

RIKKI BLANK'S
QUEERality
INTERVIEW WITH

Tyler Glenn

LEAD SINGER OF
NEON TREES

PLUS+
#MASKUP4NV
Miss Richfield 1981
Jeff Timmons
The Vegas Room
and more!



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From the Publishers

Hello QLife Fam! Let us just start off by saying, my how we've missed you! We are glad to be back and happy that you are here too. The world of COVID-19 has changed for all of us, and we hope that QLife can bring some love, joy, connection, and support during these not-so-joyous times.

During this time, we have been busy trying to reimagine how QLife can better serve the LGBTQ Community. In this issue, you will notice a lot of new technology features that link back to our brand new website. Using QR codes and texting keywords, the print version will connect readers with digital content that allows for a more interactive experience.

This issue offers not one, but two cover stories! Scott Abel interviews Little Miss Richfield 1981, an innovative drag queen who discovered how to host an online Bingo experience. Queerality host Rikki Blank also includes excerpts from their interview with Neon Trees lead singer Tyler Glenn. You can watch the full interview on QLife Stream real soon!

We strive to bring lifestyle and entertainment to our readers as a way to showcase all of the positive things happening within our vibrant and diverse community. When it comes to entertainment, this issue is jam-packed with how performers have kept us entertained via award-winning and newly nominated television shows like RuPaul's Drag Race, Pose, Legendary, Queer Eye, and We're Here. Thank goodness for streaming services that provided so many of us with great stories to warm the heart and showcase so many sectors of the LGBTQ community as we shelter through this pandemic.

With many of our magazine distribution locations closed due to the pandemic, we also got creative and launched our very own platform to stream Queer content. We call it QLifeStream and our very first show is Queerality, hosted by Rikki Blank.

Las Vegas is a city that touts being The Entertainment Capital of the World and Greg Chase, CEO and Founder of Experience Strategy Associates, launched the #MaskUpNV campaign with headliners from the strip and local healthcare heroes with visits to all Clark County hospitals. This is another example of how entertainment can spread awareness and safety tips aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19.

The amazing team at the LGBTQ Community Center of Southern Nevada continues to provide services and support to so many people through online support groups, a new CAN 24/7 victim hotline, and Delivering with Dignity meal delivery program which has since delivered over 150,000 meals to local individuals and families in need.

Sam Novak, creator of Vegas Unfiltered Blog, highlights The Vegas Room, a supper club started by three gay men. Sam also interviews Jeff Timmons of the boy band 98 Degrees about how he has weathered through COVID-19.



Russ White



Garrett Pattiani



Pick Your Own Cover!

Miss Richfield 1981 and Tyler Glenn featured on the covers of our first issue of 2020

Volume 42 Issue 1

Many of our regular distribution points may be closed because of COVID-19 restrictions. Right now our distribution is limited to Las Vegas and will return to Southern California as soon as is viable. For now, QLife is available for pickup at The LGBTQ Center of Southern Nevada, at gay bars (see the QLife Bar Guide), AFAN, Community Counseling Center, the Henderson Equality Center. If your business would like to be a distribution point, just let us know!

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DISARM HATE

Film Chronicles How 9 LGBTQ+ Activists Who Galvanized to Advocate for Gun Control Following the Pulse Nightclub Massacre

Narrated by the iconic actor Harvey Fierstein, the film seeks to create awareness about gun violence against the LGBTQ+ community following the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando that took 49 lives as the impetus

Directed by Julianna Brudek, the film chronicles nine diverse LGBTQ+ activists who come together after the Pulse nightclub massacre to join Jason P. Hayes, a hairdresser, and an activist from New Jersey who is on a crusade. Without political experience, Hayes builds a national rally to demand LGBTQ+ equal rights, fight the NRA, and challenge America's obsession with gun violence.

"I wanted to bring awareness to how disproportionately gun violence has affected the less privileged members of our community. Two weeks before Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered, Rita Hester, a trans woman of color, was murdered, and the media buried the story. Forgotten forever," said Julianna Brudek. She added, "I did not want that to happen to the Hispanic LGBTQs that lost their lives at Pulse Nightclub. As a community, we must remember the hate crimes, and work together to stop the violence perpetrated on each one of us."

Beginning as a road trip, the journey turned into so much more than anyone could have expected. Exploring their similarities and differences, the group develops a life-changing bond as they visit prominent sites of gun violence that have affected LGBTQ+ people nationwide. This common ground opens discussions between the travelers and the people they meet along the way, that look to alleviate these horrific hate crimes and bring a better understanding for all.

The renowned trans activist and media personality Ashlee Marie Preston who is a cast member and an executive producer said, "The threat of gun violence is intersectional. When someone's identity overlaps with multiple marginalized groups, their risk is compounded. Black Americans are 10 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than white Americans. Being a woman and trans exacerbates those odds." She continued, "Disarm Hate," which focuses on the discriminatory culture within America that informs the violence marginalized communities face. If we are ever to eradicate gun



by Vik Gerami

violence, we must interrogate the attitudes and beliefs that fan the flames of hate. Our journey was not about taking away people's guns, it was about removing the barriers that obstruct their ability to recognize our humanity."

The documentary successfully probes the emotional journeys of the activists, who squabble, laugh, cry, and even fall in love throughout their trip. It also examines opposing views and counterpoints to their calls for gun reform from a pro-gun perspective, as they visit a shooting range and engage with a member of the Pink Pistols, a pro-gun LGBTQ+ group.

Harvey Fierstein, who narrated the film summed it up with, "Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself."

Disarm Hate is available on multiple streaming platforms including Amazon Prime Video, FandangoNOW, Google Play/YouTube Rentals, InDemand (Comcast & Cox), Microsoft Store, and Vudu.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/393234220>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DOC2DISARMHATE/>

Twitter: @DISARMHATE

Instagram: DOC2DISARMHATE

A noted journalist, and columnist, Vic Gerami is also a radio show host and media contributor who is also publisher and editor of The Blunt Post.

In July 2020, the Los Angeles Press Club announced that Gerami is a Finalist in record seven (7) categories for the 62nd Annual Southern California Journalism Awards.





Vegas Celebrities and Health Care Workers #MASKUP4NV to Slow The Spread of COVID-19

#MaskUp4NV, a pro-mask campaign kicked off a series of events to promote the wearing of masks by all local Las Vegas residents and visitors to the city.

The first event was held on June 25th at the iconic Las Vegas sign with a star-studded fashion show. The Las Vegas entertainment community came to the forefront to encourage the wearing of masks to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep Las Vegas and its visitors healthy because "the show must go on."

The second event, a pop-up parade & performance, teamed up with all Las Vegas hospitals to make stops at 13 Las Vegas hospitals to showcase the full spectrum of Las Vegas Strip Performers including a live aerialist performing from a fire engine ladder, singers, showgirls, impersonators and more. All participants wore masks to remind the community to wear their masks in public and to celebrate the passionate healthcare and essential workers in our community.





Miss Richfield 1981 Shelters in Place with Bingo Bonanza



by Scott Abel

QLife introduces you to a legend on the LGBT Entertainment circuit — comedienne and beauty pageant winner, Miss Richfield 1981.

Could you tell us a little bit about yourself? From where do you hail? And, how did you become Miss Richfield 1981?

I am a beauty professional from Richfield, Minnesota, a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis, where butter is a spice, and gravy is a beverage. Richfield has a long history of quality beauty pageants. Our city hosted a beauty pageant and parade with a long and successful history until a little thing called feminism reared its head. Then things changed. As a result, the city leaders decided to forgo having a pageant for several years. Still, they eventually reintroduced it, and that was the year that I won.

What do you remember about the day when you won the title, Miss Richfield 1981?

On July 4th, in the year of our Lord, 1981, I won the Miss Richfield 1981 pageant. It was fabulous! ... Well, except for one — um — slight problem. There were 11 contestants, one of them, Trudy Olson, began twirling three flaming batons. She lost control. It wasn't pretty. Her flame-throwing took out the whole front row and caused a terrible fire. I was the only contestant to stop, drop, and roll, which is also how I do my hair.

All the other contestants got up and ran into the audience like a bunch of crazies. I remained focused on what was necessary at the moment. I knocked each of my competitors to the ground and kicked them until their flames went out. Most of the girls were sent to the burn unit, a couple to the morgue.

When you're lit on fire, you'd be surprised how you might behave. You're not supposed to run when you're on fire. I mean, we learned that when we were children, right?

That pageant had a rocky start, but it had a good ending. As the last remaining contestant, I received the title, Miss Richfield 1981.

How did the people of Richfield react to your winning the title? After all, that had to be a big surprise.

For nearly 40 years now, the town has continued to raise money to buy me a bus ticket to someplace else. They raise more and more money every year. Each time I return home from performing somewhere else, I find a bus ticket in my mailbox. A free ticket to someplace else. Nice, huh?

Don't get me wrong. Richfield clearly loves me, dearly. Sure, they want me to go away...anywhere else, frankly. But, I think that's because they want me outside of Richfield talking about how marvelous a place it is — so that people will know about Richfield and come visit.

It's not surprising Richfield would want to leverage your popularity to increase tourism. After all, you've held the title of tourism ambassador for several LGBT communities. How does one become an LGBT tourism ambassador? Is there a crown involved? Or, at a minimum, a sash?

It's much better than that. It's a check in the mail. The truth is, I can be purchased. You can put that in print! There was a time in my past when I probably wouldn't allow myself to be bought. But now, I'm for sale. On clearance, actually. So if anyone wants to write me a check, I'm here.

That said, while cash-in-hand is always a good thing, there are other benefits to being a tourism ambassador. They give you free stuff.

I served as an ambassador to Philadelphia in the past. I've been the ambassador for Palm Springs, CA, for several years. Both of those communities I love. And, that's a good thing. Can you imagine trying to get all excited and sell the value of a place you didn't like or a product you don't care for?

I also get asked to star in some promotional videos, which can be a lot of fun. There's a pre-show video that I play at my shows that is super cute this year. I climb out of a suitcase. It's really fun.

You must be thankful for the support of your sponsors.

You might think that there can't be much expense in what I do — after all, it doesn't look expensive. But, like Dolly Parton says, "It costs a lot to look this cheap." I say, "It costs a lot to look this disorganized," you know?

The videos we make cost a lot of money. Our sponsors, companies like Orbitz and Atlantis, help defray the cost in exchange for promotions. This is a nice arrangement because when I've got downtime (and I'm not performing), those funds help us keep producing new shows.

Do you enjoy being an LGBT tourism ambassador?

My role as a tourism ambassador to Palm Springs is amazing. Don't get me wrong, I love many of the other places I get the privilege to visit, but there is something special about Palm Springs that you can feel. I don't know exactly what it is, but there's something about it — and California — that makes me feel right at home. It's such a friendly place to visit.

I'm good friends with a bunch of the business folks there, including Molly Bondhus, who owned Wil Stiles, a beautiful clothing store I absolutely adore. Molly was the first person to hire me in drag. The first outfit I ever bought in drag was from her. She hired me to dance on the roof of her store during an art fair. I know I didn't get paid in cash. Instead, I got paid in products, which was great because I didn't have any wardrobe at the time. I had like two dresses and a bathing suit, you know?

I've always admired your use of advanced information technology. Can you tell our readers a little about your love affair with technology?

Well, technology and me have some history, I'm not sure it's a love affair. Do you remember when we were in high school, and you had punch cards that you would punch holes into? You had to deliver the punch card to the computer, and the computer would type out "happy birthday" or some other message. It was revolutionary.

But, then came the Macintosh Apple IIe. After I got it, I remember thinking, okay, this is a great word processor. I can type, and I can detect and fix my mistakes. It was a far cry, however, from the electric typewriter from Sears I had in high school with the correction tape.

When the Apple IIe came out, everyone touted it as the next big thing. They promised that one day we would use it to connect to all the world's information. At first, I thought, who is going to use this? I mean, if I want access to all of the world's information, I'll go to the Richfield library. Never, never in my wildest dreams did I foresee the way technology has impacted everything we do. And now, I'm online all the time.

The Apple IIe was a great machine, but it's not practical in today's mobile world.

That's why I recently purchased a laptop. It's a Radio Shack brand computer. It looks like a sewing machine. It's a little bit larger than a laptop, but it's portable — enough. I got a radio shack because I wanted to make sure I bought a machine from a solid, major brand name that I wouldn't have any trouble getting parts for should it break down.

Technology has dramatically changed how LGBT people meet and interact with one another. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even harder for LGBT nightclubs and bars to survive.

So many clubs have closed. It's really sad. I just feel bad for our kids. They may never get to experience the sidewalk sale we used to all enjoy, right? I remember working in the bar until



one o'clock in the morning and then walking out onto the street where everyone was hanging out -- you know, making friends. At the sidewalk sale, you'd never know you might meet, but if you got lucky, you'd find someone you might like to go grab a malted and a grilled cheese. At that time of night, nobody cared what you looked like or if you were crazy sweaty from dancing all night. It was so much fun.

LGBT folks in the US tend to move from the smaller towns in which they were raised to bigger cities or resort towns that are perceived as more friendly and welcoming. You have remained in Richfield and didn't run off to someplace like Wilton Manors, Florida.

Florida? Well, other than Broward County, I don't know what to do with that place. It's like, dear God, I just always tell my friends in the sunshine state to "Pull it together!" You can't hog all the smart people in one neighborhood; you have got to distribute them around the state.

If you want to make the place where you are from better and more accepting, then I say do not move. Stay where you are.

The truth is we need you in North Carolina — and other less-than-desirable places. People will make fun of you for living in those places, that's for sure, but we need you there because we need voices all over the United States.

Sadly, sometimes, the homos, especially, they get caught up in the 'me, me, me' mentality and make a lot of poor choices that impact us all. They don't realize that they live in fabulous gay-friendly neighborhoods in New York and Los Angeles that are all-gay, all-the-time. But, that's not a reality for everyone in the country. Some of us remain where we were raised and become bright blue beacons of hope — working all over the country — especially in the red, red, red, red States to make life better for everyone. We need to acknowledge that and support the folks who stay behind. We need to help them, especially now.

The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted everyone's travel schedule. Where were you supposed to perform this year?

The Triad Theatre, a wonderful venue in a real fancy part of New York City. It's not a real fancy theater, but it's a great place at which I was supposed to perform. I was supposed to perform in Philadelphia and in San Diego at Martini's Above Fourth. I was supposed to be at Palm Springs Pride.

Your annual pilgrimage to Provincetown is legendary. Are you going to be able to make the trek again this year despite



the pandemic? Is the city ready and able to help control and protect the crowds from further spreading the virus?

Yes, I'm in P-Town now. I'm performing at Pilgrim House. We're taking all sorts of precautions to ensure everyone has a safe and good time. In the main section of town, where I perform, at least, there is not one person that you walk by that doesn't have a mask on. And, if someone might show up without a mask on, or if they don't have it on correctly, there's a mask patrol that will provide that person with a mask or advise them to wear their mask correctly. The police and city staff are on board as well.

Given the travel restrictions on congregating, how are things going in P-Town this far?

The numbers are a little dismal for my show, but I am glad to be working. Normally I would do 60 shows in a theater that seats 180. Now I'm going to be lucky if I can do 35 shows with a 52 seat maximum in a gravel-like parking lot. Think Miss Richfield on the Rocks. That's catchy, right?

In P-Town, they're very good at distancing people. I have to be 25 feet away from the crowd, which is a long-distance, but appropriate because I do a lot of singing. I can move a little bit closer when I'm not singing. To help us stay safe, we take reservations. When we set up the chairs, we set them up so that everyone is a safe distance apart. I can interact with the

audience a bit, but we have to be very, very careful to be safe as well as entertaining.

Before heading to P-Town, you managed to create a fun, interactive, digital experience with your existing fans called Bingo Bonanza. While playing bingo online with Miss Richfield is a hoot, one bingo player we interviewed told us that your online bingo events helped him overcome the empty feeling that being trapped at home with limited mobility creates. Did you ever imagine that Bingo Bonanza would contribute in positive ways to the mental health of our nation?

That's interesting. Honestly, I didn't. I started doing bingo Bonanza because we didn't have any clue what to do in this situation. We started right after the shutdown. The initial thought was to provide an outlet for Miss Richfield 1981 to connect with people during the shutdown.

I am not used to being at home. That was a learning curve. Let me tell ya. I learned from others, like my friend, Miss Conception, who lives in Canada and couldn't come to work in the United States or travel to Mexico to work. So, she set herself up online. She and others really inspired me early on, and after witnessing their efforts, I thought, "I'm going to do that."

What I didn't imagine was that there could be a financial benefit to creating the Bingo Bonanza show. The ability to earn money from digital entertainment was both surprising and wonderful. Because so many people were so generous, I didn't have to file for unemployment. And, I was able to share the money we earned with the five other people it takes to produce our show.

You have a great line of Miss Richfield 1981 merchandise. Has the pandemic damaged your supply pipeline?

Yes, definitely, the COVID thing has impacted things. It put a dent in things for a bit, but we're working with some great suppliers in the Northeast US who are helping us get the store fully stocked of Miss Richfield 1981 goodness. But, if you're lucky, you can fill your cart with my newest bobblehead, t-shirts, and masks.

One of our readers, Brad from Toronto, wants to know, are your pearls real?

Yes, like everything about Miss Richfield 1981, the pearls are real. But, they are also on approval. You can't see there's a price tag attached to the pearls that I tuck into the back of my hairline.

Michael, from Indianapolis, wants me to ask you how you maintain such a flawless complexion?

Professional training and good clean living. It's hard to be a natural beauty.

Jolena from Monterey, CA asks if you have to deal with a lot of jealousy from the other stars in the industry?

Constantly, constantly. Fortunately, my phone's been disconnected, so I don't get the calls, but I hear people are very jealous of me, especially now with this parking lot gig at Pilgrim House. Barbara Streisand probably has been trying to reach me to ask me if she can maybe do a guest appearance — we share the same birthday. Well, I mean 20 years apart for crying out loud. Yeah. 20 years apart to the day, April 24th.

Frank from Fire Island, NY wonders how many bows you have in your personal collection? He also asks if you have considered creating a line of Miss Richfield 1981 bows?

Oh, my God. How have I never thought of this myself? First of all, thank you, Frank, from Fire Island, for the idea. I could just start by selling my own bows. I must have — and this is probably no exaggeration — a hundred different bows. I'm not sure if Frank means bows that I wear in my hair or bows that I use during my live saw performances (see Miss Richfield play Somewhere Over The Rainbow on a saw). I have about five bows for the saw, but I do have probably over a hundred bows for my hair. They come in so many different colors, and you can buy them at Claire's on sale two-for-one.

Here's some unsolicited advice. The smaller the bow, the better. Smaller bows just make your hair look bigger. I like big hair. So I don't wear big bows.

You've accomplished a lot in your lifetime. If you could accomplish just one big thing that you hadn't already, what would that be?

Ooh, I like that question. One big thing that I haven't already accomplished.

Um, Oh gosh, let me say that all of the things that have ever happened to me that are wonderful were because I met somebody who helped me accomplish those things. So my answer to that would be that what I would want to accomplish is to continue to meet more and more people. The more people I meet, it seems like the more interesting work I get. When this COVID-19 thing happened, my biggest saddest moments were due to being unable to meet new people. Those connections between us are necessary, and they have always helped me realize my dreams.

Trisha asks if you could provide one piece of advice for those younger LGBT folks, what would that be?

That's easy. My advice comes from a story in the Bible where Jesus was having lunch with his disciples, that last lunch, where they were all sitting on the same side of the table, and things weren't looking good. And Jesus knew things weren't going to end well, you knew he already had that inkling that something was amiss, you know, he wasn't a fortune teller, but he knew something was, not going well. And so he had that last launch, and I remember him saying to his disciples these very wise words: "It's important to be nice, but it's nicer to be important."





Three Men and 'The Vegas Room'

A trio of powerhouses launches a daring venture during the most turbulent time in Vegas history...



by Sam Novak

The Supper Club experience might be new to contemporary generations, but it's made a remarkable return, thanks in part to high-profile spaces like Cosmopolitan's Rose.Rabbit.Lie and Mayfair Supper Club at Bellagio. The Vegas Room may be the first Las Vegas supper club created by three openly-gay men. Their unique take on the concept combines vintage-Vegas elegance with contemporary flair.

The Vegas Room Supper Club is a passion project representing the careers of three gifted gentlemen. President Thomas Richard Michel orchestrates the business side, drawing from years of experience in the entertainment industry (including MTV). Owner/Executive Chef David James Robinson is known to thousands of online fans and television viewers. Then there's Director of Entertainment Brent Barret, a veteran lead performer in shows like Chicago and Phantom of the Opera.

Chef Robinson was an entertainer before developing his culinary skills. He and the others excelled at a time when homosexuality was an industry secret. Robinson and Michel have been together for 24 years, and Barret married former Starlight Express performer and current Nurse Practitioner Bernie Blanks in 2018.

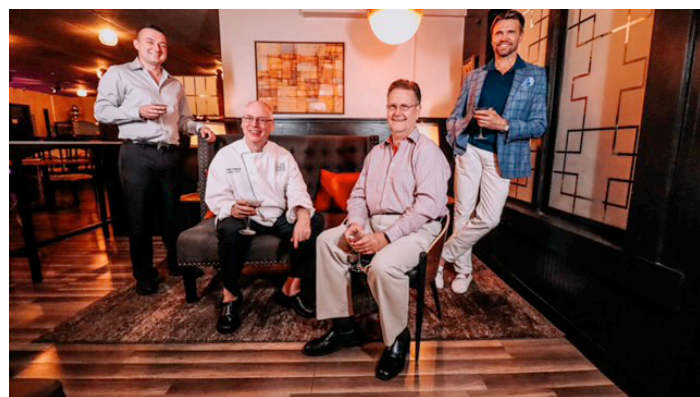
QLife Magazine recently chatted with the men of The Vegas Room. They told us how the idea came about, what it took to launch in a pandemic-shaken city, and how their business model is built to stand the test of time.

Tom: In some ways, The Vegas Room has been "in the making" for many, many years. When you look at the four key players - including our General Manager, Sean Stephenson - everyone is playing to his unique strengths and adding a vital component to the overall team. Not only do our skills complement one

another, but we share the same vision for what we're building, and we truly like one another.

David: We initially envisioned The Vegas Room as an event space and catering business (we are caterers of record for the Mob Museum and Liberace Mansion). Then we became the "accidental cabaret". We had Tom's 60th Birthday at The Vegas Room. Tom played piano for Brent at the party. You could hear a pin drop, which is rare in Vegas. Brent kept saying, "I think you have a space here for performers. A small, intimate room where music and food meet." When it became clear that there would be a long wait until more than 50 guests could gather in Nevada, we had to punt. Serendipity.

Brent: I had been looking all around Las Vegas the last year for a place that I could do the occasional show, and nothing seemed to be the right fit. After Tom's birthday party, I suggested a Christmas Show. After the success of that, we decided we'd do a monthly show. A month into the shutdown, Tom and David wanted to do "events" every week. I started calling artists, and here we are two months after reopening and going strong.



Located in the historic Commercial Center on East Sahara Avenue, The Vegas Room can be challenging for new visitors to find. Yet, it benefits from being close to the legendary Sahara Hotel and the Arts District, where LGBTQ nightspot The Garden recently opened.

David: You can't sing the blues without a little grit. We want history. We want to be real. The Rat Pack used to eat at Commercial Center Deli, Elvis used to buy bling at John Fish Jewelers, Led Zeppelin and The Doors played here in '69. We love where we are.

Tom: We would much rather take an existing "thing" and make it better by putting our own unique stamp on it. Every paint color, every picture, every crystal, every tiny detail was something that we collectively selected. We're all very humbled that people like the many choices that we made, and that they feel so comfortable.

The first vital ingredient in a supper club is the ambiance. Next is the dinner presentation. The Vegas Room rolls out an entirely new menu every two weeks, curated entirely by Chef David. Everything is made from scratch and given a unique twist. Vegans and vegetarians always have an excellent entree to choose from and the occasional whimsical theme will surprise and delight.

David: Nourishing folks is profound. I promise it will never be boring! I told Tom to put on a warning when he posts menus that say "Our Chef is a little crazy and is constantly evolving our menus based on market availability and quality." If something doesn't look quite right, I don't want to force the menu option. I want to make beautiful food...not plastic, not fussy, but so caring.

Established Vegas entertainers like Anne Martinez, Randal Keith, Eric Jordan Young, and Travis Cloer have found a new home at The Vegas Room. They come here to hang out, enjoy the talents of their colleagues, and take to the stage for their own stellar showcases. Many of Sin City's brightest and best have already performed here, and many more are on the way.

Tom: I want local performers to have a place to showcase their talents and the material that they want to do...in the city that they love. The Vegas Room hits all of the buttons that make me excited. That's probably why I love being a marketer.

David: Our criteria for booking our artists is a good pitch, clean diction, the ability to sell a song, great material perfectly curated. We are a listening room. It's just piano and voice, with a bass or guitar thrown in at times. Some artists are scared of the bareness of it - you are exposed. Often that means presenting an incredible acting singer with guts and steely bravery. For our guests, it's a beautiful, pure experience.

Brent: We really want to strip it down to the basics. Music and lyrics...just tell the story. There is no service during the performance. Working in The Vegas Room exercises different muscles. Not everyone is comfortable doing that. I can tell you from a performance standpoint, there is no quieter, more attentive audience in town.

With the COVID-19 quarantine came a shuttering of nearly all entertainment. The Vegas Room is one of the few places

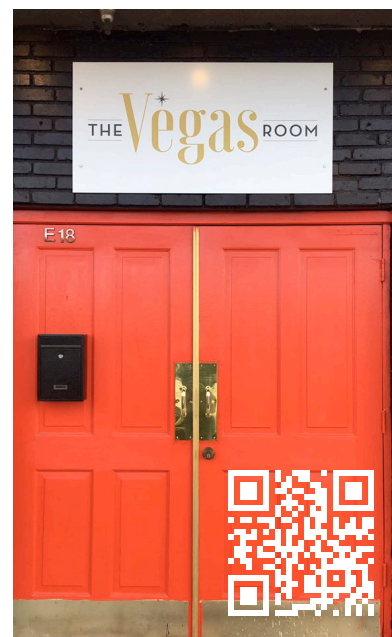


in Sin City where people can currently experience a live performance. It gives the venue a unique place in history that the creators believe will continue when things return to "normal".

David: We take temps at the door, we use touchless sanitizer on entrance, we have single-use menus, we wrap the silverware, our staff wears masks. We take our baby steps. Some of it is inelegant, like wrapping our breads in Saran, but it is necessary. We have so much to learn in this new environment. It helps if you care...and we care enormously.

Brent: We are all very conscientious about safety. Making the guests and the artists feel safe and taken care of. We have taken tables out in order to spread the guests a safe distance. With what we have all been through the last several months, people appreciate the intimate atmosphere and warm friendly service. AND the wonderful talent we have on the stage every weekend.

Tom: Long-term connectedness with our guests is something that is incredibly important to us. It's a major reason why we believe that our core audience is local people here in the Las Vegas Valley. We certainly welcome tourists, too, but repeat customers who support what we do will be our bread and butter in the long term.



The Vegas Room is located at 953 East Sahara Avenue E-18. Visit thevegasroom.com or call 702.533.0075

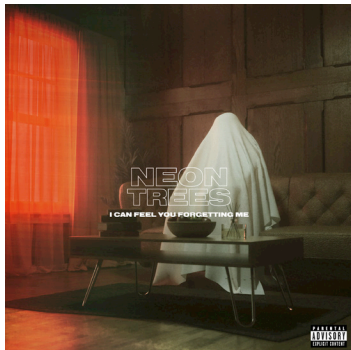


There's No Forgetting Tyler Glenn

Neon Trees releases first album 'I Can Feel You Forgetting Me' since lead singer Tyler Glenn's coming out



by Rikki Blank



The multi-platinum alternative quartet Neon Trees release their long awaited fourth studio album, 'I Can Feel You Forgetting Me.' The album explores a myriad of introspective themes across isolation, personal relationships, self-discovery and fulfillment set to the

band's signature sound cast in synth soul and rooted in robust guitars with unforgettable danceable beats. Tyler Glenn, lead vocalist, penned much of the album over several years from a deep place of reflection. Listeners will hear how much of the lyrics were inspired by personal memories and feelings.

Rikki Blank, host of QLifeStream's new web-based talk show interviewed Glenn. The full video interview will be available on an upcoming episode of Queerality.

It's been six years since Neon Trees put out their last album. You've done Kinky Boots, you put out a solo album, why regroup now? What brought Neon Trees back together?

We had always been together, ostensibly. There were a lot of middle years between 2014 until now where it was a bit of a journey and a process. There were a lot of business decisions to be made. We were always writing, and after Kinky Boots, I felt very definitively, that I was ready to write a Neon Trees record. I was ready to go to L.A. and record it. Right after New York, I went right to L.A. and started writing, and before that, it

had always been like, oh, maybe I'll do another solo thing, or maybe it's a new thing. After that experience on Broadway, it gave me a lot of my groove back, my confidence back, a vision creatively. That's why I felt really supported by my band to just go off and start writing. I wrote 40 songs and it slowly became this record. It felt right at the time. I'm happy we waited this long, but I don't want to wait another six years to make another album.

Do you have an idea when you're writing a song if it's going to be a solo thing, a Neon Trees song, or something new... how does that process work for you?

I just write. I don't really even stick to a theme or an idea right away. Things rise to the top. Neon Trees is very much a band, but it's still very much me writing the songs about my experience and influence, as much as a solo record is different, it's still my voice.

Being out and where I am in my life, I don't think I'm really separating themes, or ideas, or even voices. It's just more vibes, and what do I want to say? And is this the right thing for this record now. It wasn't always that way with my band. I feel really free creating with them as of late.

This is the first Neon Trees album that you've put out since you've come out. How much does that influence your writing process?

A ton. I wrote Pop Psychology, our third record, while I was in the closet. That was the record that came out around the time that I came out. A lot of people attribute that record to a coming-out record, but I still was very much in the closet, wrestling with identity while I was writing that album. So you're right, this is the first record since coming out. Not only am I out as a gay man, but I'm also out of the trappings of the faith that I was raised in, and I feel label-less almost or like there's no

ceiling creatively where I could go. I really put a lot of energy into this record. I feel even more confident now. I just want to continue in that energy of no ceiling of topics... there shouldn't be a roof to where you can go creatively.

It's totally influenced my comfortability with pronouns or being honest with themes and topics. Honesty, I love pop music. I make pop music, but when there's a level of honesty and a component of personality, it just elevates shit. That's what I've seen, and I just want to continue on that path.

All the lyrics on this album are genderless. Is that a distinction that you wanted to make in terms of it being a pop record, universally acceptable, and just have it at the back of everyone's mind that oh, 'he's gay' he's writing this from the perspective of a gay relationship?

I wasn't even conscious of that, where I have been on previous records. For example, on my solo record "Excommunication", I did use 'he.' I was blatant about those things, but I was also talking to God, at the same time as my ex. It was this duality. I also call God, 'she' on the record. I don't really have a subscribed idea of who God even is, but on this record, I didn't even think about it because, as I've just started to live my life these last few years I do just feel effortlessly myself. On our song "Everybody Talks" or on past records, I've said 'she' just to hide my sexuality. On this record, you're right, it's genderless and the message is clear. I didn't even really think about hiding it anymore. Maybe that's a good thing. It was just "this is me," and this is what I'm talking about.

Yes, it's obviously about a guy because I'm an out, gay man. Those are my feelings. I suppose that's where I was coming from when I was writing, totally.

This album is about one person, but on the song "Holy Ghost" for example, you've talked about walking away from your faith. Did it feel that you were going through two breakups at the same time?

As much as it is about one person, I'm also mourning the loss and also the experience of moving past other traumas as well. Thank you for noticing that about "Holy Ghost." I was putting a spin on it because there's themes of ghosting on this record and being sort of forgotten about, and it's this phenomenon... we can just unfollow someone, and all of sudden they don't exist. I wanted to take the idea of having the Holy Spirit and the idea of this companion that when in religion where if you're doing good, you'll feel the Holy Ghost, and if you're not, the Holy Ghost leaves you, and that was sort of an interplay on words. I'm still in a place in my life where sometimes it is brimming right on the surface. I'm happy that I don't want to be the type of person that just throws their life away and starts fresh just because there's still value in looking in the past and analyzing what that was, but also always moving forward. I hope that's what I'm doing, at least that's how it feels right now.

You didn't really have a normal coming out. You famously came out in Rolling Stone. Where was your head at, during that time?

I had come out a couple of months prior to friends and family, my band, and people in my life.



I knew that the article was being published that week in March. I was really excited, but I was so, so nervous. On the other side of it, I was greeted with a lot of support from people that I thought I wouldn't get it from. At the time when I came out, I was still actively believing in Mormonism, and so that added a component to where I was still worried. What would they say? What would they think? How would my standing be in this religion, now that I'm coming out? I felt supported and tried to live my life a few years that way and realized I had to look at the things that I believed in. I don't want to go off on a religious tangent, but I really recognized how toxic and damaging the messaging that I had believed in my whole life really was.

I also realized none of it was for me as a queer person.

Why have I carried so much devotion and belief in this? I've been conditioned and wired to completely believe in this thing that's just not even reality. I went through a real tailspin. Leaving the religion and purging a lot of that has been harder. There are so many things. I know I'm gay. I've always felt that, but for so much of my life, I rejected it, suppressed it, or tried to compartmentalize it to fit something that was never meant to fit in anyway. I love being a few years past all of that because it's only made me see that I am growing. I'm on your way. It's been a really wild up and down couple of years. On top of all that craziness, it's amplified by the idea that doing this publicly for a lot of people...a lot of people have seen me go through this...a lot of fans of I have watched me go up and down the last few years. It has a real interesting weight and pressure.

So what's next for you?

I'm still feeling inspired creatively. I'm just deciding where do I put that? Is that in an album? Is that in a song? Is that in a book? Or is that an idea for something else? It's crazy to go from putting an album out two weeks ago after two years to jump right into a new project right away. I feel like I have a lot of stories to share and a lot of experiences that could be helpful in a book, especially to those that are younger than me. I'm not ready to write the memoir of my life, but I think I've lived a lot of lives in my walk here on this planet, and I want to focus some of that into a long-form thing. We live in an age where everything is two minutes and now I'm looking to write a book, but I feel called to it. I feel drawn to it.





We Demand On Demand Queer Content!

Queer Entertainment on Streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, HBO, and Revry have become an important part of taking LGBTQ+ representation into the mainstream. Subscribers to these services have given so many of us an escape from reality and offer us fun, joy, love, and even tears. We don't know what Quarantine would have been like without some of our favorite shows like RuPaul's Drag Race, Pose, Legendary, Queer Eye, Disclosure, and We're Here just to name a few. It's comforting to know that all around the world and in millions of households we are all able to connect and grow from these shows.

Probably the most mainstream show for the Queer community is RuPaul's Drag Race. We were able to watch Season 12 and All Stars, thankfully recorded before the pandemic. We fell in love with the amazing cast members. Congrats to the winners, Jaida Essence Hall and Shea Coulee. It was great to see members of the Black community taking the crown, especially in light of recent protests against racial inequality.

Another moving and award-nominated show that moved audiences is "We're Here" on HBO. This "show on the road" features Drag Race alum Bob The Drag Queen, Shangela, and Eureka O' Hara as they bring messages of love and acceptance (and over the top drag shows) to small towns across America. It is a nod to past drag cinema like 'To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar,' and "Priscilla Queen of The Desert." This show is a real-life, non-scripted journey into what life is like for queer people in places where it may not be safe or accepted to come out. Not all queer people live in major cities,

by Garrett Pottiani

and that's why this is so important. We are happy to hear that it is renewed for season two. We can hear Shangela saying "Hallelloo!" You go Queens!

On the heels of a competition-based reality TV show, we also had the chance to watch *Legendary*, a show that pays tribute to the legendary houses and community that is Ballroom. For those of you that don't know, *Vogue-ing* is an important part of Queer History. If you haven't watched *Paris is Burning* do it as soon as possible. Houses are important because when many LGBTQ+ people are kicked out of their homes they find new family and friendships in the community. This show highlights the amazing talent and dedication that it takes to make it to the top. The set is amazing and the shows are the best.

Another show that tells the story of houses and families is *Pose*. It is scripted and takes place during the 1980's / 1990's AIDS crisis in New York. The cast is mainly composed of people of color as well as the history making trans women cast as lead characters. Although the show's black trans cast members were snubbed at the Emmy® Awards ceremony, we know that their representation is important to the LGBTQ+ community and we are so inspired by the story.

Queer Eye, another show featuring gay men traveling through America, even made their way to Japan! The importance of this show is that it shows how people from all walks of life can transform for the better with the help of the "Fab 5" cast, Antoni Porowski—food and wine, Tan France—fashion, Karamo Brown—culture and lifestyle, Bobby Berk—design, Jonathan Van Ness—grooming. There are usually tears shed in each episode. This means that the impact shows like this have on the world are nothing short of amazing.





Fabulous Life Skills Program Celebrates One Year with Graduation

Photo by Samantha Palaggi



by Russ White

On July 30, 2020, the Fabulous Life Skills Program hosted a graduation ceremony for students that participated and completed all the required work for the first phase. The ceremony was held at the LGBTQ Center of Southern Nevada, featured food and beverages, and certificates of completion.

Many of the news and stories we hear about the Trans community focuses on the attacks and senseless murders, especially Trans women of color. More and more we are finally starting to see positive representation in the media. A documentary recently aired on Netflix called Disclosure, hosted by Leading trans thinkers and creatives, including Laverne Cox, Lilly Wachowski, Yance Ford, Mj Rodriguez, Jamie Clayton, and Chaz Bono shines a light on trans representation in the media and how it has negatively impacted the way society treats and thinks about gender and identity.

Locally, we want to showcase an amazing program meant to lift up and educate the Trans community. The best part is that the founder and creator of The Fabulous Life Skills Program, Jazmena Jameson, is a proud trans woman of color. Students meet weekly via zoom or socially distanced in person to cover life skills such as Computer, hygiene, grooming, criminal

records, education, employment, financial, name changing, and other life skills.

At the graduation, Judy Bowenwiener, a trans activist Stonewall Survivor and icon gave a moving speech that empowered attendees to remember the past and celebrate the

contributions that the Trans community has made. Garrett Pattiani, owner of QLife Media and Secretary on The Center's Board of Directors also gave a speech that acknowledged the importance and amazing accomplishments of Jazmena and all of the graduates. Programs and events like these shine a spotlight on the amazing things that can be done, by the trans community for the trans community.

Jazmena is open with her students about her past life experiences, often common to Trans people and the discrimination they face in gaining meaningful employment and stable housing. By being honest with her students, it sends a strong message that no matter what your past, there is nothing that you can't do to change your present circumstances and build a better future. The students develop into family and show support and encouragement for one another. Jazmena has also developed the Fabulous Pageantry System and is Miss Las Vegas Trans 2008 title holder.

Congratulations to all of the graduates!



queerality

Rikki Blank Writes Her Own Queerality Check

New web talk show series is first original content to launch on QLifeStream

When life hands you a coronavirus and shelter-in-place orders you make lemonade—or at least a salty talk show. Facing the uncertainty of statewide shutdowns and job losses, Queerality creator Rick Hermansen collaborated with QLife to create an all-new web based talk show for the queer community.

Hosted by Hermansen's alter ego Rikki Blank, Queerality has already featured guests including American Idol star David Hernandez and Jacqueline Lord, RuPaul's Drag Race Alum Shannel aka Bryan Watkins, and actor/comedian/activist D'Lo.

In a statement from Hermansen: "I wanted to create a program to continue to amplify the voices of the queer community. We live in such divisive times, and many don't have access to basic resources, or the ability to interface with their own community. It's my hope that encouraging guests to share the stories of the reality of living a queer life will embolden our community to remember that they're not in this alone. Our views may be different, but our path is the same. Everyone in our family is loved, they're valid, and their stories deserve to be heard."

As far as future plans for the show, Rikki plans to turn the show into a weekly podcast, and continue to explore the boundaries of how Queerality can continue its mission of covering everything queer, from politics and media, to pop culture, and beyond.

Queerality's first three episodes streamed live and are available on QLifeStream. Future episodes are in production, including the interviews with Neon Trees lead singer Tyler Glenn and Tom Goss, featured in this issue of QLife Magazine.



David Hernandez



Jacqueline Lord



Shannel aka
Bryan Watkins



Toshia Marvin



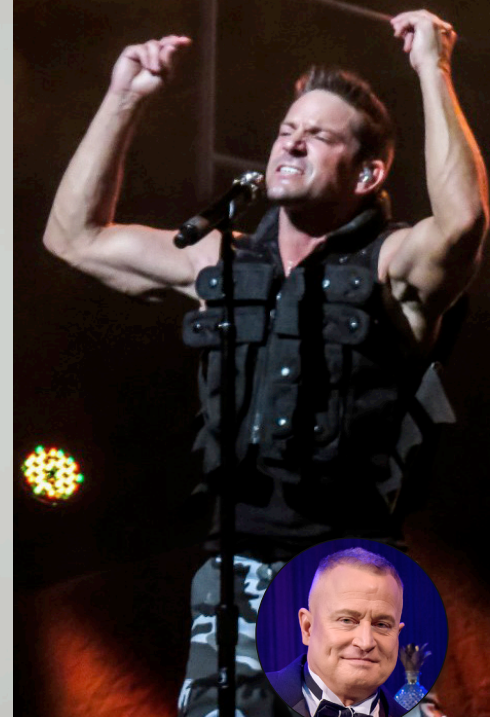
Alexx Alexis



Jazmena Jameson



D'Lo



Jeff Timmons of '98 Degrees' Weathers the Storm

by Sam Novak

Sin City's resident super-hunk on quarantine, creativity and some very pesky buttons...

Boy bands. Every decade has its share. Some, like The Beatles, create a lasting legacy while others yield punchlines or are forgotten. Resilient members re-invent themselves, branching off in new directions until the inevitable reunion tour. Jeff Timmons of 98 Degrees has experienced most of the above. And, like the boy band he founded, Jeff still keeps temperatures rising.

Timmons is a smart businessman as well as a seasoned entertainer. He's weathered the ups-and-downs of fame and focused on personal growth when boy bands fell out of favor. While he was keeping busy behind the scenes in the music industry, the male revue Chippendales invited him to be a celebrity guest host.

Uncertain of how it would impact his career, the Canton Ohio native was reluctant to accept. His wife Amanda, however, realized that it was a great opportunity and urged him to give it a try. A few weeks turned several successful months, and Jeff was suddenly everywhere in Las Vegas.

After the Chippendales stint, Jeff settled here permanently with Amanda and the kids. Then he created his very own male revue called Men of the Strip. The sexy production was daring and cutting-edge, with a focus on live singing and one or two controversial sequences. Men of the Strip toured the country, had a limited run at Hard Rock Live, and was covered in a documentary event for E! Network.

While pop singers often quickly fade away, Jeff Timmons' lasting image is tailor-made for the Sin City scene. He boldly embraces his sex appeal, which isn't as common for male performers as you might think. With open shirts (sometimes even bare-chested) and sensual body language, the always-shredded hunk knows how to make hearts race and body heat soar.

Timmons is also the rare musician who celebrated his LGBTQ fan base long before it was common to do so. He recognizes everyone as equals and was ahead of the times by performing at gay clubs, participating in Pride events, and promoting the NOH8 Campaign for marriage, gender, and human equality.

98 Degrees was headed to the Philippines as part of their latest tour when COVID-19 struck, so now Jeff is hunkered down in Las Vegas with the family. I was able to get ahold of the hard-working stud and talk about his motivations, latest activities and long-term plans. I also tried to get to the bottom of all those unbuttoned shirts.

You've dabbled in many facets of entertainment, like reality television, recording studio engineering, and mentoring new acts. What's left to conquer?

When I think of things I'd like to "conquer" or from an accomplishment standpoint, I feel like I've got a LONG way to go. I'm working hard to make a mark in the TV space in a number of different areas. I've got a few non-scripted things in the works finally, an entertainment news magazine show, a holiday special, and some other things going. I eventually want to get some scripted things happening as well. I'm launching a podcast very soon, so there is some new news on the horizon. I've got a lot of things left to do!

The Vegas entertainment community is crippled right now. Do you have any encouraging words or suggestions?

I think the entertainment business as a whole has really suffered, not just in Vegas. I'm fortunate enough to have a very loyal and dedicated fanbase. 98 Degrees has the luxury to reschedule shows, create new music, etc. Not everyone has that luxury. I know I'm very lucky. I like to look at things from a positive perspective.

Although this pandemic has been devastating to everyone, there are some good things that have emerged. There are tons of new and developing technologies that allow artists and entertainers to produce high-quality productions from their

homes. The pause has really given me the opportunity to learn more about music and TV production, and get better in the studio. Artists just have to be creative on how to keep fans engaged.

Another plus is that because folks have so much time on their hands, entertainment is being consumed more than ever. You really only need a handful of loyal fans that believe in you and what you're creating to make a living. You just have to be creative. And, although things can be depressing, find a way to stay positive and use the time to get better at your craft.

There's a joke going around that men will come out of the pandemic as either a "hunk", "chunk" or "drunk". Which one will Jeff Timmons be?

WELL... I started out working out like a fanatic (wannabe hunk), then slipped for a bit (put on some chunk), and now I'm back in obsessive mode (trying to get to hunk again). One thing has been consistent: the DRUNK part, lol...

A lot of artists are saying that the shutdown's isolation has allowed them to create new and better pieces of work. Have you experienced that?

I definitely have utilized the time to try to get better. After the initial shock of having to postpone 40+ shows, I rolled up my sleeves and have been using this time to learn more about the recording studio, reading a ton of inspirational and motivational material, and pitching a number of ideas to strategic partners that will go into production when things open back up. I'm trying to make lemonade out of lemons.

What one Sin City guilty pleasure do you miss having at your fingertips right now?

I'm not much of a sleeper, so I loved how at any time of the night I could find something to do on the strip. I miss that.

Choose one new favorite: A) catching up on sleep B) binge-watching movies/shows C) spending more time with family

I think it's a toss-up between B and C. We crafted our touring schedule to be home with our families during the week, but the quarantine has really allowed for much more quality time. I've also binged-watched about everything there is to watch on all of the streaming services. There isn't much left but foreign language series, and I've fallen in love with a lot of those!

Have you formed any new habits that will remain when things return to normal?

I've always been a reader, but I make it a point to dive into at least one new book a week. That habit is going to stick for sure.

Do you foresee yourself staying closer to home now instead of touring? Is there a possible Vegas residency in the works?

I LOVE being at home with my family. That being said, the demand for live concerts is at an all-time high. I think g8 Degrees has at least one or two more big tours in us. We are DEFINITELY exploring opportunities for a Vegas residency. The chance to be in one place and have the fans come to us is a dream come true. It allows us to stay with our families.

You're known to your fans, friends, colleagues, and locals as a kind, genuine person. What keeps you grounded?

I hope that's true. I think it's all about how you're raised. My parents made sure we always stayed grounded and treated



others with the utmost respect. Part of staying focused and keeping things real with yourself is having a constant inner dialogue about what your truth is and taking an inventory daily of what you're thankful for. Gratitude is the attitude!

I often call you the "Sexiest Man Alive". You embrace your physical appeal in a way that few male artists do. Have you always been that confident?

You're always so kind when it comes to that. I'm so very flattered. I try to embrace it because it's part of the business. Unfortunately, talent is always further down the list when it comes to success in the entertainment business. We learned that as a group early on. We know that fans are expecting us to look good. Anyhow, it gives us an excuse to stay healthy and in shape. Hopefully, it makes our wives happy!

Will we see more of 'Men of the Strip', or is that chapter closed for good?

I never want to close the chapter on 'Men of the Strip.' It was such a success from a touring standpoint and so much fun. It was quite a different experience from anything else I've ever done. There is always a demand for that show, so never say 'never!'

After covering new territory, Jeff and I revisited a series of questions that I first asked him back in 2013.

Favorite Vegas Restaurant: Archi's Thai Kitchen

Favorite Spot To Relax In Vegas: The pools at Wynn or Cosmopolitan

Best Thing Off The Strip: Downtown

Who Is Your Dream Duet With?: Bruno Mars or Ed Sheerin

Best-Kept Vegas Secret: Hiking and the lake

Must-See Attraction For Vegas Virgins: Absinthe (if it's still running). Carrot Top still crushes, too

Best Hangover Cure: Hair of the Dog!

The Sin I'd Like To See Sin City Lose: The traffic on the Strip

Favorite Place To Stay Fit: I do it at home now

Favorite Sexy Look On Stage - Tight Shirt, Unbuttoned Shirt, Or No Shirt?: All three have their advantages! (winks)





LGBTQ Community Center Continues to Serve Throughout the Pandemic

The team at the LGBTQ+ Center is proud to have continued serving the Southern Nevada community throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The greatest honor over the recent months was the opportunity for Center staff to walk proudly with the black community in support of Black Lives Matter and urgent reforms to address systemic racism and violence toward people of color. There is no part of the LGBTQ+ community more marginalized and victimized than trans people of color (TPOC). The Center participated in community education, engaged in vigils and marches, and communicated its commitment to act in the fight for justice, equality, and protections for the black and TPOC community.

In a letter to the community, CEO John Waldron expressed The Center's commitment:

"The Center will remain a place of safety, welcoming, and empowerment for everyone who is marginalized and victim to those who hate us for our sexual orientation, gender identity, or the color of one's skin. We proudly stand with the Black Lives Matter movement in our outrage, our support, and our demand that the institutions of our country that allow for privilege, supremacy, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and violence toward anyone simply for who they are, be confronted openly and honestly so that real change can begin."

The Center is proud to be working with community leaders in support of the recently formed Black Queer Men's group in Las Vegas. Vince Collins, Director of Operations at The Center, worked with a team of leaders in the black community to form the group whose mission is to "Empower Black Queer Men (GayBiTransQ) through education, advocacy, health and wellness promotion, and social support." The Center also launched a new initiative under the direction of Dr. Ray

MacFarlane, the Stonewall Las Vegas TPOC Spotlight Project, in partnership with other community leaders. The initiative helps inform others about historical and current TPOC activists while raising funds in support of local TPOC activists who do the work of advocacy without being justly compensated. The Center is also proud to be the home of the Fabulous Life Skills program, being led by local community activist, Jazmena Jameson.

Community partners of The Center continue to do essential work in Southern Nevada in collaboration with Center staff and volunteers. Some of the most important work The Center will do in the coming years includes education and activism in partnership with the Intersex community. The Center's Liaison to the Intersex Community, Jesf Benedict, is a champion of intersex rights and the urgency in educating the community about the common practice and unnecessary surgical procedures perpetrated against intersex children. The intersex community are routinely subjected to violence and discrimination and there is great urgency in helping members of our intersex community to find support, safety, and advocacy for their legal rights. The Center will be expanding services and advocacy, in partnership with Jesf, to stand proudly with the intersex community.

The Center's Wellness Clinic is open after closing for a time to ensure the safety of the staff, volunteers, and the organization's patrons. Full STI testing is available at the clinic Monday through Thursday 1-6PM. The Huntridge Family Clinic, led by Rob Phoenix, ARPN, have partnered with The Center's clinic team to provide medical services to clients needing testing and prescriptions. As the community continues to navigate the uncertainty of the COVID-19 crisis, The Center's clinic will remain available as safely as possible, and the team is looking forward to expanding services and hours in the near future. The Center team is also excited to announce soon a campaign to launch in the fall that will culminate in the great honor of naming the clinic The Arlene Cooper Wellness Center.



The Center was one of the first nonprofits to join the community-wide initiative, Delivering with Dignity (DwD). DwD is a program that provides nutritional meals for individuals who are most susceptible to the COVID-19 virus and who have an inability to secure nutritional meals while isolating at home. The Center's café partners, The Jolt, have been preparing ready-to-eat meals for hundreds of clients with a thousand meals on average delivered from The Center's kitchen. All meals are delivered by volunteer drivers who practice appropriate social distancing. The Center is grateful for being afforded the opportunity to participate in DwD, which is a program initially sponsored by the United Way, Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation, Elizabeth Blau & Associates, Moonridge Foundation, and COPIA. Center partners, The Charity Gurus,



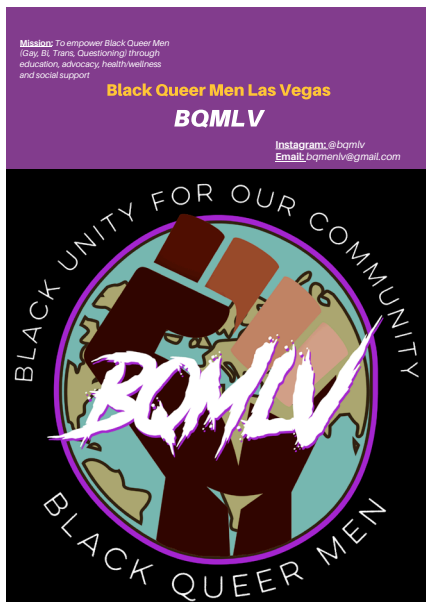
were instrumental in helping manage the program providing support for nonprofits across the valley.

Throughout the COVID-19 crises, The Center remained available to help individuals in the downtown area who are home-insecure, and others in need of essential services. While the Center's facilities were not open to the public, staff remained on site, and provided essential items to the public including clothing, hygiene kits, food, harm reduction kits, and connections to services and resources for those in crisis.

The Center Advocacy Network (CAN) is a Center program that provides immediate services to individuals in crisis. As the need for CAN services increased from the very start of the pandemic, The Center created a 24-hour crisis hotline

that is managed by a wide network of certified volunteers. The hotline will remain available as long as the need continues with many people in the community facing great challenges.

The Charity Gurus have been instrumental as partners with The Center is moving all services and programs online to the newly created Online Center. The Online Center can be found at The Center's website where the community can access nearly all of the programs normally held in-person at The Center's facilities. The Center staff have been deploying regular, and newly created programs, using Zoom and other video platforms. Great care has been taken to ensure the privacy of all participants while creating a safe and affirming environment to stay connected with the LGBTQ+ community.





Tom Goss's "Nerdy Bear" Is an Ode to the Furred Nerd

"Nerdy Bear," Tom Goss's new summer anthem, pays homage to the subset of plus-sized gay men that enjoy superheroes, play video games and wear cute glasses with clever graphic tees. It's a pop track, with a big, snappy sound and an infectious melody, that also contains a smooth sultry R&B vibe along with instrumentation that will make listeners feel like they're sliding into silk sheets.

"We've all seen the movies where the nerdy girl is hot, but she doesn't know it," says Tom. "She has to take off her glasses and let down her hair for the world to recognize her beauty. I say hell no to all that. The nerdy bear is already as cute as can be!" Tom Goss's "Nerdy Bear" is available on iTunes, Spotify, and all major digital platforms. Its music video is on YouTube.

"It would be hard to pinpoint what I love most about nerdy bears," continues Tom from his LA home. "From my experience, they tend to be gentle and warm. They want to have a good time, they're easy to get to know and of course, they're cuddly. To me, that's a winning combination."

Tom designed the song to lift listeners up and make them smile, something he believes we need more than ever. "Given the hot mess that is 2020, I feel like I have a responsibility to create music that brings people together and helps them to see the world in a positive light."

Tom Goss was raised in Kenosha, Wisconsin, a small city on Lake Michigan, between Chicago and Milwaukee. Much of his youth was spent focused on his studies and on wrestling. He didn't feel much in the way of sexual and emotional desires growing up. In fact, he didn't go on his first date until he was 22, while in seminary, training to be a Catholic priest.

That was when Tom realized he did have an appetite for sex, only it wasn't towards women or even the men that society deemed as handsome. His attraction was toward plus-sized men, known as "bears" in the gay community, and nerdy ones to boot.

"'Nerdy Bear' is authentic to my experience and relays my unique perspective that beauty doesn't fit a standard mold," he says.

Michael Serrato (Big Gay Sketch Show, Neil's Puppet Dreams) directed the music video for "Nerdy Bear." It was shot in NYC, primarily on the Chelsea Piers and at Rockbar NYC, a well-known bear bar in Chelsea. Tom wanted to keep the video fun and simple. He interviewed a bunch of candidates for the right man to play Nerdy Bear, and eventually chose Jason Villegas for the role of his romantic interest. "When I saw Jason's pictures, I knew he was the one. I can't tell you how much joy I got from editing his face for dozens of hours. His smile is perfection!"

In the video, Tom manages to show off his basketball dribbling skills and he even pulls off a bit of drag, appearing in several scenes as Princess Peach from the Mario Brothers video game. "I was happy to wear the dress and tiara," he laughs. "It's the embodiment of the video game hero becoming the real-life hero. The nerdy bear saves the day!"

"Nerdy Bear" follows the release of Tom Goss's full-length album, *Territories*, that included six music videos and his first Spanish-language single. He promoted the album last winter with a nationwide and European tour.

In April, Tom released the single, "Dancing in My Room" and three COVID-inspired music videos that featured Max Emerson and eleven artists singing in multiple languages.

Since the pandemic, he has spent his time in quarantine working on a myriad of new work, for himself as well as for other artists and their projects. "I'm excited for the opportunity to give back to the community and help other queer artists tell their unique stories," Tom says, adding optimistically that, "It's going to be a fun 2020."





MASSBRANDED and Eliad Cohen Join Forces on New Athleisure Capsule Collection

MASSBRANDED, the high-end men's streetwear label that pushes boundaries, revs style engines and leaves nothing—and everything—to the imagination, is announcing its collaboration with the world-renowned Israeli party producer, actor and model, Eliad Cohen, on a brand-new athleisure capsule collection for the urban man on the go. MASSBRANDED FOR ELIAD COHEN launched with seven new styles that can be worn to-and-from the gym, for casual nights out, while traveling, and on the dance floors. Inspiration for the collection was drawn from the military backgrounds of both Cohen, who served three years of army service in the Israel Defense Forces, and MASSBRANDED designer Mass Luciano, who grew up in a military family. "We wanted the styles in the collection to feel like the uniforms used for physical training during military exercises, drills and off-duty time," Mass Luciano explains.

Eliad Cohen and Mass Luciano met in London to design the collection. "It was important that each piece stood out in a way that appeared effortless, casual, sexy and cool," Mass Luciano continues.

"And that every piece seamlessly combined my personality, passion for fitness and way of life," says Cohen, adding that he couldn't be happier with the final result. "The collection is so comfortable. I'm wearing it everywhere."

Items in the MASSBRANDED FOR ELIAD COHEN capsule include the Reach Zip Up Hoodie and Track Pants (notable for their zippered side pockets, rib knit cuffs and mesh drawstring cords); the Renegade Sweatshirt and Shorts (featuring reflective tape at the sides that add a flashy flare to the pieces); the Shuttle Short (crafted from perforated neoprene with piping side details that flash when light hits them); and the Flex T-Shirt and Short (featuring black perforated neoprene panels with grey/tan taping details that reshape a man's body to its maximum form.)

All MASSBRANDED FOR ELIAD COHEN pieces are designed to be worn as sets, as a player would with a uniform, but they can be worn separately as well.

With over fifteen years of experience in the fashion industry, Puerto-Rico-born Mass Luciano studied at the Fashion Institute of Design in Los Angeles and has worked with international brands including Guess, Rock & Republic by Victoria Beckham and Lee Jeans. His rise to fame began in 2015 when he competed for and won the titles of initially, Mr. Gay Hong Kong and ultimately, Mr. Gay World. The accomplishment inspired him to launch his energetic namesake streetwear label, MASSBRANDED.

Eliad Cohen is an Israeli producer, actor, model and entrepreneur. He has appeared on several magazine covers, including G Magazine, Dear Magazine and the Spartacus International Gay Guide. He is also founder of PAPA PARTY, an international brand with a presence in more than thirty countries in Europe, North and South America and Australia.

MASSBRANDED FOR ELIAD COHEN is available at Massbranded.com.
Follow on Instagram @mass_branded

BOTTOMS **UP** The Stir Crazy



Vegas Baby Vodka recently introduced the Stir Crazy cocktail – perfect for a summer of quarantine. The Stir Crazy cocktail is made with 3 oz. Vegas Baby Vodka, 2 oz. club soda, 1.5 oz. agave or simple syrup, juice of one lime and four fresh blackberries.



Local spirits company, Vegas Baby Vodka, has received Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)

certifications. Vegas Baby Spirits was founded in 2018 by Vegas locals, Jennifer Higgins and Megan Wilkes, who sought to capture the excitement of Las Vegas through Vegas Baby Vodka.

Vegas Baby Vodka is made and distilled at Dry Hills Distillery in Montana, with Rocky Mountain water and non-GMO, gluten-free corn, and is distilled using a column still and filtered through a charcoal filter to guarantee an ultra-smooth finish with 40 percent alcohol by volume.



Las Vegas Bar Guide

Under current Nevada State emergency declarations, bars that do not sell food are closed due to COVID-19. As of press time, the following bars are currently in operations. Hours of operation may vary.

- The Garden Las Vegas
- Freezone Las Vegas
- The Phoenix Bar & Lounge

Text VEGAS BARS to (702) 829-5700 or scan the QR code for a current list of open venues.





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