FINDING MYSELF
from Gaysha Starr to GS Matencio

by GS Matencio aka Gaysha Starr
SGN Contributing Writer

My life, like most people’s, is composed of many different chapters and roles. I am biologically a 46-year-old person of Filipino descent. In drag queen years, I am a 26-year-old Seattle host and entertainer who has worked everywhere from bars and pageant stages to community fundraisers and corporate events. Most recently, I am a nine-month-old male-to-female Transgender woman.

see FINDING MYSELF page 4
Organized by Skyy Martini Ice, reigning Miss Gay Seattle LVI, the Imperial Court of Seattle has been volunteering at Northwest Harvest’s SODO Community Market every month since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rates of food insecurity skyrocketed during the pandemic and remain disproportionately higher for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities.

We are deeply grateful to our volunteers working with us to dismantle barriers that our LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities face in accessing nutritious food.

Please join us as we celebrate and highlight the LGBTQIA+ community’s history throughout this Prideful month of June!
"...a heartfelt and appropriately awestruck portrait of the bleary Byron of the German new wave ... Fassbinder was the nearest an auteur came to punk rock."

– Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

**ENFANT TERRIBLE**

**STREAMING JUNE 23**

**GERMAN CINEMA NOW!**

is a monthly film series presented by GOETHE POP UP SEATTLE, in partnership with NORTHWEST FILM FORUM and THREE DOLLAR BILL CINEMA

**MORE INFO AT**

GOETHE.DE/SEATTLE
FINDING MYSELF
continued from cover

Depending on the day or night, or the people I am with, I can move between all three parts of my life, weaving back and forth effortlessly. Sometimes, I feel good, complete with midlife aches and pains but with the confidence of someone who has been around the block a few times and doesn’t really care about the little things anymore. But as someone going through a second puberty due to hormone replacement therapy (HRT), I also feel like I’ve returned 21 all over again, figuring out myself as a straight-identified transwoman trying to re-find my place in the world, maintain friendships, and date men in a COVID world.

For this special Pride issue of the SGN, I was invited to write about my experiences as a Transgender woman who transitioned publicly with the support of my chosen family and community. My life continues to be filled with highs and lows — not only impacted by COVID, civil unrest, and contested elections but also a set of new challenges that I assume anyone newly living their life as their authentic selves would face. One of my biggest lessons has been to learn to live as my newly Transgender self.

Like most entertainers this past year, I’ve had to adapt and learn how to captivate an audience in the virtual medium, and I’m appreciative to have been invited to host a few LGBTQ+ events. But the pandemic was a perfect time to be alone with my thoughts and take a break from being out in public. Living alone for months, not seeing anyone, I had the freedom to explore my true self. In the eternal tug-of-war between my male and female selves, the female side finally won. Soon after, in June of 2020, I began the legal process to change my identity.

For me, the path to SGN, short for Gaysha Starr, as I like to sign off on all my social media posts anyway, and it’s undying — I don’t look like a typical Becky, Jennifer, or Lauren. I also wanted to keep my last name, to honor my family.

I am changing. Often, people associate Transgender people with physical changes, as those are the most apparent. But we should all talk openly about and support the mental and emotional changes too, because those are the most important ones to celebrate, as they require the most work daily.

In addition to the physical changes I experienced, I have also been trying to manage the emotional and intellectual ones, especially as the HRT and other daily experiences have changed me with each step I take as my new nine-month-old self.

To be honest, I wasn’t sure how my life was going to change after coming out. I think I expected to be like in the movies, when the lead actress gets a makeover and it seems that everything should go her way — but it still doesn’t. Instead, I’m very lucky that I have a career with a company and health benefits that afford me the ability to live the life I do and transition safely. Overpiced apartment on Capitol Hill? Check. Reliable car so I don’t have to take public transportation? Check. Money for food, water, and cocktails? Check. Modest savings, 401(k), and a few credit cards for emergencies? Check.

In the early stages of the pandemic, I learned who was comfortable showing one another and who was not — and that if one did not really make the effort to keep relationships going, they would eventually crack. On the flip side, I also had a few of the most important people come into my life who never really knew Gaysha, entering my pandemic bubble just in time to meet GS. But I still feel like I still spend quite a bit of time alone with my thoughts, feeling all kinds of highs and lows.

Who do I want to be (now that I’ve grown up)?

One of the first lessons I continue to learn is figuring out what I want to look like when presenting as a woman. The beauty standards that all people try to obtain can be hard to achieve as we chase perfection by looking to celebrities, advertising, magazines, the news, social media, television, and movies. For Transgender people, it’s even another challenge, as we are first trying to physically identify as the gender we were not assigned at birth, and then trying to “pass” or not get clocked as we lead our day-to-day lives — sometimes for vanity, but also for emotional reasons and personal safety.

The beautiful and special thing about Transgender people is that how we come out and how we express our authentic selves are different — no two people’s journeys are the same. While for personal reasons not everyone who is Transgender will choose to undergo physical changes, most do choose to alter themselves, starting with hormone or testosterone treatment, depending on their gender identity, and then leading up to surgery.

Some of the dangers, however, include self-dosing or prescriptions that are not supervised by a medical professional, as well as underground surgeons that are not professionally trained, work in unsanitary conditions, and/or cannot help with any post-surgery follow up. Nonetheless, some Transgender people will do whatever it takes to go under the knife in order to ultimately feel like the best versions of themselves, or that is all they can afford.

Outside looking in

I started to lose weight in 1993, when I was 21. I was told for the first decade or so that I was “fit” and could “pass.” Maybe in my early twenties, it was easier, when I could eat anything, my skin was naturally producing collagen, and the beauty ideals back then were larger-than-life ’80s supermodels. The wigs were shaggy buns in my eye, and lots of disposable fashions from the bebe and BCBG sale racks were designer knockoffs.

see FINDING MYSELF page 6
FINDING MYSELF
continued from page 5

As I got into my mid-thirties and mid-forties, I accidentally found my niche: looking like a cast member of a Real Housewives franchise, playing the role of “divorcee-on-my-third-looking-for-my-fourth.” The hair got bigger, the Spanx doubled, and — as I started working in designer stores — the clothes got brighter, shinier and more accessible (thanks to employee discount). For a while, I submitted to the self-imposed pressures of social media and brand creation, and I never wore the same thing twice.

Once I started to feel it was time to address my dysphoria between male and female and get serious about my transition, especially in the last three years, I started to have another kind of dysphoria, this time between Gaysha Sturr and GS. I spent the ages of 21 to 47 being Gaysha and knew everything about her — but I didn’t know GS very well.

I am in awe when looking at photos of myself from one year ago compared to now, as I continue to figure out what I want to look like. Thanks to a year of electrolysis combined with hormone therapy, my facial hair fell out, allowing me to avoid using heavy panti-stick makeup. Now, I just use two different colors of concealer and a translucent powder so you can see my freckles. Instead of “baking my face” and contouring like a Kardashian, it’s softer and rounder. My false eyelashes are wispy, and I am finding a balance with makeup: applying enough to feel polished and professional, especially for my work as the store director of a luxury retailer, but not so much that I look like I’m going on stage.

Sometimes, I occasionally wonder if more makeup will make me look “more real,” but I think it will just help me hide who I really am: a newly out Transgender woman transitioning in a COVID world.

I used to spend a fortune on nail glue and press-on nails and just pop my nails off, damaging my nail beds. Now, I make sure my nail manicure is done every two weeks so they don’t look too grown out — and wonder if I could get away with an extra week, just to save some cash.

Also, thanks to the HRT, the balding in the back of my head stopped, and hair even started to grow in, helping me to feel more secure about my ability to present my femininity using my own hair. To offset my receding hairline in front, though, my good friend cut bangs with one precise snip this past spring, which suddenly took ten years off my appearance and instantly softened my features.

It also saved probably another 20 minutes off my makeup process, as all I do is wash it a few times a week and hit-iron it. On some of my days off, I don’t wear makeup and just throw my hair up. While I may not look like woman, I still feel like one to me.

With the time I save getting ready, I can now do other things, like snooze, cuddle with my pop Nics, or plan out my day, rather than be in the mirror for two hours. When I do get ready, I now listen to self-help podcasts rather than a song on repeat.

Clothes do not make the woman.

I naively thought that it was going to be an easy transition from my drag wardrobe to my “everyday” clothes, and that it would be realistic to appear like a Real Housewives every day. I assumed that the bright clothes in my walk-in closet and those shelves of stilettos would be com-fortable and that I would want the same attention that they brought to me when I entered a Gay bar with my friends as in those places still at 50% capacity.

However, as I shopped for my new wardrobe, I stacked up charges on my credit cards for clothes in darker, neutral colors and for tailored pieces that were more suited to a different kind of self-expression. My closet is now a comfortable mix of high and low. As of late, I have learned the benefits of comfort and of wearing day-off leggings and sports bras, an off-the-shoulder hoodie, and Nikes, living out my own Lululemon Ub-illage stroller mom fantasy. The funny thing is that I wear the same five comfortable things over and over each week, in sync with the employee dry cleaning schedule. But one of the hardest parts of present-ing full-time the way I choose to is present-ing multiple undergarments, in order to feel snatched in the waist. After being in them for a full day, I get wells and scarring. During the holidays, though, I gained weight, and began to feel naturally curvier, so for practical reasons and comfort, I now only wear Spanx when I must.

I don’t pad my hips and or backside the way I did in drag, so sometimes I will use a belt to create a waist, and this fall I will probably begin to waist-train with a corset. Another challenge is wearing shoes that make my women’s size 11 feet look not so big but that are still com-fortable. I try not to wear flats, as I feel too mannequin in them; I feel more feminine and in charge wearing heeds.

(What I find ironic is that I do not often change the pitch of my voice to be higher or softer, as for now it takes too much effort to both concentrate on the content of a conversation and adjust how I sound.)

Regardless of what clothes and how much makeup I wear, I like most people, also try not to fall into the trap of overfiltering photos I post on my social media so that, instead of feeding better, I end up choosing an impossible version of myself that I will never be able to live up to. I also am not sure how I feel about the number of selfies I take and post and the content I curate, as I am still trying to figure out my transition publicly.

I chalk up some of my insecurities to my second puberty — and that, like most newly out people, I am in a phase of self-discovery and growth. I am on the path of accepting that I am going to not look like my drag persona Gaysha Sturr. I will always be thankful for her chapter — but I am also proudly writing a new one as GS Matencos.
Greetings from Supernova, Seattle, WA

July 4th
8pm-2am
108 Horton Street
Seattle, WA

Revival at Supernova

With:
- R. Gatsby
- Britt Brutality
- Isis
- Augustine Essence
- Sarah Kendall

DJs:
- Cookie Couture
- Papi Way
- Alfonso Tan

Find your happy place.

Summer Session Begins June 19th!
- Live online classes and combos
- All skill levels welcome
- Tuition assistance available
- Music education designed for adults
St. Patrick’s Catholic Church Welcomes LGBTQ Community Members!

St. Patrick’s Church is a welcoming, evolving Catholic Church located at the north end of Capitol Hill, 2702 Broadway E.

We embrace all people as children of God and would like to invite LGBTQ community members to worship with us.

As a parish, we have a strong emphasis on social justice and inclusion. This includes outreach to a women’s shelter, a supportive relationship with a faith community in El Salvador, weekly sign language interpreted Mass for the deaf and deaf-blind community, and welcoming developmentally disabled adults from the L’arche community.

Our choir and dance troupe are an integral part of our expression.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Engagement and Accompaniment Circle of Parishioners, and several other Parishioners, who invite LGBTQ returning Catholics and others to join us in person or online.

For more information about St. Patrick’s LGBTQ Circle of Parishioners contact John Dunn - dunn170@aol.com

A PLACE WHERE ALL ARE CELEBRATED & LOVE IS LOVE!

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH VIRTUAL WORSHIP THIS PRIDE MONTH!

PLYMOUTHCHURCHSEATTLE.ORG
1217 6th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101
We must reject calls for colorblindness. That diminishes and washes out God’s gift of diversity. We should be color amazed. God made all of us in God’s image.

Rev. Elizabeth Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA

If this sounds good, University Lutheran Church is here for you.
Pastor Sue Schneider UniversityLutheranSeattle.org

Center for Spiritual Living
Supporting all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people, the right to marry, and the right to pursue happiness and freedom. We do this not just during Pride months, but every day of the year, and have done, for 100 years.

Spiritual services that inspire hope and build faith and trust in the universe at 9AM and 11AM online and in person at 6318 Linden Ave N. All are welcome.
Ask for an “I am a force for good in the world.” bracelet when you visit.

COME RUN WITH US ON SOME OF WASHINGTON’S MOST BEAUTIFUL TRAILS!
With distances from 4k to 50k, our races are great for beginners and veterans on courses that are thoroughly marked and thoughtfully designed!

NORTHWEST TRAIL RUNS
JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS
June 22 - Sunshine Salutation 5-mile, 10-mile
Redmond Watershed Preserve, Redmond, WA
July 6 - Carkeek Warmer 5k, 10k
Carkeek Park, Seattle, WA
July 17 - The Whidbey Woods Trail Run
5k, 10k, Half Marathon
Langley, Whidbey Island, WA
AND MORE!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE UPCOMING EVENTS: NWTRAILRUNS.COM
by Lindsey Anderson
SGN Contributing Writer

Fatherhood, like anything meaningful in this world, is complicated. To members of the LGBTQ community, fatherhood is all the more complicated. It might provoke painful memories of rejection, of men who chose religion or politics over a child struggling to understand themselves in a chaotic world. Fatherhood might be a goal at the end of a long, difficult journey. Fatherhood might even seem like an impossible feat.

Robert and Robert
For Robert Crowley, fatherhood indeed seemed impossible. "Growing up as a small kid, six, seven, eight years old, I knew that early that I wanted to be a parent one day.

And as I came to terms with my sexuality and I knew that I was gay, I remember consciously having to make that decision, that if I was going to be gay, I could not have children, because gay people did not have children. And a lot of love at that time, and especially internationally, you could not adopt if you were a gay man."

Crowley continued to fight an internal battle between future desires and being authentic until the day he met a gay father. "When I was in high school, my best friend worked for an ice cream shop that turns out was owned by half of a gay couple... And attached to it was a thrift, and we partner ran it, and they had a daughter that was adopted, and that was eye-opening for me in high school, because what I thought I knew — that I couldn’t be this person — like, it actually does happen."

Years later, Crowley grew up and met his future husband, a man so perfect for him, he even had the same name, Robert. Robert Crowley and Robert Martin had "the discussion" early on in their relationship and decided they both really wanted to become parents someday.

Someday came seven years later. "We [thought] it would take a while, but it ended up being fairly quick," Martin said. "We started the process in January of 2011 and we had our first child in December of 2011." "We [waited] in three different ways... We started the surrogacy process, the adoption placement process, and foster care adoption, and whichever worked was going to be what it was meant to be." Martin explained.

As it turned out, adoption was what was meant to be for the Crowley family, and with the help of Amara, an adoption agency, they were placed with a birth mother within days, with whom Crowley and Martin developed a close bond. The night their water broke, they were at the movie theater with her. Crowley and Martin rushed her to the hospital and were able to witness the birth of their daughter, whom they named Mirabel. "I even got to cut the cord, which was so incredible," Martin gushed.

The new fathers knew they wanted their family to expand again some day, and so they left their adoption open with Amara. Just two years later, they got the familiarly familiar call inviting them, once again, to become fathers.

Photos provided by the families
TRANSPARENCY:
An LGBTQ+ Glass Art Exhibition

ON VIEW THROUGH AUGUST 2021

A three-dimensional meditation on queer experience, Transparency emphasizes the importance of being open about identity, a hallmark of liberty and creative freedom. This groundbreaking exhibition exclusively features Studio Glass works produced by artists in the LGBTQ+ community.

MUSEUM OF GLASS
Tacoma, WA | museumofglass.org


Edmonds Center for the Arts Presents
Martha Redbone Duo
JUNE 24 | 7:30 PM PDT

An Exclusive Livestream Concert
TICKETS & INFO: www.ec4arts.org | 425.275.9595
MUSIC OF remembrance®
ensuring that the voices of musical witness be heard

In honor of Pride month

For a Look or a Touch

Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Gene Scheer
commissioned by Music of Remembrance

Based on the true story of two idealistic young gay men in 1930s Berlin whose lives and love were torn apart under Nazi rule.

Starring Jarrett Ott, baritone Curt Branom, actor
Available for streaming starting on June 26, 2021

Presented by SHORELAKE ARTS
Saturday & Sunday, June 26-27 2021, 10am-5pm

SHORELINE ARTS FESTIVAL
Pfingst Animal Acres Park
17435 Brookside Blvd NE,
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155

2021
SHORELAKE BATTLE OF THE BANDS
Pfingst Animal Acres Park
Lake Forest Park

Semi-final Pool #1 | Tuesday 10 August
Semi-final Pool #2 | Wednesday 11 August
Finals | Saturday 14 August
- 6.30PM start -

Tickets: $5 Each
-On sale July 12-

shorelineartsfestival.org
shorelakearts.org
THE second adoption was through foster care placement, and that was a much longer, much more challenging journey,” Martin explained. Crowley and Martin were matched with a set of twins, a boy and a girl. The moment they met these children, they fell in love; but as it so often is with foster care, the fathers faced an unknown future with their babies.

“We did almost lose them, early on in the process,” Martin remembered. The birth mother fought tooth and nail, and at one point it seemed like Crowley and Martin were going to lose the babies for good.

“Those were the toughest memories,” Crowley recalled. “We were told, that because of the scenario, they may be going back, and I was leaving on a business trip. I had to go to a photo shoot in another state, and I knew this was going to happen while I was gone, so I boarded the plane, and it was hard leaving them... I was a mess at the airport, I was a mess on the airplane...”

“I was a mess at home with three children!” Martin added in with a laugh. “It was really, really emotional.” As it turned out, the birth mother made a bad decision, setting the clock back and allowing Crowley and Martin more time with the babies.

After four years of custody battles, Camden and Camille officially became Crowleys. Martin and Crowley had finished the long journey they had started, but the battles were only beginning.

“So, our oldest daughter, Mirabel, she’s biracial, she’s white and African American, and our twins are both Black,” Martin explained. Both he and Crowley are white. Learning to be thoughtful parents of children of different races led the men to become more aware of the world they live in, and the privilege that has coddled them. Amara provided them with resources on transracial adoption, and Crowley and Martin reached out to Black friends to learn more about the cultures and identities of their children.

“I remember thinking, we cannot fail them in this regard. It is not an option. It’s been a challenge; we’re not perfect. We strive to do that for them every single day, as best we can,” Martin said.

“In addition to that, we had to be really, really eyes wide open in terms of white privilege, in terms of what exists for us that might not be extended to our children, and as they grow up, what is that going to look like?” Crowley added. The dads explained how they began to realize just how much children’s media is marketed toward white children.

“We would overindex on the one Black Disney princess, Tiara, that exists out there, or Pocahontas or Mulan, anything we could to create diversity in the toys that exist.”

Crowley acknowledged that “there is so much we don’t know, and can never know. Being Caucasian people, we have never had to treat our hair or our skin in a different way,” but with a devotion to loving their kids, instilling a sense of pride in their identity, and more hair care products than they had ever imagined. Crowley and Martin are bringing up three smart, socially aware, and very confident children.

Crowley and Martin’s efforts seem to be working. I sat down to talk to Mirabel about what her experience has been like with two dads. Her first response was, “I love being mixed! I love having my siblings! I love having my parents! I just love my family!”

Mac and Derrick
Like Crowley and Martin, Mac Lowery always knew he wanted to be a father someday. “But it wasn’t until I met Derrick, really... We just had a conversation — it wasn’t even a debate — we both knew we wanted kids,” Mac said, referring to his husband, Derrick Lowery.

Mac and Derrick met in 2015 when singing in a Gay men’s choir, and in December of 2020 they took the leap, choosing to start their family via surrogacy. Six months later, they had chosen a surrogate and the embryos had been implanted.
DADS
continued from page 13

For decades, young Queer kids all around Seattle found a father figure in SGN editor George Italian. It seems everyone in Seattle knew a beloved side of George, a large and friendly man, who dedicated his life to Seattle’s Queer community.

But one person knew George like no one else, his daughter, Angela Cragin. When reading a sympathy card after George’s passing last year, Angela came across words that seemed to embody the early relationship she shared with her father. “One thing I do know is that you were the light of his life. I remember when I had recently met him. I marveled at how he delighted in your toddler company and every mundane activity, having enormous patience with your curiosity and distractions. I thought this is what it looks like when fathers cherish their daughters.”

George always treasured and loved Angela. Some of her fondest childhood memories were sitting atop George’s broad shoulders. “You could see the world,” she said smiling, as she remembered the pure love her father provided in her early childhood.

A strong sense of family was innate in George. He came from a large, Italian family that valued closeness. George not only fostered closeness but also pride in Angela’s intelligence. “He would take me to the library, and I would look at books, and then all of a sudden he noticed I was kind of starting to read the words, and he went around bragging, ‘Angela knows how to read at three!’ She’s three and she knows how to read.’”

Angela laughed as she remembered how proud he always was of her. “That was the good part of my dad.”

“If I got older, it got a little more difficult, because life does get a little more difficult as you get older,” she reflected. George was kind and loving and proud, but there was another side to him, as there usually is in everybody. He could get angry, “and I was a little afraid of him,” Angela remembered.

Through the anger, Angela still loved her father and cherished their relationship, until the day he left. “I was twelve years old when he went off on a business trip, and he never returned.” George left Angela and her mom in financial ruin, with no contact for years. Angela grew up watching the bank take her home and belongings out from under her, wondering if her father would ever return.

George was alive, though. He had moved to Seattle. George had known he was Gay since he left the navy early in his twenties. His wife had known, but Angela never did.

“It just wasn’t a topic anyone talked about.” George said in an interview with the Legacy Project in March of 2020. Angela found out her father was Gay when she was a sophomore in high school, and she held onto that same sentiment: leaving George’s sexuality a skeleton in the family’s closet. “He was exploring this other side of his life in Seattle,” Angela acknowledged.

At the same time George had abandoned his only daughter, he had begun to nurture his new baby, the Seattle Gay News, becoming a father figure to Seattle’s LGBTQ community.

The year Angela became a junior in high school, she reconnected with her father. “It was very tense, and it was hard, and awkward,” she recalled. “Over time we established a relationship, but it was very complicated. I wanted him to know his granddaughters, and he completely enjoyed his granddaughters.”

When Angela thinks of her father, she remembers him as generous, confident, charismatic, purposeful, and intimidating. While she could have held onto resentment toward him for abandoning her, Angela instead reflects on the struggles of their relationship hip with wisdom and hindsight. She has made peace with the fact that he needed to leave her and her mother to find himself, and to help others.

“Not only did he help others, he changed their lives. He fathered some of these people. He not only fathered them, he sometimes grandfathered them. A lot of people are shunned from their families, unfortunately, and here you have this great, big fatherly figure with big arms and bags, and with him you’re totally accepted.”

While Angela grew up missing her father, and at times resenting him, she was ultimately able to look back and see that “the loss that I had, in the fatherhood piece, he gave that fatherhood to other people, and more people, who needed it more than I did, and I am at peace with that.”

In adulthood Angela and George found a way back to each other. Time found a way of suturing old wounds. Angela was able to forgive George, and George was able to show his daughter the side of him he had hid from her for so long.

After George’s passing, Angela stepped into George’s literally very large shoes and began the task of saving the paper that had become George’s life’s work.

George and Angela’s bond is one that transcends time, mistakes, sexuality, and even death, as she dedicates her time now to preserving the legacy of her father, a man who became a father to hundreds of others.

Fatherhood is complicated, and sometimes, even the best people can get it wrong, but at the end of the day, it can be simplified into one word: love. For some, fatherhood is a journey, a fight to be recognized, a constant struggle. For others, it is an opportunity, a chance to give to someone what you didn’t get yourself.

Fatherhood is about acknowledging mistakes. It is being there for your children, and loving them, regardless of their blood, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or location — or if they are a fifty-year old Gay newspaper.

George and Angela’s relationship is one that transcends time, mistakes, sexuality, and even death, as Angela dedicates her time now to preserving the legacy of her father, a man who became a father to hundreds of others.

Fatherhood is complicated, and sometimes, even the best people can get it wrong, but at the end of the day, it can be simplified into one word: love. For some, fatherhood is a journey, a fight to be recognized, a constant struggle. For others, it is an opportunity, a chance to give to someone what you didn’t get yourself.

Fatherhood is about acknowledging mistakes. It is being there for your children, and loving them, regardless of their blood, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or location — or if they are a fifty-year-old Gay newspaper.
Happy PRIDE Seattle

Weddings | Private Event Space | Catering

Buffet | Sit Down | Cocktail Style

Eastlake Bar & Grill's Top Deck Lounge
Party with a view of Lake Union!

Private rooftop dining | Full service private bar | Sound system & TV's

Lake Forest Bar & Grill's Fireside Room
Indoor & outdoor dining options for parties up to 75

Breakfast | Lunch | Happy Hour | Dinner

Contact our Event Manager at
catering@neighborhoodgrills.com • 206.945.4727

www.neighborhoodgrills.com
"I had to do it... With all the inclinations and desires of the boy I had to restrain myself to the more conventional ways of the other sex. I have been happier since I made the change than I ever have in my life...."

- Alan Hart, 1918

CROSSING BOUNDARIES
Portraits of a Transgender West

Explore how westward migration provided transgender people with opportunities for self-expression and fulfillment. These are stories of obstacles, fear, bravery, and triumph—yet have rarely been told.


Find out more: WashingtonHistory.org/crossing-boundaries

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORY MUSEUM
1911 PACIFIC AVENUE, DOWNTOWN TACOMA
253-272-9747 or (toll-free) 1-888-BE-THERE

This exhibition is generously supported by Humanities Washington and KNKX Public Radio.
Happy PRIDE!

from the MOCHA PreP CLINIC

Come visit the MOCHA PreP CLINIC, where YOUR HEALTH MATTERS!

Our clinic provides culturally sensitive services to the BIPOC community with free STI Testing, PreP prescription, & ongoing PreP Navigation.

Call us today for an appointment!

☎ 206.653.9353  prep@pocaan.org

901 Rainier Ave. N #B103 Renton, WA 98057

A program by POCAN

ART IS THE ANSWER

GAGE ACADEMY OF ART
ART PROGRAMS FOR EVERYONE!

REGISTER TODAY
GAGEACADEMY.ORG
@GAGEACADEMY

MAKE ART

Visit us online www.sgn.org  June 18, 2021
AKWAABA
healing a queer black soul
a one-person show starring Naa Akua
VIRTUAL PREMIERE • JUNE 24 & 25 • 7 PM

Hugo House Tickets at hugohouse.org/akwaaba

EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA
The Center for People of All Races

A voice and a hub for the Latino community as we advocate on behalf of our people and work to achieve social justice.

QUIT vaping. It’s important to take care of our minds, moods, and bodies.
Join 200,000+ others quitting with This is Quitting – text VAPEFREEWA to 88709.
Aunque sientas que es más difícil de lo que pensabas, PUDES dejar de vapear. Es importante cuidar nuestras mentes, estados de ánimo y cuerpos.
For support call/ Para obtener apoyo, llame a:
Heidi López (206) 973-4404
hlopez@elcentrodelaraza.org
Ileana Garakani (206) 867-4601
igarakani@elcentrodelaraza.org

#YouCan #MentalHealthMatters

Abortion is a human right
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

prochoicewashington.org (206) 624-1990

Celebrating 47 Years!
CASS DUVANI

A 'triple threat' in his fight against oppression

by Renee Raketty
SGN Contributing Writer

Cass Duvani just turned 27 years old. He is a brand ambassador and campaign model for Medianix Collective, one of Seattle’s hottest high-end streetwear brands. He is one of the hardest-working hustlers out there: selling his own stickers and printed T-shirts while doing landscaping and landscape architecture to keep his household afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he is also one of the most interesting men I have ever met.

I first came to know Duvani through his fight for Black liberation here in the streets of Seattle. Through thick black smoke rising from heaps of burning trash spilling out of overturned dumpsters, he could be seen on the front lines of a long-simmering struggle against those seeking to preserve institutional racism and the instruments of our society that have historically fought to preserve it.

“I feel like I’m almost a triple threat: Black, Trans, and male,” said Duvani, jokingly. “The first year, I was on the front line the entire time. Then, I kind of got burned out, and I switched my activism to mutual aid. We started coming back now. I’m curious to see how that’s gonna play out.”

“I try to be an activist for Transgender rights and Black lives and the homeless community. There’s just so many things in this country. It’s hard to not be an activist or engage in activism for something.”

Like the thousands of people who took to the streets of Seattle, he was moved by the death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man who died at the hands of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. A jury concluded that Chauvin, who was recorded kneeling on Floyd’s neck for 9 minutes and 25 seconds, was guilty of his murder. Despite the conviction, Duvani believes little has changed.

“I think they used Derek Chauvin as an example. Just last week, Winston [Smith] was killed just 10 minutes away from where George Floyd was. It is not going to stop until we literally stop the system, tear it down, and move forward and create something new,” he explained. “We haven’t gotten past it. People are still dying. People are still getting murdered. Police brutality is still going on. That is not what I would consider justice. We are just going to keep fighting until abolition comes.”

Family

The fight for racial equality is personal to Duvani, who describes himself as a “light-skinned” Black man and whose wife is white. “My mom is white. So, I’m half Black and half white,” he said. “If you see skin color, I can’t really identify as white. To anyone in the system, I’m Black. I’m not white.”

Duvani’s dad was a professional soccer player, and he moved around a lot. He adds that his family was also subjected to racism, which he was too young to recognize at the time.

“As a kid, I spent time in San Diego, California. I spent a good amount of time growing up in Arizona. Unfortunately, I’ve kind of just lived all over,” he said. “Looking back, there were little remarks that I heard toward my dad and, even toward my mom [for] being with someone who is Black... I have definitely seen a difference in how each one of them was treated.”

Besides dealing with issues of race, Duvani struggled to understand his gender identity and sexual orientation. He said there were few positive depictions of Queer people growing up, outside of what he saw on MTV.

“I didn’t have any other Queer people in my family. It was just me,” he said. “I kind of had to keep it to myself until I was 14 years old, when I came out. I had dated guys in middle school, because I thought it was the right thing to do. I was going into high school, so, I kind of came out.”

“I was kind of pushed into a box of being Gay or, before I started transitioning, being a Lesbian. That never really felt right to me... I would not identify as straight and I wouldn’t identify as Gay. I’m just here and Queer I don’t want to be in a little box.”

Breakthrough

Duvani says he had a breakthrough regarding his gender identity after he met his wife, Joselyn, seven years ago. She identifies as pansexual, according to Duvani, and has been super supportive of him during their three-year marriage.

“I had actually gotten super depressed before coming to terms with my identity and my gender. I was at a very low point,” he said. “It wasn’t until I started dating my partner and my wife that I was getting ideas to explore my identity more, my gender more.”

Duvani began taking testosterone, a hormone that stimulates the development of male secondary sexual characteristics, three years ago and underwent a gender-affirming top surgery procedure about two years ago. Likewise, he legalized his legal name change earlier this month.

He says he knows it is rare to have a supportive family and feels very lucky. “Some of my family was really supportive from the beginning, from my sister, close friends, and my wife, obviously,” said Duvani. “My dad was supportive, and my mom is super supportive now. However, when I first told her, she said she was going to need time, almost like a grieving kind of thing.”

The future

Duvani worked as chef before the pandemic for 10 years. Recently, he decided to enter a community college to pursue a career as a therapist, because “we don’t have that great of a representation in that field.”

The DuVannis were profiled in a story by KUOW as they delivered supplies to encampments across the city. Their mutual aid efforts mirror those of other Seattleites who have taken it upon themselves to meet the needs of their unhoused neighbors.

“We really try to do anything we can to help. There’s a lot of holes to fill due to capitalism,” he said. “We usually just get to different encampments... build community and bring the resources that they need.”

Duvani says he and his wife, who have lived in Washington for the past four years, discuss welcoming a baby into their home one day, once he is further along with his degree program. “I’m hoping that we’re building a better future now for our children to be able to thrive in a more accepting world,” he said.
HIV: THE NEGLECTED PANDEMIC

The long journey of a Seattle man in a new Vice documentary on Americans living with HIV

by Hannah Saunders
SGN Contributing Writer

For over a year, we, as a community, have focused on combating COVID-19. We have focused on keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe. What has not been a primary focus is an epidemic that has continued to grow, a global issue that shares immense commonalities with our current pandemic: HIV.

On June 2, 2021, Vice released a documentary titled "HIV: The Neglected Pandemic," which highlights the history of the HIV crisis, the incredible medical advances that have been made along the way, and most importantly, the internal and external struggles of people living with HIV. It shows not only how far we have come with learning about, preventing, treating, and living with HIV but also how much more work there is to do.

The documentary is narrated by a man living with HIV. He is a prominent host, hairdresser, and author, Queer Eye star Jonathan Van Ness. The narrative dives into the history of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States and describes how the virus was first identified in June of 1981 by Dr. Michael Gottlieb. Some of his first patients had contracted pneumocystis pneumonia, which is uncommon in healthy adults, as well as yeast infections. The report that month from the CDC stated that five gay men were experiencing a sort of atypical pneumonia. Not long after, more reports of the illness began popping up in San Francisco and New York.

In the early 1980s, the virus was called "GRID," or gay-related immune deficiency, due to its impact on the gay community. By the mid-1980s, renamed AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), it was popping up outside of the gay community, in heterosexual people, and even in children. From the get-go, Dr. Anthony Fauci again well known due to his role combatting the novel coronavirus) became heavily involved in studying the HIV, as well as acting as an advocate in the medical field.

For the documentary, Vice interviewed not only those who have been diagnosed with HIV within the last decade or so but also HIV survivors from the 1980s. A time when the world had little idea of what was taking place, and when the death rate associated with HIV was at an all-time high. These survivors described the difficulties and stigma they faced when trying to obtain information or help, even among health-care providers.

Although it has been 40 years, much of the misinformation, as well as societal and medical stigma, still exist today — even with the remarkable medical advancements, and even during this age of information. Many people are still uncertain how the virus is contracted and spread, some believe that becoming HIV positive is a death sentence. Furthermore, many Americans do not have any positive associations with HIV, and frequently draw parallels between the disease and criminal activities, such as intravenous drug use and prostitution.

A Seattle man’s tale
Neil Legui is a Seattle-based HIV-positive man who appeared in the documentary. He grew up in a Mormon household, and by the time he was 21, he had moved to San Diego, where he worked in Gay bars for six years. But after a chain of events, he found himself moving back north to Washington state.

"I was diagnosed in 2013 in the fall. This was when I was in that addiction phase. I had met someone who was all wrong for me, and really quickly I had become an everyday meth user. Within a year, I was an addict, I was HIV positive, and I was homeless," explained Legui.

As for the specifics of his diagnosis, the story goes like this: One day, he decided to go into the emergency room. He had a lesion on his face, but he also had a skyrocketing fever that was more concerning to him at the time. While at the ER, he was asked if he wanted to receive an HIV test. He agreed and awaited the results.

"They called me in, which kind of made me think that something was up, and my boyfriend asked if I wanted him to come in. I strongly felt that I needed to go in there and do it myself, because if it was positive, then this was something I was going to have to take care of for the rest of my life for myself, and I needed to take it on and be responsible," he said.

When he presented the information, she was on the brink of tears. Although Legui had anticipated the positive test result he received, he felt numb. How did he contract HIV while in a relationship? Turns out that his partner was already HIV positive and was not taking his antiretrovirals daily.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which prevents transmission to those who are at risk of contracting HIV, hit the market only after Legui’s diagnosis. If PrEP had been on the market prior to his diagnosis, he could have prevented Legui from contracting HIV.

Nonetheless, an HIV-positive person can be sexually active with a HIV-negative person without spreading the virus, if they are taking their prescribed antiretrovirals daily.

In the medical field, there is a term known as U=U, which means that if an individual’s viral load is undetectable, the virus is untransmittable — and antiretrovirals make that possible.

After the diagnosis
As the time of his diagnosis, and as a healthy young man, Legui did not have health insurance, because it was not a concern of his at the time, but he discovered that his newly needed HIV medications would cost $4,000 without insurance.

In 2015, he moved to Ellensburg, Wash., to help his grandmother out with tasks such as grocery shopping, yardwork, and her pets. It was in Ellensburg where Legui was able to start afresh. He kicked his drug habit and founded Pride of Ellensburg, "a nonprofit community organization dedicated to inspiring and celebrating love, equality and diversity through local events, outreach, and fostering opportunities," according to the website. "It was a pivotal project that helped me turn my life around," Legui said.

During his time in Ellensburg, Legui began seeking treatment for HIV, but there was also a long battle with stigma. "I was not getting any kind of respect or acknowledgment from these doctors, who treated me as a punk kid that was trying to score pharmaceuticals. Doctors think you're crazy... and I literally heard a doctor say, 'meth is a heck of a drug.'"

With no HIV specialists in Ellensburg, Legui had to come up with an alternative plan. The closest specialist was in Yakima, but the 45-minute drive each day was a hurdle for someone without a car. So Legui found it challenging to access the healthcare he required. "I feel like that in it's a discriminatory bar, to require patients to drive that far for something that's been around for 40 years now. Like, are you kidding me?" Legui stated.

Since he was struggling with healthcare professionals in Ellensburg and strongly desired to get the appropriate care, it became apparent to Legui that he needed to move to a city. One day, however, his grandmother discovered his HIV medications, and she threw him out of the house with one day's notice. After he left for Seattle, Legui's grandmother hired workers to bleach and sanitize the house. According to Legui, his grandmother believed that he could contract HIV from his coughs or sneezes. "My uncle told her that she was better off burning the house to the ground and starting over from scratch," he said.

see VICE page 24
AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE CENTER FOR LGBTQ+
FERTILITY AT PNWF

FREE WEBINAR | JUNE 28

HiFi • TURNTABLES • SONOS • SERVICE

Hawthorne Stereo
“a pretty nice place”

Seattle’s Non-Food Based
Dog Training
Follow us on
Instagram @nitrok9

- Specializing in Aggression
& Anxiety
- Obedience On & Off Leash
- Protection Dogs
- Service Dogs
- Discounts for Police
& Military

HIT ME UP!

Are you interested
in starting PrEP?
Do you use Tina?

No problem.

HELP US SEE IF PEER SUPPORT CAN HELP YOU
TAKE YOUR PrEP EVERY DAY

ONLY 3 VISITS
OVER 6 MONTHS
FILL OUT 3
ONLINE SURVEYS
GET 3
$20 AMAZON
GIFT CARDS

SO? CONTACT US! email: hitmeup@uw.edu
text: 206-208-5234
vocemall: 206-616-5234

6303 Roosevelt Way NE • 206-355-1588 • www.hawthorne stereo.com

nitro
K-9
REAL DOG TRAINING

Visit us online: www.sgn.org

June 18, 2021

SGN
BANG
HAIRSTYLES FOR ALL HUMANS
BANGSEATTLE.COM
PIKE • SLU • BELTOWN

I’m here for you!

ARV Medication
Hep C Medication
Pres & Prep Medication
Linkage to Care
ADAP
Free Delivery & Adherence Packaging
Free Oral HIV Testing

Howard Russell
howard.russell@aidshealth.org
206-327-2230

PACIFIC NORTHWEST
LOVE FRESH • LOVE LOCAL • LOVE DELIVERY

Your neighborhood QFC is proud to offer the freshest local everything and your favorite foodie finds at an incredible value!

Try FREE QFC Same Day Pickup Today!
Shop at QFC.com or download the QFC App.

LOVE FRESH • LOVE LOCAL • LOVE PRIDE

COUPON VALID THROUGH 7/31/2021

$5 OFF a $35 purchase*
Breaking generational curses

by Janice Atill
SGN Contributing Writer

Black boys are supposed to be beaten. For our own good, he would say.

The relationship Broome had with his father can easily and accurately be labeled abusive, but the deeper tragedy is the cycle it reveals. Juniper (Brian’s father) could not show him the love or understanding he needed because he had never seen it.

Carried over from a time when Black children were used against their parents or targeted directly as a form of control, the cruelty of white people had branded Broome’s family the same way it has branded many other Black families: with the curse of non.balance and tough love adopted by people trying desperately to hide from the world what they love most in the world.

His father’s attempts to beat masculinity into him came as much from a twisted form of love as it did ignorance and hatred. While Brian’s father may have hated the idea of him being Gay, what he hated most was the thought of white men killing him because of it.

His mother, while far less abusive, also did not give young Brian the love he craved — the “bitchy-bitchy-kissie-kissie” love he mentioned in our interview, as well as in his book, that he watched obsessively on television as a child, portrayed solely by white parents with the financial security and free time to care about their children’s feelings.

His parents had never experienced the softer, more affectionate side of paternal love and were too busy fighting to survive while trying to provide.

When I asked him what he thinks played the biggest part in how he valued white people over himself — his parents, peers, or teachers — without hesitation he said, “I think all of those things. I went to a mostly white school, and those white kids immediately let it be known they knew they were better than me. They put things in my head — including the teachers — and I knew I was being treated differently. I was treated like a different species, and my parents were so busy trying to survive that they did not have time to fortify my blackness. They did not tell me these people were evil and deluded. They warned me, but did not teach me that I was worthy. So, directly my peers and teachers, but indirectly my parents.”

Learning who children really are

My focus after reading Punch Me Up to the Gods became identifying not only what young Brian was missing but also what he felt he needed. What parents of little Black boys, little Gay Black kids, little Gay Black kids, and even little Gay kids of any race could do to help give them a fighting chance in a cold world. “I don’t believe in tough love,” Broome said to me when I asked what type of parental attention, what love language, he felt he needed as a child. “I believe in love. That’s not to say there shouldn’t be boundaries, but tough love feels like force. But if someone had looked at me and said, ‘I see you and I accept you,’ it would have helped.”

In one of the most insightful moments of our conversation, Broome told me that parents should learn who their children are before they arm them against a racist America. “My environment was trying to pound me into this shape that didn’t suit me, and it was painful, and I wish they had asked little Brian who he was. But my parents were busy, and I believe my father was deeply depressed.”

He told me a story about a professor of his who had a son whose favorite color was pink. By the time the boy got back from his first day of grade school, he had colored the color altogether.

“And just that quick, the molding begins to make kids into what we’re comfortable with. If I had a child, I would try to get to know her before I started trying to reinforce her against a racist American culture, and that way, I could better protect her.”

Even children born in the same household with the same parents need different things. Some will be more independent, while others will require more affection and support from their parents. Allowing children to show their parents who they are instead of applying a cookie-cutter parenting style will be more beneficial to their overall development and self-worth.

This is what I believe Broome’s memoir embodies. The way he organizes his chapters and delivers information will make you very angry with his parents — and then will make you understand they did the best they physically and emotionally could at the time.

They did the best they could with what they were given, as so many Black parents do, and unfortunately it left Broome relatively defenseless, as so many Black children are.

A beacon of hope

Broome’s memoir, though, is more than a testament to his pain; it is a beacon of hope. Through misery and chaos, he found himself. He had help and encouragement, but in the end, he pulled himself up by his bootstraps and decided to be better.

“I don’t know that there was a real defining moment,” he said in regard to deciding to get sober, “but after rehab I would wake up every day and say I am not going to use today.”

“One of the most important things in my life right now is recovery. I have been sober for eight and a half years now. The book exists to put things out there, to help me with my recovery. I was a fool person before my recovery, and I put things in the book to help me recover from my drug and alcohol addiction. I do not ever, ever want to be the person I was, and this book helps me to be a better person.”

Broome is now an award-winning writer, poet, and screenwriter. He is an instructor in the writing program at the University of Pittsburgh (where he earned his MFA) and a credit to people everywhere struggling with addiction, making a comeback, and fighting for a second chance, to those trying to be more than they thought they could be.
(Although there has been some ongoing family tension, when the Vice documentary featuring Leighia was released, he held a Zoom viewing party, which his uncle’s daughter attended supportively. “I can still be close with family that understands me, even with all these challenges,” Leighia explained.)

While in Seattle, Leighia became heavily involved in HIV studies at the University of Washington. They set him up with a social worker immediately, and he was able to consistently take his medications while also contributing to research. In addition, he was able to hop on a health insurance plan, and finally began receiving the healthcare he needed.

Leighia spent some time working as an outreach specialist for Fred Hutch’s HIV vaccine trials, during which time he would talk to people about getting involved in research studies. “I got comfortable talking about HIV that way and understanding exactly where HIV was in the present time and that really helped me overcome my own stigma,” said Leighia.

By sharing information and personal experiences, he made peace with his diagnosis, and later came out as being HIV positive via social media.

The documentary
Prior to the release of the documentary, Leighia had never been so open about overcoming his former drug addiction or living with HIV. During the three-month waiting period in advance of the release, he felt waves of anxiety. Leighia describes himself as guarded, and he finds it difficult to be quite so open or vulnerable — particularly given how toxic social media can be nowadays.

On Facebook, Leighia created a lengthy post explaining some of the information in the documentary. He was unsure how much footage Vice would use, and he wanted to get his full story out there.

After the documentary came out, Leighia received a tremendously overwhelming reception. “I had a lot of people reach out to me and say, ‘Me too,’” he said. As a result, his openness has promoted more open dialogue surrounding HIV.

Leighia’s hopes for the future are that more people, whether HIV positive or not, maintain both an open mind and an open heart when talking about HIV. He suggests educating oneself via books or online, taking some time to watch the Vice documentary, having open communication with others, and stopping cracking AIDS jokes.

As for those living with HIV who may be struggling, he said, “It’s not big deal. It’s no longer a death sentence. It’s something that a lot of people live with and manage, and the medications have gone a long way. Research has shown that those who are open about their status are more likely to be on their meds. Connect with other people who have it, be open about your status, find people you trust to disclose to. And hopefully, we’ll one day have a cure out of here.”

To watch the documentary, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=c500H15jHjo.
It's Pride month again, which means all across the country, sexualities are being seen and celebrated.

For many members of the LGBTQ community, however, the celebration becomes complicated, especially if they are people who take their identities as bisexual or have been living as the same sex for much of their lives. Some people are not out to their families or friends, and they may feel anxious and vulnerable when they are around others who identify as gay or lesbian.

It was these experiences that led Mike Shaw to seek out a group that shared his struggles. "I came out, officially, as a bisexual person in Seattle in 2014," Shaw said. "I was looking for a social group specifically for bi men, since most of the LGBT social groups were focused around gay or lesbian interests."

"I just happened to look at a Reddit and another bisexual man in Seattle responded, 'I don't think there are any other bisexual groups in Seattle, but we could get together and chat.' And so we grabbed coffee, and we kind of came up with this idea of founding the group."

The group now meets weekly, usually for drinks, and conversation, but they will throw in the occasional picnic, hike, or baseball game. "Usually people respond best to just gathering around the table, ordering a few drinks, and just sharing their experiences," Shaw explained.

**Validation and invisibility**

"It's been great to have a ton of bi people, in this case men, around me," fellow group member James Bernstein noted. "I think it's very normalizing. Mike always says, 'This isn't a support group; it's a social club,' but at every meeting, we have conversations about very deep stuff, like coming out and people's experiences. It is very normalizing to hear so many similar stories." I think it's normal for bi people to come out a little later than our gay or lesbian counterparts, so it felt good, too, to be like, I'm not rare. It's really validating to have a bi-specific space.

The group offers a break from a world full of criticism, misunderstanding, and invisibility. There, the men's struggles are valid, and discussing experiences is helpful to all members. "It's a very helpful," added Juan, another group member, who did not want to use his last name. "Just talking about our experiences, like when did we first realize we were different, how were we dealing with it now? Are we in relationships? Family acceptance and all that stuff. We talk about it, and it helps. And I think for all the new members that are still a little less secure, it helped them to be like, 'Oh yeah, this is fine, this is normal.' So it's a great, great meetup."

In sharing experiences, many of the men in the group have found validation in identities so often dismissed by others. In fact, the dismissal of bisexuals by both straight and gay friends alike, is a common experience among many of the men in the club. "There is a lot of resistance to acceptance of the male gaze, even in queer communities," Bernstein recalled. "We discussed the prevalence of the male gaze, even in queer communities."

"Yeah, I think it's almost the (onion-like) of all the terrible stereotypes gay women get, that they're just going to leave you for a man, that phallic centeredness we all just want to be with men," added Bernstein. "I understand that sexuality exists on a spectrum is the hardest concept for those who struggle with bipolar. The next hardest concept to grasp is that attraction to men is not always superior to attraction to women."

**Visibility and validation**

Bernstein elaborated more on the phenomenon of erasure, sharing with me the story of his first relationship with a man. "I wasn't out when I was dating, so I was mainly dating women," he explained. "I only had one real, maybe two, small things with girls. Because I wasn't out, the only time I actually had a short relationship with a guy was when I was studying abroad in Guatemala, and I was completely away from everyone I know, and I felt like a little place to experiment. It was funny, because he was bi too. Once our friend group realized we were dating, they were all like, 'We know it, we knew there was something different about you,' and then immediately I was just gay to everyone. I remember realizing people can't deal with nuances.

"It felt kind of scary, knowing that it's hard to really be seen as bi. So when I moved back to the States, I didn't really come out. I started dating my current partner and didn't feel the need to come out until recently."

"Bisexuality, by definition, is a sexuality of fluidity, existing outside of the binary. However, attraction is invisible. For Bisexual people in relationships, what is visible — the gender of their partner — is what becomes the definition of a person's sexuality. It is hard for people to see a man with a woman and understand that he may still be attracted to men. It can be hard for outsiders to the Bisexual community to understand how one might feel attraction to both men and women. Bernstein is a Bisexual man, married to a woman, and his choice of a partner has led him to feel further alienation from the LGBTQ community.

"I just get the sense from some of my gay
friends that they don’t see that I should have the same amount of space in the community.” Bernstein said. “I’ve been in a straight-presenting relationship for the majority of my adult life, and now it feels like I have to be so much more seen, and I am constantly overlooked, and feeling like I’m not queer enough to wear the label or be in the community.

**Challenges**

The idea of isolation, of not being "gay enough" for the LGBTQ community but also not "straight enough" for the hetero-sexual community, and this difficulty to be understood, even by other members of the LGBTQ community, lead many Bisexuals to stay in the closet, and often not even understand their own sexuality until later in life.

"It was a journey," Shaw said about his own coming-out experience. "Like Jean and James too, I think for bisexis, people probably will notice you because you come out later in life, because it is a journey. You're trying to figure yourself out." Bisexuality is a spectrum, and Mike, Jean, and James all have their own unique experiences. Mike is in a committed relationship with a man, Jean is currently exploring the dating scene, and James has been married to his wife for several years. However, they also all understand the importance of being open and honest.

Regardless of what their relationship statuses look like, all three men face different challenges when it comes to being seen as Bisexual. For Mike, the struggle is being seen as Gay and just "not ready to come out." Many have questioned James's need to come out, since he is in a straight-presenting relationship. For Jean, and others in the dating pool, the challenges can be even more daunting. "It's tricky, because I don't approach dating as I did when I was younger, before I came out as bisexual," Jean said, "so now it's more about attracting a person, and I find that dating gay men is really hard because they have their own... notions, they have their own experience in coming out and what that's like, and a lot of time you put that experience and that baggage into a relationship and onto me." Bernstein also commented on the struggles Bisexual men face when they come out in the dating world. "I'm not dating, but I have heard from countless people, many women, that they wouldn't date bi men. Kind of like you're inferior because of that."
SEATTLE, WA

CAPITOL HILL PRIDE

MARCH & RALLY!
10am-10pm, Cal Anderson Park

Speakers, Artists, Live Music, Food & Fun!
Marshall Law Band • I AM Chame! • LSP & Friends
MC Michael Cagle • Host Mac McGregor • Darran of TDJS – The DJ Sessions – Charlotte LeFaire – Philip Lipson
Dennis Saxman • Teri Kemp Rogers • Oliver Miska • Kelli Divest SPD • Jesus, Jamil Suleman
Seattle CHEER • SEAsious for Hong Kong • AP Macroeconomics • Dining Dead
Dueling Divas – Emerald City Tenors – Broadway Showstoppers

www.capitolhillpridefestival.info

KREAU
GARGOYLES STATUARY
We Are Proud to Serve You

Protecting Seattle since 1992
4550 University Way NE, Seattle 206.632.4940
www.gargoylesstatuary.com
find us on Facebook

dreadstrands
Happy Pride!

COMICS
115 N, 8th Street
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 632-2240
dreamstrands.com

SEATTLE MATTRESS
Whatever you do in bed,
we support it.
Happy Pride!
SeattleMattress.Net

RAINBOW on the EASTSIDE
THE FIRST GALLERY SHOW
FOR EASTSIDE LGBTQ+ ARTISTS
Centro Cultural Mexicano
7945 Gilman Street
Redmond, Washington 98052

Gallery Hours:
June 1-26, 2021
Mon–Fri 10am–5pm

Reception:
Saturday June 5
1pm – 3pm
https://rainbowontheeastside.wolfberrystudio.com/

"Rainbow on the Eastside" is presented by Wolfberry Studio LLC in partnership with Centro Cultural Mexicano and supported by a grant from the City of Redmond and the Arts and Culture Commission.

Annapurna Cafe
OPEN
FOR PICK UP AND DELIVERY
WWW.ANNAPURNACAFCAFE.COM

PILCHUCK GLASS SCHOOL
ANNUAL AUCTION
OCTOBER 16, 2021
PILCHUCKAUCTION.ORG
2021 WHIDBEY ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL

Celebrate summer with outdoor concerts in June, July and August
Chamber music by Brahms, Schubert songs, Bach arias and more
www.whidbeyislandmusicfestival.org

Refresh Your Mind and Body

Rubicon Float Studio
Float Tank Therapy
Kirkland, WA
(866) 356-2888
Book Now!
Promo Code: discoverme

www.floatrubicon.com
Weightless Meditation and Recovery

LGBTQ ALLYSHIP
WORKING TOWARDS ECONOMIC, RACIAL, AND GENDER JUSTICE! GET INVOLVED INFO@ALLYSHIP.ORG
Hair-free.
Carefree.

First time guests: come in for your first wax and the next one’s on us.
LunchboxWax Capitol Hill
317 E Pine St, Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 829-5222

BI-WEEKLY!
FIND US WHEREVER YOU LISTEN TO PODCASTS!

PRIDE IN PLEASURE

pjur
ORIGINAL
premium silicone lubricant
available while supplies last

USE CODE SEATTLEGAY FOR 10% OFF
SEX TOYS, LUBRICANTS, AND MORE
@ BABELAND + BABELAND.COM

ANAL CANCER IS
ON THE RISE

WITH HIV

WE NEED HIV+ VOLUNTEERS OF ALL GENDERS WHO ARE 35+ TO TAKE PART IN A NATIONAL ANAL CANCER PREVENTION STUDY.

Visit the website anchorstudy.org or call us at 1-844-HIV-BUTT.

Volunteers will be reimbursed up to $100 for each completed study visit.
Simple Surrogacy was founded in 2002 to assist couples and individuals with the desire to achieve a family through third party assisted reproduction. We were founded on one simple principle: to provide our clients with the highest standard of care in the surrogacy and egg donation industry at an affordable price. Our team of dedicated staff and consists of parents through surrogacy, current and former surrogate mothers and egg donors, and counselors. Learn more about us at SimpleSurrogacy.com

Simple Surrogacy should be your agency because:
- One of the largest surrogacy and egg donation agencies
- One of the most affordable Surrogacy Agencies
- We donate services to LGBT Clients through Men Having Babies Gay Parenting Assistance Program
- Staff consists of previous Parents, Surrogates and Donors
- Excellent reputation helping our clients achieve success for more than 17 years
- Expedited matching with our database of surrogates
- References available from previous clients of our program
- Hundreds of beautiful donors to choose from
- Over 43 babies already expected for 2019!

We have helped many couples complete their families through surrogacy and want to help you as well.

For more information please visit us at www.simplesurrogacy.com, or www.simpledonations.com
Call us toll-free at 1-866-41-SURRO to speak with our Executive Program Director for a free consultation.
DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE, SAY “PRIDE” DURING CHECKOUT AT ANY HAVE A HEART AND GET 10% OFF YOUR ORDER.