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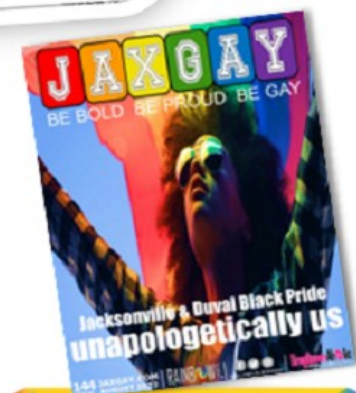
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News & Politics



Florida Wants Teen Athletes To Report Periods — Why?

By Michael Sappington

The Florida High School Athletic Association is considering making it mandatory for female athletes to report their menstrual periods — leading to fears that the association is monitoring girls for pregnancy or abortion, or trying to weed out transgender girls.

The FHSAA has included questions about periods on an annual physical health form filled out by student athletes for some time, but up to now answering the questions has been optional, and if students answered, that information stayed with their doctors. The questions include date of first period, date of most recent period, and length of time between periods, Florida TV station WTSP reports.

This week, an FHSAA committee recommended that they be made mandatory, according to The New Republic. The form will also be changed from paper to digital, and all the information on it will be transmitted to schools. Previously, just one page was sent to schools — the page on which a doctor affirmed that a student was healthy enough to participate in sports.

06 www.jaxgay.com

Whether to make the period questions mandatory will be on the agenda when the FHSAA board of directors meets in Gainesville at the end of February, a spokesperson for the group told WTSP.

That has sparked concerns among parents and activists. “It sure as hell will give me pause to fill it out with my kid,” Dr. Michael Haller, a pediatric endocrinologist and father of two teens, told The Palm Beach Post.

“Many parents and doctors are worried that schools will use the menstrual data to monitor students for late or missed periods, a possible sign of pregnancy, or to out transgender students by watching for girls who don’t get periods or boys who do,” The NewRepublic notes.

Florida in 2021 barred trans

girls and women from competing on female school sports teams. Among other anti-LGBTQ+ actions, the state has enacted the “don’t say gay” law, restricting instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in public schools. It has banned most gender-affirming care for minors and has banned Medicaid funding for this care for people of any age. It has also banned most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, as the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme Court has allowed states to ban or severely restrict the procedure.

Of the menstrual history questions, The New Republic observes, “School administrators say the information will stay private, but there’s no guarantee it will. It’s a terrifying glimpse of our dystopian post-Roe world.”

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OUT & HEALTH

**Minnesota Lawmaker Zack Stephenson
On Coming Out As Bisexual**
By Zack Stephenson



In the winter of 2006, my girlfriend and I took the Amtrak from Chicago to Washington, D.C. She was finishing up college in rural Illinois and I had just finished working on a political campaign in Minnesota. The trip was equal parts an opportunity to spend time together and a chance for me to meet her father. Somewhere along the way, I told her that I was bisexual. I was 22 years old, and this was the first time I said those words out loud to another human being. I wouldn't tell anyone else for another 13 years. Later along that same train trip, we decided to get married.

Five years earlier, while I was still in high school, I attended a wake at a funeral home in Anoka, Minn. There was an open casket, which I approached with trepidation. When I looked inside, I saw my friend Erik, wearing a short-sleeved button-down shirt with bull's-eye logos all over it. One of his favorites. His neck was still bruised from the rope he had used to hang himself the week before.

Erik was the first out gay person I knew who was my own age. He died by suicide

during my junior year. The fact that the Anoka-Hennepin School District, where Erik and I both attended high school, was toxically homophobic in the 1990s and 2000s is well documented. In fact, 10 years after Erik's death, I was on the legal team that sued Anoka-Hennepin Schools for violating federal and state law by failing to protect students from pervasive anti-LGBTQ harassment by students and staff. As an adult, I know that suicide is rarely a matter of simple cause and effect. But as I stood in that funeral home, I was convinced that Erik died because he was gay; because he was harassed, bullied, and even physically assaulted by our classmates.

When I was a teenager and young adult, my mind was deeply conflicted. I couldn't figure out if I was gay, straight, or bisexual. I certainly couldn't decide what to do with whatever conclusion I reached. Even after I graduated from high school and went off to a very progressive liberal arts college, where I was surrounded by accepting people with liberal political

beliefs and where there were many out gay students and staff living their lives with relative comfort, being anything but straight still felt incredibly unsafe to me. That danger had been burned deep into me through years of witnessing verbal and physical abuse of anyone perceived to be gay.

It wasn't until I was about 30 that I began to feel comfortable with my sexual orientation. By then, I had been married for six years and was the father of two daughters. I was working as a lawyer in private practice, with no designs on returning to politics. Given my traditional family and masculine personality, I appeared to the world as a straight male. And I convinced myself that was the right thing. Oddly, I felt I wasn't entitled to identify as bisexual. Though I had physical encounters with men before I started dating my wife, I had never been in a relationship with a man, and given my happy marriage, I probably never would. I thought it would be exploitive, inauthentic, and unnecessarily disruptive to come out as bisexual. I decided it was no one's business but my own.

I did not seriously revisit the subject when I decided to run for office in 2017. But in the years since, it has weighed on me more and more. The truth is, there are many bisexual people in long-term committed relationships with people of the opposite sex. As an elected member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, I have the opportunity and, frankly, the obligation to show that. And with unified Democratic-Farmer-Labor control of state government and a record-shattering 13 LGBTQ+ legislators, I hope my story will contribute to many critical policy changes, from ending conversion therapy to protecting transgender Minnesotans to making sure young people have access to the mental health resources they need.

But that isn't really why I am doing this.

I sometimes think back to the person I was in high school. I had loving parents and a great group of friends who I know would have accepted and embraced me if I had come out. But I didn't, and in fact went to great lengths to conceal my feelings. I just didn't know very many people who were anything but straight. And the few people I did know were outcasts, subject to endless harassment and sometimes violence. I can remember sleepless nights full of internal struggles. If being open about my own sexuality helps even one other person avoid feeling the way that I felt back then, it is worth it to me to tell this part of my story, regardless of the consequences for my own professional and political life.

Erik and I weren't close. Friend might even be a stretch. We were in school and band

together. I remember his incredible performance as the dentist in the school's version of Little Shop of Horrors. I don't remember ever hanging out with him apart from school or band. But I have vivid memories of that night in that Anoka funeral home. Of how I felt. Of being alone. Of being unsafe.

Perhaps if there had been another person in my life who was openly gay or bisexual, it might have been different. Perhaps by coming out, I can make it different for someone else.

Zack Stephenson is a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

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The Trevor Project Film Learn With Love Spotlights Young Trans People, Loved Ones

By Elizabeth Hearn

The Trevor Project released on Tuesday *Learn With Love*, a documentary short film telling the stories of three transgender young people and their relationships with loved ones.

“The documentary is part of the Trevor Project’s enduring advocacy initiative to cultivate public awareness and acceptance of transgender and nonbinary experiences, bolster messages of support and love for young people who hold these identities, and ultimately work toward ending suicide among LGBTQ young people,” says a press release from the organization.

The film features the stories of Kaiden and his mother, Skyler and her grandfather, and Lyndon and a pastor who took him in after his family rejected him. The stories illustrate the tenacity and resilience of young trans people and explore what’s possible when people who love them are able to learn and evolve.

“Rather than dwell on the persistent barriers that so many transgender young people face, this documentary explores the breakthroughs — underscoring the importance of

openness, education, and love as a basic human need,” the Trevor Project explains.

“Seven in 10 Americans have never met a transgender person, and it can be hard for them to distinguish between stereotypes that saturate today’s national discourse and what it really means to be transgender,” Kasey Suffredini, vice president of advocacy and government affairs at the Trevor Project, said in the press release. “This year, more than 150 anti-LGBTQ bills have been considered in the first two weeks of 2023 alone. This harsh, stigmatizing political climate only raises the stakes to protect transgender youth, who are already marginalized. When Americans learn their stories, they are moved to support them. In a time of increasing polarization, *Learn With Love* captures three beautiful stories and shows the power of one-on-one connection to overcome misinformation and change hearts and minds.”

“Our goal is to develop content that amplifies the human experience and ultimately helps foster deeper understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ young people among the

general public,” added Megan Stowe, head of content at the Trevor Project and director of *Learn With Love*. “This film is just the beginning of a larger content series we have planned, and we hope that this new way of storytelling will be a powerful force in shifting public perception and drawing more allies and advocates to our critical work.”

The film is a collaboration between the Trevor Project’s in-house content team and *Imposter*, a boutique production company. The release marks the beginning of a new content strategy for the Trevor Project, “designed to reach the general public at the national level with authentic, educational, impactful, youth-driven storytelling,” the press release notes. The group has a new content team.

Supporters include Anne Wojcicki Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Alexander Hill, Daniel Radcliffe, Dorian Kendal and Jared Hunt-Kendal, Kym Foglia-Wagner, Macy’s, the Moxley Family Foundation, Murray/Reese Foundation, NHL, Paycom, Richison Family Foundation, Ricky Strauss, Teva, and UGG. The full film is below.

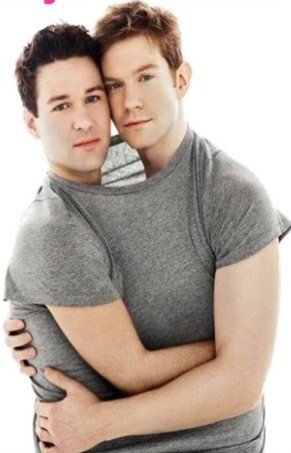
If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned that someone you know may be, resources are available to help. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 is for people of all ages and identities.

Trans Lifeline, designed for transgender or gender-nonconforming people, can be reached at (877) 565-8860. The lifeline also provides resources to help with other crises, such as domestic violence situations.

The Trevor Project Lifeline, for LGBTQ+ youth (ages 24 and younger), can be reached at (866) 488-7386. Users can also access chat services at TheTrevorProject.org/Help or text START to 678678.

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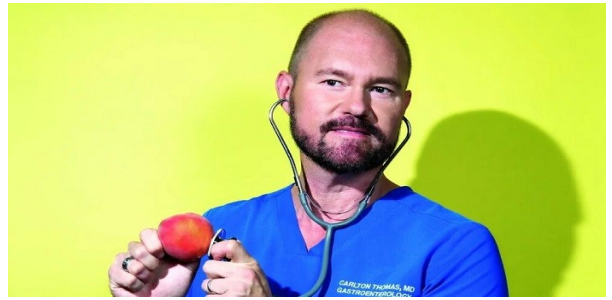
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OUT & HEALTH

Questions Every Gay, Bi Man Should Ask At Their Physical

By Dr. Carlton Thomas



The end of the year or the start of a new one is typically called the "annual physical" season as most are trying to take advantage of the benefit of no-cost physicals provided by most insurance coverage. The good news for most of us is that if you are insured, it's very likely your annual physical is 100 percent covered by insurance. The better news is that many types of diseases and cancers can be caught early in the annual physical with many treatment options that will not impact your life too drastically.

However, many men don't actually undergo an annual physical or have one done properly, especially if they have a history or exclusively have sex with men (MSM). HIV-positive or HIV-negative, every human should be availing themselves to an annual physical. I do so regularly and as such caught a very early stage anal cancer caused by a tear and HPV prior infection. My primary care doctor, who happens to be gay, routinely performs things like pap smears on my anus and comprehensive blood panels to check everything from impact of my PrEP meds on my

kidneys to PSA levels which can be early warning sign of prostate and other cancers. Like in my situation, my affliction was caught very early, cured with outpatient surgery, and didn't even require chemo or radiation.

If you are planning or scheduling your annual physical, here's what you should be asking or expecting from the doctor, according to leading gay gastroenterologist Dr. Carlton Thomas.

What are the basics every person should be getting assessed at their annual physicals?

Bring up any specific concerns about any symptoms you might be experiencing. A good thorough physical exam with age specific checks for testicular, rectal, and prostate issues. Labs including CBC (complete blood cell count), CMP (comprehensive metabolic panel that looks at liver and kidney markers as well as electrolytes and glucose), thyroid studies, Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) depending on age and family history, and lipid panel to look at your cholesterol and triglycerides. I also recommend testosterone levels. Discuss any age-appropriate cancer

screening such as colonoscopy for colon cancer screening starting at age 45 or sooner if you have symptoms or a family history of colon cancer.

What are additional "must have" tests for men who have sex with men?

Blood HIV panels including viral load and T cell counts if positive; Hep A, B, and C; syphilis studies — look for antibody titer changes if you were previously infected to check for reinfection — and herpes studies if unknown.

Urine tests help detect the very common and prevalent gonorrhea and chlamydia. Throat swabs and rectal swabs will also detect gonorrhea and chlamydia depending on how you play sexually. Anal Pap smears will help detect HPV and anal dysplasia, especially if you are HIV-positive due to the dramatically increased risk of anal cancer in HIV-positive men who also have HPV.

What vaccines should MSM discuss with their doctors?

Here's the checklist you should bring to each physical:

- Hep A (if rimming is part of your sexual routine)
- Hep B (if you've encountered blood or other body fluids)

- Meningitis
- HPV (now approved up to age 45)
- Mpox
- Age-appropriate pneumonia and shingles
- Covid and flu updates if needed

What other common specialists should MSM discuss with primary care doctors to possibly add to one's medical team?

Some primary care doctors will redirect PrEP to prevent HIV and HIV-positive care to infectious disease specialists. If you are 45 and older and have not had a colonoscopy, then you should be referred to a gastroenterologist (GI) for

colonoscopy screenings. Regular dermatologist screenings for the annual mole patrol and early skin cancer detection. Proctologists should be added for issues surrounding hemorrhoids, anal fissure (tears in the butt lining), and anal wart care. Urologists for anything concerning genital and urinary functions.

Why is it important for men to be open and honest with their doctor about their sexual preferences and habits, even if embarrassing?

Your doctor needs to know what you do so they can make sure you get the tests, vaccines, and screening care

you need. For instance, if they don't know you bottom or have a history of bottoming, they don't know to check you for potentially precancerous cells in your anal canal or to check rectal swabs for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

What else should we know in undergoing our annual physicals?

Don't be embarrassed to be honest. We have seen and heard it all. Don't be shy about being examined. Your medical and personal information is always kept confidential due to HIPPA laws.

Follow Dr. Carlton on Instagram @doctorcarlton.

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Life and Style

Trans Men Clap Back at Anti-Trans Forces, Say Penis Surgery Well Worth It

By Zack Bennett



In light of online criticism by anti-transgender forces over phalloplasty, trans men are sharing how the surgery has enhanced their lives.

Several men recently spoke to PinkNews about the surgery, which is the construction or reconstruction of a penis. It involves a skin graft from the arm, thigh, or back, and some social media users have shared pictures of scars left by the grafts, intending to stoke transphobia. It comes with risks, like all surgeries, but is well worth it, according to the trans men interviewed by the site.

“The increase in self-confidence and love has been more than I dreamed. I am still amazed at how it feels sometimes,” said a man identified only as Felix. “I’m able to feel more safe in

situations I didn’t before, like locker rooms at the gym. I don’t hate my scars — they each tell a story of a time in my life I made it through a hardship.”

“If you were to ask anyone in my life if transitioning helped me, it would be a resounding yes,” he continued.

“Transitioning saved my life, sincerely, and it makes me so sad that so many people aren’t able to receive the care they need.”

Some of the men are sharing photos of their skin-graft scars on social media, and one, Finlay Games, has made several YouTube videos regarding his transition. He had phalloplasty in 2015.

“I think trying to change [anti-trans] minds is like banging your head against a brick wall,” Games told

PinkNews. “I’ve given up trying to change their minds and instead focus on helping trans people. Allies are where it’s at. I have loads of great allies on my channel, and the work I do, sharing the truth of transition, the way it has positively impacted my life — that changes allies’ minds and steers them away from the toxic misinformation spread by gender-critical.” Some anti-trans activists refer to themselves as “gender-critical.”

“My life has been changed beyond all recognition, for the better, because of this incredible surgery. I’ve changed in ways I didn’t even expect,” Games added. “I wanted a body part I deeply felt was missing and in the process of that part being created, I’ve discovered myself and so much more.”

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

5 Simple Yet Essential Soft Skills You'll Need To Land Your Dream Job

By Veronica Massengill



If there's one thing the pandemic taught us, it's that the concepts of careers will constantly evolve, including a demand for more soft skills.

While employers are looking for those technical skills (what you learned in university or an apprenticeship), having those harder-to-develop soft skills could land you that dream job or a big promotion.

So, what exactly are soft skills? They are also known as people skills – how well you work with others to achieve goals and fit in at work. Soft skills are fundamental, so much so that many employers value them when hiring, promoting and keeping employees in the business.

For example, say you are a developer in the tech industry; you may be well-versed in the technical aspects of the job, programming languages and coding. Still, if you aren't able to work in a team environment or communicate well, you may not be a good fit.

What are the top soft skills employers are looking for?

Teamwork

Research from recruitment agency Robert Half shows that over 30% of employers think that teamwork is the most important soft skill to have.

Employers know that having a strong team that can collaborate and communicate will lead to success no matter the situation. There are many ways to show off your teamwork skills, but here are just a few to consider:

- Being able to give and receive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Appreciating the benefits of a diverse team.
- Actively listening to your colleagues.
- Being proactive in meetings and projects.
- Creating a positive and supportive working environment – either in person or remotely.

Communication



It's an old saying, but 'communication is key' still rings true today. Being able to communicate efficiently will make you more productive and also prevent miscommunication with other coworkers and your boss. Good communication skills will help you articulate yourself more easily and also understand what your colleague's needs are, ultimately making you a better collaborator. If you're looking to brush up on your communication skills, consider these tips:

- Take a moment before you speak.
- Re-read that email before you hit 'send.'
- Remember that communication is also non-verbal, so pay attention to your body language.
- Know where to communicate. Can your message be delivered over Slack or Zoom?
- Give feedback, and also be able to take it in.

Empathy

For many, empathy is the most important soft skill. Empathy is the ability to understand and

share the feelings of others, mainly through shared experiences. For many in the LGBTQ+ community, showing empathy is part of our everyday lives as our experiences living our authentic selves have shaped who we are and how we interact with others. When it comes to leadership, being empathetic involves spotting things like burnout among your employees and showing interest in the needs of others. Remember that empathy is like a muscle; you need to work at it constantly, so here are some tips for working on your empathetic abilities:

- Be curious about other people.
- Listen to others but also share your own experiences.
- Ask questions.
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable.
- Focus on similarities rather than differences.



Flexibility

It's not just the pandemic that changed how we work; advances in technology and other workplace changes have made an impact. Employers are looking for employees who can embrace change and adapt accordingly. How can

you get more flexible? Consider these tips:

- Embrace change in the workplace.
- Be passionate about learning new skills.
- Find opportunities to help co-workers.
- Communicate honestly and openly.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.



Time-Management

While the likes of Lord Alan Sugar and Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon would prefer their employees to be in the office full-time, many day-to-day employees prefer a hybrid approach to work. Data from the ONS revealed that in May of 2022, nearly a quarter of people were splitting up their work week between the office and home.

With large companies like Deloitte, PwC and Reach PLC (and also PinkNews) adopting a hybrid approach to work, recruiters and hiring managers are looking for candidates that can manage their time effectively as they bounce between home and the office. Here are a few tips that make you more efficient at both home and office:

- Start your day with a to-do

list and check the boxes as you complete tasks.

- Take breaks – they will re-focus your energy throughout the day
- Keep away from your rabbit holes – it's easy to get lost in TikTok or Twitter, consider blocking these and other distractions off your phone during working hours.
- Set a schedule that has you starting work at the same time each day regardless if you're in the office or working remotely.
- Block off 'focus time' where you don't take any calls or meetings.

How can I show off my soft skills?

Before applying for a role, scan the job post for all the soft skills mentioned above and ensure those skills are relevant in both your CV and cover letter. In your cover letter, include one or two of the skills mentioned in the job post and give specific examples of when you demonstrated those skills. In your CV, have those skills in the descriptions of your work experience.

When you get to the interview stage, come prepared with answers to questions like "Can you give an example of when you worked well with others?" Make sure you highlight experiences when other soft skills were utilized.

Remember that regardless of the job you are applying for, soft skills will always be needed for that role.

LGBTQ+ Rights Under Threat, We Will Not Be Erased

By Allison Hope



On June 28, 1970, thousands marched through the streets of Manhattan's Greenwich Village to demand an end to the violence against LGBTQ+ people.

It was the one-year mark since the Stonewall uprising, the fated event when the LGBTQ+ community, led by Black, transgender activists, fought back against the police for their repeated raids of one of the few spaces they could gather: the gay bar.

It was a clapback etched in indelible ink in response to years of persecution, assault and demoralization against members of the queer community and our way of saying, "We exist and we will not be erased." The protest marked the birth of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

"Everyone of us is important," read the note signed by the Christopher Street Liberation Committee on the day of the first Pride March. "We are showing our strength and love for each other by coming here today. We are all participants in the most important Gay event in history."

The first Pride March took place amid a climate of angst and fear and the criminalization

of queer bodies and behaviors, and it helped to flip the narrative from one of victimization to one of agency and empowerment. I imagine most who were marching that day felt a host of emotions ranging from indignation to exhilaration, but never would have guessed they would be laying the groundwork for a whiplash few decades of stunning progress toward LGBTQ+ equality.

I benefited from the progress the generation before me bled to secure. In my queer lifetime, I have seen LGBTQ+ people come out in droves and the polls swing in majority favor of LGBTQ+ people, with a record 70% of Americans supporting LGBTQ+ marriage, according to a 2021 Gallup poll. I've also seen the ushering in of anti-discrimination laws, marriage equality, workplace protections, access to family-building resources and so much more.

But all of that feels under threat right now. There are coordinated efforts underway to erase us, once again.

As we approach Pride Month this year, the clarion call to conjure the ferocious spirit of the very first Pride March more than 50 years ago is stronger

than ever.

Back then, LGBTQ+ people were demanding to be seen, to be rendered visible after generations, centuries, of being forced out of view; or much worse, prosecuted, marginalized or beaten and killed simply for who they loved or how they presented.

This time, in 2023, we are once again at grave risk of being erased of the lives we've carefully, lovingly, painstakingly built getting callously crushed between the hands of ignorance, hatred and indifference.

Despite the rainbow apparel that will no doubt fill department stores this month, the legal, political and social groundwork has well been laid to rip the rug out from under us and take away the equal rights and protections we've gained. Indeed, the far-right exploiting misunderstandings about LGBTQ+ people and our heightened vulnerabilities stemming from a widening wealth gap, climate threats and late-stage capitalism, is attempting to boil us slowly like frogs that don't realize they are cooked until it is too late to escape.

There is one thing those setting

their sights on us may not fully understand.

We will not be erased.

We will not be rendered invisible, made to hide our family pictures at our work desks for fear of reprisal if our right to gainful employment gets stripped.

We will not stop saying “gay” despite attempts like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis’ law banning the discussion of gender and sexuality with students in Kindergarten through third grade, with copycat bills proposed in many other states.

We will not be made to tuck our Pride flags away because hateful and ignorant people have been given the pulpit. We will not allow our children to feel shame for having two loving moms or dads, or any combination that isn’t traditional, because bullies feel empowered by the vitriol they hear spewed in the news or from elected officials who pathetically use us as bait for reelection.



Our families will not be erased. Our humanity will win.

We will not be erased in the books that line our children’s classrooms and libraries homophobic misanthropes are trying to ban. We worked so

hard for so long to earn a rightful place in the canon.

We will not be erased by the more than 240 anti-LGBTQ+ bills state legislatures across the country have proposed in 2022 alone nor the hundreds in 2023. They can try to take away our health care and athletics, our ability to use bathrooms safely or teach our children we merely exist. But they will never erase us entirely.

We will not be erased and go back to a time when we were legal strangers to our children, as with the recent case of Kris Williams in Oklahoma, a mom who was removed from her child’s birth certificate by Judge Lynne McGuire after she and her wife divorced.

We will not be erased and go back to a time when we have to fear getting killed going about our business, like two men who were brutally attacked outside a bodega in Brooklyn and called gay slurs, or another who was recently attacked in the subway in broad daylight.

Hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people are up, according to Prism Reports, including outside the US in places like the UK and Germany, 100% higher in presumably LGBTQ+-friendly places like NY City as compared to last year, and they are at their highest recorded levels ever for transgender and nonbinary people, according to the Human Rights Campaign,

We cannot afford to be erased.

One in five LGBTQ+ youth

seriously considered committing suicide in the past 12 months, according to a 2021 US CDC study. What does the number translate to in terms of cost to our health care system when 7% of all Americans, or more than 23 million people, identify as LGBTQ+, according to a 2022 Gallup poll?

What does it do to the ability of our citizens to be productive members of society? What is the impact not only on those vulnerable young people, but also on their families? What about the impact on our social systems, economy and society?

We cannot be erased because we have always existed. We are famous philosophers and playwrights, scientists and astronauts, pop culture icons and CEOs and lawyers and doctors and teachers and preachers, and everything in between. We have survived censorship and genocide, conversion therapy and rejection, expulsion, legal discrimination, hate crimes, microaggressions and everything in between. Yet, we continue to be born, to live and to love.

We need look no further than to the determination and resilience of those who took to the streets on June 28, 1969, and one year later, and every year after that, to understand how erasure simply isn’t an option. We will continue to show up en masse to be seen because our lives and our families depend on it.

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Actor Alexander Lincoln Just Opened Up About His Sexuality
By Lana Simmons



Get your wallets ready, Beyhive!

Beyoncé has (finally!) officially announced the long-anticipated Renaissance World Tour taking place in the summer of 2023.

The tour will begin on May 10 with a European leg that includes countries like Sweden, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland. The North American leg of the Renaissance World Tour will then kick off July 8 in Toronto, Canada and will end September 27 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Beyoncé announced the tour to the press and also shared the news on social media.

Beyoncé's last solo tour was The Formation World Tour in 2016. Since then, she embarked on another coheadlining tour with husband Jay-Z in 2018, the On the Run II Tour.

Given that it's been several years since Queen Bey last toured by herself, fans are understandably very excited about this upcoming tour.

Furthermore, Renaissance was incredibly well-received by music lovers and has been nominated for multiple Grammy Awards this year, so fans are looking forward to experiencing this album in person.

We can't wait to secure our tickets for the Renaissance World Tour!

Tickets and more information about Beyoncé's Renaissance World Tour are available on its official www.Tour.Beyonce.com

Beyoncé Is The Most Nominated Artist At The 2023 GRAMMYS: A Breakdown Of Her Record-Setting History At Music's Biggest Night.

As Beyoncé adds nine more nominations to her GRAMMY resumé, she now has 88 in total — tying her husband, Jay-Z, as the most-nominated artists of all time. Check out all the ways Beyoncé has made history at the GRAMMYS. And if Bey wins at least four GRAMMYS next year, she will become the artist with the most GRAMMY wins in history.

With her six wins in 2010, Beyoncé set the record for the most GRAMMYS won by a

female artist in one night. Just two years later, Adele also won six GRAMMYS in one night in 2012. As of press time, they share the honor of being the women with the most wins in one night.

The story may change at the 2023 GRAMMYS, as Adele received seven nominations alongside Beyoncé's nine. The two will once again compete in the Album, Record and Song Of The Year categories, bringing some déjà vu for those who watched their last face-off in 2017.

Tune into the 2023 GRAMMYS on Feb. 5, 2023 to see if Beyoncé makes even more history!

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Life and Style

Flipping The Script On Stories Of Black Trans Women

By Neal Schwartz



It can often feel like joy and optimism went on sabbatical around 2015 and have yet to reappear. Counter that despair with the Black Trans Femmes in the Arts, a young organization building community and mobilizing resources for underrepresented artists. Since its founding in 2019 by Jordyn Jay, the grassroots organization has raised over a million dollars to support Black trans artists. Members of the collective have appeared on HBO Max's *Legendary*, staged exhibitions at Los Angeles's Armand Hammer Museum, and performed on Broadway.

Jay says their organization is necessary because disparities of funding and safe spaces, and the general inaccessibility of art education, contribute to a lack of representation for Black trans women in the arts.

Jay states that, "Today, BTFA addresses all of those concerns by providing funding for projects led by Black trans femmes artists via BTFA Productions, providing artists with free studio space in New York City at BTFA Studios, creating programming for Black trans femmes to support their development as artists,

businesspeople, and individuals, and connecting Black trans femmes to the resources needed to survive and thrive."

Black trans femmes have contributed so much to American (and world) culture and BTFA's ultimate goal is to allow these women to "take ownership of their cultural production" and continue to create without limitations.

BTFA is a community-based arts non-profit that builds community and mobilizes resources to support Black trans femme artists (artists who were assigned male-at-birth and now identify somewhere underneath the femme umbrella).

We organize programming that centers and highlights Black trans femme artists, executive produce projects led by Black trans femme artists, and provide direct support to Black trans artists.

With a mission to create spaces for the production and preservation of Black trans art and culture by building community with Black trans femme artists and providing them with the resources and support necessary to thrive.

Over the past three years, BTFA has changed the landscape for Black trans femmes in the arts by opening the first Black trans-owned and operated artist's studio in the US, hosting two artists in residence, curating a database of over 100 Black trans femme artists worldwide, creating performance opportunities for over 35 New York-based Black trans femme artists, producing over 15 projects led by Black trans femmes, and redistributing over \$500,000 in money and resources to Black trans femme artists.

Find out more about BTFA, and contribute to their cause, at btfacollective.org.

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Bob The Drag Queen Is Joining Madonna On Her Greatest Hits World Tour

By David Vandygriff



Christopher D. Caldwell, better known as Bob the Drag Queen and Caldwell Tidicue, is an American drag queen, comedian, actor, activist, musician, and reality television personality. He is best known for winning the eighth season of RuPaul's Drag Race.

After winning her season, Bob released dance singles, started a podcast with Monét X Change called Sibling Rivalry, her own comedy special "Suspiciously Large

Woman", starred in the Netflix movie "Cherry Pop", started the show "BOBin' Around" on WOWPresents+ and filled in for Katya on "The Trixie & Katya Show" as of the 10th episode.

Bob the Drag Queen is going from traveling around America with Shangela and Eureka on We're Here to hitting the road with the Queen of Pop.

Madonna announced her highly-anticipated greatest hits tour, The Celebration Tour, marking her historic four decades in the music business.

In a new video recreating an iconic scene from her classic Truth or Dare documentary, Madonna plays a round of truth or dare with some famous friends like Diplo, Judd Apatow, Jack Black, Lil Wayne, Bob The Drag Queen, Kate Berlant, Larry Owens, Meg Stalter, Eric Andre, and Amy Schumer.

The viral clip ends with Schumer daring Madonna to do a greatest hits world tour. The dinner guests then start singing "La Isla Bonita" before Madonna agrees to embark on the global live spectacle.

Additional details about the tour, including tour dates and on-sale dates, were posted on

Madonna's website. In the announcement, it was revealed that Bob the Drag Queen would not only be a dinner guest of Madonna's, but will also be joining her on the tour:

"The Celebration Tour will offer a one-of-a-kind experience with special guest Bob the Drag Queen a.k.a. Caldwell Tidicue across all dates on the global tour," reads the announcement.

"Produced by Live Nation, the 35-city global tour will kick off in North America on Saturday, July 15th at Rogers Arena in Vancouver, BC," the press release continues. "With stops in Detroit, Chicago, New York, Miami, Los Angeles, and more before making its way to Europe where she will hit 11 cities throughout the fall, including London, Barcelona, Paris, and Stockholm, among others. The Celebration Tour will wrap in Amsterdam, NL on Friday, December 1st at Ziggo Dome."

Which of your favorite bops are you hoping Madonna performs live?

Tickets went on sale Jan. 20, with a fan pre-sale started on Jan. 17. Say a prayer to the ticket gods, and may the odds be ever in your favor.

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News & Politics

FBI Joins Investigation Into Threats Against 3 LGBTQ+ Bars

By Jeffery Calhoun



Tensions are high in Missouri as authorities investigate who called and threatened three LGBTQ+ bars with violence.

Between Saturday night and Sunday morning in St. Louis, PRISM STL, Just John, and Rehab all received disturbing calls from someone threatening to harm staff and patrons.

In addition to receiving threats, all three bars are located on Manchester Avenue in St. Louis, a trendy nightlife area known for drag shows, which state legislators introduced legislation about last week, seeking to outlaw the art form.

A staff member of Rehab told St. Louis NBC affiliate KSDK on Tuesday afternoon that they believed the culprit might be a bar patron who has been banned from the club. During the threatening call, the person identified themselves as "The Joker," according to staff members, the station reports.

It sounded like at least two

people were on the other line, another witness said, adding that the caller started talking about how they were the Joker and would blow up the bar, send bombs, and kill everyone by shooting the place up, Riverfront Times reports.

Staff at each location expressed concern over invading local queer safe spaces. The owners of PRISM echoed the sentiment, telling the station they felt physically ill upon realizing the nature of the call.

The owners, Michael Klatske and Sean Abernathy, believe that the toxic anti-LGBTQ+ political climate in today's America is responsible for the spate of threats against queer spaces.

"Some politicians in this state that are bigoted toward my community and are trying to create laws with no data behind them that create a sense of more hate toward my

community," Abernathy said.

While the threats are concerning, those who run local LGBTQ+ establishments say they will not be deterred or intimidated out of existence.

According to them, new security measures, including partnering with St. Louis police for support and visibility, are in place, and that police continue investigating the incidents from the weekend.

St. Louis CBS affiliate KMOV reports that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is also involved in the case.

Abernathy tried to put the calls into perspective.

"We're getting threatened with not only hate crimes, but terroristic threats," he said.

"This is all coming at a community that's just trying to exist. We're not trying to hurt anybody. We just want to be able to exist and have a good time."

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL



LGBTQ+ People Want More Out of Travel

By David Vandygriff

A new ILGTA Foundation report explores how the pandemic scrambled our expectations for queer travel and the opportunity for a global reset led by LGBTQ+ companies.

Authored by Peter Jordan, a leader in LGBTQ+ travel, *Going Further: How to Make LGBTQ+ Travel Transformational for Travelers, Communities and the Planet* reports on the interests of queer travelers and offers five key strategies for companies moving forward.

The survey uncovered a deep desire for more responsible travel: trips that reduce the environmental footprint of previous journeys and vacations that pay more attention and respect to the destination's local queer and POC communities. Respondents indicated they

want to patronize queer-owned businesses, but many would also like to contribute to an LGBTQ+ community project while on vacation.

Jordan suggests those who do business in queer travel — from travel advisors to tour operators and hotel managers to airline executives — need to meet five new goals: Lighten their environmental footprint, reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, increase their social impact, employ LGBTQ+ travel as an agent of transformation in emerging destination, and drive community change through travel.

In a practical sense, meeting the first goal involves increasing carbon literacy, developing a sustainability strategy, evaluating which tours put pressure on fragile locations, and using social

media to share advice on reducing carbon footprints.

Supporting communities means training employees to expect and embrace diversity, amplifying minority voices (including in marketing channels), ensuring queer spaces and events for people of color, building alliances with LGBTQ+ and POC nonprofits, and ensuring tours respect local issues and cultures.

In a statement, Theresa Belpulsi, former chair of the IGLTA Foundation's board, said "By taking a closer look at the diverse LGBTQ+ community of travelers, this report explains how we can build back our businesses, adopt practices that reduce our environmental footprint, and contribute to the wellbeing of communities in our most beloved destinations."

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