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Volume 1, Issue 9  
August 2017

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# 7 DATING FAILS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

## By Joey Leslie

If you're single and looking for strings in Southern Florida, the odds (on paper) should be in your favor. Compared to the national average, we have a dense population of (beautiful) LGBT people and a never ending list of fun things to do. Add to that list the great beaches and weather and you have an almost complete picture of why I relocated from Nashville earlier this year and dove head first into the dating scene. After going on several good dates, a handful of bad ones, and commiserating with friends new and old about the perils of dating, here's what I've learned so far about why dating sometimes sucks and how we can start fixing that problem right freakin' now.

**The problem:** You're not sure if this is actually a date.

**The fix:** Make it clear that this is a date before you get there. It surprises me how many people are afraid to use the word "date" and instead make a veiled request to meet for dinner only to show up and experience that unique brand of awkwardness inevitable when you're not sure if you're here to check sexual compatibility or to make a new friend. Nobody wants in on that surface-level dance so set it straight from the jump off. "I'd like to have a dinner date with you and see if we vibe. You game?" Then it's game on - so you can get right to the good stuff.

**The problem:** You're out of your element.

**The fix:** Choose a familiar restaurant or setting where you're already comfortable, especially if you're cool with the bartenders or staff. This one is especially handy if you're a shy person, as I'm learning many of us are. Controlling one element will help you focus on the other tasks you're juggling, like asking follow-up questions (see below) and actually taking note of things you can connect about. We're at our best in our element, so find your comfort zone and ease into it together.

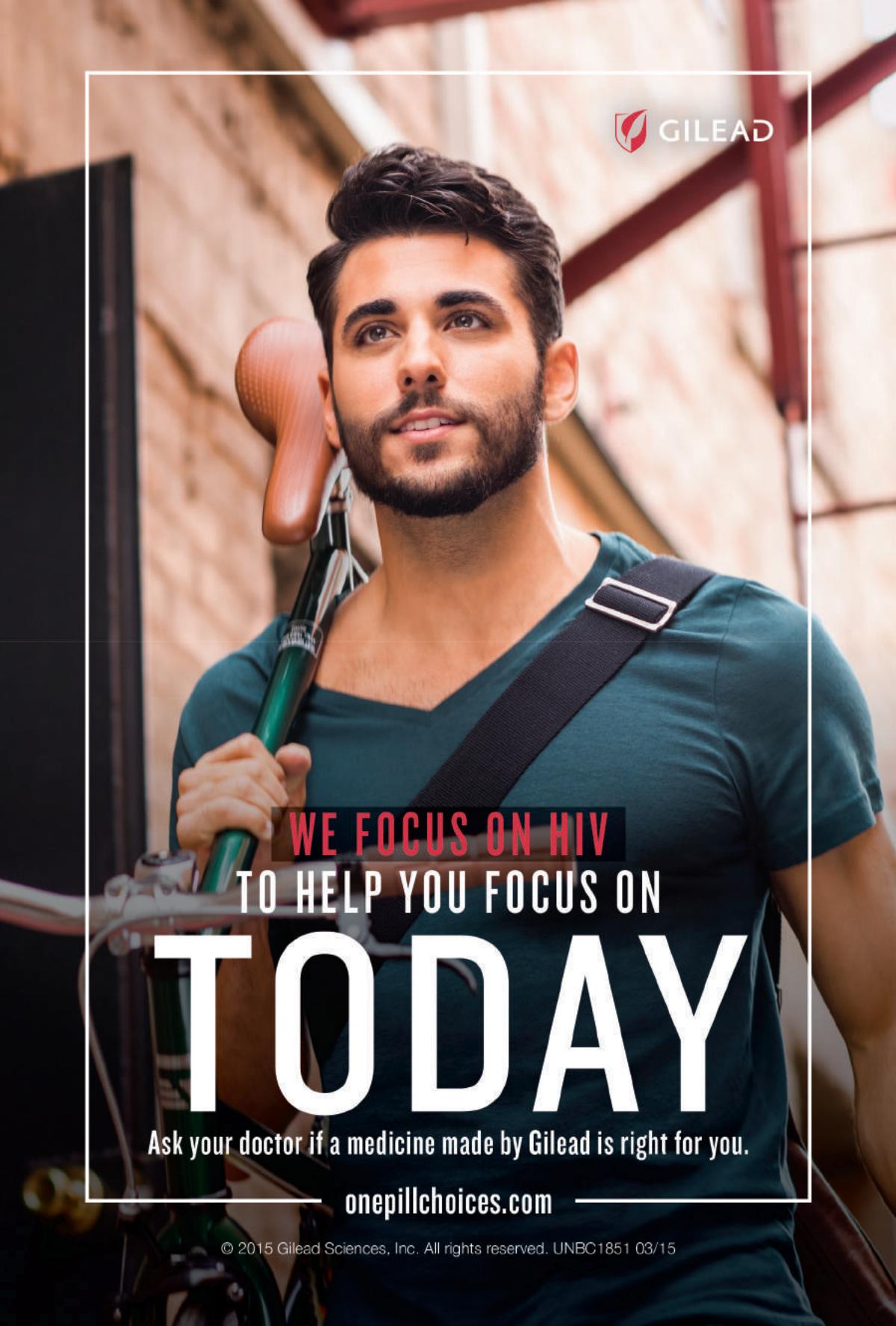
**The problem:** You're going in blind.



**The fix:** Set a timer for 7 minutes and take a peek at his LinkedIn profile or Instagram. Google him if those two aren't readily available. Standard date chit chat trends toward the safe and shallow, everyone being on their best behavior and all. So doing a bit of homework in advance can go a long way to help you quickly get to more meaningful conversation. The 7-minute timer is important so you don't go down a troll hole of assumptions to wild conclusions, or dig so deep you find historic posts that don't represent the latest version of the man today. You're just looking for good nuggets for conversation like, let's say, a photo of him accepting a humanitarian award that he's probably too humble to tell you about.

**The problem:** You're so worried about being interesting you forget to be interested.

**The fix:** Ask follow-up questions. This one should be as obvious as Kim Kardashian at an Applebee's but apparently it is not. So, a simple tactic you should start practicing now: When someone asks you a question, answer it, and then immediately say "What about you?" On one particularly bad date, I learned that this guy was 43, very close with his mother but not his father, he's an only child, hates sushi vehemently, and can't keep a plant alive so he



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stopped trying 20 years ago. And that's what I remember off-hand. He never once asked me a follow-up. Occasionally I'd offer juicy date trivia like "Oh, I'm an only child too!" just to see what would happen. Spoiler alert: nothing happened. Rather than drag the conversation along, I just let it stew for a while. "Oh there's pine nuts in this salad," he said. "Is that a good thing?" I asked him. "Eh. It's whatever." I felt the same about him...not that he asked or anything. Check please.

**The problem:** You brought a third wheel. It's your phone.

**The fix:** Keep it in your pants. And keep it on silent. You're busy. He's busy. But you've both managed to make it to the same table to share a meal and, we hope, be wowed by this awesome person. Then, he plops his phone down on the table beside his silverware, all his tools within reach, just in case. Immediately you think - in case of what? What's so important that you can't disconnect from your phone for long enough to be 100 percent into me? (And if you're not the one thinking it, then you're probably the perpetrator in this scenario.) Show up, be present and keep your phone out of sight. Not on the table . . . not even if it's face down and off to the side behind a bread basket with a napkin draped over it. It should stay in your actual pocket, out of sight and out of mind.

**Bonus** - this will also prevent you from wanting to use your phone as a prop and scroll endlessly looking for that super special photo of your dog



or the armoire you recently refurbished or that time at the Miami Heat game when the ball smacked that kid in the face. Because there's nothing worse than that moment when we all realize you deleted that photo a while back.

**The problem:** This meal isn't free, and there's a lot of subtext in who foots the bill.

**The fix:** Don't let him pay if you know you're not into him. If you've already decided no second date is needed, then please do the kind and generous thing and offer to pay or split the check. Letting him pay is akin to saying you're up for a second date. So if you're not, this is your first and most honest opportunity to gracefully start moving into the friend zone with no hard feelings, especially if you're prone to ghosting. Which, btw -

**The problem:** Ghosting.

**The fix:** Don't.

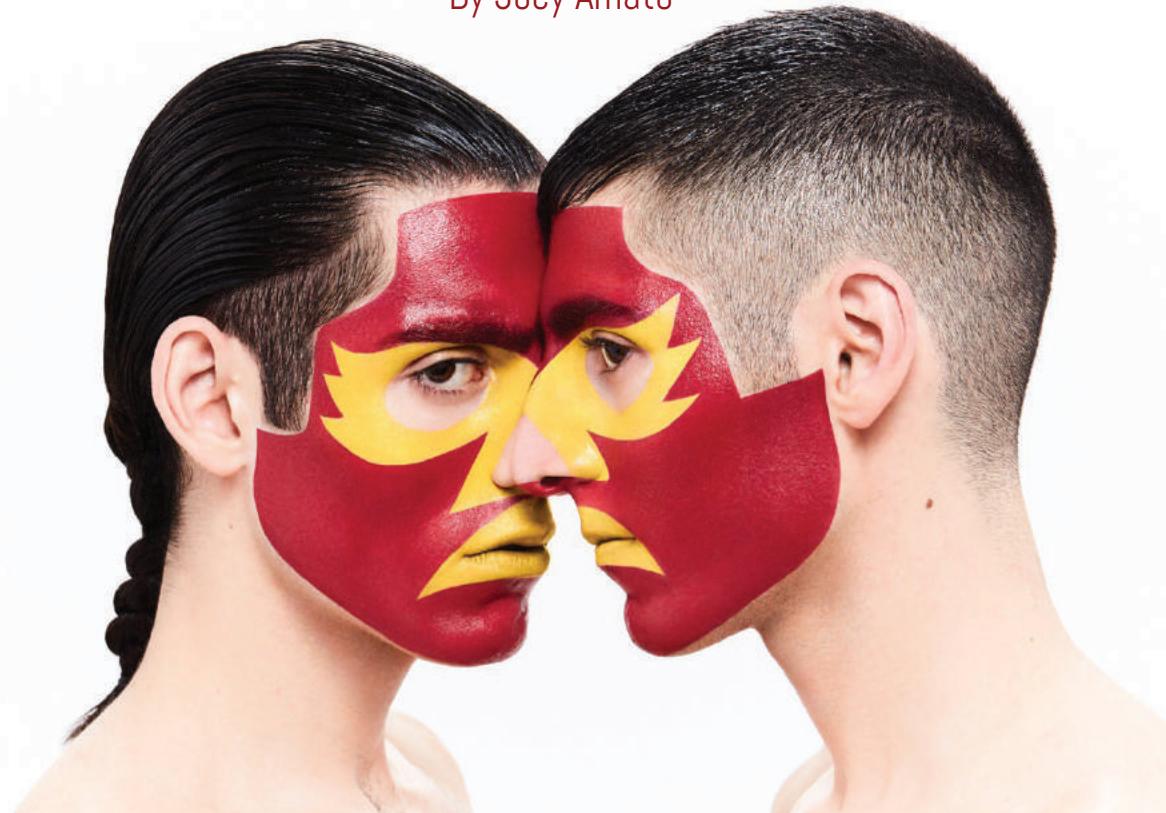
See, here's the thing. We try to be on our best, most charming behavior on a date. Even if you're not into him, you probably were still extraordinary because, well you got all dressed up after all so let's make the most of the night together, right? Then, you leave, you're not into him, so you just never respond to his text. You're now the worst. The ghosting and games lead to assumptions and jadedness that is unnecessary (to say the least) and frustrating AF (to say the perfect amount). "But I don't want to hurt his feelings," you say? Great! Then don't leave him wondering where he went wrong. Let him know you'd be fine to hang out as friends sometime but don't see it going any further than that. He'll probably ghost you at that point. So, problem solved. Feel how clear that air is now? So nice.

Joey Leslie is a freelance writer, marketing strategist, and heliophile living and loving in Miami. Find him on Instagram @joeygoes\_mia and at joyleslie.life.

# DOUBLE VISION:

AN INTERVIEW WITH GAY TWINS ZACH AND MICHAEL ZAKAR

By Joey Amato



**W**hen Zach and Michael Zakar, twins of Iraqi descent, came out as gay to their mother, she threw holy water on them. That story is probably similar to other coming out stories, but the twins persevered and are building an empire for themselves. We had the chance to chat with the guys about their story.

**Tell me a bit about your childhood and the moment both of you realized you were gay. Did one of you come out before the other?**

**Michael:** Our childhood is explained in the game our elementary school made up. It was a game called the Michael and Zachary chase. If you get tagged by either of us, you basically

die and become a social outcast. Growing up in the white suburbia, we both didn't know that each other were gay. Zach was a jock who played Rugby and I, Michael, was the artsy kid. Zach was home with stomach flu for the week, from sharing my drink (he didn't know that the stomach flu was contagious).

**A junior asked me if I wanted to fool around in the handicap stall above the gymnasium. I agreed not thinking if it was gay or straight, I was just excited. I met him in the stall during fifth period Spanish.**

We were fooling around in the stall, when two jocks walked in and caught us. I ran back to class. The next day the rumor around school

was Zach was caught in the bathroom with this junior, obviously because we looked more like twins back in the day. When I got home, I told a sick Zach about the rumor.

He said, "I thought no one saw me?"

**Michael:** What?

**Zach:** Huh?

**Michael:** No it was me that got caught?!

**Zach:** No, I was fooling around with him, but I didn't get caught? Wait, are you gay?

**Michael:** Wait are you gay?

**Zach** fooled around with the same kid a few days prior in the same stall, I was just the one that got caught.

The kid is the one that actually started the rumor.

#### **What was the initial reaction of your family?**

**Zach:** Most people would expect since we're Arab that our dad was going to have a harder time, but it was the exact opposite. Our dad's a caregiver, so he's a very mellow guy. On the

other hand, our mom threw holy water at us and ran away to her church for a week.

#### **Who did you go to for support and why?**

**Michael:** The coming out process was the hardest and easiest since we came out together, we had each other to fall back/rely on when our mom reacted so harshly.

#### **Did your religious beliefs become a factor at any time?**

**Michael:** Yes, growing up and hearing the slurs of what our Arab community thought about LGBT people left a bad taste in my mouth and taught us to learn and develop beliefs on your own.

#### **When did you both decide to pursue a career in modeling?**

**Zach:** We went to school for writing, so we both assumed we would always be in the background. Once one photographer shot with us, it seemed to be a domino effect and we got offers to work with some very talented people.

#### **What would you say are your core strengths and weaknesses when it comes to business and do you help each other in a business sense?**





**Michael:** Michael: It is also one of the easiest and worst things to do with family. Having your twin is great because they understand your business ethic and can only strengthen the idea. But when you disagree, the comments are a little more cut throat, so it can turn into one giant fight.

**Do you have any funny stories about people confusing you both?**

**Michael:** One time I was in bed with a guy and he called me Zach.

**What is the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome since coming out?**

**Zach:** The biggest obstacle was coming out to our mom. All that negative energy we turned creatively into a memoir, called "Pray the Gay Away" (coming out soon). We have heard from a few modeling gigs, to basically tone it down. It, being tone the gay down.

**What is your ideal boyfriend (if single)?**

**Michael:** I want someone normal, with a 9 to 5 job. They would have to be way more calm than me, while I am the messy one.

**Zach:** Someone with a big butt that takes me out for sushi.

Both agree they have to understand our humor and understand that when you date one of us you date the other basically lol.

**What are your hobbies and what do you like to do in your spare time?**

**Michael:** We are both artists and writers in our spare time.

**Words of advice for anyone struggling to come out?**

**Zach:** We want to help LGBT people with the whole coming out process. Be proud. Be a supporter, there's nothing worse than judging within our own community.



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## A MESSAGE OF LOVE: BRIAN FALDUTO

By Denny Patterson

Brian Falduto was 11-years-old when he was cast in the 2003 hit film School of Rock as Billy "Fancy Pants" and delivered one of the most iconic lines in cinematic history, "You're tacky and I hate you." Nowadays, Falduto is spreading a message of love and acceptance through music. His debut EP, "Love One Another," was released on iTunes in June and marks the start of his journey as a singer/songwriter. Made up of five songs in total, "Love One Another" is an entirely crowdfunded EP full of Falduto's original, heartfelt lyrics. Playing guitar and songwriting started out as a therapeutic hobby for Falduto to work through difficult emotions after a rough breakup. Since then, he has been collaborating with other musicians and booking gigs throughout NYC.

Congrats on releasing your first EP! This must be quite an accomplishment.

Thank you so much! It was fun. We are happy with the results.

And it broke the Top 100 Singer/Songwriter albums on iTunes in the U.S. within 24 hours? Yes. That was cool. It was unexpected.

Go ahead and tell me more about your EP, "Love One Another."

I've been writing music for like two years now. I was working for this country music radio station for four years, and went through this tough breakup and music was a big part of my daily life. Since I worked at this radio station where country music was big, all these songs were like getting me out of this tough place I was in. I play guitar and I sing, so I figured why not try my own stuff. It started out as therapeutic. I wasn't planning on showing my music to anyone, and eventually I was like, maybe I should share my music with people. Maybe my songs can relate to them. So, I started collaborating with other musicians, we gigged around for a while, put together the songs and how they would sound, then laid them down on this EP for their first official submission to the world. ➤



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**Is there an overall message you are trying to convey?**

A lot of the songs are like breakup songs or about past relationships, but one of the songs, "Turn That Song Back On," seemed like the best song to push this EP out. One of the key lyrics is, "love one another," and that's where we got the title from. It's just about love and acceptance and I wrote it not too long ago, over the past year. With all the stuff going on in our political climate, I kind of wrote it in response to that. I said it a couple times now, but if I could sum this EP up in a sentence, it would be, "love has wounded me, yet I know love is the only answer." I think love is what you should spread around.

**You originally started playing guitar and songwriting as hobby? Was this also a way to cope with depression?**

I wouldn't say depression per se, but just being out of a funk. The past relationship break-up everyone goes through.

**Who are some of your musical inspirations?**

Musical inspirations. That's always a tough question for me. I love so many people. I think my favorite kind of music is good, simple melodies that tug at the heart strings, like country music. As for specific artists, I would say people like Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. I'm a big fan of ballads and slow songs. You should never let me DJ a party while drunk, I'll play all the slow songs [laughs].

**I'm sure it's hard to pick a favorite song, but is there one that you hold closest to your heart?**

The one closest to my heart personally is "In My Mind," which is the last song. We recorded it live on electric guitar in one studio session and we really wanted to capture the emotions. This was the first song I ever wrote, and I

wrote it right after my breakup. It was kind of a song that appeared to me like, hey, you're my song! That song has the biggest meaning to me personally, but my favorite song is obviously "Turn That Song Back On." It's just a fun sing-along anthem that everyone can feel good while listening to it.

**Since the EP tells of your personal experiences and situations, was the writing process challenging?**

No, not at all. I didn't have to force anything. My writing process starts with a lyric or an idea, and it's all based around the lyric and emotion. I will then find the chord to go with it, then arrange it with the band. If I have to force something, I feel like that usually takes a fall. I feel like that's where you get into trouble and then it won't be a good song.

**Is this EP also kind of a take on anti-LGBT bullying as well?**

Totally. We have a great pride month here in New York City, and I think of all the people who have gone through struggles, the LGBTQ community has endured a lot. Bullying is obviously the opposite of loving everyone, and everyone should accept each other for who they are.

**Have you endured a lot of bullying throughout your life?**

When I was younger, for sure. I recently had the chance to speak about it in a couple of different publications, but yes. If you don't remember, I was in School of Rock [laughs], but when the movie first came out, I was particularly labeled as the gay kid from School of Rock. That was a tough thing to be labeled as at the time because I didn't know what being gay meant at all. I just knew it was like a negative thing. You don't want to be called

gay by a bunch of straight boys when you're all taking those puberty health classes together. You just don't want to be called that, so I started rejecting it right away. Even in high school, the first day, I remember walking into the building and someone said, "the gay kid from School of Rock." So, I was like oh, so this is going to follow me forever, huh? At times, it definitely was bullying. There were some harder experiences, but more so, it was just a label I was trying to escape for so long because it was put on me before I had the chance to decide anything for myself.

**Do you think School of Rock was what stemmed a lot of the bullying for you?**

It was also the way I carried myself onscreen. I obviously came across as gay because I played a sassy, little designer kid. I'm sure a lot of people who are growing up and leaning towards the LGBTQ spectrum probably have similar personality traits. I'm sure they act in certain ways by how they carry themselves. So, I don't think it was necessarily just the movie, but the movie certainly didn't help. It was broadcast globally. And there were even news publications who were calling me the gay kid from School of Rock. So, it wasn't just my

peers who were doing it. It was a public thing.

**So, because you were trying to escape and reject the label of being gay, is that why you came out your senior year of college?**

I definitely think that had a lot to do with it. A lot of my friends from teaching psychology classes suggest that as you grow older, a lot of development is based on the younger years, and with what happens when you're younger. This rejection of being gay was embedded in me very early on. It's not that I didn't know, but as you're building a defense against this label, you come up with religious reasons on why you shouldn't be gay. You come up with societal reasons on why you shouldn't be gay. You embed all of these things that need to be broken down over time, and then it's like oh, that was a stupid reason. So, it just took some time to get that out of my head.

**Well, there may be haters out there, but you brought joy and laughter to many more.**

Yes, definitely! I said it recently, but I kind of love that I have this little cap in LGBTQ struggle because it makes me value my role in the LGBTQ community more and my role in the movie. I heard lovely things of people relating to it. It was nice for people to see a character like them on screen when they were younger.

**Where do you hope your music will take you?**

I'm really enjoying it. The singer/songwriter thing is still new to me, I only started writing songs two years ago. I'm really enjoying it, and I love it so much, I'm pursuing it pretty head on right now as opposed to just pursuing acting. I want to collaborate with more artists this year, I want to travel more, play my music for new ears, and start playing in festivals and such.

**Do you have a favorite aspect about performing live?**

I love sharing my music, something I wrote. My favorite thing I can hear from someone is when they come up to me after a show and say how much they related to one of my songs. I try to keep the setup simple, and I love that acoustic vibe where people can hear the lyrics. I love when people can relate to those lyrics.



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- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

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- GENVOYA does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.

**Do NOT take GENVOYA if you:**

- Take a medicine that contains: adefovir (Adefovir<sup>®</sup>), carbamazepine (Carbatro<sup>®</sup>, Epitol<sup>®</sup>, Equetro<sup>®</sup>, Tegretol<sup>®</sup>, Tegretol-XR<sup>®</sup>, Teril<sup>®</sup>), cisapride (Propulsid<sup>®</sup>, Propulsid Quickso<sup>™</sup>), dihydroergotamine (D.H.E. 45<sup>®</sup>, Migranal<sup>®</sup>), ergotamine (Cafergot<sup>®</sup>, Migranal<sup>®</sup>, Ergostat<sup>®</sup>, Methadate<sup>®</sup>, Ergotamine<sup>®</sup>, Wigraine<sup>®</sup>, Wigrisette<sup>®</sup>), lisinopril (Advicor<sup>®</sup>, Altopen<sup>®</sup>, Mevacor<sup>®</sup>), lamivudine (Latuda<sup>®</sup>), methylergonovine (Ergotrate<sup>®</sup>, Methergine<sup>®</sup>), midazolam (when taken by mouth), phenobarbital (Luminal<sup>®</sup>), phenytoin (Dilantin<sup>®</sup>, Phenytek<sup>®</sup>), pimozide (Orap<sup>®</sup>), rilamipine (Rifadin<sup>®</sup>, Rilamate<sup>®</sup>, Rilatate<sup>®</sup>, Rilmactane<sup>®</sup>), sildenafil (when used for lung problems) (Revatio<sup>®</sup>), simvastatin (Simcor<sup>®</sup>, Vytorin<sup>®</sup>, Zocor<sup>®</sup>), or triazolam (Halcion<sup>®</sup>).
- Take the herbal supplement St. John's wort.
- Take any other HIV-1 medicines at the same time.

## GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about GENVOYA. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to [GENVOYA.com](http://GENVOYA.com) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [GENVOYA.com](http://GENVOYA.com) for program information.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about GENVOYA<sup>®</sup> and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF GENVOYA

GENVOYA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About GENVOYA" section.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effect of GENVOYA is nausea.

These are not all the possible side effects of GENVOYA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking GENVOYA.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with GENVOYA.

## BEFORE TAKING GENVOYA

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical condition.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with GENVOYA.

## HOW TO TAKE GENVOYA

- GENVOYA is a complete one pill, once a day HIV-1 medicine.
- Take GENVOYA with food.



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# YOUR BROWARD PROPERTY AND YOU

## By Marty Kiar



It is an honor serving as your Broward County Property Appraiser. Broward County is experiencing growth with the overall taxable value of properties increasing by 9.3% countywide. Additionally, the Florida Legislature voted to place a proposed constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot to increase by up to \$25,000 the current Homestead Exemption for non-school property taxes by exempting the assessed value of a homestead parcel between \$100,000 and up to \$125,000. If approved by 60% of Florida voters, the exemption would take effect in the 2019 tax year.

### 2017 TRIM Notices

The Property Appraiser's Office mails the TRIM (proposed tax) Notices in mid-August each year. This notice will show your property assessment, exemptions and the proposed taxes. Included in this notice are the hearing dates and times for the various taxing authorities' budget hearings. This notice is your opportunity to review your property assessment and ensure you are receiving all the exemptions you are entitled to. Our office's contact information will be listed on the newsletter enclosed with the TRIM Notice giving you the opportunity to contact us directly should you have any questions.

Many property owners ignore their TRIM Notice until it is too late to challenge an assessment or question the proposed tax rates. If you wait until you receive your bill in November to inquire about your assessment, you will lose your right to appeal. The first thing to know is your taxes are calculated using this formula:

$$\text{TAXABLE VALUE} \times \text{TAX MILLAGE RATES} + \text{SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS} = \text{TAX BILL}$$

The Property Appraiser determines the market and assessed value of your property. Your tax rates and non-ad valorem fees are set by the various taxing authorities (school board, county commission, city commission, hospital district board, water management district, and so on) listed on your TRIM Notice. If you want to question your proposed tax rates, non-ad valorem fees, special assessments or services, you should contact the elected officials who serve on the taxing authorities and attend the public hearings in September 2017. Important: The Property Appraiser does not set your tax rates or collect your taxes. Your tax rates are set by the city & county commissions, school board, and others.

If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 954-357-6904 or by email at [martykiar@bcpa.net](mailto:martykiar@bcpa.net)

Take care,

Marty Kiar

Marty Kiar is the Broward County Property Appraiser and longtime advocate for LGBTQ equality.

The Broward County Property Appraiser's Office is located at  
115 S Andrews Avenue, Room # 111, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Follow our office at:

[facebook.com/MartyKiarBCPA](https://facebook.com/MartyKiarBCPA) and [twitter.com/MartyKiarBCPA](https://twitter.com/MartyKiarBCPA)



# A HEALTHY VACATION? STOP LYING!

## By Jimmy Rodgers



When we think of vacationing, a balanced diet, sufficient movement, and sensible thinking aren't probably on the forefront of the itinerary. However, even before most vacationers come home, at least two days prior to the return, the most commonly heard statements are, "It doesn't fit anymore," or "I can't button my pants."

There are probably three main factors that contribute to an overabundance of calories and fat following a vacation:

- We tend to splurge by choosing higher-fat and higher-calorie menu selections.
- Restaurants are serving us large portions.
- We are eating it - all of it!

Most people generally finish their entire entrees. Usually, it isn't what you eat, but how much you eat, that gets you into nutritional trouble.

Portion control is the best bet overall. Ordering half-sized portions, sharing entrees or tapas, taking home leftovers, and ordering appetizers as meals are the ways to go.

Think about it and be smart! There is always some type of outing after dinner and we all

know it's no fun doing anything with a full stomach. The agony alone of the walk from the table to the car is enough to kill us, but we always play it off until we close the door. Then we do some heavy breathing and start to curse our existence, which is No Bueno when on vacation.

Here are 6 and a 1/2 easy tips to ensure you have a great, healthy vacation and still fit into your clothes when you return home.

### 1. LESS IS MORE

You are on vacation for heaven's sake! It doesn't make sense to deprive yourself of enjoyable food. The trick is carrying "moderation" in your back pocket. Sample the wonderful foods instead of feasting on them. There is no reason to eat the entire portion at every sitting. Get it together people!

## 2. UBER WHO?

Give your app a break [even better, try using your phone less while on vacay]. We were given limbs to use them, specifically our legs. Walk, walk and walk some more. Those sneakers in the back of your closet should be the first items in your suitcase. I walk all day, every day by either sightseeing, meeting friends, or even taking in a show which seems to offset any extra calories I might consume. So, go ahead and take that stroll after dinner, walk to the cinema, and even take your kids on that early morning hike! They won't like it much but they aren't paying for the vacation, now are they?

## 3. HAVE IT YOUR WAY AND MAKE IT HEALTHY

Customers are asking to have it their way more and more. It's your food and you might as well get it the way you want. Many restaurants won't cause a fuss unless it "hinders the integrity of the dish." That's right! I've gotten that one before. I usually follow it with, "yes, but the integrity of my taste buds and belly are more important."

Fast Food is not my thing but if it crosses your path, as you are walking, try to make healthful choices. Sometimes you can make a fast food or restaurant choice instantly better just by ordering it with a different condiment, sauce or without its counterpart. Some examples are: Dijon mustard instead of mayo, marinara instead of alfredo, fries no salt, olive oil and lemon instead of thick, mashed up globs of salad dressing, etc. You know who you are!



PS...Most times when you alter an item, it is made fresh. Shh, tell no one!

## 4. WATER IS YOUR NEW BFF

Give all systems the green light by drinking your daily water requirement, and then some. Traveling does dehydrate you, as well as being out in the sun more than you are used to. Stock your car, backpack, and hotel room with bottles of water. Bring water everywhere you go. It's not very nice to leave your best friend behind!

## 5. REMEMBER "FIVE A DAY" ON VACATION

It is extremely important to make an effort to get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. They will make meals seem more filling and provide enough fiber in your diet, keep your intestines regular, and keep levels of antioxidants and important vitamins high so you are less likely to get sick on your vacay. Pack them next to your new BFF and snack away.

## 6. EAT WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY AND STOP BEFORE YOU ARE FULL

Simple, right? Ha! Stop lying! Many of us have gotten out of the habit of paying attention to know whether we're truly hungry or even given time to know if we are full for that matter. There is a plethora of opportunities to eat all around us when we are vacationing. Being in the, "I'm on VACATION!" mindset, justifies it; well, we think it does at that time anyway. Being in that mindset is when we'll be the most vulnerable to

**JIMMY SAYS:** THE WORD VACATION DOES NOT EQUIATE TO EAT EVERYTHING IN SIGHT [STOP SHAKING YOUR HEAD NO, I AM CORRECT]. PACE YOURSELF, SNACK, TAKE SHORT BREAKS, TASTE TEST, ALWAYS TRY TO BE IN MOTION, THINK BEFORE YOU ORDER AND DON'T FORGET TO HYDRATE . . . WITH WATER! TRAVEL SAFE, BE HAPPY AND ENJOY! DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF; YOU'LL BE HOME BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!



eating even if we aren't hungry and not stopping when we feel comfortable and content. Coincidentally, most times our thirst is confused for hunger. My rule of thumb when it's feeding time is to drink a glass of water, room temp, prior to heading to that [healthy] buffet. The water will prepare your stomach for some yummy treats and also take up some space down there. You might not be as hungry as your eyes think you are.

## ½. HAVE FUN!

You're on Vacation! Hello! But be mindful of yourself and what you chose to do. You've

saved and planned for it so have a great time but keep your brain turned on. It is no fun having a great trip then getting home and regretting some choices you made.

Who wants the extra work and strict rules needed when you get home to figure out and plan on how to get rid of the 10 pounds of fun you just gained...I mean ate? I know! Call me! LOL

Bon Voyage and Safe travels from Jimmy and SJW!

Feeling Super Yet?



Jimmy is a Certified Holistic Health Coach who received his training from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in NYC and is also board certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. He provides continual support in the areas of food, nutrition, and lifestyle to discover imbalances in the way of achieving any personal health and wellness goals. If interested in SJW or have an inquiry about a Health Consultation please feel free to contact me. You know you want to!

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# SOUTHERN COMFORT ENDING STRUGGLE WITH THE “T”

## By Mike Brewer

While LGBTQ Americans are slipping into the mainstream of society, most cities struggle with the “T.”

Out of necessity and personal safety, Transgender people are peeking out of their closets to find homelessness, chronic unemployment, and brutal attacks await them. Some are even waiting until their parents die before they come out and have gender reassignment surgery.

**F**ort Lauderdale wasn't always as welcoming to the LGBT community at large and to transgender people specifically.

In the 1950s, Fort Lauderdale city government worked to shut down as many gay bars as possible and enacted laws making cross-dressing illegal. From 1956 to 1966, the Johns Committee of the Florida Legislature actively sought to root out homosexuals and transgender people in state employment and in public universities across the state, publishing the inflammatory "Purple Pamphlet," which portrayed all homosexuals and transgender citizens as predators and a dire threat to the children of Florida.

But today the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau (GFLCVB) is welcoming the Transgender community with open arms. In fact, the "T" is now a centerpiece of the GFLCVB marketing efforts and has become a model for other cities to follow.

As the only U.S. destination with a designated LGBTQ department, in 2014 the Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB commissioned a first-ever study of transgender travelers in North America with the goal of identifying the travel motivations and priorities of the market. The survey provided insight as to how the CVB could communicate appropriately with transgender travelers and deliver a sensitive



and authentic welcoming experience, including providing training to the local community. Last year alone, Fort Lauderdale welcomed more than one million LGBTQ visitors to the area.

"We held a roundtable of key national transgender leaders within the LGBT community. What we found out was astonishing," said Richard Gray, the GFLCVB's LGBTQ Managing Director. "They travel frequently, when they do travel, they look for hotels where they are free to be themselves. We also found out that many are stealth – or do not share their transgender status with any of their family, friends, or co-workers. This was a major motivator for us to get the word out that Greater Fort Lauderdale is the place where they really can be themselves."

Gray, a 20-year veteran of the gay travel and tourism industry, was inducted into the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2000, he received a Hometown Hero award from the Broward County Board of County Commissioners for his achievements in gay and lesbian travel, and in 1998 was inducted into PlanetOut's Travel Hall of Fame for outstanding individual achievement in gay travel. ➤



Several years ago, Gray approached his boss at the time with his idea of marketing to Transgender people. It was not an easy "yes" to get, but eventually he got the green light. Finding a qualified sample of Transgender people willing to participate in his study was also a difficult task, but if you drill down the numbers, it was an obvious challenge.

#### Consider these statistics from the National Center for Transgender Equality:

- 29% of transgender people live in poverty, compared to 14% of the general population.
- 30% of transgender people report being homeless at some point in their lives, with 12% saying it was within the past 12 months.
- Transgender people experience unemployment at 3x the rate of the general population, with rates for people of color up to 4x the national unemployment rate.
- 30% of transgender people report being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing mistreatment in the workplace due to their gender identity in the past 12 months.
- 31% of transgender people experienced mistreatment in the past year in a place of public accommodation, including 14% who were denied equal service, 24% who were verbally harassed, and 2% who were physically attacked because they were transgender.
- 40% of transgender respondents reported attempting suicide in their lifetime, nearly nine times the attempted suicide rate in the United States (4.6%)

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB is addressing many of these issues as part of putting out its welcome mat for the Transgender community, and the LGBTQ community as well.

Last year, the GFLCVB lit up a billboard in Times Square, spreading awareness about Greater Fort Lauderdale's LGBTQ inclusiveness during a two-month advertising campaign. It was the

first campaign of its kind in the world and the beginning of the CVB's newest branding effort specifically targeting LGBTQ travelers.

Greater Fort Lauderdale was also the only destination in the country to be invited to host an LGBTQ presentation at the United Nations. It was an unprecedented achievement, giving Greater Fort Lauderdale exposure as one of the LGBTQ capitals of the world.

Armed with his research and a convincing pitch, Gray approached Lexi Dee, President of the Southern Comfort Transgender Conference. The annual event has drawn thousands of transgender people and their supporters over the years, and is considered one of the largest transgender gatherings in the world. The dedicated outreach advocate that Gray is, he courted Dee for several years and was instrumental in securing a three-year commitment to hold Southern Comfort in Greater Fort Lauderdale, after Atlanta had hosted the event for 24 years.

"He kept bugging me and bugging me," said Dee, laughing. "Finally, he told me that he was hosting a roundtable with Community Marketing Insights, Inc. He said he wanted me to come speak about how to bring more transgender visitors to Greater Fort Lauderdale. That's how I convinced the [Southern Comfort] Board to bring the conference to Greater Fort Lauderdale."

In 2015, the host hotel for Southern Comfort was the Bonaventure Resort & Spa in Weston, FL. This year, Southern Comfort moves to the Riverside Hotel on Las Olas Boulevard in the heart of Fort Lauderdale – closer to the beach, downtown, and attractions attendees will enjoy visiting.

One of the driving forces for Dee's leadership role in Southern Comfort has been educating people about the misconceptions they have about being Transgender.

"If you're gay, you go to your parents and say, 'I'm gay.' It's cut and dry. The problem with the

non-trans general public is they equate being Trans with Drag Queens," said Dee. "Along with all the other acronyms, they get lumped into somebody like me. But I'm just a normal, female person. People think we are a lot like the LGB community. In some ways it is, in some ways it's not."

In stark contrast to many in the Transgender community, Dee is thankfully living a comfortable life with her wife of 43 years. She has one daughter and a granddaughter who live in Sweden.

"I am a 65 year old transgender living in North Carolina, which is perhaps the second toughest place for a transgender to live, besides the Big Red State of Florida," said Dee. "I have been out for fifteen years. My daughter and granddaughter are both accepting of me."

As a leader in Transgender education, Dee says this year's Southern Comfort Conference will be centered on empowerment for Transgender people. Noted speakers planned to appear include:

- Amanda Simpson, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy and the first vice chair of the Arizona Democratic Party LGBT caucus.

Southern Comfort Transgender Conference  
September 14-16, 2017  
Riverside Hotel  
620 E. Las Olas Blvd.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Individual event tickets are available from \$45. Registration packages start at \$75. To find out more about the event and to register, visit [sccfla.org](http://sccfla.org).

● Lori Fox, a FORTUNE 500 company consultant on transgender issues in the workplace. She serves on the Board of Directors at Out & Equal and as National Chairperson of the Transgender Workplace Advisory Board.

- Gina Duncan, Equality Florida, Director of Transgender Equality.

The conference will also include transgender speakers from Guam and Columbia, who will educate attendees on specific issues in their respective homelands. "Many people don't know that Guam is an important protectorate of

United States law, abiding by our protections" said Dee. "Guam is experiencing an influx of transgender people from Southeast Asia and Japan."

By all accounts, this year's Southern Comfort Conference promises to be a big success. The Riverside Hotel has sold out of its 275 rooms, exclusively blocked for Southern Comfort visitors. It's a milestone not lost on Dee. "When I was dealing with these issues, there was no Internet, so I had no real educational outlet to learn about being transgender," said Dee. "After the Internet, I started surfing around and found the Southern Comfort Transgender Conference site. It has changed my life for the better."



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# NEWSEUM EXHIBIT EXPLORES MODERN GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

By Joey Amato



Even though it's still a bit over a year away, it's never too early to start planning your next visit to our nation's capital. In March 2019, the Newseum in Washington D.C. will open "Rise Up: Stonewall and the Gay Rights Movement," an exhibit that explores the modern gay rights movement in the United States. The exhibit marks the 50th anniversary of a June 1969 police raid of the Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village. The protests that raid ignited are considered to be the catalyst that inspired the modern gay liberation movement and the ongoing fight for LGBT civil rights.

"Rise Up" explores what happened at the Stonewall Inn, the myths surrounding it and how it gave rise to a 50-year fight for civil rights for LGBT Americans. Over the years, activists have used their First Amendment freedoms of speech, press, assembly and petition to demand an end to discrimination against LGBT Americans in housing, employment and public accommodations.

Through powerful artifacts, images and historic print publications, the exhibit will explore key moments of gay rights history, including the

1978 assassination of Harvey Milk, one of the country's first openly gay elected officials; the AIDS crisis; U.S. Rep. Barney Frank's public coming out in 1987; the efforts for hate crime legislation; the implementation and later repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell"; and the fight for marriage equality. "Rise Up" will also look at popular culture's role in influencing attitudes about the LGBT community through film, television and music, and explore how the gay rights movement harnessed the power of public protest and demonstration to change laws and shatter stereotypes.

Beginning later this year and running throughout 2019, a series of programs will focus on the rise of the gay press, and how the news media helped and hurt the gay rights movement. Other topics will include pop culture and the gay rights movement, religious liberty and LGBT rights, and the future of LGBT rights.

"Rise Up" is being made possible by the generous support of a native Washingtonian and First Amendment advocate. The exhibit will open in March 2019, and will be on display through September 2019.

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# AFTER ALL THESE YEARS: NICK CARDELLO AND KURT ENGLISH

By Denny Patterson

Back in June, Nick Cardello and Kurt English of Tampa, Florida caused quite the stir on social media – but in a positive manner. The two attended the Equality March in Washington, D.C. on June 11 and decided to recreate a photograph they took in the exact same spot 24 years ago at the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation. Little did they know, this “Then and Now” photo would garner more than 800,000 likes and shares within three days, and capture the hearts of millions. This year marks Cardello and English’s 25th anniversary together.

First off, give me a little bit of backstory on your relationship. How did you two meet?

**NC** We met in 1992 at church at a Dignity Mass on Easter Sunday. We were introduced by a friend. We quickly realized we both had similar backgrounds growing up and mutual interests. We both come from large families, grew up on the Great Lakes, and work in health care. At the time, we lived 60 miles apart and were amazed that we even found each other.

It's amazing that you two have been together for 25 years. Nick, when did you realize that Kurt was, “the one?”

**NC** Kurt was unlike any other guy I had dated in the past. There was an instant attraction which compelled me to be rather assertive and let him know I was interested in him. The night we met after the service in the social hall, he was sitting at a table, which was completely full, so I pulled a chair in from another table and made everyone shift down. From that moment on, the entire room disappeared and the two of us locked eyes and the rest is history. We sat and talked for hours that night until the church had to close. That was the night I fell in love with him!



Kurt, same question to you about Nick.

**KE** It was soon after we met that I knew that Nick was special and that we clicked and that we complimented each other. I looked forward to talking with him every day before we went to bed. We would plan our weekend together spending one weekend in Clearwater and the other in Lakeland. Our midweek date night was the Tuesday night movie at the Tampa Theatre. It didn't matter what was playing as long as I'm with the man I love! I found him ever present in my mind and I have not lost that to this day. One of the highlights to my day is coming home to him. I have never felt like that about someone before.

**What do you think has been the key to making your relationship a success?**

**NC** I feel it is crucial to find someone you are compatible with. In April as our 25th anniversary approached, I reflected on our meeting and how we made major decisions about the future, buying a house, getting married, finances, etc. What I quickly realized was that there was never a point in our relationship where we decided, “We’re dating,” or, “We’re boyfriends,” or, “Do I spend the rest of my life with you?” What happened was that we fell into a rhythm with each other from

the first day we met. It was like we had always been together! There was a natural ease, it was uncomplicated. For us, there never seemed to be a demarcation. It flowed like it had always been.

**KE** I think it's important to recognize each other's needs and be willing to place those needs before your own. Relationships require active participation by both parties. A long-term relationship cannot be built solely on physical/sexual attraction. While these are part of the relationship, other facets begin to develop and take importance such as career goals, education, and family. It's also critical to support the overall growth and development of your partner and be willing to allow them to grow and to become their best self. I think that's love!

Moving on to the photo, why did you decide to recreate this photo and whose idea was it to do so?

**NC** After the November elections when the Equality March for Unity and Pride was announced, we booked the trip. Leading up to the March, I posted our photo album from the 1993 LGBT March on Washington on Facebook and made "The Kiss" photo my cover image. It was at a suggestion of a friend of ours to recreate the photo 24 years later at the same location. We didn't think a whole lot about posting the photo because most of our friends have been in relationships just as long, if not longer than ours.

Why is this particular photo so important to you both?

**KE** In 1993, we marched a year after we had met. It was our first major trip together and our first public protest. The March on Washington was a big risk for us then. We had no work site protections. We could march on Sunday, and be fired from our jobs for being gay on Monday. We decided to take that risk and lobbied our congressional representatives while we were there. It was also the first time we were not a minority. When a million LGBTQ

people take over a city, it is one big celebration. That feeling forever positively impacted us.

You mentioned in other articles that this photo was second coming out for you. How so?

**NC** Coming out can be a complex process. Just when you think you are out, there is another coming out layer. For example, I recently made the decision to start posting photos of us, being us! That meant kissing, holding hands, etc. These were things I kept off social media because it can make some people feel uncomfortable. I realized that was another closet I had to come out of. People need to see same-sex couples just being couples. Those images are missing from social media. The unexpected and really touching part was that our families and straight friends "came out" strongly as allies during the process. ➤





When you think about it, most of the interactions with family and friends are not public. Even if they are supportive of the LGBTQ community, their friends are unaware of that support. What we saw was for the first time, family members posting our story on their social media saying, "Look! This is my uncle, cousin, brother, son, etc. I love them and yes, they are a great couple and my kids love them too!" Bam! They just came out as allies!

**What were your reactions when you found out the photo was going viral?**

**KE** We were blown away! Why? Because it's just us being us!

You received a significant amount of love and positive feedback, especially from LGBT youth. How did that make you feel?

**NC** We could never have imagined the incredible positive response to this that we received. We were deeply touched by people's personal stories and comments from around the world about the challenges that they experience in their personal lives and in their particular cultures. Many times, we have been moved to tears by reading the comments. It became clear that we still have a long way to go. I received many private emails from people around the world who could not publicly like or comment on my post. I try to respond to each

comment because if the person made the effort to contact me, I should do the same. That has opened the door to some very meaningful discussions which were greatly appreciated. There was a wave of people replying to the post with photos of them "Then and Now" who have been in long-term relationships. This made us really happy.

**KE** It humbled me. When someone comes to you and tells you that they came to Pride to honor their lesbian mother who died eleven years ago because of what you said about the importance of celebrating Pride, it makes you realize you are touching people's lives in ways you could have never imagined.

**Do you have any advice for those who hope to have a long-lasting relationship like yours?**

**NC** One of the best decisions we made early on was to combine our finances. Over the years, we have seen couples fight over who paid for what. Combining finances removes potential major conflicts. It doesn't matter who picks up the check when it gets paid from the same pot. We're in a partnership. It's not your money or my money. It's our money. Of course, trust is foundational to making this a success.

**KE** Don't take yourself too seriously. Laugh at yourself, play, and have fun!



Can we expect any more re-created photos?

**NC** Actually, we already have. We took a similar photo where Kurt kissed me. It's important to share the love!

Besides the Equality Marches, what other LGBT activism are you both involved in?

**NC** We have decided to promote positive change in society by being out to our families, at work, on social media, and with neighbors by living our lives authentically. We feel it is important to be honest and genuine about our relationship. We think it is important to financially support groups that positively influence politics, such as Equality Florida, Lambda Legal, and the American Civil Liberties Union. Overall, it is important for us to get involved, make a difference, come out, support the community, and spread the love!

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# MOTIVATE YOURSELF TO GET THINGS DONE

## By Dr. Beau A. Nelson, DBH, LCSW

How many times have you thought about all the things you need to do and opt to just sit on the couch and watch television instead? You are definitely not alone. We all face times (more for some than others) where you just cannot seem to get yourself going towards a goal. Motivation is a tricky thing. We are all motivated by different things and by understanding what works for you there may be a way to encourage more action and get you off that couch and onto better things.

**S**ome people are motivated to do what is fun and enjoyable. Arguably, this is not going to require much effort for things that are fun and feel like a joy. Most people can motivate themselves to go to a party with friends, doesn't take too much cajoling to get off the couch for that. Friday night happy hour at your favorite bar also does not take too much arm twisting.

But what about cleaning the house, getting the car repaired, paying bills, or going to the gym? Seems those are out of reach because they aren't "fun." For the person motivated by fun, think of rewards as a better way to encourage productive activity. At first this may seem difficult, but it will really work if you try it a while. Make a to-do list, not just in your head (too much in your head can make you feel overwhelmed and demotivate you). Write down the list for today, what needs to get done, start with the externally motivated ones, such as work or paying bills.

The consequences of doing these are generally going to force you to do something. Then add a few internally necessary goals, like laundry, grocery shopping, hitting the gym, cleaning out the gutters, etc. Make progress during the day



(or night) and then plan a reward for completing your list. It could be television time, playing a favorite video game, or a night out with the girls and boys. Hold yourself responsible for not doing something and the reward has to wait. You can even have an accountability partner if you find that helps, tell them your strategy and you have them to tell yes or no to completing your necessary tasks.

Why does this work? It works because you don't really have as much fun when you are avoiding your responsibilities. You will have a cloud hanging over you when you do something fun and you miss out on some of the fun. Feeling accomplished, knowing that things are off your plate, and being proud of yourself, increases your enjoyment of things that are fun and you will be proud of yourself for having done some of those to-do list items. You will feel even better when you do have fun!

Others are generally motivated only when they have something to do that is forced on them. I had a friend that hated moving and he would wait until the day before moving to start packing his stuff. As a friend helping him, we were scrambling the next morning before the movers came throwing things in boxes and

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just running around like crazy people. When you have a deadline, don't act like a lazy high school student and pull an all-nighter. You may not realize it, but this stress takes a toll on our health and our moods. Motivate yourself by tackling small parts of a larger task before a deadline. Break tasks down into smaller bites. You know the deadline, why make yourself miserable and then go all crisis mode when the date hits. Think of smaller tasks, like my moving example, pack a few boxes each day, then you are not stressed when the big day arrives. Sometimes this is great, because once you actually start something, it is often not as bad as you think. You may even find yourself liking the fact you are getting it done and you do more than you had planned to do.

I will often use a technique with my clients that I find is helpful. Let's say you want to exercise. You put on 20 pounds and feel like crap. But every time you have time to go to the gym, you are too tired, don't feel like it, etc. Here's what I tell my patients to do. I say get dressed for the gym, get in the car, drive to the gym, and then stand outside the front door for 5 minutes. They are instructed to not go in, just stand outside, then drive home. So, guess what happens when they come back the next week to see me and tell me of their experience. Generally, they tell me that they went, but felt stupid not going in, so they went in and worked out a little.

I expressed my "disappointment" (tongue-in-cheek) that they did not do their assignment as agreed upon, but tell them, "let's try and build on that" and then they are assigned to go to the gym but just work out for 10 minutes and then go home. They come back and tell me it seems so stupid to do only ten minutes so their report is that they worked out for half

an hour. We then keep working and because they got tricked into doing something, they start feeling better, having finally started. It then builds motivation to continue.

#### HERE ARE THE TWO SECRETS TO MOTIVATION:

- Action comes before motivation.
- Our problem is not increasing motivation, it is to stop demotivating ourselves.

You have to do something, anything, to help you get on the path to getting things done. It all starts with one step. That one step is then analyzed by our brains to be good or bad. The fact that you made a step to something you have wanted or have been stressed about will feel good and we are more likely to continue steps in the same direction. That is, unless you talk yourself out of it.

Which brings us to the second secret. You don't motivate people by endlessly talking to them. That is not motivating, it is lecturing.

If you are like me, I don't do things because people badger and lecture me into doing it. In fact, I dig my heels in more and defy them by not doing something. Look on YouTube for motivational speakers. Are they boring monotone people saying, "Do this" or "Do that"? I doubt it. It is not really a good method. And it does not work in our heads either.

Fact is, we demotivate ourselves through our distorted thinking that things are too hard, too much effort, not worth it, don't matter, etc. Our biggest problem in getting things done is having excuses and believing the crap we tell ourselves. I had a patient whose home had become a pig sty. She hated going home, couldn't sleep on her bed because all of the crap on it, and just sat on her couch all the time and got progressively more depressed living like this.





While we worked on some deeper psychological issues, we agreed her environment had to change for some peace of mind. When I approached her about starting to clean her house, she had all kinds of excuses. After a few weeks of this I said to her, "I guess it is thus impossible to have a clean home, so this can never get better?" She said, "Of course not, I just can't do it for myself." Then we started to look at why she wouldn't do it for herself. There was the change, why was she resisting something that she knew would make her happier? The answer was surprising, because she said she didn't deserve it and who would care, it would only be for her and it wasn't worth the effort. I took this as an opportunity and started to coach her to action.

We got a friend to be a helper and cleaning buddy (this friend was somewhat a clean freak and was concerned about the state of her friend's house). We set up blocks of time, had her start small, with her dining room table and all her mail that had piled up. They took a few hours and her dining room looked better. Then the patient told me the two of them cleaned the entire dining room and now that made everything else look in such bad shape she wanted to tackle some other rooms.

So, after about two months, she had gone through every room and closet, she donated so much that she thought she may get a tax refund, and her mood drastically changed. Then we had a to-do list of regular items. Once a week she was doing this, or once a day that, such as going through the mail, paying bills, laundry, dish cleaning, etc. and her self-esteem and confidence increased to the point where she started having friends over. Then, she felt less lonely and isolated, and felt like a new person. After that success, she came back and told me she wanted to lose weight, and off we were again, challenging the self-defeating talk, taking action, and enjoying the feeling of accomplishment.

So, make a list of what needs to be done. Start something. Do anything to help. Set a reward if you need to and really enjoy the fun times. Watch for all the excuses which make it seem so hard and hopeless. Ask for help. Being accountable and doing things with others can help keep us on track. So many things we obsess and stress about could be handled in a fraction of the time we worry about them. Start today, make a commitment to yourself, and start to see things happen! Good luck!

Dr. Nelson practices psychology in Fort Lauderdale and helps patients with a variety of issues including stress, anxiety, and getting things done. You can find more information about his practice at [improveyourmood.com](http://improveyourmood.com) or you can email him at [drnelson@improveyourmood.com](mailto:drnelson@improveyourmood.com).



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# THE SUPERHOMO LIFE OF PAUL THE GAY COMIC GEEK

By Pup Napoleon



Photos by Adept Studios Photography | [www.addeptstudios.com](http://www.addeptstudios.com)

### Where did you get the name "Gay Comic Geek?"

I was originally just the Comic Book Geek online. But there were about a billion other comic book geeks everywhere. None seemed to say that they were gay. I'm sure many were, but I couldn't identify them, since none seemed to post it online. So I decided, "Gay Comic Geek" is going to be my name. That way, no one can mistake me for being the gay geek.

### How did you get into comic books?

In my personal life, I grew up moving a lot because of issues. I missed the basics in elementary school. I never bothered to learn to read. I got passed in school because my mother yelled a lot at principals and teachers. In 5th grade, a counselor took it upon herself to try and help me. She gave me a comic book on Robin. I couldn't read what it said, but she said she'd help me learn it. I wanted to read it badly enough that I took the extra time to catch up with my peers. I never stopped reading.

### As you've aged, how have your tastes in comics changed?

Comics themselves change. Many times, comic books reflect what society is currently going through. Some titles become more adult while others are regressed to slightly more than a fan service. My tastes generally vary from week to week, depending on my mood. But I have maintained my love of superheroes more than anything else.

### How have you seen the world of comic books change in your lifetime, in contrast to social, political, and newer issues emerging?

Comic books have always been about politics and social issues. It is generally reflected in many comic book titles. Superman was created to fight against social injustice. Wonder Woman fights for women against male oppression. Besides being much more blatant cheesy in dialog, comic books really have not changed a lot with respect to these politics.

### What made you find YouTube as an outlet for your creativity? ➤





Originally it was boredom. I was leaving work and I realized I had nothing to do. So I turned the camera on and started to talk about a comic book I read and went into a geek rant on the story. After a few people commented and asked for my opinion on other comic books, I just kept doing it after that.

**At what point did it then take your focus and become your primary work?**

There was no point that this happened. I maintain a lot of focus on several points of work in my life. My degree is in social work and I still make social services my main focus. Comic books are just a huge stress reliever that I continue to work with.

**Why do you think your fans love what you do?**

I do not know if any fans love my work, but I do receive lots of positive encouragement. Mostly I gauge my fans on comments and messages from everyone that watches my work. I get negative stuff here and there, but luckily the people who enjoy my postings far outweigh the haters.

**Where can your new fans here find you?**

I have several sites, but the main site that I use is Patreon. My site is:

[www.Patreon.com/GayComicGeek](https://www.Patreon.com/GayComicGeek)

This site is used primarily for content creators, whether they be musicians, artists, vloggers, or performers. It's a way for fans to give back to entertainers that they follow and enjoy. Obviously it is not for everyone, and not everyone can contribute. I wouldn't expect it. Some people are not financially capable of helping. Some only passingly care about their vloggers. It makes sense. But I am so appreciative of those that do care about me. So it is great that the few that do contribute are such great people.

**You've got some great moves as these heroes. For which superheroes have you always had an affinity?**

Tim Drake, aka the 3rd Robin, is my favorite characters of all time. He was the first comic



book hero I ever read about and he is also the first character that I ever cosplayed as at my first comic book convention.

#### Would you classify this role play as a fetish?

There is a huge fetish community for spandex and superheroes. I would not say that I'm really into the fetish aspect of this, but I do know that many of my fans love it. I play into it a bit myself, but I always worry that I may ruin or damage my costumes if I go too far with some role plays.

#### What about wearing the costumes do you enjoy?

I usually like the art of making the costumes. Wearing them also makes me feel more like the character. It is like any person wearing a costume of a character that they admire. It empowers them a bit and also displays their love of that character.

#### Who are the other boys with whom you dress up?

I have a lot of friends that I costume with at



many different conventions. The vast majority are surprisingly straight men, but there are some gay men here and there that also want to costume with me. It just happens that the group that I have found consists of mostly heterosexuals that enjoy different characters that compliment each other in a way to form complete superhero teams.

#### How do you want to see people use your site?

Any way they want to see it. I talk about adult topics but I also talk about the most basic of comic book and geeky topics as well. I go back and forth. Some fans like all my views, some only tune in for specific topics. It all depends on the person.

#### What are your next releases going to focus upon?

There are many comic book endeavors about to be released in the future, and I really can't wait to talk about them. Not to mention some of the future movies coming out based on the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the DC Universe.



**Any future creative efforts, outside of Gay Comic Geek?**

Oh yes. I also like to dress up for other types of conventions out there. One of which is the Renaissance Fair. That's something that is happening very soon. My best friend's birthday is coming up and he's pretty much requiring us all to dress as pirates. I consider that a challenge that I can't wait to do! There are

also some gay conventions coming up outside of my area that I would love to attend. I have never been to a leather convention yet. But I see that in my near future!

Check The Gay Comic Geek out online, [Gaycomicgeek.com](http://Gaycomicgeek.com), or his Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, and Patreon, all @[@GayComicGeek](#).



Class Comics is gay comic book publishing company owned by married couple Patrick Fillion and Fraser Mount. Their comic book universe consists of many titles of which most characters are gay males. All of their titles are also very adult in nature and do not shy away from sexuality. The company employs many artists that give their own look and feel for new characters being developed. Any fan of Tom of Finland or Etienne should definitely take a peak.

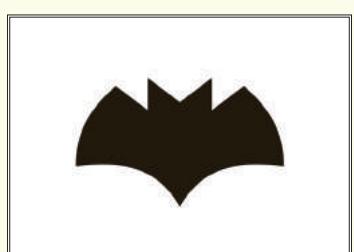
The Pride is a family friendly comic book series written by Joe Glass. The closest equivalent to this comic book in mainstream series is that it is an LGBT version of the Justice League. The characters include the likes of Fabman, Wolf, Muscle Mary, Bear, Frost, Twink, Angel, and White Trash, and they are on a mission to improve LGBT representation.



Midnighter and Apollo are gay superheroes that originally were part of the Wildstorm Comic Book universe, which were a part of DC Comics. In alternate universes they even married and had a semi-surrogate child that they were raising together. They were originally made to give allusions to Batman and Superman, but they have grown tremendously since their inception and are much more than that now.



Batwoman is probably the most well known female DC Comic book character to be revealed as a lesbian in her universe. There was not a huge uproar about her sexuality when this was revealed, but there were still those that opposed this concept. She currently is working with Batman, who happens to be cousin to Bruce Wayne, to train a younger generation of superheroes. She also has her own ongoing comic book series that recently started this past year.



Iceman, also known as Bobby Drake, is probably one of the most well known Marvel Comic Book superheroes to have come out as being gay. One of only five on the original X-Men team, this sexual outing caused a lot of anger among fans who did not like the idea that a character who has been around since the 1960s was closeted the entire time. Others embraced the idea readily, as many people keep their sexualities a secret for a good portion of their lives. Bobby has had several girlfriends in the past and currently he has explored a bit more of his personal life in his new ongoing series.



# SPIRITUALITY - THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

By Rev. Patrick Rogers, MDiv.



**A**s a Christian pastor, I often hear "I am spiritual not religious!" I immediately connect with that response as normally it means that the person had been spiritually hurt by organized religion. I have been hurt also. After living in fear and in the closet and hiding such an important part of myself as an LGBTQ person for the first 40 years of my life, I can truly say I understand why one would strongly not want to be associated with religion. After all, homophobia is often rooted in religion.

Homophobia is not just a concept or theory that someone made up out of the "blue" one day and decided to enforce their personal beliefs onto someone else or a group of people. Homophobia has intense, strong, religious, and deep roots which are abundantly fed by fear, patriarchal power, and control. Archaic interpretations of sacred texts used out of context have become a weapon.

Homophobia continues to build walls between and within individuals, families, religious communities, and cultures. It destroys families and relationships. Fear is a major component and fuels its intense fire.

Last month, we celebrated freedom and living free from fear. Yet fear was initially a substantial part of my early religious experience. It wasn't fear regarding homosexuality but fear itself that was instilled early in to me by religion. I was taught a few selective passages directly from the Bible to fear God, but have since learned that 365 times throughout the scriptures, they direct us to not fear Him. That's one verse for every day of the year (leap year not included). But the focus of my relationship with God in those formative years became fear and not love which includes acceptance, trust, inclusion, and confidence of my connection with the Divine which is the message of the gospels.

At 16 years of age, accompanied by a southern gospel version of "Just As I Am" (how ironic), I walked down that center church aisle and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into my heart, not out of love of Jesus, nor love of God but because of the fear of the image of "the eternal flames of the fiery pit" and "rejection from God." From the beginning, religion was responsible for my dysfunctional relationship with God. It's what we were taught. We sang



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"Just As I Am" but evidently there were exceptions to be worthy. They meant "Just As I Am" as long as one is heterosexual.

At the age of 40, therapy helped heal my dysfunctional relationship with God. Recovery began not through spiritual counseling but psychological family counseling. It was my spiritual connection with my psychologist and therapist that led to my religious experience which was about to happen.

After the end of my 23-year same-sex relationship, I sought counseling regarding the grief of the loss. Three months into therapy, my counselor asked me why I never mentioned spirituality or religion. I replied "Don't waste your time and my money!" My response was that the time spent would be useless because I felt then that I was an abomination to God. I told him that at \$175 per hour that insurance didn't cover, we had to be efficient with our time and only work on things that could change.

The counselor's brief recommendation was for me to read a book titled "Stranger at the Gate," written by Mel White. Weeks later, I purchased a copy and read it. Mel is an American clergyman and author. He was a behind-the-scenes member of the Evangelical Protestant movement through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, writing film and television specials and ghostwriting auto-biographies for televangelists such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Billy Graham. After years of

writing for the Christian right, he came out as gay in 1994 and devoted himself full-time to minister to LGBT people, also writing extensively on the subject of gay Christians.

It was by reading Mel White's book about his own personal journey that opened the door and delivered hope right to my front doorstep. Learning from his life story, I then sought out on my own to discover through open and affirming religious communities that I was never broken

and there was nothing to heal other than the hurt inflicted by my early religious experiences.

Every day since, I give thanks that God revealed truth to my path. Or maybe I made the decision to be open to finding it.

I embrace and give thanks daily for my orientation and for all who God created me to be. I am not in recovery, God has the power to fully heal. My journey of being spiritual in the right

spiritual religious community has greatly assisted me on my path. I am spiritual and religious! But, I have learned another valuable lesson. Religion can add to our spirituality, although we discover our connection with the divine also through community, nature, relationship, study, and life experience. All these are sacred.

Next month, in OutClique magazine, we will print an interview with Mel White. In September and October issues, we will spend time debunking the Christian "clobber" passages about homosexuality. I look forward to sharing these experiences and that journey!

Rev. Patrick Rogers, MDiv. – Community Activist and Senior Pastor  
at United Church of Christ Fort Lauderdale



## SUMMER IS HERE! HOT BODY. FLAWLESS FACE. YES!

Pool parties and beach bodies. Summer is here. Get your BBQ on, take off all those clothes, and sweat it up for some fun in the sun. Have fun, drink, dance, don't forget that sunscreen, and pump up those muscles and that sexy smile.

Summer fun can also mean working on those looks with some extra love. In the South Florida and Wilton Manors area, we have so many great options for skin and body treatments. Most of you probably know Botox is great for wrinkles, facials are great for your skin, and fillers address sagging skin, facial fat pad wasting, and under-eye problem areas but what about everything else out there? Heard of microneedling? It's great for bringing out radiantly, glowing skin and also removing scars!

When you are looking at those love handles and wrinkly signs of aging in the mirror, what do you do next? When Facebook shows you that sexy photo from five years ago and you think, "How do I get that hot, young, blue steel look back!" Where do you turn to next?

Vision and expertise are key elements in the hunt for achieving your aesthetic goals. It's key to envision your goals and consult with experts to evaluate the right treatment plan for you, identify the best approaches, and

optimize for enhanced results. Doing your research online is key, but then having a discreet discussion with a medical expert in body and skincare treatments is the next step.

In Wilton Manors, BeWell MedSpa is a local medical spa specializing in medical aesthetic and functional medicine treatments that are designed with your body in mind. Locating a place and practitioner that are right for you are important steps in discussing and developing a personalized treatment. BeWell has over 30 years of combined experience with three treatment rooms, a friendly team, and a customer service model developed to ensure you truly feel and look amazing.

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BeWell MedSpa is a full service medical spa offering a wide range of medical aesthetics treatments including double-chin removal with Kybella, botox, dermal fillers, laser hair removal, and functional medicine treatments such as for Low T, DNA testing, and nutrition evaluations. At BeWell MedSpa, consultations are always complimentary and discussions are discreet.

For more information, call 954-530-5203 or visit online at [www.BeWellMedSpa.com](http://www.BeWellMedSpa.com)  
or our Wilton Manors location at 1881 NE 26th Street.

# ALL HAIL THE FAIRY DUST QUEEN: AN INTERVIEW WITH TOVE LO

By Gregg Shapiro

It's been a couple of years since bi Swedish singer/songwriter Tove Lo made an impact with her debut disc *Queen of the Clouds*, containing the hit singles "Talking Body" and "Habits (Stay High)." For those who waited patiently for her second album, the rewards were plentiful on *Lady Wood* (Island). As you might have gleaned from the title, on the disc, split into "Fairy Dust" and "Fire Fade" sections, Lo lets her "dirty mind" (so named in the title track) run wild. Opening with a pair of house-influenced tunes, "Influence" (featuring Wiz Khalifa) and the aforementioned title cut, Lo loosens up on the beats on "The Disaster," "WTF Love Is" and "Cool Girl," then finds her way back to the club on album closer "Keep It Simple." I spoke with Tove Lo at the end of Pride month about her music and her tattoos.



**GS** Your 2014 full-length debut album *Queen of the Clouds* is divided into four sections. Your second album, 2016's *Lady Wood*, is divided into two sections. Can you please say something about this concept of dividing the albums in that way?

**TL** It was important to me that it was clear that it's one body of work. There's a storytelling element to it; a sequence of events and emotions. I never plan it when I write, but because I write about what's going on in my life, what's going on around me and what's in my head and my heart, it's natural to put them in an order that lets you follow the emotional ride, so to speak.

**GS** The "Fairy Dust" mini-movie, which incorporates the first half of the songs on *Lady Wood*, begins with the quote "There is nothing pure about the way we do things".

**TL** Growing up in Sweden, I noticed it's maybe a bit more liberal when it comes to sex. Sex isn't seen as something shameful.

Women's sexuality isn't seen as something shameful. When I came to the States, and started touring, it's where I first got the reaction that it's something to be ashamed of, that I'm a bad girl or whatever. To me, it was a shock. There's a difference between being provocative and for something to be fun and stir up emotions. There's a big difference between being good and being pure. (Being) pure isn't necessarily a good thing. A lot of times the shame comes from religious descriptions. I think it's a sad way to raise people because it makes you feel guilty about who you are. Especially if you are coming out as gay. So many friends of mine, the years that they felt ashamed of themselves, makes me so sad; it's not fair. Because it's really all about love.

**GS** I'm glad you mentioned that because there is a same-sex romance at the heart of the "Fairy Dust" mini movie. We are speaking in late June, on the last day of LGBTQ Pride and I was wondering if you did anything special to celebrate Pride?

*what will you remember?*



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**TL** I feel like I do that every day [laughs]. I've just been touring all over. I actually haven't had a single moment to go to a parade, which I'm really sad about. I've been performing, getting on the bus and waking up in the next place and performing. During my club shows, I've been giving out rainbow flags and throwing out rainbow glitter [laughs] to the audience. Seeing all of my friends, gay and straight, celebrating and being supportive of each other. I feel like there have been strong messages and more people than usual taking a stand. More people who might not have taken part in the past are taking part. That's great!

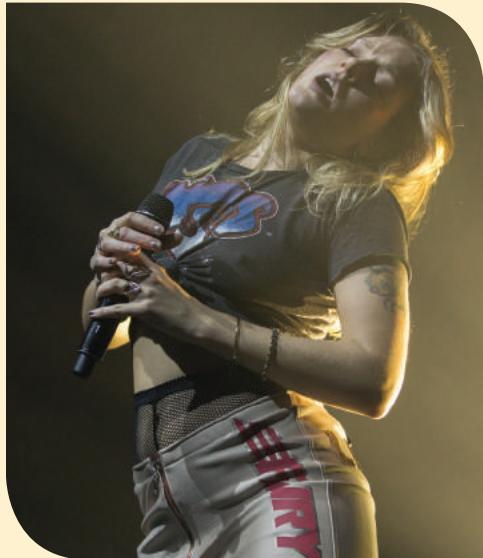
**GS** In the song "Imaginary Friend" on Lady Wood, you sing about "how kids get high", as well as being "under the influence" on "Influence". The songs "Not On Drugs" and "Habits (Stay High)" also include similar references.

**TL** It mainly has to do with my life. It's been part of my life as an escape and an enhancement [laughs] in certain situations. For me, it becomes, "Should I or shouldn't I mention this"? I decided not to have a filter and just be honest about my life, so it becomes part of my songs.

**GS** In addition to writing and recording songs, you have also established yourself as a songwriter for other artists. What's the most rewarding aspect of that?

**TL** It's so crazy because there are so many steps along the way, little victories, until a song gets released by an artist. First of all, you have to write a song that the publisher is into. Then the publisher plays it for the management. If the management and the label are into it then they play it for the artist. If the artist is into it, then they record it. Maybe you'll co-write it together a little bit. It still might not even make the record. When a song actually makes it out with an artist, it feels like [said ecstatically] "Oh my God, it made it!" It's a pretty amazing feeling.

**GS** Are there any songs that you wrote for someone else that you wished you had kept for yourself?



**TL** Actually, no. I'm very aware when it's something I'm making for or with someone else. It's clear to me when that's the case. No, not so far [laughs].

**GS** What can you tell me about your ink?

**TL** I started at 17 with my little scorpion under my collarbone because I'm a Scorpio [laughs]. It feels very classic. But the rest of it is paintings by (artist) Mark Ryden that I love. Lo means lynx in Swedish, which has been my nickname since I was a kid. I now have that on my hand. My vagina symbol on my arm, my lady wood symbol that I felt needed to be with me forever. I think that's all I have.

**GS** You are currently on a concert tour that will include dates with Coldplay. What do you enjoy most about live performance?

**TL** What's been so amazing now is that we're combining festivals and club shows with opening for Coldplay in stadiums; the three most different kinds of shows. I feed off the energy of the audience so much. It's an hour, hour and a half a day that I get to fully emotionally be very present and not think of anything else. It's the most present I am at all times. There's nothing to distract me from whatever is going on onstage. It's a very freeing feeling.

# MAN ON THE STREET: SAMUEL SIAUS

By Denny Patterson

Photography by Images Male | [www.ImagesMale.com/silv](http://www.ImagesMale.com/silv)



Welcome back! It is now time to meet Samuel Siaus. A native from Venezuela who now resides in Portland, Oregon, Samuel is a multi-media artist who has published five books, worked on a LGBTQ radio station, done photography on both sides of the lens, and now heavily focuses on documentary filmmaking. In addition to his art, Samuel also revolves his life around community and volunteer work. He has been able to connect, explore, and mentor numerous individuals within the LGBTQ community who are still targeted by politics, religion, and ignorance that refused to accept individuality and freedom. This is his story.

## When and why did you move from Venezuela to the U.S.?

I was 12, so 1999. It's a long story, but my father, who was adopted, found his birth parents who are both American and the political situation in Venezuela was starting to unravel. That was the beginning of 1998, and Hugo Chavez was elected at the beginning of '99, so it was a little sketchy from the beginning, but

by the time summer hit, my parents were like, if you're all open to it, I have an older sister, you two can go learn English and we all figured out how to make this transition work. We just never went back.

## Was moving to the U.S. a huge culture shock for you?

Definitely! It's funny, as a Latin person in this country, I am not a fan of hot and spicy food. I like spices, but sometimes I'm like, oh my God, this is so hot and whoever I'm with, they're like you're the worst Latin American person [laughs]. Actually, and I remember vividly, the first time I had spicy food was when I moved here. Cooking in South America, especially in Venezuela, is very European. And my dad, although he was adopted, was raised in Italy, so we were raised on Italian, and it's like garlic all day, every day. So, yes, moving to the U.S. was a huge culture shock for me.

## Tell me more about the community-building projects you are working on.

So, in the last nine years, I started exploring

my art and publishing my writings. The last book I did a few years ago is writing with photography. When I got to photograph that book about my experience as a queer, multi-ethnic person in this country, the book wound up becoming commentary about gender and beauty ideals for men. When I moved to Portland, I started working as a volunteer at the queer center here and through them, a radio station where I was working behind the scenes and creating weekly podcasts. So, I did that and then it sort of flowered into a bunch of different organizations and projects here.

Right now, I have three big hats. The closest one to me in relation to my art is documentary filmmaking. About two years ago, I created a short documentary about intergenerational relationships in the queer community. The importance of intergenerational love, mentorship, core history, and the division amongst generations. What I call the pre-Stonewall, pre-AIDS community and post internet, same-sex marriage communities. They can be very conflicting, and I think older folks within our community are very much still about the sexual orientation aspect of who we are while younger people are focusing on gender. Like being genderqueers, trans, etc. I think in conversation because we also live in a youth obsessed culture, we have pockets of our community who stay together. So, older folks stay together, people who experienced the AIDS epidemic stay together, younger people are catered to always be young, wild, and party. There is this idea that you don't want to hang out beyond that group. So, I applied for a local grant here in Portland and I'm working on an extension of that project, but instead of focusing on the intergenerational aspects, I'm talking about queer intersections. Here in Portland, I want to discuss the lives and stories of queer-identified persons of color, immigrants, those who are essentially not part of the status quo when it comes to what the idea of what America is about. This grant allows me to be able to hire. That's project number one.

#### Project number two?



Project number two, I became part of the organizing committee for a group that is essentially a local chapter of Hispanic/Latin queer people and we are trying to create awareness. Oregon as a state is not very diverse. Politically and law wise, Oregon has a very questionable history in regards to protections under the law and a lot of really racist laws were still on the books until about 20 years ago. Portland was created like as a counterculture so everyone went to the city to thrive and find all the freaks and outsiders, but the rest of the state is still a little questionable when it comes to a general sense of human rights. I didn't know this until I moved here and slowly learned. Like the KKK and white supremacist groups have strong ties with the state. It's bizarre because you think this state was made for diversity, but it really isn't. So, when it comes to the Latinx community, I think there's still a lot of us as Latin Americans who feel colonized like any other place. We're mix, so when it comes to physical representation, if you don't look the part, then you're not considered part of the community. We're trying to reintroduce the community and changed the name to Latinx from gay Latino because it was kind of male eccentric. The X became a way to change the language so that it's inclusive by nature. Spanish, like French and Italian is very gendered. We want all inclusive. ➤



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I am surprised to hear that about Oregon. I never thought of Oregon as being a non-inclusive state.

And it still is in comparison to a lot of middle America. Portland brings out a lot of wonderful people who are self-aware, but a lot of rural areas are not the best. The ACLU released a map of all the hate groups within the country that are still active, and if you look at the map, some states have 1-2, but Oregon, although small, has like five. Oregon is not the worst state, and I'm not overlooking all the wonderful aspects of it.

**That still blows my mind. Anyways, now for the third project.**

The third project is a little more international. I've been working with a group of queer volunteers and activists who three years ago had a global gathering in California through the Radical Faeries who wanted to showcase people's precocity and make what they are doing available to people around the world. They can culture one another, but also create a global network of support and we're still going through a lot of challenges here ourselves, but we're quite visible and out. In a lot of places, it's regressing. So, if you look at a lot of countries in Africa, Russia, Southeast Asia, even the Caribbean, it's completely ridiculous. They're throwing people off buildings. Their idea was to bring people in through fundraising, and they raised around \$20,000 three years ago and contacted whichever way they could people who were doing interesting work around the world. A lot of it was hush hush. A lot of people can't be like 'I'm doing HIV prevention work in Togo.' So, they did the best they could and they had between 20-25 people come and visit. They created a gathering. It's kind of like burning man communities that go back to communal sense of being, nature, nudism, and self-expression. They had a week-long gathering and workshops and heart circles. It was beautiful. Through that, there was a connection made with a lot of people who were struggling. These people were in countries where it's illegal to be queer and they were persecuted for doing their work. This year, they decided to do another gathering and

this time it's going to be in the UK, but they went through Brexit. Even though Brexit hasn't undergone any immigration platform yet, it's sort of like an underground process right now. It's really challenging.

**Since a lot of your work is based on gender, sexuality, queer issues, why are these topics so important to you?**

Being a queer person myself, I think it's nice to remind and educate ourselves that we have always been a part of culture and I think there's this fallacy that all these freaks came out of the internet age, or some bullshit like that. We have been around forever. There is a purpose to us being a part of humanity, and I think with humanity, there's still these ignorant and misguided assumptions. We're queer, that's a fact, move on. I think for us to do that ourselves, we can make other people feel what we're feeling or acknowledge us for who we are. If we educate, there will be understanding, that's kind of what led me to documentary filmmaking. I want to keep telling stories so people will understand that we are everywhere and always have been. I think being an immigrant and being multi-ethnic allowed me to have a different perspective. Because I'm an outgoing person and do art, I feel it's not my duty, but my desire to use that platform



to talk about it. It's close to my heart. I still live in a world where family members and other people who don't know me, judge my character based on things they shouldn't.

#### And you have always had a passion for art?

Yes, it's shifted though. I think the mediums have expanded now. Because of my background and the different types of art, I can put a whole different thing together. I started with drawing. I wanted to be a cartoonist since I was a child. I did a lot of charcoal and graphite portraits. I then did a little bit of music, but my writing kind of took over. It's very cathartic and helped me a lot. When I started doing books, particularly the photography one, I designed the cover with a graphic designer and put pictures with the writings. They complimented each other. Now I'm doing film because of my background doing radio interviews and I was a columnist online for a long time. I would talk to people and extract information. I always knew I wanted to be an artist.

#### Besides the photography book, what other books have you published?

I have five books. The first two are poetry in English, then I did a short stories book in English, then a poetry book in Spanish, then the last book is poetry in English with the photography.

You say you are close to your mother and sister. Have they been a good support system for you? They really are. I'm very fortunate. My mom is a delight, and I think my relationship with her has shaped who I am. It's allowed me to enjoy myself and to do my best to improve my life. I have never gotten to the point where I am questioning myself in a way like maybe I don't like myself or judging my character at that level. It's been helpful to bring in a perspective even when I feel my lowest, there's respect and forgiveness that comes with that. And my sister and I, we were close as kids, then when we became teenagers, I was the younger pest, but as adults, we became closer again.

Is your dad still in the picture?



My dad died 10 years ago, so my relationship with him is always evolving [laughs]. I think our relationship now is the healthiest it's ever been, and I guess whenever it's necessary, he visits. It was a tough relationship because we didn't really get close until right before he died. So, there was a little bit of closure, but it felt weird once he died. I was younger too, I was 20. I thought, oh, that's a bummer. I kind of get my dad, he's finally a buddy. I struggled with that a little but now that I have experienced life longer and know myself and look at details in a different way, I wonder about my dad's journey. There may be the possibility that some queerness was going on. Just by the way he related to me and reacted. I told my parents I was gay when I was 14, a freshman in high school, and I remember the comments and questions he asked. I wonder if he struggled with that in his Catholic-Italian culture, and as a man in Latin America, he was never able to enjoy the intimacy and camaraderie with other men.

Are you currently seeing anyone? ➤

Nope [laughs]. What a great, deep response that is. I haven't officially had a boyfriend in a handful of years, and I don't date often. I flirt a lot, that's for sure. I get that energy out. I think right now, I'm sort of in a space where intimacy and partnership are important. I don't take that lightly. Casual stuff doesn't get me going.

**Currently, what is the long-term plan for you?**  
I don't know if there any big plans, but the intentions and desires will probably change. I would love to stay here in Portland, but I'm really a person of the world, and part of me understands why I've been here for four years now, but that doesn't last forever, I'm fine with that. The gathering in the UK happens in August and there's going to be connections and intentions to create another one somewhere in the world and keep it going. Right now, I think it's more about the art stuff. I dove into film through documentary filmmaking, but I would love to be able to do script writing. Put my short stories into scripts and film. Whatever happens, it will be encompassing.



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# THE ONLY 4 EXERCISES YOU NEED

By Bobby Jackson, BA, CSCS



The gym can be a very complicated place. With so many different types of equipment, and the constant evolution of equipment technology, it's almost impossible to understand it all. Not just simply how to use everything but if/when you should be incorporating certain pieces into your workouts. Luckily, our muscular anatomy and biomechanics remain constant. Once we truly understand the basics of how our body moves (the interactions between our muscles and joints) it's much easier to structure effective workout programs. This article will lay out the 4 most efficient yet simple exercises that can transform your entire body.

## 1 SQUATS

As a strength and conditioning specialist, I often hear that clients experience discomfort in the knees, hips, and/or back while performing squats. This discomfort usually ends up causing the client to completely avoid using the exercise. However, the discomfort tends to be caused by one of two easily

fixable things, improper form or simply using too much weight. Once our form has been tweaked, and the right amount of weight is being used, this is an extremely efficient exercise as it targets the major muscles of the legs, hips, and back simultaneously.

## 2 DEADLIFTS

Even simpler than squats is the deadlift exercise. The entire movement of a deadlift is to pick up a weighted bar off of the floor in front of you, lift it into a standing position with your arms straight down, and then lower it back down to the floor. With such simplicity, deadlifting is one of the most compound, multi-joint exercises possible. Starting in

the hands, deadlifting targets the forearms, biceps, shoulders, traps, lats, core, hips, and legs. Due to how compound the deadlift is, and its emphasis on the back and hips, it requires excellent spinal alignment. Similar to the squat, our form on the deadlift should be very good before adding a significant amount of weight to it. ➤



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## 3 PULL-UPS

The pull-up (palms away) and chin-up (palms towards) are the kings of the upper body exercises. Unfortunately, due to the difficulty of lifting our entire body weight up off of the ground, they are not often used. Luckily, there is a common variation that gives us the same range of motion but allows us to lighten the load, the Lat Pull-Down. The Lat Pull-Down is typically done in a seated position with the

hands pulling some type of handle or bar down towards our head. Regardless of which variation you use, the portion of the movement we should focus on is not where the hands are in relation to our head but pulling the elbows towards the hips. This emphasizes the activation of the lats (under the armpits), which are the largest muscles in our upper body.

## 4 DIPS

Our final exercise, dips, gives us a thorough breakdown of our chest and triceps. However, similarly to pull-ups with an issue of difficulty, there are some variations that give us the same range of motion but allow us to lighten

the load. Decline bench/dumbbell press gives us the same low (angled towards our hips) pressing movement. This emphasizes activation of the lower chest as well as the triceps during elbow extension.

These 4 exercises are some of the oldest, most simple, yet unbelievably effective movements we can possibly do in the gym. These movements and their variations are the fundamental building blocks of almost every professional athlete's training program. The athletic foundation that they build, and their ability to completely transform our bodies is unbeatable. Just remember, when working these movements into your own routine, you must start by mastering the correct form before any significant weight should be added. However, once proper form is achieved consistently, and the foundation is built, the sky's the limit.



Bobby is a graduate of Minnesota State University with a degree in Biology; emphasis in Health and Medical Sciences. Certified as a Strength and Conditioning Specialist, Bobby is the owner and director of The Custom Fitness Institute, a private training studio in Pompano Beach.

[Facebook.com/TheCustomFitnessInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/TheCustomFitnessInstitute).



# » OUT WITH CHAZ

By Mike Brewer

Photos by Keans Llamera



They come from all over the world with a body people notice, a backpack over their shoulders, and the promise of taking the stage as a male stripper. But before these young men reach Fort Lauderdale, the promise is often broken into dangerous shards of glass.

While erotic dancing is a noble profession for many, just like any job, it has its drawbacks that can include being surrounded by alcohol and drugs, not getting much sleep, and keeping a smile on your face while interacting with some less-than civilized bar patrons. The upside is, on a good night, you'll have your skivvies full of dough you don't have to report to the IRS.

Chaz Dunn knows the drill. A Miami native and former dancer, Chaz left the clubs behind to build a better life that includes a sort of "stripper advocacy" for young men who take the stage and realize they chose a profession that breeds controversy every night.

"There's a lack of respect in the industry," said Dunn. "Respect for the dancers, the clubs, and the customers need to be improved. The dancers are pretty much treated like property. We need to take care of our own."

According to one club staffer, who declined to be named in this story, the scenario of a new stripper is very similar to trying out for parts in Hollywood. It typically goes like this:

- You call to ask if the club needs dancers, which most of them do since the turnover is pretty high. Dancers often move from club to club in search of better tips, only to find out that a "good night" at any club changes by the day. Depending on the club, you'll be asked if you're straight, gay, or otherwise. You'll also be asked your physical stats, including the size of your package. It helps if you ask some questions (What's it like to work there? Who do I need to get in good with? What are the rules? Do I get to keep all of my tips?).

➤

- If you pass the screening, you're invited to dance at an open stage night. It's a pre-scheduled competition where club customers can try out their amateur skills in front of the audience. The club's management keeps a watchful eye out for the guys who get the most applause, garner the most attention, and show a willingness to part with their money.
- After the show, a staff member (usually the club manager) will approach you to discuss your performance and ask if you're interested in going full-time. Expect a heavy-handed flirt. They usually need you more than you need them.
- If you accept, get ready to invest hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in underwear and outfits. Many dancers make their own to save money, said Dunn. Like a woman going to a fancy affair, you never want to be seen with the same dress as another.

Wherever you dance, you will be subject to a firm set of rules. Depending on the club, you get an hour break, but make a deposit with the club before you leave. If you're back by the end of the hour, you get some of your deposit money back.

No weapons, no G-strings, and no leaving without a shirt on. If you leave with a customer in the club, that's your business. Some clubs allow you to keep all of your tips, but others have a business model like you're a stylist at a hair salon. You pay the house a fee for your "chair."

Dunn says dancers come from many different backgrounds and carry their own sets of baggage, but all of them are looking for a way to support themselves. They are high school dropouts and college graduates. Some were raised like the kids in the Brady Bunch. Others come from broken homes or homes where abuse runs rampant.

One straight man, Dunn, used to dance with was a former veteran who came home to his wife and kids and was unable to get a job.





To make money fast, he tucked his tail and started to strip. Dunn says due to the lack of respect he was presented with on a nightly basis, he was left with emotional scars aside from the ones he obtained while in the military.

*"They get caught up in a cycle they feel they can't get out of," said Dunn.*

Dunn is trying to minimize the pitfalls for current and aspiring erotic dancers. Using his experience as a former dancer, he is now a volunteer for the community, full-time student working on his degree in Physical Therapy, part-time bodybuilder and is learning about business with the help of Jeff Sterling, owner of Sterling Tax and Accounting Services.

Although Dunn currently has no name for his advocacy or formal plan, he has a big idea for Fort Lauderdale he hopes will catch on with local politicians, Fort Lauderdale businesses, the dancers, the patrons, and even the club owners themselves. He said there's something in it for everyone he is trying to reach.

The goal of his organization is to inform people and support the industry in a more responsible way. Most importantly, said Dunn, it's about reaching out to those who want to enter the industry, or those who find themselves with no way out of it. As it stands, many dancers work at the mercy of the clubs and the generosity of the regulars.

Dunn is working on a way to spread the word on a social media platform that shares the ideals of respect and unity amongst dancers, patrons, and club owners alike. In the meantime, Dunn is going to approach some influencers in town to start the conversation. While he understands some business owners and dancers may be reluctant to address the issues, he believes once they understand the importance, the ball will start rolling.

*"It's something that needs to be talked about," said Dunn. "We have a responsibility to educate and provide support for those who want it."*

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# 10 SOUTH FLORIDA ATTRACTIONS EVERYONE SHOULD VISIT

By Denny Patterson



Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

There may be a million tourist traps across the country, but South Florida actually has some of the most talked about attractions. They really are must-see locations. In addition, South Florida's climate, culture, and beauty amplifies the desire to stop and check them out. From Vizcaya Museum to the Lincoln Road Mall, all of these attractions are appropriate for visitors of all ages, and some might even include special VIP packages. Listed below are some of South Florida's top attractions every guest should visit.

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## CORAL CASTLE MUSEUM

Coral Castle is a mystery. Built by one man, Edward Leedskalnin, he single-handedly and secretly carved over 1,100 tons of coral rock from 1923-1951. Since it is documented that no one ever witnessed Ed's labor in building his beloved Coral Castle, some have said that he had supernatural powers. When he died, his secrets and knowledge died with him, leaving scientists and thinkers debating on Ed's methods. Today, the Coral Castle Museum

welcomes visitors from around the globe to explore this enchanting South Florida destination. You can tour the Coral Castle using their audio stands and informative guides are available to conduct tours. Features of this attraction include a 9-ton gate that moves with just a touch of the finger, a Polaris telescope, and functioning rocking chairs – all made entirely of stone. For more information, visit [www.CoralCastle.com](http://www.CoralCastle.com).

## DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

Made up of seven small islands, Dry Tortugas National Park is one of the world's most unique eco-attractions. Discovered by Ponce de Leon in 1513, the Dry Tortugas were named after the large population of sea turtles living in the island's surrounding waters. Ponce himself caught over 100 sea turtles during his time on the island. The area is known for its treacherous reefs, and in 1825, a lighthouse was built on Garden Key to guide ships to safety. Explore and learn of its history with one of their guides and enjoy an array of activities. Visitors are invited to ride the ferry over to the park, bird watch



from the Great Florida Birding Trail, sunbathe on the beach, camp under the stars, snorkel and take a tour of Fort Jefferson, the park's crown jewel that was once used as a Civil War prison. There is something for everyone! For more information, visit [www.DryTortugas.com](http://www.DryTortugas.com).

## EVERGLADE ALLIGATOR FARM

If you are headed to Key Largo or Key West, then this is an attraction you absolutely do not want to miss. Near the entrance of Everglades National Park, come visit and discover South Florida's oldest alligator farm, the Everglades

Alligator Farm. A trip to this thrilling farm includes not only an alligator show, but also a snake show, an exciting airboat tour, and an alligator feeding demonstration. For more information, visit [www.Everglades.com](http://www.Everglades.com).

## JUNGLE QUEEN RIVERBOAT

The Jungle Queen Riverboat is a must see for anyone visiting Fort Lauderdale. Guests will experience a little southern hospitality on this "all you wish you can eat" cruise. Enjoy pleasant and humorous commentary by the Captain about the many interesting sights and beautiful homes you will see as you sail up the New River, past Millionaire's Row, en route to a tropical isle to enjoy dinner and a show. The show is followed by a moonlit ride back to the dock. More than 18 million guests over the years have enjoyed this magnificent attraction. An evening full of laughs and joy. Jungle Queen also offers fully narrated daily



sightseeing cruises where you will see plush waterfront homes, downtown Fort Lauderdale, a bit of the Everglades, and a stop-off at the tropical isle to see rare birds, monkeys, and an alligator exhibit. For more information, visit [www.JungleQueen.com](http://www.JungleQueen.com).

## EVERGLADE ALLIGATOR FARM

Often voted as Miami's best people-watching spot, Lincoln Road Mall is South Florida's premier outdoor shopping, dining and entertainment destination. Located just a few blocks away from the beach, this mile long, pedestrian-only promenade boasts a happening street scene for locals and visitors alike. Shop at your favorite stores, including American Apparel, Forever 21, Lacoste, Lush,

Pandora, Pottery Barn, and Urban Outfitters. Looking for a bite to eat? No problem! Lincoln Road Mall offers a variety of both casual and chef-driven restaurants. From Cuban to German to Italian and Sushi, no one will go hungry. Lastly, do not let any rain spoil your fun. Catch a flick at the Regional Cinemas South Beach 18 + IMAX. For more information, visit [www.LincolnRoadMall.com](http://www.LincolnRoadMall.com).



Lincoln Road Mall

## LION COUNTRY SAFARI

Are you ready to take a walk on the wild side? The Lion Country Safari, Florida's only drive-thru safari and walk-thru amusement park invites you to spend the day with over 900 animals. Rhinos, apes, giraffes, and lions are just a couple of the animals that roam around this wildlife preserve that also runs a comprehensive

conservation program to help replenish endangered species. With animal displays and encounters, feeding experiences, rides, water playgrounds, food, shopping, and more, you are sure to have a memorable time. For more information, visit [www.LionCountrySafari.com](http://www.LionCountrySafari.com).

## MIAMI SEAQUARIUM

The Miami Seaquarium is a 38-acre tropical paradise like no other. A place where dolphins walk on water, killer whales fly through the air, sea lions delight children of all ages, and sea turtles and manatees find a safe haven. Visitors are invited to enjoy a world-class marine life entertainment park with eight different marine animal shows and astonishing

daily presentations. You have heard about the mysterious legends and facts about dolphins, now you have the chance to have a hands-on experience with these magnificent creatures at Dolphin Harbor. The Miami Seaquarium is a place of education, inspiration, and fun. For more information, visit [www.MiamiSeaquarium.com](http://www.MiamiSeaquarium.com).



## PEREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI (PAMM)

The Perez Art Museum Miami is a modern and contemporary art museum dedicated to educating visitors on international art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Known as Miami's flagship art museum, PAMM's exhibitions highlight the community's diverse culture and pivotal geographic location at the crossroads of the Americas. In addition to exploring the museum's exquisite galleries, visitors can enjoy a waterfront dining experience at the Verde restaurant, browse around in the gift shop, where they will find a unique selection of



books, furnishings, and handmade items, and take in the spectacular views of the Biscayne Bay. For more information, visit [www.PAMM.org](http://www.PAMM.org).

## VIZCAYA MUSEUM AND GARDENS

From Popes to pop stars, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens has played host to several celebrities and dignitaries. It is one of the most sought-after locations for photo shoots, weddings, and other celebrations. Perched right on the Biscayne Bay, this breathtaking Italian 34-room mansion once belonged to industrialist James Deering. It is now a National Historic Landmark. Built in the 1910s, Vizcaya is

surrounded by acres of serene European style gardens with fountains and statuary, some dating back to antiquity. Vizcaya contains much of the original furnishings and artwork. Visitors are invited to engage within the Vizcaya community in learning through the arts, history, and environment. For more information, visit [www.Vizcaya.org](http://www.Vizcaya.org).

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# CHECK OUT THESE EVENTS!

WHERE TO BE AND WHAT TO DO IN LGBTQ SOUTH FLORIDA

## BOWLING TO FIGHT HUNGER

Aug 12 | Sawgrass Lanes

## SHORTS GONE WILD 5

Aug 17 | Island City Stage

## DELIVER THE DREAM SOUL BOWL

Aug 5 | Strikes At Boca

## NEW RIVER ORCHESTRA, SUMMER SERENADE

Aug 6 | Sunshine Cathedral

## EAT AT CHIPOTLE AND SUPPORT THE SMART RIDE

Aug 9 | Chipotle in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach

## KEY WEST TROPICAL HEAT

Aug 16 | Key West

## WOMEN'S FEST

Sep 6 | Key West

## DELUCCA EVENTS

Sep 7 | Key West to Cuba

## WICKED MANORS

Oct 31 | Wilton manors

## COFFEE KLATCH

All but 1st Saturday | Skolnick Community Center

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For more photos of this event, visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/outclique](https://facebook.com/outclique).

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# QUEER ME OUT AT THE W FORT LAUDERDALE NIGHTLIFE AS EXPRESSION WITH TYLER OAKLEY, THE MISSHAPES, & SUSANNE BARTSCH

Photos by Darryl Nobles



For more photos of this event, visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/outclique](https://facebook.com/outclique).



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## Your Invited LGBT Appreciation Cocktail & Hor D' Oeuvre Reception

On behalf of the owners, management and staff of STORK's, we would like to invite you to a Celebration of the LGBTQ community and STORKS 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Please join us on August 16<sup>th</sup> at the GRAND RESORT to Celebrate and appreciate our LGBTQ Clientele.

6:30-9 pm for cocktails and hors d'oeuvre

Raffle tickets may be purchased at STORK's beginning 7-17-17

Prize is a piece of art - Raffle Tickets \$15.00

A 50/50 drawing will also be held that evening to benefit THE PRIDE CENTER

RSVP @ [storkscatering@mail.com](mailto:storkscatering@mail.com) by 8-10-17

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M, Th 4pm-7pm

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F 2pm-6:30pm, Sa 10am-5pm

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