



## Pittsburgh Pride 2026 Defies Expectations, Draws Record-Breaking Crowds

Despite early funding concerns, Pittsburgh Pride 2026 weekend drew 300,000 attendees, setting records for festival vendors and parade participation.

After months of uncertainty surrounding funding, Pittsburgh Pride 2026 delivered one of the most successful celebrations in the event's history.

Estimates put attendance at more than 300,000 people who attended Pride festivities throughout the weekend, making it one of the largest LGBTQ+ events ever held in the region. The festival also featured the highest number of vendors in its history and the largest number of registered marching contingents ever to participate in the Pittsburgh Pride parade.

The achievement comes after concerns



Photo by Maya Lovro.

earlier this year about reduced sponsorship and financial support. Despite those challenges, community members, businesses, organizations, performers, and volunteers came together to create a weekend that exceeded expectations.

Even the rain on Saturday failed to dampen spirits. Crowds filled festival grounds throughout both days, and

and attendance remained strong despite the weather. By Sunday, the celebration was packed, with thousands lining parade routes and gathering throughout Downtown Pittsburgh and the North Side for performances, community programming, and festivities.

The record turnout underscored the resilience of Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ community at a time when queer and trans communities across the country continue to face political attacks and growing uncertainty. Rather than retreat, Pittsburgh showed up in force.

Pittsburgh Pride 2026 demonstrated that while funding challenges may create obstacles, community support remains stronger than ever. If attendance, participation, and visibility are any indication, Pride in Pittsburgh continues to grow not just in size, but in significance.

## Questions mount after Monroeville Library Pride display removed following community support

Residents are seeking answers after an LGBTQ+-inclusive children's book display disappeared from the Monroeville Public Library days after dozens of community members spoke in its defense at a packed library board meeting.

An LGBTQ+-inclusive Pride Month display in the children's section of the Monroeville Public Library has been removed, prompting questions from residents about how the decision was made and whether municipal officials played a role.

Photos taken after the display was...

Continue reading on pg. 4



QBURGH is your source for LGBTQ news & community resources in Pittsburgh and the tri-state region.

### They Missed It

As some companies stepped back from Pittsburgh Pride, more than 300,000 people showed up.

pg. 6

### Support for LGBTQ+ rights has dipped.

#### What changed?

Republicans' views of same-sex couples are similar to what they were in 2005.

pg. 9

### Faces & Places

Did QBURGH photographers Ava Grace, Maya Lovro, and Alexis Giger capture you at Pride?

pg. 13



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## Who Gets to Be a Drag Queen? Andi Whorehol Is Changing the Answer

When Andi Whorehol was crowned Miss Blue Moon, she became the first cisgender lesbian to hold a major Pittsburgh drag title and sparked conversations about who gets to be a queen.

By Josie Byzek  
Courtesy photos.

When I think of drag, I think of a gay man dressed in over-the-top feminine costumes, making risqué jokes or lip-syncing to a famous diva. Often a friend, they're campy and naughty up to a certain line. But usually, under all that mascara, they are AMAB.

So, when QBurgh asked me to interview the first lesbian drag queen who won a Pittsburgh pageant title, I was intrigued. "Want to go with me to the Soft Spot while I interview a woman who dresses like a man dressing like a woman?" I asked my wife.

It was Riot Grrrls night and Fiona Apple blared in the background about needing a good defense when I met Andi Whorehol. At 6 foot 3 inches, she towered over me. We sat on the sofa near the TV in back and she shared her drag journey.

"I'm so honored to be the first lesbian to hold a major bar title in Pittsburgh," said Andi. "I've wanted to see this type of representation since I started drag, but I never would have guessed that I would end up becoming that representation for so many other people."

Specifically, she is the first AFAB cisgender lesbian queen to hold a major Pittsburgh drag title, and ain't that a mouthful? Let's break it down. AFAB means 'assigned female at birth' and by now most of us know that 'cisgender' means your gender matches the sex you were assigned at birth.

"I know many people are uncomfortable with the bioessentialism of 'AFAB,'" she

says. "I don't think anyone's art or identity should be reduced to their assigned sex at birth. But I think, at the moment, it's a for-lack-of-a-better-word term. At worst, we're excluded. At best, we're tokenized." 'Bioessentialism' is the idea that biological characteristics determine who we are, what we can do, and all that nonsense that biology is somehow destiny.



### I Can Be a Queen?

Andi has always been drawn to people who play with gender, and thought if she ever did drag, it would have to be as a king, the binary corollary to drag queen. Then she met a cisgender female drag queen from Florida and was intrigued.

"I'm a girl, and when I found out I could be a queen I said, 'oh my goodness, I'm so excited! I love this,' and I immediately started," she says. After all, she likes theater and guessed she could get into makeup. "And then the rest is performance stuff."

During the lonely COVID years, she worked on her makeup and once society began opening up again, she hit the bars and met other drag artists. "The pandemic definitely speed-launched my drag career, because in my first year of doing drag, I hosted an open stage weekly with another person. Then I performed at the Warhol Museum, started getting lots of bookings, and that is not the norm," she says.

You'd think those gigs are how she chose her drag name, but no. "I was driving home

from a pumpkin patch with a friend and saw a billboard for the Warhol Museum and I said, what about Andi?" Up until that moment she toyed around with becoming Polly Pickpocket, "But then I found out that somebody else had it."

### The Lady Elephant in the Room

Obviously, there are not all that many drag queens who are born and identify as female as it's been traditionally a gay male or AMAB genre for decades. So, let's look at that history. First, for a long time, men played women in performances because women were not allowed to be on stage. By a long time, I mean from ancient Greece up to about 1660. And even after that, it was highly discouraged until only about 100 years ago.

Yet in many non-Western cultures, gender wasn't as binary as Europeans tried to make it. The Zuni people of New Mexico recognized a third gender called lhamana. We'wha, a lhamana who lived in the 1800s, even visited President Grover Cleveland in Washington, D.C. The Bugis of Indonesia traditionally recognize five distinct genders. Zoom in on 19th century United States, and "drag balls" began occurring, most often in Black and immigrant communities. By the late 20th century, drag was central to gay male culture. The bars, the people, all of it was already illegal, so why not? Why not have fun messing up gender concepts?

That bit about being outlawed runs through all of this. In 1969, famously, trans women, drag queens, and gay men fought back against police who'd come to beat and arrest them – again – at the Stonewall Inn. And butch lesbians, too, which isn't always mentioned ... for some reason. Cross-dressing was illegal for everyone, after all.

Which brings us back to contemporary drag. It is performance, but also a lifestyle, and the gender-blending is mostly in the direction of masculine to feminine.

But that's changing. It's opening up. It's transforming.

And not everyone is comfy with that.

*continue reading on pg. 3*



*(Who Gets to Be a Drag Queen... con't)*

## Red Latex Meat for the Masses

When Andi won her Miss Blue Moon title in February 2026, there were grumbles. Andi discusses the pushback diplomatically.



"I mean, me and some of the OGs are beefing, but that's fine. The beef is because I was not some people's winner," she says. "It has been taken out on me, but that's how I know that I'm trailblazing, because treading through uncharted waters should never be smooth." She promises to make waves as long as she has a platform, "because life is not about comfortability and that's not how we evolve."

Of course, many others were happy. Plus, she won in a dress styled to look like a whole lot of raw red meat, ala Lady Gaga.

"THERE IS A AFAB HUMAN REIGNING AS MISS BLUE MOON," gushed Margaret Halo, her fellow drag artist and dressmaker, on Instagram. "When I first started drag, AFABs weren't even allowed a packet for the pageant ... this is major. This is herstory made for Pittsburgh drag. ... Go scream that shit from the rooftops."

Andi matched Margaret's energy.

"The second that I won it was immediately, let's go lesbians, this is the year of the Dyke! And that is very much in my platform — I'm trying to make sure that the shows I host reflect all of the different talent and personalities we have in the city. There are shows probably seven days a week in Pittsburgh, so there's not really an excuse not to have POC performers, AFAB performers, trans performers," says Andi. "It doesn't make sense to have these weird old-school shows when this city is so progressive in that way and there are so many talented individuals."

## Dress Like an AFAB Queen

To achieve her winning look, Andi will at times wear as many as five to seven pairs of tights. She'll add on hip pads, and sadly must often wear a bra. But she tries not to get nailed down into one specific look.

"My aesthetic is all over the place. I love to do so many things, and I never want to feel trapped in just like one set way of doing drag," she says. "Like today, I just posted pictures of me dressed up as a clown. I like to do it all and make sure that I'm exploring all of my options always, and expanding upon it."

Her Kaufmo the Clown creation made an appearance during Pride weekend at a lesbian takeover of P\*Town bar. And she's currently planning her 29th birthday bash, a show about celebrities who will always be younger than her. "Like, gone-too-soon celebrities," she says. Then self-deprecatingly adds, "I love being stupid."

Andi is a powerful role model for others, reclaiming women's ability to play ... well ... women.

"I've had a couple of lesbians who wanted to get into performing ask me advice," she says. "And I always try to give the best advice possible: go see shows, go to drag, go to open stages. Be loud, be proud, and don't let them forget about you."

And, most importantly, she has a message for our entire rainbow queer community: "If you aren't feeling represented on our stages, it may be because we've been waiting for YOU to be that representation."

Catch Andi on Instagram at @theandiwhorehol, and watch her live at Blue Moon on Butler. Her next show is June 27th, with dates through December. For more lesbian shows, Steel Carabiner runs the first and third Thursday of every month at Blue Moon, SZR and Crush Hour bring monthly dance parties and happy hours, and both the Soft Spot, Pittsburgh's only sapphic café, and Harold's Haunt, Millvale's they-bar, are there when you need a place to land.



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### Monroeville residents rally behind library Pride display after councilman's criticism

(continued from pg. 1)

...dismantled show shelves that previously featured dozens of LGBTQ+-inclusive children's books sitting empty beneath a "Love Is Love" sign. Left standing on the display was a single children's title: The Day the Books Disappeared.

The removal comes just days after dozens of residents, parents, educators, and LGBTQ+ advocates attended the Monroeville Public Library Board meeting to defend the display after Monroeville Ward 4 Councilman Bill Krut publicly criticized it on social media.

In a Facebook post, Krut questioned whether the books should be available to children and described the display as "child, sexual grooming."

At the June 22 library board meeting, community members overwhelmingly expressed support for the display, with speakers sharing personal stories about growing up without LGBTQ+ representation, raising children in LGBTQ+ families, and

the importance of public libraries reflecting the diversity of the communities they serve. The display featured age-appropriate children's and middle-grade books about LGBTQ+ families, Pride, acceptance, belonging, and history, including The GayBCs, Prince & Knight, Pride Puppy!, My Two Moms, My Two Dads, Sparkle Boy, A Kids Book About Gay Parents, and The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Streets.

### Questions about a reported council vote

The display's removal has also sparked questions about reports that Monroeville Council voted to remove it.

Monroeville resident Nicole Scott wrote on social media that community members Paul Hajdukiewicz and Don Ammon spoke with Municipal Manager Alex Graziani and were told council had voted 4-3 in favor of removing the display. According to Scott's account, the reported majority included Councilmembers Joseph Hyzy (Ward 1), Bill Krut (Ward 4), Mike Adams (Ward 5), and Bob Williams (Ward 6).



QBurgh has not independently verified that such a vote occurred, and no public record of a council vote on the library display has been identified.

The reported vote has drawn scrutiny because Monroeville Council's publicly advertised meeting schedule does not appear to include a meeting where such action could have

been taken. Council's last regular meeting was held on June 9, before the controversy surrounding the Pride display began, and the next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, July 7.

As of publication, QBurgh has not identified a publicly noticed council meeting between those dates at which council could have voted on removing the display.

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(Monroeville... con't'd)



If a vote did occur, residents are asking when it took place, whether it complied with Pennsylvania's open meeting requirements, what authority council exercised over the library display, and why the public was not informed.

Scott also questioned whether comments made by some council members regarding the library's municipal funding may have influenced the display's removal.

"The people of Monroeville deserve a full explanation," Scott wrote. "If there was a council vote, when did it occur? Was it public? Why wasn't the community informed?"

### Community Plans Another Show of Support

Rather than allowing the controversy to end with the removal of the display, residents are organizing another show of support for the library.

Families are encouraging children to create drawings, letters, and notes describing what the Monroeville Public Library means to them. The messages will be delivered during Monroeville Council's next scheduled meeting on Tuesday, July 7, at 7 p.m. at the Monroeville Municipal Building.

Organizers say the effort is intended to recognize the library's staff and children's department while demonstrating community support for intellectual freedom, inclusive public spaces, and the library's mission to serve all residents.

QBurgh has reached out to Monroeville Municipal officials seeking clarification on several questions, including who directed

library staff to remove the Pride display? Was the display removed as part of a routine rotation or because of the recent controversy? Did Monroeville Council vote on the display? If so, when and at what public meeting? What authority, if any, does council have over library displays?

This story will be updated as additional information becomes available.

Krut, who represents Monroeville's Ward 4 on council, is next scheduled to appear on the ballot when his seat comes up for reelection in November 2027.

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## Empty Convertible Honors Late Pittsburgh Pride Grand Marshal Kathi Boyle

Among the vehicles carrying grand marshals at the Pittsburgh Pride Parade this year, one convertible traveled the parade route without a passenger.

The empty vehicle was included in honor of Kathi Boyle, a longtime community leader and 2011 Pittsburgh Pride Grand Marshal who died on May 31, just days before the start of Pittsburgh Pride.

Organizers reserved a place for Boyle in the procession, positioning the unoccupied convertible alongside the vehicles carrying this year's grand marshals. The tribute served as both a memorial and a recognition of Boyle's lasting impact on Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ community.

The symbolism of an empty place in a ceremonial procession has a long history. In military funerals, a riderless horse is often used to honor a fallen leader whose place remains recognized. Pittsburgh Pride organizers employed a similar gesture, using the empty convertible to represent a community member whose contributions continue to be remembered.

Rather than separating the memorial from the celebration, the tribute incorporated Boyle directly into the parade's opening procession. The reserved space acknowledged her role in



Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ history and the work of past generations of LGBTQ+ leaders who helped build the community celebrated today. For many spectators, the vehicle offered a quiet moment of reflection amid the music, color, and festivities that filled the parade route. While Pride is a celebration of visibility, resilience, and community, the tribute also highlighted the importance of remembering those whose leadership helped make those celebrations possible.

By reserving a place among the grand marshals, organizers ensured Boyle's presence was felt throughout the parade. The empty convertible served as a visible reminder that although she was no longer able to participate in the event, her place in Pittsburgh Pride history remains.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 11.



# They Missed It.



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not a special interest group. Three hundred thousand people is a city-sized gathering of LGBTQ people, families, friends, neighbors, coworkers, customers, and voters.

For one weekend, those hundreds of thousands of people saw which organizations showed up and which ones didn't.

The sponsors who stood with Pittsburgh Pride didn't just put their logos on banners. They invested in a community gathering that became one of the largest Pride celebrations our region has ever seen.

Their names were visible. Their support was visible. Their commitment was visible.

The companies that stepped back missed all of that. They missed the goodwill. They missed the visibility. They missed the opportunity to demonstrate that their values extend beyond a marketing strategy.

Most of all, they missed the chance to be part of a historic moment.

This year's Pride was never ultimately

defined by who didn't show up. It was defined by who did. The organizers who kept working. The volunteers who gave their time. The performers who took the stage. The vendors who believed in the event. The marchers who filled the streets. And the hundreds of thousands of people who proved that Pride remains one of the most powerful community gatherings in Western Pennsylvania.

Back in May, I wrote that Pride is built, not bought. This year, Pittsburgh proved it. But let's also be honest about what happened. The companies that pulled back didn't diminish Pride. They diminished their own presence in one of the largest public celebrations our city has.

**Pittsburgh Pride moved forward without them. And judging by the crowds, the community did too.**

With pride,

Jim Sheppard  
Co-Creator  
QBurgh

As some companies stepped back from Pittsburgh Pride, more than 300,000 people showed up. The sponsors who stayed became part of a historic moment.

By Jim Sheppard  
Photo by Maya Lovro.

A few months ago, Pittsburgh Pride was facing a question nobody wanted to ask. Would there be enough support? Corporate sponsorship was down. Organizers warned of funding shortfalls. Community members worried about what might be cut, scaled back, or lost altogether.

The conversation quickly became about absence. Who wasn't sponsoring? Who wasn't returning calls? Who was quietly stepping away?

Today, we have our answer.

More than 300,000 people participated in Pittsburgh Pride weekend. The festival saw record attendance, record vendor participation, and the largest number of parade contingents in its history.

Even the rain and heat couldn't keep people away.

And as I watched the crowds fill our streets, parks, and festival grounds, I couldn't help but think about all the companies that chose not to be there. Not because they were obligated to be, but because they missed an opportunity.

Over the last few years, we've watched a growing number of corporations retreat from public support of LGBTQ communities. Some cite budget concerns. Others remain silent. Many seem content to wait and see whether supporting queer and trans people has become politically inconvenient.

What Pittsburgh Pride demonstrated is that our community isn't going anywhere. Three hundred thousand people is not a niche audience. Three hundred thousand people is



# 20 Years Later, Pittsburgh Dykes Keep Marching On

By Jami Gagnon  
Photo by Jaye Frances Imagery.

The first Dyke March in the United States was held in 1993 in Washington, D.C. by political organizers such as the Lesbian Avengers, as a way to speak out against lesbian erasure and other intersectional issues within the larger queer rights movement. The message spoke to the 20,000 people who attended that year, and sparked other Dyke Marches across the country, including in Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York City. This movement inspired the Pittsburgh dyke activists who attended some of these marches in later years to bring this protest to the Steel City.

“We wanted to take up more space at Pride in a confrontational way,” Colelea (they/them), one of the organizers of the first Dyke March, said. “The word ‘dyke’ means that you can’t be apolitical. It’s an inherently political identity.”

Colelea, alongside organizers Khalia Latte and Eli Kuti, banded together with organizers from the Lesbian Avengers and other activist groups, as well as queer event producers, to form the first coalition for the Pittsburgh Dyke March. In 2005, this coalition forcibly joined the Pittsburgh Pride March as the Dyke Contingent, as a direct response to the way marginalized queer individuals were treated within the larger community.

One year later, on Friday, June 16, 2006, the inaugural Pittsburgh Dyke March stepped off in Oakland. The march experienced some homophobic fraternity brothers who threw rocks at them along the route, but it didn’t deter the marchers from finishing the route and returning for the next several years. Estimates put the number of attendees at the inaugural March at 125, including those who traveled from rural areas to Pittsburgh.

The Dyke March continued to be a Pittsburgh tradition until 2019. It returned post-COVID lockdown in 2023, this time in Bloomfield under new organizers.

Colelea had returned to her hometown after living in California for a few years to find,

to their shock and joy, that the Dyke March kept going, and did not back down from its political and radical messaging.

“I cried,” they said. “I had no idea that there were that many people [who were still marching]. I was so excited about how many people were involved in organizing it.”

For the new organizers of the Dyke March, it was important to honor Pride and the

Dyke March’s legacy as a protest and outcry against injustice. Last year’s message behind the Dyke March was speaking out against the genocide in Gaza. This year’s message is ICE Out, in a direct response to the Trump administration’s ramped-up attacks against Black and brown communities across the country.

*continue reading on pg. 8*



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*(Dyke March cont'd)*

“Pride and liberation for dykes requires solidarity with all of these different movements,” said Surya Ramachandran (they/them), one of the organizers from the 2026 Dyke March. “People are relatively more okay with seeing a party, and then when you demand your rights, they don’t like it so much.”

With transphobic attacks at the federal level, as well as the local level, with former Allegheny County Council President Pat Morena’s transphobic mailer to constituents, it makes the Dyke March’s message of transgender and intersectional solidarity even more critical.

“It’s definitely a little scary to [organize a Dyke March in the current political climate], but that’s why it’s even more important that we show up,” Danielle Shellgren (she/they), another 2026 Dyke March organizer, said. “We deserve to have a Pride event that’s a protest and a community event. We deserve to have our message heard and to have fun. We owe it to ourselves and our community.”

The 20th Dyke March was held again in Bloomfield on Saturday, June 6. Hundreds

of dykes and their friends showed up with masks, water, signs, and flags to celebrate and demand queer liberation as they marched down Liberty Avenue. The route ended with the Dyke Bash under the Bloomfield Bridge, where there were vendors, organization tables, dancing, food, and pure queer joy.

For two marchers, Monica and Patience, this march and Dyke Bash was their wedding reception. The couple got married at the Calvary Episcopal Church in Shadyside a few hours before the Dyke March stepped off.

“My wife and I are longtime community organizers, so we wanted to share our wedding day with all of the dykes who make Pittsburgh feel like home,” said Patience.

“At the start of the march, the whole crowd started cheering when they saw us. And most of these people had never met us, but it didn’t matter—they were cheering for trans dyke love, for trans dykes looking beautiful, for trans dykes fighting for a happily ever after, not just for ourselves but for our whole community.”

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# Support for LGBTQ+ rights has dipped. What changed?

Republicans' views of same-sex couples are now similar to what they were between 2005 and 2014.

By Orion Rumlmer

Americans' support for LGBTQ+ rights has slid downward after peaking in the early 2020s, according to a new Gallup poll.

Support for marriage equality has been steadily declining since it reached an all-time high of 71 percent in 2022. Now, 65 percent of Americans believe same-sex marriages should be valid. Broader support for LGBTQ+ people also continues to dip: 62 percent of Americans believe that gay or lesbian relationships are morally acceptable, compared with 71 percent in 2022.

What's changed? In the past five years, anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric has become a staple of both state and federal politics, as conservatives accuse queer and trans people of influencing children's identities in schools, sports and hospitals. Politicians including President Donald Trump have spent millions on campaign ads attacking transgender people, while conservative groups and super PACs push out their own anti-LGBTQ+ ads. Nearly 50 organizations have launched a new campaign lobbying to end marriage equality, despite the Supreme Court showing little to no interest in revisiting its landmark 2015 ruling.

The dip in support for LGBTQ+ rights comes largely from Republicans. In 2021 and 2022, Gallup found that 55 percent of Republicans supported same-sex marriage, but now only 37 percent do. In 2022, over half of Republicans found gay or lesbian relationships to be morally acceptable; now 35 percent feel that way.

Other markers of LGBTQ+ acceptance are also waning: A recent study from the

Williams Institute, a think tank at UCLA Law, found that HIV stigma has increased in recent years despite significant progress in treatment and prevention. More adults feel fear and blame toward people living with HIV than they did only a few years ago, and a higher share of adults have at least one stigmatizing belief about people with HIV. Conservatives expressed the most stigma.

According to Gallup, Republicans' views of same-sex couples are similar to what they were between 2005 and 2014 — essentially turning back the clock on LGBTQ+ acceptance.

In a statement, the Human Rights Campaign, the country's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy group, said that backlash against the LGBTQ+ community has had only limited success.

"Marriage equality is still backed by two-thirds of the American public, our federal protections are codified through the Respect for Marriage Act, and more than 800,000 same-sex couples are in loving marriages all

across this country. This is exactly why Pride, our visibility, and our stories matter now more than ever. We will not let extremists define who we are or who we love," said Jarred Keller, senior press secretary at the Human Rights Campaign.

These cultural shifts are also affecting how Pride month is recognized. This year, Republican governors across several states — including Indiana, Tennessee and Alabama — have rebranded June as a month to celebrate heterosexual marriage and families, the Associated Press reports. But those proclamations aren't stopping local parties: In Birmingham, Nashville, and Indianapolis, Pride is already in full swing.

*This story was originally reported by our partners at The 19th.*

## In Memoriam: DJ Billy Sandor & Miss Vivian

DJ Billy Sandor and Miss Vivian Semanick spent decades helping define Pittsburgh's LGBTQ nightlife, leaving behind generations of memories, music, laughter, and chosen family.

In June, Pittsburgh's LGBTQ community lost two beloved figures whose presence shaped generations of nightlife, friendship, and chosen family. Though they left very different legacies, DJ Billy Sandor and Miss Vivian Semanick shared one thing in common: for decades, they helped make Pittsburgh's LGBTQ community feel like home.

### DJ Billy Sandor

William P. "Billy" Sandor passed away peacefully on June 16 at the age of 77.

For more than five decades, Billy was one of the defining soundtracks of Pittsburgh's LGBTQ nightlife. Beginning his career at the Holiday Bar in 1969, he went on to DJ at many of the city's most beloved gay bars and clubs, including the Tender Trap, Norreh, Blue Moon, Pegasus, Images, and other venues that became gathering places for generations of LGBTQ Pittsburghers. He was also a familiar face at community events, including the annual Memorial Day picnics in North Park.

Friends remember Billy not only as an exceptional DJ, but as a mentor, storyteller, and someone who always made newcomers feel welcome. Whether spinning extended disco mixes, sharing stories from Pittsburgh's nightlife history, or introducing people to new music, Billy created spaces where people could dance, celebrate, and simply be themselves.

The outpouring of memories following his passing reflects the extraordinary impact he had on the community. Friends recalled meeting him while they were newly out, receiving encouragement as young DJs, and dancing to his music through every era of

*continue reading on pg. 10*



*(In Memoriam... cont'd)*

Pittsburgh's gay nightlife. Many described him as a legend whose influence stretched across generations.

**A celebration of Billy's life will be held at P Town Bar on Sunday, July 12, from 4 to 7 p.m.** A donation station will be available at the family's request to help fulfill Billy's final wish of being laid to rest with his mother.

### Miss Vivian Semanick

Vivian Semanick passed away on June 7 at the age of 67.

Vivian became one of the most beloved personalities in Pittsburgh's gay nightlife. From the 1970s through the 2000s, she was embraced as family by generations of bar patrons, performers, and friends who knew that if Vivian was in the room, it was going to be a memorable night.

By day, Vivian worked for many years as a hairstylist in Bridgeville. By night, she

became a fixture everywhere from 2001 to Pegasus, Lucky's, Zack's 4th Avenue, the Norreh, and countless other clubs where Pittsburgh's LGBTQ community gathered. Friends remember Vivian for her infectious energy, her trademark "Meow!" greeting, spontaneous hugs, cheek kisses, bright red lipstick, signature perfume, and hilarious poems that people still recite decades later. She was known as someone who never simply walked into a room; she made an entrance. Whether dancing, voguing, or making everyone around her laugh, Vivian had a gift for making people feel welcome and celebrated.

Many shared memories of leaving the club with lipstick on their cheek, perfume on their clothes, and a smile on their face after one of Vivian's legendary hugs. Others remembered her kindness toward anyone who felt out of place, describing her as someone who made uncertain people feel seen, loved, and accepted.



Friends and loved ones will have an opportunity to celebrate Vivian's life during **visitation on Friday, August 7, from 3:30 to 6 p.m.** at Warchol Funeral Home in Bridgeville.

Vivian's family has asked that memorial donations be made to a cat rescue in her honor, reflecting her lifelong love of animals.

While Billy gave Pittsburgh its soundtrack and Vivian filled its dance floors with laughter, both helped create something far more lasting than a night out. They helped build a community.



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*From Philly:*  
**Masked police  
 attack LGBTQ+  
 community**

By Mark Segal, Philadelphia Gay News

Philadelphia police officers, some wearing masks, confronted and attacked members of the LGBTQ+ community gathered in the Gayborhood during Pride celebrations on June 7. Other officers deployed Tasers, while mounted officers and motorcycle units pushed community members into areas already confined by fencing erected by the city itself. Much of what occurred was captured on video and is readily available on social media.

The police response was, at best, unprepared. At worst, some officers appeared completely out of control.

The actions of a number of officers discredited their own department and undermined years of work by the Police Commissioner and many dedicated officers who have worked hard to build trust with the LGBTQ+ community. In a single afternoon, some of that trust was damaged.

To those officers whose actions crossed the line: Shame on you. You must be held accountable.

Now for the good news.

Mayor Cherelle Parker responded quickly by assigning her Director of LGBTQ Affairs, Tito Valdes, to review what happened and begin discussions between police leadership and community leaders. The goal is simple: open communication and begin repairing the damage caused by the disrespectful and, in some cases, excessive actions of certain officers.

To the Commissioner's credit, he has pledged to identify any officer who violated

department policies, ethics, or regulations and hold them accountable.

The question now is: How did this happen?

Earlier this year, Philly Pride 365 announced it would move its major Pride celebration to the Parkway because of concerns about crowd size and safety in the Gayborhood. With that move went much of the event planning expertise, security coordination, crowd management, and infrastructure necessary to safely handle large gatherings.

Unfortunately, no coordinated effort emerged to replace those safeguards in the Gayborhood. Instead, a private business organized a large outdoor dance event in a parking lot. Other businesses had permits to close off some streets, but not the main ones. Combined with fenced-off streets and thousands of attendees, the area became increasingly congested. When police attempted to clear the crowd, a tense situation quickly escalated into chaos.

We all want Pride to be joyful, vibrant and

welcoming. But we cannot allow profit and an unprepared police department to take precedence over public safety. Nor can we accept a police response that lacks sensitivity to our community and an understanding of what Pride represents.

The reality is that the Philadelphia Police Department still has work to do when it comes to LGBTQ+ relations. Ask LGBTQ+ officers themselves whether they always feel accepted and supported by fellow officers. There is an LGBTQ+ police organization, GOAL, whose members have long advocated for greater understanding and inclusion within the department. If LGBTQ+ officers do not always feel fully secure within their own ranks, how can the broader community be expected to feel secure?

The solution is not complicated: the department must earn back the trust of both the LGBTQ+ community and its LGBTQ+ officers. Those officers should be empowered to help educate colleagues on issues important

*continue reading on pg. 12*



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(Masked Police cont'd)  
to our community and to help shape policies affecting LGBTQ+ residents.

Imagine if LGBTQ+ officers had been part of the command structure that day, working directly with LGBTQ+ leaders, businesses and neighborhood organizations. The outcome might have been very different.

I know community leaders are willing to work toward solutions. I believe the Police Commissioner now understands that a problem exists. The next step is his.

Perhaps it is time to establish an LGBTQ+ advisory task force composed of community leaders and LGBTQ+ police officers. Such a group could provide guidance, improve communication and help ensure that future Pride celebrations are both safe and respectful.

Pride should never end with members of our community fearing those sworn to protect them.

*We can do better. And we must.*

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## In 'Leviticus,' the Real Monster Is Conversion Therapy

This acclaimed Australian horror film transforms religious trauma into one of the year's most unsettling cinematic experiences.

By Jason Van Ness, MSW, LSW

*Content warning: Light spoilers for the film and discussions of conversion therapy.*

Leviticus, directed by Adrian Chiarella, is a masterful entry into the horror genre, arriving during a summer in which horror films have dominated the domestic box office. While I doubt this film will make the same dent at the box office as other horror hits such as Obsession and Backrooms, it should be a major contender during the upcoming awards season. If not for the acting, then certainly for the artistry and craftsmanship on display in its cinematography. The fact that Neon acquired this low-budget Australian film so quickly following its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and gave it a wide release indicates it has all the elements of a strong awards campaign. The film is eerie, chilling, and at times difficult to watch. It also contains one of the most effective jump scares I have encountered in a very long time. Beneath the horror elements, however, is a vivid, albeit symbolic, commentary on conversion therapy.

What follows is another masterclass in horror filmmaking that will undoubtedly unsettle audiences—not simply because it is a horror film, but because of the underlying message it confronts: the belief that being LGBTQ+ is demonic.

As someone who has spent the past decade tracking the religious movements that demonize LGBTQ+ people in both the United States and abroad, I can say this film is a remarkably accurate depiction of the independent charismatic worship communities that increasingly dominate the religious right in America. These groups believe they are a righteous and specially chosen people, called by God to fight a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil.

In their worldview, anyone who is not straight or cisgender is possessed by demons. These are the same demons they believe poison the minds of those who reject their God or fail to embrace the rigid theological positions they hold.

The film's ending is realistic, disturbing, and heartfelt. In the final scene, Naim has one last encounter with the evil entity. Without saying a single word, he conveys a simple but powerful message: "I don't know her."

I would strongly recommend seeing this one in theaters if you can or catch it on Apple TV or Amazon Prime.



In the film, lead characters Ryan and Naim are both gay and fall in love with one another. Because they were raised in a fundamentalist religious community, their relationship cannot be accepted. An exorcist is ultimately brought in by Naim's mother, played by Mia Wasikowska. Unfortunately, the intervention results in an evil entity taking hold of both characters, effectively turning them against each other.

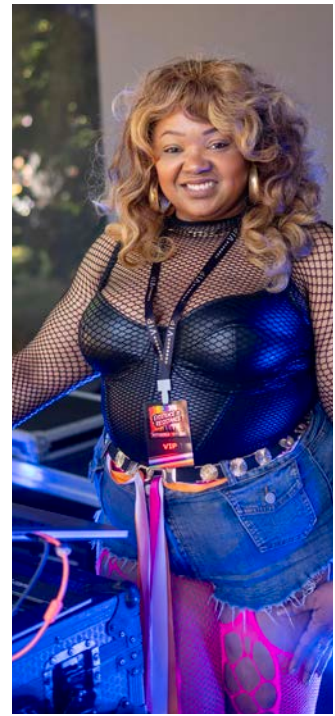
Ryan (Stacy Clausen) and Naim (Joe Bird) in Leviticus. Photo courtesy of Neon.



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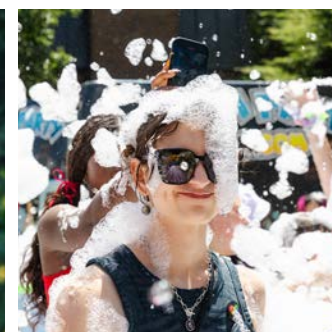
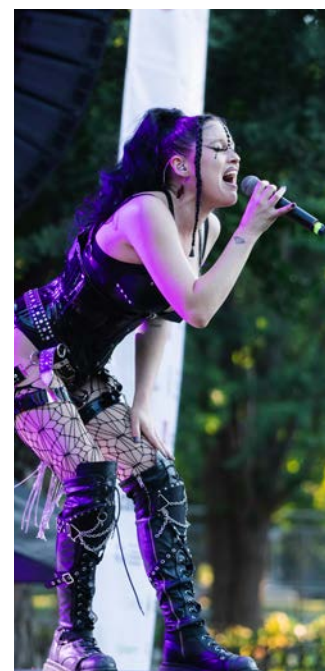
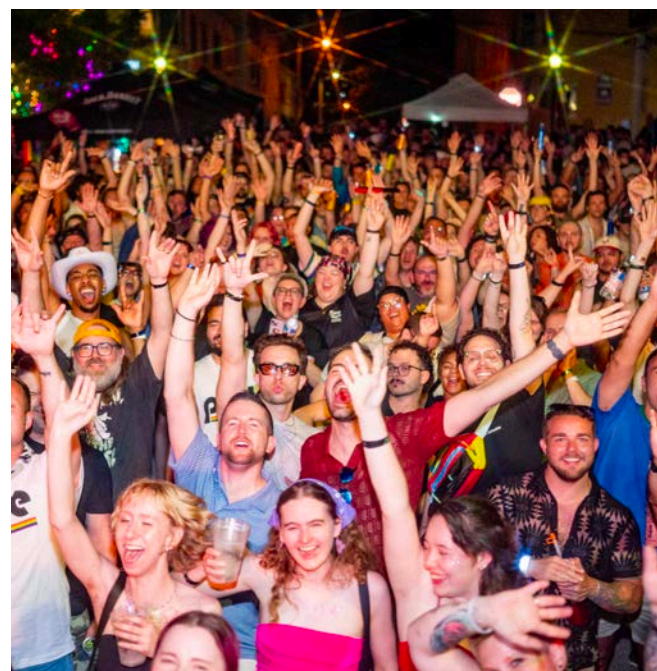
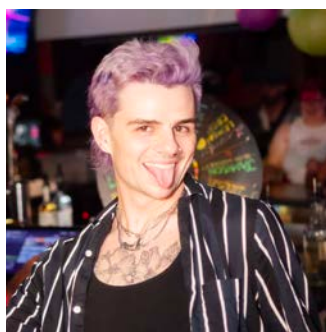
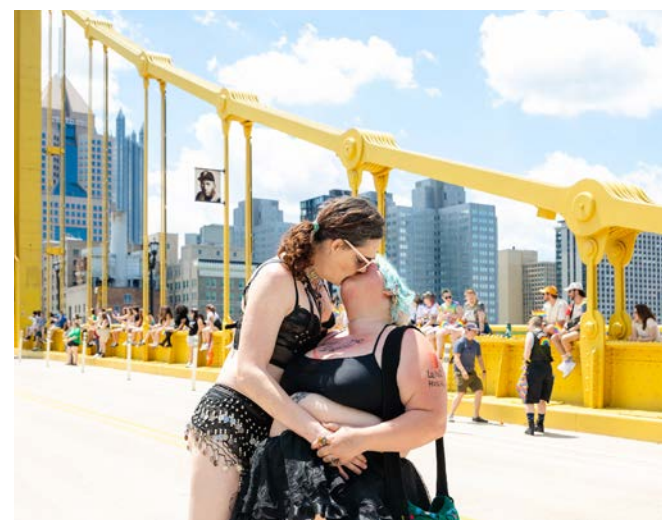
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# FACES & PLACES

Photos by Ava Grace, Maya Lovro, and Alexis Giger

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# WHAT'S QUEER AND GOING ON

**JULY**

**July 10 | DJ Georgie's Summer Dance Party**

*Babylon Morgantown*

**July 11 | Steel City Spooky Market**

*Allegheny Commons Park West*

**July 11 | Monroeville Pride 2026**

*Tall Trees Amphitheater, Monroeville  
Community Park West*

**July 11 | House Party: Mic Drop! 18th Benefit for Kelly Strayhorn Theater**

*Kelly Strayhorn Theater*

**July 13 | Monday Night Fever**

*P Town Bar*

**July 14 | Lesbianz in Space**

*Space Bar*

**July 16 | Eddieoke**

*P Town Bar*

**July 17 | Crush Hour**

*Jackworth Ginger Beer*

**July 18 | A Bob's Burger's Variety Show**

*the Soft Spot*

**July 18 | The Rocky Horror Picture Show**

*Row House Hollywood*

**July 22 - 26 | Pittsburgh Black Pride 2026**

**July 25 | SZR: Sapphic Day Party**

*5801 Video Lounge*

**July 25 | Furbowlaoke**

*AMF Bowling Co. Mt. Lebanon Lanes*

**July 31 | Sapphic Pool Club**

*Squirrel Hill Sports Bar*

**AUG.**

**August 2 | 4th Annual Big Gay River Float**

*Smithton Beach*

**August 4 | Cozy Vinyl Night**

*Harold's Haunt*

**August 8 | Big Bear Pool Party**

*West Penn Recreation Center*

**August 11 | Stay Gay Book Club**

*Stay Gold Books*

For more events and full event details

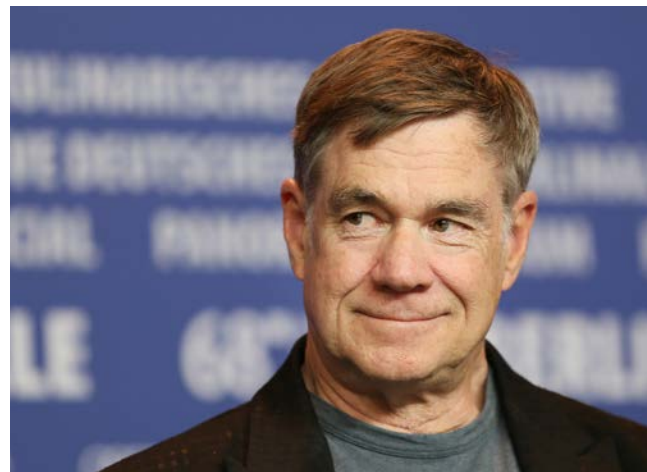
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## Deep Inside Hollywood

By Romeo San Vicente

**Gus Van Sant to turn Nicholas Galitzine into a supermodel cultist**



Gus Van Sant. Photo by Denis Makarenko.

Legendary gay filmmaker Gus Van Sant is currently in talks to direct a feature film about model Hoyt Richards. Don't know that name? He was widely known in the fashion world for being the highest paid male model of the 1980s and '90s. He worked in the same places as Cindy, Naomi and Linda and was the face of ad campaigns for Gianni Versace, Ralph Lauren and Valentino. Meanwhile, he also found himself part of a strange New Age cult of models called Eternal Values, a group that is currently the subject of the HBO docuseries "Bring Me the Beauties." Nicholas Galitzine ("Masters of the Universe," "Red, White & Royal Blue") has signed on to play Richards, who worked in front of the camera while giving lots of time and money to the cult and its leader behind the scenes. We assume the docuseries will inform the narrative when it eventually begins shooting and Van Sant strips away the glamour. More information to come as this project takes shape.

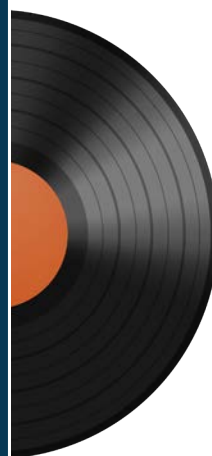
## François Arnaud hangs with Lindsay, Shailene and Superman

François Arnaud, queer breakout star of "Heated Rivalry," has a lot on his plate. He's just joined the cast of the Hulu limited series "Count My Lies," from "Love, Simon" writers Isaac Aptaker and Elizabeth Berger, in which he'll play friend to co-star Lindsay Lohan. The series is about a woman (Shailene Woodley) who untruths her way into working as a Nanny for Lohan and "Game of Thrones" alum Kit Harington. Turns out they live in a house full of readymade secrets, and their new pathological employee might be the match that lights it on fire. Arnaud will also be hitting Broadway in a revival of Richard Greenberg's acclaimed 1997 play "Three Days of Rain," to be directed by Tony Award winner Anna D. Shapiro ("Eureka Day"). Joining him there — it's also a family drama with secrets revealed — will be Yvonne Strahovski ("The Handmaid's Tale") and "Superman" star David Corenswet, with performances on track to begin in February of 2027. This should keep him busy until it's time put the skates back on for season two of "Rivalry."

## 'Dreams in Nightmares' ushers in Queer Cinema Autumn

It's been a packed Pride Month, with multiple queer indie films opening across the country in multiplexes and arthouses, from big releases like "Leviticus" and "Girls Like Girls," to smaller films like "She's the He," "Drunken Noodles," and more. Once June is over, though, more titles are coming to wrap up the summer and usher in fall. Among them is Shatara Michelle Ford's next (her first feature was the 2019 indie drama "Test Pattern"), a highly anticipated drama called "Dreams in Nightmares," which finds three queer Black friends on a road trip as they try to find a friend who's disappeared. The largely queer cast is impressive: Broadway star and Tony Award nominee Denée Benton ("Hamilton"), "Yellowjackets" star Jasmin Savoy Brown, Sasha Compere...

*continue reading on pg. 15*



## On Heavy Rotation

Every issue, we're asking LGBTQ+ artists, DJs, performers, and community leaders what's on repeat.

This month, iconic Pittsburgh DJ ROJO shares their five tracks to keep dance floors moving all summer long.

### ROJOS TOP 5

**I'm Every Woman - Whitney Houston**  
**Dream In Color - Regina Belle**  
**Can't Be Stopped - Janet Jackson**  
**Where Life Begins - Madonna**  
**Not About You - Honey Dijon**

DJs, Artists, Performers! Send us your top five heavy rotation and we might feature it next month!  
 Email us at [HeavyRotation@qburgh.com!](mailto:HeavyRotation@qburgh.com)



*(Deep Inside Hollywood cont'd)*

...("Single Drunk Female"), Charlie Barnett ("Chicago Fire"), Mars Storm Rucker ("A Strange Loop") and newcomer Dezi Bing. The film's been making the festival rounds to acclaim and will wisely begin its arthouse rollout in August and September, after the June deluge has had its time to shine. Seek it out.

### Reshaping 'Rocky Horror' for The Sphere

Las Vegas entertainment ball The Sphere has already struck gold once with its AI-altered and truncated version of "The Wizard of Oz." Now another classic film with special relevance to queer people is getting the tourist attraction treatment: "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" is coming to immerse your senses in 2027. The flop that became a cult and cinematic rite of passage for generations of LGBTQ+ audiences has, after 50 years, found its way to the Vegas

strip. What will be done to it in the process to satisfy the greatest number of people? There's no telling, especially when AI is thrown into the mix, and currently there's no news of what elements will be added or lost in the process. But the hopeful news is that the lead character is a "sweet transvestite from transsexual Transylvania" and nothing short of complete overhaul will be able to dilute that level of heroic queerness. Anybody want to lay bets on the rest?

*Romeo San Vicente's pelvic thrust will really drive you insane.*



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### Opinion

## The Trump Administration Is Drowning in Corruption, Still Has Time to Hurt Trans Kids

By D'Anne Witkowski

In an effort to thwart the rise of AI, I am choosing not to use a computer to write this week's column. I am, instead, writing it by hand using both manmade and natural materials. You will notice various shades of green and a certain American Flag Blue throughout.

That's right. I am writing on peeled scraps I've salvaged from the bottom of the Reflecting Pool in D.C. as well as whatever algae I could scrape from the surface of the water. It is both my most ambitious and most politically charged column to date.

I am, of course, kidding. I am nowhere near the Reflecting Pool geographically. And even if I were, I don't get paid enough to write this column to go through that kind of trouble (sorry, editors).

But Donald Trump would like us all to believe that there are some antifa agitators wading in the water, slicing through the newly redone bottom of the pool with large blades while others hurriedly dump algae into the pool.

"WOW, who would do such a thing?" Trump posted to Truth Social on June 21. "SICK, DERANGED PEOPLE!"

But, of course, the sick and deranged people who vandalized the Reflecting Pool are the people he paid millions of dollars to "fix" it. The Reflecting Pool, which Trump was in such a hurry to beautify before his big July 4th celebration, will not, in fact, be ready in time for America's 250th anniversary. So many millions of dollars literally poured down the drain.

In case there's any doubt, it's his fault. Obviously. The Reflecting Pool is just more blatantly obvious proof that Trump is corrupt, ignorant and incapable of accepting accountability.

And we're not even halfway through his second term. He's literally just getting started.

But don't worry. Trump isn't so busy destroying Washington D.C. landmarks that he can't find time for other policy priorities. Like making lives as hard as possible for transgender people.

Trump may be intent on dismantling the Department of Education Department, but as long as it's still around, he's keeping it busy investigating school districts that dare treat transgender students as fully human.

The latest schools targeted are in Michigan. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is investigating Ann Arbor Public Schools, Monroe Public Schools and the Chippewa Valley School District.

"OCR will determine whether the Districts violated Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) by allowing athletes to participate on boys' and girls' athletic teams and use locker rooms based on their self-professed 'gender identities,'" states a department press release. Title IX prohibits sex-based discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

That's right. OCR is being deployed against these schools for the crime of transgender kids playing sports. Is this OCR's purpose? To go after already marginalized kids? No. According to NPR, "OCR's staff of civil rights lawyers are tasked with protecting students in K-12 schools and universities from discrimination based on disability, gender, race and national origin."

Or they were before Trump, anyway. OCR clearly has other priorities now. Like policing kids' bodies.

They are literally investigating these school districts based on just a few kids.

*continue reading on pg. 16*



*(Trump Administration Opinion cont'd)*

“The government said it had received a complaint that Ann Arbor schools allowed a transgender girl to compete on one of its volleyball teams for girls and also allowed the girl to use female-only locker rooms,” reports the Detroit Free Press.

Imagine, for a moment, that you’re this kid. Or this kid’s family. And the full weight of the federal government is coming down on you for the crime of playing volleyball.

It’s a disgusting act of intimidation and abuse of power. But that’s what Trump does best.

It’s the same story in Monroe. The district is being investigated because their girls volleyball team played against another team that included a transgender player. And that player used the locker room. Oh, the horror. And in Chippewa Valley, a transgender athlete was also apparently allowed to use a locker room.

Given the small number of transgender students involved in this investigation, it’s quite possible that the same trans student is the subject or each one of these complaints. That’s how small the pool of trans high school athletes is in this country.

The Department of Education under Trump has decided that their most important role is not to protect the civil rights of students or to ensure that students with disabilities get the education they are entitled to. No. The purpose of this department is to terrorize transgender kids under the guise of protecting girls and girls sports.

May Trump, his entire administration and all who enable them wade into the Reflecting Pool and never again emerge.

# Queer Summer Reading List: LGBTQ+ reads for every shelf

Our picks for the summer stretch across generations, genres and shelves

By Sarah Bricker Hunt & Chris Azzopardi



The challenges of the current political era have inspired a strong wave of LGBTQ+ titles across every genre and age range, and our editors have been reading.

Below are the books we think deserve a place on your summer reading list — and honestly, on every other list, too. From Barry Walters’ sweeping history of queer music to AIDS-era ghost stories to a “Golden Girls” spinoff set in Palm Springs drag culture. For memoir, nonfiction, and younger-reader shelves, a landmark Black queer history of the United States to picture books, YA biography, and a cozy monster-hunting romantasy.

Whether you’re looking for a memoir that hits close to home, nonfiction that reframes what you thought you knew, or younger-reader titles for every age and shelf, there’s plenty of ground to cover.

*Most available to borrow from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.*

## Arts & Culture

**“Mighty Real: A History of LGBTQ Music, 1969-2000” by Barry Walters**

Barry Walters, who has written for the Village Voice, Spin and Rolling Stone, has spent his career writing about queer music from the inside. Here, he takes his cue from Sylvester’s euphoric “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)” to trace the full arc of LGBTQ+ music from Stonewall to RuPaul. In this sprawling deep dive, he moves from Lou Reed and David Bowie through the disco queens and homopunks in between, making the case that queer artists didn’t just contribute to pop history — they built it.

The book is full of moments like Bette Midler’s “Friends” becoming an unlikely AIDS-era anthem and Whitney Houston in her first and last major gay press interview with Houston speaking about the LGBTQ+ community as though she weren’t a part of it. “I can’t imagine her anguish in that moment,” Walters writes.

As Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys puts it, “Barry Walters has been writing about music

from an American queer perspective for five decades. This is his testament: a musical, personal and political history that explores and celebrates the LGBTQ+ contribution to popular music.”

**“Fire Island Art: 100 Years” edited by John Dempsey**

Flip through the pages of this first-ever art history of Fire Island and you might just feel the salt air. For nearly a century, the slender barrier island off the coast of Long Island has been a place where queer artists vacationed — and, in doing so, made it sacred. The archival materials editor John Dempsey has unearthed, many never before published, carry the particular ache of queer history: sun-drenched, hard-won and achingly beautiful. Front and center is PaJaMa — Paul Cadmus, Jared French and Margaret French — three painters who made Fire Island the backdrop of their intertwined lives in the late 1930s and ’40s, and whose tender, unhurried images feel like stolen glimpses into a world that wasn’t supposed to be seen.

Fifteen chapters, each by a leading art writer, trace the overlapping circles of friends and collaborators who shaped the island’s identity — from George Daniell and Andy Warhol to Robert Mapplethorpe, Peter Hujar and David Hockney. Contemporary artists like Nicole Eisenman, Wolfgang Tillmans and Salman Toor carry that legacy forward. Part archive, part love letter, this is a book that reminds you why Fire Island has always felt, to so many of us, like coming home.

**“Rainbow Dreams: Color and Light in Contemporary Art” edited by Olga Rei and Valentine Uhovski**

Consider this your permission to judge a book by its cover: “Rainbow Dreams” arrives printed with a seamless rainbow gradient on its exterior, and the inside delivers on that

*continue reading on pg. 17*



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*(Queer Summer Reading List cont'd)*

promise. Featuring more than 200 works by some of the world's most celebrated contemporary artists — Yayoi Kusama, Takashi Murakami, Judy Chicago, Olafur Eliasson, Jeff Koons and Ellsworth Kelly among them — it's a dizzying, joyful tour of the color spectrum in every medium imaginable: paintings, monumental sculptures, LED light installations, immersive spaces and more. Paola Pivi's feathered bear sculptures sit alongside Ugo Rondinone's neon works and Nick Cave's maximalist visions, revealing just how differently brilliant minds see and use color. For a book that doesn't wave any particular flag, it feels awfully good to hold right now.

## Fiction

### “Waiting on a Friend” by Natalie Adler

New York's East Village, 1984. Renata, described as a “young dyke-about-town,” has always been able to see ghosts — but lately, as AIDS claims more and more people in her community, they're everywhere. When her best friend Mark dies, she waits for his ghost to appear. It doesn't. And when a mysterious company moves into the neighborhood promising to rid apartments of lingering presences — capturing and storing ghosts in the process — Renata realizes the world is trying to erase the very people she's fighting to remember. Named Fiction Debut of the Month by Library Journal, Natalie Adler's debut is, at its heart, a book about friendship and loss, but more specifically a haunting portrait of how mass loss during the AIDS crisis reshaped an entire generation of queer life.

### “That's What Friends Are For” by Wade Rouse

Michigan author Wade Rouse has dreamed up something irresistible: what happened to Coco, the gay housekeeper played by Charles Levin who appeared in the very first episode of “The Golden Girls” — then vanished, written out to make room for Sophia? Rouse fictionalizes the life of the actor who played him, imagining Coco alongside three aging gay besties living together in a fabulous pink mid-century home in Palm Springs, members of a monthly drag tribute called “The Golden Gays.” It's being called an “affectionate queer homage” to “The Golden Girls” by Publishers Weekly and “a rip-roaringly funny ode to found family,

Palm Springs, drag and Bea Arthur” by author Grant Ginder. The New York Post recommends it as the “perfect cozy gift to make you laugh, cry and fall in love with your chosen family.” Coco deserved better — and now, finally, he gets it.

### “Night Night Fawn” by Jordy Rosenberg

Barbara Rosenberg is dying in a cluttered rent-controlled Manhattan apartment, high on opioids, and she has things to say. About her smutty late husband. About her career as a receptionist for a disreputable plastic surgeon. About her glory days as an accomplished jazzerciser and her failed dreams of film noir stardom. About Karl Marx, Zionism, gender and her two great disappointing loves: an estranged trans son and a long-lost best friend whose betrayal still haunts her. From the author of “Confessions of the Fox,” a novel that veers from memoir to diatribe to deranged manifesto — and what The New York Times Book Review calls “a rant of comedic genius.”

### “The Summer Boy” by Philippe Besson

July 1985. A scruffy resort island off the coast of France. Six teenagers suspended between carefree mornings in the waves and nights heavy with yearning, orbiting each other in a circle of frustrated desire — François loves Alice who loves Nicolas, Marc is drawn to Philippe who is drawn to Nicolas, and Nicolas himself remains an enigma. From the author of the bestselling “Lie With Me,” translated from French by Sam Taylor, this autofictional novel follows Philippe as he excavates that summer and the boy whose sudden disappearance at a cliffside party left a mystery that would haunt him for the rest of his life. Besson writes with a delicate, nostalgia-laden precision, moving between that long-ago summer and the present with the kind of clarity that only distance — and a lifetime of carrying something — can bring. Quietly devastating.

### “Pretend You're Dead and I Carry You” by Delgado Lopera

The author of The New York Times-acclaimed “Fiebre Tropical” returns with a sophomore novel set in 1990s Colombia, navigating the rivers, drag clubs and dusty apartments of Bogotá with electric, Spanglish-drenched prose. At the heart of the story: a depressed father haunted by the young man he loved and betrayed, his teenage daughter desperate

for answers about her mother's drowning and Mamadora Eléctrica — a luminous travesti who steps into the wreckage of their lives. Morbid teens, dysfunctional families and queer chosen kinship thread through Julián Delgado Lopera's latest, which Publishers Weekly calls “striking and indelible” and Alejandro Varela describes as “a present for us all.”

### “The Dinner Party” by Cat Fitzpatrick

A riotous post-pandemic dinner party. A short arcadian pageant. The trials of making babies as queer and transsexual couples. Eight love poems. An epistolary friendship. Cat Fitzpatrick's follow-up to her Lambda Award-winning debut novel “The Call Out” is a novel-in-verse that moves through all of it with jubilation and tenderness, celebrating queerness and the communities we build through joy, support and love. Fitzpatrick — the first trans woman director of the Women's and Gender Studies program at Rutgers University-Newark, and co-editor of the ALA Stonewall Award-winning anthology “Meanwhile, Elsewhere: Science Fiction & Fantasy from Transgender Writers” — is one of the most distinctive trans literary voices working today. “The Dinner Party” is proof that the table she's setting has room for all of us.



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## Nonfiction and Memoir

### “A Black Queer History of the United States” by C. Riley Snorton and Darius Bost

Columbia University's C. Riley Snorton and University of Illinois-Chicago's Darius Bost make a compelling argument in their January 2026 release: that gender and sexual expression have always been inseparable from the Black freedom struggle. Moving from the colonial era to the present day, the book draws on figures including James Baldwin, Josephine Baker and Marlon Riggs to show how Black queer and trans Americans have shaped — and been shaped by — the fight for racial justice. A landmark work of accessible scholarship.

### “Play Naked” by Amanda De Lisio

York University professor Amanda De Lisio centers the stories of sex workers who mobilized during Rio de Janeiro's 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, events that generated global spectacle while intensifying police scrutiny of femme and trans bodies. Drawing on extensive interviews, De Lisio frames sex work as a site of political resistance and economic agency, pushing back against the trafficking narratives that typically dominate coverage of mega-events. The result is a rigorous, compassionate look at how queer and trans people navigate — and subvert — systems designed to exploit or erase them.

### “Pretty: A Memoir” by KB Brookins

Winner of the 2025 Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Nonfiction, KB Brookins' debut memoir traces their coming-of-age as a Black transmasculine person in Texas, weaving poetry into prose as they reckon with family, church, masculinity and desire. Brookins writes about negotiating the space between who they are and how they're perceived with candor and linguistic precision, pulling from both queer theory and pop culture without losing the thread of an intimately personal story that Publisher's Weekly called a “powerful testament” to the journey of self-actualization.

*continue reading on pg. 18*



*(Queer Summer Reading List cont'd)*

**“Queer & Christian” by Rev. Brandan Robertson**

For LGBTQ+ people who have experienced faith as a weapon rather than a refuge, Rev. Brandan Robertson — the theologian known as the “TikTok Pastor” — offers an evidence-based reclamation of Scripture. The book methodically challenges the passages most often weaponized against queer people, situating them in historical and cultural context while also celebrating queer figures throughout the biblical tradition. With conversion therapy cases reaching the Supreme Court and book bans accelerating, Robertson’s theological framework feels especially well-timed.

**“Wine, Women, and Weed: A Memoir of Faith, Hope, and Love” by Elisabeth Mack**

Healthcare leader Elisabeth Mack came out and found lasting love later in life, a trajectory that still goes underrepresented in LGBTQ+ memoir. Moving through a strict religious upbringing, a heterosexual marriage and profound loss, Mack’s debut explores how identity can take decades to fully surface. For readers who came to their queerness in adulthood, or who are still working out what faith and sexuality can look like together, her story offers both recognition and a kind of permission.

**Children’s and YA**

**“Athlete Is Agender: True Stories of LGBTQ+ People in Sports” edited by Katherine Locke and Nicole Melleby**

With trans athletes’ right to compete under legal assault across the country, this 2025 middle-grade anthology arrives as both affirmation and argument. Featuring personal essays by queer, trans and nonbinary athletes alongside profiles of Megan Rapinoe, Billie Jean King and Adam Rippon, the collection makes the case that sport has never belonged to any single identity. A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year and ALA Rainbow Book List selection. Ages 10 and up.

**“Bromantasy” by Máire Roche**

Former teacher Máire Roche’s debut novel follows two best friends — the charmingly useless Juniper and the endlessly capable Mo — who stumble into a monster-hunting quest

and discover that their feelings for each other might be harder to face than anything in the forest. Roche, who describes the book as “my love letter to every queer person carving out moments of joy despite it all,” delivers a cozy, laugh-out-loud friends-to-lovers romantasy. Fans of Travis Baldree’s “Legends and Lattes” and T.J. Klune’s “The House in the Cerulean Sea” will want this immediately.

**“Hick” by Sarah Miller**

A 2026 Stonewall Book Award Honor Book, Sarah Miller’s YA biography follows Lorena Hickok from a brutal childhood in rural Wisconsin to the top of the Associated Press masthead — and into a years-long intimate relationship with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Miller read all 3,500 letters between the two women to reconstruct the story, and the result is both a portrait of a trailblazing queer journalist and an honest look at how love survives the weight of public life. A rare YA nonfiction title that earns the word essential. Ages 14 and up.

**“Teeny and Tilly” by Beanie Feldstein, illustrated by Laura Watkins**

“Booksmart” and “Lady Bird” actress Beanie Feldstein makes her picture book debut with a story about Teeny, a girl who’s been teased her whole life for being short, and the unexpected friendship she forms with Tilly, the tallest kid at her new school. Warm and genuinely funny, the book is less about difference as a concept and more about the specific courage it takes to reach across your own nerves and connect. Feldstein, who lives in Brooklyn with her wife, brings a real tenderness to the material. Ages 4–8.

**“What Kind of Queen?” by Kyle Casey Chu and Andrew W. Shaffer, illustrated by Cindy Lozito**

Co-written by Drag Story Hour co-founder Kyle Casey Chu and historian Andrew W. Shaffer, this vibrant picture book biography introduces young readers to José Sarria, born in 1922 to Colombian immigrants in San Francisco, who became the first openly gay person to run for public office in the United States. Told with a fairy-tale sensibility and brought to life by Cindy Lozito’s research-driven illustrations, it celebrates Sarria’s legacy as a drag performer, community builder and forerunner to figures like Harvey Milk. Perfect for Pride and well beyond.

# PITTSBURGH PINK PAGES

## LGBTQ Pittsburgh Community Directory

### RESOURCES

**Hugh Lane Wellness**

Foundation  
925 Brighton Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
(412) 626-3812  
hughlane.org

**Proud Haven**

525 E. Ohio Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 346-1234  
proudhaven.com

**Shepherd Wellness Community**

4800 Sciota Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
(412) 683-4477  
swconline.org

**SisTers Pittsburgh**

211 Smithfield Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 297-0548  
sisterspgh.org

**TransYOUning**

525 East Ohio Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 346-1324  
transyouningpgh.org

**For more information about community centers, health, testing, LGBTQ+ Bars & Clubs, and other business resources please visit:**

**PittsburghPinkPages.com**

### LGBTQ+ BARS & CLUBS

**5801 Video Lounge**

5801 Ellsworth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232  
(412) 661-5600  
5801pgh.com

**Babylon (Morgantown, WV)**

335 High Street, rear  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
(304) 292-2010  
babylonmorgantown.com

**Blue Moon**

5115 Butler Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
(412) 781-1119  
bluemoononbutler.com

**Brewers & Underground**

3315 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
(412) 904-2821

**Club Pittsburgh**

1139 Penn Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 471-6790  
clubpittsburgh.com

**Harold’s Haunt**

142 Grant Avenue  
Millvale, PA 15209  
(412) 283-6023  
queerwitches.com

**Lucky’s / Real Luck Cafe**

1519 Penn Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 471-7832

**Lucy’s Place (Johnstown, PA)**

520 Washington Street  
Johnstown, PA 15901  
(814) 539-4448  
facebook.com/lucillesjohnstown

**Mary’s**

5128 Penn Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15225  
maryspgh.com

**P\*Town Bar & Baum Shelter**

4740 Baum Blvd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
(412) 621-0111  
ptownbarpgh.com



# Crossword!

## C'est Moi – Queer Autobiographies

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Solution in next month's issue

- ACROSS**
- 1 Von Trapp family escape route
  - 5 Doesn't come quickly
  - 10 Judy's daughter
  - 14 Comic Trevor
  - 15 Narrow waterway
  - 16 In midvoyage
  - 17 Arc on Bernstein's music score
  - 18 Do-re-mi
  - 19 Within earshot
  - 20 "Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic" author
  - 23 Overly inquisitive
  - 24 Hangouts of Muscle Marys
  - 25 Study stations
  - 28 He had a threesome with Larry and a bald guy
  - 30 College choice
  - 34 Sounds of satisfaction
  - 35 Half sib of 10-Across
  - 37 Sandwich fish
  - 38 Hagen of "The Boys from Brazil"
  - 39 Vellekoop who wrote "I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together"
  - 41 "Runaway" rocker Shannon
  - 42 Little chickens
  - 44 Harmonic
  - 46 Sailor's rear
  - 47 One way to be wed
  - 48 Susan in "Rocky Horror"
  - 51 Vermouth name
  - 53 Designer Cassini
  - 55 Firm-fleshed fruit
  - 57 Draft rating
  - 60 "Can't Help Lovin' That Man Of \_\_\_"
  - 61 Perching place
  - 62 Bounce in one's step
  - 63 Have an opening for
  - 64 Novocain predecessor
  - 65 Reverb
  - 66 Pitch-dark
  - 67 Hard to penetrate
  - 68 Bound gaily Down
- DOWN**
- 1 T or F, on exams
  - 2 Cross-dresser in a Kinks song
  - 3 Lynde of "Bewitched"
  - 4 Frasier and Niles
  - 5 Transportation for Liberace
  - 6 Faceless
  - 7 Partner of Felix, for example
  - 8 Loved by the camera
  - 9 Actor Keach
  - 10 Alights on
  - 11 Voyeur's confession?
  - 12 Get-up-and-go
  - 13 Rhine tributary
  - 21 "Mayday!" signal
  - 22 "Very interesting..."
  - 25 Puts on a little KY
  - 26 Bother terribly
  - 27 "Caught in the Act" author
  - 29 Bruin Bobby
  - 31 "Pedro and Me" author
  - 32 Tatum of "The Bad News Bears"
  - 33 Exchange at Wimbledon
  - 35 On the \_\_\_ (fleeing)
  - 36 Alas, in Augsburg
  - 39 "Death in Venice" author Thomas
  - 40 Many, many, many moons
  - 43 "Hamlet" genre
  - 45 Extends shoe life
  - 49 Like cornstalks that bear
  - 50 Gov't. interest bearer
  - 51 Pink wines
  - 52 Very queer
  - 53 Prefix with potent
  - 54 Property right
  - 56 Glynn who wrote "Out East: Memoir of a Montauk Summer"
  - 58 Of grades 1-12
  - 59 Opposite a bottom



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