

NEW ENGLAND'S LGBTQ+ MAGAZINE

VOL. 18

NO. 1

# savoirflair

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and Sylvia Drake**

19th Century Public  
'Same-Sex Marriage'

**Our LGBTQ+  
Ancestors**

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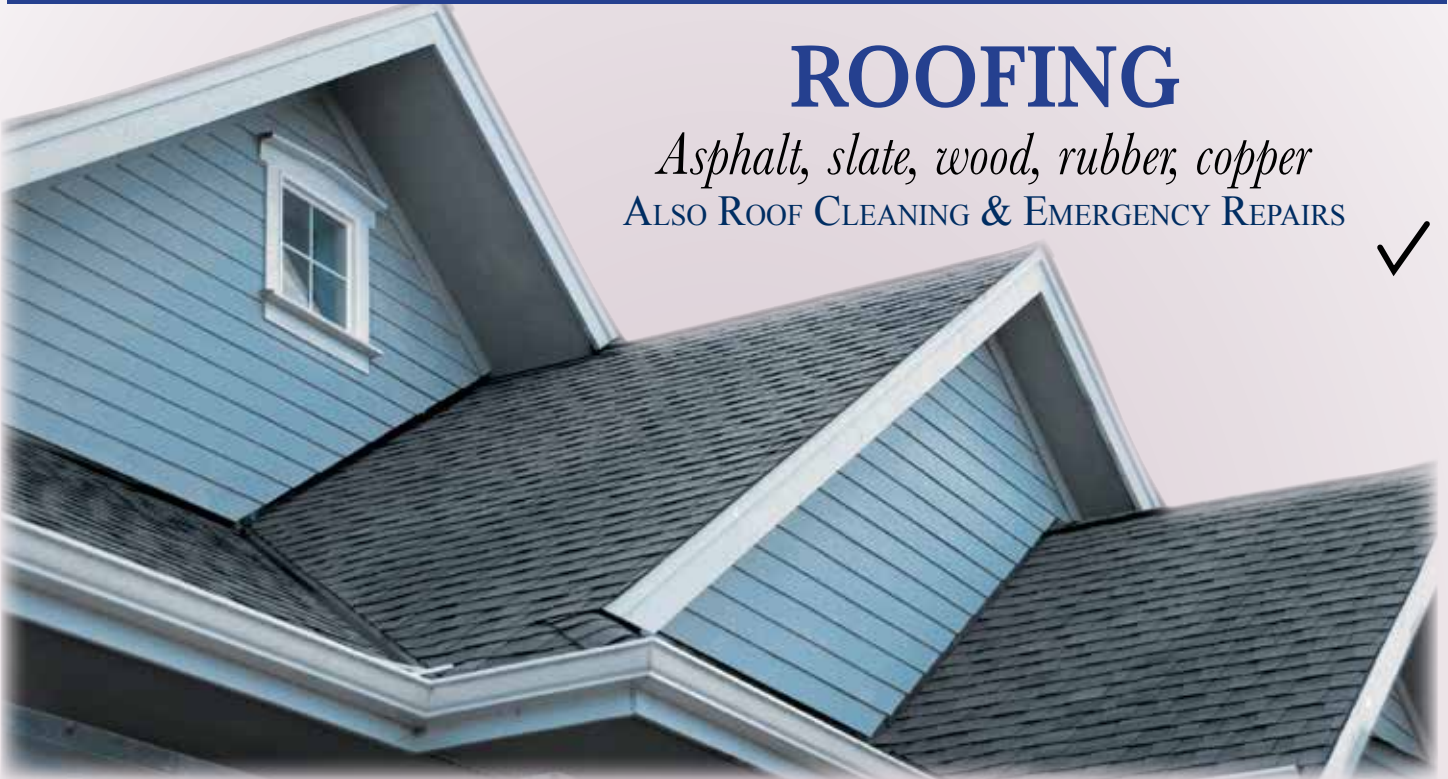
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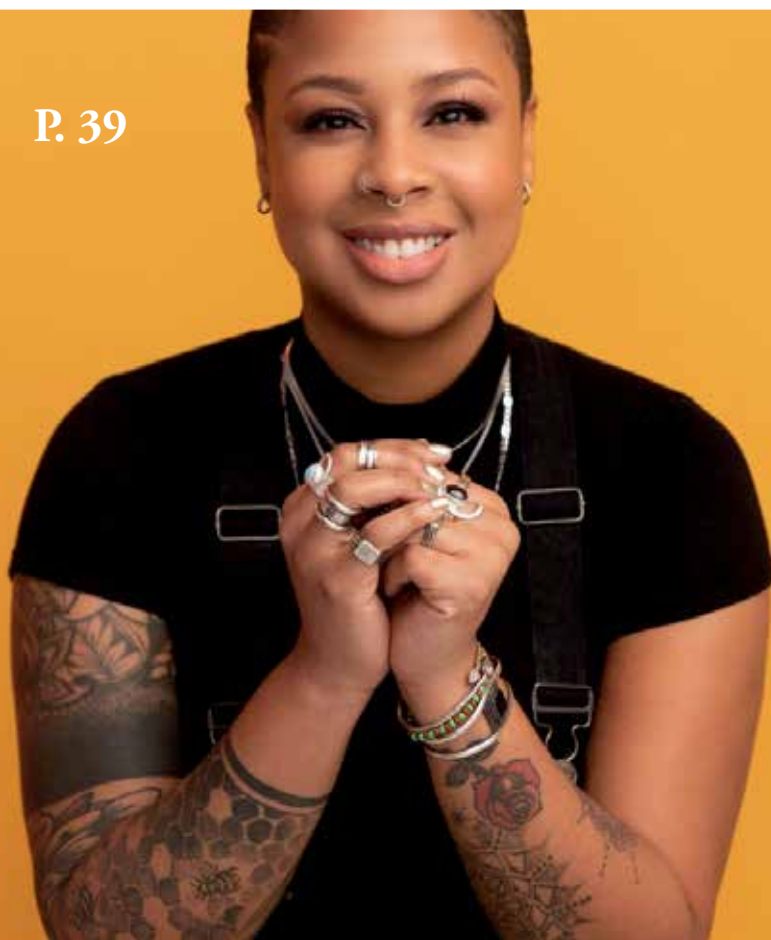
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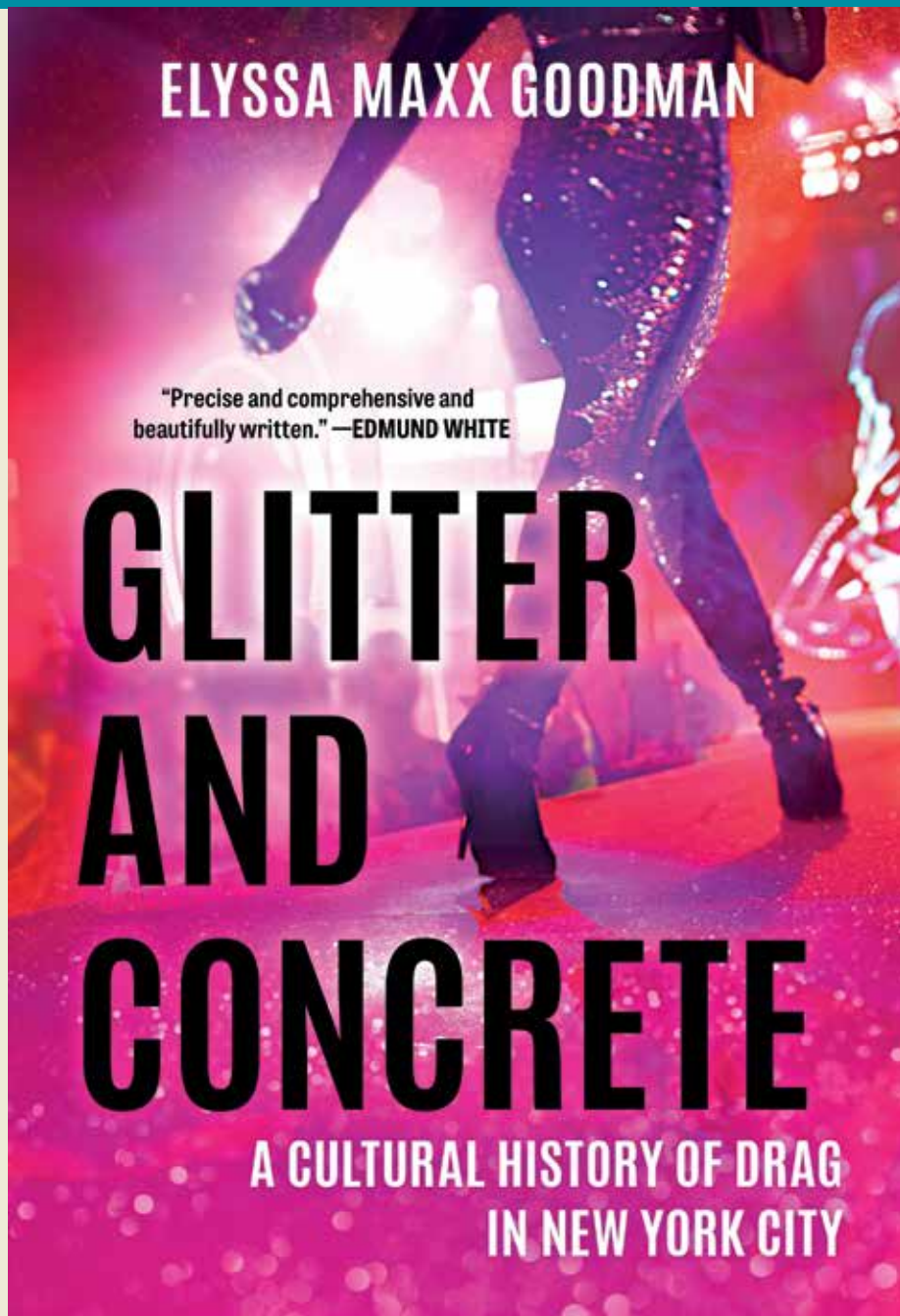
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*Book Reviews by Terri Schlichenmeyer*

**“Glitter and Concrete: A Cultural History of Drag in New York City”**

**by Elyssa Maxx Goodman**

c.2023, Hanover Square Press | 464 pages

You simply have nothing to wear. Old joke, that one. Really old because these days, it's easy for anyone to have racks and shelves and dresser drawers full of casual wear, fancy duds, comfy things, and finery to put on their body. Yes, you have plenty to wear but, as in the new book “Glitter and Concrete” by Elyssa Maxx Goodman, you just have to look in the closet.

Like nearly every kid in America, Elyssa Maxx Goodman loved to play dress up. In her case, though, she didn't hope for a princess costume. She wanted to dress like the characters in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything!* Julie Newmar. Later, as an adult, she “sought to learn as much about drag as” possible and she began to see New York City as its epicenter. “From the mid-1800s to 1900, gender impersonation became a beloved genre of theater” in New York, she says, but social attitudes and morals changed in the early twentieth century. Female drag performers were often scrutinized,



and worked under sometimes-unpredictable rules while male impersonators might've enjoyed the ability to live as a man, travel alone, and keep company with women in public.

By the beginning of World War I, social reformers had begun to shut down places where they thought homosexuality might be found, and that included drag venues. They did so, despite that gender impersonations were important to the morale of soldiers.

Says Goodman, "... female impersonator roles were incredibly popular with enlisted men" and one drag show became "an instant hit."

Prohibition sent both booze and drag underground, but while the former was widely available again in 1933, the latter was not. And yet, it was impossible to keep drag performances from happening; in fact, the mob ran several drag clubs, including one owned by Anna Genovese, the bisexual wife of mobster Vito. Yes, drag could be found in the years 1933 to 1968, but audiences both straight and gay had to search for it.

Still, change was coming...

Then again, doesn't it seem like change never stopped

happening in the world of drag? Like, a now-you-see-it, oops, now-you-can't kinda thing? Understanding that, and the future of drag, entails knowing it's history and that's easy to do, once you've read "Glitter and Concrete."

In taking readers back some 170 years, author Elyssa Maxx Goodman shows how New York City led the way for drag to be both condemned and enjoyed in the rest of America, often seemingly in the same breath. Intuiting the difference between illegal and permissible was a matter of splitting hairs then; the scandalous nature of drag was often you-know-it-when-you-see-it, and not always firmly defined. That repeating juxtaposition, a social flip-flop-flip, if you will, is fascinating to follow here. Indeed, it was sometimes a case of one man's trash being another man's pleasure.

So what's changed about that? So much and not much, and the rest of the story is inside this necessary book. Read it, and "Glitter and Concrete" will make you wear a smile.

### **"Blood Sisters" by Vanessa Lillie** c.2023, Berkley | 384 pages

It's the truth. Scout's honor. Pinky swear. Spit on your palms or prick your fingers, and shake hands. As a child, you had many ways to show that you intended to keep a promise when you made it and your word was your bond, but you've grown up. Today, you cross your heart but, as in the new novel "Blood Sisters" by Vanessa Lillie, you hope no one has to die.

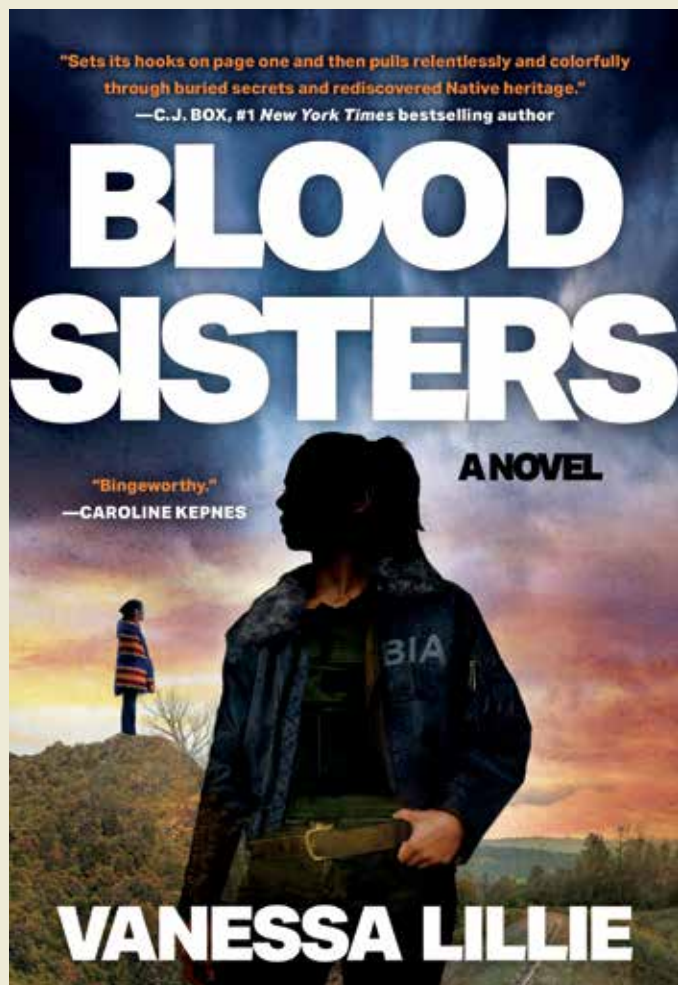
She wasn't looking for skeletal remains.

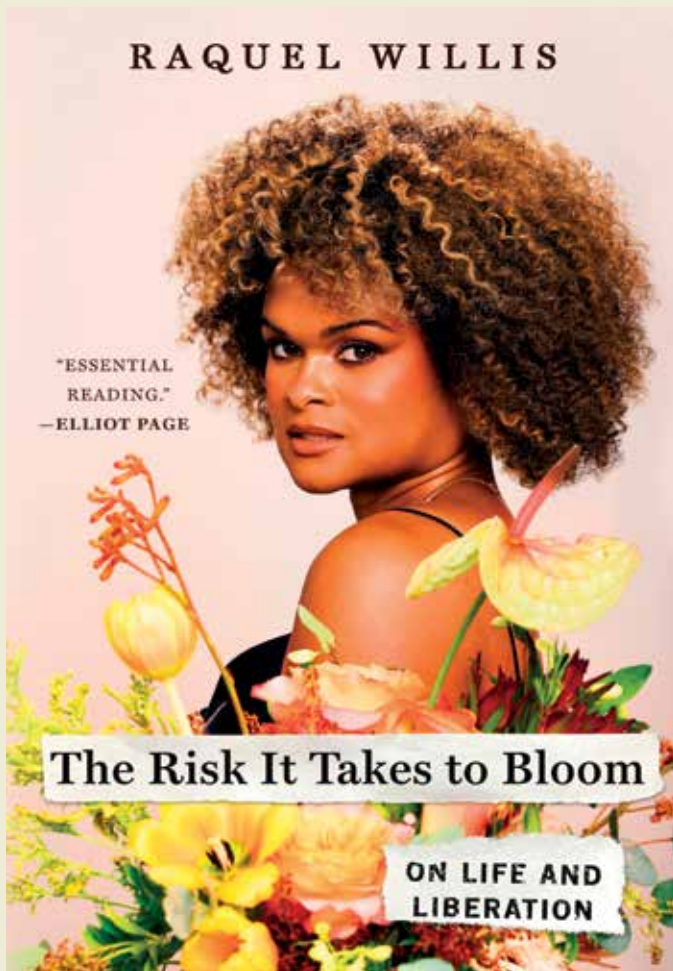
For Bureau of Indian Affairs archaeologist Syd Walker, such a find was very unusual but not unknown. Odd things happen during geological surveys on tribal lands everywhere. Still, the gruesome recovery in Rhode Island wasn't top on Syd's mind.

She'd gotten a call that her sister, Emma Lou, was missing in Oklahoma. Again. Fifteen years before, as Syd, Emma Lou, and Luna, who they'd considered a sister, were chilling in Luna's family's trailer, a group of men broke in. Wearing masks, the "devils" killed Luna and her parents, and the small town of Picher, was never the same.

Neither were Emma Lou or Syd.

As a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Syd was well aware of the problems near her hometown, the issues Native Americans had there with the BIA, and her own ancestors' efforts to survive on land that was given and then snatched back. She also knew the fact that she had a wife at home in Rhode Island set her apart





“What the....?” down to a manageable level.

Yeah, this is that kind of book, the kind that’s written with authenticity, an insider’s feel, and heightened tension that’ll keep you awake. The kind that you think you know how it’ll end and you’re wrong. For mystery lovers or thriller fans, “Blood Sisters” is the kind of book you should scout out.

## **“The Risk It Takes to Bloom: On Life and Liberation” by Raquel Willis** c.2023, St. Martin’s Press | 384 pages

The catalogs should start arriving soon.

If you’re a gardener, that’s a siren song for you. What will you put in your pots and plots this spring? What colors will you have, what crops will you harvest? It never gets old: put a seed no bigger than a breadcrumb into some dirt and it becomes dinner in just weeks. All it needs, as in the new memoir “The Risk It Takes to Bloom” by Raquel Willis, is a little time to grow.

The last time Raquel Willis remembers being completely safe and loved without strings attached was at age five, at a talent show. Shortly afterwards, some elders began telling Willis to speak with “a particular brand of clear,” to move differently, to act differently. Willis was a Black boy then, and that was how her father worked against his son’s “softness.”

Willis didn’t know the truth about herself then, but other boys did. So, eventually, did the girls, as a grade school Willis “gravitated... toward” them. Young Willis prayed for God to “just make me a girl” but the bullying that had already begun only got worse.

She changed schools and things were no better; meanwhile, her father tried “even harder to correct who I was becoming.” Friends and online friends were encouraging and supportive, offering her courage to come out to her mother, who thought it was “a phase.” Her father was angry, then accepting. Other family members took Willis’ news in stride.

It was going to be okay. More than okay, in fact, because Willis was introduced to drag, and she started to feel more comfortable in women’s clothing than in men’s attire. To Willis, the drag troupe had begun feeling like family. She settled into life as a gay drag performer, because that was the “language” she had.

And then one day, while talking on the phone with an on-again off-again boyfriend, something important hit Willis, hard.

since she’d left. And drugs – too many people on tribal allotments were getting drugs too easily.

But someone wanted Syd to come home: a female skull was found in the crook of a tree with her old work badge in its mouth. Despite knowing that Syd had fled Oklahoma on purpose, her new boss at the BIA pulled strings to arrange the trip and assigned her the case.

Years ago, Syd had promised to protect Luna and Emma Lou.

One of them was already dead. The other was missing. Was the skull a threat – or a warning?

Here is the best advice you’re going to get when you grab “Blood Sisters”: pay close attention to the minutiae. Without being a spoiler, little things mean a lot.

Unless you watch carefully, you’ll be cruising along at 200 miles an hour in a screaming run through pages and pages of barely-bearable excitement when suddenly, your brain will make that scratchy sound like a stopped record album. It’s there where author Vanessa Lillie drops three tons of TNT, right towards the almost-end of her story and whoa, Nelly. If you’re not paying attention, you may have to read the chapter multiple times to cut your



"I think I'm a woman," she told him. "I'm a woman.... I am." Sometimes, it takes awhile to understand the person you really are. Half a book, in this case, because "The Risk It Takes to Bloom" is quite wordy: author Raquel Willis tells her story in excruciating detail, and it can get rather long. And yet, the length allows for clues that readers can follow, to truly see the woman, the activist and writer, who penned this book. But is that enough to attract readers? What sets this book apart from other, similar books by star-powered Black trans women?

The answer lies in the approachability of its author. Willis tells her tale with a more anchoring feel, more down-to-earth, like she could have lived up the street from you or sat in the last row of your high school Algebra class. You could've known her. You could know someone like her. Or Willis could be you.

Indeed, this book might hold plainspoken inspiration for anyone who needs it. If that's you, get "The Risk It Takes to Bloom," find a chair, and plant yourself.

### **"The Old Gays Guide to the Good Life" by The Old Gays of Tik Tok** c.2023, Harper Wave | 256 pages

For every gray hair you pluck out, two more grow back. That's a myth, of course, but you have to wonder. Gray hair, brown spots on the backs of hands, knee joints that can be heard across the room, how did this happen? Getting old is not for the faint of heart but in the new book "The Old Gays Guide to the Good Life," by The Old Gays of Tik Tok, there is an alternative...

When eighty-something Robert was about to lose his beautiful Victorian home, he was deeply saddened. Doing the maintenance for it was impossible, but so was the thought of moving. As it turns out, though, he didn't have to move: he was able to save his home at the last minute but he knew he needed creativity to stay long-term. And so he ran an ad on Craigslist that read like this: "Roommate/Hippie wanted: Must be nudist, LGBTQ+ and 420 lifestyle friendly."


Bodybuilder Mick, age sixty-something, was the first to answer the ad, followed by his friend, Bill and then Jessy, both over seventy years old. Thirty-something John moved in for awhile, and John's boyfriend, Ryan, was a constant presence. There was some getting-used-to involved, but it was obvious that things would work out among them.

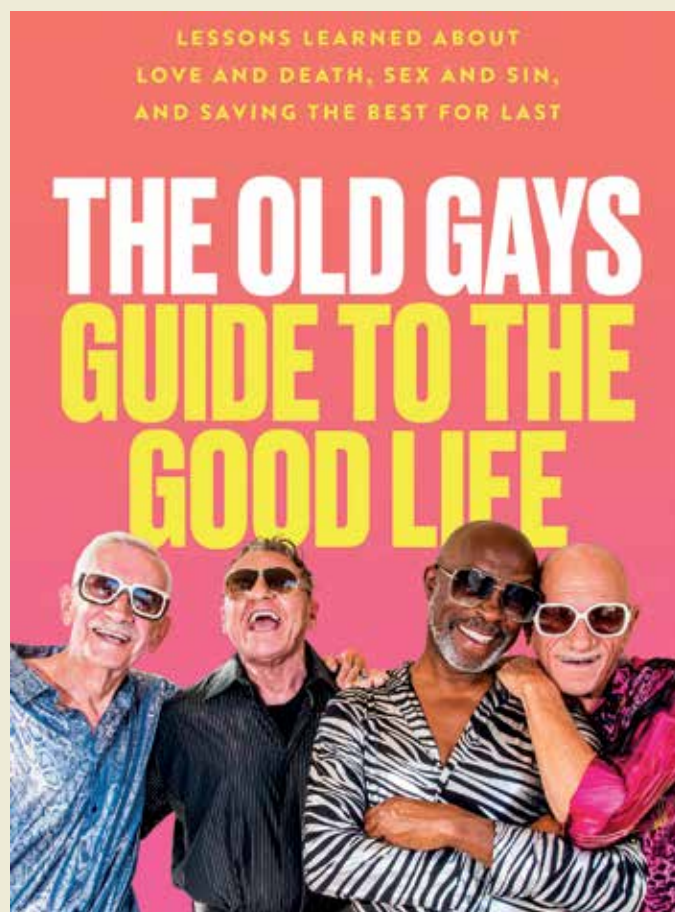
And one night, something clicked, for real. There was weed involved, and a conversation about conversation; the younger men recorded a hilarious video of the older men and posted it on Tik Tok. They were "immediately a hit," more videos were released, the Old Gays made television appearances, and their audiences love them.

Here, they offer advice for those fans.

Support one another always, and always be yourself. Know how to throw a good party and how to be a good guest. Listen to your elders; you are where you are because of them. Be safe and know your history. Love wholly. Take care of your body and mind. Keep your eyes open for celebrities. And "please do not give up hope..."

Though it may sound impossible, "The Old Gays Guide to the Good Life" really is a book for an audience that spans decades. You can hand it to your eighteen-year-old, he can share it with an eighty-five-year-old, and both will get something out of it.

And yet, readers will notice that not all is smooth. There's a good bit of confusion in the preface; we're not well-introduced to the people involved before everyone's tossed into the mix. An introduction comes later, but that's not always enough. What you'll read is (mostly) funny and also helpful and inspirational, but all of that can feel 



forced sometimes. It's raunchy (beware!) but also often poignant and heartbreaking.

Take that as a warning: "The Old Gays Guide to the Good Life" is a great look at LGBTQ history by those who've been there and it's authentic, approachable, and honest – but honestly explicit. Still, what you get on Tik Tok is what you get here and if you're a fan, you'll love that, gray hair or not.

**“Letter to My Transgender Daughter” by Carolyn Hays**  
c.2023, Blair Publisher | 282 pages

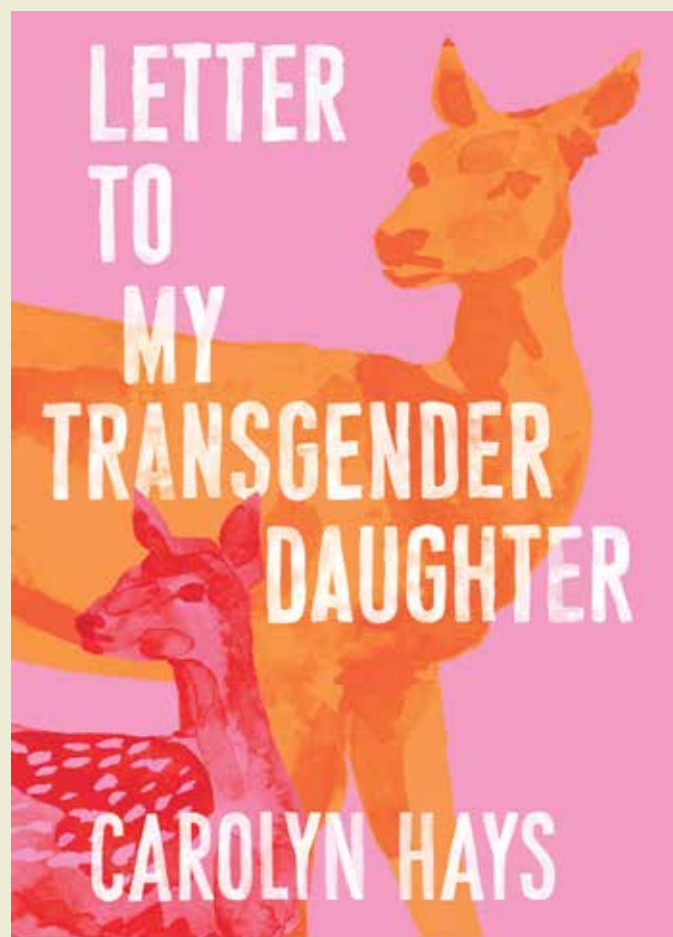
The piece of cake you cut into did not have a pastel center. There were no pretty balloons in a box, no colorful confetti, no “Team Pink” or “Team Blue” t-shirts or bracelets. You didn't have a gender-reveal party for your baby because you didn't want to know. As in the memoir “Letter to My Transgender Daughter” by Carolyn Hays, you'll let your child tell you in person.

She never expected another baby.

After seven years, Carolyn Hays thought she was done with diapers and late-night feedings but the pregnancy test didn't lie. This was good news. The whole family was excited to welcome another member into the household! The baby was a boy – but as soon as he could talk, he told everyone he was a girl. No problem; Hays' other children rolled with it; they “saw” their sibling for who she was. Teachers were also nonplussed; they gave the girl a nickname, and extended family members quickly learned to use it.

Hays and her husband balked sometimes, though. They hoped it was a “phase.” They gave their daughter “girly” things and allowed her to wear girls clothing, but they tried “boy on the outside / girl on the inside” wordage. Their daughter patiently corrected them each time until eventually, they, too, saw the truth. Their youngest child was a girl.

They were, at that time, “a big, loud East Coast family, new to the Bible Belt” but they'd found community in the south, and a support group so Hays could parent her trans daughter better. Everything seemed to work out – until the knock on the door. The representative of the Department of Children and Families couldn't tell Hays who'd made a complaint about them, or when. They could only guess who was offended by their personal family matter, or their total acceptance of their daughter. All they knew,



she said, was “We could lose custody. We could lose you.” If you are someone who loves a child – any child, even a cis child – be prepared to have your heart fall out of your chest. “Letter to My Transgender Daughter” is a nightmare, not because of the book itself but because of what very nearly happened to its author and her family.

Indeed, this “letter” in book form goes from mildly confessional to outright terrified, and author Carolyn Hays susses out all your emotions and turns them raw. Hers is an honest story, not only of a trans girl but of parents who walk through the steps of acceptance. Cue the ominous music, though: you know what's coming but foresight doesn't diminish the outrage and fear you'll feel, once you get there – although Hays doesn't completely let you roll in misery. Readers will be delighted by the precociousness and determination in her daughter's patient steadfastness, and by Hays' family memories.

Now out in paperback, “Letter to My Transgender Daughter” is an absolute read for parents and for trans adults. Read it – then check the headlines and see if it doesn't cut your heart to pieces. 🏳️‍🌈





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## NYAD

NYAD with Jodie Foster and Annette Bening as Nyad

by Mark Adams

A short voyage through the Savoirflair Wayback Machine tells me that it was more than eight years ago that the fine folks at GLAAD reported that streaming services (think Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, and the like) were depicting more LGBTQ+ characters than the broadcast networks (and, I might add, this was even before the “Q” was used). Things have remained the same, except the broadcast networks seem to be more interested in reality and game shows than those of the scripted variety. As an aside here, speaking of game shows, is it just me, or does WHEEL OF FORTUNE seem to have a lot more proud gay daddies than ever? Isn’t that wonderful? But I digress. Yes, my “To Be Watched” list is now out of control. By the time I get to many of them, they will undoubtedly be featured on Turner Classic Movies. For each one I actually see, I seem to be adding at least a couple more a week. This is thanks to recommendations from various friends, who apparently have no life except for sitting in front of their Firesticks.

“Skins” is a British series that ran almost a decade ago, but you can now catch it on Hulu. It was one of my favorites back then. Definitely teen-oriented, it offered up subjects like queerness, drug addiction, poverty, and sex, along with a great sense of humor. Those crazy Brits... It also kick-started the careers of current Hollywood hunks Dev Patel, Nicholas Hoult, and Hannah Murray, lovely but not a hunk. There is a really nice love story between a couple of female characters in the later years (the show ran for seven series, and it appears that they are all on Hulu), but the first few are, in my worthless opinion, the best.

The latest additions to my list include “Nyad,” a biographical drama based on Diana Nyad’s 2015 memoir “Find a Way: The Inspiring Story of One Woman’s Pursuit of a Lifelong Dream.” “Diana Who?” said I, whose knowledge of swimming extends to the movies of Esther Williams (and maybe Greg Louganis), but that’s about it. “Nyad” is about Nyad’s 2013 attempt to swim from Cuba to Key West and features





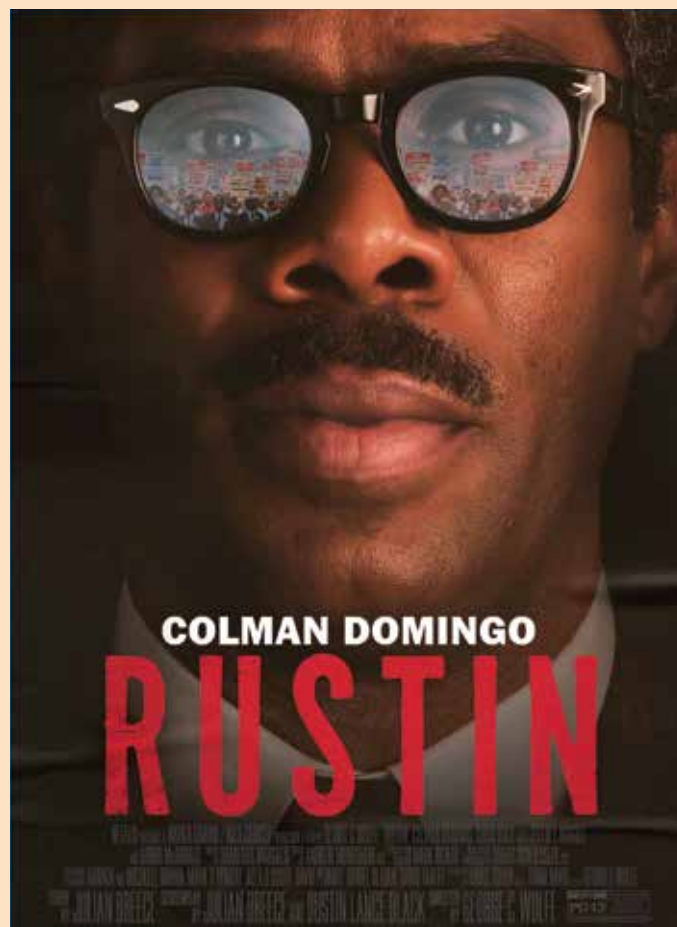
amazing performances by Annette Bening as Nyad, with Jodie Foster and Rhys Ifans in supporting roles. The movie and the book have had some controversy surrounding the accuracy of the events depicted, but hey, it's a movie. Does the Royal Family dispute their depictions in "The Crown?" I think not. To say nothing of the Netflix series "The Windsors," which, if you are into that sort of thing, is one of the most hilarious shows out there. But I digress, yet again. "Nyad" can be tough to watch at times, particularly if, like me, you get antsy if the bathtub is filled too high. It was released theatrically for a couple of

Mark Adams has been a popular contributor to LGBTQ+ media for many years, writing extensively on film and video of interest to the community. You can email him at [vidioview@gmail.com](mailto:vidioview@gmail.com) with any of your favorites for a future scribbling.



weeks, probably to qualify it for the Oscars, and it's now on Netflix.

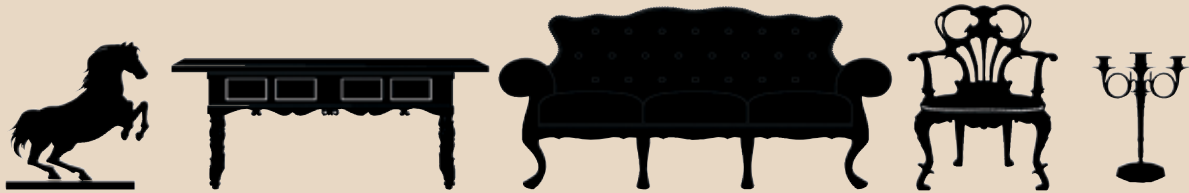
And then there's "Rustin," another movie whose existence evaded me. This is a 2023 American biographical drama film directed by George C. Wolfe, from a screenplay by Julian Breece and Dustin Lance Black, based on the true story of civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. Though he was the lead organizer of the March on Washington, as well as a friend and an influence on Martin Luther King Jr., Rustin's involvement in the civil rights movement was often downplayed, due to the fact that he was a gay man. Never heard of him? I'm with you on this one as well. The incredible cast features Colman Domingo as Bayard Rustin, along with Chris Rock (yup, THAT Chris Rock) in a surprise dramatic performance. The "based on a true story" designation explains the occasional inaccuracies, but don't let this keep you from a riveting movie, also on Netflix. 🏳️‍🌈



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## Our LGBTQ+ Ancestors

# Artist Winslow Homer

by Jeff Parsons

Winslow Homer was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1836; Homer was the second of three sons of Charles Savage Homer and Henrietta Benson Homer, both from long lines of New Englanders. His mother was a gifted amateur watercolorist and Homer's first teacher; she and her son had a close relationship throughout their lives. Homer took on many of her traits, including her quiet, strong-willed, terse, sociable nature, her dry sense of humor, and her artistic talent. Homer had a happy childhood, growing up mainly in then rural Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was an average student, but his art talent was on display early.

Homer's father was a volatile, restless businessman who always sought to "make a killing." When Homer was thirteen, Charles gave up the hardware store business to seek a fortune in the California gold rush. When that failed, Charles left his family and went to Europe to raise capital for other get-rich-quick schemes that



Winslow Homer portrait by Oliver Ingraham, 1865



Winslow Homer with Albert Warren Kelsey in Paris. 1867, photographer unknown

didn't materialize.

After Homer's high school graduation, his father saw an ad in the newspaper and arranged for an apprenticeship. Homer's apprenticeship to a Boston commercial lithographer at 19 was a formative but "treadmill experience." For two years, he worked repetitively on sheet music covers and other commercial work. By 1857, his freelance career was underway after he turned down an offer to join the staff of Harper's Weekly. "From the time I took my nose off that lithographic stone," Homer later stated, "I have had no master and never shall have any."

Homer's career as an illustrator lasted nearly twenty years. He contributed to magazines such as Ballou's Pictorial and Harper's Weekly, when the market for illustrations was growing rapidly, and fads and fashions were changing quickly. His early works, primarily commercial engravings of urban and country social scenes, are characterized by clean outlines, simplified forms, dramatic contrast of light and dark, and lively figure groupings - qualities that remained important throughout his career. His quick success was mostly due to his strong understanding of graphic design and the adaptability of his designs to wood engraving.

In 1859, he opened a studio in the Tenth Street Studio Building in New York City, the artistic and publishing capital of the United States. Until 1863, he attended classes at the National Academy of Design and studied briefly with Frederic Rondel, who taught him






The Gulf Stream by Winslow Homer, 1899 reworked by 1906.

the basics of painting. In only about a year of self-training, Homer produced excellent oil work. His mother tried to raise family funds to send him to Europe for further study, but instead, Harper sent Homer to the front lines of the American Civil War (1861 - 1865), where he sketched battle scenes and camp life, the quiet moments as well as the murderous ones. His initial sketches were of the camp, commanders, and army of the famous Union officer, Major General George B. McClellan, at the banks of the Potomac River in October 1861.

Winslow Homer traveled with Albert Warren Kelsey to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida in 1884. In Nassau, he captured the rugged musculature and masculinity of black conch and coral divers. Homer had an intense and devoted relationship with his 'flatmate,' Albert Warren Kelsey, whom he drew in the Bahamas riding the back of a turtle in the nude. Like John Singer Sargent, many have speculated about Homer's sexual appetites.

In 1866, Winslow Homer sailed from Boston on the *Africa* for Europe. Homer spent a year in Paris, where he shared a studio in Montmartre with Albert Warren Kelsey. Although Kelsey inscribed the back of a photograph of the two of them, "Damon and Pythias," alluding to the loving youths of Greek mythology, he seems in later years to have rejected his sojourn with Homer as a frivolous

interlude. Albert Warren Kelsey was the son of Albert H. Kelsey and Charlotte Upton. In 1869, he married novelist Jeanette Garr Washburn, the daughter of Wisconsin Governor Cadwallader C. Washburn. Together, the Kelseys had eight living children. 



Winslow Homer's caricature of Albert Warren Kelsey riding on the back of a turtle 1840

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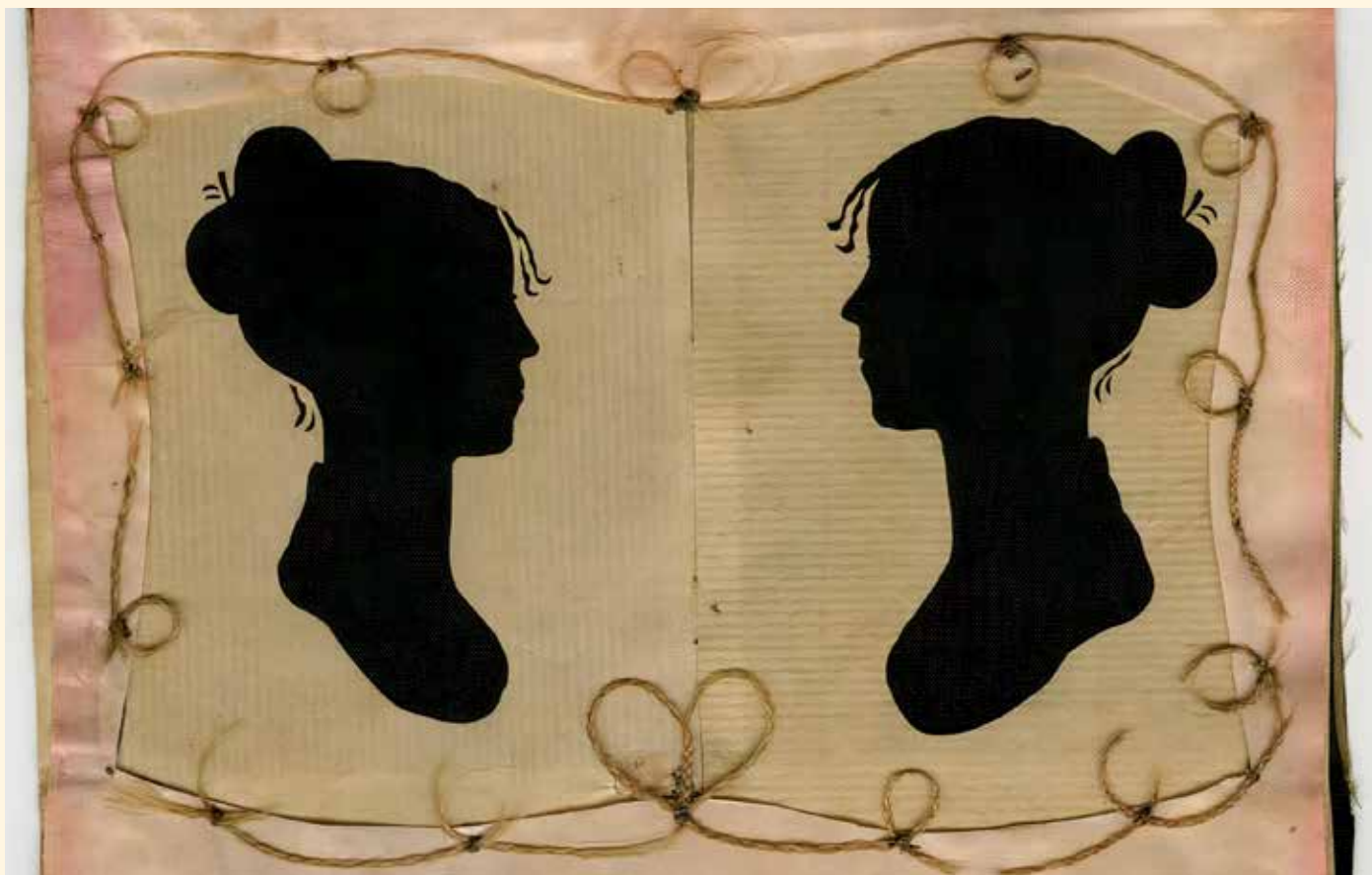


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# Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake

## A 19th Century Public, 'Same-Sex Marriage'



The only existing image of Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake in this double-silhouette

by Mark Adams

In the fall of 1835, Hiram Hurlburt, a young man growing up in Vermont, visited the local tailor shop to order a coat. Waiting for his service, Hurlburt observed the unusual couple who owned the business. Charity Bryant, a woman in her late fifties, the shorter of the two, took the order and wielded the scissors to cut the cloth. Some years younger, Sylvia Drake stayed quiet as she plied her needle, working her way through a stack of garments. After placing his order and leaving the shop, Hurlburt “heard it mentioned as if Miss Bryant and Miss Drake were married to each other.” He found the marriage so unusual that he recalled it sixty-two years later when writing his memoir. However strange the arrangement, Hurlburt seemed to approve. When he deduced during later visits to the shop that “Miss Bryant was the man” in the marriage, he judged her role to be “perfectly proper.” Hurlburt recalled the women as church stalwarts who “got along pleasantly together” and earned the community’s approbation.”

Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake’s “marriage” is an example from the early 19th century of a same-sex couple who made a union despite all the external forces that would deny them a state-sanctioned marriage. Their 44-year union is just one of a number of known same-sex relationships in early U.S. history. It has been documented in detail by



## *The Magic of Vermont*

In 1807, Charity opened a shop in Weybridge, Vermont. She was 29 and a talented tailor, but she had been the subject of gossip due to her close relationships with women. She had met Sylvia Drake, age 22, during a visit earlier that year, but that summer, she hired her as her assistant. The two became partners and worked together in the tailoring business they ran out of their shared house. This arrangement may have been unconventional, but it did not prevent them from being active in the local church and being accepted and respected by their neighbors, community, and families. They lived together for the rest of their lives and shared a gravestone, united even in death. “What made their relationship work was how public it was,” Author Rachel Hope Cleves told the *Washington Post* in 2015. “Charity and Sylvia were enormously valued in the community. They did everything from leading the local charitable organizations to contributing money to the church... and people just chose not to know what was inconvenient to know.”

## *Charity Bryant*

Charity Bryant was born on May 22, 1777, in North Bridgewater, Massachusetts, to Silence (née Howard) and Phillip Bryant. Her mother died of consumption after she was born. Philip remarried, but unfortunately, Charity’s stepmother was unkind and did not want to manage 10 children who were not her own. Nor did she have time or patience for a child who preferred reading and writing to housework. Charity did not know much about her real mother, though she wrote many intimate poems about their relationship. In the first poem she wrote about her mother, she used words like “tender” from her older sister’s point of view:

... And say, was I wrong for to dream  
That fortune upon me would shine?  
When friends to me smiling did seem  
And the tenderest of Mothers was mine...

Charity was a descendant of Francis Cooke through her father’s line. As the youngest of ten surviving children, including the oldest brother, Oliver, who had enlisted in the Massachusetts Revolutionary militia and died in battle in August of 1776. Another brother was Peter Bryant, who grew up to be a doctor and later a state legislator. Charity was often treated with “affectionate indulgence” by her older siblings, who also instilled in her a love for poetry that would stay with her throughout her life. She was also an aunt to poet William Cullen Bryant.

Charity began working as a teacher in 1797 in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, allowing her to live independently from her father and stepmother, continuing to read and write while earning her own living and protecting her reputation. During this time, she formed intimate relationships with several of her fellow teachers, including most notably Lydia Richards, with whom Charity exchanged several poems containing somewhat erotic imagery. In 1807, she went to visit a friend, Polly Hayward, in Weybridge, Vermont, and it was there that she was introduced to Polly’s sister, Sylvia.



Weybridge is a small, rural town in Addison County, Vermont

## *Sylvia Drake*

Sylvia Drake was born on October 31, 1784, in Easton, Massachusetts, to Mary (Manley) Drake and Thomas Drake II. She was the youngest of eight children. Although the Drake family had weathered the Revolutionary War in relative safety, the economic crisis that followed hit them particularly hard, and they were bankrupt by 1788. The family was separated for much of the next ten years as they searched for work until her older brother, Asaph, established a household in Weybridge, Vermont. Sylvia's father died on the journey there in January 1798, but by 1799, Sylvia and her mother settled in Weybridge.

As a teenager, Sylvia was visited by several young men "paying their respects" to her, but she did not express interest in them. Five months after she met Charity Bryant in July of 1807, she moved into Charity's rented home, where she "commenced serving in company with Dear Miss B," as she later wrote in her diary. Two years later, in January 1809, the two women moved into a house of their very own from which they ran their tailor shop.

Sylvia discussed their relationship in her diaries: "Tuesday 3 [July]—31 years since I left my mother's house and commenced serving in company with Dear Miss B. Sin mars all earthly bliss, and no common sinner have I been, but God has spared my life, given me everything I would enjoy and now I have a space, if I improve it, to exercise true penitence."

In "Letters of a Traveller" (1850), William Cullen Bryant, Charity's nephew, described their relationship using language that emphasized the depth of the women's relationship: "If I were permitted to draw the veil of private life, I would briefly give you the singular, and to me interesting, story of two maiden ladies who dwell in this valley. I would tell you how, in their youthful days,

they took each other as companions for life and how this union, no less sacred to them than the tie of marriage, has existed, in uninterrupted harmony, for more than forty years."

Charity and Sylvia's relationship was treated the same way as any standard marriage between a man and a woman. According to William Cullen Bryant, Charity was like the "husband," and Sylvia was her "fond wife." On tax documents and census records, Charity was always noted as the head of the household.

Not everyone was so amiable; Sylvia's mother and some of her brothers did not visit often, although ultimately, "the family compromised its embargo to preserve...amity."

Both Charity and Sylvia frequently suffered from poor health. Sylvia, in particular, was prone to severe migraines. Over the years, they turned to various treatments for their ailments, often exploring both chemical and natural remedies, which gave them the medical knowledge to assist friends and family when necessary.





Charity's ill health ultimately caught up with her, and she died of a heart attack on October 6, 1851, at the age of 74.

Following Charity's death, Sylvia was occupied with both running their business on her own, as well as managing the house that Charity had left her. In 1859, she

moved out of her home to live with and care for her elderly brother, Asaph. Sylvia was 83 years old when she died on February 13, 1868. She was buried in the same plot as Charity on Weybridge Hill, and that summer, a joint headstone with both of their names was erected at the site. 🇧🇷



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## 20th Anniversary LGBTQ+ Marriage

Joyous celebration in front of the Massachusetts' Statehouse upon hearing of passage of the historic same-sex marriage decision

by D. Bullen

Same-sex marriage in Massachusetts is 20 years old about now, although it has two different start dates: November 18, 2003 and May 17, 2004. A lot of bureaucratic, procedural, and historical nonsense took place in those six months—between the moment when same-sex marriage was legally allowed, and the day when same-sex marriages could begin—but the history of that interval is a testament to the persistent hard work of LGBTQ+ lawyers, activists, and communities throughout the state, who did not just make same-sex marriage legal, they also changed the tide of American morality.

Because of their efforts, same-sex marriage has grown less and less controversial over time, with 71% percent of Americans today agreeing that it should be legal—compared to just 27% in 1996, when the year Democratic President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, denying federal recognition to same-sex marriages. (Today's numbers skew by party, with agreement at about 80% for Democrats and 71% among independents, with only 40% of Republicans agreeing.)

So when is the anniversary?

Technically, same-sex marriage was recognized on November 18, 2003, when Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court ruled four to three that the state's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional.

This decision came in response to a lawsuit, *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, filed by Gay & Lesbian



Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) on April 11, 2001. Lead GLAD attorney Mary Bonauto had already represented three same-sex couples in Vermont, in a case that led to creation of civil unions in 2000. In this Massachusetts' case, named for Hillary and Julie Goodridge as well as six other same-sex couples, Bonauto argued that "denying same-sex couples equal marriage rights was unconstitutional under the State Constitution."

Julie and Hillary Goodridge had experienced the familiar discrimination when Julie gave birth to a daughter, and Hillary was made to wait in the hospital waiting room, unable to consult on Julie's care. But when their daughter was three, she asked a simple question that spurred them to join the case for marriage equality: "If you love each other, then why aren't you married?"

Originally, Superior Court Judge Thomas E. Connolly ruled against the parties, saying that limiting marriage to male-female couples made sense "because procreation is marriage's central purpose," but on appeal,

the Supreme Judicial court stated that: "We declare that barring an individual from the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same-sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution."

The court stayed its ruling for 180 days, though, till May 17, 2004, to allow the General Court to "take such action as it may deem appropriate in light of this opinion." This gave then-Governor Romney six months to hear challenges to the decision, and to try to create a two-tier system of marriage, with civil unions for same-sex couples. By February 2004, though, the court added that civil unions were a form of discrimination even if the benefits of the classification were identical to marriage, since the term civil union was "a considered choice of language that relegates same-sex couples to second-class status."

When the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that same-sex marriage was constitutional in 2003, the federal right to same-sex marriage was still 12 years in the future, and legislators and leaders in Massa-



Janet Stathos (left) and Loretta Cardinale, walked out of City Hall into a cheering crowd after filling out their marriage license application.





Hillary and Julie Goodridge celebrating the Massachusetts' historic same-sex marriage passage

Massachusetts had a hard time answering questions about how Massachusetts marriages would be recognized in Massachusetts and in other states. This question centered on a 1913 Massachusetts law that invalidated the marriage of non-residents if the marriage was invalid in their home state, a relic of Jim Crow attempts to regulate interracial marriages. This law gave Massachusetts leaders real headaches until Governor Deval Patrick finally repealed it in 2008. While New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer expressed solidarity in early 2004, when he issued a non-binding opinion that “New York common law requires recognizing as valid a marriage... validly executed in another state,” 38 other states expressly denied recognition to same-sex marriages.

This might make you think that the tide was running against the LGBTQ+ community, but marriage licenses were not issued directly by the state. They were issued by town clerks, so this issue was left to the interpretation by individual towns. While the state tried to influence clerks about the legal issues surrounding same-sex manager licenses, the clerks still had some independence.

In Provincetown, the Board of Selectmen decided that their town clerk would approve marriage license applications from any couple who took the customary

oath that their marriage was lawful. The town manager said: “We’ve never been the marriage police with heterosexual couples, and we’re not about to start with same-sex couples.” Worcester and Somerville followed suit, refusing to ask marrying couples for proof of residency.

The celebrations begin

By May 16, 2004, none of the governor’s delays or challenges had delayed the inevitable start of same-sex marriage in America. The City of Cambridge decorated the wooden staircases of City Hall with white organza while hundreds of applicants and supporters gathered in the street. City officials opened the building at 12:01 AM, May 17 “for a rousing party, with wedding cake, sparkling cider and the music of the Cambridge Community Chorus.”

262 couples obtained licenses, starting with Marcia Hams and Susan Shepherd. Many of the couples had obtained waivers of the three-day waiting period before issuing marriage licenses, in order to be wed as soon as possible.

The first to wed in Cambridge were Tanya McCloskey and Marcia Kadish at 9:15 a.m. Cambridge City Clerk Margaret Drury was the first city clerk in the U.S. to perform a legal same-sex marriage. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino said that he was “very proud to be mayor of this city today.” The first to marry in Boston City Hall were Tom Weikle and Joe Rogers, who lined up for their license application at 5:30 a.m. and were wed about 11 a.m. by Boston’s city clerk.

Addressing a crowd of same-sex couples, Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone said, “No matter who you are or where you come from, if you fill out the application, you will be given a license to marry. Those of you from out of state, welcome to Somerville.”

The seven couples who were party to the Goodridge lawsuit were all wed on May 17, beginning with Rob-



ert Compton and David Wilson at Boston's Arlington Street Church. There were sizable celebrations in Northampton, Worcester, and Provincetown, while "protests were scattered and few."

In the first year, more than 6,200 same-sex couples married in Massachusetts, though only 1,900 marriages were performed in the second year. Of those 8,100 marriages, 64% involved lesbian couples.

#### Same-sex marriage today

Since the 2015 Obergefell decision, of course, same-sex marriage has become the law of the land throughout the U.S. Of the 1.2 million same-sex couple households in 2021, Census Bureau data indicate that about 710,000 of the same-sex couple households were married and about 500,000 were unmarried.

As of 2022, Massachusetts has the third-highest percentage of same-sex couple households, with 1.5%, behind Washington D.C. and Vermont (3.6% and 1.8%, respectively). Rhode Island and New Hampshire are also in the top ten with 1.4% and 1.3% of households), making the northeast an enduring center of America's LGBTQ+ community.

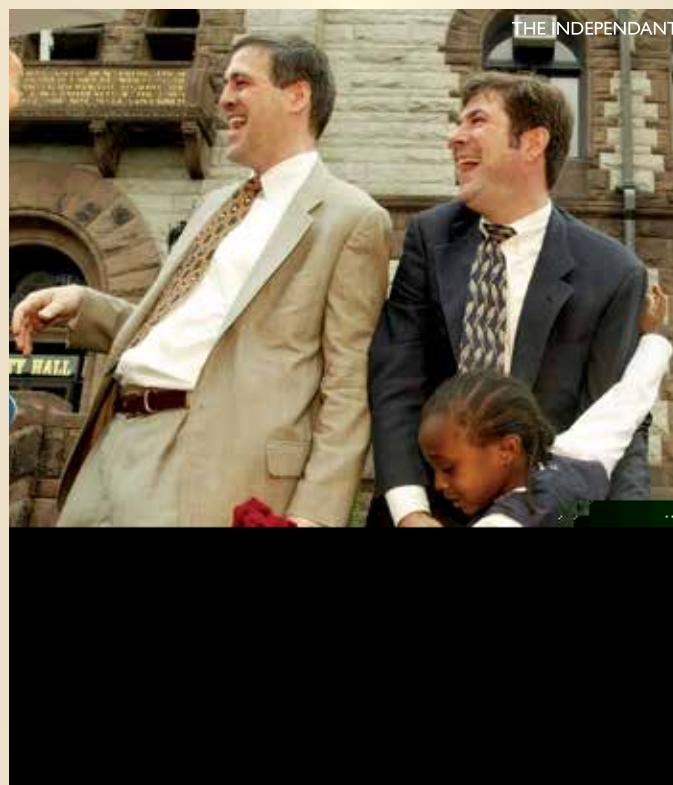
Researchers expected the "first-wave LGBTQ+ marriages to prove more durable" than the average, since so many couples had already been living together without marriage, but as time has gone on, divorce rates have crept closer to opposite-sex marriages.

Today, the frontier for LGBTQ+ rights centers around questions related to divorce, including child support and custody. The question of matrimonial assets in a divorce has had to be redefined, for instance, since many couples had lived together for years before they were legally able to marry, which means that divorce judges considering only assets built since marriage would not be getting the whole picture.

Also, states have created a new patchwork of laws regarding LGBTQ+ divorce, which have yet to be chal-

lenged and resolved. As Jesse Green puts it in, "From 'I Do' to 'I'm Done,'" "for gay couples, the promise of marriage is still so new and incomplete that the idea of matrimonial courts, equitable settlements, and all the rest barely register. How do you process the undoing of a bond that until a moment ago in history you were not allowed to form?"

Nevertheless, whether you celebrate the anniversary of the decision in November or celebrate the first mar-



First Couples Married: married on the lawn of Cambridge City Hall Don Picard (left) and Robert DeBenedictis (right)

riages in Massachusetts that took place in May 2004, remember that faith leaders and community leaders, activists and legal aid organizations carried this cause from Bill Clinton's 1996 Defense of the Marriage Act to legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts to the 2015 Obergefell decision, and that activists, attorneys, and community leaders will still be rallying together to advance the simple and still radical statement, that 'love is love.' 🏳️‍🌈

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# 3

## Amazing LGBTQ+ Jewelry Designers

By Nicholas McCarty

LGBTQ+ people have long used jewelry to express their identities and challenge traditional norms. From thumb rings to collar chains, queer jewelry is a powerful form of communication. Today, many queer jewelers are creating stunning and innovative pieces that celebrate our identities. Here are three queer jewelers who are redefining the jewelry industry.

### BLACK QUEER MAGIC:

Handmade healing crystal and metal stamped pieces with a focus on Black Queer and Trans liberation created by Vanessa 'Vee' B. Miller. Vanessa is a self-taught jewelry artist specializing in lapidary, gemology, and metalsmithing. Vee is a Jamaican, queer, gender non-conforming woman who makes



Vanessa 'Vee' Miller's handmade jewelry celebrates Black queer love and affirms Black queer lives.

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### 3 Amazing Jewelry Designers



Black Queer Magic's silver and semi precious stone pendant sampling

handmade jewelry that celebrates Black queer love and affirms Black queer lives. "I decided to create the Midas Touch Collection as a reminder that I am badass, capable, worthy of amazing opportunities, and swaggy af. My hope is that these pieces are a reflection of our magic & endless possibilities. She wants purchasers to "cast a spell with me."

#### XLDESIGNS:

Xiomara Lorenzo is a queer jeweler who makes one-of-a-kind 3D-printed jewelry on Etsy. Based in Boston, Xiomara has been designing and making jewelry for over ten years. She discovered her passion for design while in college. While taking weekend classes at the Jewelry Arts Institute in New York City in 2012,



XL Designs earrings made with a 3D printer

I refined the design, eventually learning how to solder metals. I recreated the continuous loop effect by layering the metals, soldering, or fusing as I went. She now combines technology and art and incorporates 3D printing into her design and production process.



Boston based Xiomara Lorenzo makes one-of-a-kind 3D printed jewelry

Xiomara says, "I work at the intersection of user needs and digital strategy to create exceptional product experiences. I focus on continuity as a key theme because I believe in continuous personal growth. I bring this capacity into my designs, encouraging the viewer to lose themselves momentarily as they trace the intersecting lines of the piece, attempting to find where the lines start and end. By stepping back from the design emerges a willingness to embrace these lines as constant and continuous, as personal growth should be."



QueerKwe Designs' Becca Lynn an anishinaabe artist that creates two spirit beadwork



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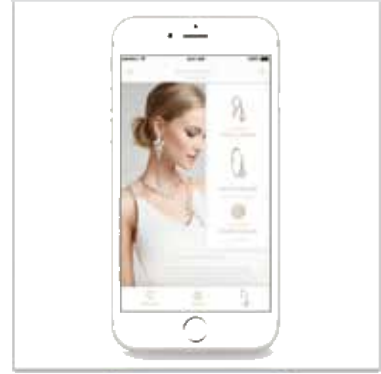
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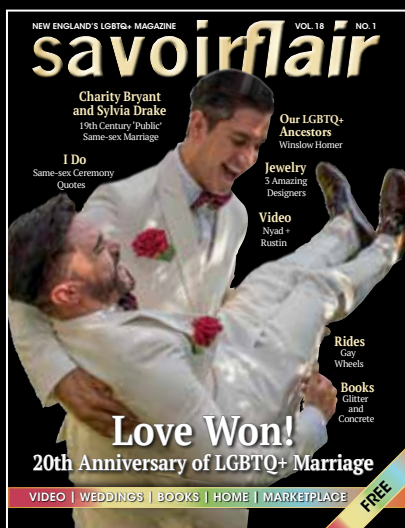
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QueerKwe Designs' handmade beadwork marrying the tradition of the indigenous people with the LGBTQ+ community

#### QUEERKWE DESIGNS:

Becca Lynn is an indigenous two-spirit beadworker who sells them on Etsy. Aanii! An Anishinaabe artist is trying to create

space and representation for two spirits and LGBTQ+ Indigenous folks through her beadwork. Born and raised in Northern Michigan, she has always advocated social change. After studying sociology at the University of Michigan, she returned home to reconnect with her tribal community, family, and ancestral lands. Becca says, "There is a lot of trauma that comes with being a queer native person, but there is also so much beauty. These pieces remind us of the beauty, strength, and resilience that has kept our people going. The project is a decolonization effort aiming to start conversations about the history of Two-Spirit peoples in our communities and create a stronger community for LGBTQ+ And Two-Spirit Indigenous folks."

Non-native / LGBTQ+ folks are more than welcome to purchase my beadwork. Please educate yourself about the indigenous folks around you. Be an ally. Speak up for indigenous issues. Offer a platform for indigenous-centered voices." She has given lectures at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University on Two Spirit Identity and Indigenous gender and sexuality. 🏳️‍🌈




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# Vendor Red flags

## Wedding vendors that aren't LGBTQ+ community friendly



Tuscani Photo

by Chloe Belle, interview with Equally Wed, courtesy of insider-inc.com

Sometimes, it may be difficult to find LGBTQ+ friendly wedding vendors, especially if you live outside of an urban area. Of course publications such as *Savoirflair Magazine*, other LGBTQ+ publications, and websites are an excellent resources for community-friendly wedding services. Sometimes even those listed in these resources may not be as community friendly as you might expect.

Here are some tips on what makes for an inclusive vendor — and what are red flags.

As if wedding planning isn't stressful enough, for LGBTQ+ couples, it can prove extra complicated and emotionally draining. Despite the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts in 2003 and federally in 2015. LGBTQ+ couples still face discrimination and homophobic language during the wedding planning process, and often from the place you wouldn't expect it: the wedding professionals themselves. Wedding vendors in many areas of the U.S. are overwhelmingly supportive of same-sex couples, but there are other cases that are just the opposite. LGBTQ+ couples still interact with wedding vendors that are just not accepting of couples like them.





Insider spoke to Emily Monus, a New York-based wedding planner that specializes in LGBTQ+ weddings, and Kirsten Palladino, the co-founder and editorial director of Equally Wed, about what couples should look for when choosing their wedding vendors.

**The vendor's website and social media fails to show any hint of LGBTQ+ representation.**

When hiring a wedding vendor, Monus recommends scrolling through the company's Instagram page or photos on their website to see examples of their typical clientele. Most wedding professionals post images of their past work and blogs about their now-married couples.

Monus explained that a common red flag is the lack of LGBTQ+ couples in the imagery. "If all I see are cis, heterosexual, white people on someone's profile, this may not be the right vendor," Monus said of working with LGBTQ+ couples.

Of course, she added, a business may be accepting even if their social media doesn't indicate as such. But an important aspect to the LGBTQ+ community is to make inclusivity a priority. For Palladino, that means posting same-sex couples outside of June, for Pride Month. "It needs to be consistent, not just popping up in June," Palladino said. "I'm still queer in December. Are you

welcoming me into your business at that time?" Palladino warned against vendors that use stock photos of LGBTQ+ couples instead of real couples from past weddings. Stock images can feel fake whereas actual couples feel more representative of reality, she said.

"Everybody in the queer community has already seen that photo a hundred times," she said of stock images, adding that it's important to use "authentic LGBTQ+ people."



## WEDDING VENDOR RED FLAGS

### The language on a vendor's website isn't inclusive

The language on a vendor's online platforms will also indicate how inclusive they are, especially when it comes to wedding planning.

As both Monus and Palladino pointed out, much of the language that is traditionally used around weddings is very gendered. Words like "bride," "groom," and "bridal party" are all cis and heteronormative. Using them makes members of the LGBTQ+ community feel excluded. "It's not enough to be friendly when somebody walks through your door; you also need to use the language that resonates with them," Palladino said of why the language matters. To help vendors better understand LGBTQ+ couples, she created a glossary of inclusive language for Equally Wed.

The language on a vendor's site should be inclusive. See what language a wedding business uses, Palladino said. For example, if your only option on an inquiry or intake form is to list the names of a "bride" and



Dreamtime Stock Photo

"groom," it may indicate a company isn't used to working with queer couples. Look instead for vendors that use words like "partners," "couple," and "wedding party." That goes for pronouns too. If a vendor doesn't ask about your pronouns, it may indicate they are not as familiar with non-cis-gendered couples.

Monus and Palladino recommend that all vendors transition to using the word "marriers" instead of bride or groom, as it's a more inclusive term for engaged couples, even if they are heterosexual.

"If you can be inclusive, why wouldn't you be?" Monus said. "It just makes things better for everybody."

### There are overtly religious or anti-gay statements on a vendor's website or social media.

Monus said she is not against religion, but she has correlated overtly religious messaging on a vendor's website and social media with a red flag for LGBTQ+ couples. "Overly religious statements sometimes put me off because so much of the hate that LGBTQ+ people receive is from conservative [religious groups]," Monus said. Specifically, statements that present marriage as a union only between a man



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and a woman would be a signal a same-sex couple may not want to work with a vendor, Monus told Insider.

"Wedding vendors say things like, 'the bond between a man and a woman is sacred,'" she said. "Any language where it's exclusively saying 'between men and women,' I immediately would be turned off."

The key is to look for vendors that make you feel comfortable. Both Monus and Palladino recommend surrounding yourself with wedding vendors who make you feel seen and heard. "If you're a queer couple and seeing the same language over and over again, you start to feel defeated, like this isn't for me," Monus said. "It's supposed to be fun and exciting."

Palladino also advised to look for vendors who go the extra mile when it comes to inclusivity, such as ensuring a venue has a gender-neutral bathroom or an emcee

who doesn't address your guests as "ladies and gentlemen," no matter how your guests identify.

"Even if no one in the LGBTQ+ community is coming to your wedding, every inclusive action that you take has a ripple effect on our community," Palladino said, to which Monus added: "We fought really hard to get to this place, and it's important that we make everyone feel included." 

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# Gaywheels

## The Story of an Activist

By John Axelrod

Today, gaywheels.com reads much like most automotive consumer sites, with reviews of cars, mini-vans, SUVs, and trucks, in accessible terms that makes car buying easier. But when Joe LaMuraglia started the site in 2005, it acted as a radical lever to push automakers, suppliers, and auto-industry-adjacent businesses like insurance to adopt LGBTQ+-friendly policies for their workers.

The site started as a back-of-the-napkin sketch Joe made in a meeting when he was working at Nissan in 2004 in market research. The name popped into his head and he bought the domain name, but did not build it out until after he heard his co-workers complaining around the office that Nissan did not have domestic partner benefits.

Joe LaMuraglia



Photo courtesy of Joe LaMuraglia

At the time, Joe had benefits through his job, and his partner also had benefits through his job, so this was not an urgent issue, but the co-workers had a point, so Joe offered to do something about that. Joe did not





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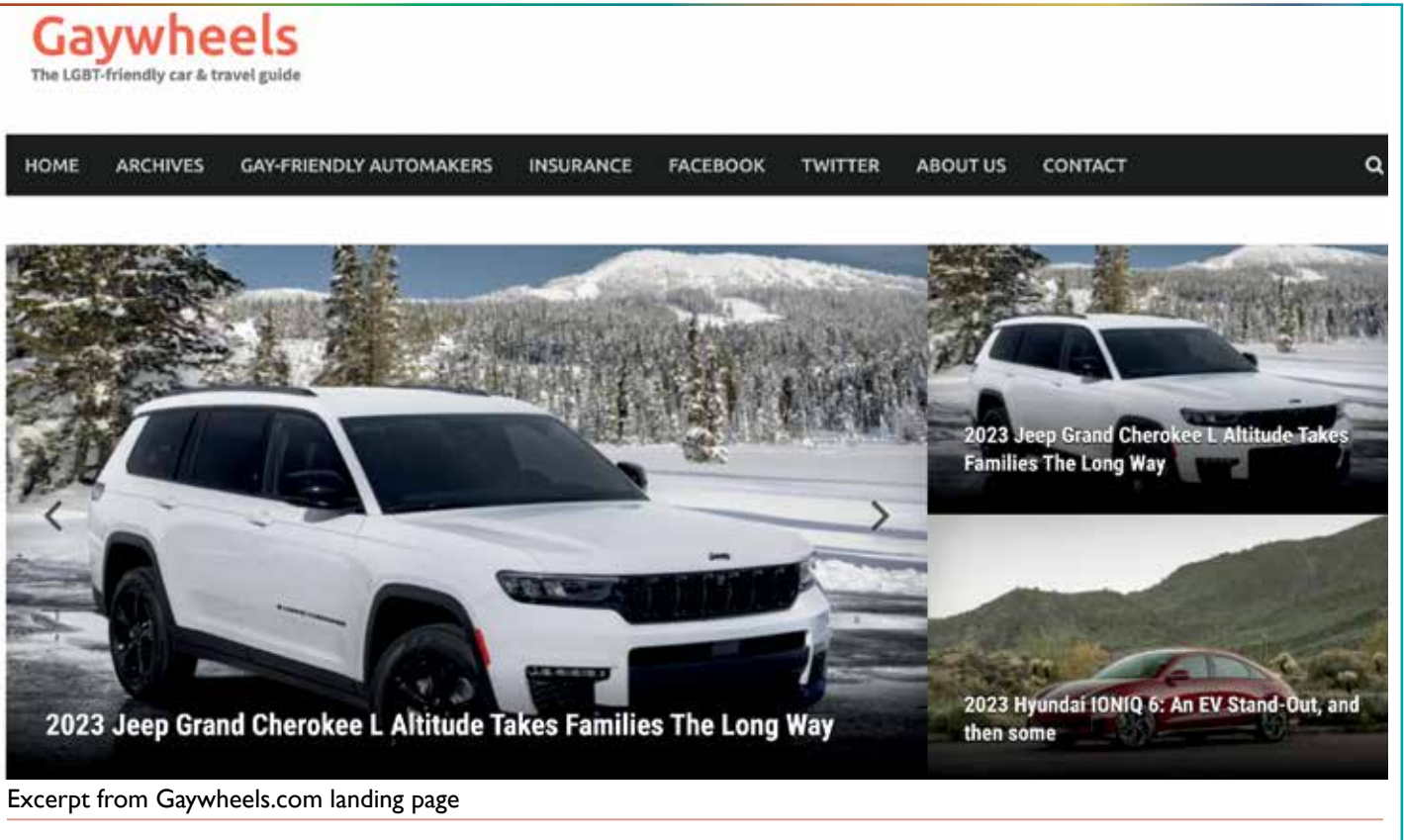
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already earned him the nickname ‘honey badger’: he had a tenacity and a willingness to dive into things, and just didn’t give a thought to the consequence.

With his co-workers from Nissan, Joe formed a group with other manufacturers and suppliers, meeting after hours to develop a business case they ultimately presented to management, making the case for why offering domestic partner benefits was the right thing to do.

The beautiful PowerPoint presentation did not have any effect until Joe reached out to Alan Gilmore, the retired Chief Financial Officer of the Ford Motor Company. Alan had retired, then been publicly outed, but then Ford hired him back on an interim basis, making him something of a poster child for LGBTQ+ concerns in the industry.

When Alan was speaking at a New York conference run by mba.org—a trade association for LGBTQ+ MBA students, Alan reached out to conference organizers, and arranged to get 30 minutes with Alan.

When Joe asked why they could not we get traction with the business case, Alan answered that they were doing everything wrong.

The executives don’t need to see why this is the right thing to, he said, they need to know how joining this cause would help them sell cars.

This lit a light bulb for Joe, and it became the basis for a business plan for gaywheels.com: talk about cars in lan-

the LGBTQ+ awareness of the auto market, and let auto makers see that there was a demographic they were not reaching, with interests they were not responding to.

In 2005, Joe quit his job at Nissan, cashed in his 401k, and started the magazine. Ironically, Nissan started to offer domestic partner benefits shortly after he left, then Honda. Toyota already had them.

The site was a little bit of a gamble based on a hunch, but it put gaywheels in a position to exert some leverage in the industry. By writing articles for the GLBT consumer, as they were called at the time, and by gathering key data points about their audience and their interests, gaywheels was building a demographic analysis of the market the automakers were not touching.

Gaywheels started as an activist site, with car reviews with LGBTQ+ flair, providing a service to consumers, but the site did not have immediate success. The first time Joe went to the Detroit Auto Show, his gaywheels badge elicited laughter from an auto executive, but a few years later, executives could not ignore the reception he was getting from a gaggle of gay automotive journalists.

That’s when they started to listen, he says, when they saw him proving himself as a business person.

Gaywheels was also shining a light on the industry. By building an audience with about 60K visitors a month, gaywheels was letting their audience know who they LGBTQ+-friendly automakers and





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suppliers were, based on who provided domestic partner benefits for their employees. That list was not long in the beginning, but as the community grew, so did the pressure on automakers and on advertisers as well. If they wanted to be 'certified business partners,' they had to walk the walk on LGBTQ+ rights. There were times when major auto makers offered to submit cars for test drives and reviews, but Joe told them that he would not write about them until the companies could be considered LGBTQ+-friendly.

To help drive his point home, Joe developed surveys to gather data that did not exist. He had worked in market research at Toyota and at Nissan, parsing out psychographic, ethnographic, and demographic analyses. He built a survey anyone in the industry would respect, and ran it through partner sites. This gave him really good data about LGBTQ+ consumers, which he presented to car companies yearly, helping them understand the behavioral and attitudinal approach to LGBTQ+ community. In addition to helping buyers understand terminology and technical jargon, the site showed automakers the flimsiness of the LGBTQ+ stereotypes. The data showed that LGBTQ+ buyers are smart, and understand horsepower and torque and all the technical bells and whistles, but also that they were regular people from all walks of life, who shopped for minivans, big turbo crossovers, and, the most researched vehicle: pickup trucks. Aside from a few general stereotypes—lesbians were highly represented with Priuses, gays preferred style and design above function—the LGBTQ+ population looked just like the general population—except that they also paid close attention to how companies treat them, and treat their



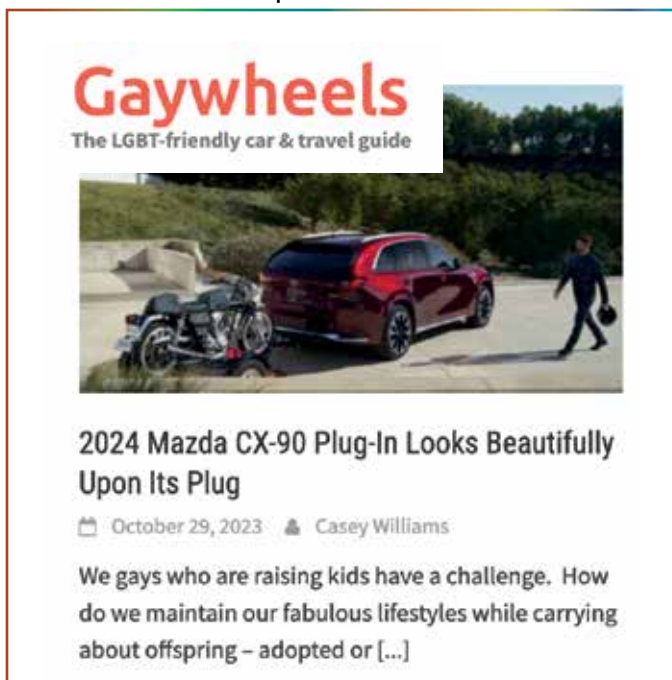
community.

Casey Williams, a writer for gaywheels, says that the site was part of a movement that was complemented by the UAW and other unions, who also pressured automakers and parts suppliers to include domestic benefits, and even since 2008 when he started writing for gaywheels, he has seen real movement on the issue. GM, Ford, and Chrysler all got pressure from the UAW in the late 90s to early 2000s. Saab came around as well, and Subaru took the next step and started an LGBTQ+-friendly ad campaign before anyone.

Following this success, gaywheels pivoted to create an LGBTQ+-friendly dealer locator, which required that dealers have an LGBTQ+ employee to handle their traffic, and the site has expanded its networks to include other sites, spreading the market pressure of recognizable LGBTQ+-friendly policies through business partnerships, advertising relationships, and reciprocal links to other magazines and local and regional media who shared or linked to gaywheels content.

Casey says that he has seen the culture shift first-hand. Before 2005, automakers did not offer partner benefits, and did not want gays in the showroom. Auto people did not know how to embrace employees and shoppers. Now, in the manufacturing floors he visits in his quality control role, no one pays any attention when team leads are lesbians. For the duration of his career, he says, if he was out, and anyone was saying bad things, it would not go well for those people.

By the time Joe left gaywheels to Casey and others in 2010 (the site was suffering in the af-



## GAYWHEELS—THE STORY OF AN ACTIVIST

termath of the 2008 collapse, the auto industry bankruptcies) the site was still bringing in 60K visitors a month, and the list of LGBTQ+-friendly automakers now contains almost all the brands you would recognize.

Now Casey says that at press events most journalists are LGBTQ+-friendly and vehicle launches and test drives reviews are written, 50% by female journalists. Casey says that there are lots of journalists and automaker reps who are out. The LGBTQ+ community has won this anti-climactic victory: it's simply not a big deal when someone's out and works for an automaker.

Looking back at the gaywheels period in his life, Joe is proud of the culture change gaywheels was part of. He says that he worries less about the means to the end, and thinks more strategically about using whatever leverage he can build, to pressure the industry to change. One other lever the site used was a Headlights section, which profiled people within the industry. Joe says that the section humanized the site, and he got feedback from visitors who would say that the site helped them come out to their family, or even to find a place in the LGBTQ+ community, where an interest in cars could be isolating. "If I get hit by a truck tomorrow," Joe says, "I know I changed the marketplace."

Joe is currently running communications for Hyundai in Savannah now, and is known to sing his co-workers happy birthday in the office—in an inflatable unicorn suit. He has bought the domain name unicornwranglers.com, and may start a communications consultancy under that banner, with the logo of a honey badger riding a unicorn. Casey and the other writers are trying to determine with what to do next, to grow the audience and evolve the movement. They have turned to networking with LGBTQ+ reps at automakers, to find new ways to ensure that car culture maintains strong relations with the LGBTQ+ community. 🏳️‍🌈

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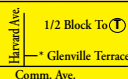
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