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**INSIDE**

Speaker Mike Johnson's Obsession With Gay Sex

Mariah Carey Announces 'It's Time' For Christmas Season To Be Defrosted

Your Ultimate LGBTQ+ Guide To EDC In Orlando

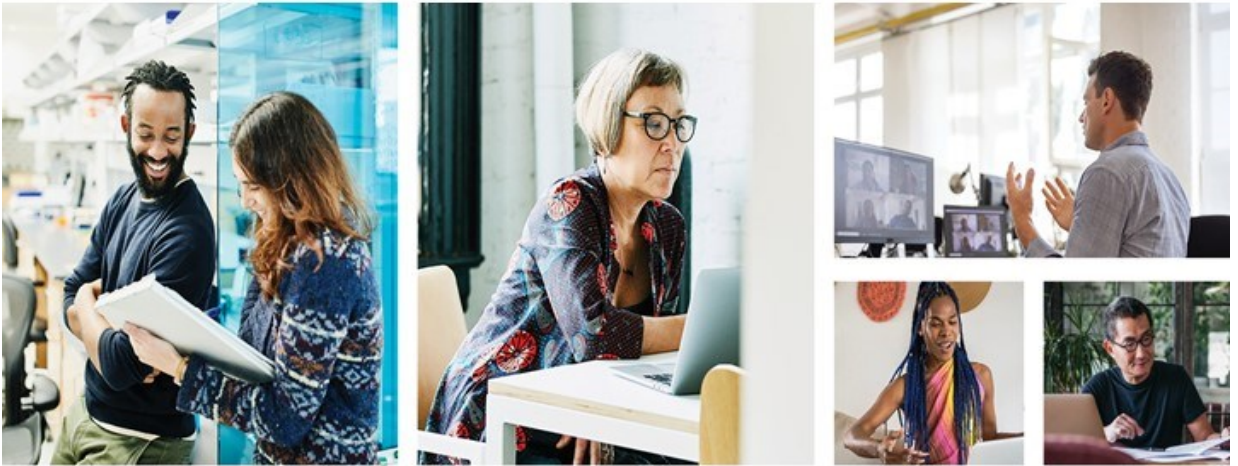




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Jax Gay Magazine is published every first Friday of the month (12 issues/year).

David Vandygriff  
**Chief Executive Officer**

### ADMINISTRATION

VP-Development | Adam Plante, Esq.  
Business Manager | Carlos Martinez  
Administrative Assistant | Jean Joshlin

### ART & DESIGN

Art Director | Brandon Massengill  
Designer | Michael Swartz

### ADVERTISING

Account Executives  
James Eddy | 904.349.5562  
Will Bray-Kelly | 904.402.5995

### NATIONAL ADVERTISING

Rivendell Media 908.232.2021 Ext. 200

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Brenda Wilson | Daniel Galbraith  
Desmond Wilkerson | Joey Amato  
Penelope Stricklin | David Vandygriff  
Jennifer Williams | Janet Livingston  
Jacqui Palumbo | Robert Conner  
Drew Griffin | David Reimer

### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Randy Lesson | Renee Parenteu  
David Vandygriff

### CELEBRITY HOST

Karrissa Wade | Brittany Moore  
Jordyn Sinclair | Diva Cliché

### LOGISTICS

Adrian Bray-Kelly

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## HOW TO CONTACT US

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664 Bridal Ave.  
Jacksonville, FL 32205  
Phone 904.900.8027  
[info@jaxgaymag.com](mailto:info@jaxgaymag.com)

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## WHO WE ARE

Jax Gay Inc. is a Community Marketing and Events organization incorporating Jax Gay Magazine, Rainbow Events, and Drag Queen Aholic.

Our mission as a 502(c)3 non-profit is to promote North Florida and especially in Jacksonville, as a welcoming LGBTQ+ destination through marketing and events. Jax Gay produces many events a year, including Jax Equality Festival in Jacksonville. Other events include the Rainbow Awards Show, White Party, Big Gay Picnic, Taste of Pride and Red Party. Visit [www.JaxGayMag.com](http://www.JaxGayMag.com) for more information.

Jax Gay Inc. also plans to launch our Jax Event Center & LGBTQ+ Art Gallery in Fall of 2023.

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# Cover

# UNITY 24

**Queer Is Not A Bad Word.  
It's Our Unifying Path Forward**

*By Tom Hastings*

*it starts with you*



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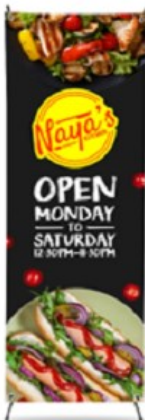
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# News & Politics

## Supreme Court Considers Challenge to Washington State's Conversion Therapy Ban

By Brenda Garrison



The U.S. Supreme Court is considering a challenge to Washington state's ban on conversion therapy for LGBTQ+ minors. The case, *Tingley v. Ferguson*, brought forth by the Alliance Defending Freedom, an org. labeled as an anti-LGBTQ+ hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, highlights the ongoing legal battles surrounding conversion therapy in the U.S.

Brian Tingley, a licensed marriage & family counselor, is the plaintiff in this case, asserting that the ban on conversion therapy infringes on his rights to freedom of speech and free exercise of religion as a Christian therapist.

Tingley's legal rep. by ADF follows a recent controversial ruling by the Supreme Court in the case *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis*, which, despite lacking standing, signaled a nod towards discrimination previously deemed unacceptable, said Katherine Franke, a law professor at Columbia University.

The district court in the Western District of Washington & later the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Washington's

ban on conversion therapy in 2021 and Sept 2022, respectively. The rulings emphasized the constitutional authority of states to enact laws protecting minors from the harms of conversion therapy administered by licensed therapists. This stance garnered support from the American Psychological Association, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the 9th Circuit highlighting the dangers of conversion therapy.

Tingley petitioned for a rehearing by a larger panel of judges in the 9th Circuit, which was denied. In March, he urged the Supreme Court to review the case. Although the court has yet to act on the petition, legal experts are closely monitoring the case, with concerns that conservative justices may be inclined to hear such a case, aligning with ADF's broader agenda of leveraging free speech and religious liberty rights to challenge reasonable government regulations enacted in the public interest.

"I do worry that the more conservative members of the court will be more than open to taking this kind of case, independent of the circuit split

because it's the next step in what is the ADF's agenda, which is to have free speech and religious liberty rights basically become a mechanism by which to supersede any reasonable government regulation that is enacted in the public's interest," said Franke.

The *Tingley* case comes at a time when advocacy against conversion therapy is gathering steam, highlighted by the recent formation of the U.S. Joint Statement, a coalition aimed at eradicating conversion therapy.

However, Tingley's challenge to Washington's ban threatens to undo progress in a state that has taken steps to protect LGBTQ+ minors from such harmful practices.

Conversion therapy has long been condemned for its severe psychological and emotional consequences on individuals, particularly minors. The practice, aiming to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, has faced widespread condemnation, leading to a coalition of influential mental health and medical orgs advocating for its eradication.





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# OUT & HEALTH

## CDC Greenlights Routine Mpox Vaccination For Those Most At Risk

By Linda Harrington



have sex with men and others who are at high risk of mpox infection should get two doses of the Jynneos vaccine, even now that the recent public health emergency in the United States has passed, according to an independent panel of experts that advises the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on its vaccine decisions.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, or ACIP, voted unanimously on Wednesday to recommend that certain individuals ages 18 and older who are at high risk for getting mpox continue to get the vaccine as a routine part of their sexual health care. Previously, the CDC had recommended vaccination of high-risk individuals during the outbreak.

The recommendations now move to CDC Director Dr. Mandy Cohen, who must sign off.

More than 31,000 Americans were diagnosed with mpox in the 2022-2023 outbreak, including 55 who died, according to CDC data. Most of those who were infected were gay men.

According to the CDC, people at high risk for catching mpox include gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender and non-binary people who in the past six months have had at least one of the following: a new diagnosis of at least one sexually transmitted disease; more than one sex partner; sex at a commercial sex venue or in conjunction with a large

public event in an area where mpox is spreading; sexual partners of people who have those risks; and people who plan to participate in any of the previous activities.

More than 2 million people in the United States are eligible for vaccination against mpox under the new recommendations, according to the CDC. To date, approximately 23% of this group has received the recommended two doses of Jynneos.

Bavarian Nordic, the manufacturer of the vaccine, says it's preparing for a commercial launch of Jynneos in the United States in the first half of 2024.

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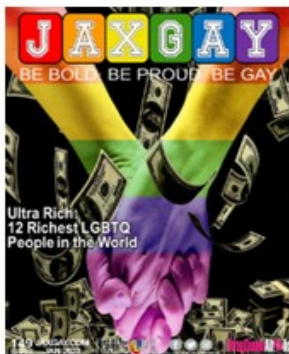
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## Mariah Carey Announces 'It's Time' For Christmas Season To Be Defrosted

By David Vandygriff



All we want for Christmas is Mariah Carey!

The official Queen of Christmas has declared that it's the Holly Jolly Season at last now that Halloween has passed, and we all need to get ready!

In a new video shared on her Instagram, we see a frozen vault with a clock reading "October 31, 11:59." As the vault opens, we see a large block of ice with Carey inside wearing a sexy red suit. People dressed in black and wearing classic Halloween masks like Ghostface, Jason, and a Jack-o-Lantern are surrounding the ice, working hard to defrost it with hair dryers.

Thankfully, they have some help from Mariah, who uses her legendary five octave vocal range to hit a perfect high whistle register and crack all the ice around her by singing,

"It's time!"

From there, Mariah dances around with a group of holiday revelers as the greatest holiday song of all time, "All I Want For Christmas Is You," plays.

"All I Want For Christmas Is You" has become the anthem of the holiday season, re-entering the Billboard Hot 100 each year around this time, and reaching number one on the chart each of the last four years.

Carey isn't the only one ushering in the season with music. The Pop Prince of Christmas, Matt Rogers, has also released the music video for his song "Have You Heard of Christmas" off his upcoming album of the same name.

The album even features a Mariah-inspired song, "Hottest Female Up in Whoville," a twist on "Where Are You,

Christmas?" from How the Grinch Stole Christmas, which Carey wrote from the perspective of Cindy Lou Who.

"I thought that was funny, because when I'm watching the movie, the Mariah Carey type in that movie is Martha May Whovier," Rogers said about the song. "She is the one who is the most Mariah-ish, for lack of a better term. And I thought, 'Wouldn't it be funny if she wrote a song from her perspective?'"

I combined Mariah's sensibility around the time that Grinch film was released in 2000, which was sort of like that R&B, urban pop sound, along with Martha May Whovier's lyrical reality, and I had the song 'Hottest Female Up in Whoville.'"

Rogers' album Have You Heard of Christmas comes out this Friday, November 3.



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# OUT & HEALTH

## Elliot Page Continues To Speak His Truth And Help Others

By Michael Heam



It's been a big year for Elliot Page. For starters, his candid and clever memoir, *Pageboy* — which documents the 36-year-old actor's journey to come out as a trans man, among other life experiences — quickly became a *New York Times* bestseller upon its release in June, almost instantly topping the nonfiction list. The *Los Angeles Times* lauded it as “raw, harrowing, and often heartbreaking,” while The *Washington Post* called the memoir “eloquent and enthralling.”

He's also been named one of 2023's *The Advocates*, our annual list of creatives and

changemakers who are working toward a brighter future for us all.

Among the many intimate details of Page's life that are included is the fact that he and actress Kate Mara (*American Horror Story*, *Fantastic Four*) once had a secret relationship. Despite the fact that Mara was also dating actor Max Minghella at the time, Mara expressed she was OK with the revelation, knowing it was an important part of Page's story. In the book, Page writes that Mara was “the first person I fell for after my heart was broken.” “This was right after I'd come out as gay and it was a time of exploration and also heartbreak,” Page told *People*.

“Today I definitely feel a way that I never thought I would get to feel,” he added about his decision to write the book, and how he had to come to a certain place of peace from within before sharing his story outwardly. “I think that mostly manifests in how present I feel. The sort of ease and the ability to exist. There's been periods in my life where I really felt like I wasn't. We talk about trans joy and euphoria and all of those things, and so much of it is in the stillness. I just feel so lucky.”

In addition to becoming a bestselling author, Page also had to navigate the delicate balancing act of promoting his indie hit film *Close to You*, which he cowrote with the film's director Dominic Savage, during this year's writers strike while also supporting his colleagues. The experimental film was one of very few independent projects officially deemed exempt from the strike due to a lack of conflict with the union's grievances and demands. Still, Page consistently showed up at the picket lines in support.

The *Umbrella Academy* actor also spoke out about the movement to degender acting categories at awards shows, echoing what many other non-binary and trans actors have recently voiced. While in Toronto for the *Close To You* premiere in September, Page told *Entertainment Weekly* that he's hoping the Oscars will do away with gendered classifications very soon.

“Yeah, it seems like a good idea,” Page told EW. “And, again, this sort of unusual aspect of that being the only category, right, where that sort of happens? So, hopefully, we start moving beyond that degree of binary thinking.”

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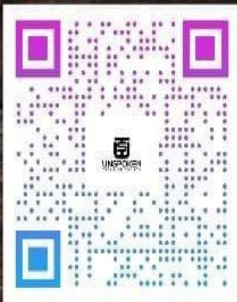
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# Life and Style

## Google Searches For 'Am I Gay?' Are Up 1,300% Since 2004

By Mey Rude



It seems a lot more people are wondering if they're queer than we previously thought.

Many of us remember days on the internet when we'd type in a Google search bar questions like "Am I gay?" "How to know if I'm a lesbian?" or "Am I trans?" Now, a new study shows that we were far from alone in those searches.

According to a study published by the Cultural Currents Institute, which studies public opinion trends, Google searches for phrases questioning sexuality and gender such as "Am I gay?" and "Am I lesbian?" have increased by 1,300 percent over the last 20 years.

In order to cancel out the simple fact that more people are using Google overall in 2023 than in 2004, the study shows relative data, "representing each term's share of all Google searches for the region or time period being examined."

That means that the amount of Google users searching these terms over time has risen by over 1,300 percent, a truly staggering number.

Interestingly, the state of Utah

led all states in these searches. The state has a large conservative population and a large Latter Day Saints population, both of which probably contributed to the higher numbers.

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Other states at the top of the "Am I gay?" search include Iowa, Indiana, West Virginia, and New Hampshire. Connecticut, Kentucky, Washington, and Colorado followed behind Utah in the "Am I lesbian?" category. The "Am I trans?" search has Kentucky, Colorado, Michigan, and Washington rounding out the top five.

Two other terms' Google trends were also studied: "How to come out," and "nonbinary." States that searched the most for tips on how to come out include Oklahoma, West Virginia, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Kentucky, meaning that the south and Appalachia have the highest rates.

According to the study, the question "Am I nonbinary?" didn't have sufficient data for Google to provide results.

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# BUSINESS & TRAVEL

## Your Ultimate LGBTQ+ Guide To EDC In Orlando

By Debi Regan

Let's party gays!

The Electric Daisy Carnival is considered the largest electronic dance music festival in North America and the LGBTQ+ community makes up a significant part of the rave community.

EDC is famously known for being so accepting of people from all walks of life thanks to the classic rave motto PLUR, which stands for Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect. Plus, many gays love to dance the night away... so EDC is a safe haven for many in the LGBTQ+ family.

Happening Friday, November 10 to Sunday, November 12, here's a quick guide to living the ultimate gay fantasy at EDC.

EDC thrives on a super inclusive environment that makes everyone feel welcome.

From creative costumes to electrifying stages with music that'll make anyone's heart pump, there's something for everyone. People from all backgrounds can spend the night dancing to their favorite DJs, riding some incredible rides, or simply vibing out with new friends.

The lineup this year includes Zedd, Armin van Buuren, Fisher, Gryffin, Anabel Englund, The Chainsmokers, Alok, and so many more. It's safe there's tons of iconic DJ sets in store.

With so many anti-LGBTQ+ bills being introduced in Florida, it's incredible that EDC includes a Pride parade during the festival!

Happening on day two, members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies can come together and show their Pride in a unifying parade before

partying the rest of the night.

Plus, the representation at EDC is like no other festival. Groups of gays and same-sex couples are running around the grounds ready for an unforgettable weekend.

Even proud members of the LGBTQ+ family go solo and rock their outfits they finally feel comfortable wearing for the first time!

To make EDC even more iconic, couples can get married!

Same-sex marriage is celebrated every year at the huge festival, which is certainly a sight to see. There's nothing quite like a beautiful couple in the LGBTQ+ community tying the knot under the electric sky.

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**Queer Is Not A Bad Word. It's  
Our Unifying Path Forward**  
*By Tom Hastings*



We need to talk about the word "queer."

I know very well that some of you have a complicated relationship with it. Not everyone has embraced it as a positive term; maybe it was the pejorative that still haunts you from your time in the closet. But given everything that's going on right now, I think the time has come for us to set aside any of those kinds of grievances for the greater good.

No matter how you identify, if you care about the well-being of all LGBTQ people, embracing "queer" and all that it stands for has never felt more necessary. Because leaning into it allows us both to be free from the expectations of others and to unify as a force of truly authentic individuals. And these things all seem crucial in battling the full-fledged war that is currently being waged against the lives and livelihoods of LGBTQ people.

There's obviously a lot to unpack here; I should perhaps start with my own relationship to "queer." It's a word I haven't always felt comfortable

identifying myself with — though perhaps not in the sense you'd expect. It took me a really long time to feel like I earned the right to identify as queer, which I've long considered a badge of honor in one's pursuit of a genuine sense of self.

It was the activists and academics of the late 1980s who reclaimed the word as a deliberately provocative and politically radical alternative to what they saw as more assimilationist movements (namely, "gay" and "lesbian"). It then grew to become an inclusionary umbrella term to describe a broad spectrum of non-normative sexual or gender identities. With the word "queer," everyone is invited — it's really just up to you how you go about embracing the invitation.

In her new book *The Big Reveal: An Illustrated Manifesto of Drag*, the brilliant drag queen (and serious queer history buff) Sasha Velour writes about discovering "queer" in her college years, and how much it brought her new personal freedom.

"Queer as an identity (or non-identity) opened up a space for me to exist outside

expectations (particularly my internalized ones) about binary sex and gender, and allowed me to play with how I could look and who I could be," Velour writes. "For me, being queer meant that I didn't need to fit into binary ideas of sexual attraction or gender. If you are queer, you don't allow body parts to determine how you dress or act."

I admit, my own relationship with queerness has been a journey. Like Velour, I only knew "queer" as a dated slur until I was in university, which is where I first saw it sandwiched between two other words full of glorious potential: "New Queer Cinema." This essentially served as my gateway into understanding the word's reclamation in various contexts, and to meeting people who exclusively identified as "queer." But when they would ask me how I identified myself, I'd just tell them honestly: "I guess gay? I kinda thought that was my only option."

Despite knowing that it was no longer my only option, "I guess gay?" continued to basically be my answer to that question for the next decade or so, as I allowed both my body parts



and society's expectations determine too many elements of my personal expression.

It took me a long while to fully understand that this instinct was the result of coming of age during an era of limited and exclusionary acceptance of LGBTQ people. Basically, those who had enough of the traits that deemed them eligible to be assimilated into mainstream society (the big ones: being cis-passing, gender conforming, white, able-bodied, and/or wealthy) were joining en masse. I'm not proud of the way my young adult self didn't know whether to aspire to be like the assimilationists, or to instead follow the true queers to the land of authentic selves.

It was only a few years ago that a series of events in my personal life and the global cataclysms of 2020 just kind of broke me open, and I stumbled upon a comfort with the identity that had been there all along. "I guess gay?" was gone; "queer" was here.

By finally owning that identity, I found a freedom in everything from how I presented myself (did I want to paint my nails pink and wear magenta "women's" cut-off shorts I bought for \$6 at Urban Planet? Why not!) to caring significantly less (though, admittedly, still a little bit) about what mainstream society — the straight or gay versions — thought of me.

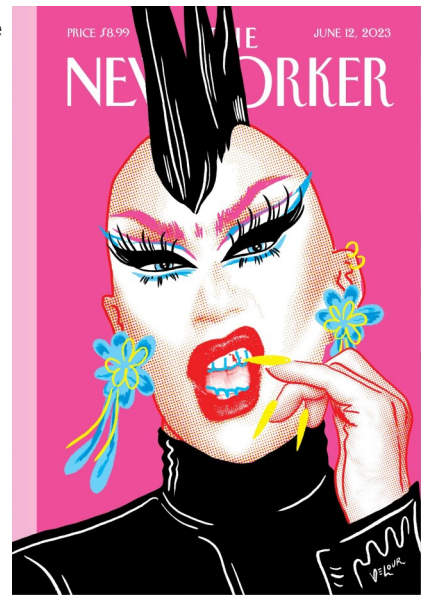
But some people in the LGBTQ community have done quite the opposite of following this path.

I'm thinking specifically of those who are taking an aggressive stance against the word "queer" as of late — the people who are calling themselves "LGB activists" in their Twitter handles and who have decided to fully align themselves with right-wing extremists in their attacks on trans people and drag queens. To them, they want a new world order where only the "LGBs" who assimilated are allowed to exist. "Queer" is simply too inclusive a term for their fascist pursuits.

I brought these specific people up to Ms. Velour when I had the pleasure of interviewing her for this column's sibling of sorts, a talk series I host called Here & Queer. Given Sasha's seniority in earning her queerness (and just her general brilliance), I felt her words could speak to this matter better than mine:

"I have nothing nice to say about them," she replied. "This isn't a new term. In the 80s and 90s, it was reclaimed to be an activist term — to encompass the whole community, to stand up against discrimination for trans people and to see us as an entire community. So what they're saying by not wanting to be called queer is they don't want to be seen as part of the same community as trans people."

"It takes a queer person who understands all the beautiful things this community advocates for. Freedom for all people. A new version of society that would have



equality and opportunity for many different kinds of people. The full, inclusive, intersectional nature of the LGBTQ community. That's what makes us so strong and beautiful."

"And if you're missing out on that? You don't understand glamour, darling."

What these people are also missing out on is the opportunity to use the power of your visible queerness to create space for queer people who need it much more than you. We're seriously living in an era where domestic terrorists are violently attacking people outside a school board meeting that was voting on whether to recognize Pride month. Where events featuring drag queens reading children's books in libraries are routinely being met with similar energy. Where the Human Rights Campaign has declared a state of emergency

for queer people living in the U.S. for the first time in their 40-year history.

So if you're an LGBTQ person who is not terrified that their rights or even lives are being threatened, the least you can do is actively show your solidarity with those who do not have that privilege. This goes for straight allies, too: fly that flag for us (the updated, inclusionary version please), literally and figuratively, in any space it might matter.

It often doesn't take much. Earlier this year, I was riding the train to visit my family for Easter. I was simply wearing pastel pink nail polish (in honor of the holiday, of course) when a queer-presenting teenager got on at one of the many small-town stops that particular train makes along the conservative stretch of Eastern Ontario. They sat down in the seat beside me, seeming stressed or upset for reasons I'll never know. But they immediately seemed to calm down when they looked at me and noticed my nail color.

"I love your nails," they said to me.

"Thanks, I love them too!" I responded.

We didn't say another word to each other, but I could tell they felt safe to be who they were for the rest of the ride. Now we just need to figure out how to come together so more queer people can feel that safe for the rest of their lives.



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# HARDWICKS

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## Galantis' Christian Karlsson Spills On His Collabs With Gay Icons With A Christmas Tour

By *Walter Bennett*

Everything he drops is a banger!

Christian Karlsson is one of the most well-known producers in the music industry for many years now. Known as many monikers including Galantis, Miiike Snow, and Bloodshy, Karlsson's legendary discography goes all the way back to the early 2000s.

One of his first hits was the undeniably iconic song and gay anthem "Toxic" by Britney Spears, which would catapult him into stardom.

"Britney respected my crazy ideas the most. She stuck by me and that's why I was on every record because she gave me the most freedom and was still excited about the next one. I got to see Britney over the years and I really enjoyed all the different colors."

Karlsson's credits also include collaborations with plenty of other gay icons like Dolly Parton, Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez, Little Mix, Kylie Minogue, and Madonna.

"I feel blessed that I got to

actually be in the studio writing songs with so many amazing and talented people. Madonna is not just an amazing artist and songwriter, she's also the creative flow in the studio. I was so blown away and inspired by her."

Even though he's worked with plenty of legends, there was one gay icon he was really hoping he'd get to collab with.

"I was really close to go into the studio with George Michael and I would have absolutely loved that, but I missed that. That would have been amazing."

Next year, Karlsson will hit his ten-year anniversary as Galantis. He debuted Galantis at Coachella in 2014, and since then, he's had so many incredible EDM tracks garner millions of streams like "Runaway (U & I)," "No Money," "Love on Me," and more.

"That actually means a lot to me. I feel like I just started Galantis, to be honest. That's what's weird about it. I feel like this journey just started for me. It doesn't feel like ten years,

but I'm really proud of everything I've done with Galantis. I got ADHD and Galantis was like my medication. I needed Galantis to feel better and I still do."

Today, Karlsson has dropped his latest single as part of Galantis and another notable gay singer hopped on the record. Galantis' new song is called "Dreamteam" and features out and proud singer Tyler Glenn with his band Neon Trees.

"I love that genre of electronic indie music, so to me, this was a collab I couldn't be happier about. I was just thrilled they were down to do it. Tyler came on and just took it to another level. He hit it out of the park."

With every song that Karlsson puts out, he's humbled to have worked with so many pioneers and create songs that serve as the soundtrack to many people's lives, especially in the LGBTQ+ community.

"My music is for absolutely everyone. I'm so happy that people are into my music. If I can help someone, I'll do it every day."

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# Life and Style



## Blue Moon Wants To Make Thanksgiving Taste Like Beer With New Seasoning

By Sarah Martinez

Thanksgiving is a time to test out new recipes and flavors for turkey and side dishes, but it's also a time for festive drinks. Of course, there are plenty of festive cocktails out there — like apple cider mocktails, for example — but sometimes you just want a tried-and-true beer. Depending on your guests' tastes and preferences, accommodating every person at your table can be nearly impossible, but Blue Moon is attempting to satisfy everyone's tastes with the launch of its new holiday seasonings. While these new products don't taste exactly like the well-known beer, the flavors are inspired by Blue Moon Belgian White Belgian-Style Wheat Ale.

Blue Moon's two new offerings are a Zesty seasoning and a Pie Pint seasoning. The former is meant for savory applications, such as adding

more flavor to your turkey, and its blend contains notes of salty citrus, coriander, and hops. Of course, you can't enjoy a turkey dinner without dessert, and Blue Moon's pie pint seasoning is there for all your sweet dessert needs. Expect notes of fresh orange and coriander that you can use to make a perfect pie filling.

### Garnish Your Beer With A Seasonal Tiny Pie

Since dinner and dessert go hand in hand, Blue Moon is offering both of its new seasonings in a two-pack. The company is also partnering with Austin, Texas bakery Tiny Pies to bring back its pie pints. Pie pints are miniature pies that can be enjoyed for an individual dessert, or as a perfectly sweet garnish for your Blue Moon pint. In 2022, Blue Moon partnered with Baked by

Melissa to create miniature pie pints; this year, Tiny Pies will be offering four new flavors, including Zesty Pumpkin Spice, Tangy Citrus Apple Twist, Key Lime Coconut Crumble, and Chocolate Citrus Haze.

For a limited time, the Tiny Pies four-pack can be bought for \$27.30, while the seasoning two-pack is going for \$11.26 (both prices do not include shipping). As these products are from a beer company, purchasers must be 21 or older to order. Customers can head to the Blue Moon seasonings website, as well as the Tiny Pies website, to order their seasonings and dessert and avoid a bland Thanksgiving meal. Now that you have your seasonings covered and your dessert needs met, you just have to decide which Blue Moon flavor to pair with your turkey.

# ONE COMMUNITY



resolved. She looked like a fighter.

She identifies as Black and indigenous nonbinary trans/femm. Her vision is to turn vacant buildings into small business ventures and dilapidated houses and blighted neighborhoods into safe communities with affordable housing. She wants to bring resources into communities so that youth are not left to activities that will lead them into the carceral system.

Avory's platform transcends gender, and it is why I believe she is the change maker the 104th District needs. "We may think differently, but I can imagine we usually feel hunger, homelessness, community

violence, and the overdoses of loved ones the same," she said during her visit, "As abandonment by our politicians." For Avory, policies ought to lift people up, not keep them down. She articulates, substantively, on the how.

Gone are the days of believing that our politicians must be the person you would want to have a beer with. Deceptive campaign malarkey is watching how many politicians put on their best face while courting the voting constituency.

Avory, a hopeful politician, came into the "belly of the beast" to learn from some who have caused disastrous harm in their communities, but who may now be the cultivators on

how to heal the same communities. It is said that "a man's strength flows from the same well as his weaknesses."

Being incarcerated does not relieve us of our civic duty as U.S. citizens, and the U.S. Constitution supports that sentiment. It reads, "No State shall make or enforce any law which abridges or immunities of citizens of the United States."

Avory did not come to offer any promises or hand me the same laundry list of promises recycled from the last election's did-not-achieve-pile. Over a shared bag of vending-machine chips, we talked about solutions, ones that politicians seldom, if ever, think incarcerated citizens have.

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## Drag Race's Kameron Michaels Soft-Launches New Mystery Boyfriend

By Greg Joshlin

There's a new man in Kameron Michaels' life!

On Friday, October 20, the Drag Race season 10 finalist came back to social media with a new video shared on TikTok and Instagram. In the since-deleted video, out-of-drag Michaels explained that he's been diagnosed with ADHD and wants to "catch up" with his fans on social media.

Well, it seems like Michaels is following through with the catching-up part! On Thursday, October 26, the Drag Race star

shared an Instagram story soft-launching a new boyfriend in his life. "Happy anniversary," the post read, suggesting that they've been together for quite some time while Michaels was on a break from social media.

Alas, the identity of this new boyfriend is still undisclosed, with Michaels using an orange heart emoji to cover that person's face. It's also worth mentioning that the couple is dressed pretty much exactly the same: long-sleeve plaid shirts, black jeans, and the same Nike shoes.

As a drag performer, Michaels made her reality TV debut on season 10 of RuPaul's Drag Race. Over the course of the competition, she was criticized by the judges for not "opening up" when it comes to her personality.

Though Michaels admitted on Drag Race that she can be a little guarded at times, that didn't stop her from giving us incredible lip syncs throughout the season, winning the Rusical challenge, and making it to the grand finale. She then lip synced for the crown against Aquaria and Eureka, finishing the competition as a runner-up.



In recent years, Kameron Michaels performed as a cast member on the RuPaul's Drag Race Live! residency in Las Vegas. She also appeared as a Lip Sync Assassin on All Stars 6, going up against Ra'Jah O'Hara and winning that lip sync to Charli XCX's "Boom Clap."

Congratulations to Michaels and this mystery new boyfriend for their anniversary!



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# News & Politics

## Speaker Mike Johnson's Obsession With Gay Sex

By Drew Massengill

What is behind U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson's unusual obsession with gay sex? If you put all the pieces together, Johnson's antagonism and revulsion toward our community borders on fixation, fascination, and hysteria. It's unhealthy. It's mysterious.

And it's not something new. His loathsomeness about gay sex started more than 20 years ago, and to this day, he's hasn't let go.

First, right out of college, he worked for the Alliance Defending Freedom, which the Southern Law Poverty Center has called a hate group. Johnson also is a habitual denier; he denies climate change, denies reproductive rights, denies free and fair elections, and denies LGBTQ+ rights.

This is how SLPC describes what ADF and Johnson want for our community: "Recriminalization of sexual acts between consenting LGBTQ adults in the U.S. and criminalization abroad; has defended state-sanctioned sterilization of trans people

abroad; has contended that LGBTQ people are more likely to engage in pedophilia; and claims that a 'homosexual agenda' will destroy Christianity and society.

ADF also works

to develop 'religious liberty' legislation and case law that will allow the denial of goods and services to LGBTQ people on the basis of religion. Since the election of President Trump, ADF has become one of the most influential groups informing the administration's attack on LGBTQ rights."

Johnson is vehemently against marriage equality. But he doesn't stop there. He has let his disdain toward us seep into our bedrooms. While at ADF he wrote an editorial for a local newspaper and "called homosexuality an 'inherently unnatural' and 'dangerous lifestyle' that would lead to legalized pedophilia and possibly even destroy 'the entire democratic system,'" as CNN reported.

He also said America is not a democracy, so theoretically, queers are worse than insurrectionists in his demented mind.

Johnson let his warped brain show in another opinion piece that he wrote in a Louisiana newspaper. "Your race, creed, and sex are what you are, while homosexuality and cross-dressing are things you

do," he wrote. "This is a free country, but we don't give special protections for every person's bizarre choices."

Now, ask yourself: Why is Johnson so passionate about men having sex with men and men marrying other men? Why the animosity? What have we ever done to him? Why is this any of his business? What is his behind his condemnation? Why does he spend his time on something that has nothing to do with him?

He says he's a "firm believer in the law." Well, this might be news to him since he's so dogged about dogging us, but the last time I checked, it's legal for men to have sex with men, and it's legal for men to marry men. So right away, Johnson's hypocrisy shines through as he casts aspersions on our way of life.

While laws are in place for marriage equality and for our freedom to sleep with those we love or lust after, it might not be that way for very long.

Across the street from the House chamber, where a dyed-in-the-wool homophobe sits in the high-backed ruler's chair, is the U.S. Supreme Court, where six dyed-in-the-wool homophobes sit in similar high-backed rulers' chairs. In the United States, the leaders of the Supreme Court and the leader of the U.S. House of Representatives would like nothing more than to strip rights away from queers. This should keep us all up at night.

Johnson's history against our community can't be dismissed,

waved away, or answered by saying he follows the law. The words he uses to describe the way we love each other and the way we show love by marrying each other are not only cruel but dangerous.

Johnson recently told the equally repugnant Sean Hannity, "I genuinely love all people, regardless of their lifestyle choices. This is not about the people themselves." He's pushing the dangerous trope of "lifestyle choices," that horror idea that we as queer people "choose" the way we are. It's blasphemy, and he knows what he's doing by dredging up this coded, hateful language. It's impossible to love the sinner and hate the sin — because in this case there is no sin, and he has not an ounce of love for us.

As further evidence of the fact that Johnson has no choice but to hate us, his wife runs a counseling center that equates being gay to bestiality and incest. But something is amiss there, because Kelly Johnson took down the website for her practice. Looks like they are trying to hide their obsession with gay sex. To the Johnsons, we are all having sex with our relatives, dogs, and children, which makes it inconceivable that they would love us.

As an aside, Johnson and his wife make Clarence and Ginni Thomas look like Howard and Marion Cunningham from Happy Days.

And Speaker Johnson's anti-LGBTQ+ venom just keeps going and going and going.

While with ADF, Johnson gave legal advice to Exodus International, a conversion therapy organization, and partnered with the group to put on an annual antigay event aimed at teens. We reported today that the Supreme Court is considering hearing a challenge brought forth by the ADF to Washington State's ban on conversion therapy.

Why all the fuss about us? Why do Johnson and his wife feel the need to push against us on every conceivable issue? It's not that there's anything wrong with us, so it only seems obvious that there's something seriously wrong with them.

Johnson and his wife are in what's called a "covenant" marriage, which is an evangelical and conservative union that makes it difficult to divorce and is only legal in three states, including Louisiana. While covenant marriages aren't all that uncommon, they are still a small minority.

There's nothing wrong with this arrangement, if that's the way you desire to be married, but what's wrong with it in Johnson's case is how he uses it as a badge of honor, and in a way that conveys he's morally superior to someone who might be in a same-sex marriage. In other words, his "special" marriage license gives him license to condemn ours.

Here's how Johnson explains



it: "My own parents are divorced. As anyone who goes through that knows, that was a traumatic thing for our whole family. I'm a big proponent of marriage and fidelity and all the things that go with it, and I've seen first-hand the devastation [divorce] can cause."

If Johnson is a big proponent of marriage and fidelity, why wouldn't he support marriage equality? Oh, wait, it's because it's "sinful" in his interpretation of the Bible for two men or two women to lie with each other. Johnson also told Hannity that his worldview and policy positions are dictated by the Bible.

His preaching and posing as some sort of prophet has no place in a society that includes a multitude of religious beliefs, personal beliefs, and morality that have nothing to do with his extreme reliance on dated scripture, written by sinful men — all men, no women. Some of these men who wrote the Bible may have had sex with other men. Blasphemy? Hardly! How do we and how does Johnson know that Peter never slept with Paul?

As the Human Rights Campaign points out, "The Bible says nothing about 'homosexuality' as an innate dimension of personality. Sexual orientation was not understood in biblical times." But gay sex most certainly was.

So if Johnson's life is dictated by the Bible, why isn't he all-consumed by the relationship of Jonathan and David in the Bible? Why doesn't he seek answers behind what's up with those two? Or condemn them? Or write editorials about them? Why is he so frenzied about gay sex and same-sex marriage in the 21st century?

Johnson having intimate relations with his wife is no less, and no worse, than two men or women or anyone of the same gender showing their love for each other. A covenant marriage is no more and no

less committed and loving than a same-sex marriage, or any marriage, for that matter (even an "open one!").

And if your way of thinking is that your marriage is better than mine, then there must be something wrong with yours. And there's something wrong with you if one of your "deity" goals is to get men to stop having sex with other men.

Good luck with that! Or watch out for that! If you and your six cronies on SCOTUS have any plans — which they do — to screw around with what we do in our bedrooms, you're in for the fight of your life. In fact, if you proceed, as a protest, I will call for an all-male orgy outside of your office in the Capitol.



We won't rip down the name plate above your door, fly Confederate flags (sorry to disappoint you, Mike), steal documents off your desk, threaten your life and the lives of your staffers, put feces on your wall, put our feet on your desk, injure the cops outside your door, or break your windows.

In other words, we'll just have sex, and you're welcome to take pictures, Mike, since you're so obsessed with how we love each other.

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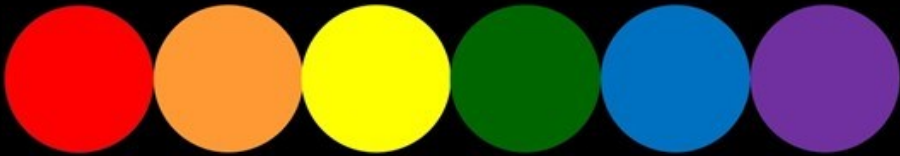
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# BUSINESS & TRAVEL

## Amazon Unveils Buy Now, Pay Later Option From Affirm For Small Business Owners

By Janet Griffin



Amazon is unveiling its first buy now, pay later checkout option for the millions of small business owners who use its online store.

The service, with loans ranging from \$100 to \$20,000, will be available to all eligible customers by Black Friday, or Nov 24. It is specifically for sole proprietors, or small businesses owned by a single person, the most common form of business ownership.

It's the latest sign of the widening adoption of a fintech feature that exploded in popularity, along with the valuations of leading players Affirm and Klarna. When boom turned to bust in 2021, and valuations in the industry dropped steeply, skeptics pointed to rising interest rates and borrower defaults as hurdles for growth and profitability.

But for users, the option is touted as being more transparent than credit cards because customers know how much interest they will owe up front. That's made its appeal durable for households and

businesses coming under increasing strain as excess cash from pandemic stimulus programs has dwindled.

"We constantly hear from small businesses that say they need payment solutions to manage their cash flow," said Todd Heimes, director of Amazon Business Worldwide. "We offer the ability to use credit cards & to pay by invoice; this is another option available to small business customers to pay over time."

Amazon Business was launched in 2015 after the company realized businesses were using its popular retail website for office supplies and bulk purchases. The division reached \$35 billion in sales this year and has more than 6 million customers globally.

If approved, users can pay for Amazon purchases in equal installments over three to 48 months. They are charged an annualized interest rate between 10% & 36%, based on the perceived risk of the transaction, according to Affirm Chief Revenue Officer Wayne Pommen. There are no late or hidden fees, the companies

said.

"The financial industry is not great at providing credit to really small businesses," Pommen said. "They can't walk into a bank branch and get a loan until they reach a certain scale. So us being able to provide this for purchases" helps business grow and manage their cash flows, he said.

The move is a boost in a crucial relationship for Affirm, which has had to search for revenue growth after demand for expensive Peloton bikes collapsed. Affirm first began offering installment loans to Amazon's retail customers in 2021, launched on Amazon in Canada in 2022 & was then added to Amazon Pay earlier this year.

Affirm decided to target sole proprietors first because they make up most small businesses in the country, with 28 million registered in the U.S., according to Pommen.

"We'll see how the product performs and if it makes sense to expand it to a wider universe of businesses," he stated.



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