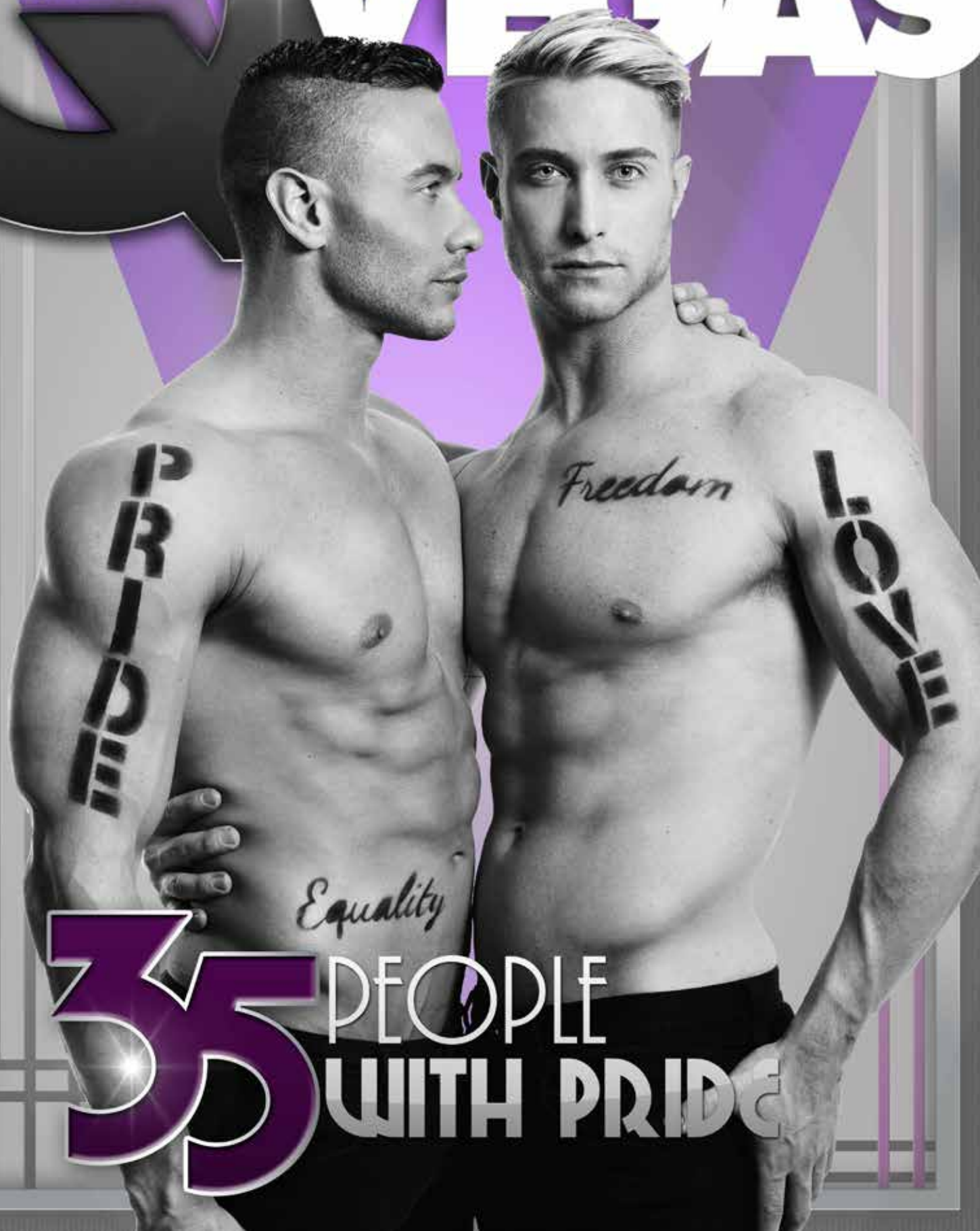


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Bleona is the first southeastern European recording artist to sell over 800,000 albums, setting a record that has yet to be broken. She is currently in studio working on her latest album with various acclaimed producers and songwriters including Timbaland, Darkchild, Jukebox and Makeba.

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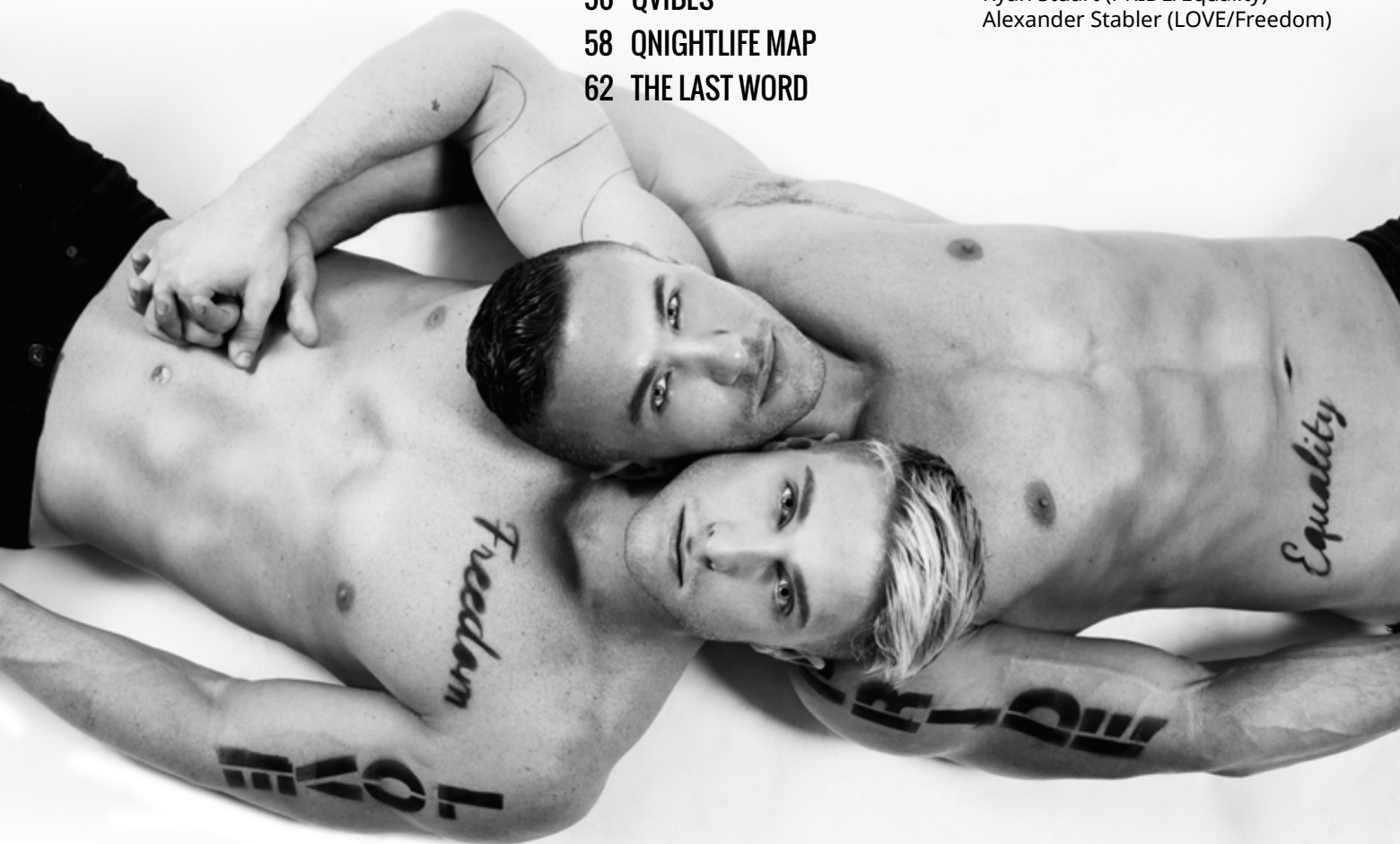


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a note from our Editor

Las Vegas PRIDE is such an exciting time of the year. The last few years the city seems to get gayer and gayer. Earlier this year the Strip turned purple in a campaign to 'Flip the Script' to end bullying. Now we are in September and while the Strip will not be turning purple, she will flame on with three LGBT events taking place at the same time.

Enjoy dining discounts with MGM's Fabulous Weekend, enjoy the best pool parties from the makers of Gay Days® Orlando, bringing Gay Days® Las Vegas back for its second year! The grandest of them all, Las Vegas PRIDE returns for its 30th anniversary.

September is our pride issue and it is also our annual People with Pride issue. 35 is the number of years QVegas and its previous names have been around, serving the Southern Nevada LGBT community, so every year we increase the number of active community members and supporters to acknowledge in print. I congratulate each of you for your dedication to the community.

It would seem finding and interviewing dozens of people every year would be a daunting task but



this year the youth at The Center have engaged with the staff at QVegas and set out to conduct the interviews themselves and for that I am truly grateful and I hope that you enjoyed meeting some of the awesome people in our community.

In case you weren't able to grab the Official PRIDE Guide we've included information about the parade, events, and an interview with entertainment headerliner, BLEONA. Have a safe and happy PRIDE!

Janise "Noah" Henderson

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I WANT TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS

Do you have something on your mind? Do you have something to say about an article in QVegas or any topic of interest to our readers? Do you have an idea for a future story? I want to hear from you! Simply send an e-mail to Editor@QVegas.com. Letters to the Editor may be printed in a future issue if signed and may be edited for clarity or length.



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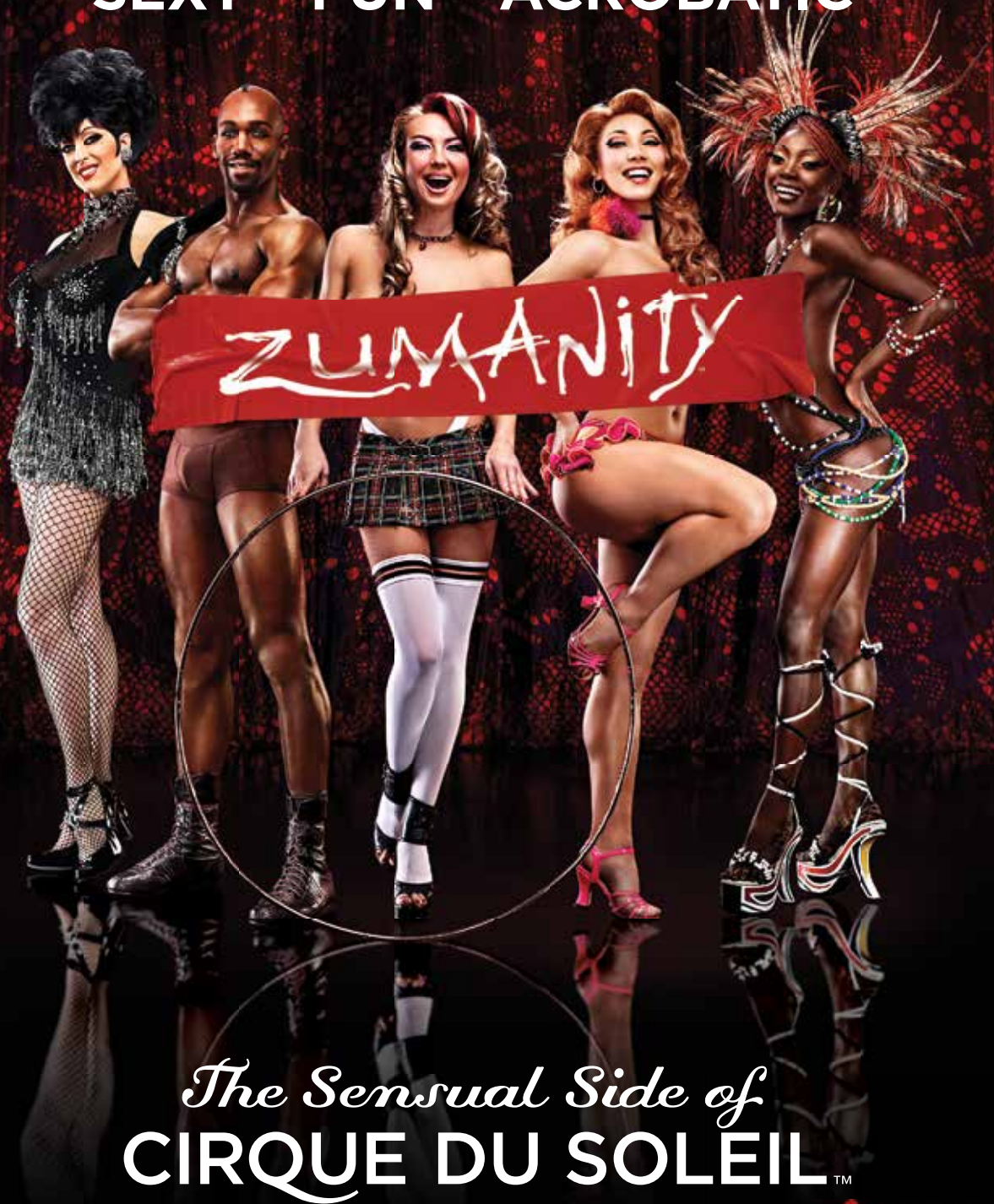
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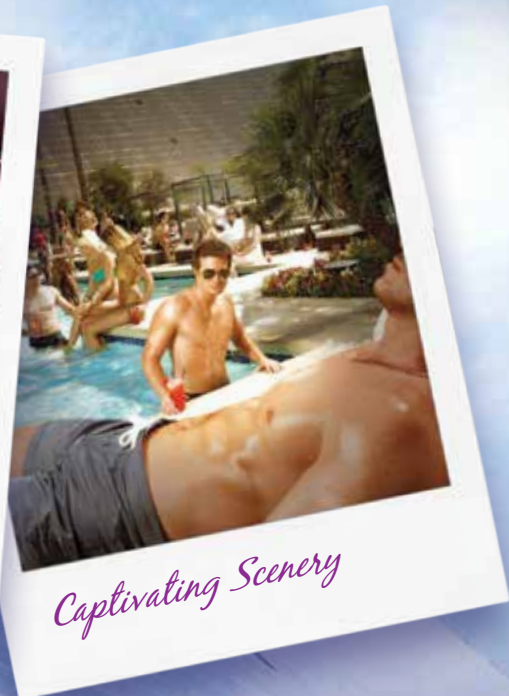
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A black and white photograph of the musical duo Veronicas. They are standing on a stage, wearing matching black sleeveless dresses and black boots. They have long, wavy blonde hair and are smiling with their mouths open as if singing. Their hands are clasped in front of them. Behind them are two faint, semi-transparent duplicates of themselves, creating a sense of multiple voices or a chorus.

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2 STEPS FORWARD...

[by Miranda Boyd]

Here we highlight some of the accomplishments achieved over the past month. This is but a taste of all the progress made and all the victories won by LGBT and Ally individuals and organizations constantly striving for full equality and an end to discrimination.

US Military Offers Leave for Gay Couples to Wed

The Department of Defense has announced that it will begin offering marriage benefits to same-sex couples now that the section of the DOMA restricting the federal government's recognition of same-sex marriages has been struck down. In addition, the Defense Department will also permit same-sex couples nonchargeable leave "for the purpose of traveling to a jurisdiction where such a marriage may occur." Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said the DOD is committed to "ensuring that all men and women who serve in the U.S. military and their families are treated fairly and equally." The change will go into effect no later than September 3.



CA Enacts Law to Help Trans Students

A new law was signed in California that will permit transgender and gender-non-conforming K-12 students "to participate in sex-segregated programs, activities and facilities" in accordance with the gender with which they identify, regardless of that assigned at birth. Public schools in California will now permit transgender and GNC students access to the restrooms and locker rooms of their choice. While Massachusetts and Connecticut have similar, state-wide school policies, California is the first state to enact an official law. According to Assembly Speaker John Perez, D-Los Angeles, the law "puts California at the forefront of leadership on transgender rights."

NJ Bans Reparative Therapy

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie signed a law banning any licensed therapists from attempting to change a minor's sexual orientation. New Jersey is now the second state to ban so-called reparative therapy, following California. Reparative therapy has been widely discredited by the medical community, and was referred to by NJ Assemblyman Time Eustace as, "an insidious form of child abuse." Gov. Christie, who noted in a statement accompanying the bill that he believes people are born gay and that homosexuality is not a sin, said that, "on the issues of medical treatment for children we must look to experts in the field to determine the relative risks and rewards."

Pro Wrestler Comes Out

Darren Young, a wrestler with World Wrestling Entertainment, was approached by a videographer in Los Angeles International Airport. When asked about the possibility of an openly gay professional wrestler finding success in the sport Young replied, "Absolutely. Look at me. I'm a WWE Superstar and, to be honest with you, I'll tell you right now, I'm gay, and I'm happy. Very happy." Young added, "I'm just letting you know that I'm happy [with] who I am, I'm comfortable with myself, and I'm happy to be living the dream ... I'm here to be happy ... I'm hoping to make a difference. It's very important to me to make people understand that someone's sexual preference shouldn't really matter. It should be about the person."

Murder in Jamaica

Dwayne Jones, a 16-year-old from Jamaica, was brutally murdered when attending a party while presenting as a girl. After being kicked out of home at age 14, Jones ended up living with three transgender friends. One friend, afraid to give a full name to media, said, "When I saw Dwayne's body, I started shaking and crying. ... It was so, so painful to see him like that." Jamaica is regarded by many international organizations as one of the most hostile nations in the Western Hemisphere to LGBT people, however some are optimistic about its future. Dane Lewis, executive director of the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals & Gays, said, "We can say that we are becoming more tolerant. And thankfully that's because of people like Dwayne who have helped push the envelope."

1 STEP BACK

As we move ever forward, we must pause to acknowledge the backslides. Here we show the defeats suffered recently at the hands of adversaries and the misguided who continue to deny the rights, respect and beauty of us all.



Soldier Booed for Supporting Gay Rights

In San Antonio, Texas, Eric Alva, a gay soldier who lost his leg during combat in Iraq, was booed by anti-LGBT activists and religious followers while testifying in favor of an ordinance that would protect persons from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and veteran status. Alva wrote after the event, "Well I just left city council chambers and I feel like crying. I have never seen a city so divided and hateful towards each other. All of mankind should be ashamed." The same proposed ordinance gained attention when secret recordings were released that allege to reveal Councilwoman Elisa Chan discussing how to oppose the ordinance and calling homosexuality, "So disgusting."

Couple Attacked in Chelsea, NY

In New York City's neighborhood of Chelsea, Peter Nortman and his boyfriend, Michael Felenchak, were holding hands as they left a movie theater when they were attacked by a group of men. Two men initiated the assault and four others joined in punching the victims and shouting slurs. Nortman and Felenchak were eventually able to make it back into the movie theater from which the police were called. The two spent the night in the hospital where they were treated for cuts and contusions. "It was six of them against the two of us," Nortman said. "Typical of the cowards they are."

USOC Expects Athletes to Obey Russian Laws

The United States Olympic Committee has said it expects athletes to comply with all Russian laws while attending the games in Sochi. Scott Blackmun, chief executive officer of the USOC, said, "The athletes are always going into countries with laws different than his or her own country. They're going to agree with those laws in some ways, they're going to disagree with those laws in other ways. It's our strong desire that our athletes comply with the laws of every nation that we visit. This law is no different." While speculation has reigned regarding whether athletes will be punished by the International Olympic Committee for minor acts such as hand-holding or wearing rainbow pins, the IOC has still not directly stated that athletes would be exempt from Russia's homophobic laws.

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photo by Michael Wilson

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photo by AJ Mast



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PATTI LUPONE IN FAR AWAY PLACES

Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 7:30pm

In her new, critically acclaimed concert, *Far Away Places*, two-time Tony Award® winner (*Gypsy*, *Evita*) Patti LuPone will take you on a musical journey with thrilling renditions of timeless songs.



photo by Rahav Segev

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Tidbits from The Strip & Beyond

SUNDAYS

- Showtunes High Tea @ **FLEX Cocktail Lounge**
- Pride Pajama Brunch Bingo (bi-monthly)
- Charlie's Amazing Drag Show @ **Charlie's LV**
- "She's Dope" Ladies Night (1st Sun.) @ **FreeZone**
- Burgers & Boys @ **Blue Moon Resort**
- REVO Sundays @ **Revolution Lounge**
- FREEDOM @ **Marquee Las Vegas**

MONDAYS

- Karaoke Night @ **FreeZone**
- Sin Monday's @ **The Garage LV**
- Liquor Bust @ **Spotlight Lounge**
- Pool and Pong @ **Club Metro LV**

TUESDAYS

- Karaoke Night @ **FreeZone**
- QSocial Ladies Event (Every 2nd Tues.)
- Drag Queen Bingo @ **Charlie's LV**
- Pajama Slumber Party @ **Club Metro LV**

WEDNESDAYS

- QBA Luncheon (Every 1st Wed.) qvegasba.com
- Confidential @ **Bond**
- Pride Bingo @ **Circus Circus** (Every 1st Wed.)
- Skin/Underware Night @ **Charlie's LV**
- Gay Men's Mpowerment Groups @ **The Center**
- Ntoxxicated- Diva Toxxx Drag Show @ **FreeZone**

THURSDAYS

- Dark & Double Thursdays @ **Entourage Men's Spa**
- POP Thursdays @ **Share Nightclub**
- Nothing But Country Thursdays @ **Charlie's LV**
- Prism @ **The Artifice** (Every 2nd Thurs.)
- Boys Night @ **FreeZone**
- Lei'd Back Thursdays @ **Drink & Drag**
- Big Gay Thursdays @ **Krave Massive**

FRIDAYS

- Stripper Circus @ **Share Nightclub**
- 3D Fridays @ **Piranha**
- Drag Madness @ **FreeZone**
- flamBoyance @ **FLEX Cocktail Lounge**
- Amateur Night with Jodie Maldone @ **Club Metro LV**

SATURDAYS

- SNAPI Saturdays @ **Charlie's LV**
- Porn Stars in Vegas @ **Share Nightclub**
- Goddess Saturdays with India Farrah @ **Piranha**
- What A Drag @ **FLEX Cocktail Lounge**
- Drag Madness @ **FreeZone**
- CumUnion @ **Hawk's Gym**

AUGUST 2013						
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NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY CELEBRATIONS RETURN TO THE FRUITLOOP THIS OCTOBER.

National Coming Out Day (NCOD) is a day to promote public awareness of gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender rights and to celebrate sexual diversity in our community. NCOD is a time to publicly display support and your love for all members of the LGBT community. Many individuals choose this day to come out to their parents, friends, co-workers and be their true selves, without fear of judgement.

Las Vegas will be celebrating NCOD on Saturday, October 12, 2013. This event will be a street festival in the area of Paradise Rd and Naples St. (the "Fruit Loop"). There will be live entertainment with special guest appearances, area business promotions and exhibit spaces in business parking lots. Free parking provided in the lot behind Get Booked.

ZUMANITY THE SENSUAL SIDE OF CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S CELEBRATE 10 YEARS

Zumanity, the Sensual Side of Cirque du Soleil, melds sexuality, athleticism, and comedy. This is a highly eroticized, cabaret-style production that takes a seductive twist on reality, making the provocative playful and the forbidden electrifying. Created for adults 18 and over, audience members go through a succession of topless fantasies, autoerotic S&M, and all the facets of passion and lust.

Before the show begins, the audience is amused and aroused by Antonio with his infectious charm that shines as bright as his gold suit. The Botero twins, voluptuous ladies dressed in racy French maid outfits draw laughter and curiosity from the audience as they squeeze in and out of awkward positions between aisles and guests. As the two make their way to the stage with a flock of other characters, the show finally begins with Edie, "the Mistress of Sensuality," a drag queen that guides the audience seductively through provocative indulgences.

From tribal dancing and graceful acrobatic swimmers to lusty male lovers and awe-inspiring aerialist intertwined on a white curtain draped from the ceiling, beauty molds shatter as characters tantalize the crowd in all shapes, sizes, colors and sexual preference.

As the third Cirque du Soleil show added to the strip, Zumanity continues to celebrate sensuality and sexuality. Join them this month and perhaps you'll be invited to close the show with an "orgy" in-the-round.

GAY DAYS® LAS VEGAS SEPTEMBER 3 - 8

Gay Days® Orlando began 24 years ago as a one-day event at Magic Kingdom. It has since grown to be a full week of events around Orlando and is ranked in the top five LGBT vacation events in the world. September 2012, President Chris Manley decided to bring the party to Las Vegas and after just one year Gay Days® Las Vegas ranked seventh BEST Gay destination in the world.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Gay Days® Kick Off Party
Tropicana Lounge
5 PM - 8 PM

Gay Days® Diversity Dinner
Bacios inside Tropicana Las Vegas
Suggested dining starting at 5pm

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

**Gay Days® Diversity Dinner
ROCK & DINE**
Hard Rock Cafe on Harmon
5 PM to 6 PM - DJ Ricoche at 8 PM,
Free Admission

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Gay Days® Welcome Pool Party
Luxor Oasis Pool
10 AM to 6 PM

Gay Days® Expo - Day 1
Luxor Hotel & Casino
Noon - 6 PM

Gay Days® Diversity Dinner
Rice & Company inside Luxor Hotel & Casino
Suggested dining starting at 5pm

Gay Days® Throwback Thursday
Hard Rock LIVE on The Strip.
Doors open at 9 AM FREE ADMISSION

Gay Days® Sinful Friday Pool Party
Luxor Oasis Pool
10 AM to 6 PM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Gay Days Expo - Day 2
Luxor, Noon - 6 PM

Gay Days Diversity Dinner Addiction
Rumor Boutique Hotel
Suggested dining starting at 5pm

Gay Days GLOW Pool Party
Rumor Gossip Pool
7 PM to 3 AM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Gay Days® The Affair Pool Party
Luxor Oasis Pool
10 AM to 6 PM

Gay Days® Expo - Day 3
Luxor Hotel & Casino
11 AM - 6 PM

Gay Days® Diversity Diner at
Biscayne inside Tropicana Las Vegas
Suggested dining starting at 5pm

Gay Days® Glam Party
Tropicana Lounge
6 PM - 10 PM FREE Admission

The Official Gay Days® Club Party
Hard Rock LIVE on The Strip
Doors at 9:30 PM. DJ DIESEL at 10 PM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Gay Days® Dog Yappy Hour Party
Rumor Boutique Resort
10 AM - 6 PM

Gay Days® Expo - Day 4
Luxor Hotel & Casino
11 AM - 4 PM

Gay Days® Pricilla Slot Tournament
Tropicana Las Vegas Hotel
(Registration 11 AM - 1 PM)

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The official women's events of Las Vegas PRIDE. Shedonism, the original Women's weekend in Las Vegas with a complete resort hotel TAKE OVER! The boys far outnumber the girls in presence, so Shedonism has countered this at PRIDE with a carefully developed weekend for the ladies. Shedonism 2013 will feature new events and venues, learn more at www.shedonismlasvegas.com

LUST | The View @ THE PLAMS
Thursday, September 5, 10 PM - 3 AM

The official women's celebration at Las Vegas PRIDE kicks off a weekend long celebration of SIN. Have some drinks, play some pool or shuffle board and steal an amazing view of the city from 50 floors in the sky.

3rd Annual Dyke March | PRIDE Parade
staging area W Charleston & 4th street
Friday, September 6, 6 PM

Bring your signs, beads, t-shirts and whistles and join the ladies for the 3rd annual PRIDE Parade March downtown.

SIN - After Parade Party | MEET 233 S 4th St
Friday, September 6, 8 PM

SIN is the official women's after-parade party. Enjoy this indoor and outdoor party with drag shows and performances, DJ's and dancing.

Eden Pool Party | THE PALMS
Saturday, September 7, 12 PM - 5 PM

Day parties, nightclub parties, pop stars, singers, dancers, performers, DJ's, comedians, show girls, poker tournaments and a parade (just to name a few). All happening in one weekend for an "L"GBT experience like no other. Make your reservations today!

Wake up and indulge in the scenery while getting 'wet' at the first pool party of the weekend. Cruise the hotel, get your groove on to the resident party DJ's as they make their own waves on the turntables.

Texas Hold-em Celesbian Charity Tournament
HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO
Saturday, September 7, 5 PM - 9 PM

Take a gamble, press up against lady luck, because the good prizes are up for grabs. Prizes include SWEET vacation, VIP Crazy Horse Burlesque show Tickets, gift packages and \$8,000 in prizes. Celebrities include: Vanessa Rousso, and Vanese Selbst. Reservation is required.

Envy Nightclub Event
HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO
Saturday, September 7, 10 PM - 4 PM

Hosted by the The Real L Word cast members of season 1, 2, and 3. Bring your flip cam and maybe you can make your own reality. The very sexy Vegas dance team will seduce your panties off with a mere glance.

Vice Pool Party | THE PALMS
Sunday, September 8, 12 PM - 6 PM

Salvation Sunday Closing Nightclub Event
Ghostbar @THE PALMS

Enjoy the perfect weather and the fresh air patio. Overlook the Las Vegas Strip and reminisce about all the things you can't remember you just did. As the DJ's play their finale, sexy go-go's and choreographed dance shows, hug it out with your friends, last chance to get those digits of that girl you noticed all weekend. "Save yourself here" Salvation closing party.

Relax (this was vacation)
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Poolside
Monday, September 9, 12 PM - 5 PM

Finally, Hard Rock Hotel invites you to relax poolside Monday morning with a full bar and Hard Rock Hotel DJ. Mostly a locals retreat, but it's time to join the rest of the world again for this mainstream party. Say out say goodbye to the girls-only takeovers and leave with just your memories.

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EATING OUT

Mon Ami Gabi

[by Michael Barbieri]
www.myvegasobsession.com

I'm sitting in a charming French bistro. The lighting is low and I have a cozy corner table in the Main Dining Room. Mahogany partitions topped with brass rails define dining areas, and champagne bottles—mostly magnums and jeroboams—are a part of the decor, along with framed prints and copper cooking pots. Servers are zipping from room to room and I'm sipping a cocktail made with Lillet. It's all so wonderfully French! It's hard to believe I'm not on the Champs Élysées. No, I'm on ze boulevard—Las Vegas Boulevard! Yes, this is Vegas and I'm at Mon Ami Gabi.

Tucked away in the northwest corner of the Paris Las Vegas Casino, Mon Ami Gabi has the feel of an authentic Parisian eatery—globe lamps, crisp white tablecloths, white tiled floors, and bentwood chairs. Archways are decorated with etched glass panels. Red velvet curtains add grandeur. And the servers wear long aprons over their black and whites. Seated in one of the interior dining areas, you could easily forget you were in Sin City. Other dining rooms, however, look out on the Strip, the Bellagio fountains, and the base of the hotel's Eiffel Tower replica. There's even an outdoor cafe which lets diners be a part of the energy and craziness of the Vegas Strip.

I went to Mon Ami Gabi on a whim. I had heard wonderful things about Executive Chef Partner Terry Lynch's classic French bistro fare, but hadn't had a chance to dine there yet. I arrived rather late—about 9:30—and without a reservation, but was accommodated almost immediately. Within moments I was set up with a loaf

of fresh bread in its own white paper sheath, and a dish of carottes râpées: a popular French salad made from grated fresh carrots, honey, brown sugar, raisins, and olive oil. I decided to start with a cocktail and ordered a Scarlet Letter: Lillet Rouge, raspberry vodka and raspberry puree.

After considering some excellent suggestions from my server, Michele, I made my choices from the menu. I love escargots, so I had to try the Wild Escargots De Bourgogne: oven roasted snails in a garlic-herb butter. The presentation was fairly standard—a round metal serving plate with six indentations, each holding one of the little gastropods and a good portion of the butter which had liquefied leaving a layer of herbs coating the top of the dish like a green blanket. Tender and a little chewy, without being rubbery, the escargots





with a fork. Served with fingerling potatoes, cherry tomatoes, watercress, and a combination of minced spring onion, zucchini, and yellow squash, the dish was rustic and deeply satisfying.

Now, my friend, Richard, back home in New York, is a phenomenal chef who turned me into a connoisseur of bread puddings back when we worked together. It seemed an obvious choice then that I should end my meal with the White Chocolate Bread Pudding. The small, circular pudding was a gorgeous, eggy-yellow color all around, with a golden brown, caramelized top. Served with a dusting of powdered sugar, a sinful, gooey butterscotch sauce, and a scoop of vanilla ice cream, the pudding was warm and light, while still retaining the dense richness this old-fashioned dessert ought to have.

themselves were wonderfully garlicky with a subtle herbal finish. At Michele's urging, I also ordered the Duck Confit & Fingerling Potato appetizer. This was traditional French cooking at its best—a duck leg and thigh, slow cooked in its own fat, until rendered fall-off-the-bone tender. The unmistakably strong ducky flavor was nicely complemented by the balsamic cherries, which provided a touch of acid. This was definitely a culinary wow moment—one I wanted never to end!

For my main course, I was in the mood for something homey, but couldn't decide between the Chicken Grandmere and the Braised Beef Shortribs. I was told the shortribs had recently been restored to the menu after an absence. Apparently, they had been such a favorite with diners that when they were removed customers had complained. That was all I needed to hear. When the ribs arrived, I found them to be unlike most I'd encountered. The bones seemed to have been deftly extracted and the meat was left intact, almost as a single cut. Although they needed just a touch of salt, they had been perfectly cooked, leaving them beautifully tender, shredding easily

The Main Dining Room, in which I was seated, felt very empty; but I knew there were other diners, particularly in the North and South Pavilions with their dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows, and out on the Terrace at the sidewalk cafe. Also, due to the late hour, many of the staff were already running their prep list for the next day's service—folding napkins, laying silverware, and polishing glasses. Still, none of that got in the way of their being attentive to my needs. Michele had other tables in the Cafe Les Halles room to my right, but was always available to chat me up or answer any questions I had about the food. The combination of lovely ambience, excellent service, and phenomenal food, made for a memorable meal!

One of the aspects I enjoyed most about Mon Ami Gabi, was the lack of pretense in their food. This was all about French comfort food—Onion Soup Au Gratin, Steak Au Poivre, Mussels with French Fries, Trout Amandine, and so many other classic dishes from which to choose, all presented in a simple, unfussy fashion.

A well made plate of food can transport you to another time or place. So whether it be for breakfast, lunch, brunch, or dinner, if you want a little taste of Paris in the middle of the Vegas Strip, try Mon Ami Gabi. C'est parfait! ■

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BOTTOMS UP

@ Hakkasan at the MGM Grand

[by Russ White]

This month we take Bottom's Up to the latest mega nightclub and restaurant on the Strip—Hakkasan at the MGM Grand—occupying five stories at the corner of Tropicana and Las Vegas Boulevard in a completely redesigns space where Studio 54 once anchored Las Vegas nightlife.

Hakkasan is known around the world as one of the most successful modern restaurants, and the latest addition to the Strip certainly upholds Vegas standards in experiential dining with five floors of restaurant, lounge and nightclub.

I met Hein Troung, bar manager for Hakkasan on the third floor Lily Lounge for a sampling of two of the most popular cocktails: The Chinese Mule and the namesake Hakka.

Ginger beer as a mixer is this year's trend drink in Vegas and the Chinese Mule, Hakkasan's rendition of the Moscow Mule, mingles Ketel One vodka and Masumi Okuden Junmai sake with fresh lime juice, house-made ginger juice, cilantro, and ginger beer.

This is one savory cocktail. The ginger and cilantro make this a perfect drink before dinner. Ginger cleanses the palette and adds a bit of kick. Sake softens the vodka and the ginger beer adds a little fizz. This is a great conversational cocktail that also pairs well with the crispy duck salad or grouper.

My second drink was the Hakka. A definite contrast to the Mule,



Chinese Mule

Photography by Anthony Mair

Hakka combines fresh passion fruit, coconut creme, lime juice and lychee juice with Belvedere vodka, Masumi Okuden junmai sake, and Soho lychee liqueur. I expected a much sweeter drink, but was delighted with a mild yet compelling beverage that is easy to drink.

Unlike the Chinese Mule with the stand-out ginger and lime flavors, the Hakka ingredients meld together so well, it's hard to discern the ingredients. The coconut creme adds comfort; the passion fruit and lychee make the drink exotic; the lime juice makes it familiar.

Where most mixologists would be satisfied with passion fruit juice, Hakkasan scoops out half a passion fruit—seeds and all—adding an extra texture to the cocktail.

Many guests enjoy the Hakka with their meal, but I'll be back to try it along side the coconut pudding. ■



What you need to know about the 2013 Las Vegas PRIDE Parade

Join us downtown for the most glamorous, glittering spectacle ever created by the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community of Southern Nevada, the annual Las Vegas PRIDE Night Parade.

General Information

More grand than any other PRIDE parade ever held in Las Vegas, its SNAPI's 15th Annual PRIDE Night Parade presented by MGM Resorts International! Join us from 7 to 10pm in downtown Las Vegas for the most glamorous, glittering spectacle ever created by the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community of Southern Nevada. This year's PRIDE Night Parade, led by our Parade Grand Marshal Edward Padilla and Celebrity Grand Marshals from the cast of Divas Las Vegas, features Las Vegas' gay and straight business community, nonprofit organizations, GLBT service agencies, civic groups, and churches as well as SNAPI's royalty. Don't forget to come early to grab the best spot and pre-party with PRIDE at MEET Las Vegas (at the corner of 4th Street & Bridger Ave. Then, when the parade ends, make sure to keep the party going at the official after party at Club Metro in the Q Central (the Commercial Center at 953 East Sahara Ave.)

**Parade Pre-party at MEET and begins at 5pm on
Friday, September 6, 2013.
Parade begins at 8pm**

The Parade Route

The parade route begins at West Charleston Blvd. and heads north along 4th Street to Ogden Avenue. Secure your spot where the action happens early. The main stage is at Bridger Avenue just two blocks south of the Fremont Street Experience.

This year Cox is proud to support Southern Nevada's GLBT community as the official broadcast partner of the PRIDE Night Parade. Watch the parade LIVE on September 6th from 8pm - 10pm on Cox Channel 96 or online at www.cox96.net.

There is a competition for parade entries vying for trophies for best walking units, vehicle units, and floats. Judging takes place at the grandstand so support your entry with thunderous applause as they strut their stuff for our celebrity judges. Parade entry forms will be accepted until 6pm on August 31, 2012. ■

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LAS VEGAS, MEET BLEONA

[by Miranda Boyd]



"I live for that applause! It's what I do. It's what I breath for. It's what I exist for."

Bleona Qereti—just Bleona to her fans—is one of the most famous people you may not know. A renowned superstar in her native Albania, Bleona has achieved international success unprecedented for a Southeastern European artist. This year she's bringing her unique style and sensation to Las Vegas as the headliner for Las Vegas PRIDE.

Called the Madonna of Albania, Bleona began performing at age five. Dignitaries and leaders from her country would invite her to sing for their campaigns, helping her develop a persona and life that, while full of pressures, is something she feels she was born to do. "My dad was involved with the government," she says. "So I was born into a life of telephones and drivers when everyone else was pretty much struggling to eat. But me being a singer didn't really come because I was a privileged kid. If anything that added so much pressure on me and I had to be the best!" Since then she's recorded eight albums in her home country, and is positioning herself for an exceptional introduction to American audiences. "It's a long time since then, but basically I'm in the position that I don't know what else to be if I'm not a singer because I've done this my whole life. ... Music is my life."

Love for music, and the life it's brought her, is evident in all she does—from the moment she's seen taking the stage, to the sincerity in her voice as she describes the joy of a lifetime spent there. "I don't know if there's any other feeling in the world that will substitute the feeling you get when you have 100,000 people in a venue and you're playing for them and everyone is raising their hands together with you

and dancing with you. For me, that's the most irreplaceable feeling in the world. And that is what actually drives me and what actually pushes me to work harder than everybody else." And working harder to be outstanding, not just in Albania but throughout the world, is something Bleona does with a willing grace.

"Usually I'm the one that I refuse to leave the stage." Her determination is apparent through her music and the volume of her catalog, but her words convey an intelligence and presence that makes her performance that much more appealing for its shared revelry. "It's like you're not even tired after having a four hour concert because the energy you get from people is so amazing and it's so refreshing. I'm actually never tired after a concert. I just want to go, go, go." That energy and enthusiasm is even more admirable when her conscience is considered.

While the list of starlets consumed by their own troubles seems to unceasingly grow, the thought of a woman—who's grown up in the public eye—having remained free of drugs and excessive drinking is as refreshing to the American public as it is expressive of her depth and devotion. She explains, "I think having a strong family foundation is the key on forming the character of someone; so I always knew who I was. I never felt the need to be cool or follow the trend. I think a lot of entertainers get into drugs, especially if they're introduced to it on a young age, because they deal with a lot of pressure and also don't know how to deal with fame. I always was very lucky that my family was so close to me and always with me." And a different relationship abided her even more

reason to abstain. "My first boyfriend did drugs and he almost died in my arms, and I saw with my own eyes what drugs can do to someone. So I had no curiosity to try it." With that stability and purity in tact, Bleona was able to craft a career and a life that eventually brought her from familiar locales to new shores.

Coming from a nation that's celebrated her for years, Bleona has benefited from a wealth of fans already devoted to her substance and style. But being a woman who loves challenges, she set her sights on audiences awaiting her awe. "I would see shows like X-Factor or this America's Got Talent, and I could see really, really talented people competing there. And I would always wonder when I was back home like, my god, if I had to start this over again, would I be able to do it? So that was actually the reason I moved to America, because this is a challenge that I wanted to prove to myself first and then to everybody else." Proving her quality to herself may have been the inspiration for her journey, but the evidence observed by the people who've seen her since her arrival is making the waves that define the tide of one's career.

"I've done a lot of concerts now for people who've never head me before, and I will tell you, as an entertainer, you know when you're really good is when you can make people dance that have never heard of you before—who those people are not your fans, they don't know who you are, but by the end of the show those people come to you, have photos with you, dance with you, greet you and meet you. You're good as an entertainer." Entertainment is exactly what people get through Bleona's music. And woven within the melodies are her unique persona and story that brought her from

"I believe in equality. I believe people need to do what they need to do. People are born a certain way, and they are free. They need to be free to do whatever the hell they want in their life. And this is what I believe in."

European superstar to American upstart demanding a chance.

While on tour in Europe in 2007 and 2008, Bleona heard a song by Timbaland, and was so transfixed that she sought him out to produce her American debut. Despite early reluctance from the producer, Bleona's determination once again paid off. "For like six months I refused to leave the studio until he said yes to me." Finally, with artistic and critical support, she cut a series of singles in Timbaland's studio. "Pass Out" is available on iTunes, "Without You" is already being remixed by top DJs, and "Take it Like a Man" will be launched in London and Las Vegas this summer. And she'll soon be working with director Chris Applebaum on a new video. It all may seem like the beginnings of a fabulous career for any young star, but to Bleona, it's just another record. "For me it's a very unseparated thing. I feel funny when people talk about, 'This is how the music industry is for certain locations.' And I'm like, 'Yeah, this is how life is, this is life.' I don't have much to say for the music industry, because at the end of the day it's the same system everywhere you go. It's people."

The people, especially the fans, are the driving force for a star as bright as Bleona. And throughout this Pride season, the LGBT fan base is feeling her warmth. Fresh off a lauded performance at White Party in Palm Springs, Bleona explains why she cherishes and respects the community saying, "The gay community has always been a very big supporter of my songs back in Europe. And now that I'm

getting introduced here to the American public, it's really important because that community has reacted very, very well to my music. ... People had no idea who I was and they embraced my songs and was really, really a fantastic experience. ... I just see a lot of messages on twitter and on my website saying, 'Bleona, we're gay guys from Albania, thank you for what you're doing for us.' They really love my initiative to be very open to the topic because, as you know, being Eastern Europe, things are not as open as I would love them to be. But I am just definitely doing my part, and at the end of the day, I believe in equality. I believe people need to do what they need to do. People are born a certain way, and they are free. They need to be free to do whatever the hell they want in their life. And this is what I believe in."

With a love of music, a life spent making it, superb skill as an entertainer, and an adoration for the fans that support her, Bleona is a star blazing in one skyline and

quickly rising over a new horizon. September will see her shining at Las Vegas PRIDE 2013, creating a season of memories, reinforcing the confidence earned throughout her extraordinary life. "I can reassure you guys it's going to be an amazing, amazing show. And it's going to be something that I will remember for a long time. ... I'm really, really looking forward to getting introduced to the world through my music." ■





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Bryan Chan

Bryan Chan got his start within the Las Vegas community in 2005, just six months after he moved here to be a part of the Chippendales. During his performance in Naked Hearts, Chan looked out and marveled at how so many people from different shows on the Strip came together and dedicated their time and talents to support such an important cause. Since then he's been involved with the HRC, NCOD, the AIDS Walk, Golden Rainbow, and the Black and White Ball, just to name a few. Chan tries to be very active in many diverse areas of the community, either by helping to organize events, or doing something as simple as attending them. Part of Chan's personal philosophy is that, "pride means being exactly who you are and not being ashamed of it. Equality means you didn't have to be ashamed of it in the first place."

by James Wheble



Rose Miztri

Rose Miztri returned to Las Vegas four years ago after leaving the city in 1978. Since returning, Miztri has become founder of the Southern Nevada Trans Alliance, a venue to connect and unite the Las Vegas transgender community, and also participates in groups and events at The Center, including Trans.lation, Out of the (Gender) Box, and Trans Veterans of Las Vegas. Miztri's genuine compassion and care, as well as unique experiences in the Vietnam War, have informed contributions to the local trans community. "I understood to give your life to save the lives of others was what the job required." This has fueled the unapologetic 64-year-old's tireless march for equality and fair treatment of transgender people both inside and outside of the LGBT community.

by Brandon Jones



Dina Proto

This powerful figure has been with the community since 1999. She created Teazed, an LGBT-focussed greeting card company which, along with commercial displays in stores like Albertson's, donates cards to help fund LGBT organizations. She is also co-chair to the QVegas Business Alliance—a nonprofit business networking organization and the Nevada affiliate chamber for the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Originally from Newtown, Pennsylvania, Proto has been to every PRIDE parade since she and her wife came out; and their children have gone to every one with them. "We walk with our church to PRIDE every year and I love the authenticity," she says. "Pride is the ability to be authentic with yourself, family, friends, and society. Equality means enjoying all the rights, liberties and freedoms as everyone else in society."

by Kenny Lee Williams



Desarae Pendavis

Desarae Pendavis loves to plant community seeds and watch them grow. For the past seven years, she has been a show director working throughout Vegas' hottest gay nightlife including Drink N' Drag and now Share Nightclub. Some of this city's best-known LGBT entertainers, including Miss Gay Las Vegas 2010, have grown into their stardom under the watchful and caring eye of Pendavis. "I'm Keeping Drag Alive," she says of Heart Pageantry Systems, a drag company of which she is the CEO. Opening the door for the community to easily access the drag scene has long been one of Pendavis' passions, and this year she celebrates 20 successful years in the drag field with proud drag mother and big sister CoCo VanCartier by her side. As Pride season rolls in, Desarae encourages standing up for what's right and putting down what's wrong. "We are a people of love and togetherness, and we should be proud and share it with the partner we desire!"

by Christina Lynn Givant



Candice Nichols

Educator, HIV as well as LGBT activist, lobbyist, community leader—these are just a few of the reasons why native Las Vegas resident Candice Nichols was chosen as a Person of Pride. She has been helping and working in the community for 23 years and going to PRIDE since the very first parade. The idea of pride and what it stands for is very important to Nichols because she has been there from the beginning and has seen the growth and changes that the celebration has made. “[It means] pride in who we are and in how far our movement has come in a relatively short time. I think the word equality stands alone in its meaning. It’s written by our forefathers in our constitution that we should all be treated equal. End of story.”

by Peyton-Renae Love



Holly Reese

Holly Reese’s compassion for other human beings seems endless. As a member of Gender Justice Nevada, Reese works to support and affirm people from all backgrounds through community-wide coalition-building. Reese is also involved with the Queer Anti-Violence Project, which runs a crisis hotline operated by certified advocates to make sure that the victims get exactly what they need. Each PRIDE she’s been to, on the East and West Coasts, has been an amazing experience full of “fun, vibrant, and brave human beings.” Reese has enjoyed many PRIDEs throughout the country, the common theme of them all being acceptance, freedom, and empowerment. “When we look at persons for what they have to offer in terms of experience and heart instead of what category they do or do not fit into, when love and respect and honor are revered more than money and power, we will have equality.”

by James Wheble



John Monzo

John Monzo came to the valley in 1999 to explore and help others as best he could. He’s been supporting the LGBT community for several years by volunteering at The Center in its various locations. He has attended PRIDE parades countless times and enjoys seeing people being themselves and truly feeling happy. A Chicago native, he believes pride and equality are major components our lives must have, and also comments that, “They [equality and pride] are very much the same in different ways, and equality is something everyone has truly been born with.” Monzo, who is always smiling no matter what, adds that, “We are all equal and should have pride to know it.

by Kenny Lee Williams



Mark Ades

Careers are a defining element of many people’s lives, but what may be much more indicative of people’s passions is their choice of non-work related activities. When he lived in his hometown of Los Angeles, Mark Ades was heavily involved in political activism during his free time including helping to write the Hate Crime Ordinance for the city while sitting as a city planner and historical commissioner. In Vegas, Ades has been with Club Metro from its inception, construction, and now as a thriving club in Sin City’s LGBT nightlife. He seeks to create a safe, inclusive, but fun venue through Club Metro and collaboration with other gay bars in Vegas. For Mark, pride means being comfortable and assertive about expressing who you are. However, equality is a necessary counterpart to the individualistic emphasis of pride. Mark’s concept of equality includes the recognition of the common respect and dignity deserved by our fellow human beings in spite of our differences. His personal philosophy regarding the meaning of pride and equality is apparent in his working life. Ades sees much potential for the LGBT community and the annual PRIDE Parade to match the elegance, expressiveness, and cosmopolitanism of the greater city of Las Vegas. He has already put much effort into closing this gap between grand visions and reality, and we are excited to see this continue in the future!

by Brian Trinh



Joshua Montgomery

Joshua Montgomery, a San Diego native, has played an honorable part in the LGBT community for over ten exciting years. Being HIV+ himself, Montgomery is very passionate about educating others about safer sex behaviors and helping to reduce new numbers of HIV infections. Montgomery moved to Las Vegas in 2003 and immediately joined the board of directors for Las Vegas PRIDE. He has always enjoyed PRIDE but has never been able to see it from a consumers point, and has always enjoyed the amazing privilege of working them. His passionate but direct way of teaching the community about both HIV and STD prevention has helped many. "Pride and equality to me," he says, "means being able to be myself at all times and be proud, having no fear of judgment, walking outside with no ridicule, being able to love without any consequence."

by Erin Johnson



Yolanda Castaneda

Yolanda Castaneda is a native Las Vegas and is an avid volunteer for the Human Rights Campaign and The Center. She has co-chaired HRC's annual gala and silent auctions events in the past. Her commendable service and leadership has helped shape Las Vegas' LGBT community. Castaneda has attended Las Vegas' annual PRIDE and she appreciates PRIDE's ability to bring people together in an accepting environment. Pride and equality are important concepts to Castaneda. She believes that pride is "knowing who you are and expressing yourself [and] it doesn't matter how you identify yourself... as long as you love the way you are living." She also believes equality is something we should all strive for and she hopes that one day every individual will have the same rights everywhere.

by Branden Jung



Analese Alvarez

Analese Alvarez is a music teacher for Clark County School District and has been in Las Vegas since 2006. She was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California, attended USC in Los Angeles, and taught in Oxnard before moving to Nevada. Alvarez is the Gay-Straight Alliance advisor at her school, has volunteered for PRIDE, and is on the GLSEN Southern Nevada board. Her GSA club created the GSA Jam—a dance that invites LGBT and ally student clubs from all CCSD high schools. The Jam will celebrate its third year with participation from dozens of schools and hundreds of students. Alvarez notes the importance of teaching compassion, pride, tolerance, and equality to Las Vegas youth, and has enjoyed seeing the local community grow. Alvarez met her girlfriend in Las Vegas, and they both enjoy supporting the vendors and meeting people at PRIDE each year. They are planning to be married in Santa Barbara in April.

by Branden Jung



Camthi Dao

Camthi Dao immigrated to Carson City from Vietnam when she was three. In 2000 she moved to Las Vegas and began seeking local LGBT groups with whom to volunteer. The first she found was Betty's Outrageous Adventures, an organization she still works with. In addition to BOA, Dao has volunteered with AFAN and the Human Rights Campaign. This Pride season, Dao is preparing for the events and festivities with optimism stating, "This is about the only time everyone comes out of their daily routine of work and living. We all celebrate and come together as a community." And, through her work with Lez Vegas In Motion and HRC, she continues to strive for equality that she defines as, "Just being myself and being normal. Heterosexual people wake up and it's a given. Unfortunately, right now we wake up and we still have to fight for our equality. So one day I'll just be able to wake up and say, 'Oh, I don't have to think about it.'"

by Miranda Boyd



Suz E. Que

Originally from Bangkok, Thailand, Suz E. Que has been part of the Las Vegas LGBT community for many years. Not limiting herself strictly to the social scene, Suz E. Que has also been an active volunteer. She has worked with nonprofit organizations to inspire youth to be themselves and to be proud of who they are, and has also shared her time with organizations such as Gender Justice Nevada and Betty's Outrageous Adventures, among others. Suz E. Que has attended her fair amount of pride parades and states, "My most memorable parade was when I had my kids with me and they were singing their lungs out to Cydni Lauper music!" She has been a supporter in Vegas since 1976, and believes that, "Pride and equality are about loving, respectful and grateful attitudes toward oneself and to others".

by Kenny Lee Williams



Tatiana Lewis

"Pride is just being very proud of yourself, your community, and how wonderful it is. Pride is love. That is what the community is, love." This is what pride means to Ladies of Q Socials event director, Tatiana Lewis, who will be celebrating her very first Las Vegas PRIDE this year. Raised in Northern California, Lewis started hosting these events just nine short months after coming out of the closet in 2011. April 9, 2012, was the day that she started the socials with a turn out of 14 people. However, through her hard work and dedication, that number has gone from a humble 14 to just over 100 people of all gender identities and orientations. The driving force is the wonderful people that show their gratitude for her work. With such ambition, there is no doubt that Ladies of Q Socials will be the talk of the town in no time. As Lewis says, "Why would I stop?"

by Peyton Renae-Love



Matthew Frazier

Matthew Frazier has been a strong part of our Las Vegas community since he moved here in 2000. Originally from Utah, Frazier moved here as a trustee of the John C. Kish Foundation. As a trustee, he's involved with the trust in various efforts to improve equality—Flip-the-Script Campaign, LGBT youth services at The Center's including Youth Thanksgiving and Christmas party, and health-related services offered by St. Therese and Golden Rainbow. Frazier has been to several of the PRIDE parades, and is continuously impressed with the growing number of corporate community supporters. He says, "Equality is being treated the same in all areas of the law, and having the same legal protections that all citizens enjoy."

by James Wheble



Tom Kovach

Tom Kovach is the Interim Executive Director of The Center. The apparent temporariness of this title does not reflect the actual picture of his long, sustained involvement in the Las Vegas LGBT community during the past ten years. Kovach co-founded the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Steering Committee and regularly helps chair the annual HRC Gala in Las Vegas. He has also served on boards for both HRC and The Center. Kovach is well-traveled having lived in the Midwest and East Coast of the US and also England before arriving in Sin City. For Kovach, the concepts of pride and equality are self-explanatory, and are most obviously realized in personal experiences and relationships with others. In particular, he considers the unconditional love and support of his parents after he came out to them as a moving example of this belief.

by Brian Trinh



Official Mister Gay World Photography

Matt Simmons

Mr. Gay World USA, Las Vegas Stoli boy, HRC volunteer—these are just a few of the titles that Matt Simmons currently holds in his mission to inspire his peers to transcend their obstacles to achieve their dreams. Having moved around the country (and several international cities as well) for most of his life, Simmons finally settled in Las Vegas about two years ago, and hasn't slowed down for a minute. For Simmons, pride and equality mean living in a society that accepts you for who you are. "I can live without fear of judgment or discrimination. I can simply be me."

by James Wheble



TJ Degenhart

Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, TJ Degenhart moved to Las Vegas about three years ago to bartend for Share Nightclub. It wasn't long before a modeling agent scouted Degenhart and his career took off. Now Degenhart represents multiple companies that are all supportive of the LGBT community. Whenever PRIDE comes into town he loves to attend the events to experience all of the energy and the attitudes that come together. He remarks that PRIDE events are full of "beautiful people, inside and out," and he loves to see the families bring their children to the festival as it shows that our society is "moving in the right direction." To Degenhart, pride is a hard-won value that came after battles over his sense of self. His words of wisdom are, "I believe our unique and special talents and abilities should set us apart from one another, not our sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, etc."

by James Wheble



Tony Clark

It was 1994 when Tony Clark first went to The Center, joined the 20-Something Group, and took his first steps into developing exciting community events. Shortly after, he joined the Las Vegas PRIDE Board of Directors and developed the original string of LGBT PRIDE events and ran the monthly skate night that helped pay the rent for The Center. In 2000, he helped bring an openly gay theme party to the Strip with a turnout of over 3,000 people! Clark tirelessly continues to innovate the nightlife scene hosting the city's first gay Halloween block party as well as the 2011 and 2012 National Coming Out Day block parties. Clark's passion for keeping the community connected in a social setting is unparalleled, and the entire valley has him to thank for many of its annual celebrations. On June 5, 2013, Clark launched his latest venture, Las Vegas' newest gay lounge and club, Club Metro.

by Christina Lynn Givant



Terrence Thorton

Terrence Thorton has been an important leader in the LGBT and broader Las Vegas community since 1999. He is the Director of Investor Services and Development for the Regional Economic Authority for Southern Nevada (Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, LVGEA). Thorton raises money for programs that focus on creating new jobs and industries in Southern Nevada. Thorton believes that pride is "more than an LGBT celebration, but a celebration to anyone willing to think outside of the box and take action to make themselves, their peers and their community better." He hopes that one day we will stop using labels and abandon the barriers associated with nationality, ethnicity, and religion that keep the nation segmented. Thorton's hope is that one day we will "see a couple in love and not focus on gender, but respect and honor their right to marry or not as they choose."

by Branden Jung



Eric Ryan

Eric Ryan has been a volunteer firefighter for the Los Angeles Fire Department for 27 years. As if that is not commendable enough, he is also the event coordinator for Sin City Shootout. In 2007, Ryan started with a simple goal of creating the world's greatest queer softball tournament. Now, in 2013, that goal has long been achieved. In January of 2014, Sin City Shootout expects to have over 7,000 attendees. Ryan said, "To me equality means everyone being given an equal chance in life to grow and be who they are without any limitations or restrictions based on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other factors. Pride to me is not only about my identity as a gay male, but in everything I do. Pride in my work, social interactions, the way I treat people and especially the event I put on each year in Las Vegas to name a few. All of these things make me proud that as a gay man I am able to accomplish and thrive in these aspects all the while being myself."

by Alex Camberos



Senator Kelvin Atkinson

Kelvin Atkinson received national media attention this April when he publicly came out on the floor of the Nevada Legislature during a debate over the repeal of Nevada's same-sex marriage ban. During his tenure as the incumbent senator for District 4 and as a former state assemblyman, he has co-sponsored several bills with regard to the LGBT community, most notably playing an instrumental role in the passage of Nevada's domestic partnership legislation. Atkinson recalls being a timid young boy taking shame in who he was. Today, he feels that he has come full circle and is determined to see through the passage of marriage equality in not just Nevada, but the entire country. Although the senator has never attended PRIDE celebrations in Las Vegas, he has been to numerous festivals around the country and plans on attending Las Vegas PRIDE this year.

by Brandon Jones



Cameron Catton

Cameron Catton is the Youth Services Manager at The Center. Catton came into the role of activist after moving from Michigan and spending six years as a public school teacher where the pervasive bullying and harassment of students forced the passion to challenge intolerance to the surface. Developing young LGBT leaders solidified as Catton's true calling; and joining The Center's team in 2012 to work with its youth groups was a perfect fit. Catton has established week-long programming to make PRIDE as accessible to young people as it is to adults. Catton strongly believes that pride feels different for everyone, and that it reflects not only one's accomplishments in the year, but is also a celebration of the many layers that make up each and every member of the community. As the country strives for a more equitable and accepting approach for everyone, Catton believes that the community must come together to address all issues, from systemic racism to disparities in healthcare.

by Peyton-Renae Love



Deb Browning

To know Deb Browning is to know a positive mindset and an optimistic attitude. Believing that pride is not an event but a way of life, Browning believes that true pride is found within—staying true to yourself. For over 15 years she has been a part of the LGBT community or, as she prefers to call it, the human community's progression to a state of acceptance of all. From bystander to event planner and organizer for many Texas LGBT pride events, Browning grew into a leadership role that continues today in Nevada. Known by many positive adjectives in the community, Browning has been called an advocate, a spokesperson and a unifier. She also stands for social justice, refusing to stand by while vicious judgment, hatred and discrimination taint the work around her. Browning wants equality for all people, and sees the time coming when all people, regardless of race, age, gender and sexual orientation will receive the same rights and fair treatment. It is only a matter of time and hard work.

by Christina Lynn Givant



Latoya Holman

California born and raised Latoya Holman is the Director of Projects and Community Outreach at R&R Partners Foundation. Although faced with discrimination being a proud, straight woman fighting for LGBT rights, she is nothing but true to herself. That's what she is fighting for: everyone's right to be who they are. Moments such as the recent Supreme Court rulings, watching the Strip turn purple for Spirit Day, and her supportive military father are just a few of the things that keep her fighting for the community, lobbying and attending events like the PRIDE parade. This year, to encourage those who cannot come out and will be spending this year's pride in the closet she says, "Even though you couldn't be with us, you can still be authentic. Be safe, but be authentic. We'll be waiting for you. Be proud of those celebrating, but for now, in your own space, be authentic."

by Peyton-Renae Love



Peter Bastien

Peter Bastien is the Executive Chef at Bronze Café at The Center, which opened its doors in March. Bastien was born in Los Angeles, CA and started serving the community as a volunteer for the LGBT synagogue Beth Chayim Chadashim. BCC introduced him to Project Chicken Soup, a Jewish nonprofit that provides weekly meals to people living with HIV/AIDS. Having the awesome experience of working in Project Chicken Soup's commercial kitchen inspired him to enroll in culinary school. After earning his culinary diploma from Le Cordon Bleu, he began catering monthly Shabbat dinners for BCC. Upon moving to Las Vegas, he found himself looking for more cooking opportunities with the community and soon came across The Center. "Pride is loving my amazing partner of 14 years, David Mozes, openly and without worry of what others might say, think, or feel about our love. Equality is the ability to be seen and heard as an American regardless of my sexuality."

by Erin Johnson



Linda Quackenboss

Originally from Orange County, California, Linda Quackenboss is now well-known in the LGBT community for her photography: publicity and marketing photos of The Center's new location, HRC and three covers of *QVegas*. She was recently quoted in the *Las Vegas Sun* on her belief in marriage equality. Realizing that a conservative upbringing had guided her into many misconceptions about the community, she developed the "Breaking Stereotypes of LGBTQ" personal photography project. The idea is to show, visually, that LGBTQ people are no different than the straight community. Quackenboss is eager to join the PRIDE festivities in Vegas this year following her past work and photography with The Dinah Shore events in Palm Springs, California. "Everyone should have the same rights and opportunities to live their lives in peace," Linda believes. "If an LGBTQ couple wishes to marry, I'd be honored to celebrate with them!"

by James Wheble



Garrett Pattiani

Garrett Pattiani has small town roots and a genuine passion for hospitality. "Being proud of yourself, what you believe in, and being truly happy for others when they achieve their own enlightenment is what keeps the world turning. It's the purest form of love that I know, and it's my driving force every day that I wake up—helping others grow to achieve their best. When we all operate at our best the world truly is a better place. Equality allows people to achieve the inner peace at an earlier time in one's life. When equal laws and treatment are present, more time and energy can be focused on enhancing other areas of one's life or others around them. To be unequal has no purpose but to slow the progress of life and other issues facing our world. Equality is the turning point for the rapid spread of life in general as so many things depend on it. Once that necessary foundation is achieved it is easier to build a stronger community in which all citizens prosper."

by Alex Camberos



David Mozes

"Pride is about demonstrating through action who we are and why we exist. It's a celebration of being a little different." That's the meaning of pride to co-owner of the Bronze Café, located inside of The Center, California born and raised David Mozes. After moving to Las Vegas in 2009, Mozes has been to the AIDS walk as well as PRIDE and has always enjoyed the diversity as well as the unity he feels when the community puts everything aside and comes together for these events, similar to how he feels about the Bronze Café. It gives not only the LGBT community a place to call their own, but it also gives allies a place to enjoy good food, amazing company and indulge on the educational resources The Center has to offer—one of them being Mozes' listening ears. He enjoys being someone that people can talk to and being someone that everyone knows they can talk to if they ever need help with just about anything. His place in the community is one of an educator, a businessman, as well as a true friend.

by Peyton-Renae Love



Coco Montrese

As a young college student, Coco Montrese started serving the LGBT community in and out of her drag character. She served as a youth counselor for teens with HIV and at night performed at countless benefits for LGBT communities across the country. Montrese first started attending pride events in college. "It was such a great feeling knowing I wasn't alone and many were going through the same thing I was going through." Montrese enjoyed the parades, performances, and seeing families and people come together in support of our community. Montrese is originally from Miami, Florida but moved to Las Vegas in January 2011 to join one of the most prestigious female impersonators, Frank Marino, in Divas Las Vegas at the Quad Resort and Casino. "Pride and equality mean the world to me. Pride saves lives! There was a time when we couldn't be openly proud of who we are and I've lost friends who were gay to suicide because their family, their peers, or their job wouldn't accept them because they are gay. Now, through pride, we educate and teach people to celebrate who we are, not just tolerate who we are. Equality is just as important because legally we deserve the same rights as others without discrimination."

by Erin Johnson



Crystal Woods

Crystal Woods came to Las Vegas from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1985 to perform in La Cage on the Las Vegas Strip. Woods now appears in What a Drag! at Flex Cocktail Lounge—the longest running drag show in Las Vegas. Woods has also helped raise money for AFAN and Make-a-Wish. Woods has been in the PRIDE Parade many times and says, "I love the parade because we get to see so many beautiful faces. I love that about Las Vegas!" Pride and equality, to Woods, mean "that people can stand tall and be proud of who you are and be loved without hate in their hearts."

by Miranda Boyd



Sin City Stud

Sin City Stud has been a Las Vegas resident for over thirty years. Having run one of the oldest and most legendary nightclubs in the Fruit Loop area, she has made a home for the LGBT hip hop community. For the past five years, Sin City Stud hosted the only after hours party for the lesbian community at Gipsy's Nightclub that brought in well over 300 people locally every weekend. Not only is she one of the most popular club promoters, but she is also a friend and confidant to the lesbian community. "Over the past few years I've found myself mentoring the youth, helping them set personal goals like going back to school, finding jobs, and dealing with daily obstacles and struggles. It seems they need positive energy to help them get through life, and it starts with a good role model." Looking forward to PRIDE this year, Sin City Studs shares her feelings on what pride means to her. "It means everything, starting with the lost and confused. I'm God's creation. I am my own thoughts and I am proud of who I am."

by CJ Sturgis



Christopher Preciado

Christopher Preciado is one of Las Vegas' strongest youth leaders. From volunteering to activism jobs, Preciado has helped to pioneer a new image for young people as LGBT community advocates. In 2012, Preciado worked to run The Center's Voter Pride Project, registering nearly 500 Nevadans to vote in the election. He also became an organizer for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), where he sponsored and hosted the successful Uniting Communities Nevada workshops in partnership with the Western States Center. The program discusses and dissects issues of power and oppression within the community. Most recently, Preciado has been an advocate for undocumented youth in Nevada, co-hosting "Drag For DREAMs," a fundraiser to pay for Deferred Action scholarships. He is currently the Discussion Night Chair for Vegas Mpowerment Project at The Center, bringing his passion for education and pride to their weekly meetings.

by Miranda Boyd



Kris Grajeda

Kris Grajeda moved to Las Vegas when she was eight years old. After coming out at 15, she noticed a lack of female influence in the community and became determined to make positive changes for women in the local LGBT scene. She became an enthusiastic advocate for the local LGBT females, searching for ways to balance the largely male-dominated city and LGBT demographic. Grajeda has helped organize and/or created events from the second annual Las Vegas Dyke March to local nightlife parties and social gatherings including Bootybar, Dollhaus and Cream Vegas. Grajeda is also the co-owner of the brand new LGBT spot, Blo Hookah Bar, which opens in September 2013. The website, VivaLezVegas.com is a new online service Grajeda created to provide local and visiting ladies a one-stop website for all lesbian needs in Las Vegas, also launching September 2013. "I have been attending [PRIDE] almost yearly since 1996. I like the fact that everyone comes together to celebrate their pride and individuality. I have been fortunate enough to watch Las Vegas PRIDE grow in size over the years and am proud of our city's accomplishments in embracing the LGBT community." Pride and equality to Grajeda mean "having confidence in your self and sexuality, embracing and accepting all people no matter their sex, religion, race, beliefs or sexual preference."

by Miranda Boyd



Diva Toxxx

Las Vegas native Diva Toxxx is the current headliner at FreeZone performing four nights a week. But that busy schedule doesn't stop Toxxx from participating in charitable events such as hosting Mpowerment's Pitch Black event in October 2011 and the Red Dress pre-party for the Sin City Sisters in February 2012. Toxxx is also a former member of the Imperial Royal Sovereign Court holding three titles. Toxxx has attended PRIDE events almost every year saying, "What I like about Pride is that it's a fun-filled event, and bringing our Community together with all walks of life. We are proud!." Toxxx adds, "Be proud of who you are, and ignore adversity. Be different, be colorful, and always stay true to yourself. ... I believe every human being or life form should have equal rights. We are all the same color on the inside."

by Miranda Boyd



Publisher's Note: Since temporarily moving the QVegas offices into The Center, the #QCrew has become more integrated into our surroundings. Watching the community embrace the new Center exhilarates and excites us, and there has been no better way for us to interact with so many people over the recent months. Part of that interaction has been the QVegas staff working with the youth program to provide writing workshops that eventually culminated into these 35 People with Pride interviews. Thank you James Wheble, Kenny Lee Williams, Branden Jung, Alex Camberos, Peyton-Renae Love, Erin Johnson, Christina Lynn Givant, Brian Trinh, and Brandon Jones for your efforts in interviewing our honorees, and to Felicia Jackson and Cameron Catton for facilitating the process.

MEET THE COVER BO



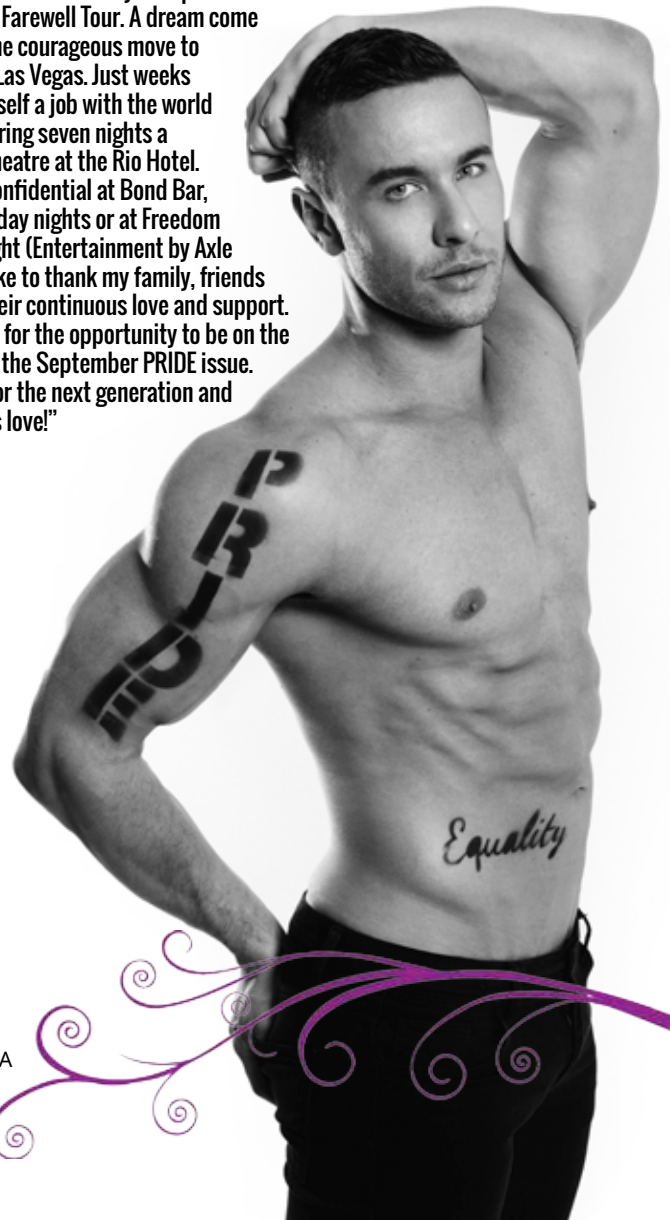
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Ryan Stuart

Ryan Stuart was born and raised in Melbourne, Australia. After enjoying a successful dancing and modeling career, where he starred in seven national and international musicals including the original cast of Priscilla Queen of the Desert The Musical, Chicago, Rocky Horror, and several music videos, rock concerts, TV commercials and short films. He most recently finished a tour with the world famous Barry Humphries/ Dame Edna's Eat Pray Laugh, Farewell Tour. A dream come true! Stuart recently made the courageous move to the USA and set up camp in Las Vegas. Just weeks after arriving, he landed himself a job with the world famous Chippendales appearing seven nights a week at The Chippendales Theatre at the Rio Hotel. Stuart can also be seen at Confidential at Bond Bar, Cosmopolitan Hotel Wednesday nights or at Freedom at Marquee every Sunday night (Entertainment by Axle Entertainment). "[I] would like to thank my family, friends and incredible partner for their continuous love and support. [I'm] also extremely grateful for the opportunity to be on the cover of QVegas to celebrate the September PRIDE issue. Here is to a brighter future for the next generation and equality for all. Love is love is love!"



Photography by RAEN BADUA
www.raenbadua.com

AYS

Ryan

& Alexander

Alexander Stabler

Alexander Stabler is from Southern California and grew up overseas in Hong Kong and Macau. He started dancing at age five and competed nationally in the dance circuit. He then went into musical theatre in high school performing with Bruce Willis's Company of Fools. He joined a ballet company straight out of high school which lead him to move to LA where he had the opportunity to perform with Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Pink before getting picked up by Cirque Du Soleil and joining the cast of Zumanity.

He owns his own company, Axle Entertainment, which opened Hyde at The Bellagio. And he spent three years raising the bar of performance at The Abbey, West Hollywood. He can now be seen providing entertainment at The Cosmopolitan for Confidential Wednesday's at Bond Bar, and Freedom Sundays at the world famous Marquee. He's grateful for the love of his man and continued support of friends and family and having the opportunity to be on the cover of QVegas's September Pride issue showing our Pride and celebrating the next generation that will get freedom, equality and love. "The battle isn't won but giant steps have been taken and to be able to represent that with my partner is something I will truly cherish."



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50 WOMEN IN 1

[by Miranda Boyd]

Music, beyond the visual presentations and theatric additions, is sound sewn to delight. The sum of female singers delighting listeners can be difficult to assemble on a single stage, unless the center of that stage happens to be held by Véronic DiCaire.

Described by promotions for her show at Bally's as, "One Singer...Fifty Voices," Véronic creates an audible experience akin to hearing a chorus of famous and infamous performers dancing past and belting their hits. Throughout the show, she swings from present stars like Adele and Rihanna to legends like Tina Turner and Barbara Streisand. Each voice is unique and expertly designed to match the subtlety and nuance of the singer naturally behind it. And often accompanied by humorous explanations of how she achieved the proper timbre and tone, each voice is an example of the artistry behind imitation—effort Véronic has perfected over hundreds of performances.

"I've been singing for a long time," she explains. "And I was doing impressions just to make my musicians and technicians and surroundings laugh. But it was not very serious." Véronic notes the swiftness with which she went from humoring those in her own studio to opening for

one of the biggest Canadian singers of all time. "In 2008, the opportunity came to do Celine's opening act in Montreal. That's where it all started for me as an impersonator. ... And that's where I realized that I had this certain ability. I only had like five singers in my repertoire and I had to do a half an hour of show. So that's when I started to work on my impressions with my vocal coach and then I realized, I have this ability, I can do this; and from there it all started. I had 25,000 people standing up after my act. So that's where I realized that maybe life was sending me a big, huge message." With that message received, she took her show to sold-out performances throughout Canada and Europe.

"There are some different audiences and different vibes in different areas of Europe," she says when referencing the unique experience of playing the Las Vegas Strip. "And here you have them all in one crowd. You have people from Canada, people from Quebec, people from the US, people who are visiting—all kinds of different people coming to my shows. It's like a box of chocolate. You never know what you're going to get. That's true. You can't expect that the audience you have tonight will be the same as last night." That variance

will walk away with their favorites, perhaps not those they walked in adoring, though even Véronic herself admits having a hard time choosing. "I like my show, so it's hard to say which part is my favorite. ... I love to do Anita Baker because it makes me laugh all the time. And I also love to do Karen Carpenter." But, of course, one voice can never be overlooked. "I like to do Celine because everybody loves her, from all generations, old, young—everybody loves her." With such an extensive list of names in her throat, one might assume there's no one she can't, or won't, impersonate. But Véronic has set some important criteria to ensure perfection.

"I have tried Mika," she explains when asked if she's ever tried impersonating male singers. "He has a very high pitched voice so I said, 'Okay, let's try Mika.' But for him to sing so high, it's very high for him—but not for me as a woman. So that's where I realized that the voice tone was not the same, and it bothered me and I said, 'Nope. I won't do it.' And, anyway, there are so many male impressionists out there that, for once, I had the chance to pay homage to the women. So why not do women all the way?" That want for the perfect tone, the best impression, the most accurate rendition—and the sincerity to know what sounds superb and what's only mimicry—are what set Véronic amongst the greats of the Strip. And they give her an appreciation of shows that take similar, if almost the opposite, approach to impersonation.

When speaking about the concept of female impersonators, the way they visually present the voices she imitates, and specifically Frank Marino's Divas, Véronic said, "I can't wait to go see his show because I'm very fascinated with drag. I would like to be sitting next to the guy who's doing Cher and Celine. It is amazing. It's an art I think." And, while the mantle of art is sometimes hastily taken from impression, the flattery to the impersonated, and the obvious talent of the impressionist, must vault it to something honorable.

From recording her own albums in Quebec to opening for superstar Celine Dion, touring Europe, headlining the Vegas Strip, and returning to her quaint home in the forest in Canada; Véronic has built a career, show and name on the craft of recreating in person the vocals that so many love. And to everyone interested in her ability she simply says, "Take a chance on my show. ... If you're not fond of imitations or those kinds of shows, put a chip on me. Come and have a good time. I promise you will. ... There's something very modern and new to this show." ■

“there are so many male impressionists out there that, for once, I had the chance to pay homage to the women. So why not do women all the way?”

in crowds always creates a thrill for performers, and variance is something Véronic knows well.

The quality of her craft, and the selections she chooses to perform, are designed for mass appeal. Rock, pop, soul and more are represented with accuracy and respect—enough variety and taste to turn any doubter. And, as with any show worthy of seeing, one community is always at the forefront of the artist's appreciation. "Once you get the gay community in your shows it's the best publicity you can get, I think." With the best demographics understood, and an increasing fan base in multiple segments of the Las Vegas scene, Véronic's position as Strip headliner is securing. "What I can see in the audience is now the venue is getting fuller and fuller. For me that's a good sign."

Her repertoire spans styles, eras and ages. Reba McEntire, Shakira and Billie Holiday will never truly share a stage. But Véronic steps through each as though the divisions are just tricks of voice to be mastered. Everyone watching

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The Center
401 S. Maryland Pkwy.
September 1, 2013 | 11am to 1pm
Admission: \$35.00

Temptation Sundays [21+]

PRIDE Opening Pool Party
Luxor Hotel & Casino North Pool
3900 Las Vegas Blvd. South
September 1, 2013 | 1pm to 7pm

PRIDE Family Skate Night

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4680 Boulder Highway
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Admission: FREE With Coupon

PRIDE Family Bingo

Circus Circus Las Vegas
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The original "Love Muffin" himself, B.Scott, is currently on an emotional rollercoaster about the public embarrassment provoked by Black Entertainment Television (BET). He's suing BET for gender discrimination that took place during the BET Awards.

B.Scott started out as a popular youtube sensation with his fun and personable personality and hilarious video posts. Over the years, B.Scott has created a significant role in both the broadcasting and the LGBTQmmunity. In late June, he was hired as the Style Stage Correspondent for the 2013 BET Awards Pre-Show. After weeks of preparation to serve as nothing less than cute on the red carpet, he was prepared to work.

B.Scott has always described himself as a gay man with feminine tendencies, but has recently publicly identified as transgender. "Over the years my love muffins and strangers alike have questioned me about my gender identity. What IS B.Scott? As a society we've been conditioned to believe that a person has to be 'exactly' this or 'exactly' that. Biologically, I am male—as my sex was determined at birth by my reproductive organs. However, my spirit truly lies somewhere in between."

The day of the show, B.Scott arrived on set five hours early with his hair and makeup crew along with the outfit that had already been approved by producers. Immediately after B.Scott started his test shots, he was literally grabbed and dragged off of the red carpet by producers. "Your outfit is unacceptable from head to toe," said the producer. He was then forced to go back to his dressing room to put on a more "masculine" outfit. Confused as to why he was being asked to change his pre-approved look, he obeyed the producer anyway, only to come back to Adrienne Bailon, who supposedly was his replacement. Finishing out the night as the style correspondent like originally planned, there was a sense of anger, hurt, and emptiness in him.

After the incident, B.Scott tried to talk things over with those responsible by simply asking for a public apology. But when he was even denied, B.Scott took matters into his own hands. "I'm suing BET and Viacom for a true public apology and to be fairly remunerated for the time lost, humiliation and emotional distress this entire situation has put me through." He feels that if the world can accept the androgynous lifestyles of Michael Jackson, Prince and Grace Jones, then why was he treated in such a manner by a company that promotes unity within the community. B.Scott's lawyer says, "Evidence shows the he was intentionally discriminated against based on his appearance and his gender identity." So with that being said, BET better get to writing that statement of apology.

B.Scott has been receiving lots of love and support from fans of all flavors. He reminds us that "it is ok to be who you are no matter how you chose to express yourself." With such a high spirit and loving personality, I will forever be his "Love Muffin." :)

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VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

A despairing wake up call occurs this month for you Virgo. Sad fortune reveals that the only reason that you have obsessively and compulsively attached to work and money is because you didn't know that scientific studies have found that poorer people have more sex. Go check out someone else's assets for an evening to balance the over-importance of yours.



LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Suspend the need to make sense out of your own life's suffering this month. There are karmic reasons outside the realms of this lifetime and those beyond the limits of human understanding at work. For a simple brief moment, "suspend" trying to make sense of the suffering that bothers you the most. Notice how your mood immediately begins to improve. Your soul seeks better feelings day-to-day, not understanding, resolution, or justice. Without the emotional weight of understanding your suffering, your soul integrates its lessons and unleashes its resilience in obtaining great pleasure this month.



GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

Don't take anything personally from others this month. Know that all negativity you encounter has nothing to do with you. What others say and do is a projection of their own misperceived reality. Remember, to become a victim of harsh words you must first agree. Give up changing others' perceptions this month to be free. Choose to be happy vs. being right in each moment this month.



SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Failure and set backs seem to repeatedly present themselves on your path this month. Question all of what you treasure and seek advice from wise council on what matters most. As you perceive recent setbacks as negatives, such experiences are calling you to question more deeply to realign your goals to what your soul seeks. Know that your soul's road to success will always be "under construction."



SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Sagittarius, you've become addicted to identifying other people's faults simply in order to dodge your own. Like a zealous missionary, you grandiosely felt it was your job to demand others to see life from your "open minded" point of view. As your ego wishes to place a "final verdict" on another's entire existence, you are reminded that you do NOT know the full story. You don't know how they have been hurt, struggled, or the overall context in which they lived. Judgementalism's benefits to you of feeling superior, intellectually superior, and avoiding your own flaws through scape-goating are ripe to be released this month.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)



Follow your heart and intuition. They know better than you what you wish to become.



LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

Past failures in love and relationship takes a turn for the better based upon intuitive breakthroughs this month. As you may have chosen to hibernate in the past to sort out the issues, a new way of being through spiritual understanding occurs this month. Your fears of your own attractiveness, self-worth, and the fear of being hurt again are met with a spiritual call to action: Work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like no one is watching.



CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

The apparent ending to what you value arrives. Letting go of past pain, old ways and associations that no longer serve your soul allows you to embrace the next chapter in life. Don't greet any loss by sadness as great opportunities await you this month.



AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Wonderful news is on the way, particularly in the form of a favorable legal decision, awarding of a new contract, or new offer of work based upon your efforts. Reflect with gratitude, all who have helped you throughout your life and know what really mattered came true. Enjoy a new level of confidence that occurs as a result of your good fortune.



PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

Confront your own soap-opera this month. You are not your circumstances, your circumstances are simply a result of your own past choices. Several doors of fate will be presented to you this month. Each is simply "an audition" for you to freely choose your own role in relation to others which creates your future. Life is only a series of choices and consequences (both good and bad) based upon your own choices. Choose wisely this month.



ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

Kindness has the unique ability to dissolve the worries and fears of those around you this month. The kindness you share not only brings healing in friends, but restores the long-forgotten feelings of living in a safe, just, and loving world in the heart of a total stranger. Practice random acts of kindness with all whom you encounter and know that one person begins to simply breathe easier each day afterward, simply because you showed that you cared. A spiritual lesson is shared with you this month: Know the only way that love works, is by giving it.



TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

You've wrestled with the fears of your own imagination for far too long. Create a 7 day worry journal noting every single thing that you worry about to double-check what is real vs. imagined. Always remember, "I too, have experienced some truly vivid and horrific things in my life and a few of them, actually have happened." Double-check your version of reality to gain more pleasure this month.

Meet Me at www.LoveStockFestival.com on Sep 15 in LA / Must RSVP online

About the Author: Mike Schopp is a gay Psychic Medium with 20+ years of working via telephone & Skype and offers "Money-Back" Guarantees on all readings. He connects directly with clients' spirit guides and those in the Spirit-World. Educated at the Arthur Findlay College for Mediums in England and the California School of Psychology, he blends channeling & humor with his professional experiences in counseling, career assessment, and organizational development to jump-start others to identify & achieve their soul's dreams. He has been a "guest psychic" on radio and published quality "how-to" spiritual development articles in various media. He has provided entertaining psychic & mediumship development courses & presentations in China, Thailand, England & USA and regularly provides spiritual development courses locally in Las Vegas. His web is: www.PsychicMike.com



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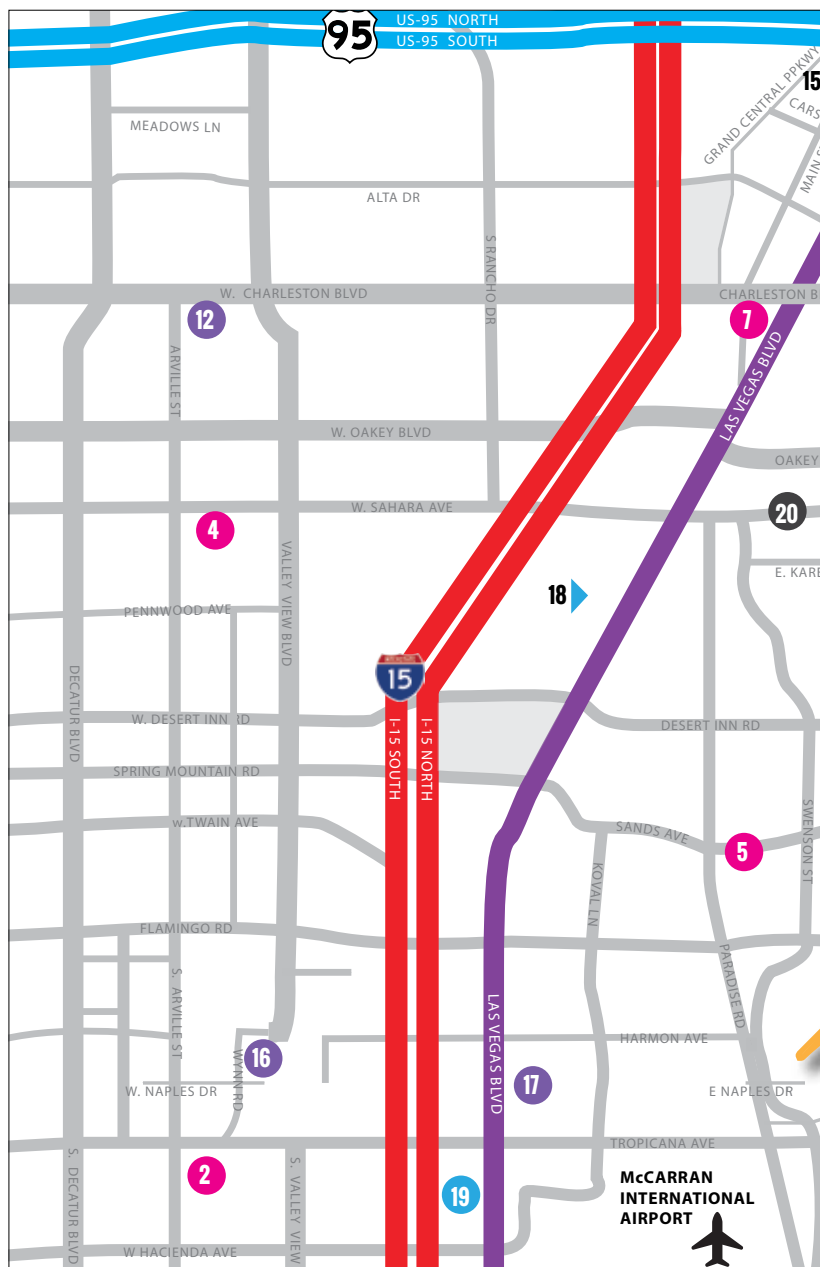
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last word!

[by Miranda Boyd]

PRIDE MEANS REMEMBERING

Pride is about recognizing the progress we've made. It's something earned. It's something those who toiled for rights and respect in days thankfully past have gifted us, that we need not work for the same sanctity again. And each year we celebrate the season with parties, parades and a justifiable amount of glory. No one should ever deny us, as a community, that revelry. Likewise, we must not deny those still struggling the very recognition our victors achieved.

In the United States, 29 states allow a person to be fired from their job for being gay and 33 for being transgender. Hate crimes are still occurring with disturbing frequency, even in major cities with histories of inclusion. Students are bullied. Suicides are woeful realities. And beyond our borders the problems expand more than we can comprehend. Russia, Jamaica and dozens of other countries socially condemn homosexuality and gender non-conforming while some outright punish them. The world we see when we smile and wave is not the world in which all our siblings live.

The point is not to chastise, guilt or embarrass. Pride is something that everyone deserves and should be expressed loudly by all who feel it. We earn that everyday by knowing and applauding who we are. But it should never be an excuse to forget that all the things we're proud of are the things of which those in agony still dream.

When I stand in crowds with QVegas and HRC I see the smiles and hear the laughter of people who deserve every moment of the joy they gain from being themselves. I don't know how far past that glee they all think, but I look at it as a mist beyond which I can see the humbled huddling.

Gay men and lesbians are celebrating the right to marry. Many trans people, while celebrating, are daily

just trying to survive, to avoid being victims, and to find any way to pay for the necessities that make survival worthwhile. And many more LGBT persons throughout the world are doing all they can to understand why so much of this planet seems determined to destroy us with words, laws or worse. The joys may last as long as the drinks do, but when we go to sleep we seem to remember different things.

Remembrance is what we who feel forgotten often fail to adequately request. Maybe we assume we're ignored out of apathy, annoyance, ignorance or disgust. I don't think any of those are the case. But I know we feel it. When you watch everyone in your life, the community as you see it, overjoyed by victories that seem so far removed from the pain you're still drowning in; the slightest acknowledgement that you are indeed a part of the community, that they know you're still not entirely equal even to them, that you're remembered, is truly remarkable.

So this is my humble request: When you're enjoying your Pride season, when you're out with friends and strangers at a nightclub or party, or when you're at home with family and closeness; please just raise a glass. Give a toast to the struggles yet to be overcome. Acknowledge that we haven't all achieved the measure of success we'd like, that some of us are still terrified, and that too many won't see tomorrow. Then smile and return to reveling.

Pride is the progress we've made. It's saying not one of us need be ashamed of any aspect of ourselves. We embody it. We adore it. And we all deserve to stand upon it, using it as a cane when necessary and a flag when possible. Pride is the way we walk when the rocks can no longer trip us. So if you look ahead of you and see a smoother path than you once did, turn your head, look back, and help someone walk with pride. ■

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