



BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

NYC

RESTAURANT
**STONEWALL
INN**

**Marsha P.
Johnson**



GAY IS A
WAY TO
THAT SPIRIT
MEN
AND
HYS

**STONEWALL MEANS
FIGHT BACK! SMASH
GAY OPPRESSION!**
GAY CAUCUS AGAINST WAR & FASCISM



**Sylvia
Rivera**

**STORIES FROM
STONEWALL & NEW YORK CITY**

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any Budget**
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For 51 years, we've informed, defended, and celebrated our community.
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A QUEER NYC TRAVEL DIARY

BY RENEE RAKETTY
SGN PUBLISHER

TIMES SQUARE
RENEE RAKETTY

It wouldn't be right to kick off Pride without a tribute to the place often credited with bringing about the birth of our modern LGBTQIA+ civil rights movement: Stonewall. For the Queer community, it has become a much-revered and sacred location. The Stonewall Inn and the Stonewall National Monument across the street are the living embodiments of our ancestors who put their bodies on the line so that we can enjoy the basic freedoms we have today.

Every year, LGBTQIA+ people from around the world make the pilgrimage to New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood to visit the site where a series of riots and demonstrations against police abuses — the Stonewall Riots —erupted following an early-morning raid on the popular Gay bar on June 28, 1969. This year, the venue became a reminder of the ongoing struggle ahead, as the Trump administration removed the words "Transgender" and "Queer" from the monument's website, run by the National Park Service.

As the publisher of the *SGN* and a Transgender woman myself, I knew it was the right time for our staff and me to travel to NYC and join the resistance brewing against a fascist regime hellbent on overturning hard-fought gains and returning us to the closet — or worse. Joining me for the journey were two of our writers, Madison Jones and Nova Berger, whose work is contained in these pages.

Below are excerpts from my travel diary.

Trump

We had only landed hours ago, but there was something we needed to do first and foremost: go to the very place that best symbolizes our president — Trump Tower. Madison and I extended the one-finger salute from across the street, not wanting to get caught up in the cocoon of barricades and Secret Service protection the building enjoys.

The people of NYC have long known what the rest of the world has come to realize: the man is an alleged profiteer, fraud-

ster, and racist. And, of course, a convicted felon on 54 counts for falsifying business records.

For me, the act was personal — especially as I was traveling with a passport that identifies me as "male," thanks to Trump's executive order "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government." It seems like voters picked the wrong guy if they wanted to "defend women": his history of alleged womanizing, rape accusations, and hot-mic "grab them by the pussy" comment says all that needs to be said.

Central Park

Madison and I later took a walk through Central Park. The last time I was in NYC, I promised myself I would. It's the most stunning urban park I've ever seen. The varying land features, the zoo, and the architecture were masterfully planned. It was once the final destination of the first Gay Pride March, has hosted the AIDS Memorial

Quilt, and has been the site of numerous Queer protests, rallies, and sporting events (like the Gay Games in 1994).

I took a minute to admire the 1860s masterpiece by Lesbian sculptor Emma Stebbins, "The Angel of the Waters" atop the Bethesda Fountain. The sculpture was even featured in Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America*. And, as if on cue, LGBTQIA+ people could be seen everywhere.

Broadway

If there's one thing I've learned about visiting New York City, it's that there's no substitute for the big productions, historic theaters, and incredible artistic talent on display all around you — and of course, the big-ticket prices that come along with it.

Nick Leone, the *SGN*'s Broadway critic, spent several days with me and Madison. If I learned anything, it's that there's a story behind every theater, every production, and the whole cottage industry of restaurants, bars, and establishments that cater to the theater crowd.



MADISON AND RENEE AT TRUMP TOWER
MADISON JONES



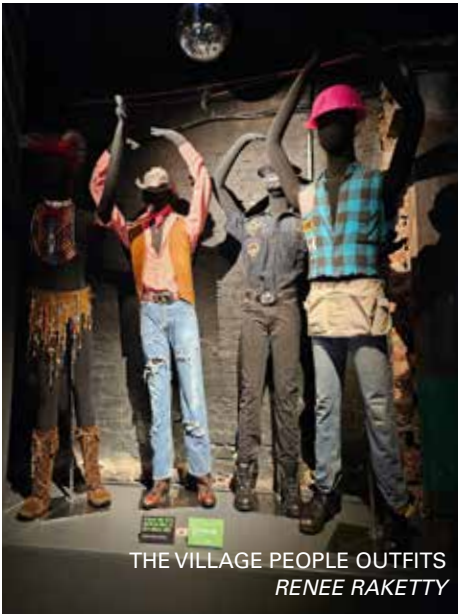
CENTRAL PARK
MADISON JONES



BROADWAY MERCH
RENEE RAKETTY



KEITH HARING DESIGNED JACKET
WORN BY MADONNA
RENEE RAKETTY



THE VILLAGE PEOPLE OUTFITS
RENEE RAKETTY



BROADWAY COSTUMES
RENEE RAKETTY

It was at Joe Allen’s — a hot spot for Broadway talent and decorated with memorabilia — that I sampled my first escargot (not a fan of the texture, but deliciously prepared). I also tried a couple of pies at the Black-owned Little Pie Company and walked along Restaurant Row, a popular destination before or after a show.

Together, we saw *Cabaret* with Orville Peck at the August Wilson Theatre and *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* at the more modern Marquis Theatre. Both productions were stunning, and seeing Peck unmasked was a special treat.

I assume I was probably the only LGBTQIA+ journalist to set foot into the St. James Theatre for the revival of *Sunset Boulevard*, made popular by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Nicole Scherzinger, who plays Norma Desmond, delivers a stunning performance. However, she was recently in the hot seat for a social media comment praising a hat that read “Make Jesus First Again.” Many saw this as a nod to Trump and the MAGA movement.

The production was unlike anything I’d seen before, with a camera operator providing close-ups of the actors that were projected onto screens — ensuring that there were no bad seats in the house. The most remarkable moment was when the camera went backstage (some Queer representation was included here), and lead actor Tom Francis, who plays Joe Gillis, could be seen and heard singing as he walked through the street and neighborhood with backup dancers — all live (they close the street for this for every performance).

What the show lacked in elaborate sets, it made up for with amazing performances and creative backstage antics. The run is relatively short by Broadway standards: opening in October 2024 and closing soon, on July 13, 2025.

I tried to get rush tickets at the Lyceum Theatre box office to see *Oh, Mary!*, but people start lining up in the middle of the night. Who can blame them? Oregon-native Cole Escola’s play has taken Broadway by storm. In addition to writing it, Escola plays Mary Todd Lincoln. The production received five Tony Award nominations.

Likewise, tickets were scarce to see Jinkx

Monsoon, a longtime Seattle resident, in *Pirates! The Penzance Musical* at the Roundabout Theatre.

Of course, I also raided the gift shop at the Museum of Broadway, where I posed for a self-portrait. I’m not sure where I’m going to put it all, since I bought one of everything at the *Stranger Things* merch booth.



RENEE RAKETTY

Attractions

When I saw the signs for RiseNY, I assumed it was just a tourist trap featuring a thrill ride soaring over video of NYC. But I figured it was a hell of a lot cheaper than a helicopter tour. I was happily surprised, however. This is literally a museum that begins in a subway simulation and takes you back in time to the earliest inhabitants of the area. It moves through the decades and explores New York from every angle.

There were many exhibits and artifacts of interest to the Queer community, including costumes from the original Village People; a hand-painted jacket by Keith Haring, once worn by Madonna; and a costume from Broadway’s *Wicked*. The exhibit on New York fashion was also fascinating.

The whole experience ends with a Times Square New Year’s Eve simulation — corny, yes, but worth it for what follows: a flight simulation over NYC neighborhoods featuring all the major sites and buildings. It was well worth the price of admission.

A local once joked that “nothing happens on Staten Island,” but when I heard I could see the Statue of Liberty, Manhattan sky-

line, and Brooklyn Bridge (and much more) for free, I zoomed on down to the Staten Island Ferry.

I had been quoted lofty prices for private tours with half the itinerary. You can tell it’s a popular destination for tourists — much to the dismay of locals. The captain made sure to direct us newbies on how to navigate the experience.

Seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time with my own eyes made me sentimental for the ideals of our country, their importance to peace and democracy, and — of course — how Trump is making a mockery of those ideals. I took a dozen selfies from every angle.

Words can hardly describe the skyline — a monument to capitalism and architectural innovation. The Brooklyn Bridge was also a marvel, a 142-year-old engineering masterpiece that has inspired poets, artists, and American culture through movies, shows, and books.

Stonewall

Like a true New Yorker, I took the subway to the Christopher Street–Stonewall station with Nova and Madison. As we turned the corner and saw the monument and the Stonewall Inn for the first time, I was overcome with emotion. I had to pause for a moment to take it all in. Madison and Nova eagerly took pictures.

Of course, I had to opine on the significance of this location and its current relevance — the latest example of Trump’s

attempt to erase Transgender people from existence. Madison and I understood that being here was a statement to ourselves and to our Transgender community: we won’t be erased, and we aren’t going anywhere — except back into the streets, like our predecessors at this very location.

Nova, on the other hand, cracked a joke about it being called Stonewall because of a literal stone wall.

After touring the monument, we headed over to the Stonewall Inn, where drag queen Sabel Scities greeted us at the door: “This belongs to you and to all of the LGBTQ+ community everywhere.”

She invited us to join her later that night for a drag show on the second floor. After dinner nearby, Madison and I returned to the Stonewall. We took in the history and examined every item on the walls before heading upstairs to watch Sabel and fellow drag personality Indigo Dai, fresh from the West Coast, dazzle a diverse crowd from around the world.

After the show, we were invited to take photos with them on the stage. Before the dance floor opened, I pulled Madison aside. I told her we were obligated to dance here at Stonewall — like our forebears did in 1969. She joined me for a lap around the floor before we called it a night.

Final thoughts

This visit to New York City was extra special. Not only am I the publisher of the third-oldest LGBTQIA+ newspaper — celebrating its 51st anniversary, its incredible accomplishments for our community, and its regular reporting from and about NYC for five decades — but I got to do it with two incredibly bright people who represent the future.

While Madison and I went to sleep, Nova hit the Queer nightlife hard. Her incredible well of energy also led her to dance with celebrity Mark Ruffalo at the “Hands Off” protest in Bryant Park. Madison, on the other hand, was reflective, thoughtful — and my own version of Xanax in the city that never sleeps.

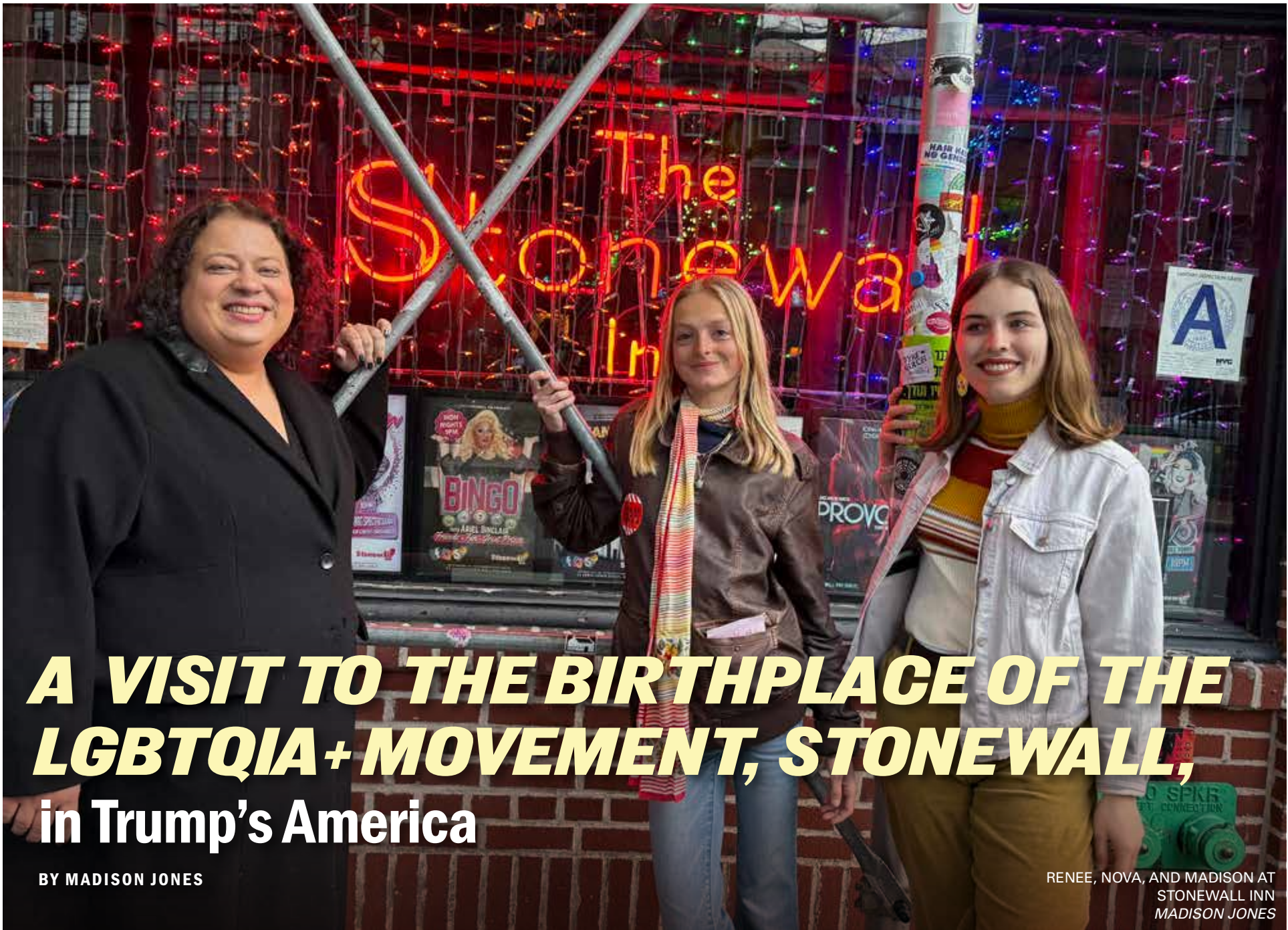
And as someone who had a wall of windows overlooking Times Square, I didn’t sleep either.



STONEWALL INN
MADISON JONES



RENEE WITH INDIGO DAI AND SABEL SCITIES
MADISON JONES



A VISIT TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE LGBTQIA+ MOVEMENT, STONEWALL, in Trump's America

BY MADISON JONES

RENEE, NOVA, AND MADISON AT STONEWALL INN
MADISON JONES

To some, New York City is a mecca, a place where many beloved institutions trace their origins, as well as a beacon of diversity and inclusion. To others it is a chaotic, liberal bubble rife with corruption and lawlessness, symbolic of everything that is currently wrong with the nation. But regardless, no other place continues to hold more cultural weight in the collective psyche of Queer Americans than the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, where the 1969 riots took place.

In many ways, LGBTQIA+ people today continue to occupy a similar, polarized space in the minds of the US public as they did back then. Nothing demonstrates this more than the Trump administration and Republican Party's attack on Queer civil rights in the past several months. The

LGBTQIA+ community's struggles in 2025 and the Stonewall uprising 56 years ago share numerous parallels — something that was not lost upon the bar's patrons, performers, and employees when *SGN* staff visited its historic grounds back in April.

A night of uprising

According to the NYC LGBT Historical Sites Project, founded in the 1990s to preserve the history around Stonewall, police raids on Gay establishments were all too common at the time. So too was the growing resistance against their violence, like the Compton's Cafeteria riots in 1966 in San Francisco.

But what made Stonewall stand apart from these other events, according to the project, was the scale and sheer tenacity

of how people resisted, which sparked a national and global movement.

In the early hours of June 28, 1969, inspired by the indoor commotion at the Stonewall Inn that June night, an angry crowd began congregating around outside as police began arresting some of its patrons, protesting the unjust harassment by throwing objects and blocking the police's path.

Protesters then occupied nearby Christopher Park and adjoining streets for a total of six days. On the second day, at the height of the protests, according to the NYC LGBT Historical Sites Project, eyewitness accounts estimated there being around two thousand people.

The Stonewall riots were unique in that they brought together a wide coalition of

"homeless LGBT teens, trans women of color, lesbians, drag queens, and gay men," according to the project, inspiring Queer people in NYC and across the country to politically organize.

The Smithsonian Museum highlights the story of famous BIPOC Trans activists Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, who were both participants in the Stonewall uprising. They would go on to join groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) to fight for Queer civil rights, while also founding their own organization, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), to house LGBTQIA+ youth.

"Pride" itself was originally created to recognize the anniversary of the Stonewall uprising; however, the Smithsonian points out that groups like the GAA, which Rivera was a part of, were not keen on recognizing the role Transgender people played at Stonewall and in Gay liberation.

At the New York Pride March in 1973, organizers banned drag queens, though Johnson and Rivera marched ahead of it in defiance. This is an unfortunate chapter in the treatment of Transgender and gender-diverse people that continues to echo into the present day.

Stonewall today

Five decades later, Stonewall continues to have immense social and political relevance. The Stonewall National Monument was established in 2016 by the Obama administration as the only US landmark to recognize Queer history. The monument became a point of controversy back in February 2025 when the "T" in the LGBT abbreviation was removed from the official National Park Service website, one in a long list of decisions by the Trump administration to wipe all acknowledgement of Transgender existence from federal agencies. In response, the community has been decorating Christopher Park with Trans flags and heart-shaped stickers in defiance.

The façade of Stonewall has not changed much since the infamous police raid. Inside, throughout the ground floor, there are placards and framed memorabilia showcasing its history. A large Transgen-



STONEWALL INN INTERIOR
MADISON JONES



der Pride flag sits on the back wall facing the entrance, acting as both a centerpiece and an unequivocal sign of support and acknowledgement of its roots.

Sabel Scities, a resident drag queen with 20 years of drag experience, told the *SGN* that they drive from Long Island every Sunday to deliver their joyful and hilarious performances to the bar's patrons. Their show, alongside guest drag star Indigo Dai, was a complete riot, leaving the crowd gagged, cheering, and wanting more.

At the beginning of the night, Scities emphasized the importance of fostering safe spaces and "protecting our Trans siblings" in an era of uncertainty under Trump. To them, inclusive Queer spaces like the Stonewall Inn are becoming more important than ever, as LGBTQIA+ people look for a means to temporarily escape their troubles in the outside world, a sentiment that would probably ring true to the patrons of Stonewall in 1969 as well.

If any lessons can be gleaned from the history and current status of Stonewall, it is that the community is strongest when we uplift one another, standing up and fighting back for the rights of everyone in the LGBTQIA+ alphabet — not just our own — no matter the stakes.



Op-Ed: Let's remember, Pride was born out of protest

BY TAYLOR FARLEY, QUEER POWER ALLIANCE



Pride didn't begin with a parade. It began with a riot.

On June 28, 1969, Queer and Trans people — led by courageous Black and Brown Trans women like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera — stood up to police violence at the Stonewall Inn in New York City. Their resistance was not sanctioned, safe, or polite. It was a survival-driven rebellion against a system that criminalized their existence and tried to erase them. That refusal to back down sparked a movement that still fuels our fight for collective liberation today.

Each June, we honor that uprising, not

because we've forgotten but because we draw strength from it. Especially now in 2025 — when Queer and Trans communities are once again in the crosshairs as a distraction from larger political corruption — it reminds us of the power we hold when we resist together.

Across the country, LGBTQIA+ rights are being systematically stripped away. Under the current administration, we've seen a surge in anti-Queer legislation, attacks on gender-affirming care, and renewed efforts to ban Transgender people from military service and existence. These are not isolated incidents: They are part of a national effort to silence, marginalize, and criminalize us — to reverse decades of hard-won progress and to make us feel powerless, invisible, and afraid.

But Stonewall taught us that even when the system is stacked against us, we are never powerless when we act together.

Even here in Seattle, a city often seen as a haven for progress, our community is not untouched. Discrimination, housing insecurity, and healthcare gaps continue to disproportionately impact Queer and Trans people, especially those who are Black, Brown, Indigenous, disabled, or undocumented. Adding insult to injury, Seattle Pride is facing a projected \$350,000 short-

fall as major corporate sponsors quietly pull out. The same companies that once rushed to paint their logos in rainbow hues are now turning their backs on our community when things get politically uncomfortable.

Let's be clear: Pride has never needed corporate permission. Stonewall didn't have sponsors — it has survivors. And today, Pride lives not only in parades but also in community organizations that hold the line, doing the work and building the future to exist, gather, and fight — without fanfare or financial safety nets.

That spirit is alive in Seattle and across Washington. It lives in the work of grassroots organizations like Queer Power Alliance, Gender Justice League, Entre Hermanos, Lavender Rights Project, QLaw, and TRACTION, to name only a few. These groups are leading with care and courage, offering mutual aid, legal advocacy, culturally competent healthcare referrals, housing support, and more. They are shaping policy and pushing back against the narrative that our lives are expendable.

This is what the heart of Pride looks like, not floats or photo ops. Pride is policy change rooted in lived experience. Pride is leadership that reflects our communities. Pride is demanding housing justice, access to healthcare, and safety without compro-

mise. And that's where our support, funding, and solidarity must go.

If we want to honor Stonewall, we must show up in the same spirit: with boldness, urgency, and the refusal to be sidelined. That means defending Washington's gender-affirming care protections. It means advancing policies like HB 1217 (rent stabilization), SB 5181 (student privacy), and HB 1296 (support for LGBTQIA+ youth in public schools). And it means recommitting ourselves to the work of building safety, access, and belonging year-round, not just in June.

The protest at Stonewall didn't happen because people thought they could win. It happened because people knew they wouldn't survive by staying silent. That's where we are again — at a moment that demands not just remembrance but resistance.

Let's meet it with clarity, courage, and the collective power of our communities, because that's how we've always made history.

Taylor Farley is Executive Director of Queer Power Alliance, a nonprofit working to empower Washington communities, advocate for change, and ensure a future where all LGBTQIA+ people can thrive.



NEW YORK CITY: AN SGN TRAVEL REVIEW OF MANHATTAN at two different price points

BY MADISON JONES

VIEW FROM TIMES SQUARE EDITION BAR
COURTESY EDITION

What with the hassle of traveling into Manhattan from other boroughs or out of town, it is understandable that most travelers to New York City would want to stay close to the action. The *SGN* staff recently stayed at two separate hotels right next to Times Square, while also trying out nearby restaurants and entertainment options, from the bougie to the budget conscious. Each itinerary item below provides travelers with some insight into what kind of experience they can expect with two different price points.

Hotels

The Times Square EDITION offers a minimalist, sleek interior design with ambient tracks and scented lobby benches to convey its luxury. In the main lobby, guests are welcomed by courteous, well-dressed staff at the front desk. The guestrooms mirror the hotel's overall modernist, stripped-back aesthetic, with opaque glass walls, floating countertops, and herringbone flooring. But the highlight of booking a room here was securing one with a spectacular view of Times Square — though be warned that the 24-hour noise may impact one's sleeping experience.

Other perks, like \$40 off during brunch at the hotel's Terrace and Outdoor Gardens restaurant, an American brasserie headed by Chef John Fraser, adds to the hotel's popularity. The EDITION is also home to the Paradise club, a party venue made famous by Madonna. If travelers are looking for refined and modern luxury at the heart of Manhattan, then this hotel will certainly deliver.

- Pros: Paradise club, views of Times Square, Terrace and Outdoor Gardens restaurant

- Cons: Multiple elevator transfers, noise from outside, expensive

OYO Times Square is only a couple feet away yet offers a very different experience for travelers that is more budget friendly. The large generic lobby — and kitschy Serendipity 3 restaurant adjoining it — are overall unassuming. Although by comparison this hotel is cheaper than its nearby competitors, patrons get what they pay for during their stay.

The hotel room with a king-sized bed was subpar in general. The metal Amazon bed-frame wobbled and squeaked with every little movement during the night. With no functioning AC, the room felt humid and stuffy, requiring open windows for airflow despite it being early spring.

The hair dryer in the bathroom was a fire hazard, and there were few other amenities besides hand soap. The only saving grace was the very nice cleaning staff that quickly and efficiently restocked the room every day with new bedding and towels.

Travelers looking to save money in NYC would be wise to instead choose other options in Manhattan. OYO Times Square's location is about the only thing going for it. In a pinch, it may do for a night. But as a multnight experience, this hotel's numerous deficits will grow old quick.

- Pros: Budget friendly, next to Times Square, daily room cleaning
- Cons: Lack of amenities, poorly working AC, uncomfortable mattress

Restaurants

Joe Allen, unlike other spots that have become dominated by tourists, remains a



OYO LOBBY TIMES SQUARE
COURTESY OYO

popular destination for Broadway stars and starlets to come enjoy solid meals after their performances in a dimly lit, cozy atmosphere. The establishment's long history serving theater clientele is reflected in its décor, with Broadway posters on the back wall showcasing its place in feeding the entertainment industry over the decades. Its menu consists mainly of refined staples and classics like meatloaf with gravy, roast chicken, and pork chops served with sides of spinach and mashed potatoes.

The highlight was in its appetizers. First the escargot in herb butter served with sourdough toast: the snails were tender yet chewy, with no sliminess or funky aftertaste. Second, the guacamole with taro root chips: the mixture was buttery, fragrant, and refreshingly perfect when paired with the crunch of the taro. Most dishes start in the \$20–30 range, but diners will be in for a truly elevated experience.

- Pros: Delicious food, excellent service, potential for meeting Broadway stars!
- Cons: Pricier but reasonable, a little out of the way, long waitlists in the evening

Famous Famiglia on Eighth Avenue is one of many pizza-by-the-slice joints dotting the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. It may not be the best pizza spot in town, but it is affordable and more importantly, open until 1 a.m. on weekends. The photos on the wall showing celebrities meeting the owner try to convince customers that the store is a real mom-and-pop joint, but it is not.

What the place lacks in quality or originality, it delivers in consistency and convenience. Its pizza, garlic knots, and calzones are nothing that will knock your socks off, but they scratch an itch, especially after a long night out on Broadway or at the Gay bars of Hell's Kitchen. Regardless, Famous Famiglia would still easily go toe-to-toe



JOE ALLEN RESTAURANT
COURTESY JOE ALLEN



COURTESY FAMOUS FAMIGLIA

with most of the overpriced pizza joints in Seattle. And for that alone, it deserves respect. Mangia!

- Pros: Affordable, convenient, open late
- Cons: Better pizza elsewhere, not always fresh, chain store

Broadway

Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club is an inventive and subversive rendition of the classic musical, in which country artist and Gay icon Orville Peck makes his Broadway debut as frontman Emcee. The opening number showcases Peck’s vocal and acting ranges, introducing the cabaret girls one by one, as well as the two cabaret boys.

Emcee tells the audience the only way he can tell the boys apart is by spanking them and comparing their whimpers, proceeding to do so in one of many Queer and lewd moments.

Clifford Bradshaw’s character, played by Calvin Leon Smith, becomes much more explicitly Bisexual than in previous versions with former male love interests. Eva Noblezada as Sally Bowles steals the show with her singing voice, as well as her portrayal of Sally’s emotional instability. The only downside was the seats of the August Wilson Theatre: Being 100 years old, they were cramped and uncomfortable, especially through a three-hour show.

- Pros: Evocative performances, one-of-a-kind experience
- Cons: Relatively expensive, uncomfortable seating

The Book of Mormon is one of the longest-running and most successful musicals on Broadway. Playing at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre, even after all these years, it still had the audience laughing all the way though. Having only listened to the soundtrack, it was a special experience to watch numbers like “Turn It Off” and “Spooky Mormon Hell Dream” performed live.

The show ended with a special announcement from the cast about the Broadway

Cares Foundation raising money for HIV/AIDS. They stood by the exits with buckets, collecting donations from the audience as they left, which is crucial work in these times.

For those travelers who still want to catch a show but may not have strong preferences or financial commitments, day-of tickets at the TKTS Times Square under the Red Stairs can be a clever way of scoring a discount.

- Pros: Discount tickets, might catch good seat
- Cons: No choice of play or seats, may have obstructed view



CABARET AT THE KIT KAT CLUB
COURTESY BROADWAY



BOOK OF MORMON AT O'NEILL THEATRE
COURTESY BROADWAY



COURTESY KIT KAT CLUB



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SEATTLE SYMPHONY
AT BENAROYA HALL

CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH AT BENAROYA HALL



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JUNE 20

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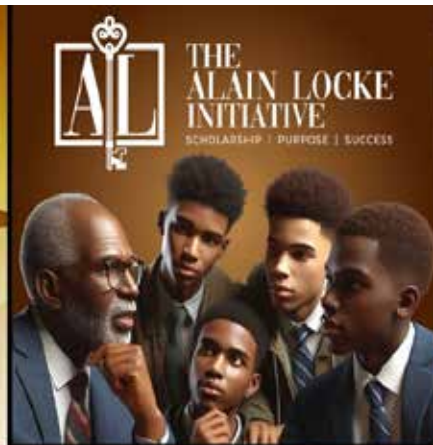
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A GUIDE TO NEW YORK:

Places to celebrate color, Queer Pride, and dance

BY NOVA BERGER

THE RITZ BAR & LOUNGE
NOVA BERGER

New York City, known as the Big Apple, is the city that never sleeps, and if you find yourself wandering its streets — full of Broadway show buzz and warmth from an Aperol spritz — you might be looking for your next spot. The latest late night in New York is sure to be found in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan, and after all the partying is done, it’s a relief that the delis are open 24/7.

The Flaming Saddles Saloon offers perhaps the most dynamic and intriguing combination of American flags and ass-less chaps. It’s the epitome of the positive, inclusive changes coming to the Queer

bar industry in New York, as it relates to LGBTQIA+ representation, emitting a fusion of Queer joy and Western charm, and featuring live performers each night. Its world-famous Frito pie is also a must-try.

Also in Hell’s Kitchen is Industry, which has been pegged as the best Gay bar in the city, an all-inclusive late-night club with a pulsing disco ball and nightly shows. Nearby is the 9th Avenue Saloon, which locals have frequented for years. For those interested in learning the history of Pride (or just the where to get a good cup of coffee), chat up one of the regulars at the bar

who have been coming for years. You’ll be sure to leave with a wonderful bit of Queer history.

Crossing the water to Brooklyn — the hippest neighborhood that has become a haven for Queer creatives, cultural diversity, and LGBTQIA+ independence — is worth the trip.

The Desert 5 Spot is more of an off-brand, teenage version of Flaming Saddles, and is one of the only such places open late on Sunday. It’s best to grab tickets early if you want to engage in line dancing, which seems to have taken the country by storm in recent years, as they sell out days in

advance.

What’s NYC’s nightlife like as a Queer native? Mitchell, a regular at Flaming Saddles, told the *SGN* that NYC’s Gay scene has no limits. While the city gets a bad rap for being “dirty,” Mitchell said the LGBTQIA+ community is flourishing.

“You can find a place to twirl wherever you’re at. I mean, it’s all about the vibe right?” he said. “What’s your mission for the evening? You want to twirl with your girls? Do you want to go get a boy?”



FLAMING SADDLES
NOVA BERGER



TOM OF FINLAND LINED BATHROOM
AT THE 9TH AVE SALOON
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BOTANICAL IN THE BIG APPLE:

A guide to Central Park, a wild and wonderful man-made heaven

BY NOVA BERGER

NOVA BERGER

Central Park, in the heart of New York City, is where pigeons mingle with poets, tourists stumble across secret gardens, and skyscrapers disappear behind the tangled wood of American elms. Built on nearly 853 acres, the park has everything — from chess tables where you can play with the masters of New York to swan ponds to float your own rowboat.

The architect, Fredrick Olmsted, is also the father of many of Seattle’s green spaces.

In 1903, he designed a visionary system for Seattle: 37 parks and 14 boulevards to connect residents with nature throughout the city, including Volunteer, Seward, and Mount Baker Parks.

Central Park was a pioneer for outdoor, large recreational public spaces in the US. It was a revolutionary idea: a “people’s park” where anyone — rich or poor — could stroll, breathe fresh air, and escape the chaos of city life. It first opened to the

public in 1859, when thousands of New Yorkers turned out to ice skate.

In a city thick with skyscrapers, what’s truly astonishing is how connected to nature Central Park feels: from the rocky outcrops of Umpire Rock to the whispering trees of the Ramble, it seems untouched. Yet nearly every inch is man-made or sculpted by design.

Olmsted didn’t just design scenery — he built a social experiment. Olmsted wanted to create a space that encouraged mixing of all classes, a remedy for the stresses of modern life. He wrote that Central Park should offer “tranquility to the mind” and a sense of “unbending of the faculties” — ideas that feel just as important today as they did 170 years ago.

civilization.

Strawberry Fields is a peaceful memorial to John Lennon near the Dakota Building, where he was tragically killed in 1980.

Central Park is also home to an array of wildlife. Visitors can spot raccoons, red-tailed hawks (including the famous Pale Male), turtles sunning on rocks, and migratory birds making a pit stop on their way up or down the continent. There’s even a population of monk parakeets — escaped pets that now live freely among the trees. Just be careful a pigeon doesn’t nab your lunch!

A Queer sanctuary

For much of the 20th century, when LGBTQIA+ people faced abundant violence, criminalization, and social stigma, Central Park served as a discreet meeting place. Areas like The Ramble, a wooded, maze-like area, became well-known as a cruising spot for Gay men, especially during the 1960s and ‘70s when safe and safe Queer spaces were limited.

A “ramble” along its main trails honors women and the LGBTQIA+ movement. The Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument features Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. There continue to be ongoing efforts to include statues or spaces honoring Queer activists like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

Olmsted’s vision worked. Central Park isn’t just a place but a phenomenon — a landscape that invites you to wander, wonder, and be free.

Highlights

Central Park sits on what was previously Seneca Village, a 19th-century African American community that was forced out — legend has it that visitors can hear the ghostly voices where the village stood in the westmost side. Today, the park is home to woodlands, meadows, waterfalls, formal gardens, and Belvedere Castle, where rumor has it that a reclusive stonemason who worked on it died there — and never left.

The oldest man-made object in Central Park is a 3,500-year-old Egyptian obelisk, known as “Cleopatra’s Needle,” a gift from Egypt in the 1880s. It’s tucked behind the Met Museum, looming mysteriously in the shadows like a forgotten artifact from a lost



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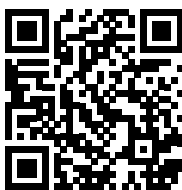
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Many revered shows on Broadway both past and present have been based on popular television and film franchises. Whether it be *Hairspray* or *The Lion King*, adaptations time and again prove to be a reliable strategy for bringing in general audiences from the TV screen to the theater stage. While this is not always a guarantee for success, *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* is a prime example of what can be achieved when adaptations are well executed.

Nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Actor for Louis McCartney's performance as Henry Creel, this offshoot of the award-winning Netflix original series sees Creel's character as the protagonist of his very own story, battling with his villain origins.

Making its successful debut first in 2023 on London's West End, *Stranger Things* staged previews in March at New York City's Marquis Theatre, with its official opening date on April 22, earning much critical acclaim thus far.

Characters

The opening sequence starts with a mysterious disappearance of the WWII battleship USS *Eldridge* due to a military experiment aboard that goes horribly wrong. The audience is then teleported to Hawkins, Indiana, circa the 1950s, where Henry Creel, a teenage recluse obsessed with his radio, begins life in a new town with his family in order to get away from an ominous "incident" at his old school back in Nevada.

While attending Hawkins High School, Henry encounters multiple characters from the *Stranger Things* franchise, including Jim Hopper, a delinquent selling cigarettes and nagged by his strict, no-nonsense father, Chief Hopper. Joyce Byers, known as Joyce Maldonado, is depicted as the school's charismatic ringleader. She devises a scheme to escape Hawkins with the help of her classmates by creating a school play about a misunderstood witch boy, and Henry inevitably gets roped into playing the lead role. Bob Newby, featured in season 2 of the Netflix series, runs the school's AV club and has his own radio show.

New characters are also introduced, like Bob's father (Principal Newby) and his adopted sister Patty, the only character to feel an affinity toward Henry. Patty asks him to use his strange powers to help look for their estranged mother.

Over the course of the play, Henry continuously struggles with and ultimately succumbs to the evil influences of what is known as the Mind Flayer. A younger version of Dr. Martin Brenner also makes his appearance midway through, as the main antagonist that encourages Henry to fall deeper down the rabbit hole.

This story further explores the motivations of Dr. Brenner's character, and explains why he develops an obsession with reaching through to the alternate dimension, "The Upside Down."

Impressions

What first stands out about *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* is the comedy, which, much like the Netflix series, strikes a creative balance between goofy teenage shenanigans and the overall somber tone of Henry's otherworldly affliction. Despite the new slate of actors (except McCartney, carried over from the London production), the performance and dynamic between characters remains strong. Because of this, directors Stephen Daldry and Justin Martin still capture the essence of what people enjoy

about the series.

The production also takes several technical risks in the set design to authentically reconstruct the world of Hawkins for the stage. One of the show's major successes is its integration of both digital and practical elements: the opening sequence interweaves a digital screen depicting a crashed ship with smoke and soldiers firing prop weapons. In a more subtle moment, Henry is shown entering the in-between dimension with a mirrored body double.

But the moment that encapsulates this most is in the climax, when the Mind Flayer, a near full-scale prop replica, overtakes the entire top of the stage. In the day and age of smartphones and shortened attention spans, it has become harder for the entertainment industry to maintain the suspension of disbelief, especially among younger people. And yet, the positive audience reaction to these scenes proved the set design team stuck the landing.

Where the show struggles, like most adaptations, is in its originality and ability to be a stand-alone product. An observer who is unfamiliar with the *Stranger Things*

universe may struggle to follow the plot. The greatest fault of this play is that it relies too heavily on the audience already knowing the storyline.

Despite this, the production, overall, offers a compelling narrative for theatergoers. At times, it can feel more like a live TV show instead of a more traditional-style play; however, it is still an immensely enjoyable experience worthy of the time and money spent.

Fans of the franchise will find that *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* authentically channels the spirit of the show, capturing the excitement for the final season of *Stranger Things* coming out later this year.

It ends with a teasing ending sequence of a Netflix loading screen that says "Watch Next Episode" almost completing itself only to have a mouse cursor click the "Watch Credits" button next to it last second. Above all else, it is this playful relationship *Stranger Things* continues to have with its fan base that demonstrates why people continue to stay hooked, and the Broadway production captures that.



COURTESY STRANGER THINGS BROADWAY



Theater expert walks through **BROADWAY'S DAZZLING HISTORY**

BY MADISON JONES

TIMES SQUARE
MADISON JONES

Nick Leone is a theater expert who, during his five-decade career, has performed professionally across North America, Europe, and the Middle East. He has directed and choreographed over 50 productions and has taught at some of New York's finest dance schools, as well as Long Island University. In an interview with the *SGN*, Leone shared his decades of accumulated knowledge on musical theater, Broadway, and its history in New York City.

In the late 1800s, theater as entertainment became more readily available in the metropolis. The theater district today roughly covers over 30 blocks. Leone explained that the terms "on-Broadway" and "off-Broadway" do not refer to location but rather designate a theater's capacity. If a venue is above 500 seats, it is considered "on-Broadway"; below that is "off-Broadway." (Only three on-Broadway theaters — the Palace, the Broadway, and the Winter Garden — are located on Broadway itself.)

Although Times Square is the center of the district today, according to Leone that was not always the case. In George M. Cohan's song "Give My Regards to Broadway," he wrote, "Remember me to Herald Square!" for his influential 1904 play *Little Johnny Jones*. Herald Square is where Macy's flagship store stands today, just outside the district.

Changes

"Every now and then, a landmark musical comes along that pushes the genre forward," Leone said when describing Broadway's long history. The idea of the modern-day musical is considered a distinctly new and American invention, Leone

said. Precursors existed, like operettas and musical reviews; however, it was not until 1943, when *Oklahoma* opened that everything changed. According to Leone, it was the first production with songs and accompanying dances that were created with the purpose of furthering the plot; it created a blueprint for all future musicals.

Broadway has also been a tool for social commentary and change. In 1929, *Showboat*, created by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, was the first to address serious subjects in a Broadway production. The plot focuses on racial prejudice, and the song "'Ol' Man River," sung by Jules Bledsoe, made him the first Black male star on Broadway.

Leone also noted how Broadway performances have a history of pushing racial boundaries. The musical *Hello, Dolly!* debuted on Broadway in 1964 with an all-white cast, but in 1967, producer David Merrick refitted the show with an all-Black cast. Pearl Bailey and Cab Calloway played the lead roles, landing Bailey on the cover of *Life* magazine. The 1994 Broadway revival of *Carousel* casted Black actress Audra McDonald as Carrie Pipperidge, a traditionally white character; she won a Tony Award for Best Featured Actress for her performance.

Queering Broadway

Gay male characters began surfacing in shows during the 1950s, especially off-Broadway, Leone said. By the 1970s, Gay characters on stage had become increasingly commonplace.

"I would look at the on-Broadway and off-Broadway roster, and every single show

seemed to have an obligatory Gay character. It had to be about something Gay," Leone recalled.

Leone highlighted shows that pushed for societal acceptance of the Queer community, specifically Gays and Lesbians. *The Boys in the Band* (1968) was the first play with all Gay characters. Although it was performed off-Broadway, Leone said, "It just rocked the theater world."

Broadway was one of the first institutions to tackle HIV/AIDS awareness. There were several notable plays about the plight of people dying during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with 1991's *Angels in America* impacting Leone the most.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS is a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 to raise money for awareness of and research into the disease. After performances, the cast speak to the audience about the importance of the organization, followed by passing donation buckets around the theater.

Broadway gets commercialized

Not all cultural shifts in Broadway have been good, according to Leone. In the 1990s, Disney made a deal with NYC to help revitalize the area. After renovating the New Amsterdam Theater, Disney opened *The Lion King*.

Leone described how Disney moves older productions to another one of its theaters once a new show opens. But it's what Disney does during its shows that upset Leone most. At intermission, especially the kid-friendly performances, vendors walk the aisles selling water and merchandise to the audience.

"To me, that's terrible. That's the bad

thing Disney brought to the commercialization on Broadway," Leone said.

The Broadway district today is a dual-edged sword for Leone, because on the one hand, it has become a much safer area for people to visit, but on the other, it is much more gentrified and losing some of its distinctive character.

"Before, there were local places. There wasn't an Olive Garden at one end and a Chili's at the other. It was just more unique," Leone said.

Tips for visiting Broadway

As a theater expert, Leone recommends that for productions with big casts and lots of elaborate special effects, or for musicals with choreography, the best seats are at the center and farther back.

"Don't buy seats too close unless it's a very small, intimate play. Like if you're going to go see *Waiting for Godot*, there's only two characters for that. You want to see the illusion they're creating for you," Leone noted.

He recommends buying tickets at the physical box office whenever possible. Agencies and third-party vendors lead to additional charges, and the tickets aren't reflective of what's available. For instance, when Ticketmaster sells out, that means its chunk of the tickets are gone. Tickets may still be available at the venue.

"It's old-fashioned, but it's still the best way to do it" Leone stated.

If people choose to buy tickets online, Leone said to "beware, beware, beware" of fake websites and to only go to the show's official website.



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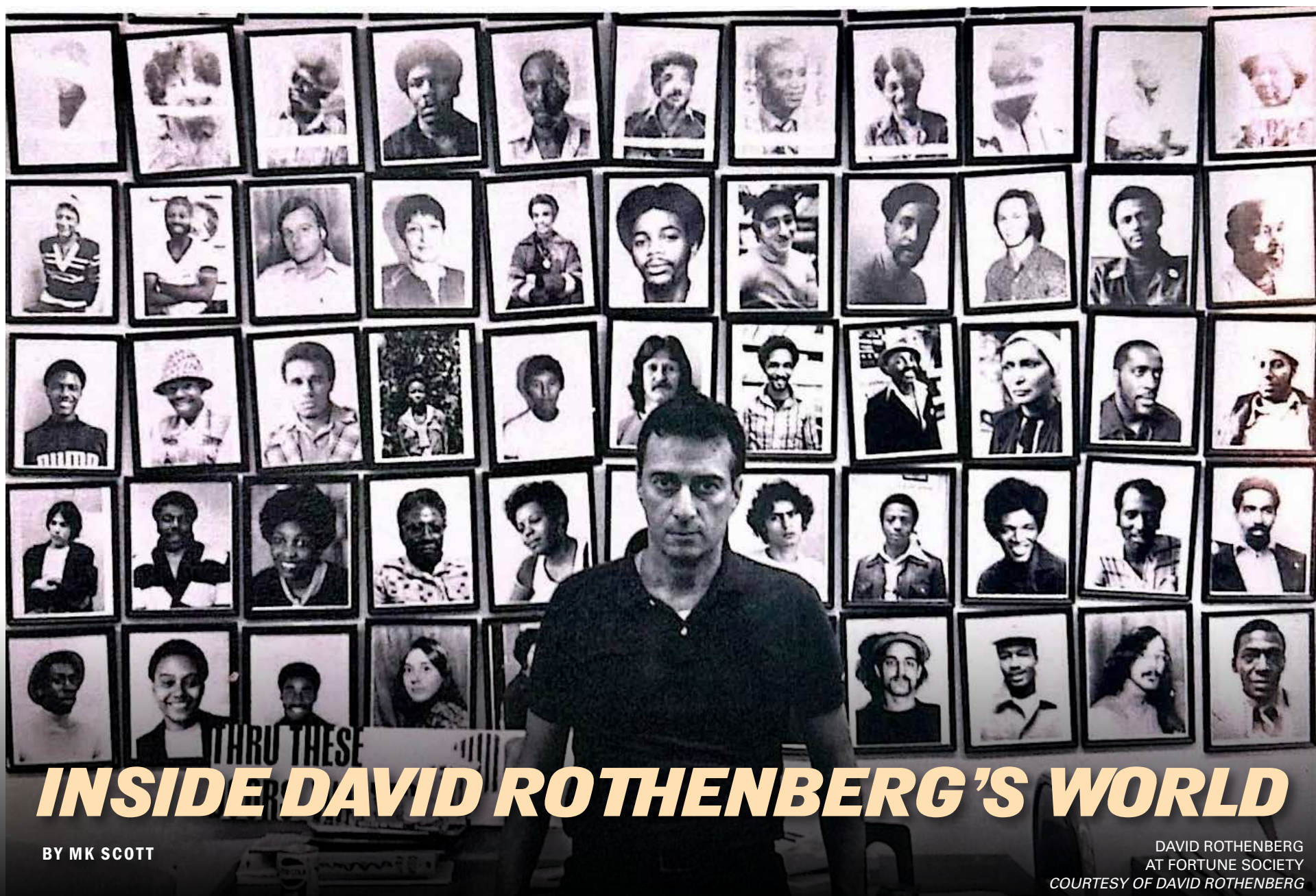
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David Rothenberg is a bona fide legend. Still active at 91, he hosts a podcast and has just released a new book. *Manhattan Mayhem* is the latest work from this legendary activist and author.

A must-read for anyone who loves New York or feels its rhythm coursing through their veins, *Manhattan Mayhem* showcases Rothenberg's signature wit and wisdom. A mensch with a big mouth, a big heart, and big ideas, Rothenberg shares 18 captivating stories that capture the mood and heartbeat of the world's most electrifying city. With heartbreak, humor, and hope, he reflects on friendships, faith, family, and fortune through his personal urban fables.

When I connected with Rothenberg via Zoom, I was amazed at how sharp his mind remained, showing no signs of retirement. I mentioned I was in Seattle, and he noted that he was old friends with George Freeman, the former owner of The Monastery and head of the Universal Life Church. Rothenberg added that he first met Freeman while he was still in prison. I didn't ask which time.

Here are the excerpts from his answers during the interview.

On his book, *Manhattan Mayhem*

It's a collection of stories I wrote during the pandemic. These were ideas that had been kicking around in my head for years, and suddenly I had the time to put them down. They're reflective of my work in the theater, my experiences with the Fortune Society, and even my childhood and life.

I say in the book that there's a lot of fact in the fiction. Life is filled with little dramatic tales. Some of these stories, I think, are funny. I've read them all — I do a radio program, and I started reading them on the air. That's when I decided to turn them into a book.

My agent told me there was no market for these stories, so I was going to call it *Stories for Which There Is No Market*. But as I read them on the air, people kept calling in, asking for copies, saying, "I'd buy a copy!" And that's how *Manhattan Mayhem* came to be.

One example: "Manhattan Marriage, Manhattan Style"

It's based on a couple I knew — social powerhouses in New York. I fictionalized

it, but they were both very prominent people. They were deeply involved in social action and participation.

They were also wealthy — not titled, but TITLED, coming from distinguished family backgrounds. The husband became very involved with our organization, and I suddenly realized he was having a relationship with my assistant, a young man. Meanwhile, his wife was having a relationship with an actor.

It was all sub rosa — a fascinating dynamic because, outside the bedroom, they had a wonderful relationship and friendship. And I thought, well, there's a lot of that. Certainly, if you work in theater, you see it often. Plenty of female stars had husbands who were managers and were obviously Gay. It worked for them.

I always remember Jason Alexander from *Seinfeld* saying he loves theater, ballet, and opera — that he's "Gay except for the sex." You can have deep friendships with someone, marry them, and not be sexually compatible.

So, I called it "Manhattan Marriage, Manhattan Style."

"The Uninvited"

One of the toughest stories in the book, which emanated from Fortune Society, is "The Uninvited." It's based on a true story, though I changed details for obvious reasons.

A woman in her forties contacted me. I remembered her as a little girl — her father and I had been very close at Fortune Society. He went back into "the life," ended up testifying against the mafia, and was placed in a witness protection program.

When I met his daughter decades later, I learned what it was like growing up in that situation — five kids and their mother, constantly moving, unable to have friends, unable to tell anyone who they really were. It was harrowing. This woman ran away and built a life, but her siblings were either in prison or addicted to drugs. And my friend — their father — died having destroyed the very family he had tried to protect.

People in witness protection are drilled never to talk about it. The only reason she reached out to me was that, as a child, she remembered playing in my office and my close friendship with her father. I asked if

she had ever sought therapy. She said, "I can't. I can't trust anybody."

"What about a priest?" I asked.

"No, I can't trust anybody."

"But you came to me," I said.

She replied, "You were there at the beginning. I don't have to explain it to you. I don't have to justify my father. You knew him."

On coming out

I was 39 when I came out. I choreographed it carefully, because I was the director of a nonprofit working with formerly incarcerated people — tough guys. It wasn't an environment where you expected someone in my position to be openly Gay.

For six years, I had been telling men to be honest about their pasts, to put a face on the formerly incarcerated and create public change. Meanwhile, the Gay movement was happening, and I was deeply closeted.

Eventually, I got tired of lying. I decided to take control of my narrative instead of being outed. So, I called Jean Kennedy at *The David Susskind Show* and suggested a program — not about activists but about professionals living double lives.

She loved the idea. "Do you know anyone?" she asked.

I said, "You're talking to one."

Before going on air, I gathered six key people from Fortune: four men, two women, all formerly incarcerated—and told them: "1. I'm gay. 2. I'm going on national television to talk about it. 3. Here's my letter of resignation."

There was a long pause. Then Kenny Jackson, a tough Brooklyn kid, said, "What are you going to wear on TV?"

I was stunned. "What kind of question is that?"

"Look how you dress! Get something nicer. We're proud of you."

Then Mel Rivers, another formerly incarcerated man, asked, "Why would you resign?" I told him I didn't want to hurt the organization.

And he gave me the most sophisticated political response I'd ever heard: "You've stood by us for six years. Give us a chance to stand by you."

So, I pulled back the letter. Kenny said, "We have a lot of work to do. Can we get back to that now?"

That was it. I went on television, got a thousand letters — 999 of them positive.

The New York Times put me in their "People" column, right between Hubert Humphrey's gallbladder surgery and Marshal Tito's birthday.

Meanwhile, *The New York Post* ran the headline: *Prison Advocate Says I'm Homo*.

But life went on. And I did it on my terms. I simply said: "This is who I am. I am a gay American."

That was a very powerful.

On bringing *Fortune and Men's Eyes* off-Broadway in 1967

I'll tell you something: John Herbert, who wrote the play, was the boy who got gang-raped his first night in jail [where he stayed for six months].

He wrote the play 20 years after it happened. I visited him in Toronto, and he said, "I want to take you someplace." We went to this real seedy joint, and a drag queen got up and started belting out a song.

I said, "John, that's Queenie, isn't it?"

He said, "That's, uh, Randy. We did time together. He's the one who saved me."

And then we met afterwards. So, I met the real Queenie, which was kind of fascinating — his boyfriend was a gangster.

On rape culture in prison

You know, when I read the play, it wasn't until I saw the reviews that I realized people were calling it a play about homosexuality. I never thought of it that way. To me, it was about a kid who goes in, gets raped, and how the system molds him. By the end of the play — or the movie — he's ready to get back at everyone.

Sex is a point of power in prison, but that's not about homosexuality — it's about using sex as a tool of power. The critics who truly understood the play really loved it and talked about that.

For example, Norman Nadel in *The World-Telegram & Sun* wrote, "Unless you're obsessed with viewing sodomy, there's no reason to see this." He obviously missed the whole point.

Meanwhile, Jerry Talmer in *The New York Post* compared it to De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*, saying it was about boys being destroyed by the system. It's fascinating what critics bring to a piece — I never thought of it as being about homosexuality. I saw it as an indictment of the prison system, which allows sexual power to destroy kids.

When I was still working, I did several articles on rape in prison and participated in panels with men who were ostensibly heterosexual but had sex while incarcerated. It depends on the environment. I believe it happens much more in Southern prisons now. I've heard stories from Georgia, but I'll tell you — if there are enough programs and opportunities for inmates, there's less violence. And rape is an act of violence, not sexual desire.

Where inmates have chances to confront why they're there and build a future, there's less violence. I've run groups with teenagers at Fortune Society, and one day we had a discussion about violence.

I asked them, "You read in the papers — it's about gangs, it's about this or that. What do you think the real cause is?"

After a long talk, the general consensus was that it relieved boredom.

I said, "Do you know what demographics are? You all come from the same demographic as the kids we're talking about — same racial breakdown, same ages. So how come we don't have violence here?"

One kid shouted, "Who has time?"

Oh God. In those three words, you could build a platform for social change. These kids in my group had individual counseling, classrooms, field trips. We took them to theater, to art museums, gave them family counseling, helped them navigate their relationships. It was a full load.

We went to court, trying to convince judges and DAs to send kids to us instead of jail — because they'd only get worse in there. It was tough, but enough DAs and judges took the gamble. Now, alternative sentencing is common — at least in New York.

Prison is an unnatural environment. You put 800 or 900 men together, and the power dynamics emerge.

Sometimes, it's not sexual. Have you seen *Sing Sing*? Powerful movie. It shows some of the same dynamics.

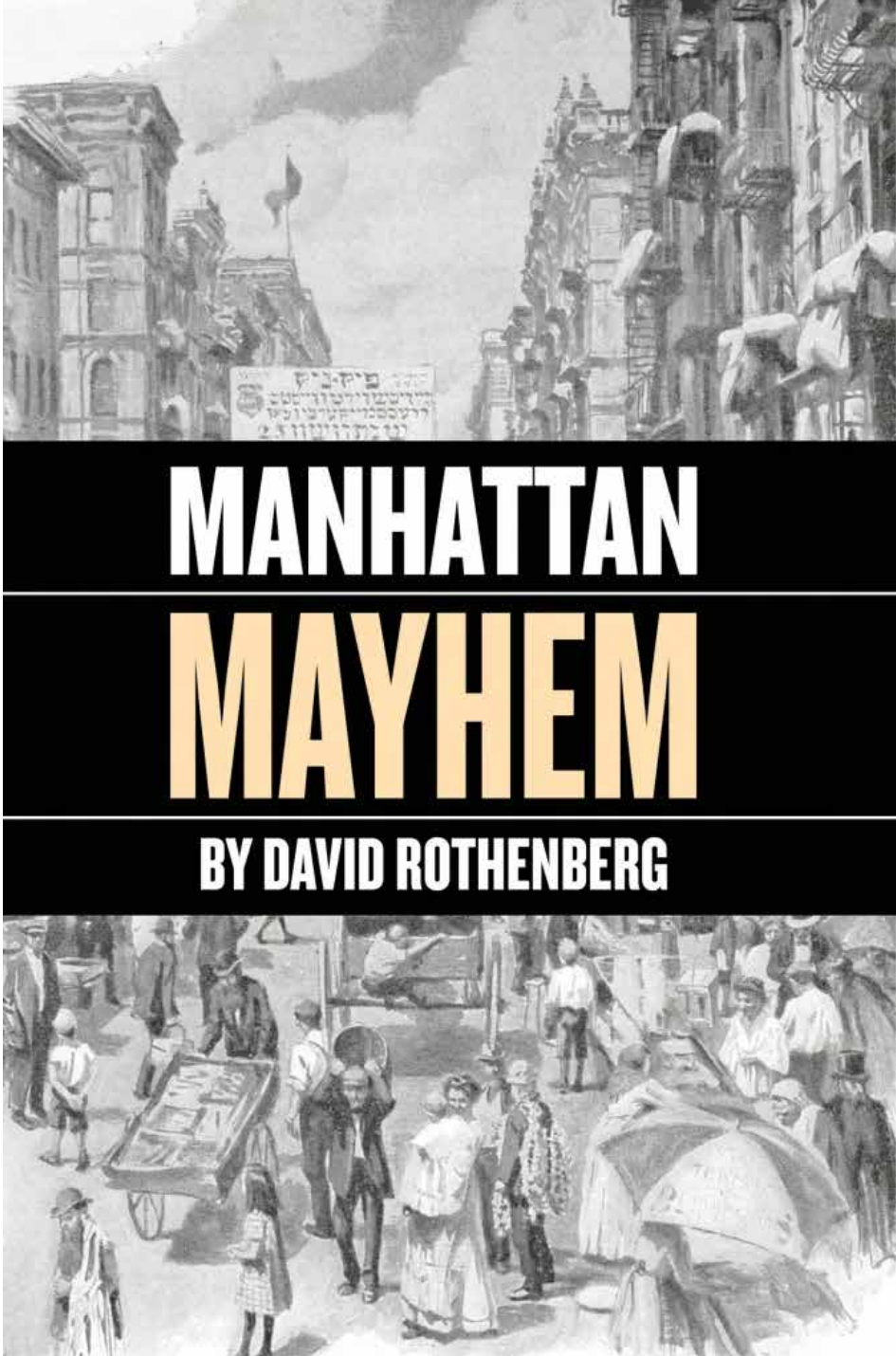
And there's always a need for protection — especially for those perceived as weak. If someone is convicted of pedophilia, they have a very rough time because their peers become judge and jury all over again.

Some inmates end up in solitary for protection.

Our prison system? We have to go back to the drawing board. Conceptually, it's a disaster.

The modern penitentiary system was created by the Quakers — it comes from the word *penance*. Their idea was that if people sat in solitude long enough, they would atone for their crimes and emerge reformed.

They forgot one thing: the guards. Prisons are filled with human beings



unequipped to deal with people's problems.

When AIDS entered prison

I started getting letters from inmates saying that people inside were being identified as having AIDS. In the early days, it was labeled a "Gay disease," but drug users were contracting it in the same numbers. They just didn't have a press corps or a Larry Kramer to advocate for them.

So, I called Marty Horn, who was the deputy commissioner of New York State at the time, and I said, "You're going to have real problems. There's a lot of fear, and inmates aren't getting any information."

He asked, "What can we do?"

I said, "The only game in town is the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC). We need to start educating people to reduce irrational fear."

He said, "Great."

So I went to GMHC, got literature, and sent it to Marty. Three days later, he called me and said, "The wardens won't let it in because the word *gay* is on it."

Wow.

So I went back to GMHC and said, "Can you print versions without the word *gay*? Just use 'GMHC'?"

They did, and that's what got in.

Sometimes, instead of fighting the system, you have to find a way around it.

On Alvin Ailey

Alvin was my first friend in the theater.

He was a chorus boy in *Jamaica*. I had just gotten out of the army and landed a job in a New York press office. I was the lowest guy on the totem pole, and the office was handling the summer tour of *Jamaica*.

Abby Lincoln was replacing Lena Horne in the lead role, and she and her co-star were doing a photoshoot. I was sent over — not to do anything, just to be the office's representative.

I was told to meet the director, and this imposing African-American guy walks up.

I said, "I'm David from the press office."

He said, "Oh, hi. I'm Alvin Ailey. I'm the director."

He had been in the chorus of *Jamaica* but convinced them to let him direct the summer tour.

At the shoot, I noticed he was setting up shots, so I said, "Alvin, I was the editor of my college paper. Don't leave too much space between them — newspapers use two- and three-column pictures. If there's too much space, they won't print it."

He said, "That's great to know. I didn't realize that."

Afterward, he said, "Let's grab a bite to eat."

We did, and from that moment on, we became friends. It was the late '50s, and the theater community was tight-knit.

Later, Alvin took acting jobs while building his dance company. He was in *My Rightful Name* with Joan Hackett and Robert Duvall.

I saw the play and afterward said, "Alvin, who is Joan Hackett? She's great."

That night, the three of us went out. We closed every joint in town.

For a year, we were inseparable. It was a little like *Jules and Jim* — three young people, full of ambition and humor, making sure we were part of each other's lives.

When I started the Fortune Society, the first two people I called were Alvin and Joan. They were always there for me.

Even when Alvin's company took off, he always set aside ten tickets for Fortune Society. Hundreds of formerly incarcerated men and women saw dance because of him.

One of the running jokes at Fortune Society was: "When you get out of prison in New York, they give you \$40, a bologna sandwich, and two tickets to Alvin Ailey."

Manhattan Mayhem was officially released on April 2.



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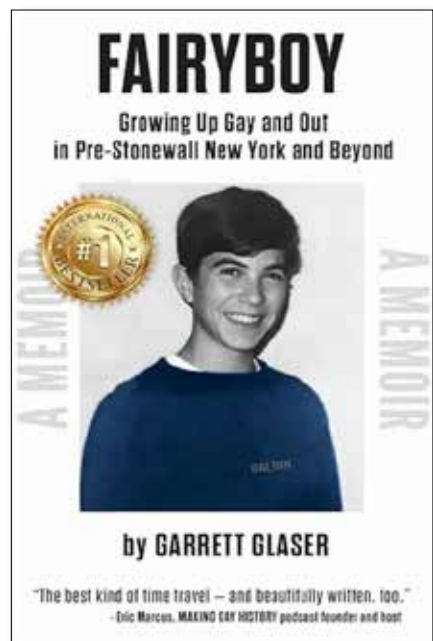
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NEW GAY MEMOIR REVEALS A FORGOTTEN WORLD

MARTHA KILEY



In his new, best-selling memoir, *FAIRY-BOY: Growing Up Gay And Out In Pre-Stonewall New York And Beyond*, veteran journalist Garrett Glaser revisits a world unrecognizable to many contemporary LGBTQ readers. “It was a time before rainbow flags when very few gay people were able to live honestly and openly,” Glaser says. “When I graduated from high school, the headmaster was heard to say of me and a friend, ‘We just graduated our first fags.’ Such was the world before the Stonewall rebellion.”

When Glaser came out as gay to his mother at age fourteen, she told him, “You are going to a psychiatrist right now, young

man! We are going to nip this in the bud.” Fortunately, she came around to accept her son’s orientation, and Glaser used his psychiatric sessions to address the challenges of finding a boyfriend, not an easy task in the pre-internet era of 1967. Glaser was an unusually adventurous and self-assured teenager. In *FAIRYBOY*, readers follow as he explores the hidden world of gay New York, from the infamous “trucks” along the West Side Highway to the Continental Baths in its opening weeks. Glaser marched in the first Pride Parade in 1970, which was called the Christopher Street Liberation Day March. A “Gay-In” followed in Central Park.

Glaser grew up to become an Emmy Award-winning TV news correspondent, with stints at CNBC, NBC, ABC, CBS and Entertainment Tonight. During his thirty-year career, he interviewed the biggest stars and notables of the era, from Elizabeth Taylor and President George H.W. Bush to Oprah Winfrey and even Charles Manson. In 1994, he became the first local TV reporter to come out on the air.

In *FAIRYBOY*, Glaser examines changes in gay politics over the decades and weaves stories demonstrating the importance of mentors and of remaining true to oneself. “Journalists are living role models to their audience. They need to live and work 100% out of the closet. They should bring ALL of themselves to the newsroom every day and capitalize on the outsider status they endured growing up. Sexual orientation is such a basic part of our lives. I can’t imagine what it would have been like to deny that primal piece of my identity to anyone.

I knew from a very young age that I would have to live ‘out and honest.’ What’s more, when I think back on it, I truly believe being ‘out’ actually helped my career.

FAIRYBOY: *Growing Up Gay And Out In Pre-Stonewall New York And Beyond* by Garrett Glaser is now available on Amazon.com in print and eBook formats. There’s also an audiobook narrated by the author.



AUTHOR KISSING HIS BOYFRIEND AT THE FIRST GAY-IN IN CENTRAL PARK 1970



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PUTTING AN END TO THE MYTHS OF STONEWALL

BY MARK SEGAL

Reprinted with permission from the Philadelphia Gay News (<https://epgn.com/2022/10/02/putting-an-end-to-the-myths-of-stonewall>)

For years, people have debated what actually happened that night in June 1969 when Stonewall was raided and a new, more militant struggle for equality was born. Due to the debates, and the insistence of some who claim they knew all aspects of what had actually happened, an incredible void opened up, where people could invent, imagine, or distort Stonewall and our history to their own objectives. The myths of Stonewall are endless, but they're easily dispelled when you look at the material proof and plain logic.

Judy Garland's death and funeral did not cause Stonewall.

The myth of Judy Garland's death being the impetus for Stonewall is the most belittling myth to those of us who participated. It's stereotypical and self-loathing, and with this article we add new information that finally ends this silly tale.

One clue is where the idea originated: from a conservative, straight columnist at the *Village Voice* named Howard Smith, who actually was a friend of the police captain who led the raid.

Simple logic says it's just not so. People of my age, late teens and early twenties at the time, were not dancing to Judy Garland in the Stonewall. We were dancing to Diana Ross, the Beatles, and Barbara Streisand. My best memory is dancing to the Fifth Dimension song "Let the Sunshine In," which is from the musical "Hair." Judy Garland was of an older generation. We wanted to dance our asses off when we were in Stonewall, and that you didn't do to Garland's music.

But the final nail in the Judy Garland myth are articles about the funeral at Campbell's Funeral home. If you look at the photos and reports in the *New York Times*, as well as other newspaper reports, you'll note that the subjects in the photos, as well as the majority of quotes, are from housewives. When you look more closely for the very few men in the photos, they're in suits and ties. We all know that is not the kind of person who fought at Stonewall.

Men who wore suits and ties ran from the police for fear of losing their good-paying jobs or their families finding out about them. They were not the ones who resisted.

It's time to bury the Judy Garland myth for good. The myth makes Stonewall sound like the only riot in US history where its participants fought for a silly cause. The truth is that we were fighting the hate and oppression of the police that night. We were not empowered by a dead singer. Let's put that coffin into the ground already.

Nobody knows exactly how many people were at Stonewall.

I was recently filming a BBC television show in front of the Stonewall when a tour group came by. The guide stated "There were 105 people in the bar that night." But nobody can possibly know how many people were there. Some people paid for entry, and some were regulars that were let in without the door charge. But that number does give an idea of the average size of the crowd inside.

Then, as we all know, once police began letting people outside, those with any standing in society ran for the hills as soon as they could. Those of us who remained — street kids, drag queens (later to be called Trans), people of color, and the verging radical Gay youth of the day — gathered around the door in a semicircle.

There were hundreds of passersby and even more who craned their necks from a distance. That night went on for hours, so anyone who was within a few blocks could say they were at Stonewall that night. But actually participating is another matter. Anyone who says they know how many people were there must not have actually been there, since it occurred in various areas of Christopher Street and around Christopher Street. You don't take a roll call in the middle of a riot.

Those people who tossed stones or cans of soda, or those wrote on the streets and walls "Tomorrow Night Stonewall," as I did, all went on to be a part of Gay Liberation Front (GLF), which arose from the ashes of Stonewall. Some GLF members were there during the first night. Other GLF members stood and spoke from the doors of the closed Stonewall the second night. More GLF members began leafleting



MARK SEGAL, FAR RIGHT, AT THE GAY LIBERATION FRONT'S FIRST POST-STONEWALL MARCH IN JULY 1969. COURTESY MARK SEGAL

the following nights.

So who can we say was there? Well, anyone who had family in the area or a decent job ran for the subway or a cab as soon as they were let out of the bar. Who was left? Drag queens, stereotypical men and women, street kids like me who were homeless or living at the YMCA, and young activists like Marty Robinson.

Since the riot created the urgency for change, the Gay Liberation Front picked up that mantle and ran with it. Stonewall and GLF are synonymous.

When asked who was there at Stonewall, my answer is: Who was there the following night and the night after that? Who carried out that change through that first turbulent year? We have pictures and written accounts. This is no myth. There are facts in plain sight.

Stonewall lasted several days, and then an entire year.

There have been numerous suggestions about how long Stonewall lasted. At one museum I was speaking at — during the

opening of its Stonewall Rising exhibit — they had a sign that stated one number. Then, someone else wrote about the exhibit and put another number. When I'm asked that question, I say confidently that Stonewall went on for 365 days, from the first night until the first Pride one year later. That spirit in June 1969 carried on with the changes that Gay liberation brought from it.

We were self-identifying for the first time in history. We were out, loud, and proud rather than in the closet. We took back our streets from the police. We organized legal and medical alerts. We had social and political meetings. All of that threatened the police, since much of it was illegal for "homosexuals," and we did it in plain sight and even advertised it. We dared the police to stop us. One last thing: we were diversified and inclusive. It took 365 days to create that change.

There was no brick.

It is often stated that my fellow GLF member, Sylvia Rivera, threw "the first brick" at Stonewall. Although it's flashy and bombastic, that myth actually does not give her her rightful place in history. Both Sylvia and her GLF sister Marsha P. Johnson have spoken about where they were during Stonewall, and people today have either ignored their words or distorted them.

But what cannot be disputed is that Sylvia and Marsha did something much more important than throwing an imaginary brick: they created the world's first Trans organization, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries. STAR gave visibility and Pride to the Trans community for the first time in history. STAR was not one night but an entire movement. Sylvia is more of a historical figure for cocreating that first Trans organization than for being just one of a crowd at Stonewall. That cannot be disputed! And if you're still hung up on the brick idea, the *New York Times* did a video dispelling it in 2019.

Who created that first Gay Pride?

Here is an answer that is well documented and known by each of us who lived this history. The two people who actually came up with the idea of Pride were Craig Rodwell and Ellen Broidy. They were having dinner in Craig's apartment with their partners at the time, and they began putting down a resolution that would be read at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations meeting in Philadelphia. That resolution created the Christo-



JASON VILLEMEZ

pher Street Gay Liberation Day committee, which went on to organize that first Pride one year after Stonewall.

It is often reported that the “mother” of Gay Pride is Brenda Howard. That is absolutely false. There are numerous members of the Gay Liberation Front or Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day committee who are alive today. We know, because we were there when it took shape, who created Pride. If anyone is going to be deemed “mother of Pride,” it’s Ellen Broidy. Brenda Howard was a member of the GLF, but she was not in any way associated with the formation of that first Pride other than to march in it. She may have someone editing Wikipedia on her behalf, but that doesn’t

make that falsehood any less false.

The most accurate history of Stonewall is a collective one.

There are many views of Stonewall, but the majority of its participants went on to form the GLF. They, we, are the spirit of Stonewall. Each GLF member who was there relies on their personal memories, and those memories collectively weave a fuller picture.

Numerous books on the subject have been written. There are two that stand out. The first book written on the subject was Donn Teal’s *The Gay Militants* in 1971. The other is David Carter’s *Stonewall*, published in 2010. While Carter’s version has

some flaws, it comes closer to any version before or after. He wrote at a time when our community was beginning to realize the importance of Stonewall historically, and at a time that many different viewpoints took hold. He literally had to duck to keep out of the way of warring parties on the subject and which can be seen in other books.

David Carter continued to research the issue and had a passion to find the missing points and bring facts forward until his death in 2020. Others (who were not at Stonewall, mind you) unfortunately write with their bias at the forefront. Many of us who were there continue to pass on lost information or leads. We feel that our

personal battle that night has been used to reinforce people’s own misconceptions and political objectives.

It wasn’t that single night that changed and built our community. It was from the ashes of that night that the Gay Liberation Front created self-identity, community, and pride. Change doesn’t happen overnight. In this case, the seeds of equality took 365 days to take root. It was that first magical year of Gay liberation.

Mark Segal is an award-winning journalist, author, and Stonewall pioneer. More information on his 50-plus years of continuous activism can be found at www.marksegalstonewall.com.



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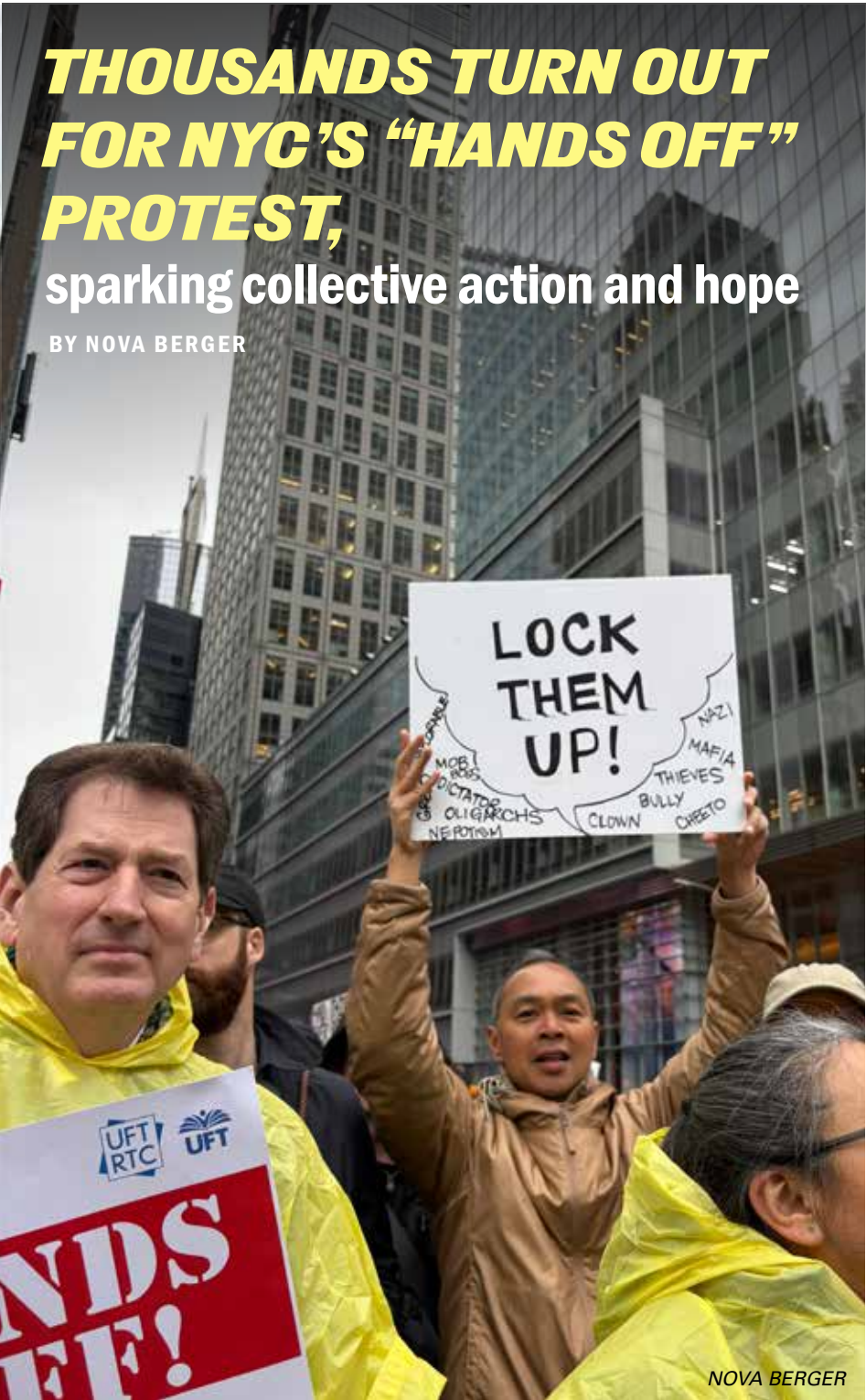


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THOUSANDS TURN OUT FOR NYC’S “HANDS OFF” PROTEST, sparking collective action and hope

BY NOVA BERGER

NOVA BERGER



NOVA BERGER

At the April 5 “Hands Off!” protests across all 50 US states in over 1,200 locations, Americans demanded an end to the Trump administration’s harmful executive actions that impact all marginalized communities. In New York City, the protest began at Bryant Park and proceeded along Fifth Avenue to Madison Square Park. Despite the rain, thousands of concerned citizens flooded the city’s streets.

Two communities being impacted the most are Transgender people and immigrants. But American seniors are also being targeted, through rollbacks on Social Security, like withholding all benefits to recover overpayments, and staffing cuts. Furthermore, the full retirement age is gradually increasing from 67 to 69, which will reduce benefits for many future retirees, according to *Forbes*. These attacks have acted as fuel to fire up older generations, and they were some of the loudest voices in the NYC protest.

“I feel terrible about [Trump’s actions], but we’re here to fight it, and we’re going to win,” Denise, a 71-year-old New York resident, told the *SGN*.

Although she doesn’t have any family living in the state, she said she’s using her voice as a means to protect her son in Texas.

“I happen to have a Transgender son and a Nonbinary [child],” Denise said. “They’re both frightened. One’s in Texas. I would be frightened too.”

Texas has passed several legislative measures restricting Trans rights, including Senate Bill 14, which bans gender-affirming care for minors and was enacted in 2023. This is in addition to the ongoing efforts to limit Transgender people from participating in sports and receiving public accommodations.

In an executive order issued by President Trump, he threatened to withhold over \$13 million in federal funding from school districts that allow Trans student athletes to participate on teams consistent with their gender identities. This policy sparked controversy in New York, exemplified by the case of a 14-year-old Trans girl in Long Island who faced opposition for competing on the girls’ varsity track team.

Many of the younger voices of the NYC “Hands Off” protest stood in defiance of these laws. The *SGN* spoke to two LGBTQ+ attendees at the event: They were scared, but they are turning that fear into fiery love to protect the Queer community and the safe haven that the city offered them.

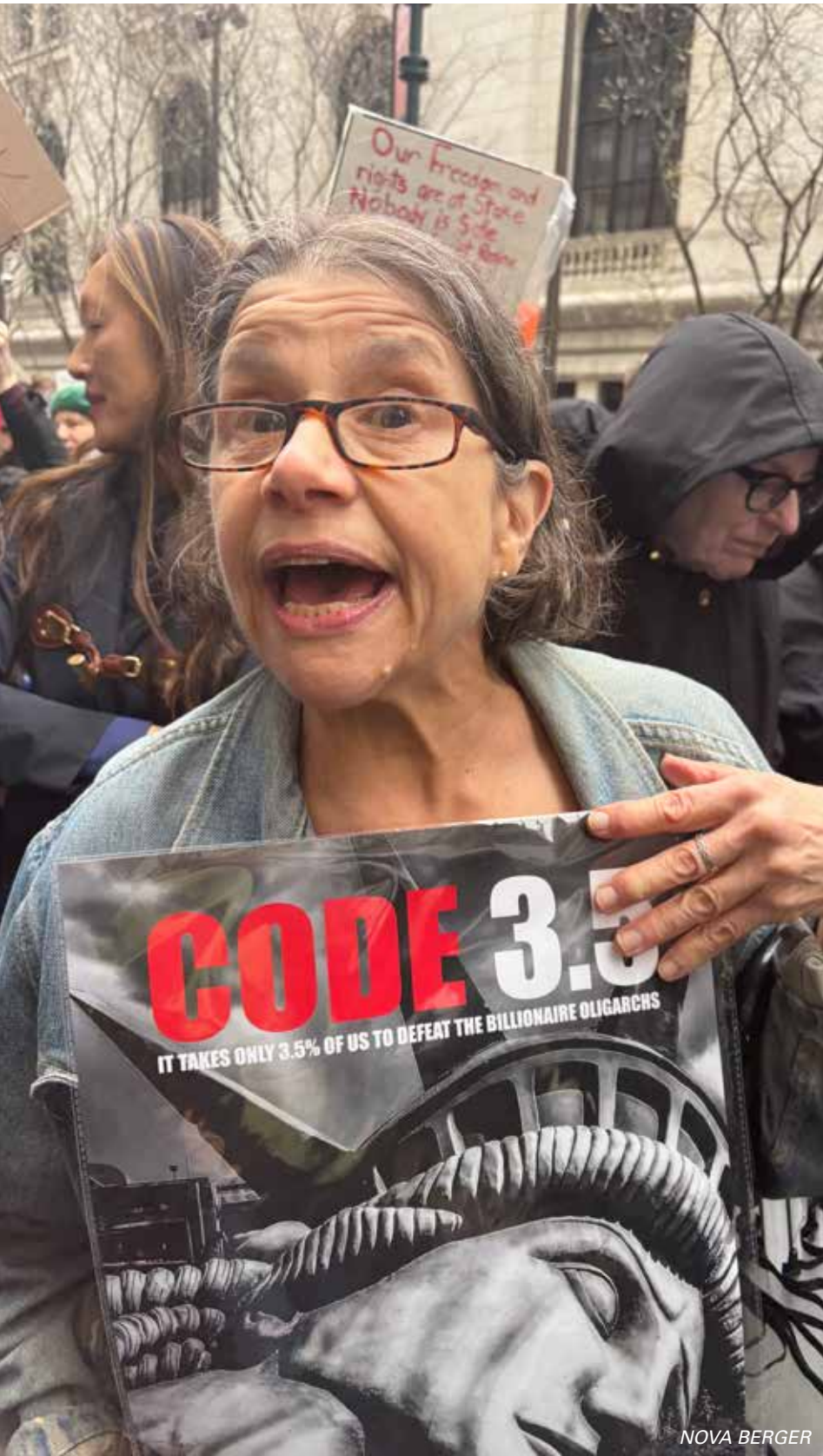
“We need to build bridges: Get involved in your local neighborhood, join community gardens, volunteer,” one of them said. “Support your individual community, because outside of all of these things that are happening, we need to stand together at the core level, because whatever happens on the outside, they’ll try to disrupt us.”

“It doesn’t matter if Donald Trump says or does something hurtful,” said the other. “If we support each other, you know, if someone is struggling with the rent or with their food, we can be like, ‘Hey, we got you,’ you know?”

A loud voice heard at the protest was John Fenar, a straight, middle-aged, self-described “average American.”

“My buddy and I said to each other, ‘We’ll be [safe protesting]... You know, we’re upper-middle-class, white, American [men],” Fenar told the *SGN*.

While safety is a major concern for many protesters, Denise said she hopes her participation encourages others to become politically active, and gives them hope.



NOVA BERGER



For more
events visit
SGN's online
community
calendar!



Duvall Pride Art Show
Date: May 20 - June 16 (Open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays)
Time: 12 p.m.-4 p.m.
Venue: Duvall Visitor Center
15619 Main St. NE
Duvall, WA 98019
Admissions: Free
Celebrate creativity, identity, and community at the Show Your Pride Art Show! Visit the exhibit from May 18 to June 16 to experience powerful, local artwork that celebrates love, inclusion, and self-expression.
duvallwa.gov/565/Show-Your-Pride-Art-Show

Burien Pride
Date: May 30-June 1
Time: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. (varies by day)
Venue: Burien Town Square
15100 6th Avenue Southwest
Burien, WA, 98166
Admissions: Free
One of the largest PRIDE Festivals in South King County. Three days of celebration: May 30th - June 1st 5/30-FRI: Street Dance Party, 5/31-SAT: All Day Street Festival, 6/1-SUN: Drag Bingo & Pancakes
Our Mission is to unite the community through a symbol of unity, acceptance, and peace, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect for all.
www.burienpride.com/

Lake Stevens Pride
Date: June 1
Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: Mt. Pilchuck Elementary
Admissions: Free
food, vendors, and entertainment
lspride.org

San Juan Island Pride Fest
Date: June 1-30
Time: Varies
Venue: Varies
Admissions: Free
From happy hours and drag shows to art showcases and kayak tours, this year's Pride Fest is all about celebrating love, visibility and island pride like never before.
Mark your calendars, gather your crew, and get ready to shine! Let's make this the most joyful, inclusive and unforgettable Pride yet!
sjipride.org/pride-fest-schedule

Seattle Mariners Pride Night
Date: June 4
Time: 7 p.m.
Venue: T-Mobile Park
Admissions: Varies
We're excited to celebrate Pride Night on Wednesday, June 4 vs. Orioles! Join us for a great slate of ballpark-wide festivities presented by T-Mobile. score some Mariners-themed Pride gear! June 4: Pride belt bag giveaway
www.mlb.com/mariners/tickets/specials/pride

Snohomish Pride
Date: June 6-8
Time: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. varies by day
Venue: Varies
Admissions: Varies by event
parade, picnic, parties, market, wine walk, cabaret, drag brunch
www.historicdowntownsnohomish.org/snohomishpride

Port Townsend Pride
Date: June 6-8
Time: 10:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: Varies
Admissions: Free
Port Townsend Pride uplifts the 2SLG-BTQIA+ community through advocacy, the arts, and joyful connection! Join us for a vibrant celebration featuring live performances, 50+ vendors, a kids' zone, a sensory space, delicious food, and our one-of-a-kind boat parade—all in a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone.
www.theproductionalliance.org/events/ptpride

Stanwood-Camano Pride Parade and Party in the Park
Date: June 7
Time: 12 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: Freedom Park
highway 532 Camano Island,
Admissions: Free
Kick off Pride month with this family-fun event for everyone! Parade at Freedom Park on Camano Island is open to all, chalk bomb throw, Glass Quest ball hunt, food, crafts, and more! Come celebrate our LGBTQIA+ neighbors and friends with your message of love, support, and no hate!
www.camanoarts.org/event/stanwood-camano-pride-parade-and-party-in-the-park-2023/

Chelan Pride
Date: June 7
Time: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: Riverwalk Park
Admissions: Free
The 4th Annual Chelan Pride Festival, themed "Vision for Tomorrow," is a vibrant celebration of diversity and inclusion, set against the stunning backdrop of Lake Chelan. This year's festival focuses on envisioning a brighter future for the 2SLG-BTQIA+ community and its allies, featuring an exciting lineup of events including live music performances, art showcases, and engaging activities.
www.chelanpride.org/

Maple Valley Pride
Date: June 7
Time: 9 a.m. to 2p.m.
Venue: Maple Valley Farmers Market
Admissions: Free
Celebrate Pride with us!
We will have a dance party with DJ Kelli from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. under the pavilion.We will have several LGBTQIA+ resource booths joining including PFLAG Bellevue, Eastside PRIDE PNW, Lambert House, Tahoma's SAGA Club and Mental Health First Aid. The Maple Valley Library bookmobile will also be on site with their LGBTQIA+ book collection.
There will also be bracelet making, air-brush tattoos, a photobooth, raffle, community resources, Proudest Pup Contest and more!
www.eastsidepridepnw.com/

Renton Pride
Date: June 7
Time: TBA
Venue: Various
Admissions: Free
renton.lgbt/pride/ & <https://seattlepride.org/events/renton-pride>

Seattle Pride in the Park
Date: June 7
Time: 12 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Venue: Volunteer Park, Capitol Hill
Admissions: Free
Seattle Pride in the Park isn't just another festival—it's a full-on experience. It's where thousands of us come together to celebrate, dance, eat, shop, connect, and just be.
seattlepride.org/events/pride-in-the-park-2025

White Center Pride
Date: June 7
Time: 12 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Venue: Downtown White Center
16th Ave SW (between SW Roxbury St and SW 100th St)
Admissions: Free
100+ local & LGBTQ-friendly vendors, local performers and main stage headliners, beer gardens, delicious food specialties, wristbands available for discounts, live wrestling matches (by Lariat Bar), family play area with bouncy houses, resources & resistance section
www.whitecenterpride.org/white-center-pride-street-festival

Carnation SnoValley Pride Picnic
Date: June 8
Time: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Venue: Tolt Commons, Carnation
Admissions: Free
We are thrilled to invite you to our third annual Pride Picnic in Carnation on Sunday, June 8th from 11am-3pm. Join us at Tolt Commons for a day of love, community, and celebration as we make this year the biggest one yet! Enjoy free live music, free food, and free art-making stations in a welcoming space where everyone belongs. Bring your friends, bring your family, and let's celebrate Pride together in the heart of the Snoqualmie Valley!
Bring your blanket, picnic basket, and camp chairs, and join us for the sweetest picnic in the Valley!
snovalleypride.com

Monroe Pride
Date: June 8
Time: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: Skykomish River Park 413 Sky River Parkway, Monroe
Admissions: Free
In June of 2021, during a record-breaking heat wave, Monroe Washington made history with the FIRST EVER PRIDE event at Skykomish River Park. Over 700 people attended to celebrate the love, freedom, and belonging of LGBTQIA+ community members and to honor the hard work and struggle of those who have paved the way through history.
The celebration continues...
monroeequitycommunity.org/pride2023

Newcastle Pride
Date: June 8
Time: 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Venue: TBA
Admissions: Free
Newcastle Pride, a brand new celebration this year!
www.eastsidepridepnw.com/

Seattle Mariners Celebrate Pride Month
Date: June 13
Time: 7 p.m.
Venue: T-Mobile Park
Admissions: Varies
June 13 vs. the Guardians! June 13: Pride Stanley style tumbler giveaway
www.mlb.com/mariners/tickets/specials/pride

Astoria Pride
Date: June 13-15
Time: Varies
Venue: Varies
Admissions: Free
Astoria Pride celebrating 10 years of Pride catch us Pride Weekend June 12-15, 2025. parade, pub crawl, gala, brunch
www.facebook.com/AstoriaOregonPride

Laugh with Pride: A Kitsap Pride Comedy Showcase
Date: June 14
Time: 7 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Venue: Roxy Theatre, Bremerton
Admissions: \$18
Experience an unforgettable night of comedy at Laugh with Pride on June 14 at the Roxy Theatre in Bremerton. Enjoy hilarious LGBTQ+ comedians and a fabulous drag host in this one-night-only celebration of laughter and pride! Highlights
Experience high-energy, side-splitting comedy with Ricci Armani, Nancy Jean Naly, Paul Curry, Jenna Nobs, Genevieve Ferrari, and host Anita Spritzer. Enjoy top LGBTQ+ comedians and a hilarious drag host Celebrate laughter, pride, and community in one unforgettable night
www.theatermania.com/shows/bremerton/laugh-with-pride-a-kitsap-pride-comedy-showcase_1773378/

Spokane Pride
Date: June 7-15
Time: Varies
Venue: Varies
Admissions: Varies
June 1th to June 29st Pride History and Remembrance Project (Central Library 1st and 3rd floor)
June 7th, Pride Cruise
June 13th, Kick off party (Under Big Tent)
June 14th, Pride Parade (Downtown Spokane)
Festival Kick Off (Riverfront Park, All Ages Dance Party (Lilac Bowl), Dempsey's/Irv's Reunion show (Pavilion)
June 15th, 10 AM Clean Up PARTY (Riverfront Park)
www.spokanepride.org/pride2025

Woodinville Pride
Date: June 14
Time: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Venue: Wilmot Gateway Park
Admissions: Free
We hope you'll join us for the 4th Annual Woodinville Pride event! www
-FREE to all attendees
-Food trucks on premissis
-Entertainment
-Shuttle Service from the Woodinville Park & Ride to the event and back. Shuttle is FREE to riders and we hope will make getting to/from the event much less stressful.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1393398515446044>