Editor’s Note:
“Someone ought to tell Spicer that lurking in the bushes is a gay rite of passage.”

On the cover:
Betty Who poses for Zak Cassar

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DJ MILK
Licht also believes that Peggie’s gender expression clashed with second-wave lesbian feminist politics. “That people of that generation were very set in their views,” Licht explains. “And that was true of Peggie.”

Licht notes that Peggie, in her early 50s, was much older than most of Buffalo’s lesbian feminist community. “If you owned a gay bar, maintain a queer-oriented public space or service organization, or host an LGBTQ+-related event, you were likely to be treated with suspicion and even hostility.” Licht adds.

In 2012, I got into a fight over a woman with Dee Austin. She was kicked out of GROW, a local lesbian organization, for instance, she was kicked out of GROW. In 2015, she was elected secretary of MSNF, and used her position to ensure that Buffalo’s Pride celebrations always had trans representation. She had been a trans woman with medical students and members of the Transgender Health Network, providing trans people with a model for living a meaningful activist life.

Peggie’s transition. She was thus disinvited from Daryll’s funeral and disowned by her family. Deprived of her savings, she earned money by founding the organization that preserved records of that life until her death in 2000. She lived a life of activism and struggle, and she meticulously preserved records for the future generations.

Although few Buffalonians knew her name today, Peggie Ames was a primary mover and preserver of local LGBTQ+ history. Born in 1923, Peggie lived a quiet life in Clarence Center for a half-century, until the early 1970s, when she came out as a transgender woman. In the ensuing years, she lived a life of activism and struggle, and she meticulously preserved records of that life until her death in 2000. She was a primary mover and preserver of local LGBTQ+ history. Born in 1923, Peggie lived a quiet life in Clarence Center for a half-century, until the early 1970s, when she came out as a transgender woman.

Peggie stayed in her hometown for several reasons. First, she was an activist, and provided a model for living a meaningful activist life. She had been a trans woman with medical students and members of the Transgender Health Network, providing trans people with a model for living a meaningful activist life.

Peggie bought memberships to medical organizations such as the Harry Benjamin Institute. She clipped every news article she could find about doctors who performed gender confirming surgeries, and kept multiple copies of medical articles. She perused pornographic magazines with names like Feminine Illusion—magazines meant for trans women, but which also contained passing tips. Whenever Frank’s advertisement for “Imagine—your friend in drag” was included in a program with individuals that were going to become physicians,” recalls Don Licht, a local gay activist who was sitting, watching TV?”

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Pride Center appoints new senior director

Longtime staffer Damien Mordecai assumed the role of senior director at Pride Center of Western New York on May 24, after Matthew Cook resigned. Higgins accepted a newly created position at Evergreen Health as Associate Vice President of EVP Services.

Mordecai, who started his tenure with the center almost 10 years ago, is a quiet but strong presence at the center, responsible for the design of popular programs such as Our Fair Business, a coming-out support group, and the Gay Men’s Book Club. For years, he’s overseen the center’s calendar of events and developed its marketing and promotional materials, as well as taken on numerous other catch-all tasks for which his experience has left him equipped.

Higgins became senior director of clinical education and eventually became program manager.

Club owner hypes up grand re-opening

The latest reinvention of Club Marcella debuted May 19, complete with a 50-square-foot video wall, two separate dance floors each with their own sound system, a coffee bar for designated drivers, new VIP lounges — and the black paint is gone.

Owner Joe Guagliardo moved back from Miami last year after spending a decade operating two nightclubs there, and has been promising to ramp up the motif at Marcella ever since. Fifteen visiting deejays are scheduled over the next three months, and Guagliardo is keeping the big-city, EDM dance club vibe that has set his space apart from the rest for the past 22 years.

Familiar faces remain behind the bar along with new ones, and “Life’s A Drag,” Buffalo’s longest running drag show, keeps its Friday night slot, even though Guagliardo has been trying to distance himself from the label “gay club” for awhile now, telling Artvoice in December 2016: “We were never a gay bar!”

Queer duo’s career bottoms out in a flash

Up-and-coming American queer music duo PWR BTTM’s career appears to have come to a screeching stop after it resumed on Facebook on May 10 by user Kitty Cordero-Kolin, who discouraged her followers from supporting the group because, as she claimed, Hopkins had garnered a reputation in local queer communities and DIY groups for nonconsensual affection and sexual behavior, as well as for bullying other queer artists.

Two days later, celebrity blog Jezebel.com released an interview with an anonymous source who recounted a sexual encounter with Hopkins that she described as aggressive and nonconsensual, and she said Hopkins refused to wear a condom.

Hopkins, who identifies as gender-neutral, confirmed having a sexual relationship with the unidentified source, but said they “strongly contest the account put forth in Jezebel.” In a statement on Facebook, Hopkins said “the statements made about me by the anonymous source did not line up with any sexual experience I had ever had.” They said they have always maintained a commitment both to clear consent and use of protection during sex.

The statement released by Polyvinyl read: “There is absolutely no place in the world for hate, violence, abuse, discrimination or predatory behavior of any kind. In keeping with this philosophy, we want to let everyone know that we are ceasing to sell and distribute PWR BTTM’s music.”

Lawsuit accuses McKinley High principal of LGBTQ discrimination

Buffalo Public Schools placed McKinley High School’s principal on administrative leave May 11 after student Byshop Elliot filed a lawsuit against the district May 10 claiming a pattern of discriminatory actions against LGBTQ students by the principal.

Elliot alleged that Principal Crystal Boling-Barton stymied efforts to form a Gay/Straight Alliance, warned students during announcements that they were not permitted to bring same-sex dates to prom, reserved couples tickets to prom for only opposite-sex couples, and had been known to separate same-sex couples from each other who were dancing together at school functions.

The district confirmed on May 12 that same-sex couples would be allowed to attend prom this year, and that staff has been directed to assist students in the formation of Gay/Straight Alliance within the school as soon as possible.

The lawsuit was filed by New York Civil Liberties Union on behalf of Elliot.

Underserved communities grant will target LGBTQ caregivers

Thanks to a $100,000 grant for underserved communities, Pride Center launched a new support program for LGBTQ caregivers last month focused on those caring for individuals with memory loss. The Memory Loss Caregiver Program is being overseen by Draemis Redoan, the center’s newest wellness coordinator.

The program will provide caregiving resources to members of the LGBTQ community, as well as help train health care related businesses about how best to serve those who identify as LGBTQ. The support program meets the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the center.

Local high school forces student to use certain bathrooms

A 17-year-old transgender junior at Tonawanda High School is not being allowed to use the women’s restroom this school year even though it was allowed last year, and even though directives from the State Education Department make it clear that she should be allowed to do so.

Arianna Adamo is being told she must use the school’s gender-neutral bathroom or the health office bathroom. She said the district’s superintendent told her that things changed this year out of a safety concern for “people pretending they are identifying as a girl going into the wrong bathrooms.”

Although the district has yet to implement its own bathroom policy, State Education Department guidelines released almost two years ago state that students who can be documented as identifying as transgender or gender nonconforming should be allowed to use the restrooms and public accommodations that match their gender identity. In addition, any student who feels uncomfortable using a public bathroom for any reason should be given alternative accommodations upon request.

The guidelines specifically suggest “a single ‘unisex’ bathroom” as one alternative, which the district is using to justify its requirements on where Adamo is allowed to relieve herself, even though the issue is not that Adamo feels uncomfortable using the women’s bathroom nor has she requested alternative accommodations. The guidelines go on to state that these alternatives “should never be forced upon students, not presented as the only option.”
Performance artists Vidalia May and Max Darling want you to get your head in the clouds at this year's annual Buffalo Pride Week art exhibition. The drag queen duo is the face of local performance troupe SheLives, and in sculpting the motif for this year's show during Chroma on June 2, they've recreated an adult-themed childhood fantasy — a FantaSHE, if you will.

“It's going to be very Powderpuff Girls meets Brooklyn Grunge meets The Labyrinth meets Final Fantasy meets The Last Unicorn meets RuPaul's Drag Race,” Darling said, if only to make it clear that the production is going to be over the rainbow.

The troupe opened for gay hip hop artist Cazwell at Momentum during last year's Pride festivities, just as their popular #DEEP parties had already garnered them a hardcore local cult following, but this will be their first performance at an outdoor venue. Lit-up clouds will be floating over “the garden” with a prideful balloon arch at the entry, a unicorn wonderland projected onto the back of the building and rainbow uplighting for extra ambiance. With drag, burlesque, live music, rap, two deejays and “unicorns ever-y-where,” Darling said, they're going all out.

“We've maintained a lot of the things we've done in the past,” May said, “and we always try to add something new, and take it a step further. I think this time the vibe, the music, everything everyone loves about coming to our parties will still be there, but I think we've really done some things to elevate this event. Everything's a little more supernatural, a little more off-color, a little more extravagant than usual.”

The show starts at 9 p.m. or just after the sun sets in the backyard of Pine Apple Company and No Labels Collective at 224 Allen Street, but the event is really about local art, and Pine Apple, as the headquarters of this year's Chroma, is putting the emphasis on queer art with its exhibition, Unicorns!

“The culture has shifted,” said Mickey Harmon, explaining the concept behind this year's头lining exhibition. “The younger generation doesn't care nearly as much about what your gender is or how you define your sexuality. As a millennial, I feel that everyone is unique and special and that we're all unicorns in our own ways — and we all deserve to feel that way, regardless of our various stripes.”

But this year’s Chroma event is not just in one place at one time. Pine Apple and Pride Center of Western New York teamed up with Albiontown Association to morph the entire First Friday Gallery Walk into a Pride event. The hundreds of people making their way through Pine Apple and down Allen Street from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. will also have the opportunity to participate in live art.

Thanks to a grant from Awesome Buffalo, local artists will be directing “Rainbows On Allen,” a collaborative public art initiative to paint four rainbow arches on the sidewalks at each corner of Elmwood Avenue and Allen Street.

“Whether you’re attending Unicorns! or visitors to First Friday, visitors to Pride, eating at a restaurant on Allen — you name it — anyone can come and collaboratively paint this symbol,” said Seth Amman, board president of the Association.

It was initially hoped the grant could fund the painting of permanent rainbow crosswalks along Allen Street, and while that may still happen, it won't be in time for Chroma. Albiontown Association is currently working closely with Department of Public Works and Buffalo Common Council to draft a policy that would ultimately allow for such a public art project, but currently there isn't one in place.

Food and a wine and beer bar will be available in the backyard of Pine Apple and No Labels for the event and the deejay starts at 6 p.m. Face-painting and Henna tattoos by Obsidian, champagne toast at sunset, and unicorn fantasy costumes encouraged.

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Pride, Reconsidered

by Christopher John Treacy

Pride will always mean different things to different people, but most would probably agree that it’s meant to be a celebration. Just how to do it, however, has been a challenge. The traditional form of Pride, which attempts to capture the spirit of the gay community, has evolved over time. For many, it’s a time to see people that they don’t normally get to visit with during the demanding day-to-day itinerary of their lives, and still for others it’s a time of quiet reflection — a more solitary way of celebrating, but linked to the spirit of the larger group. One Pride definitely does not fit all.

But this year in particular, in the wake of men -...
Here For You
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LGBTQ Memory - Loss Caregivers

While adjusting to their role as a caregiver to a person with Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias, people may experience isolation, loneliness, and a decreased sense of self. LGBTQ caregivers are at greater risk due to unique challenges in accessing services and telling their stories to service providers.

The LGBTQ Memory Loss Caregivers program supports caregivers with assessment of their unique needs and referrals to respite providers, homecare, caregiver counseling, insurance options, and fall prevention training. The program also provides caregiver education, with a support group coming soon.

Funded (in part) by a grant from the New York State Department of Health
In case you missed the worldwide coverage last summer, the organizers of Pride of Toronto granted their city’s chapter of Black Lives Matter “honorary status” in the 2016 parade, an expression of solidarity with the younger group which could be read as a parting of the torch from the last wave of civil rights activists to the next one. This symbolic gesture made perfect sense—after all, the international gay liberation movement of the late 1960s owed its existence to the strategies of the desegregation and Black Power movements that preceded it, to say nothing of the Black drag queens who took direct action when cops raided the Stonewall Inn. But instead of celebrating common ground, what happened next looked more like a turf battle: BLM Toronto staged a sit-in during the parade, bringing the massive event to a halt until their demands were met. The majority of these had to do with inclusion—increasing the numbers of Black people on the staff and on the stages of Pride Toronto. But the demand that generated the most attention was a matter of exclusion: “the removal of police floats in the Pride marches and parades,” to quote BlackLivesMatter.ca, “it’s important to note that, like ACT UP and the Occupation movement, Black Lives Matter is a grassroots, decentralized network with no formal hierarchy, so BLM Toronto’s actions are not necessarily representative of the BLM movement anywhere else.”

As BLM Toronto member Rodney Diverlus told the crowd during the sit-in, “the presence of police might make some of y’all safe, it makes a whole lot of people in our community unsafe. If you’re down for an inclusive Pride, you are down for a police-free Pride.” Elsewhere in the same speech, Diverlus identified the people who feel unsafe as members of “vulnerable communities,” omitting the fact that queers of all skin tones and ethnicities have historically been vulnerable… and still are. The impetus who does not see that these communities are more vulnerable than others—no argument there—but that some vulnerabilities are more important than others.

In order to get the parade back on track after thirty minutes of derailment, Pride organizers agreed to all the demands, which sparked much heated public debate, an outpouring of blatantly racist sentiment from many non-Black citizens, and the eventual resignation of the group’s executive director.

Late last year, Pride TO issued a formal apology to BLM for the way it had handled the situation, but this May, the brouhaha resumed after a conservative member of the Toronto Council introduced a motion to pull more than a quarter million dollars of city funding unless Pride allowed uniformed officers to march. As of late May, the PrideToronto.com site includes a statement that LGBTQ police and their allies are not banned from the parade (and will continue to provide security for it), noting that “…we are simply requesting that their participation not include the following elements: uniforms, weapons, and vehicles.” Meanwhile, the New York City chapter of the Gay Officer Action League (which itself had to fight the NYPD in federal court in 1997 for the right to march in uniform in the New York Pride parade) has invited Toronto cops to join them at this year’s Manhattan parade.

A common dynamic in families plagued by abuse is for victimized children to blame not the parent who is beating them but the welfare system that fosters them. It’s easier to vent your anger on someone whose major shortcoming is their failure to protect you from the abusive parent than to tack each other, the easier we make it for those who’d prefer that none of us exist at all.

I have generally been supportive of the work of the Black Lives Matter movement, but this entire controversy infuriates me—not because of the very real issues it raises (or more precisely, revists) about the racism enmeshed in the LGBTQ community, but because it serves as an ugly reminder of another toxic tendecny that has been with us for a long time. The Left still seems addicted to attacking the principle of both sides equally in the grand scheme of things, solvable disagreements compared to the existential threats posited by hatemongering Right-wingers. I can think of no better way to ensure that homophobia thrives into the 21st century than to alienate the good ones currently on the force. (Full disclosure: My husband is a retired cop who spent years teaching diversity in some quarters of both races equally in the grand scheme of things, solvable disagreements compared to the existential threats posited by hatemongering Right-wingers. I can think of no better way to ensure that homophobia thrives into the 21st century than to alienate the good ones currently on the force.

The point of difference between interactions of race, gender, class, and other factors is to look past either/or scenarios in favor of both/and ones. In times as dire as the ones we now find ourselves with, prejudice and nationalism eroding everywhere we look, the stakes are too high to keep aiming at misidentified targets.

Ron Ehmke is a writer, performer, and all-around artsy-fartsy fellow; learn more at everythingroundoes.com.

Christopher John Treacy

35 years after her breakthrough as the booming, husky voice of Yaz, Alison Moyet’s career is experiencing an electronic renaissance. Out 6/16 on Cooking Vinyl, her second studio collaboration with knob-twiddler extraordinaire Guy Sigsworth (Goldie, Madonna, Bjork), Other, is a more sinewy presentation than 2013’s The Minutes, clock full of subtle grooves and curious synth chips. From the sweeping drama of “I Germinate” and “Reassuring Pinches” — the latter of which vaguely recalls the early electronics of Kraftwerk, then sneaks up on you with a walloping surprise hook — to the sparse arrangement of the title track, Moyet presents a wider range of musical possibilities than ever before, making Other her most fully realized work to date.

Alan R. Siegel is a writer, performer, and all-around artsy-fartsy fellow; learn more at everythingroundoes.com.

Ron Ehmke is a writer, performer, and all-around artsy-fartsy fellow; learn more at everythingroundoes.com.
We don’t know just yet what the most popular T-shirt will be at all the Pride celebrations in 2017. It might be the black one with the rainbow lettering saying “RESTE” or it might be a commemorative shirt marking the Equality March for Unity and Pride in Washington D.C. on June 11. LGBTQ Pride tees are being sold by local and regional organizations, in on-line shops (one site lists 12,753 gay pride styles) or even in the “Pride Boutique” sections showing up in many major department stores.

T-shirts have been a part of the gay liberation movement since its earliest days immediately following the Stonewall riots of 1969. Many were produced locally in mid-larger sized cities across the country and were worn in public at a time when being identified as gay could have dire consequences. Many of Buffalo’s early T-shirts were collected by Madeline Davis and her friends over years of gay activism. Davis was chief curator and head of preservation in the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System before her retirement, and she was also active from the start in the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier, our first regional gay rights organization. Davis started collecting things in her home and eventually transferred them to the Archives and Special Collections at Buffalo State University in 2009. In 2016, an anonymous donor made a $50,000 gift through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to assist with digitizing the collection, which became the core of the Dr. Madeline Davis LGBTQ Archives of Western New York, housed at the E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.

Until last year, those shirts from years past were hidden away, largely un-cataloged and unphotographed. Hope Dunbar was new to the Archives and Special Collections at Buffalo State University in 2009. In 2016, an anonymous donor made a $50,000 gift through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to assist with digitizing the collection, which became the core of the Dr. Madeline Davis LGBTQ Archives of Western New York, housed at the E.H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.

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