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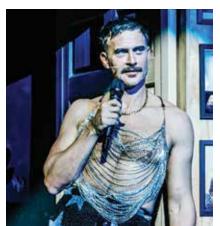
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**TODAY** 





# SEATTLE SYMPHONY AT BENAROYA HALL CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH AT BENAROYA HALL



## CHEYENNE JACKSON: THE SIGNS OF LIFE TOUR

Cheyenne Jackson brings his infectious charm and powerhouse vocals to the iconic Benaroya Hall stage with Signs of Life, a musical meditation on art, love, fatherhood and the cosmic twists that have shaped his remarkable path.

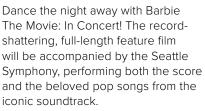


## MUSIC AND FASHION WITH THORGY THOR AND THE SEATTLE SYMPHONY

Reunited with the Seattle Symphony, sensational NYC-based drag performance artist Thorgy Thor (RuPaul's Drag Race, Dragnificent) will dazzle audiences with her vibrant personality, virtuoso violin skills, razor-sharp wit and outrageous fashion sense.



#### BARBIE THE MOVIE: IN CONCERT WITH THE SEATTLE SYMPHONY



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### **Creating with pride: Path with Art's LGBTQIA+ Open Studios** foster community, creativity, and radical hospitality

BY ALEX GARLAND

At the intersection of art and identity, Path with Art is quietly revolutionizing what inclusive creativity looks like in Seattle. In a city rich with Queer culture, the nonprofit's LGBTQIA+ Open Studio sessions provide a rare blend of free-form art making, community care, and radical hospitality. Every Friday evening, these gatherings offer Queer-identifying people a space to show up exactly as they are, with no explanation needed, no cost to participate, and no pressure to produce anything beyond connection.

"We were looking at the demographics for our participants in 2023," Emily Shallman, program director at Path with Art, told the SGN. "We noticed that it was around 25-30% of participants who identified as LGBTQ+. Now, that number is at 36%."

Recognizing that Queer artists naturally gravitated toward Path with Art in large numbers, Shallman and other staff members got to work. With teaching artists Jess and Lee, Shallman cocreated a space specifically centered on LGBTQIA+ identi-

The sessions are free-form, open to anyone 18 and older, and require no prior registration — just walk in and make something.

"You can come in, maybe you're having an anxious day or a great day, and you can use the supplies for free and make anything that you want," Shallman explained.

#### Radical hospitality in action

The concept of radical hospitality treating people with deliberate, generous kindness — shapes the environment.

"You can expect people to treat you with respect and to value what you're working on and who you are," Shallman said. "There's a lot of resource sharing between the participant artists."

It's this blend of creativity and care that has made the program so successful. About 10-40 people participate per session, with more attending during the paired music jam sessions. But more than the numbers, it's the stories and the transformations that resonate.

Alec Rogers, arts administrator, recalled the organization's first LGBTQIA+focused exhibition, and how it turned out twice as good as they thought it would.

"Honestly, I was expecting maybe, like, 10 works of art," they admitted to the SGN. "But we got at least 20, and we filled up an entire wall... full of really diverse mediums and subject matter."

One artist is actively working on a scale model of Path with Art's "art home," complete with a library card catalog and miniature cabinetry.

#### From drag camp to Queer visions

The popular Drag Camp, now in its second iteration, is also a sign of things to come. It introduces participants to drag: its history, cosmetic and hair styling techniques, ways to develop a stage identity, and more.

"It's much more popular than I was anticipating," Rogers said. "People with very big personalities — all who left smiling and



These moments are common in a space that encourages artists to bring their full selves. Amanda Carter Gomes, director of marketing and events, told the SGN that "the process of art making can be isolating depending on what you do and how you create... A lot of people find that it feels good to be in community and create together — and also just to have human interaction out in the world.'

Rogers enthusiastically shared their excitement about Path with Art's future offerings. This June it's working with Ant Gallery in the Seattle Center to host this year's Pride Month exhibition, "Queer Visions." The Drag Camp class currently in progress will be performing at the closing ceremony.

#### Community roots and future growth

As the space continues to grow, the organization will introduce an online LGBTQIA+ Open Studio this June to mirror the in-person sessions and better serve a broader audience.

"We've seen how impactful those identity-driven spaces are, so more opportunities are coming in the future," Shallman

Much of this expansion is made possible through strong community partnerships. Shallman credits Peer Seattle, a Queerfocused support network that offers job assistance, support groups, and its own art programming.

"We wouldn't exist without our partners," Shallman said. "Jack Harlan over at Peer has been such an amazing supporter. Some of our participants come from Peer Seattle to Path with Art."

Ultimately, the LGBTQIA+ Open Studios are not about crafting perfection or producing masterpieces but rather showing up for yourself, for each other, and for art as a shared act of healing and expression. As Shallman put it: "People really crave authenticity... and there's so much of that



#### As we celebrate Pride Month across Washington state, I find myself reflecting on both how far we've come — and how far we still have to go. When I first came out, I was also running for public office. I'll never forget what a political mentor said to me at the time: "I love you, Dave. But it's too bad

- now you can't run for office." That was 25 years ago. Back then, the idea of an openly Gay legislator representing the working-class suburbs of South King County was virtually unheard of. But I ran. I won. And together, we made history - becoming the first openly LGBTQ+ legislator in Washington state elected outside the city of Seattle.

And now, it's with honor that I serve as

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### **Marching Forward: Reflections on Pride and Public Service**

BY DAVE UPTHEGROVE **COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS** 

Washington's first out LGBTQ+ statewide executive official — albeit far too late in our history. I don't share that story to center myself. I share it because what motivated me then still drives me today — and should drive all of us: a commitment to justice. Justice for LGBTQ+ people. Racial justice. Gender justice. Justice for tribal nations, working families, and the natural world.

That commitment is personal. I'm the son of a father with disabilities. I'm the brother of someone who has overcome addiction and criminal justice involvement. I believe deeply that everyone — regardless of background or identity — deserves dignity, respect, and opportunity.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." That has been my experience. When I began serving in the legislature, it was still legal in Washington to fire someone simply for being Gay. LGBTQ+ families had no legal protections or recognition.

But together, we fought for change.

We passed antidiscrimination laws. We secured domestic partnership rights. And in 2012, Washington voters made history by affirming marriage equality at the ballot box. The following year, I had the joy of marrying the love of my life.

Today, I'm honored to serve as Washington's commissioner of public lands, leading a team of 2,200 employees at the Department of Natural Resources. I'm also proud to be Washington's first out LGBTQ+ statewide elected executive.

At the department, our core value is simple: respect. Everyone deserves it. Everyone should feel it. No exceptions. We owe this progress to those who came before us - trailblazers like the late Sen. Cal Anderson, who courageously served as Washington's first openly LGBTQ+ legislator; and Justice Mary Yu, the first out statewide elected official in our state. Their leadership opened doors for so many of us.

But we know the work is far from over.

We see Transgender youth being targeted across the country, used as political punching bags. And the consequences are devastating. According to the Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, 41% of LGBTQ youth in Washington seriously considered suicide in the past year. For Transgender and Nonbinary youth, that number rises to 49%.

That's not acceptable. That's not "family

values." That's a crisis.

That's why Pride is not just a celebration - it's a statement. It's visibility. It's survival. If the only messages young people hear are messages of fear and hate — even if they're wrapped in the language of faith and family — then silence isn't neutral. Silence is harmful.

Young people need to see themselves reflected in leadership. Those of us with privilege and a platform have a responsibility to lift others up, to speak out, and to push forward.

Pride didn't start as a party. It started as a protest. From Stonewall to today, every step forward has been earned — by people who stood up, spoke out, and refused to go back. This month, and every month, let's recommit to basic truths: That all people have value. That our differences are not weaknesses but strengths. That everyone deserves justice, equal rights, and a fair

That's what Pride is about. That's the future we're building. Let's keep showing up. Let's keep standing up.

Happy Pride.

Jayne DeHaan, RE/MAX Metro Realty 206-963-3877 ladyj@jaynedehaan.com



Teachers refused to call on me because I was too timid to speak louder than a mouse. I don't know what happened to the kids who exchanged looks when I read in class, but if you told them what I do today, they wouldn't believe you.

Decades after I could barely whisper in class, I yapped into a microphone for a full hour. A crowd listened with rapt attention. When it was up, I felt a rush stronger than any substance could provide. They say addiction alters a person's whole life, but what they don't say is performance is one hell of a drug.

I first stepped on stage in January 2022. I enrolled in a class offered by one of Seattle's greatest living comedy legends, Stephanie Nam, who has produced women-centered comedy showcases, open mics, and a dating show. As a writer for the *Seattle Gay News*, I discovered Nam while reviewing one of her shows. I debated enrolling in her course, but ultimately I took the plunge when the realization that I would soon be 23 and thus decrepit pushed me into action.

I sat in my car the first night of class, wondering if I should pretend I was sick. My whole life, I'd sat at home and watched stand-up specials. Raised on sitcoms, I



found that my first friends were written by a group of coked-up white men in a studio lot. Comedy was my dream. Now, with the first step in front of me, I feared that leaping would break my neck.

Inside, I met talented comedians and performers like Molina Molina, who would later become one of my best friends. I realized that voicing my dreams out loud wouldn't make me crazy. Nam led me into the light, and it was blinding.

I started attending open mics, like at The Comedy Nest, not as a patron but as a participant. I learned the secrets to the "biz," like that most comedians aren't just riffing ideas. That "spontaneous" joke was rehearsed for months, sometimes years. I also learned I'd need to get on stage sober. For months, I'd order a drink and slurp it down to hold the microphone without trembling. Drinking before a show wasn't healthy for my liver or my bank account, but eventually, I found my confidence.

Soon, I was booked for my first real show, "Flock," by Seattle's super talented Juno Men. Today, she is one of the biggest names in PNW comedy, but on a hot September night in a crowded bar on Capitol Hill, we were both fresh faces sharing the first of many earnest conversations about our dreams. In that chat, I referred to Juno as my "comedy big sister," and the moniker stuck. Three years later, I still follow her like an embarrassing toddler, screaming to the world, "That's my sister!"

I have found a cult-like community. Like a church that worships the holy trinity of Nathan Fielder, Maria Bamford, and daddy Jon Stewart, strangers come together to help one another, share a laugh, and give a push when needed. When one friend got top surgery, local comedians banded together to make him meals during recovery. Performers will also block out a full Saturday to appear as an extra in a friend's short film and work together to promote each other's projects.

My friends in the Seattle comedy scene pushed me when doubt crept in. One day, Juno asked me to coproduce a show with her. I had already turned down several production offers, as I felt I wasn't "there" yet, but she showed me the ropes. There was freedom in sharing something with the world that you created. It also helped that we sold out, and I only got my hair caught in the stage curtains twice.

With the support of my friends and my incredible partner, I started producing my very own show. Inspired by my love for Jon Stewart, I created a Queer-themed news parody, "The Gayly Show." Starring my partner, Izy, and me as the front desk "anchors," we began poking fun at politics, Seattle locals, and the very industry in which I make my livelihood. With the 2024 election approaching, I figured the best way to celebrate the most anxietyinducing night of recent American history was to produce the very first "Gayly Show." It was very successful, because it became more nerve-wracking than the actual election. By curtain call, we had a full house and plenty of hijinks to pursue.

Comedy isn't for everybody. Those with a penchant for sanity tend to avoid the ordeal. Many nights, I lie awake, fearing that I won't make anything of this "career," that I'm just making a fool of myself as time slips away.

However, if nothing more comes of this, if I never find fame or success or see my name on the ending credits, it will still have been worth it. I am no longer afraid to speak. What I have to say is not profound — it's silly, and at least half of it is about poop — but I've found the voice to say it, and I've found people to laugh with.

The more time I spend with comedians, the harder it is to return to civilian life. Funny people have a way of existing without fear of judgment. Acquaintances start conversations about hemorrhoids and dog penises, and before you can judge, you realize everything they're saying is *true*.

As a child, I spent years going to church. As an adult, I've found friendship, community, and family not in pews but in the itchy seats and one-drink minimums of comedy clubs. Every moment I spend on stage, whether crushing it or bombing, I'm growing. Comedy will always be worth it.

Okay, that's enough sappy stuff; I'm burning the light.

Lindsey Anderson is a Seattle-based comedian, writer, and former fetus. She has appeared in "Don't Tell Seattle" and "Funny or Die" and performed in the Wet City Comedy Festival (Seattle), Laugh Riot Girl Comedy Festival (LA), Mutiny Radio Comedy Festival (SF), and HaHa Harvest Festival (Portland). Her headlining hour, "Former Fetus," premiered at Hereafter on April 29. She is a producer of "The Seattle Secret Show" and the co-creator of "The Gayly Show." You can catch her performing regularly at Club Comedy Seattle or Laughs Comedy Club, or listen to her yap on the MIILF podcast.

# We don't march at Pride — we secure it

BY OLIVER WEBB

At Diversity Alliance of the Puget Sound (DAPS), we don't march — we mobilize. Our Securing Our Own People (SOOP) teams are already boots on the ground for over 10 events this Pride season, and we've fully led health and safety at two. We show up in bulletproof vests — not hi-vis — because for our people, safety isn't about optics. It's about survival.

SOOP is a majority Trans-led, fully LGBTQIA+-led program providing abolitionist security, medical, accessibility, and communications support at events where police presence endangers more than it protects. Since 2018, we've secured over 200,000 people across Washington — from Redmond and Woodinville to Sno Valley, Seattle, and beyond.

This March, DAPS raised the Trans flag over the Tacoma Dome for the first time — a historic community collaboration. Weeks later, during the Mayday USA counterprotest, Seattle police assaulted our Trans medical director while they were visibly rendering aid at Cal Anderson Park. We didn't stay silent. We issued public statements and are in ongoing meetings with city officials. And we're not backing down.

In 2025, SOOP formally merged with DAPS, creating a unified, frontline non-profit that integrates mutual aid, advocacy, and community-based safety. We're guided by a new board made up of former DAPS board members, SOOP leadership, organizers from other grassroots orgs, and deeply rooted community members — and



we're just getting started.

Across our programs, DAPS has supported thousands through mutual aid deliveries, resource navigation, and peer-based advocacy — from HRT kits and name-change aid to housing referrals and court support.

We don't do Pride for attention. We do it

for each other. And we'll keep showing up — because no one keeps us safe like community does.

Oliver Webb is the operations director of the SOOP Program and advocacy director of DAPS. More information is at https:// www.diversityallianceofthepugetsound.org.

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# THUNDERCAT PORTER ROBINSON

DJPEE.WEE 100 GECS THE DARE VALUE SLAYYYTER JORDANWARD (AKA ANDERSON. PAAK) 100 GECS THE DARE VALUE SNOW STRIPPERSON DORA JAR ZULAN INJI HANA VU ALEMEDA

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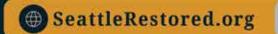
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Everyone deserves to live, and anyone can be a friend for life.







# DJ Mixx America and DJ Summersoft on Black queerness and musical entitlement in the Seattle club scene

BY EVELYN ARCHIBALD UW NEWS LABS

If you know what you're looking for, Seattle's Queer club scene can take you right to the night of your life. Among those cultivating that electricity are local DJs Mixx America and Summersoft, some of the many Black and Queer entertainers across the area who have become staples in the community — even up against expectations of arbitrary palatability and pervasive inequity in the industry.

Somnia Feral, known publicly as DJ Mixx America, first started spinning at the Central Washington University's radio station for a summer course credit when she was 19. Now, she works as a resident DJ at Queer/Bar, the Wildrose, and Chop Suey. As a Black entertainer primarily DJing for the Queer community, she said she's felt an imbalance in promotion, publicity, and compensation.

"I've been told behind the scenes — from promoters that are honest with me — that my cis, male, white counterparts are going there and quoting them two and a half times what I'm quoting," Mixx told the SGN. "So maybe that's why I'm getting booked so much, because I'm not asking for \$300 to walk in the building and do something that I love."

Mixx mentioned how there have been weeks at a time when she's worked night after night, having to turn some venues down, which she considers a blessing.

Music has always been a part of Mixx's life. It stuck with her through her marriages, divorces, day jobs, departure from school, and relocating. It wasn't until a decade ago when DJing became the career move that made Mixx a name to know in Seattle

The club where Mixx jumped into Seattle's Queer community and began her full-time DJing was Maxim's, which has since closed. It was owned by three Black Lesbians, which was a comfort for Mixx, who had just come out as a Lesbian, she

said. Queer venues were some of the first to embrace her, and through word-of-mouth, the news of her DJing skills spread, flooding her with bookings of all sorts.

With that success, she was quit her day job in the private sector and started her own LLC, Mixx America, almost three years

An Oakland native who moved to Seattle in 2019, DJ Summersoft told the *SGN* that people in this city seem to pay more attention to up-and-coming non-Black musicians, particularly those who are LGBTQIA+.

"I get a lot of pushback, sometimes, by some people in the crowd when I'm playing hip-hop in general," Summersoft said. "I think the interesting part of that is that, when I came out [as Queer], this is the music of my coming out, too. I wasn't young in the club listening to pop music."

#### Celebrating Blackness in the Seattle club-music scene

Summersoft said that entitlement — the expectation of what Queer music should sound like — and the tunes themselves "go hand in hand." She noted how her style is "all things soul" across genres, from hiphop to R&B, Afrobeats to disco, and everything in between.

Mixx, similarly, said she wanted to "cut her teeth" in the field as a Black woman when she began her music career, and now specializes in old-school hip-hop and R&B. While the artists' love and familiarity with the music sets them apart from other local talent, crowds still request younger, whiter, ultra-pop artists, like Chappell Roan, even on a night dedicated to their sets that highlight Black culture.

Mixx said she won't bend to that pressure. She's comfortable in her skin, confident in her craft, and has earned the respect of her audience. But she has previously mused as to whether she would be more



prolific or profitable if she quieted her artist brain and altered both her appearance and musical style. Ultimately, though, promoters hire Mixx for her authentic self.

"I'm not trying to be skinny. I'm not trying to be young, I'm 45, and I'm okay with that, I'm proud of that," Mixx said. "I'm going to cut my hair; I'm going to dye it fuchsia. I'm going to do what the fuck I want to do. I'm comfortable doing it like that, and I also book 20 gigs a month doing it just like that."

Both Mixx and Summersoft are wellestablished and unapologetic in their signature styles and have deep love for the venues and communities that have embraced them. Nonetheless, they believe a hard conversation about race in the Seattle music industry needs to be held.

"I have more skill — and that's a fact, Mixx said. "I know that there are DJs that have less skill than me who are making more money than me because they're not Black"

While Seattle's Queer entertainment scene is fairly diverse, the lack of support for Black-produced events and the prioritization of white Queer music creates complications. Summersoft suggests that a perceived lack of Black DJs might reflect audiences self-selecting events and circles that rarely promote Black entertainers more than once a year for Pride.

That doesn't mean Black-centered events don't exist in Seattle — Summersoft and Mixx host one themselves with their friend

and colleague Deejay Hershe called "Hella Softies." They started it in 2022 on Summersoft's birthday, and it became a twice annual show at the Wildrose: once in December for her birthday and once in the summer, often falling before Seattle's Pride weekend.

"The goal is to have a lot of Black folks, or POC, or people who really enjoy our music specifically, between the three of us, coming out and filling up the Wildrose and having it be a completely different energy," Summersoft said.

Summersoft and Mixx want the Seattle club-music scene to cultivate that energy and allow Black queerness to exist comfortably — not just this Pride, not just once a month but consistently.

DJ Mixx America can be found during Pride here:

June 25: Drag BINGO! @ Great American Casino in Tukwila June 26: Ladies Night @ Great American Casino in Tukwila

June 27: Wildrose MainStage; Sapphic @ Nectar Lounge

June 28: Real Queens of Eastlake @ Otter Bar; Unicorn

DJ Summersoft can be found here: June 7: Hella Softies @ Wildrose with DeeJay Hershe & DJ Mixx America June 15: Zaddy: A Dapper Day Party ("Hella Softies" in collaboration with See

You at Honey) **June 20 & 21:** Everett Pride **June 28:** Wildrose Pride



## **Eckstein Middle School teacher awarded for LGBTQIA+ work**

BY IAN COON, ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

The Alliance for Education again gave out almost \$100K in awards this year to principals and educators in Seattle Public Schools who are advancing educational justice and racial equity. One of those teachers is Kels Isaacson, a special education case manager at Eckstein Middle School who was nominated and awarded for their work supporting intersectional students with disabilities who are part of the Queer community (as is Kels).

This \$3,000 will allow Kels to support Eckstein Middle School's student Rainbow Society this coming school year, providing it with the resources and opportunities it needs and deserves.

"Kels understands the incredible importance of moving past a fixed mindset to one of action and understanding," a parent who nominated Kels for the award said. "He creates an inclusive environment for all students and supports their needs while also advocating for them to be responsible adolescents. He showed enormous care in advocating for my daughter while also sharing personal experiences about his Queer identity. Sharing one's own lived experiences as a teacher takes courage, and it can make all the difference in a middle schooler's identity. He stands up and advocates for all his students in a fair and just manner. He can relate to these students, understands their anxieties, and he treats all with compassion."

For more information on the award, visit alliance4ed.org/2025/06/meet-the-2025-swain-weaver-award-winning-educators.





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# Experience the magic: Pacific County's rural Pride celebration will transform you

BY JOVON VAUGHN
CHIEF COORDINATOR, PACIFIC COUNTY PRIDE

When someone vandalized our Pride flag and destroyed our garden pots in June of 2024, they probably thought they'd scare us into silence. Instead, they accidentally created "the Gayest house in Raymond" — our fabulous response that became a beacon for every Queer person who needed to see that they belonged here.

That's Pacific County Pride in a nutshell: we don't just survive adversity, we bedazzle it and turn it into community magic.

After moving here in 2021, I joined cofounders Jeff Karnatz and Jessica Porter in 2022 to expand what had become a grassroots phenomenon. Our mission to "love the hate out of Raymond" has grown into something extraordinary: a movement spanning two cities, with drag extravaganzas that would make RuPaul weep with pride.

This year's June 21–22 celebration features the crown jewel: drag shows hosted by The Ladi Vixxen that have become our absolute highlight, proving that rural Pride doesn't just survive but serves looks with sequins on.

The numbers tell our incredible story. Our faithful sponsors Inatai Foundation, CHOICE Health, and Crisis Support Network have believed in us since 2022, and are now joined by over 75 donations from local businesses and community members who've made this year our most supported vet

But the real magic happens watching families drive hours to see drag performances that leave everyone screaming with joy, or witnessing 82-year-old Doug learn to be the perfect grandpa to his newly out

grandsor

Pacific County isn't Seattle or Portland — we're something better. We're proof that love grows everywhere, especially in logging towns where flannel meets feathers and everyone goes home feeling fabulous. Our celebration happens where ancient Douglas firs provide natural confetti and the Willapa River reflects rainbow flags like nature intended.

We've learned that rural accessibility means scheduling around fishing seasons, partnering with affirming churches, and understanding that when your nearest Starbucks is an hour away, community becomes everything. Our programming reflects this through quilting circles where PFLAG parents collaborate with drag performers, youth spoken word performances about growing up Queer in logging towns, and volunteer firefighters rocking rainbow suspenders.

As I transition from coordinator to cheerleader, the grassroots investment continues exploding. Our drag shows have become legendary — The Ladi Vixxen brings performances that transform our small-town venues into glittering temples of joy, where everyone leaves feeling ten feet tall and absolutely fabulous.

This year, Pride is more vital than ever. In times when our rights and visibility face increasing challenges, Pacific County stands as proof that love wins loudest in unexpected places. We need you here, whether you're driving from Seattle or walking from next door, because every person who shows up makes our message of hope stronger.



Join us June 21–22. Come for the drag shows that will leave you gagging, stay for the community that will make you family.

Pacific County chose hope over hate. Now we're BOLDY GAY, BOLDLY RURAL, and BOLDLY UNSTOPPABLE. Be part of the magic!

More information is at www.pacificcountypride.com and www.facebook.com/ PacificCountyPride.



## **Stitched by the Starz: Sustainable handcrafted fashion**

BY CECE PALMER

My bestie Audrey Forbes and I are Queer women who own a sustainable fashion brand called Stitched by the Starz. Every design is consciously curated and hand-crafted with local, upcycled materials. We transmute trash into wearable art as an act of reclamation.

Our designs also serve as a medium for healing and transformation, turning our experiences of growing up in poverty into a powerful expression of resilience, both personal and collective.

Rooted in the belief that fashion can be a force for change, Stitched by the Starz

blends sustainability with storytelling. The brand's mission is to reimagine what would become landfill waste and curate collections that celebrate individuality and care for the planet.

Through vending at our favorite local parks and markets, Stitched by the Starz creates an inclusive and affirming space where people of all sizes, shapes, and identities can discover clothing that celebrates their authentic selves — free from the pressure of commercial beauty standards and capitalistic spending habits.

We recognize the inherent worth and *Starz*.

uniqueness of each person we serve. Our deep belief in the talents and aspirations of our community means we turn first to them for models, photographers, makeup artists, and collaborators of all kinds. Our success is a shared journey, one that would not be possible without them. As we grow, we are proud to grow stronger, together.

Stitched by the Starz is vending on June 14 at On the Block Seattle, a creative marketplace with crafts made by local artists. Follow on Instagram @Stitched.by.the.

## New Seattle's Trans film festival adds to 20-year history

BY SOPHIE AMITY, STUFF

The inaugural Seattle Trans Underground Film Festival (STUFF), by and for Trans people, is planned for October 17–19 at the Northwest Film Forum. Its purpose is to support Trans film and its production by connecting Trans filmmakers to their audiences and to celebrate Trans lives by showing their stories through film.

We're excited to program films by and/or about Trans people across all genres, continuing a 20-year history of annual Transgender film festivals in Seattle. We're super excited to be a platform for local Queer films!

We're still in the selection process, and film submissions are still open on our website (www.seattletransfilmfest.org). We'll have sneak peeks ready in September, but attendees can expect three days of Trans joy, suspense, drama, and comedy on Capitol Hill, celebrating that we are still here and will not be silenced, even during



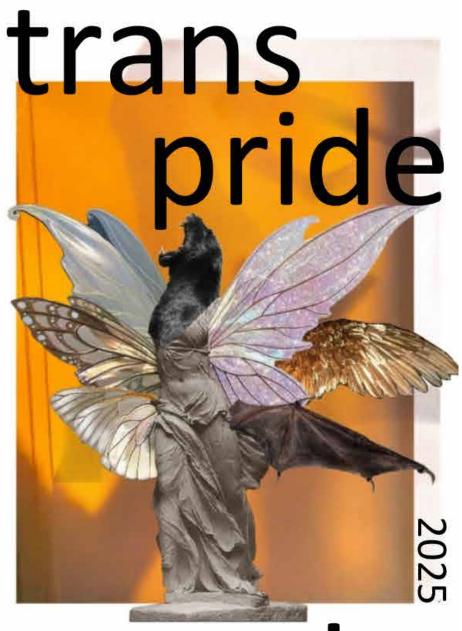
the ongoing attempts to remove our self-expression from public discourse.

We'll also be having an accompanying social event or two over that weekend nearby, for attendees to revel together and enjoy each other's company.

For more information, go to www.seattletransfilmfest.org.

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# seattle

### friday, june 27

5-10 pm volunteer park amphitheater

- ★ live music + performances feat, all-Trans talent
- community speakers on community issues
- resource fair feat. 100+ Trans-led and affirming orgs, community groups, artists, and services
- find community with thousands who gather to celebrate, resist, and show we're not going anywhere!

masks required: we keep us safe!

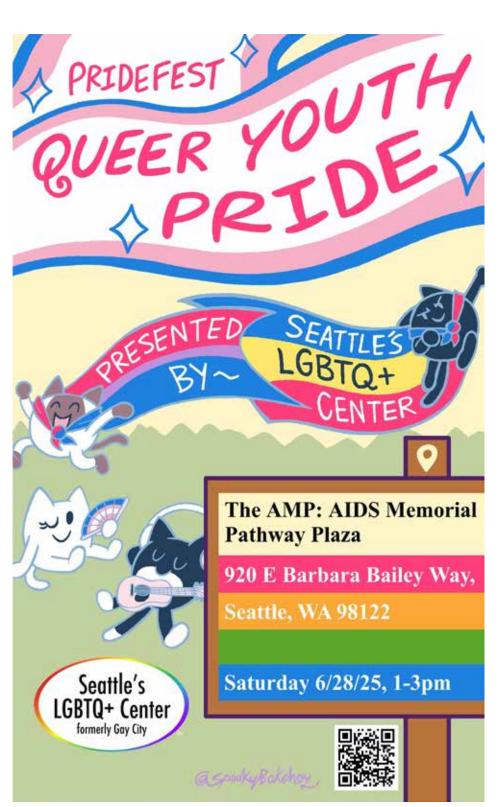
more info on accessibility, maps, performers, etc. available at transprideseattle.org













# Largest LGBTQIA+ hockey tournament in the world expands player opportunities

BY CALVIN JAY EMERSON

When Steven Thompson and Joey Gale started the Seattle Pride Classic in 2020 (moved to 2021 due to COVID-19), it was the world's largest LGBTQIA+ hockey tournament. This year it had 20 teams, which required scheduling, supporting, and suiting up a whopping 280 players.

For this year's fifth edition (which took place June 6-8), a "social conference" was introduced, in which only exhibition games are held and there are no team eliminations or winners. This simpler approach was often requested by a growing number of participants.

"I was raised in Michigan, so I've been skating since I was ten," said Lexi, a wing player for Edie's Enforcers, a team in the social conference. "You can play in leagues that have Stanley Cup levels of pressure anywhere, but here, it can be just all about the fun."

When launching the Seattle Pride Classic, COVID-19 was a citywide concern, and the founders knew that the more players they brought together, the harder it would be to ensure everyone's safety. So they chose to start small by creating four teams that had a total of 56 players, with each team named after an Queer icon.

After the first year's success, Thompson and Gale found that there were consistently more players interested in joining than there would be open slots on any given team. This meant that the Pride Classic had the opportunity to expand over the last five years, now reaching 20 teams.





On the competitive side, the generous spirit of the tournament left enough room for two winners, who had their names etched onto a pair of silver trophies, each decorated with rainbow hockey sticks.

"We all grew up without something like this in our lives, and as adults now, we want a space where it feels safe to come out and play with each other on the ice, with teammates who understand who we are," Gale said. "There's also something instinctive, almost intuitively joyful about celebrating Pride, and you see it on the rink and in the locker rooms. You see it on people's faces."

For more information, visit www.seat-tlepridehockey.org/classic.

#### Red Panda Muay Thai teaches Seattle's Queer community safety techniques and mutual support

BY KELLEN HARDCASTLE

If you're walking through a park this summer and see a gaggle of people gleefully kicking and punching (and kneeing and elbowing) each other, you may have stumbled across the Red Pandas!

Red Panda Muay Thai martial arts school, which first opened its doors in August of 2024, is dedicated to teaching the art of Muay Thai, with a focus on serving the expansive Queer and Trans community.

Muay Thai (Thai kickboxing) is often considered the most effective stand-up striking art — and it's also a great full-body workout. Training consists of learning how to effectively throw and defend against a variety of strikes, footwork drills, clinching (stand-up grappling), punching bag and pad rounds, live sparring, conditioning, and more. At Red Panda, emphasis is placed on consent, control, and learning proper techniques.

In this political climate, in which many Queer, Trans, and other marginalized people are struggling with mental health and often feel unsafe and unaccepted, the benefits of self-defense training can include increased endorphins, improved confidence, practicing nervous system regulation, and the opportunity to join a wonderfully supportive community.

As founding coach Abby said, "It has been my experience that there has always been a shortage of spaces to safely train martial arts for those who come from various marginalized communities. This was upheld by a one-size-fits-all approach to training, which I have to admit was incredibly toxic in the expectations of what each student should have to go through in order to 'survive' the process ... and turn a casual hobbyist into a 'fighter.'

"I found a different way forward when I went to Thailand and connected with the sport at its point of origin and discovered how playful and whimsical the professional practitioners were in both attitude and approach.

"I started Red Panda knowing it was possible to alter some of the most toxic aspects of commercial training that shut people out at entry level and replace them with practices that centered consent and an awareness of trauma, as well as the many different types of needs that potential students

might have. Basically, breaking the onesize-fits-all [approach] and replacing it with a curriculum that held space for the many sizes that different folks might require."

Many Trans people who wished to or used to train in martial arts before transitioning have finally been able to find a gym to train at that actively supports them, including many people from out of town, who have been able to join the space to participate in tournaments. For many, combat sports can be a practice in fully embodying oneself.

#### Lily's story

One visiting fighter, Lily, shared her story: "I got beaten up a lot as a kid but didn't start training martial arts until my early twenties. I ended up training Muay Thai in rural Isan in Thailand. My gym offered me a fight, and although I got beaten up, it was one of the best nights of my life.

"I had spent a lot of time before that fight feeling really dissociated from my body — as someone who did not know I was a woman, I did not process what I was feeling as gender dysphoria. I was just like 'Well, I hate every part of my physical form.'

"But the first time I fought, I was so present and unmasked, grounded and unself-conscious, and just there in a way that I'm not in most of my life. I fell in love with it. I was able to fight 12 times in Thailand at funerals, high schools, and local holiday celebrations. I had eight wins and four losses.

"However, the gym I trained at treated me as a kind of a novelty who they could have fight anyone for a little extra money. They didn't give me any training, and they were not uplifting or encouraging me in any way. The worst mismatch I had, I got a severe concussion. [So] I identified that the risks outweighed the benefits, and decided to train for fun back in the States.

"Unfortunately, at every gym I tried, the vibes went from being actively hate-crimed to just... not great. Fighting was for years something that I did in spite of all of the discomfort that I had to endure, so eventually, I stopped.

"Seven years later, I found Red Panda when I saw an Instagram post for a Queer/ Trans Muay Thai tournament. [I] figured, with my ring experience, I could be a fun



first or second fight for someone as some sort of midlevel henchwoman. However, after being matched with an experienced opponent, I asked to join Red Panda's fight camp.

"I wasn't expecting to socialize— I'm awkward and my experience at gyms had not been great — but people just kept being really brave and unmasked and vulnerable in that space, and I kept seeing that be modeled and positively reinforced during fight camp. Getting to do this thing that I had always loved in a space that felt warm, collaborative, and encouraging — it's genuinely been life-changing and a radical shift for me in how combat sports can be practiced, taught, and learned.

"It's the best gym I've gotten to train at! (Though perhaps I'm biased since I've coached there myself!)"

#### Mutual support

Lily lives in California but is not the only fighter to travel from out of state, with several competitors traveling internationally for the opportunity to safely compete. For those who are able to stay and train at Red Panda, what sets it apart from other gyms is the strong sense of community and support that members give each other. As one of Red Panda's fighters, C, shared:

"Coach Abby emphasizes having a nonhierarchical culture, where everyone is a coach to everyone else, and we can all advocate about our training needs to each other. In addition to fighting and competing with Red Panda, I've also had the privilege of getting to corner for my teammates as well during their fights!

"Fighting and training can often feel lonely and isolating, but at Red Panda, we treat it like the team sport that it is. Every successful fighter has a strong support team behind them, and getting to coach and cheer for each other and help each other improve is a big part of what makes Red Panda so comfortable for me."

Red Panda has another fight event coming up in August in conjunction with several other Queer- and Trans-centered martial arts organizations, so fighters will soon be starting upping the intensity and regularity of their training.

Fighting is optional, though, and there are always supporting roles, such as refereeing, timekeeping, and coaching. Beyond opportunities to test our skills, Red Panda members are also looking forward to a summer of community events, such as BBQs, beach hangs, movie nights, and of course, training together.

Red Panda is on Instagram at @red-pandaboxing, and is soon to be relocated near the light rail station on Capitol Hill. Red Panda offers both beginner and advanced classes. Operating under a culture of consent, all exercises are opt-in and modifiable. Free trial classes are available as well as sliding-scale memberships, and loaner gear is available at the gym.

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SEATTLEPRIDEFEST.ORG



Few can claim the same level of talent and skill as Jonathan Mathews, a local interior designer, a leader in event design and planning, and a producer of high-quality events with culinary delights and crafted spirits. Through his design group, Kwanchai, Mathews has steadily built a career of being a jack of all trades and providing exquisite experiences.

Located in Queen Anne, Kwanchai offers services from real estate staging to event catering with its own line of vodka. Past clients include Microsoft, the Tacoma Opera, and the University of Washington, among others. Its catering is inspired by international flavors. For instance, last December, at the Society of Professional Journalists award ceremony, Kwanchai catered an

array of delicious Middle Eastern dishes.

Mathews stressed the importance of having flexibility with clients in his line of work.

"I always want to work within the budget given," he told the *SGN*.

As a Queer man, Mathews is active in Seattle's LGBTQIA+ spaces. Back in 2010, the *SGN* covered an event he helped organize called "Night FantAsia," which celebrated the Asian Queer community.

Mathews said the task of organizing those types of events has evolved since then. Once, they drew more buzz, but he's noticed how people nowadays are more averse to attending large-scale events due to higher operational costs, with many nonprofits focusing on smaller fundraising

events instead, he said.

Continuing to find ways to serve the community, Mathews said he's become a board member of the Journey Project, a local nonprofit that helps unhoused and formerly incarcerated people find supportive services. He highlighted how the organization explicitly works to include Trans people experiencing hardship.

Through his business, Mathews finds new ways to connect with his clients. Inspired by his mother's recipes and having been born in Thailand, he's been working on *My Thai Country Cookbook*, with which he intends to share more accessible ways for people to enjoy Thai cuisine while honoring dietary restrictions.

He said that his Thai heritage has played

a large role in influencing his entrepreneurial work on a broader scale. As a culmination of his business vision, client interest, and launch of his new cookbook, Mathews will lead a "Kulinary Treasures of Thailand" tour, showcasing its rich food traditions, on October 13–23, 2025. The tour will cover several cities, including Bangkok and Chiang Mai.

"It will combine the beauty, history, and adventures of Thailand with the tastes and flavors that make the cuisine so unique," according to the tour announcement.

More information about Kwanchai can be found at https://kwanchai.net/home.



#### Where to fill your closet with genderaffirming clothes: T4T Clothing Swap

BY SOPHIE AMITY, SEATTLE T4T CLOTHING SWAP

The Seattle T4T Clothing Swap hosts regular events where Trans people can come and "shop" for all the gender-affirming clothes, shoes, accessories, and other things that their heart desires — all for free, powered by a community donation.

These events — typically 3-4 a year — feature racks upon racks of clothing donations that have been washed and sorted by our volunteer team. Swap locations vary: our last few have been at Seattle Open Arts Place, which has been an amazing host and a great venue.

It's such a privilege to be a place where Trans people can come and get all the clothes to their heart's content to fill out their closet with gender-affirming clothing without worrying about cost, since that can be such a barrier to so many of us, making the process a much slower and more gradual. Those who've already got a closet that feels good to them can always get fresh things. We never want cost to be a barrier to anyone's transition or presentation, so we are so happy to be able to help make that happen.

Having been in operation since early 2022, we have seen a real need for something like this in our community, and have been happy that a lot of other Trans clothing events have popped up around the city in recent years.

People can get involved by emailing seattlet4tswap@gmail.com or joining our mailing list at bit.ly/t4tswaplist. They can also get notified about new events via our Instagram or Bluesky accounts @seattlet4tswap.



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# The Co-Op Funeral Home of People's Memorial: Dignified deathcare for a diverse community

BY BRENDAN DIEFFENBACH

When you die, who do you want taking care of you? It's not something anyone wants to think about, but as Queer people, especially in the current climate, it is a consideration that we don't have the luxury to ignore.

Will those you leave behind — partners, children, chosen family — have to deal with a funeral home that invalidates your identity or the value of your relationships? And how do you make sure your final wishes are respected, especially if your legal next-of-kin doesn't support you?

Please know that we at the Co-Op Funeral Home of People's Memorial want to help you with these questions. We are a not-for-profit, established in 2007, motivated solely by our desire to provide dignified, equitable, and inclusive deathcare for the people we serve.

In conjunction with the People's Memorial Association, the oldest funeral consumer advocacy organization in the nation, we provide the highest quality of care at the lowest costs we can manage. Our diverse staff comes from all parts of the Queer community, and we understand where you are coming from. We like to joke that we're the Queerest funeral home in the country by volume, but honestly, it's probably true.

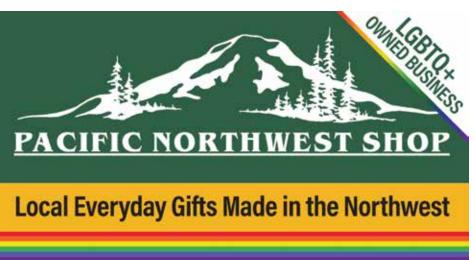
We offer traditional burial, green burial,

cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, and natural organic reduction. We refuse no questions and are happy to help you in any way we can to make sure you feel secure in how you will be cared for after death.

Additionally, we also offer low-cost tissue retrieval for those who have had gender-affirming surgery or other surgical procedures and would like to keep the tissue that has been removed. You may not know this, but according to most hospitals' policies, surgically removed tissue generally must be returned to you through a funeral home. It's strange, we know, but that's why we feel it's important to offer this service affordably to our community, so you can feel confident calling a funeral home that both understands the process and will share in your joy.

To learn more about the Co-Op Funeral Home, visit www.funerals.coop or call 206-529-3800. To learn more about the People's Memorial Association, its advocacy, and how you can become a member and support its work, visit www.peoplesmemorial.org.\_







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### Hatch: Columbia City's Queerowned and gender-affirming hair salon and barbershop

BY SAVANNAH ROSA

Hatch Hair & Co. is a Queer-owned hair salon and barbershop in the Columbia City neighborhood of Seattle. It is home to a talented team of independent stylists, each bringing their unique expertise and passion to the studio. From haircuts and advanced coloring techniques to barbering, it offers services tailored to every client's style and needs

As a Bisexual barber, I know firsthand how traditional salons and barbershops haven't always felt like the most welcoming spaces. That's why I joined Hatch — a safe space built on inclusivity, expression, and genuine connection.

I began my barbering journey in 2023, driven by the passion to create a welcoming environment where everyone can feel safe, seen, and truly respected. I specialize in gender-affirming haircuts, clipper cuts, beard trims paired with an essential oil-infused hot towel, and straight razor neck finishes.

At Hatch, my goal is simple: to make sure you feel confident, comfortable, and cared for in my chair. I truly value our time together and can't wait to meet you.

Visit www.hatchhairandcompany.com for more information.





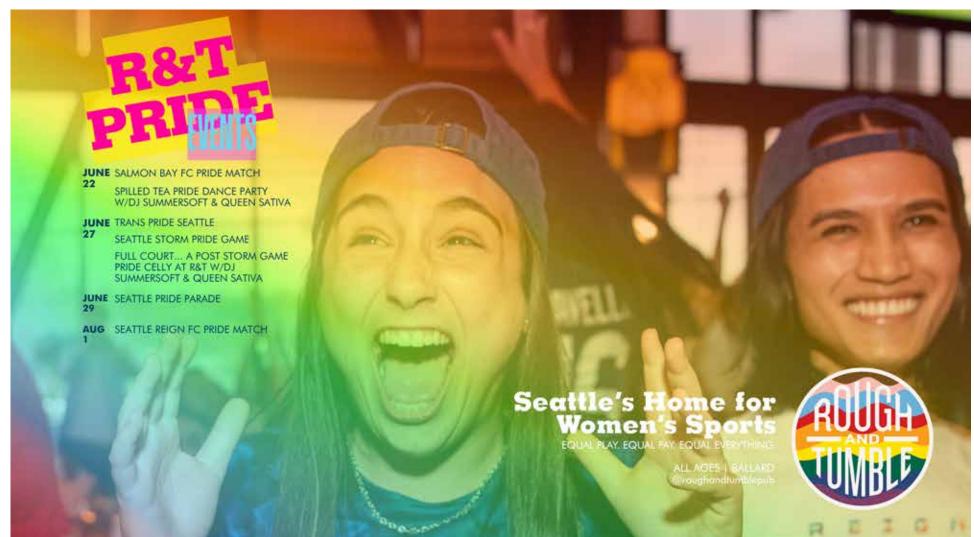
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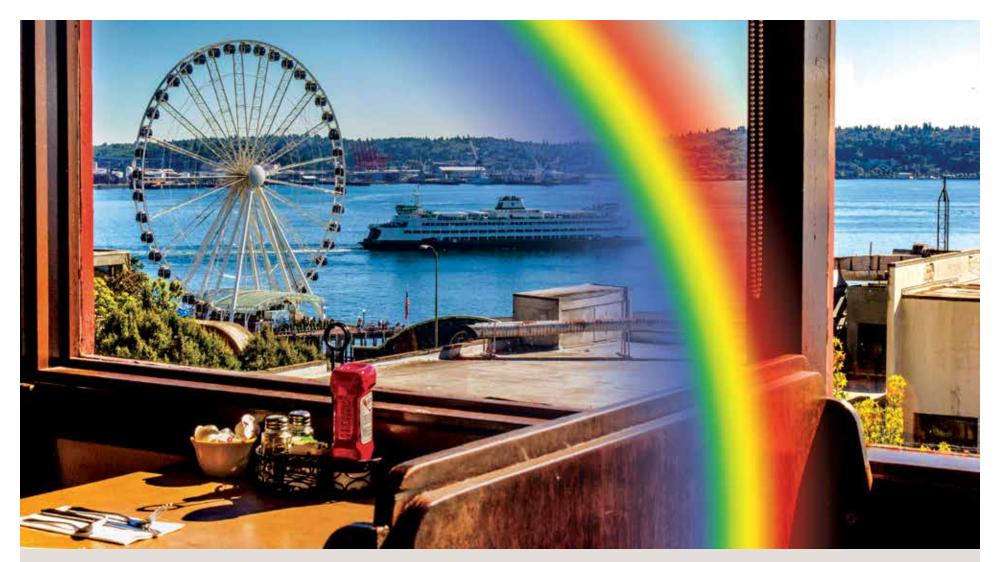
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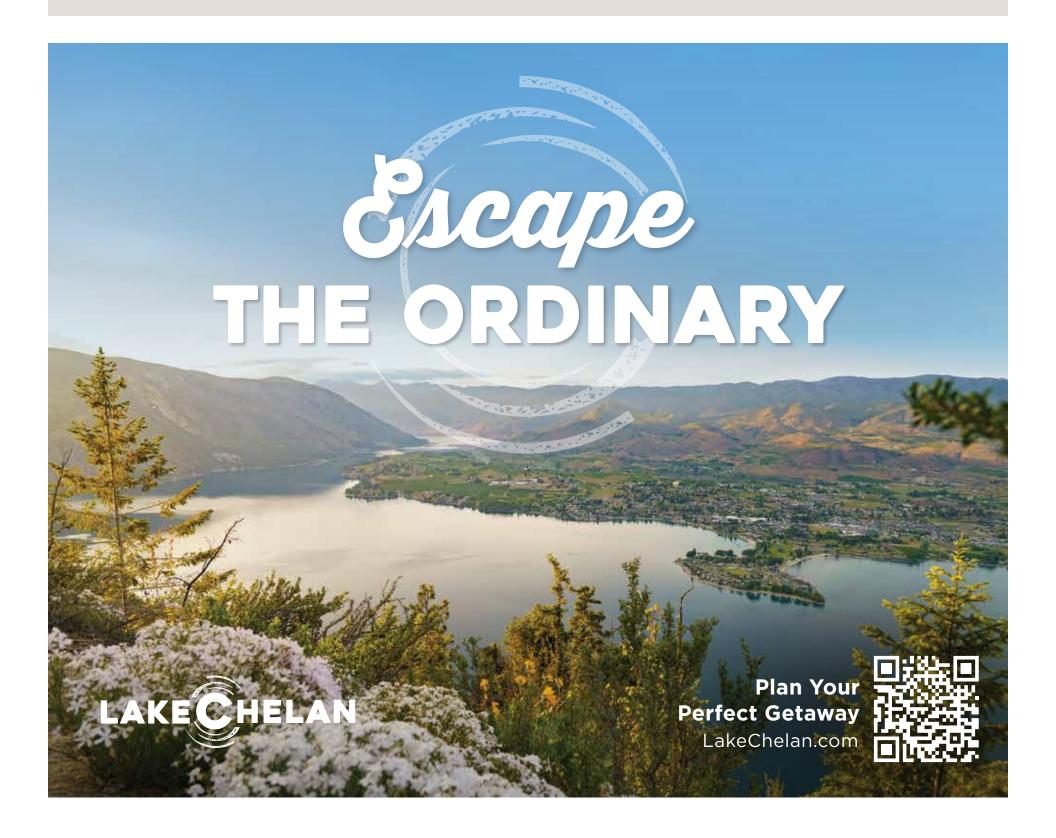




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# How the Seattle Tennis Alliance is building community through LGBTQIA+-inclusive sports

BY FRASER KERR UW NEWS LAB

On a weekend afternoon in April at the Amy Yee Tennis Center in Seattle, a group of eight gathered to play mixed doubles. Some had been playing tennis for many years, while for others, this was one of the first times they had picked up a racket. This social event is hosted weekly by the Seattle Tennis Alliance (STA), an LGBTQ+ club that aims to bring people together through playing the sport at all levels.

"I thought that we had a great turnout last Sunday," Andrew Zarate, event coordinator, told the *SGN*. "We had two new drop-in players, one of them a beginner, and several of our regulars showed up. Our weekly social doubles events are pretty popular, and it's a great way to meet other players around your level or even across different playing levels."

The STA is a nonprofit volunteer group that has existed for over 35 years, beginning as a collection of friends playing tennis in Capitol Hill in the 1980s. The club now serves over 100 active members in the Seattle area.

Beyond the social events, the STA also participates in a variety of club and cup competitions as a registered organization of the United States Tennis Association. As STA President Ian Guenther explained to the *SGN*, accommodating members from all backgrounds and capabilities is a primary objective for the club.

"I get emails constantly from people that are like, 'Hey, I just wanna start. I haven't played [tennis] before," Guenther said.

Active STA members can guide new ones on advancing to a skill level they are comfortable with, Guenther noted. Through membership, players not only compete but also make deeper connections through travel and participation on the STA board.

"We can really help guide you, and we can get you slotted in the right place so that you feel comfortable," Guenther added.

A transplant from Philadelphia, Guenther had been on a nine-year break from tennis during which he "lost being in touch" with the sport.

"When I moved out here, everyone had mentioned a 'Seattle freeze,' that you're not going to be able to make any friends. You really need to kind of put yourself out there into an organization" he said.

Looking online to make some connections, Guenther said he was surprised to discover the STA, as he was unaware that an organization like that existed. After a couple of STA events, Guenther decided to become more involved with the club, making the jump to the board as vice president and then to his current position.

"I'm on a couple of other boards. I work in the nonprofit world, and so I thought it was another great opportunity," Guenther said. "To just become more well-rounded, get more engaged with the group that I thought I could have an impact with, and I took the opportunity from there."

#### **Increasing the numbers**

One of the main near-future goals for the organization is improving membership numbers and relations within the club.

"I'd like us to continue to grow our membership, and in particular our women's and Genderqueer community, and continue to hold more diverse events for our members," Neesha Pinnaduwage, a board member, told the *SGN*.

Guenther shared similar thoughts on the hope for added exposure. Growing the



membership has been a challenge for the STA. Guenther explained that similar clubs in places like Vancouver have nearly three times the membership-than Seattle does. The "Seattle freeze" has been considered a reason for the struggle. "I think it just is a little bit tougher here with culture and keeping people engaged," Guenther noted.

Relationship building

Guenther said that STA is intent on building relationships with businesses in the community. The club is currently seeking sponsorships and donations through its website.

"We especially want to be a part of the community so that we can bring business to other LGBTQ companies, we can have a name in the community," he said.

The association is one of more than 30 LGBTQ+ sports leagues in Seattle, according to the United States Gay Sports Network. These leagues provide an outlet and a safe space to engage in both fun and competitive play across a variety of sports. The club's main demographic are those who identify as LGBTQIA+, but STA welcomes anyone who wants to engage in focused social activity and seeks connection through sports.

In addition to tennis socials, club teams,

and hosting local, regional, and national events, the club has volunteered for charity food drives and community kitchens in the Seattle area.

The STA has many events this year, and will host the Seattle Classic tournament at the University of Washington on August 22–24

"It is an international tournament that anybody can sign up for," Guenther said. "We cap out around 120–130 players every year in the past, and we've had about eight countries represented."

This will be the 31st year that the STA is hosting the classic, and events will be held in both singles and doubles for all genders across five separate divisions of competition. Furthermore, the organization will host two regional cup tournaments this August against players from Vancouver (BC), Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego, according to board member Andrew Zarate.

Those interested in learning more about the STA and upcoming events can follow it on Instagram at @SeattleTennisAlliance and checkout its website at www.seattletennisalliance.org.



## **Seattle Basketball Club: Fostering friendships on and off the court**

BY KELLY SAGNELLA
ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the Seattle Basketball Club (SBC), we believe that sport is more than competition — it's community, connection, and collective joy. Founded with the mission of providing Seattle's LGBTQIA+ community and its allies with a fun, inclusive, and well-organized recreational basketball experience, the SBC has grown into a vibrant hub where people of all identities come together to play, laugh, and belong.

The SBC isn't just about what happens on the court. It's about the friendships forged, the leadership cultivated, and the sense of safety and visibility that every player, ref, and volunteer brings. Our league actively affirms players of all identities and is a space where everyone is welcome, celebrated, and safe.

In a world that can feel increasingly hostile to LGBTQIA+ people, the SBC is a joyful, rebellious act of community care. Whether it's cheering each other on from the sidelines, showing up for teammates beyond the court, or organizing events that bring players together, our league proves that Queer excellence thrives in every bounce, pass, and play.

We are proud to represent what it looks like when love, leadership, and basketball collide, and we're always looking to grow our circle!



VISIT US ONLINE SGN.ORG JUNE 13, 2025 SGN 21

## **Imperial Sovereign Court of Seattle donations**

BY KYL LEDBETTER

The Imperial Sovereign Court of Seattle, along with the support of the community, was very happy to be able to donate \$2,500 to Peer Seattle and \$2,500 to Lambert House. Both these organizations provide valuable services to the LGBTQ community.

Lambert House specifically focuses on the LGBTQ youth that are at risk. Peer Seattle has a wide range of services for those impacted by addiction, mental health, and/or HIV. Our being able to assist in these difficult times is a win for the entire community.

Kyl Ledbetter is on the board of directors of the Imperial Sovereign Court of Seattle.





# Union announces annual Pride Block Party to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community

**PRESS RELEASE** 

SEATTLE (June 5, 2025) – The Union Pride Block Party, for guests 21+, will feature bars (indoors and outdoors), DJs, music videos, and more in the heart of the "gayborhood." Free entry (no cover charge!) is provided courtesy of the owners of Union.

#### When and where

- Friday, June 27, 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.; East Union between 10th & 11th
- Saturday, June 28, 12 p.m. to 2 a.m.; entrance at 11th & East Union Sunday, June 29, 12 p.m. to 2 a.m.

#### **Details**

The street will be closed to allow the community to celebrate at this free outdoor event. Bars will serve adult beverages for your enjoyment! DJs will mix the tunes and videos for you to dance and celebrate Pride all weekend!

Please remember good party etiquette:

NO outside containers

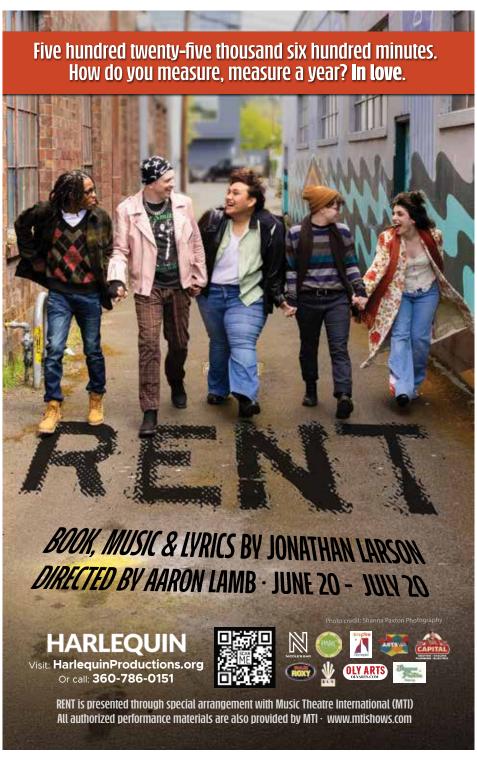
ALL bags subject to inspection 21 and over/ID required

NO smoking

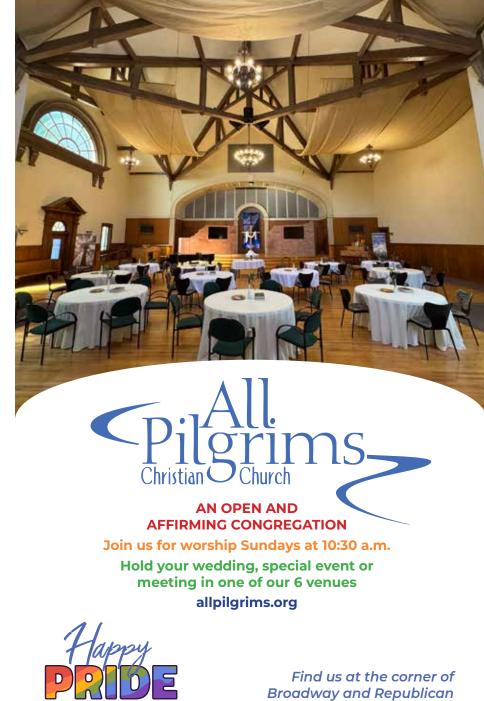
NO firearms

NO negativity! Come and enjoy!

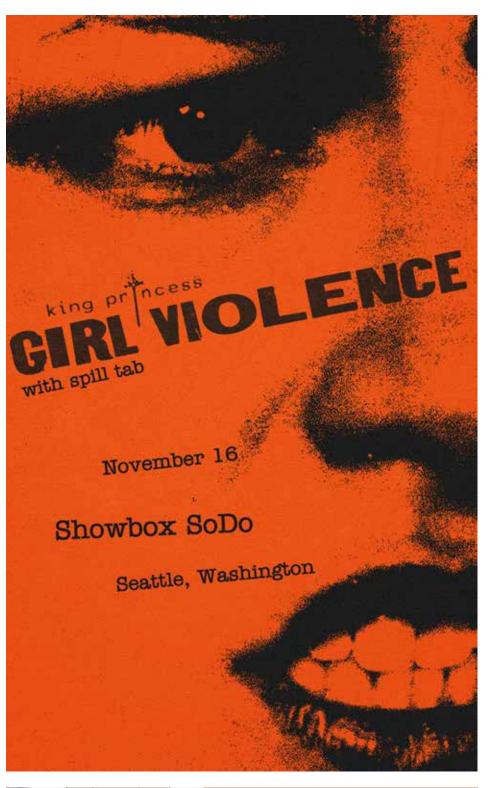
Streets on Capitol Hill

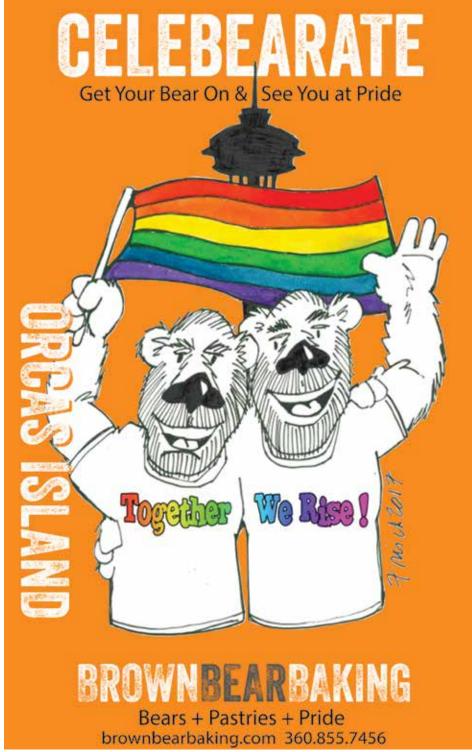


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