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SUMMER 2010
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GAZE

SUMMER



SPAIN: A psychiatric clinic in Barcelona is under investigation amid allegations if offered to "treat" homosexuality with therapy and medication, pinknews.co.uk reports.

Speaking to a Spanish newspaper, psychiatrist Joaquin Munoz, who works at the clinic, angered many when he said homosexuality "just happens to people."

"Nobody wants to be a homosexual ... If (gay people) could change their sexual orientation with a pill, 99 per cent would take it.

Regional Health Minister Marina Geli said there was no evidence to support the idea that homosexuality is a disease.

NEW YORK:



NYC's Village Voice scored the cover of the year last month when it welcomed Jersey Shore's "guido" pack - Vinny Gaudagnino, Ronnie Ortiz-Magro, and Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino - to mug for the camera, then slapped their pic on the front page of its Queer Issue.

IRELAND:



Quite possibly the best headline of all time, compliments of Ireland's Evening Herald.

ARIZONA: Yuma mayor Al Kreiger apologized last month for controversial comments he made during a Memorial Day speech a month earlier.

Expressing his disapproval of the proposed repeal of the U.S. Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, Kreiger had referred to gays in the military as "lacy drawered" and "limp-wristed."

In apologizing to the gay community by way of the Yuma Sun newspaper, Kreiger said that "As mayor I must respect the lifestyle choices of others, no matter how disagreeable they are with my personal beliefs or my personal moral standards."

CONNECTICUT:



The Cedar Brook Cafe, believed to be the oldest, continuously operating gay bar in the United States, closed last month after 71 years. Owner Clem Bellairs told WestportNow.com that renting the building - sold last fall for \$1.6 million - was no longer economically feasible.

ICELAND:



Prime Minister Johanna Sigurdartottir, the world's first and only openly gay head of government, quickly took advantage of new legislation enabling gay couples to marry by tying the knot with her live-in writer girlfriend Jonina Leosdottir at the end of June.

Iceland legalized homosexuality in 1940; civil partnerships became legal in 1996.

Closer to Home ...



Queer nightlife in Atlantic Canada just busier, thanks to the recent openings of new gay bars in Moncton and Saint John.

Moncton's Club SO.HO, a new GLBT lounge and dance club on Mountain Road,

opened up in a location previously occupied by The Mint, an exotic night club, in May, while PUMP set up shop in a 19th century bank building on Saint John's Main Street in early June.

Down on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, Avalene

Osmond and Danielle Langevin, who took over the Spry Bay Campground and Cabins in January, are moving full-steam ahead with plans to renovate and upgrade their new commercial enterprise, which includes a



convenience store, eatery and laundromat. The pair says they intend to expand their kitchen to accommodate their pizza-making plans and eventually want to add ten to 20 new camping sites and two or three new cabins.

Plutonium Playhouse presents *Splinters*

Splinters, a new play by Lee-Anne Poole, will be performed at The Plutonium Playhouse, 2315 Hunter Street, Halifax, until Sunday, July 25.

Directed by Simon Bloom, and featuring Stephanie MacDonald, Vanessa Walton-Bone, Lewis Wynne Jones and Stewart Legere, the production focuses on Belle, a 28-year-old lesbian who returns home to Sambro, Nova Scotia, to take care of her newly widowed mother.

In a secret heterosexual relationship for over a year, Belle wants her boyfriend to accompany her to the funeral, but doesn't want her mother to know that her lesbianism, as she'd predicted, was just "a phase," and asks that her boyfriend keep their coupledness under wraps.

The show runs Tuesday through Sunday, 8 pm.

For more information, visit <http://plutoniumplayhouse.wordpress.ca>.

To book, phone 902.423.4653

Legal community to host gay judge

British Columbia's first openly gay judge, Justice Gary Cohen, will be the keynote speaker at this year's 8th Annual Pride Reception hosted by Halifax's legal community July 22 at the Argyle Fine Art gallery.

Prior to his 1999 appointment to the B.C. Provincial Court, Cohen was in private practice with Bruce Fraser, his "partner in law and partner in life."



Cohen is a past president of the International Association of Lesbian & Gay Judges and a founding member of the Gay/Lesbian Law Students Association at the University of British Columbia.

In their spare time, Cohen and Fraser breed miniature schnauzers and operate the aptly named "Advocate" kennel in Surrey.

The event is being co-hosted by the Nova Scotia Barristers Society and the Canadian Bar Association's Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity committee.

For more information, visit www.nsbs.org.

Loose Ends Bonspiel

Loose Ends, Halifax's co-ed recreational curling league for the GLBT community and its straight allies, will be hosting its first Bluenose Bonspiel over the Labour Day weekend, September 3 - 5.

GLBT teams from Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver have already registered for the weekend tournament, says Curtis Cartmill, adding that several social events - a brewery tour, a dance, banquet and "Mystery Bus" tour - have also been added to the schedule to give out-of-town guests a taste of Maritime Culture.

At press time, team spots were still available.

For more information about the bonspiel, or to register for Loose Ends's second season of curling, which gets underway Sunday, October 3, visit www.looseends.ca or email the league at halifax.glbtcurling@gmail.com.

Courage Round Up

The 22nd Annual Courage Round Up, sponsored by GLBT people in Alcoholics Anonymous, will be held August 6 - 8 at the Universalist Unitarian Church, 500 Inglis Street, Halifax.

The weekend, open to all AA and Al-Anon members and those seeking sobriety, includes fellowship, speaker meetings, sharing and discussion of recovery topics in a relaxed and peaceful setting. Courage is a small, safe, intimate Round Up and is the only GLBT AA Round Up in Atlantic Canada.

For more information, contact John, 902.425.8383 or visit www.halifaxgayaaroundup.org.

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Gaze

Here it is, folks – the first of what I hope will be many issues of *Gaze Magazine*.

And even though I'm excited to see the final product in all its glossy glory, I'll freely admit I'm also a bit nervous, largely because expectations are high and I continue to feel as though it's still a work in progress.

In fact, as I sit here, mere hours before the final pages of this inaugural edition are due to be submitted to the printer, it's all I can do to fight the strong obsessive-compulsive urge compelling me to make massive changes to just about everything between pages 3 and 30. But I won't.

Not only is there not enough time – or Red Bull – to support me in this last-minute endeavour, but as I once again flip through the pages of *Gaze No. 1*, I realize that for a new publication produced with minimal manpower, yet myriad man hours, it's a product with which I am extremely proud to be affiliated.

From the beginning, it has been my intention for *Gaze* to both inform and entertain members of Atlantic Canada's GLBT community and to enlighten our friends – and maybe even a few foes – in the straight one. And while I'll likely never know if I've accomplished all three, I go to press feeling good that the first two objectives have been achieved.

Christina Copp, a recent journalism graduate from the University of King's College, is to be commended for her excellent feature; ditto our trio of models who graciously agreed to put their pretty faces forward.

I'd like to take this opportunity to issue a very special thank you to all those who offered their time, their support, their ideas, and yes, even their swimming pool, to make this project happen.

And to the rest of you, reading this issue either in hard copy or on our website, www.gazemagazine.ca, I look forward to hearing your thoughts and your suggestions for further editions.

Until September,

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Queertoons

By John Williams
Artwork By Bryan Martin

With **Archie Comics** preparing to introduce hunky Kevin Keller, *Riverdale's* first openly gay character, into its storied mix this September, we at *Gaze Magazine*, decided to take a somewhat irreverent look at some of the cartoon world's other rainbow denizens.

The Great Gazoo: A vertically challenged know-it-all, who flies around telling his married friends they're dumb-dumbs. Yeah, I don't know anyone like that either.

While some Internet bloggers are of the opinion that all the Smurfs were gay - Is it any wonder? Were they not largely a group of men living in the Village - the only one that really pinged my gaydar was Vanity. The posy in his Smurfy cap. The ever-present hand mirror. The blatant narcissism. Smurfness me, what more evidence do you need?



Patty Bouvier: After years of hinting at her same-sex proclivities, Marge Simpson's sister came out in 2004. Closet case closed.



Heavens to Murgatroyd! You'd be hard-pressed to find a more stereotypically gay two-dimensional figure than this over-the-top Hanna-Barbera creation. I mean seriously folks, a pink mountain lion whose catch phrase is "Exit, stage left"? Talk about effeminate, Flaming, even!



Stewie Griffin: If the myriad homosexual references haven't been enough to convince you that *Family Guy's* flamboyant bambino

is a card-carrying friend of Dorothy, show creator Seth MacFarlane told *Playboy* last year that football-headed Stewie "will be gay or a very unhappy repressed heterosexual."

Fred Jones: The orange ascot has done nothing to help combat the gay rumours plaguing this *Scooby-Doo* posse member. But a few years back the Cartoon Network addressed Fred's fashion choices in a 30-second bumper: <http://bit.ly/cQo1kh>

Velma Dace Dinkley: Sure, she's the butchiest member of *Scooby-Doo's* crime-fighting crew, but how does that prove she's a Sapphic sister? After all, her last name is Dinkley. Shouldn't that count for something?

Mr. (Herbert) Garrison: *South Park's* elementary school teacher may very well be the most sexually complex cartoon character ever. He's had hetero and homosexual relationships and undergone two sex changes; his struggle with gender-identity issues has been nothing short of epic. "He's the soap opera element to the whole series," co-creator Trey Parker once said. "(He) has a real story going on." More like several years worth of after-school specials.

He-Man: If the page-boy haircut and rippling physique weren't enough, He-Man's close relationship with Man-at-Arms has provided many with sufficient evidence that Filmation's superhero was a superqueero. A hysterical *Masters of the Universe* clip parodying *Brokeback Mountain* has since vanished from YouTube, but there are plenty other gay-themed He-Man clips, like this one: <http://bit.ly/dd4vS0>

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**Did
You
Know.....**

... that in 2008, the Village of Chester, on Nova Scotia's South Shore, was used as the backdrop for Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom, a film based on the now-defunct gay TV series Noah's Arc? Shooting took place at the Captain's House, Lunenburg County's legendary Fo'c'sle Tavern, and aboard the Tancook Island Ferry. Truro-born lawyer Burnley "Rocky" Jones made a cameo, as did several bottles of Propeller beer.



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Did You Know.....

... that in the 1950s, a Canadian government agency created a top-secret homosexual-detecting device known as "The Fruit Machine" in an effort to purge gays from the civil service.

According to gay historian Neil Miller, the test subject would be asked to sit in a chair - similar to one you'd find in a dentist's office - where a camera suspended by a pulley would be pointed at his pupils, while a series of photos, ranging from run-of-the-mill boring to sexually explicit, would be flashed before his eyes.

The individual being tested was informed the experimental test was being used to measure stress levels. But in actuality, it was recording the change in pupil size based on the photographic stimuli.

It was believed that a photo of a nude male would cause a male homosexual's pupils to expand, thereby providing proof of his sexual proclivities.

Fraught with problems, budget cuts eventually spelled the end for what Miller calls "one of the most bizarre legacies of the homosexual panic of the 1950s."



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Gay and Single... Forever?

Steven Bereznai
Da Capo Press, 2006



Though released in 2006, Toronto writer Steve Bereznai's *Gay and Single...Forever?* continues to provide today's reader with a relatable, tongue-in-cheek look at the evolution of

acceptance society affords same-sex relationships.

We first meet Bereznai as a closeted college freshman, and follow him through the coming-out process, the club scene, his attempts at dating, a series of one-night stands, and ultimately into his thirties where he remains single. Interestingly enough, while being gay is no longer socially taboo, being gay and single is.

Looking through historical, biological, psychological and sociological lenses, Bereznai provides his reader with thorough analyses of both gay culture and the gay-dating subculture. He further draws on interviews with other gay men and reflects on his own experiences in an effort to understand why highly successful professional men continue to feel like failures because they're single.

"In this world a lot of emphasis is put on being 'good enough' that someone might actually want to date you. In fact there's so much pressure there are times when it's hard to remember that singlehood is not failurehood."

Throughout the book's 247 pages Bereznai examines several key questions: Why is couplehood considered the only right of passage leading to personal fulfilment? Who defines fulfillment and happiness in gay culture? Why is monogamy so difficult?

Bereznai also sheds light on the AIDS epidemic of the early eighties, and explains how legal inequities of the time punished same-sex couples and fueled the fight for equal rights.

Sarcastic and funny and yet always sincere, Bereznai's book – the former Fab editor's first – offers a unique glimpse of what drives gay men to date, form couples, and ways in which gay culture has evolved. Gay men will easily find themselves reflecting past experiences as Bereznai discusses his own.

- Mark MacPhee

iWant: My journey from addiction and overconsumption to a simpler, honest life

Jane Velez-Mitchell, HCL, 2009



She's dodged flying coconuts in the midst of Hurricane Hugo and hog-called Raisa Gorbachev. She also wound up in a head-on collision with Ari and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' limo, at which time she was spared serious injury thanks to the pith helmet she happened to be wearing at the time.

These are just some of the things we learn from *iWant: My journey from addiction and overconsumption to a simpler honest life*, the life story of television personality, Jane Velez-Mitchell, host of the HLN gabfest *Issues with Jane Velez-Mitchell*.

And if anyone deserves to sit at helm a TV show with the word 'issues' in the title, it's Velez-Mitchell who, for decades did battle with the bottle.

The daughter of an Irish American ad exec father and a Puerto Rican mother, Velez-Mitchell was throwing back the remainders of the adults' drinks at age nine and before long would find herself selecting a bottle of wine for herself as she went about filling her parents' liquor order.

The "only teenager to have a wine closet," Velez-Mitchell eventually turned into a full-fledged alcoholic – just like her dad – who'd hold day-after "damage- assessment meetings" with a good friend to determine just how much damage she'd done to her relationships and her reputation while under the influence.

"Going out on the town was beginning to feel like an inevitable date with self-destruction," she writes.

But as Velez-Mitchell explains, her alcoholism wasn't just about genetics, but rather issues concerning her self-identity – especially her Puerto Rican heritage and the prejudice she faced because of it – and her true sexuality, an issue that went unaddressed until her mid-40s.

iWant is a different kind of book. At times, it provides exactly what you'd expect from a celebrity autobiography – inebriated tales which led to a reputation as a "kissing bandit", and one during which she knocked someone down the stairs at his own party – her relationship with her somewhat atypical parents, and her road to sobriety.

Then there are sections where the book feels more like a guide to living right, or at least a rundown of all the things you're doing wrong.

Take, for example, Chapter 5, *Veganism/Animal Activism: I want to make a difference*. It's at this juncture that we learn that Velez-Mitchell's mother ate a mainly vegetarian diet

– she was never the same after a pig she'd befriended as a child was slaughtered and served for dinner – and that Velez-Mitchell herself has always had an interest in animal rights. Unfortunately many of her interests took a backseat to her interest in alcohol.

Years later, however, with her drinking under control, she felt the need to do something, and switched to a vegan lifestyle.

What follows is a lengthy, finger-wagging discussion of PETA, puppy mills, psychotic pigs, the cruelties of factory farming, and her assertion that "peace begins on your plate."

Overconsumption and workaholicism receive similar treatment in her book.

And then there's the narration. An unfortunate clicking snafu during the on-line ordering of this book caused me to receive the seven-CD audiobook instead of the desired print version. Consequently, I was treated to Velez-Mitchell's story, delivered in her trademark bombastic, drama-laden, tabloid journalism-friendly style.

Listening to the book, complete with Velez-Mitchell's odd pronunciations and strange emphases, was at times like sitting down to a marathon of her primetime show. At the same time, however, the narration provides an insight the reader would not get if someone else – i.e. someone lacking connection to the events – was reading the text. And it certainly does up the entertainment quotient. How else could one get a real flavour for the aforementioned moment when Velez-Mitchell screeched Raisa Gorbachev's name, or discover that many of the people the author knows and quotes seem to speak with a southern accent.

In the end, whether or not you enjoy Jane Velez-Mitchell's journey to self-acceptance and change more or less comes down to whether or not you can get past the delivery, the drama – "Ego and Fear were the two horsemen of my apocalypse" – and the scolding tone.

None of what Velez-Mitchell says is really new, but her honesty, humour, and experiences nonetheless make for an interesting read – or in this case, listen.



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13 famous gays, lesbians and bisexuals



Chris Hughes

In 2009, *Fast Company Magazine* dubbed this gay twenty-something Facebook co-founder “*The Kid Who Made Obama President.*” As one of the key figures behind MyBarackObama.com (a.k.a. MyBO), a social networking site that helped drive the U.S. president’s 2008 grassroots campaign, Hughes has been widely credited with helping to amass \$30 million by way of 70,000 personal fundraising pages.



Clementine Ford

The daughter of actress Cybill Shepherd, former *L Word* castmate Ford, who currently portrays Mac Browning on the CBS soap, *The Young & the Restless*, came out as a lesbian in 2009.

Former child chess prodigy turned venture capitalist, Thiel co-founded Paypal (acquired in 2002 by eBay in a deal worth \$1.5 billion), became an early Facebook investor and in 2008, was said to boast a net worth of \$1.3 billion.



Peter Thiel



Meredith Baxter

This Emmy Award-winning actress, probably best known for playing mom Elyse Keaton on the widely popular NBC series *Family Ties*, has appeared in several made-for-TV movies, including *A Woman Scorned: The Betty Broderick Story*, in which she flawlessly played the film’s murderous real-life title character. Fans of gay-themed flicks may also remember her from *The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green*. Baxter came out as a lesbian last year.



Patricia Cornwell

Crime novelist Cornwell, who’s made medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta a household name, has sold more books than any other woman, with the exception of Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling. In 2005, she married Dr. Staci Gruber, a psychiatry prof at the Harvard Medical School.

Former TV game show staple (think *Match Game*) Flagg is likely best known as the lesbian author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*, the novel on which the abbreviated Jessica Tandy/Kathy Bates film was based. Flagg removed much of book’s lesbian content when she adapted it into a screenplay.



Fannie Flagg

Though he eventually married a ballerina, this man, whose name is synonymous with economics, also reportedly had affairs with a male painter and a male psychologist.



John Maynard Keynes



Martha Raye

Despite having walked down the aisle with men on no less than six occasions, beloved comedienne, actress (I remember her as Mel’s mom on *Alice*) and one-time Polident spokeslady Martha Raye, once claimed she’d carried on an affair with Oscar-winning actress and wire coat-hanger wielder Joan “Mommie Dearest” Crawford. Incidentally, Crawford is also said to have had a one-night only tryst with Marilyn Monroe.

The greatest love affair of Newton’s life was a fellow mathematician named Fatio de Duiller, with whom he lived for several years. When they broke up, Newton, The Godfather of Gravity, broke down.



Isaac Newton



Liz Smith

Nicknamed the Grand Dame of Dish, the *New York Post*’s long-time Page Six gossip columnist, revealed her own bisexuality in her 2000 memoir, *Natural Blonde*.



Leslie Gore

Gore’s number one single, *It’s My Party (and I’ll cry if I want to)* came out in 1963. She waited till 2005.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who gave us *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *The Glass Menagerie*, never attempted to disguise his homosexuality, nor did his long-time companion Frank Merlo. Once asked at a party, what he did, Merlo responded, “I sleep with Mr. Williams.”



Tennessee Williams



Gaze

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upcoming photo shoots*



*White stretch denim slack and purple v-neck jersey by American Apparel
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Model: Adam*



Red board shorts by American Apparel

Photo by Stella Ducklow

Model: Adam



*Striped button-up shirt by American Apparel
Photo by Joseph Jacob
Model: Chris*



*Tie-dye harem pants and black viscose tee by American Apparel
Photo by Joseph Jacob
Model: Chris*



Peacock mineral wash denim slack and crew neck tee by American Apparel

Photo by Joseph Jacob

Model: James



*Striped seersucker Kennedy shorts, coral oxford and black chambray bow tie by American Apparel
Photo by Joseph Jacob
Model: James*

Elle-amentary School by Christina Copp

Chris Cochrane isn't your average twenty-four year old.

Chris has gained and lost more than 100 pounds, lived in both small town Nova Scotia and Canada's largest city, travelled the world with the Canadian Navy, performed in seven different countries, spent time in rehab, and won several pageant titles in both Halifax and Toronto.

Chris also happens to be transitioning from male to female.

Upon our first introduction at Halifax's Menz Bar, Chris looks on guard, as though she's sizing me up before deciding whether or not she's going to speak. But as she sits down on a couch in the bar's library to chat, her face is kind, her body language relaxed and her voice soft but strong. Her eyes reveal a quiet confidence.

To look at her, you would never guess she'd ever been overweight. Or male. She is a lighter-skinned African Canadian, and while tall, her features are overwhelmingly feminine - a round face, long, straight hair, a nose more petite than most and small hands.



Born and raised in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, the no-nonsense Cape Bretoner is brutally honest when describing her younger self as a "little fat kid."

"I weighed around 300 pounds, had glasses, the acne, the really high voice ... I was shy, just stayed in," she says, confessing that she habitually confined herself to her basement bedroom where she'd stashed food behind the ceiling panels.

She realizes now her eating disorder was her way of dealing with her problems of sexual and gender identity; suicide had been pondered and attempted.

"I was self-medicating, though this medication was food," she confides, however she was careful to keep her over-eating under wraps, indulging only late at night after the rest of the family had gone to bed.

As a young man in high school, Chris joined Cadets, a move that gave her enough self-confidence to control the weight issue. After high school, she got in shape and joined the Navy.

"We don't have the don't ask, don't tell policy (in Canada). I think it's almost worse that we don't have it." Chris says that while homophobia wasn't a huge issue among the Navy's "younger crowd," it was clearly a problem among some older officers. "They won't come out and say it, but they'll do stuff. They'll give you extra duties and say it's part of your training, but you know it's not part of your training."

Regardless, she says there were many supportive people in the Navy, and that many of her memories are fond ones.

Interestingly enough, it was on a dare while in the Navy that Chris first began doing drag. At the time of this writing, her drag alter, Elle Noir (She Black), had won Five Minutes of Fame - Reflections

Cabaret's anything-goes talent contest - a record 55 times. She's no stranger to local drag pageants either, having served one term as Mz. Gay Halifax and two reigns as Mz. Reflections, a title she currently holds. While living in Toronto, she was crowned Miss El Convento Rico at the College Street club of the same name. And last month Chris - the niece of a drag queen - celebrated five years of drag performances with a Reflections anniversary show as elaborate as many of the her hand-sewn costumes. She also did a cameo in the Trailer Park Boys-produced mini-series The Drunk and On Drugs Happy Fun Time Hour.

In 2007, after four years, Chris left the Navy and went straight to rehab, where she spent three months.

Personal issues together with legendary at-sea partying spawned a drinking problem that

needed to be addressed. Now that she's happier, she says alcohol is no longer a problem, and isn't something she continues to think about, though friends say she still enjoys the occasional bottle of blue Rev with a splash of grenadine added for colour.

While Chris admits she wasn't always sure she was meant to be female, she always knew she was different; she just didn't know why. "I was always an effeminate guy," she says. "I never had the guy experience. I never saw an upside in being a guy." And so, in 2009, after years of doing drag, she decided she never wanted to go out in public looking like a man again.

She went home at Easter and told her mother and stepdad - the man she considers to be her "real father" - she was going to transition to a woman. She says they weren't surprised.

"It was like 'that's nice dear, now pass the potatoes.' I was upset (and) my mom was like 'why are you upset?' and I said, 'Because I just told you something that's going to change my life forever.' She goes, 'well why are you mad at me that I'm not mad with you? I'm happy that you finally found yourself. There's no reason for you to be angry about it.' I understood it then. She didn't respond the way I expected her to respond, so I was upset because I'd been stressing out about it for a month or so."



The first time Chris went out as a woman, she says she felt like "everyone on god's green earth knew what I was doing, and it felt like a cosmic joke. I felt like everyone was looking at me saying 'look at that man, he's trying to be a woman.'"

She warned her co-workers ahead of time, and says everyone at the store where she then worked was waiting for her. "I felt like a bride or something! I shocked all of them."

Of the rare occasions where someone does stare, she feels like saying, "I'm not hurting you. I'm not talking to you. I don't care what you think. Grow up." But instead, she stays quiet. "I don't say anything because I don't like controversy. There's a lot of things I just brush off."

When asked about the more physical aspects of the transition, Chris says she's not at all nervous. She completed the required year of therapy, then had to wait several months to see endocrinologist Dr. Shirl Gee. "I've had a year and a half to think about this."

Only recently has Chris begun her hormone treatments. The treatment begins with one estrogen pill and one testosterone-blocker, with the number of estrogen supplements increasing gradually over time.

"(Apparently) It's going to be like I'm going through menopause and puberty at the same time," she laughs, adding that while she's considering undergoing various surgeries to enhance her breasts and make changes to her face, changing her genitals is not in the cards. She questions whether the benefits outweigh the risks and refuses to believe that not having the surgery will make her feel any less like a woman.

The risks of the lower surgery are high, explains nurse Anita Keeping of prideHealth in Halifax, a Capital Health-partnered project devoted to providing equal healthcare access to members the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) community. "People don't realize how complex it is ... It's very complicated. It takes hours and hours."

In addition to potential risks involved - problems with urination and scar tissue are just two of the possible drawbacks - the surgery



eHealth

About pride

Created in 2003 as the GLBTI Health Project, prideHealth has become an extremely important part of the GLBTI community.

"In the early days, what we learned is that people weren't getting the same access to health care in the way that the heterosexual community would," explains prideHealth coordinator Jeanne Rokosh. "What we did was look at creating a different model for providing healthcare for the GLBTI community. We create a safe point of entry for access to health care. Anita (Keeping), our clinical nursing specialist, is that safe point of entry for people."

"Jeanne and I don't have receptionists or anything," adds Anita, "so if people call my number and I don't answer, it'll go to my voicemail. I'm the only one who'll ever get the message. So if you're worried about confidentiality, it's only me."

In addition to performing basic assessments, Anita is also responsible for referrals, health education and health promotion.

"My role," explains Jeanne, "is generally to coordinate the program. I do more education around cultural confidence, diversity, homophobia, transphobia (and) discrimination, as well as raising the profile of prideHealth."

For more information, contact Jeanne Rokosh at (902) 240-7065 or Anita Keeping at (902) 220-0643.

itself isn't exactly cheap. "You're looking at \$20,000 more or less," Anita tells *Gaze*, "not something your average person can pull out of (his or her) bank account."

Surgeries or no surgeries, these days Chris says she refuses to step foot outside without her face - or her size 11 heels - on.

"I can't go outside looking like that person anymore," she says of her former self.

And she's very honest about the importance of make-up in her daily life.

"I have no eyebrows. I'll tell you that right now. It's make-up. (And) my nose is as small as it looks because of contouring ... It only takes me 15 minutes to do my face, but if I don't like it, I'll wash it all off and do it again. I carry around a big purse with all my make-up in it, just in case my eyebrow goes missing, or one of my lips fall, or my cheekbones aren't high enough, or if it starts to rain. It gets bad.

"When Elle is on stage, she has the big makeup, the big hair, the big attitude, but offstage, I'm just me."

In fact Chris says there were four foundations, two powders, three contour colours, six eye colours, two lip colours, two eyeliners, three eyebrow colours, a high lighter and a concealer on her face during our interview. "It's like making a mask, and painting it."

"I feel like I have to overcompensate. That's why I wear heels so much. Sometimes I think, oh my god, I can't believe I'm wearing my heels right now, but this is what I think in my head: if they see someone walking down the street with some platform heels or work boots, they're going to think, 'That's different,' but if they see a girl wearing six-inch stiletto heels on, 'That's obviously a girl.' ... I don't wear flat shoes."

"I have to look perfect," she sighs. That's why I check myself like 700 times a day, flat iron my hair forty times. I always feel like if I mess up, or have one of those days where I'm off, people are going to go 'that's a guy' so

I'm always on guard."

As someone who doesn't feel she can go swimming in public because of her male physique and the likelihood her make-up would wash off, Chris believes



people who are comfortable with their bodies tend to take them for granted. She even goes running at dawn before the majority of people are awake because sweat could ruin her make-up. "A lot of people check you out when you're running!"

Asked about her biggest fear, Chris is quick to answer.

While a lot of people are attracted to transgendered people, she says she's scared she won't find someone who will be able to live with her for what she is. "I'm single now because I'm trying to get myself together. I don't really need somebody else's problems. I can only deal with mine."

Even when she is in a relationship, she has a tendency to keep it under wraps - even from some of her close friends. "The gay community is faster than AT&T. You tell (someone) something, and all of a sudden, everyone in the whole dang community knows what you're doing."

Career-wise, Chris dreams of becoming an esthetician. "I want to help people like me," she explains, "I want to help by giving lessons on how to hide this, how to accentuate this, how to make yourself look more feminine. If you need help, come to me and I'll help you."

She'd also like the opportunity to speak with young people who may be

dealing with issues relating to sexual and gender identity. "If this is the way you're feeling, I want to show you, look at me, I'm successful, I'm doing what I want to do, and I started out like that."

Chris says the transsexual suicide rate is higher than that of gay suicide. Transsexuals, she says, face additional hurdles; many may not be able to afford the associated costs, or have the family support to do so. "Transsexuals are not widely accepted, even in our own community."

So if Chris Cochrane could go back in time and talk to the insecure teenage male who confined himself to his basement bedroom, what advice would she give him? That "'It's not as hard as you think it's going to be.' I thought growing up I was going to be alone, not have friends ... never ... get out of Cape Breton. I'd just say, 'Smile. When you get older, you're going to have a lot of people who look up to you. You're not going to have fame beyond fame, but you're going to be one of the best. As long as you keep at it, you'll be able to do what you want to do.'"

"(And) it takes a lot of balls to do what I do."

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Aiden's Story

Like Chris Cochrane, sixteen-year-old Aiden (who asked that his surname be withheld for this article) is embarking on his own gender-reassignment journey. Born female, Aiden admits he was unaware a line separating genders even existed until a sex-talk class addressed the subject in Grade 4.

"That's when I started making an effort to be a girl. I mean, I had the bits, now I needed to change my clothes to match. I was a tomboy then, which is why coming out to my parents wasn't surprising.

"I discovered the word for trans in Grade 10, from a friend of mine, who happens to be female to male as well. He told me everything about it and I finally had someone to identify (with). I stopped trying to please society by suppressing the little boy inside of me, and I went out and bought a tonne of boys' clothes.

Now, though not yet seventeen, Aiden has already completed the requisite therapy and will begin hormone treatments in the fall.

And while he eventually plans to legally change his birth name when it comes to the topic of surgery, he admits it's a subject to which he's given a great deal of thought.

"I've been thinking about surgery ever since I was a kid actually. I would always try to think of ways to make girl bits into boy bits," he confides, adding that he remembers telling himself that if such a way existed, he would find it.

"Now it's a little more terrifying. I've never (had) surgery before in my life. As scary as it is, it's definitely something I'm thinking about. As of now, the only surgery I would get is top surgery. Since nearly every transman gets it, it seems less scary than the dreaded bottom surgery.

Even if Aiden decides to opt for the complicated operation down the road, he says he doesn't think he'll ever be completely happy with himself. "Just the fact that it ever had to change is depressing to me," he says.

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The only thing Aiden finds scarier than the prospect of genital reconstruction is his ability to find work. "I'm afraid that I'll be rejected for being trans and never find work." He plans to go into graphic design.

As for his parents, Aiden says they're supportive "to a degree."

"They don't call me Aiden. Instead they call me by my birth name. But hopefully when I start taking hormones and my voice drops, they'll change their minds considering how awkward it'll be.

"They've come a long way though, and I really love them for loving me no matter what.

PRIDE WEEK LINE-UP

Sunday, July 18th

Happy Hour & Free BBQ
Post-Dykes & Divas Ball Game, 5-9 PM
Pink Velvet Burlesque & Rouge Fatale & Friends present BOYLESQUE!
Show at 9 PM. \$12 cover

Monday, July 19th

DaPride Cafe, presented by
The Queer Acts Theatre Festival
Bar Special: 2 for \$6*

Tuesday, July 20th

Artist Expo and Meet & Greet
Featuring work of local GLBTI artists
Bar Special: BOGO @\$2.75*

Wednesday, July 21st

Pride Karaoke w/ DJ Bear
Extra mystery song, extra toonie song
1st prize \$75, 2nd prize \$50, 4 extra door prizes!

Thursday, July 22nd

No Cover Dance Party w/ DJ Legacy
Bar Special: 60 oz pitcher for \$13.50*

Friday, July 23rd

Out of Towner Party
Best Ass contest w/ Rouge Fatale at midnight
Door prizes & DJ Bear. \$5 cover after 10 PM
Bar Special: BOGO, \$2.75 til midnight*

Saturday, July 24th

White Party & Video Show w/ Sonny D
Happy Hour & FREE cover before 9 PM
(\$10 after 9 PM)

Sunday, July 25, Noon - 3 PM

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*Visit www.menzbar.ca for details



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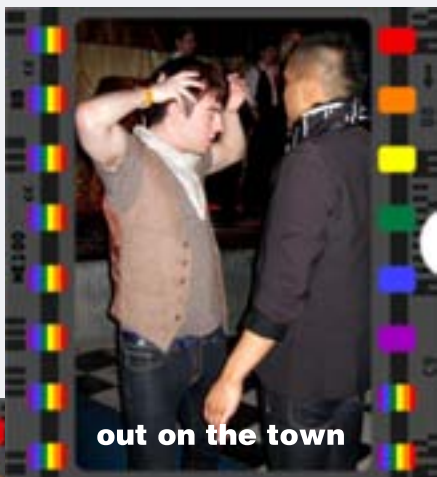


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Born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela, Samantha Rodriguez Machado is an architect with Fowler, Bauld & Mitchell in Halifax.

1. What was your favourite childhood Halloween costume? *Frankenstein. I've loved monsters and horror movies since I was a kid.*
2. What was your first paying job? *An English teacher in Caracas.*
3. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? *I played a lot with Legos, so building things and drawing them was my passion. I think I always wanted to be an architect.*
4. Which person has had the greatest influence on your life? *My mom. She was a feminist; she had very progressive thoughts regarding equal rights. She was very firm and loving, had a sense of humour and was extremely wise.*
5. Who was your teenage celebrity crush? *Alicia Silverstone in the Aerosmith videos.*
6. What sport did you play in high school? *Volleyball. I also tried rugby and karate but never enjoyed it as much*
7. What qualities do you most admire in a man? *I admire men that are independent; have a sense of humour; are emotionally open; have a great capacity to relate; appreciate and understand different people and points of view; and tend to be quite liberal in their attitudes.*
8. What qualities do you most admire in a woman? *I admire women that are confident and independent; have a sense of humour; are balanced and emotionally open; empathetic; and not resistant to change.*
9. Last place you went on vacation? *Florida, to visit my family.*
10. Person living or dead you'd most like to meet? *Virginia Woolf.*
11. What is your greatest regret? *Not being able to see and visit my mom before she passed away.*
12. What is your greatest fear? *Being in a tsunami.*
13. What is your biggest pet peeve? *People who don't wash their hands after brushing their teeth.*
14. Facebook or Twitter? *Facebook.*
15. Blackberry or iPhone? *Blackberry.*
16. Wonder Woman or the Bionic Woman? *Perhaps Bionic Woman. Her body's functionality takes a much more prominent role than just selling her sexuality. And her bionic ass-kicking also opened the door for female superheroes like Buffy, Xena, Lara Croft, and the more realistic Cagney & Lacey/Murphy Brown type of heroes.*
17. Favourite colour? *Blue.*
18. Do you wear pink? *No.*
19. Who would play you in the movie of your life? *Hilary Swank, even though we do not look at all alike.*
20. If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be? *Impatient.*

1. What was your favourite childhood Halloween costume? *The Lone Ranger.*
2. What was your first paying job? *My dad got me a summer job with Canadian National Railroad icing train cars.*
3. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? *It changed on a weekly basis.*
4. Which person has had the greatest influence on your life? *My mom.*
5. Who was your teenage celebrity crush? *Michael Landon.*
6. What sport did you play in high school? *Curling.*
7. What quality do you most admire in a man? *Sincerity.*
8. What quality to you most admire in a woman? *Intelligence.*
9. Last place you went on vacation? *Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles & the Napa Valley.*
10. Person living or dead you'd most like to meet? *Leonardo da Vinci.*
11. What is your greatest regret? *Not being able to play a musical instrument.*
12. What is your greatest fear? *Being buried alive.*
13. What is your biggest pet peeve? *Standing behind someone in line for ten minutes at a fast food outlet, and when it's time to order they haven't decided what they want. #@%!*
14. Facebook or Twitter? *Neither.*
15. BlackBerry or iPhone? *Neither.*
16. Colin Firth or Colin Farrell? *Colin Farrell.*
17. Favourite colour? *Yellow.*
18. Do you wear pink? *Yes.*
19. Who would play you in the movie of your life? *Tom Skeritt.*
20. If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be? *Caring.*



Born and raised in Campbellton, N.B., architect Wayne Duncan is a partner with Fowler Bauld & Mitchell in Halifax. His firm is designing the city's new \$55 million central library.

Did You Know.....

... the Khyber Building on Barrington Street was once home to one of Halifax's most

memorable gay bars? Founded by the Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE), The Turret was a social, political and open space for the city's burgeoning queer community from 1976 to 1982.



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