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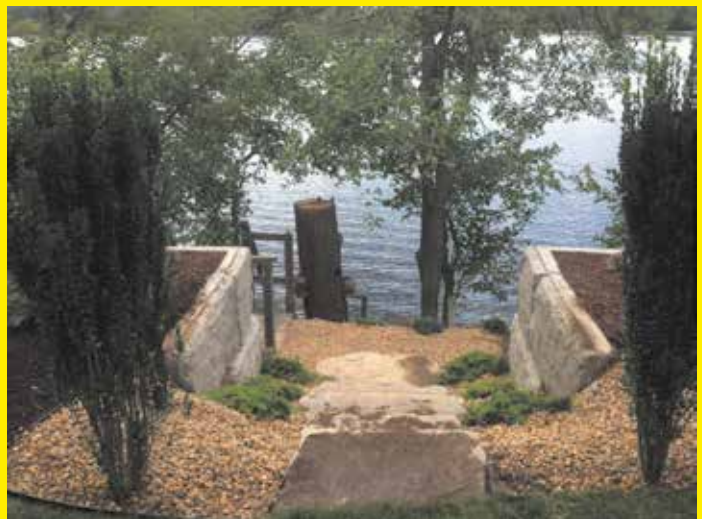


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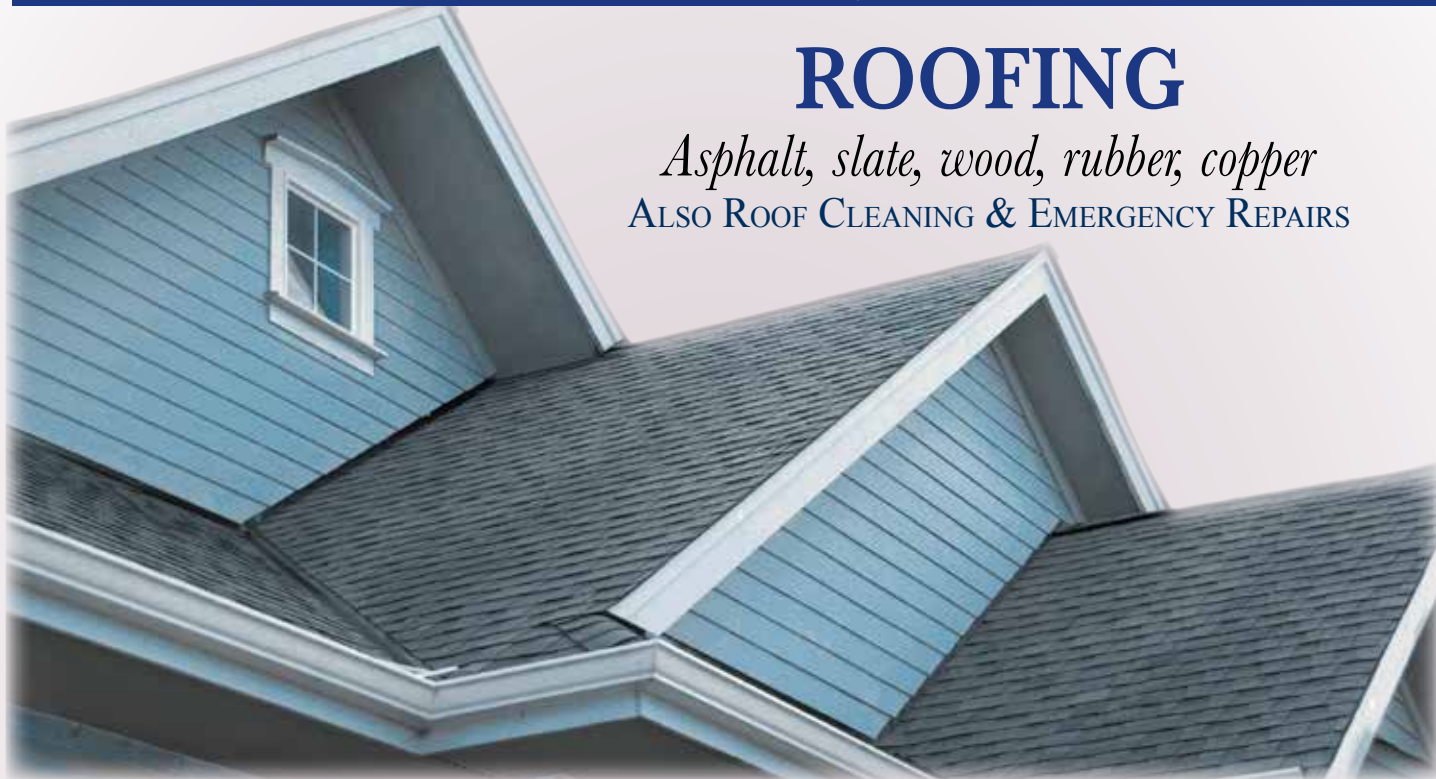
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PUBLISHER

Mary Kennedy

EDITOR

Nicholas McCarty

WRITERS

Wendy Mimran | Mark Adams | Jeff Parson
Chloe Belle | Bo Rodriguez | D. Bullen
John Axelrod | Terri Schlichenmeyer

SALES

Rena Berman, Sales Director
Wendy Mimran, Sales Development Manager
Nicholas McCarty | Mark Davis

PRODUCTION

Louis Chavez | Shorty Kennedy | Bodhi Berman | Orella DeVille | Cleo Marie | Kwame Byrd
Pixie Chavez; Proof Reader

PHOTOGRAPHY

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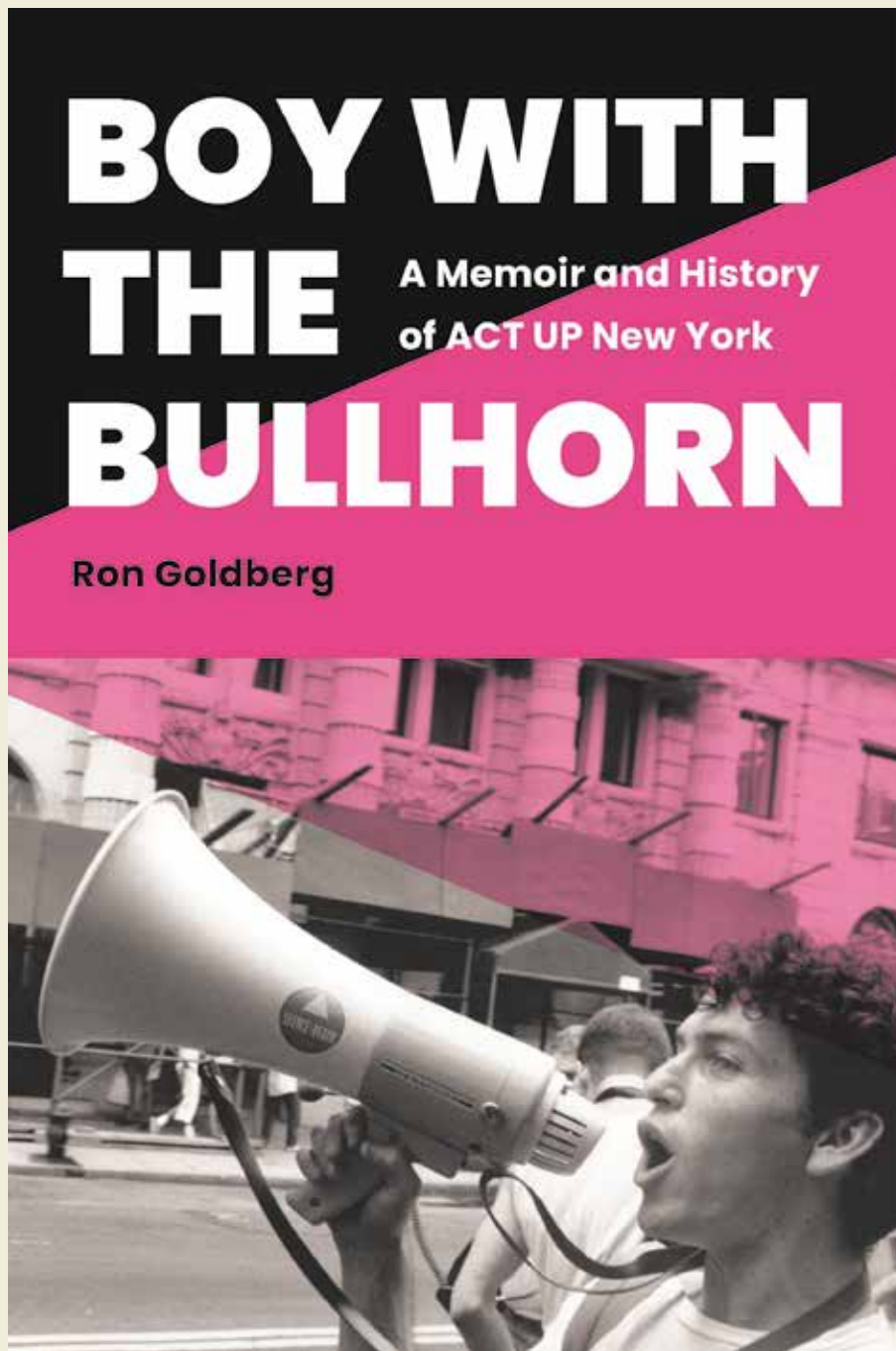
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Book Reviews by Terri Schlichenmeyer

"BOY WITH THE BULLHORN: A MEMOIR AND HISTORY OF ACT UP NEW YORK" BY RON GOLDBERG

c2022, Empire State Editions / Fordham University Press 512 pages

The sign above your head shows what's going on inside it. Last night, you made the sign with a slogan, firm words, a poke to authority – and now you carry it high, yelling, marching, demanding that someone pay attention. Now. Urgently. As in the new book, "Boy with the Bullhorn" by Ron Goldberg, change is a-coming. He'd never done anything like it before. But how could he not get involved? Ron Goldberg had read something about ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, and he heard they were holding a rally near his workplace. It was 1987, he'd never participated in anything like that before, but whispers were everywhere. He and his friends were "living under a pervasive cloud of dread."

He "was twenty-eight years old... scared, angry, and more than a little freaked out" about AIDS, he says. Couldn't he at least go down and hold a sign? That first rally led Goldberg to attend a meeting which, like most, as he came to realize, were raucous and loud and "electric." Because he was "living fully out and proud," and because he realized that this was an issue "worth fighting for," he became even more involved with ACT UP by attending

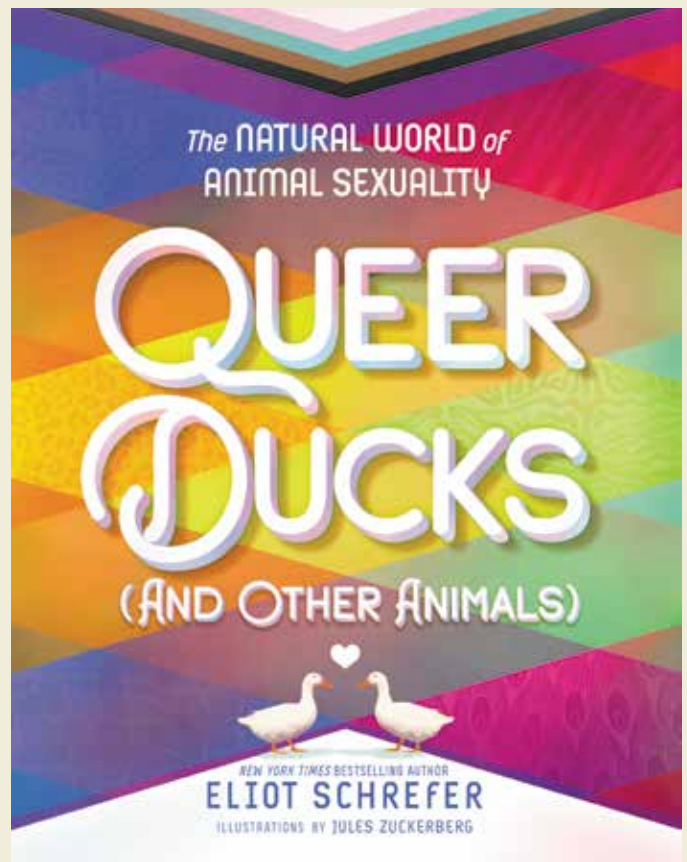
larger rallies and helping with organizing and getting his fellow activists fired up. He observed as women became involved in ACT UP, too. Monday night meetings became, for Goldberg, "the most exciting place in town." There, he learned how politics mixed with activism, and why ACT UP tangled with the Reagan administration's leaders. He puffed with more than just a little ownership, as other branches of ACT UP began spreading around the country. He learned from ACT UP's founding members and he "discovered hidden talents" of his own by helping. On his years in ACT UP, Goldberg says, "There was hard work, grief, and anger, surely, but there was also great joy." He was "a witness, and so, I began to write." Let's be honest: "Boy with the Bullhorn" is basically a history book, with a little memoir inside. Accent on the former, not so much on the latter. Author Ron Goldberg says in his preface that Larry Kramer, who was one of ACT UP's earliest leaders encouraged him to pull together a timeline for the organization and this book is the end-result of the task. It's very detailed, in sequential order and, as one reads on, it's quite repetitive, differing basically in location. It's not exactly a curl-up-by-the-fire read.

Readers, however – and especially older ones who remember the AIDS crisis – won't be able to stop scanning for Goldberg's memories and tales of being a young man at a time when life was cautiously care-free. The memories – which also act as somewhat of a gut-wrenching collection of death-notices – are sweet, but also bittersweet. This book is nowhere near a vacation kinda book but if you've got patience, it's worth looking at. Take your time and you'll get a lot from "Boy with the Bullhorn." Rush, and it might just go over your head.

"QUEER DUCKS (AND OTHER ANIMALS)"
BY ELIOT SCHREFER, ILLUSTRATED
BY J.R. ZUCKERBERG

c.2022, Katherine Tegan Books 240 pages

You know all there is to know about the birds and the bees. Or, well, you know enough about them, anyhow. You know that it takes a girl bee and a boy bee to make bay-bees, and that lovebirds dig their chicks. But did you know that penguins enjoy private lives or that bison bulls often bond? Read "Queer Ducks (and Other Animals)" by Eliot Schrefer, illustrations by J.R. Zuckerberg, and don't let it bug you. The year was 1834 and German zoologist August Kelch couldn't quite believe what he was seeing. It wasn't that he'd never noticed mating doodlebugs before, but the two he'd found were both male! He chalked it up to the only thing he could think of, believing it was an act of perversion. You can't entirely blame him: for centuries, early theologians and scientists, lacking the proper language, noted that animals' love lives sometimes didn't match the boy-meets-girl ideal then ascribed to humans, so they wrongly condemned it in the only ways they knew. The thing



is, animal sexuality varies so much that they might've overlooked other examples that could've proved the naturalness of it all. They may have seen mating animals and assumed something different than the truth. Psychologists call it "confirmation bias – you see what you're looking for – which means a pair of cats or dolphins, tête-à-tête, may both be male. You might see a male wrasse that changed gender for mating purposes, or a bonobo whose species is notoriously promiscuous. You might be watching a deer with a same-sex dear. Every farmer knows that cows will mount other cows in heat. Scientists have observed mating activity in female macaques lacking nearby males. Albatrosses form pair bonds without mating, and wild geese sometimes form throuples to care for a nest. Maybe it matters to the individual animal, and maybe it doesn't. Which, suggests Schrefer, is half of an intriguing question: and why does that same behavior in humans matter to us?

So you've noticed some embarrassing activity at the dog park or the zoo, and you've waived it away by saying it's a matter of dominance or a power-play among animals. But, as you'll ask yourself while reading "Queer Ducks (and Other Animals)," what if it's not? Another question you might pose: is it fair to compare a dog or elephant to a human in this way, or is it anthropomorphizing? Scientists tend to hate the latter; author Eliot Schrefer does both here, proving that the behavior so often condemned in

homo sapiens is perfectly natural in the animal kingdom, while also urging readers to see the ridiculousness of affirming one while lambasting the other. The point is made, though it can get heavy-handed at times. Still, readers won't be able to keep their thoughts from being provoked. Also full of interviews with scientists and biologists and a nice biography of the author, too, this book is informative, eye-opening, and just plain fun to read. Yep, get "Queer Ducks (and Other Animals)," or you'll be a monkey's uncle.

**"EQUAL PARTNERS: IMPROVING GENDER
EQUALITY AT HOME"
BY KATE MANGINO**

c.2022, St. Martin's Press, 344 pages

Plates on one end, bowls on the other, glasses on top. It's your turn to load the dishwasher tonight, but if you plead ignorance on how it's done properly, maybe you could worm your way out of it. Somebody else'll do it, so go sit down. Take a rest and read "Equal Partners" by Kate Mangino, then ask yourself if you could've assumed another chore tonight. Several years ago, researchers finally acknowledged what generations of women already knew: that many working women were responsible for a "second shift" after 5 p.m. The first shift was the job for which they received a paycheck; second shift included making meals, straightening up, schoolwork help, and all the other things that needed doing at home. Researchers also noted that the "second shift" is detrimental to men and boys; Mangino says that such gender inequality happens around the world, restricting everyone, perpetuated by "all genders." Most often, she says, even when we try our hardest to maintain equality in the home, women generally take responsibility for "routine tasks" and men take "intermittent tasks." It's easy to slip into those roles; in fact, avoiding them takes real effort – although, interestingly enough, most same-sex couples do pretty well in "fifty-fifty equality."

Still, no matter what your domestic situation, there are always improvements to seize that can make your household a more equitable one. First, know that things won't fix themselves. Do a "gender check-up" to determine where you stand in your household and on the equal-housework spectrum. Before launching into a life-altering event such as marriage, having a baby, or starting a business, know what questions to discuss with your partner so you're closest to an agreement. Remember that "women perpetuate sexism, too" and that men generally have "Four motivational themes" for their actions. Pick some role models, and be one, too. And finally, watch your words. They might need to be "tweaked" to reflect more mindfulness. Flip through "Equal Partners" and if you're a man, you may

~~Help w/ Homework~~

~~Cook Dinner~~

~~Provide for Family~~

~~Laundry~~

~~Groceries~~

~~Role Model Equity~~

~~Repair Sink~~

~~Allow Vulnerability~~

Equal Partners

Improving Gender Equality at Home

Kate Mangino

~~Walk the Dog~~

~~Be Authentic~~

feel a little on the defensive. Author Kate Mangino seems to side with women on issues of home work, but she vows that she's not showing bias, that statistics confirm her points. Still, some readers may have a lot to overcome before reading this book about overcoming inequality at home.

Fortunately, Mangino shows why this is absolutely worth doing. Through pages and pages of stories – some that may have you thinking Mangino was peeking in your kitchen window – she systematically lays out how things get to be how they are and what actions couples can take. There are quizzes to tackle and places for notes (a reason to buy this book outright) and if you're still not quite convinced, there are happy interviews with dozens of people for whom satisfaction lies in change.

Though it's not without a little abrasiveness, "Equal Partners" is a good conversation starter for fixing the status quo in your relationship status, regardless of what it is. Find this book, and add another thing to your plate.

"BEFORE WE WERE TRANS" BY KIT HEYAM

c.2022, Seal Press, 352 pages

Yes or no: before there were rockets, there were no astronauts. No, there wasn't a need for them without a vehicle to go where people only dreamed of going. But yes –

the word “astronaut” is more than a century old. Words and labels matter, as you’ll see in “Before We Were Trans” by Kit Heyam, and time is no excuse.

On the evening of June 8, 1847, John Sullivan was apprehended by gendarmes while weaving down a sidewalk in London. Sullivan was wearing a few women’s garments, and was carrying more, all of it stolen. Because it wasn’t the first time he was arrested, he spent ten years in an Australian penal colony for his crime. “Is this story a part of trans history?” asks Heyam. There aren’t enough clues to determine Sullivan’s truth, not enough “evidence that their motivation for gender nonconformity was not external, but internal...” The answer’s complicated by the fact that “transgender” wasn’t even a word during Sullivan’s time. Presumably, Sullivan was white but even so, we must also consider “that the way we experience and understand gender is inextricable from race.”

Surely, then, Njinga Mbande, the king of Ndongo, can be considered trans; they were assigned female at birth but presented themselves as king, as did Hatshepsut of Egypt. In precolonial Nigeria, the Ekwe people were gender-fluid, to ensure that there was a male in the household. Do political and social reasons fit the definition of trans? In England, it was once believed that to dress like the opposite sex was to become that gender. In prison

camps during World War I, men participated in plays to ease the boredom, and some ultimately lived permanently as women. Early history shows many examples of people living as “both.” Were they trans or not? Says Heyam, “historians need to tread carefully and responsibly when we talk about the histories of people who blur the boundaries between intersex and trans.” Moreover, can we allow that there’s probably some “overlap”? The answer to that could depend on your current situation and mindset. Absolutely, author Kit Heyam dangles their own opinion throughout this book but “Before We Were Trans” doesn’t seem to solve the riddle.

Judging by the narrative here, though, it’s possible that it may be forever unsolvable. There’s a lot to untangle, often in the form of partially-recorded tales that hark back to antiquity and that are shaky with a lack of knowable details. Even Heyam seems to admit sometimes that their thoughts are best guesses. And yet, that tangle can leave readers with so much to think about, when it comes to gender. Ancient attitudes toward trans people – whether they were, indeed, trans or acted as such for reasons other than gender – absolutely serve as brain fodder. This is not a quick-breezy read; in fact, there are times when you may feel as though you need a cheat-sheet to follow similar-sounding names. Even so, if you take your time with it, “Before We Were Trans” may put you over the moon.

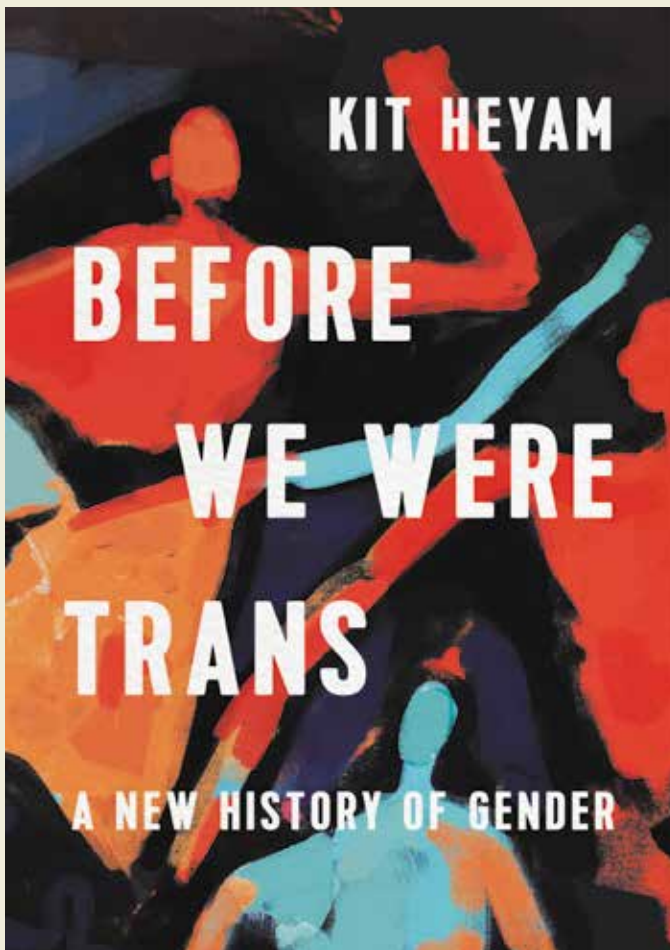
“FROM GAY TO Z: A QUEER COMPENDIUM”

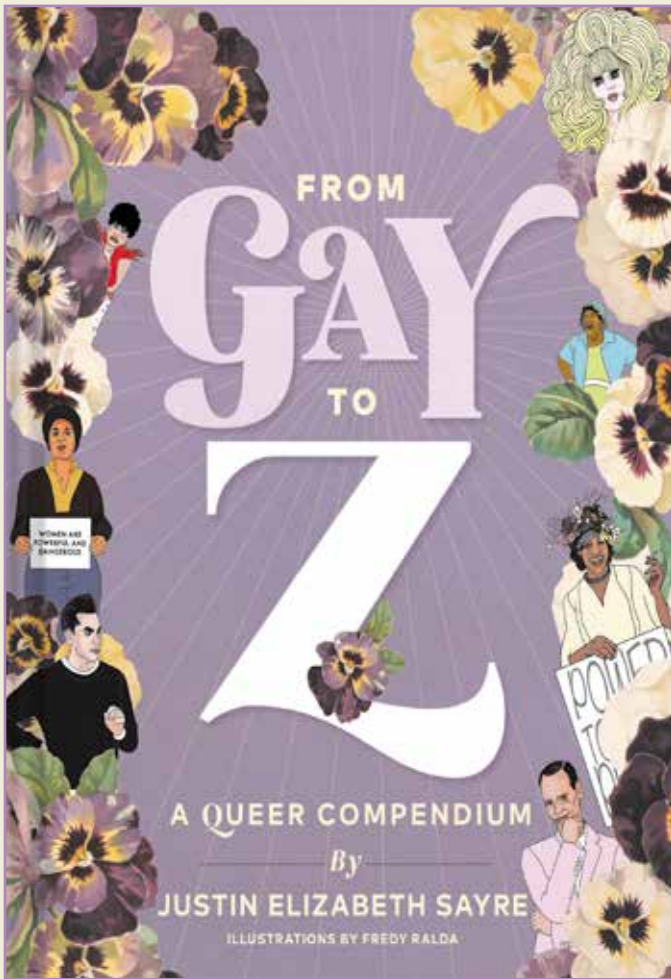
BY JUSTIN ELIZABETH SAYRE,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FREDY RALDA

c.2022, Chronicle Books, 312 pages

Little things mean a lot. A tiny kiss, a love note written on a scrap of paper, you know how you cherish those things. If you can keep them in your pocket, on a keychain, or tucked in a satchel, all the better because importance isn’t measured by volume. Little things mean a lot, and in the new book “From Gay to Z” by Justin Elizabeth Sayre, they all add up perfectly. For most of your life, you’ve been fed a steady diet of history, but what do you know about LGBTQ+ history, pop culture, and stand-out activists? Everything you don’t know about your GayBCs is in tiny entries in this book. Take, for instance, drag, or a method of performance that Sayre thinks “queer people have always participated in...” Drag is performance, but it’s also campy theatre, “empowerment,” and “a chance to... get to be the person you always wanted to be.” Check out this entry, and the one for RuPaul. In your GayBCs are places to meet, dance, play, vacation, and a lot of New York and San Francisco hotspots, both current and otherwise. “So much of New York is gone,” says Sayre, and some are immortalized here. And by the way, do you speak Polari? Inside this book, you’ll read about trailblazers like Christine





Jorgensen, controversy-makers like Robert Mapplethorpe and Chelsea Manning, activists like Marsha P. Johnson, and the male We'wha of the Zuni tribe, who lived as "female-bodied people." You'll find notable performers from then and now in this book; for instance, do you know who Wayland Flowers was, and his sidekick, Madame? If so, you'll enjoy the entry for Liberace, too – and if you're not, then read about Lil Nas X, Billy Porter, Brandi Carlisle, Freddie Mercury, and dozens of LGBTQ+ allies and "icons." You'll also find entries about notable LGBTQ+-owned newspapers, as well as authors, playwrights, movies and moviemakers...

In the introduction for "From Gay to Z," author Justin Elizabeth Sayres says that there was no way "of boiling down the entirety of queer culture into one book." It's true: just page through and you'll likely spot AWOL entries almost immediately (What? No Danica Roem? No Bettie Page?). No worries: you'll also instantly see something else that Sayres promises: lighthearted humor. There's so much goodness packed between the covers of "From Gay to Z" that you almost don't know where to start. Be conventional, and begin with "A" or take a chance and flip open the book at random. There's something interesting, either way. Sayres goes pretty far back into gay history for the entries chosen, but there's plenty for a modern reader, or for someone who's recently out, or who badly needs a brush-up on history. Each entry is quick to read, too, so no commitment is required. Even so, this book is like a bag of potato chips: you can't help but dip into "From Gay to Z" until it's gone. Little things mean a lot but in this case, they mean great big fun. 🏳️‍🌈

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Netflix's *Uncoupled* starring Neil Patrick Harris (Middle)

Uncoupled + Secret Love + Prom + My Grandma's A Lesbian

by Mark Adams

Doogie Howser. If you are of a certain age, you'll recognize the name from a 1989 series that ran for 4 mercifully-long years. Starring as the 16-year-old title character with an MD after his name, was, and still is, Neil Patrick Harris, who fortunately turned his selection of roles around, and appeared in numerous Broadway shows, as well as the popular "How I Met Your Mother." Harris has been out of the closet for many years, and now is appearing on the Netflix series "Uncoupled."



Netflix's *Prom* with Nicole Kidman and Meryl Streep

The sometimes comedy, sometimes drama production is from Darren Starr, the man who brought us "Sex and the City," which just didn't know when to end, but that's another story altogether. Harris plays a married 40 year old something gay who is dumped by his partner after 17 years. The 8 half-hour episodes follow him through the breakup and his uncomfortable re-entry into the gay single lifestyle. If you're at all familiar with star's other endeavors, you won't be disappointed. The supporting cast is brilliant, with Marcia Gay Harden is a hoot as Harris' "best friend," because every series has to have one of these. Look for Tuk Watson as the 50-year old who unceremoniously dumps poor Neil on his birthday. I would really like to see Watkins in a more challenging role, perhaps with his husband Andrew Rannells, whose name will show up in an upcoming paragraph, but I digress. It will take barely 4 hours to binge the series, as I did. No word yet on a second season. And here is some trivia for when there's a lull in dinner conversation: Did you know there was a remake of the "Doogie Howser, MD" series called "Doogie Kameloha, M.D.?" Neither did I. It stars Peyton Elizabeth Lee, it's just been renewed for a second season on Disney+ and I will avoid it at all costs.

From the production company of yet another gay entrepreneur comes the Netflix movie "A Secret Love." While the title kind of gives it away, Emmy winner Ryan Murphy's original documentary follows a lesbian couple who have been together for 65 years. 65 years! That's before Home Depot. They came out later in life for the obvious reasons, but, as it says in the promo material, "their love outweighed any challenges they face along the way." This amazing couple met in 1947 at a hockey rink in Saskatchewan, where one of them was playing with the Moose Jaw Wildcats. Although much of the story is about the hardships of getting old, there are glimpses of what life was like for them in the mid-1900s. One of the rare films to get a 100% rating from Rotten Tomatoes, the filming was done between 2013 and 2018, released a couple of years later, and is on Netflix now.

Also from Ryan Murphy is the film adaptation of the Broadway musical "Prom," for all you theater queens of varied sexual orientation. It is the one where big-time Broadway stars help a high school student, who has been banned from attending the prom with her girlfriend. Among the talent are Meryl Streep and Andrew Rannells, neither of whom is, to my knowledge, a lesbian.

And lastly, coming in at a whopping 33% positive rating on Rotten Tomatoes, is the seldom-discussed (and probably justly so) movie "So, My Grandma's A Lesbian!", the exclamation point being a part of the actual title. The movie, a Spanish acquisition currently running on Netflix, is about

Netflix's Documentary *A Secret Love*



Spanish Import *My Grandma's A Lesbian*

two women in their 70s who decide to come out to their families and get married. As is the case in many of these outrageously-named Spanish imports, chaos ensues. Another one I'll have to watch. 🏳️‍🌈

Mark Adams has been a popular contributor to LGBTQIA+ Media for many years, writing extensively on film and video of interest to the community. You can email him at vidioview@gmail.com with any of your favorites for a future scribbling.





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Edward Perry Warren

(January 8, 1860 – December 28, 1928)

by Jeff Parsons

Known as Ned Warren, was an American art collector and the author of works proposing an idealized view of gay male relationships. He is now best known as the former owner of the Warren Cup in the British Museum.

Warren was born on January 8, 1860, in Waltham, Massachusetts, one of five children born into a wealthy Boston, Massachusetts, family. He was the son of Samuel D. Warren, who founded the Cumberland Paper Mills in Maine, and Susan Cornelia Clarke. He had four siblings: Samuel Dennis Warren II, lawyer and businessman; Henry Clarke Warren, scholar of Sanskrit and Pali; Cornelia Lyman Warren, philanthropist; Fredrick Fiske Warren, political radical and utopist.

Ned Warren received his B.A. from Harvard College in 1883 and later studied at New College, Oxford, earning his M.S. in Classics. His academic interest was classical archeology. At Oxford he met archeologist John Marshall, with whom he formed a close and long-lasting relationship, though Marshall married in 1907, much to Warren's dismay. Beginning in 1888, Warren made England his primary home. He and Marshall lived together at Lewes House, a large residence in Lewes, East Sussex, where they became the center of a circle of like-minded men interested in art and antiquities.

Warren spent much of his time in Continental Europe collecting art works, many of which he donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, assembling for that institution the "largest collection of erotic Greek vase paintings" in the U.S. His published works include *A Defence of Uranian Love* in three volumes, which proposes a type of same-sex relationship similar to that prevalent in Classical Greece, in which an older man would act as guide and lover to a younger man.



Edward Perry Warren and John Marshall, 1895 | Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

In 1900 Warren published *The Prince who did not Exist*, a small edition art book from the Merrymount Press, "a most beautiful specimen of workmanship" according to the *New York Times*.

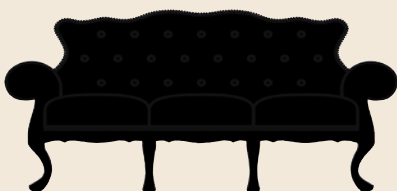
Warren purchased the Roman silver drinking vessel known as the Warren Cup, now in the British Museum, which he did not attempt to sell during his lifetime because of its explicit depiction of homoerotic scenes. He also commissioned a version of *The Kiss* from Auguste Rodin, which he offered as a gift to the local council in Lewes. The council displayed it for two years before returning it as unsuitable for public display. It is now in the Tate Gallery.

In 1911 Warren adopted a four-year-old boy, Travis. The child grew up at Lewes House and Warren's Maine residence, Fewacres, calling Warren "Papa". He was the illegitimate son of the daughter of a Cornish vicar and a local squire. Warren told Lois Shaw, a relative and friend, "I think that I have found a boy to adopt, but shall not know till my return to England. He is of good birth and healthy. Travis Warren attended Winchester College. He was not a good student, and he changed schools, going to Tonbridge School.

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Warren's home, Fewacres, in Westbrook, Maine, was near the paper mills of his father. Marshall had a home in Rome. In 1925, Marshall spent more time ever at Lewes House, where he died in 1928. John Marshall's will named Warren as his executor and beneficiary. Later that year, Warren became seriously ill and underwent surgery. He died in a London nursing home on December 28, 1928. His ashes were buried in the non-Catholic cemetery in Bagni di Lucca, Italy, a town that is known as a spa in Etruscan and Roman times. In the same tomb are buried John Marshall and the latter's wife, Mary.

According to Green, of all the men who gravitated around Warren, the most important was John Marshall. John Fothergill, Warren's friend and biographer, reports that Warren composed the following epigraph: "Here lies Edward Perry Warren, friend to John Marshall ... the finest judge of Greek and Roman antiquities." He reported Marshall's death date but not his own. J. D. Beazley said that "Warren always spoke of Marshall (over generously) as in a class much superior to himself as an archaeologist." According to Green, "the relationship was intellectually and emotionally unequal.




Warren Cup: a bearded man with a beardless youth | Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

But there was some reciprocity, as well as this one-sided adoration. Each called the other Puppy, and in their later years, according to Burdett and Goddard, they came to resemble each other, looking like twin Punchinellos walking arm in arm together."

In March 1928, Warren had already given Lewes House and its adjoining properties to H. Asa Thomas, who had begun as his secretary and become his business associate and friend; meanwhile, Fewacres and its adjoining properties went to Charles Murray West, his other secretary. Both Thomas and West sold the properties a few years after Warren's death. Travis Warren inherited \$3,000 a year managed by his guardians (Thomas and Burdett) up to the age of twenty-eight. From 28 to 32 years old he was to receive \$20,000, and \$200 a month, and his guardians could invest up to \$30,000 on his be-

half in a business. At the end of the trust, he was to receive \$3,000 a year. Despite all this money, Travis was poor by the end of his life.

The disposition of Warren's estate was complicated by legal problems. An auction of some 250 pieces of his furniture brought \$38,885. The Sackler Library at Oxford University holds the "Papers of E.P. Warren and John Marshall." Warren's will established the position of EP Warren Praelector at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and established restrictions, no longer maintained, that ensured the holder lived at or near the college and taught only men.

In 2013, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts determined that a bronze statuette it purchased from Warren in 1904 had been stolen from a French museum in 1901 and arranged for its return. 

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Batwoman

MARVEL & DC COMICS EMBRACE THE GAY

By Bo Rodrigues | Images courtesy of Marvel and DC Comics

Marvel and DC Comics feature a surprising number of LGBTQIA+ superheroes. They choose May 2022 to announce their respective plans to celebrate Pride Month in June with the LGBTQIA+ community. In *Marvel's Voices: Pride is back* with its Pride anthology special featuring its LGBTQIA+ characters written and illustrated by LGBTQIA+ creators (which includes a Young Avengers reunion), along with a series of Pride variant covers. DC is similarly publishing a new volume of its *DC Pride* anthology also featuring LGBTQIA+ characters and creators, along with additional new titles featuring characters like Tim Drake, Nubia, and Poison Ivy, along with their own *DC Pride* variant cover theme. We've put together this list to introduce some of the more best-loved superheroes from the LGBTQIA+ community.

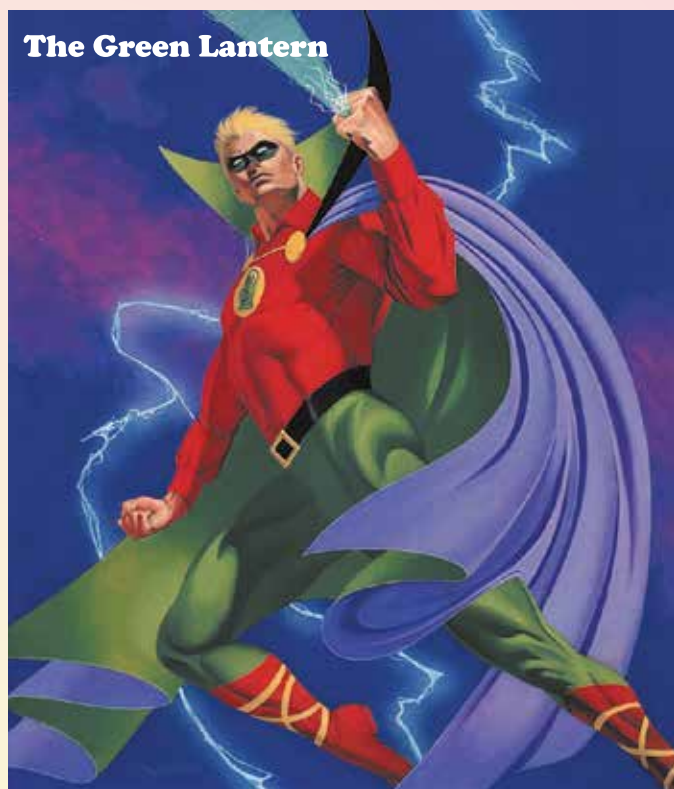
Batwoman

A military brat. A socialite. A caped crusader. A lesbian? Kate Kane's military upbringing didn't make it easy for her to embrace her sexuality but her struggle definitely defined her heroism. Batwoman first appeared as Batman's love interest in the 1950s, shortly after the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent*, a book that accused Batman of homosexual propaganda. Recently she was rewritten to be lesbian, a controversial decision that led to some problems of its own. Her relationship with Gotham City Police Department (GCPD) Detective Renee Montoya was up there with our last entry on our list as a paragon for well-written, nuanced queer relationships, and their visibility helped open up doors for many other characters moving forward.

Although her comic's creators wanted her to marry her girlfriend, DC nixed the decision by saying heroes "shouldn't have happy personal lives," a dubious statement that sounds pretty ridiculous in the context of, say, Superman. Despite all this, she's undoubtedly the most high-profile lesbian superhero around, with a key role in the Bat-family.

The Green Lantern

In comic books since 1940, the original Green Lantern, Alan Scott, only finally came out in 2012. Though this revelation first took place with an alternate Alan Scott in DC's *Earth 2*,



further in the spin-off comic, *Harley Quinn: The Animated Series: The Eat, Bang, and Kill Tour*. Harley and Ivy are one of comics' most prominent on-again-off-again queer couples.

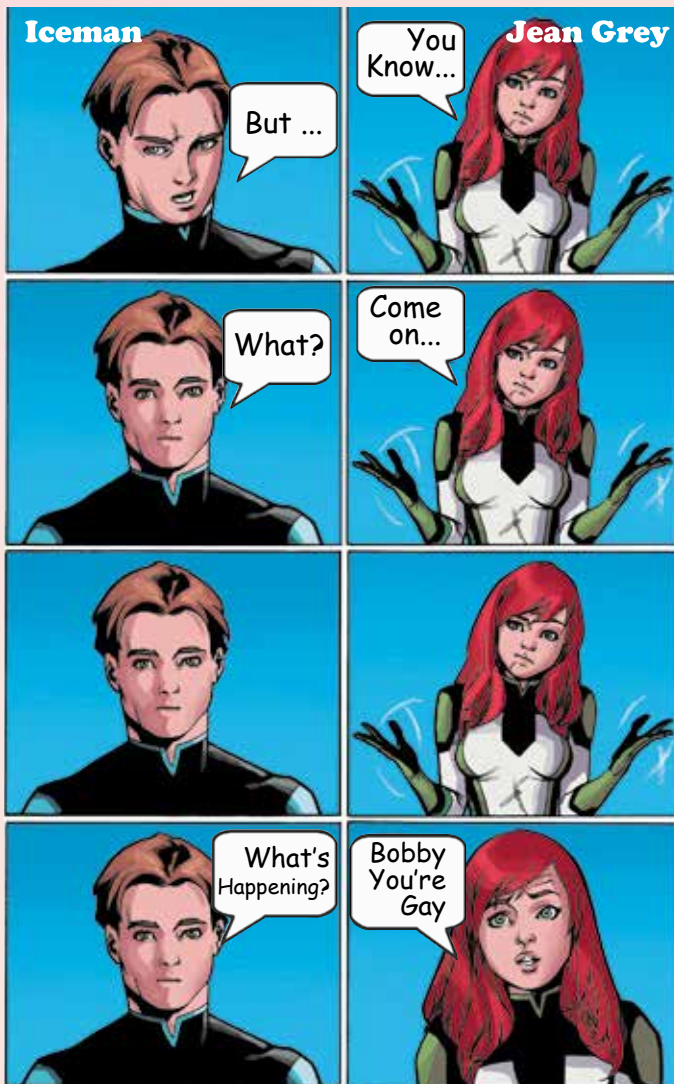


coming out to his children Jade and Obsidian. Alan Scott's son Obsidian has been out as a gay man since 2004, beating his dad to the punch and reflecting a rare, but very real experience shared by many readers who have multiple family members, even parents, who are queer.

Harley and Ivy

Harley and Ivy are a fan-favorite power couple, especially for queer women. Harley Quinn's queerness has always been a bit up in the air. Her abusive relationship with the Joker was the focus of many of her stories but there were subtle references that something romantic might be going on in her relationship with Poison Ivy. Now that they're both out, they took things even

MARVEL & DC COMICS LGBTQIA+ SUPER HEROES



Iceman

Straight for decades, in 2015's *All-New X-Men* #40, the younger Bobby Drake was psychically outed as homosexual by Jean Grey, retroactively making the founding member of the X-Men Marvel's highest-profile queer mutant.

Because of the X-Men's time travel hijinks, there are actually two versions of this character at the moment: A teenage Iceman who realized he was gay after Jean Grey read his mind, and an adult version who stayed in the closet and dated women for years, but came out after being confronted by his younger self. The recent Iceman solo series focused on his life after this revelation, and his emotional arc is a rather old-fashioned coming-out story.

Midnighter

Armed with the ability to predict combat moves in advance, Midnighter is a hyper-violent action hero with no compunctions about killing his enemies. Originally, Midnighter was created as a parody of Batman, starting off in the adult-rated Wildstorm comic *Stormwatch*. When Wildstorm became an imprint of DC, he officially joined the DC universe. This created a rather unexpected overlap with the character who inspired him.

While recent comics portray him as a solo character, he started off as a member of the Authority team, which is led by his husband Apollo—a blond Superman analog. Apollo and Midnighter were among the first openly gay superheroes in comic books and were certainly the



most visible gay superhero couple in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

America Chavez

Debuting in the 2011 in the miniseries *Vengeance*, America Chavez, aka Miss America, gained her cult following after a subsequent makeover and reappearance in *New Avengers*. Her fans formed a gang called La Chiquitas and changed their hair to Chavez symbols. She's been called "one of Marvel's most high-profile LGBTQIA+ heroes," a super-strong badass with the ability to fly and travel to other dimensions with superhuman strength and durability, and the power of

MARVEL & DC COMICS LGBTQIA+ SUPER HEROES



flight. Chavez also has the power to kick open star-shaped holes in reality, allowing her and her teammates to travel through the multiverse and into other realities. America Chavez is bisexual, making her the first LGBTQIA+ Latinx superhero to get her own solo comic, the excellent 2017 series *America*, and she also has one of the most cos play-able costumes in the Marvel universe.

Aquaman

In 2016, during *DC Rebirth*, Jackson Hyde was re-introduced as an openly gay teenager. Although he debuted as Aqualad, half-Atlantean Jackson Hyde has graduated to the mantle of Aquaman — which means that one



of DC's flagship characters will be a queer black man, something almost unthinkable in a mainstream comic

even just a few years ago.

Due to his hybridized Xebellian physiology, Jackson is capable of living and breathing underwater, possessing superhuman strength, superhuman durability, and enhanced senses. Jackson has been a fan-favorite character since his simultaneous debut in DC comic books and on the *Young Justice* animated series — and he has become somewhat emblematic of the rise of characters with queer identities in modern comic books, which have now come full circle into the role of Aquaman, as one of DC's most unique legacy characters.



Mystique

Mystique is a shapeshifter who can mimic the appearance and voice of any person with exquisite precision. Her natural appearance includes blue skin, red hair and yellow eyes. While Mystique's sexuality was not specifically confirmed, it has been an open secret for many years, owing to her marriage to precognitive mutant Destiny, as well as her relationships with characters of other genders.

Typically portrayed as a foe of the X-Men, Mystique has been both a supervillain and an antiheroine. In 2009, Mystique was ranked in the review site IGN (Image Game Network) as 18th Greatest Comic Book Villain of All Time.

ALISON BECHDEL by Chloe Belle

No comic feature would be complete without mentioning our community's favorite cartoonist, Alison Bechdel. Long before Marvel and DC Comics discovered LGBTQIA+ superheroes, Alison was producing *Dykes to Watch Out For* comic strips. Syndicated in the 1980s it became a staple in the alternative press. *Dykes to Watch Out For* spawned the Bechdel Test, which Bechdel credited to a friend, Liz Wallace. Originally meant as "a little lesbian joke in an alternative feminist newspaper," according to Bechdel, the test moved into main-stream criticism in the 2010s. Simply the test is as follows; It asks whether a work features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man.

In 2006 Alison's *Fun Home* was published. Lev Grossman and Richard LeCayo called it as "the unlikely literary success of 2006,...a stunning memoir about a girl growing up in a small town with her cryptic, perfectionist dad and slowly realizing that she is gay and he is too... Bechdel's breathtakingly smart commentary duets with eloquent line drawings." *Fun Home* was hailed as one of the best books of 2006 by numerous sources, including *The New York Times*. *Fun Home* premiered as a musical Off-Broadway, winning five Tony Awards, including "Best Musical." In 2012 the memoir *Are You My Mother* debuted. A comic drama exploring her relationship with her own mother alongside the theories of British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. Winnicott theories revolves around the concept of true and false selves; the false self enabled a person to fit into society, whereas the true self, is the only self capable of creativity, and play. In May 2021, her recent book *The Secret to Superhuman Strength*, continues the relationship between the inner self and outside world. Married in July 2015, Bechdel lives with her partner, Holly Rae Taylor, a painter, in a house Bechdel bought in Vermont in 1996, adding her own studio to work in.



Northstar

Northstar is a groundbreaking figure in superhero comics. After years of hints, he came out as gay in 1992, making him one of the first openly gay superheroes in American comic books, and the first openly gay character to come out in a book published by Marvel Comics. Marvel did include a few LGBTQIA+ characters in the background of other comics, such as Captain America's childhood friend Arnie Roth. Northstar married his husband, Kyle Jinadu, in 2012, which was the first depiction of a same-sex wedding in mainstream comics. At the time, it was a highly-publicized event in the X-Men timeline.

Coagula

Coagula is a transgender lesbian, programmer, and former prostitute. There are very few out trans characters in superhero comic books, but when transwoman writer Rachel Pollack took over the reins on *Doom Patrol* from Grant Morrison, she aimed to shift the focus.

To give the comic book universe a positive portrayal of a queer trans woman, she created Kate Godwin a.k.a. Coagula, a superhero with the ability to coagulate liquids and dissolve solids at will. The Coagula character exposes readers to transgender topics. 🏳️‍🌈



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BOB PARLIN

Groundbreaking Teacher

Who Started the First Public-School Gay
Straight Alliance Considers His Next Steps...

By D. Bullen

As the well-mythologized story goes, ninth-grade history teacher Bob Parlin arrived late to a 1991 meeting of the Newton South High School's Committee on Human Differences, where caring people were discussing strategies to fight anti-semitism, sexism, and racism in the school. He stepped into the room just as a committee member was saying that homosexuality was not an issue at Newton South. When Parlin came out to the teachers in that moment—explaining what it was like, growing up gay and afraid and staying in the closet and attempting suicide—he performed an act of human bravery in front of his colleagues. He also advanced an activist cause he had already been active in for years.

Three years earlier, Parlin had watched his partner at the time, Kevin Jennings, start the country's first Gay-Straight Alliance in a private school, at Concord Academy, in 1988, where the private school was free to set its own policies and declare support for LGBTQ+ students and teachers.

Parlin and Jennings had met after both had graduated from Harvard in 1985, where Parlin had been active in the Gay Student Association. Parlin was inspired by seeing Jennings teach at the Moses Brown School in Providence, where he approached history as a platform for critical thinking about the principles that were evident in current events. This led Parlin to return to Harvard Graduate School of Education for his teaching degree, and he started teaching at Newton South, also in history, in 1987.

Around that time, Jennings had moved to the Concord



Bob Parlin enjoying his retirement on the water. Photo courtesy of Bob Parlin

Academy, where he started the country's first GSA. From there, he collaborated with Parlin and with Kathy Henderson, who was teaching at Phillips Exeter, to establish the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), which was designed to help teachers come out and get support and be role models for other gay and lesbian teachers and students.

Parlin and Jennings had judged that the public school environment might be less receptive to openly LGBTQ+ teachers, since schools were town-run institutions, which could not simply set their own policies, so Parlin bided his time, waiting for the right circumstances.

The state of Massachusetts helped set the stage for him, moving gay and lesbian issues forward with a 1989 law that made it illegal to fire a teacher for being gay or lesbian. This was certainly encouraging, but Parlin was still a fairly new hire in a system where budget crunches meant the last-hired teachers were fired first, so he says that it was also very important to him that he trusted his principal, Earnest Van Seasholes, to support him if he came out. In fact, Seasholes was there in the meeting where Parlin

came out to the Committee on Human Differences, and he set up a supportive atmosphere at the school, although Parlin says that his colleagues were generally afraid for him, concerned that his tires might be slashed. Nothing of the sort ever happened, but the outpouring of this concern meant that it was still a few months before Parlin came out to the student body.

When he did, Seasholes again played an instrumental role. A student in Seasholes' current events class asked if Mr. Parlin was gay. Today Parlin says that Seasholes knew that he wanted to come out, so Seasholes ran upstairs to ask Parlin what he should say. Parlin suggested he send the student to talk with him. The next day, Parlin told his own students, and word quickly spread. There was one openly gay student at Newton South, Matt Flynn, and he came to Parlin expressing interest in starting a Gay-Straight Alliance.

Together, the two put up signs: "Do you want to talk about Gay issues? Come to Room 4205," and they waited to see if they would draw even a handful of students. But a lot of straight allies saw those signs and 50 people showed up to support their friends and to advance a LGBTQ+ rights as a civil rights issue that was close to home.

In a strategic move, Jennings had pioneered at Concord Academy, the GSA cast gay rights as a safety and health issue, for students who faced bullying as well as the dangers of self-harm and possible suicide. By emphasizing safety as well as kindness, they figured they stood the best chance of building sympathetic understanding, and skirting the backlash that had been building against 'multiculturalism.'

As a result, the GSA became a safe place for students to be accepted as themselves and supported without being 'othered.' Others said that Parlin inspired them with his zero tolerance for homophobia, as well as his interest in building bridges grounded in justice.

Growing Beyond the GSA, Jennings has said that he was "a gay person who was into teaching," whereas Bob was "a teacher who happened to be gay," but once Parlin had

come out to his students and started the GSA at Newton South, he became the point person for all things LGBTQ+ related, and this led to opportunities for further action in the community and throughout the state.

Jennings had moved to NY in 1994, to turn GLSEN into a national organization. Parlin stayed in Massachusetts, continued to teach, and served as the head of the local GLSEN chapter, working alongside members of Governor William Weld's 1992 commission on gay and lesbian youth, which was designed to address ostracism and bullying. The commission charged schools with establishing "school-based support groups for gay, lesbian, and heterosexual students."

Parlin also worked with the Massachusetts Department of Education, creating the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, where he developed workshops to help schools build programs to protect and care for gay and lesbian students. For years, Parlin spent his weekends traveling the state to regional workshops where he met with teams of 10-15 teachers, counselors, principals, and students from up to ten schools at a time, laying out recommendations for GSAs and other programming.

Instead of following a lawyer's advice, and adopting the strategy of threatening to sue schools that dis-



Bob Parlin, Jordan Smith-Michaels, and Ben Miner in front of Newton City Hall June 1, Photo Courtesy of Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC

criminated against or failed to protect their gay and lesbian students, Parlin and the GSA and GLSEN used the CEFA model as an engine for community building and advocacy. Parlin credits his use of this model to UMass Amherst professors Felice Yeskel and Linda Marchesani, who introduced him to it in one of their workshops. CEFA stands for:

- Context – Explaining why this is an issue now
- Empathy – Laying the groundwork for seeing human connections through differences
- Facts – Providing statistics and details that reveal the extent of the issues
- Action – Helping participants build programs, or intervening in harassment

Parlin says that the programs were largely successful because it was hard to say no to students who were asking for reasonable things centered on safety. These workshops helped establish GSAs in thousands of public schools in Massachusetts and later throughout the country.

In addition to running workshops through the DOE, Parlin served as a pathbreaker in the school, which hired at least 15 other LGBTQ+ teachers and staff, and he contributed to the development of a race, class, and gender elective for seniors.


Throughout the rest of his teaching career, Parlin continued to teach a people's history approach to American and world history, asking students to consider who told the stories, and for what purpose. He focused on people and events that were typically left out of the 'mainstream' histories, and asked students to think critically about what stories they were telling in their own lives.

But Parlin's activism and devotion to the LGBTQ+ cause did not stop evolving. When the inclusive atmosphere of the late 90s was battered by right-wing talk radio, gender and transgender issues became polarizing, hot-button issues, and many GSAs rebranded as 'gender and sexuality awareness' groups, opening new fronts for safety- and kindness-driven activism. This led activists to foster connections between groups, and the emphasis on intersectionality created a new opportunity for Parlin, building bridges between student organizations.

Starting in 2020, Parlin founded and served as the co-director of Newton South's Human Rights Council, which functioned as an umbrella organization to bring the GSA, the Black Student Union, the Asian Student Organization, the Gender Equity Club, the Mental Health Awareness Club, and other student and staff affinity groups into conversation with each other. The intersectionality approach was a huge success, especially as it helped students comprehend the outpouring of national emotions in the protests that followed George Floyd's murder.

Bob Parlin retired from teaching in the spring of 2022. He says that he plans to travel with his husband of 25 years, artist Bren Bataclan. Their wedding was the first same-sex wedding in Harvard's Memorial Church, and they will be celebrating their 25th anniversary next year. Bataclan is a muralist, painter and workshop leader who has written a graphic novel *FE: A Traumatized Son's Graphic Memoir*, about his mom and coming out, as well as stories about his marriage to Parlin. Bataclan is a 'kindness activist,' who has given away paintings for free, in all 50 states, and in over 100 countries, on the condition that the recipient will smile at random people more often.

Bataclan also works with schools and communities to run residencies that result in murals expressing student concerns ranging from healthy eating to the environment to athletics. Bataclan has traveled nationally and internationally holding these workshops and residencies, and Parlin says that he is looking forward to spending the next year going along for the trips, as he recuperates from the rigors of teaching and all the adjustments required by remote teaching through covid.

After a year off, Parlin says that he plans to keep weaving teaching and activism together, and expects to look for work teaching, with incarcerated adults or recent immigrants perhaps. One way or another, he looks forward to returning to the grass-roots, front-line work of helping marginalized people find the kindness and access to resources that will let them take care of their communities and nurture hope rather than fear. 

COLONIAL CARPENTRY INNOVATIONS, INC.

Jeff Parsons with founder and President Bob Szklarz



Bob Szklarz

Q. How long has Colonial Carpentry Innovations (CCI) been in business, and what is the history of the company?

A. Colonial Carpentry Innovations, Inc. was incorporated in 2011. Before that time, we operated as a D.B.A. Colonial Carpentry – started in 1999. Now having over 40 years in and around this industry, and having grown up in the home improvement industry, I always wanted to bring more to the home improvement experience for homeowners.

Q. What is your title and your role at Colonial Carpentry Innovations?

A. I am the founder, president, and master remodeler. I oversee the day-to-day operations which include estimating, project scope writing, production, and guidance.

Q. What makes Colonial Carpentry Innovations different from other contractors?

A. Simply put, it's the details! For CCI, it's a way of life. With absolutely no hesitation, we will take something apart if we are not happy with the outcome. Cleanliness and respect for our client's homes keeps us coming back.

Q. Do you have many LGBTQ+ clients?

A. Our client base is made up of about 1/3 by the LGBTQ+ community.

Q. What are some of the LGBTQ+ communities' projects your company has completed?

A. You name it, we have pretty much done it. From something as small as a window replacement all the way up to a whole house renovation and everything in between. This includes kitchens, bathrooms, insulation, and trim work.

Q. We have heard that you have a high level of client satisfaction, what's your secret?

A. Communication! We make every effort to communicate with all our clients – good or bad news. We find that homeowners just want to hear from us and know what's going on or possible timing for their project.

Q. What makes you proud of being a part of Colonial Carpentry Innovations?

A. The end product and seeing the way our clients' eyes light up during different stages of the project. Also, it's hearing, directly or indirectly, how happy a customer is that they were referred to CCI.

Q. What is the biggest challenge you face in the carpentry business?

A. Our biggest challenge is finding more skilled craftsmen to fill the demands placed on CCI.

Q. As owner and founder of CCI, what is your day-to-day wish?

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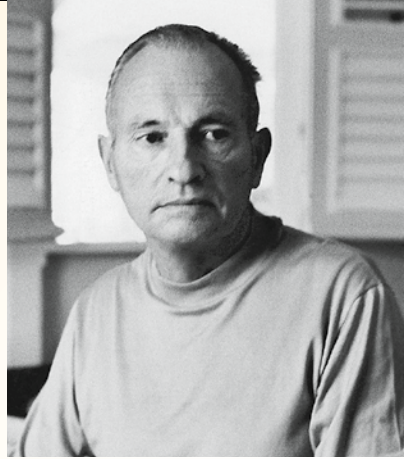


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20th Century Gay Jewelry Designers



Famous gay jewelry designers from the 20th Century from l to r: Fulco di Verdura, Jean Schlumberger, Art Smith, Aldo Cipullo – Photos Courtesy of Wikipedia

by N. McCarty

The list of successful 20th-century gay jewelry designers is long and distinguished. Fulco di Verdura, Jean Schlumberger, Donald Claflin, Aldo Cipullo, Art Smith, David Webb, and Kenneth Jay Lane were men “of a certain disposition” who were hugely successful, with clients cut from the right cloth. But these men did not make public reference to their sexuality, since the stereotype of gay men in those dark times would have limited them to effeminate pinkie rings or campy brooches, or had them dripping in gaudy jewels and chains, à la Liberace. They did not have the freedom to express their range of their sexuality — no boxy masculine jewelry on a hairy chested bear in those days! They did lay the foundation for some of today’s most important contemporary jewelers, Shaun Leane or Joel Arthur Rosenthal, who are openly gay men. (We did look for well-known lesbian jewelry designers from the last century but couldn’t locate any. Let us know who we missed!)



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20th Century Gay Jewelry Designers

In the late 1960s, Cartier's Love Bracelet—which might be the brand's biggest seller to this day—was designed by a gay man, Aldo Cipullo. With sunken screws, the piece can only be secured with a miniature screwdriver and the help of a loved one. Cartier gifted it to 25 celebrity couples including Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton on launching the bracelet in NYC. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton's love affair was constantly displayed in the pages of newspapers and magazines. This liaison was credited with inaugurating Taylor's prized collection of fabulous gems and jewelry.

Aldo Cipullo, the designer of the Bracelet, passed away in 1984 at the tragically early age of 42. While the New York Times reported that he suffered two heart attacks at St. Vincent Hospital, Cipullo in fact died of complications related to AIDS. He stated that he was inspired to create the Love Bracelet, which debuted in an exhibition held at the Cartier Mansion, by the end of a relationship. He said that he wanted to make a representation of love that



Aldo Cipullo's; Cartier Love Bracelet

stung. Art Smith, an Afro-Cuban jewelry designer, experienced discrimination during the course of his career due to both his sexuality and race. Art was featured in a previous issue of *Savoirflair Magazine*. He opened a jewelry shop in the heart of the West Village, in the 1940s, after studying at the Cooper Union, and taking jewelry-making courses at NYU. The largely Italian West Village made him feel unwelcome, so he relocated to a shop on West 4th, where he could express himself as a gay black man. His designing talents were featured in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* magazines, and he made jewelry for Duke Ellington and Eleanor Roosevelt. He passed away in 1982 with little money. Currently his silver sculptural jewelry sells for thousands of dollars and is held in collections at the Brooklyn Museum, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, and the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York.

We would hope that every jeweler who identifies as LGBTQ+ would be out and proud, like the many prominent fashion designers who have used their influence to publicly further equality, inclusivity, diversity, and gender-related issues, but openly gay jewelry designers who advocate for LGBTQ+ issues are unfortunately rare.



Fulco di Verdura, jewelry based on the legend of Medusa

"nobody could take away from him."

Cipullo's gayness remained hidden in his lifetime, but iconic Tiffany & Co. jewelry designer Jean Schlumberger's life partner Luc Bouchage was mentioned openly in a recent exhibition catalogue devoted to Schlumberger's work, and Bouchage's photography fills the book. Bouchage's descendants helped organize the exhibition and provided valuable insights.

There is no doubt that a special relationship exists between gay jewelers and their heterosexual female clients. Schlumberger was extremely close with clients including Jackie Kennedy and Elizabeth Taylor. Bunny Mellon, the gardener and art collector who designed the White House Rose Garden, had a special friendship with Schlumberger. She commissioned endless jeweled objects and he even designed a jellyfish brooch for her after she was



Art Smith's; Half and Half necklace

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One reason for this might be that many jewelry brands are owned by European conglomerates, so designers do not enjoy the same independence as fashion designers have had, when it comes to their choices and messaging. Some jewelry companies' insurance policies don't allow even photographs of these designers. And of course, many LGBTQ+ jewelers continue to be extremely private about their personal lives.

Additionally, many long-standing family dynasties in the jewelry companies have been and continue to be patriarchal, as Tiffany, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston, all were run by men and their sons. In an industry that markets its wares to heterosexual couples, LGBTQ+ culture has not broken into leadership positions.


Some major jewelry brands have recently launched campaigns targeted to LGBTQ+ couples, particularly Tiffany and Cartier, who have entered the market for engagement rings. Smaller brands have gotten on board with LGBTQ+ messaging as well. The house of David Webb dressed RuPaul in rings and a necklace for the Camp-themed Met Gala in 2019.

Openly gay jewelers have won accolades in today's market. Emmanuel Tarpin was named Designer of the Year at the 2019 Town and Country Jewelry Awards. His jewelry designs have been worn by Rihanna and Mandy Moore on the red carpet, and his work has been featured by Christie's New York.

Shaun Leane is a British jewelry designer who made his name with sculptural pieces he created for Alexander McQueen. His brand has won the UK Jewelry Designer of the Year award four times.

American Alexis Bittar, who has also been featured in a previous *Savoirflair* Magazine, is a fashion jeweler, working in lucite and other non-fine materials. Michelle Obama wore his work frequently during her time in the White House. In 2013, Bittar wrote a blog post on his website expounding the importance for LGBTQ+ Pride, together with the celebration of Marriage Equality.


Joel Arthur Rosenthal, known as JAR in the industry, is an American who lives in Paris. His client list includes Gwyneth Paltrow, Mimi Haas, and Lauren Santo Domingo. Reclusive and selective, he is known for his immaculate work. In the major career moment when the Metropolitan Museum of Art mounted an exhibition of his work, Rosenthal disclosed his relationship with his partner Pierre.

This is a huge topic, and we have really only scratched the surface of it. There are many more LGBTQ+ jewelers, many of whom have earned national and international acclaim, who are a proud part of our very talented, creative community. 



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LGBTQIA+ Wedding Etiquette

By Chloe Belle | Photos Courtesy of Freepik

“We’re getting married!” What a thrill it is to finally be able to say these words, or to hear dear friends announce them. While we’re all caught up in the excitement of making history, it might be time to step back a bit and consider how our weddings will work – and how we will act at them. What are the rules – and are there any? every couple should create the ceremony that's right for them

The good news is, common sense and good old-fashioned etiquette still rule the roost (and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise). But for the wedding challenges that are unique to same-sex couples, as well as those that are important no matter who you are marrying, here are some guidelines.



Money

First & Foremost

The best way to deal with money issues is to first figure out where the money is coming from. Are you two footing the entire bill yourselves? How much are parents or relatives willing to pay? Once you calculate how much money you have to play with, it will all come down to how to spend it; the fun part!

Today, many couples pay for their own celebrations with some help from their folks. In the traditional bride-groom arrangement there are some long-standing bill-splitting guidelines, but even these are just a starting point, altered by most! Discuss the elements that are most important to you both

and map out the rest of the budget around those big items.

Dress

Two white gowns, two tuxedos, one of each or neither? There are no hard and fast rules, so just go ahead and wear what feels right to you. A same-sex wedding is a great opportunity to break away from traditional wed-

ding apparel. Some couples prefer traditional clothing, and others prefer to have a theme, such as Elizabethan garb. The choice is yours!

The Processional

One of the most observed traditional wedding customs involves the walk to the altar (groom first, then the bride). How you want to address this when there are two brides or two grooms depends on personal taste.

Some options:

One person waits by the altar for the other partner to walk down the aisle.

You accompany each other, arm in arm, down the aisle.

Create a seating arrangement with two aisles that meet at the altar: You and your partner—alone or arm in arm with another loved one—walk in unison down separate aisles.

Your Bridal or Groom party?

Feel free to create a wedding party of friends and family, regardless of gender or traditional definitions. Two brides or two grooms can have two best men—or two maids of honor. You may choose to call the group "honor attendants" for a gender-neutral name. Or skip attendants all together.

Gifts

What do you say when someone asks you what you need or what you would like? This can be a sensitive area both for you and the gift-givers. First of





all, don't be afraid to register at a department store, but have friends and family members pass the word along. (Do not put it on the invitation - tacky, tacky, tacky. If someone asks you directly where you are registered, then tell them.) Make sure you include low to moderately-priced items on your registry. If friends and family members have done a lot to help you prepare

for the big day, don't expect a gift – their time may be their gift to you. (Be sure to thank them in writing afterwards.) By the way, although gifts should ideally be sent prior to the day of the event, many will bring the gifts and cards with them. Make sure you have someone collect all the items and bring them to your home for you. NEVER open gifts and cards





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LGBTQ+ Wedding Etiquette

at the reception! Finally, if you and your partner are already overwhelmed with stuff, have a friend pass the word that you'd appreciate a donation to your charity of choice in lieu of a gift.


Customize Your Ceremony

The wording can get a little tricky when it's time for your officiant to make the actual pronouncement. Take a cue from commitment ceremony scripts and have your officiant pronounce you "partners for life." If that doesn't suit you, vows are a great place to personalize your ceremony. Many couples these days, regardless of gender, are opting to pen their own words. For great tips and how-tos, check out our article on writing your own vows.

Birdseed Instead of Rice

Throw birdseed instead of rice so you don't harm any of your avian guests. Other rice alternatives: beads, confetti, soap bubbles (have your guests blow them!), sparklers, streamers, dried flower petals, a flock of well-trained white doves or brilliantly-colored butterflies... use your imagination!

Name changing

To change your name... or not. This is a very personal decision. Choices include keeping your own names, taking one or the other person's name, hyphenating your names, merging your names, or picking a whole new name. Make sure to check with someone who knows the law in your state, and don't forget to change everything including your social security card and driver's license. 





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Nahant Country Club

Jeff Parsons with Yasmene Discroll

How long has Nahant Country Club been in operations and what is the history of the property?

The history of Nahant Country Club starts when it was built in 1825 by Frederic Tudor, locally known as The Ice King. Tudor built the NCC estate as his summer cottage after making a fortune shipping ice from local New England ponds to warm climates across the globe. The NCC is even home to the 1938 wedding reception of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's son. The property is nestled in the middle of Nahant, Massachusetts, a maritime community located 20 minutes north of Boston. We are situated on seven acres of native lawns and gardens, creating the perfect indoor and outdoor space for your celebration, just minutes from the beach. We have four separate & unique spaces indoors and out, that accommodate up to 200+ guests. The name can be a little tricky because its not a 'country club' by modern day definition. We are truly a historic mansion used for private wedding and events.



Yasmene Discroll

What is your title and your role at Nahant Country Club?

I own the business and operate the mansion for private events—yet we are open to the public! Let's just say I wear many hats. Today, I would say my most important role is identifying what people need or want and working to make that come to life. Being a small business owner in a tough economy, while identifying what my clients need and how to make it happen for them, that's my biggest role today.

What makes Nahant Country Club different from other venues?

We are not a corporate machine. We cater each event to the individual and have been doing that for a long time. We're not a pop-up venue or a fad. We have found our niche in providing timeless events that combine our expertise and our clients vision.

Do you have many LGBTQ+ clients?

We have had many but it's never enough.

What are some of your favorite LGBTQ+ weddings that have taken place at Nahant Country Club?

Well I can't go choosing favorites because we have had only amazing and beautiful experiences with our LGBTQ+ couples! And let's be honest—if I start choosing favorites I'll be in trouble. :)

We have heard that you have a high level of client satisfaction, what's your secret?

Whether it is a shower or a wedding all of our events are treated with the same special attention. We're creative and flexible and backed with over 20 years of industry experience. I have a very easy going approach to event planning and that makes my guests comfortable. Our goal is making our clients feel part of the family. I think it's a combination of our approach to planning successful weddings, the customized service we provide and reasonable pricing are what make our guests truly happy.

What makes you proud of being a part of this venue?

This one grabs my heart. I moved to Nahant as a lost 12 year old girl from Toronto, Canada. My mom had remarried a man that would later become my father, best friend and business partner. He started here in 1987 and taught me everything I know. To be able to continue his legacy doing what I love makes me very proud. I'm also very proud of my staff. Each relationship plays an important role in the success of the business and satisfaction of my clients. Seasons change and people come and go but what we carry from them stands the test of time, each person leaving their mark. I'm proud of that too.

What is the biggest challenge you face when organizing an event or wedding?

I would say the biggest challenge of today is staffing... and the often unreliable product availability... and price increases everywhere. But other than that, its all good. :) 🇳🇮



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TOP SIX CARS WE LOVE



Subaru Outback

by John Axelrod

A radio show *Car Talk* asked its LGBTQ+ listeners what they thought were the best and most popular cars owned by the LGBTQ+ community, as reported by Jezebel. Some of these cars are no brainers, others are a bit of a surprise. The picks weren't separated out by gender, so unfortunately we don't know which were popular with lesbians and which with gay men. (Of course we can make educated guesses, but some cases are a bit murky.) Here are six of the top LGBTQ+ cars based on the results of this non-scientific radio poll.

The Subaru Outback

Ranking high on the list is the all-wheel drive Subaru Outback. While late model Outbacks are pretty posh, with different trim levels, boasting media packages and Nappa leather, the humble beginnings of the Outback are what made it so popular. Much of Subaru's popularity within the LGBTQ+ community is due to their progressive ad campaigns from the 1990s. After finding that the size and capability of the Outback appealed to lesbians, Subaru decided to market toward the queer community. In their commercials, they used suggestive taglines for their brand

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Jeff Parsons with Molly Brodeur-Nesbitt

Al Brodeur Auto Body, Inc. has been awarded the Best Small Business by the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce for our work throughout the pandemic in supporting the community at large. Donating over \$45 thousand in gas cards, restaurant gift cards, grocery gift cards, detailing gift certificates, and more to the first responders, nurses, truckers, school teachers, grocery store and retail workers in the region who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to keep the community moving. The company also works very closely with the Marlborough Rotary Club, Sweats for Vets, the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), Fresh Start Furniture Bank and many other civic organizations in an around the region.



Molly Brodeur-Nesbitt
President and Owner

What is your title and your role at Al Brodeur's Auto Body?

Molly Brodeur-Nesbitt, President and Owner of Al Brodeur's Auto Body, Inc.

How long has Al Brodeur's Auto Body been in business and what is the history of the company?

We have been in business for 52 years. My father, Al Brodeur, opened the shop in 1970 when he was 19 years old. Al Brodeur's Auto Body is family owned and operated and we are proud to have achieved I-CAR Gold Class status and numerous manufacturer certifications in collision repair.

Do you have many LGBTQ+ clients?

We are proud to have many LGBTQ+ clients. Most recently, a client of ours transitioned and it was so wonderful to witness them coming into their own. The LGBTQ+ community holds a special place in my heart and we are here to serve all!

What are your services?

Manufacturer certified collision repair, mechanical repair, auto detailing and towing.

What makes Al Brodeur's Auto Body different from other businesses?

We are hyper-focused on our customers, providing a stress-free repair experience. We handle all aspects of the repair and claim process, including negotiating with insurance companies to ensure safe and proper repairs. We offer rental vehicles in partnership with Enterprise Rental.

We have heard that you have a high level of client satisfaction, what's your secret?

I think our secret starts with an employee focused culture – we value each member of our team and have worked very hard to create an inclusive, supportive environment, which translates over to how we treat our customers. Being involved in an accident can be traumatic, it disrupts our lives and it's not something most folks experience often. We work very hard to ease the distress.

What makes you proud of being a part of Al Brodeur's Auto Body?

I am proud of our 52 years of providing exceptional service and proper repairs, along with our outstanding team! We are also part of an elite group of collision repairers that have achieved I-CAR Gold Class status and Manufacturer certifications, with our technicians all receiving the Platinum Training Designation. Less than 10% of collision repairers nationwide fall into this category!

What is the biggest challenge you face in the auto body business?

The biggest challenge we face is negotiating with insurance companies to repair vehicles in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. Here in Massachusetts, we receive the lowest labor rate reimbursement from insurers for repairing vehicles nationwide. This suppressed rate, which has been in place for close to 30 years, does a great disservice to the motoring public as it puts undue pressure on repairers and leads to unsafe repairs, performed by untrained technicians. As an industry, we've been lobbying diligently to get this disparity addressed. 🏳️‍🌈

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continued from page 52

like, "It's Not a Choice. It's the Way We're Built." They also had duos of the same gender act in scenes together, using body language to subtly hint that they could be together. Though nothing was said outright, they were quite progressive for the '90s and caused a bump in Subaru's popularity in LGBTQ+ circles.

The Subaru Forester

Because it was tough to pick just one Subaru model, the Forester also tops the list. Touting both cargo space and comfort, it also heavily relies on a following estab-



lished by its station wagon predecessor.

The Forester made every major car magazine's top-10 compact SUVs list for 2021. It has decent off-road capabilities and a spacious interior.

Toyota Prius Prime

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The Volkswagen Beetle

Another model that has stood the test of time is the VW



Bug. It's compact while being cute and fun. Whether you know it as a Beetle or Bug, it's definitely a car that everyone can admire and enjoy.

The VW Beetle ended production in 2019, and many hope that the iconic car will be revived in a new shape in the future.

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continued from page 56

The Ford 150 EV

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The Jeep Wrangler

The Wrangler was popular across the board in this poll. It's rugged and versatile and available in fun colors for added style. The Wrangler has always stood out among



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