

# The Sapphic Sentinel

Vancouver's\* Queer Women's & Trans-inclusive News Source

Since 2006

## International Drag King Extravaganza 9 Vancouver's bid to host world-renowned event in 2007 beats out DC and San Francisco

Sena Hussain

It's official: Vancouver will be the host city for the 9th Annual International Drag King Extravaganza in October of 2007. The event has traditionally drawn hundreds of kings from Canada, Germany, Japan, Australia, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States in an effort to foster an international community, showcase their talents, and raise awareness about current gender performance issues and trends.

According to a press release from Vancouver's megamouthmedia, "IDKE is a four-day conference that brings together an international collection of individuals interested in exploring gender, critically and artistically through performance, art and dialogue."

The bid was organized by a collection of GLBT performers.

"Bent Umbrella, a col-



*A Kingly Affair: World-class kings such as Chicago's A Sordid Collective, shown here performing at the International Drag King Extravaganza 7 in Winnipeg, MB in 2005, will gather in Vancouver in 2007.*

laboration of various Vancouver drag king, burlesque, and other LGBT performance groups, put together a fantastic bid for IDKE 9 that demonstrated their enthusiasm, creativity, and resources. The steering committee is excited to see

IDKE head north of the border again next year, and we're looking forward to working as closely with the Vancouver team as we've been able to with the Austin, Texas crew" stated an IDKE spokesperson.

Local drag king/chore-

ographer Majik points out that Vancouver's drag scene has come a long way since he first went to IDKE two years ago in Chicago.

"The drag community in Vancouver has become so big and interesting...it's really exciting and flattering," says

Majik.

The theme of IDKE 9 in Vancouver will be "Generation," a look at drag past, present, and future.

The four-day event will include, "an international performance showcase, workshops, panels, presentations, an art exhibit, film screenings, spoken word, academic streams and additional performances throughout the weekend. Keynote speakers to be announced," according to the press release.

The showcase is traditionally booked at one of the host cities' larger venues. This means that event organizers will have to work hard to get the word out, but Majik does not think it will be such a huge feat with the many troupes representing Vancouver.

"We have DKUnited, Drag King Vancouver, and \$3Bill, and each of these troupes has a fan base that'll want to see them perform."

## Thoughts on 2006 Dyke March: a Pictorial

By Inika Arentsen & Joelle Touchette

Our reporters went to the 2006 Vancouver Dyke March and asked two questions:



*Danielle (co-founder of Utilikilt), Seattle (with Inika, left, & Joelle, right)*

1. "It's a good place to meet chicks and a good reason to come up to Vancouver for the weekend."
2. "I'd like to see more people!"

1. What does the Dyke March mean to you?
2. What would you like to see more of next year?



*Tara, Vancouver*

1. "A good day out in the sun with lots of friends."
2. "More people dressing up."



*Alexis, Point Grey*

1. "It's a chance to come out and support my queer friends."



*Shay, Vancouver*

1. "Connection/union/embracing beauty."
2. "More electricity, more participation."



*Alex, Victoria*

1. "Community—seeing everyone come together to bring the commonalities and the differences together."
2. "Energy-workers throughout the parade!"



*Ria, left, & Casey, Vancouver*

1. Ria: "Increasing visibility and building a community"  
Casey: "It's a chance to feel like you belong somewhere."
2. "More outdoor music!"



*Dvora Greenberg, Vancouver*

1. "It's wrong to say this is the 3rd annual march—we used to do this illegally 20 years ago. We'd stop the traffic all down the Drive. It means not to pretend we're not here. We've come so far. I won't go to the Pride parade cause everyone is so damn fucking polite!"
2. "More sass!"

### Inside...

**I Know That I Am** film review by Tami Starlight & Inika Arentsen

**Community Segregation** by Tina Tew

**More Thoughts on the Dyke March** by Inika Arentsen & Joelle Touchette

\*Coast Salish Territory

Cont'd on next page

# I Know That I Am Documentary Teaches, Reminds, Reflects Global Trans Struggle

Tami Starlight (edited by Inika)

The world premier of *I Know That I Am* shows never-before-seen documentary footage smuggled out of Iran by director Peyman Khosrav in an attempt to show the struggles of Iranian transsexual/transgender/gender queers.

The film begins with fast paced, semi-punk sounding music with various clips from throughout the movie. One begins to be unsure about what they are watching. To the viewer, this is most certainly captivating. I did meet a MTF transsexual woman in my time working at "The Centre" a few years ago. She had her surgery in Istanbul, Turkey. She

told me the government of Iran paid for her transition. I was quite bewildered at this fact, seeing as our own government does not grant us protection under the law. Western media has only shown me how gay youth and gay men have been allegedly murdered by sanctioned government executions in the past year in Iran.

In order for social change to happen we need to witness all forms of media from all countries. Since there are difficulties in reviewing this film from, as some may perceive, a "Westerner's perspective," or perhaps as someone with little understanding of the local culture, I am

not interested in enforcing my views upon anyone.

I viewed this film with my own understanding and empathy of this situation as a Canadian aboriginal transsexual woman who also identifies as 2-spirited. I see many similarities with the people in this film to my own story. Though Canadian trans people do not receive funding for their surgeries like Iranian trans people, the world needs films like these to remind us of the freedoms and basic human rights we must all fight for. We must understand the ramifications of oppression in all countries including Canada where 1 in 9 trans people commit suicide. Unfortunately, many LGBT Iranians have a

steep uphill battle, and their lives are at risk just for being who they are. I understand this issue on a very deep level. I have had my life threatened here in Canada a number of times before and during my transition. I have sold myself in sex work and I was a drug addict, like those whose experiences were discussed in this movie.

Barbara Findlay put it quite well - when people in any society are heavily oppressed you will find more addiction, sex work and suicide. "I know that I am" is a must for any human to watch. I am a better and more informed human for watching it.

## Let's Put Ourselves on an Island! Thoughts on Self-segregation

Tina Tew

With the passing of Pride, the approach of Vancouver's Queer Film Festival, and the termination of my employment at Vancouver's gay-owned, gay-operated, and almost exclusively gay frequented B & B, I have begun to question my own tendency to participate almost exclusively in queer-focused events and to surround myself with people of a similar sexual orientation as myself. After a simple tally of the names in my phone book, I discovered that over 60% of my contacts and over 90% of the people I see daily do not identify as heterosexual. Why do I, like so many other queer people, engage in self-segregation? There are GLBT cruises, games, resorts, film festivals, papers, days, weeks, clubs, B & Bs, neighborhoods, and co-ops. In removing a sexual minority from the general public, is its fight for equality and understanding being harmed or helped?

Children play with each other regardless of gender, sexuality, race, belief system or economic background. As we grow older, we notice our differences as reflected in the eyes of our community and we begin to separate. My sexuality

quickly became a focus in my life because it was proven to be important to the people I interacted with. My experiences with homonegativity caused me to seek the understanding of my closest friends. Much to my dismay, my heterosexual companions were unprepared to respond to my experiences in a supportive way and, as a result, brushed off my feelings as "over-sensitivities". When people's experiences with homonegativity are not taken seriously, emotions tend to escalate and eventually disrupt other aspects of life. We queer folk seek each other out because we require understanding, sensitivity, support and meaning in order to function. We relate to each other in a way that only those who have experienced something first hand can. Now that we have found a safe place to discover ourselves and examine our position in society, do we dare to venture out?

Displays of homonegativity come in varying degrees. They can be as strong as the inequalities found in a constitution or as deceptively simple as someone's habitual misuse of the word "gay". In my experience, a substantial amount of homonegativity is caused by the assumptions or misinformation of

basically well meaning people. These people may simply be in the dark about the effect their actions have on the population around them. What they're lacking are regular interactions with queer people. These interactions would put a human face on their homonegativity. By hearing the voices and stories of real people, homonegativity would be moved from the intellectual to the personal, and it would become increasingly difficult for compassionate human beings to ignore the influence they have on the world around them. Our presence alone would raise awareness as to our struggle for equality.

After having successfully used our queer resources to expand our previously limited definition of what it means to be queer and having become emotionally grounded contributing members of society with strong senses of self, we can now, hopefully, share what we've learned with people less informed than ourselves. As we continue to discover the endless possibilities in sexuality and gender and as a result encounter new forms of discrimination, we will need to create more spaces, resources, and services for those minorities. With that hard work being done, let's not forget to share our fabulous selves with the rest of world when we feel strong enough to do so.

Cont'd from pg.1



Samuel, Vancouver

1. "Ridiculous, the queer movement has totally changed from a political movement to a consumer commodity... I don't pick my friends based on their sexual or gender identity."  
2. "It's impossible to change."



Erica, East Vancouver

1. "It's about a community coming together as opposed to the Pride Parade which is really commercial."  
2. "Bigger and better."



Anita, Toronto

1. "Standing up and being proud of who we are. A celebration."  
2. "VOLUME!"

**DRAG KINGS FOR HIRE**

BOOK US ONLINE FOR YR NEXT EVENT!  
[WWW.DKUNITED.COM](http://WWW.DKUNITED.COM)

### Help Wanted

The Sapphic Sentinel needs volunteer reporters, photographers, and editors to help this newspaper stay alive. We also need advertisers to help cover costs. This is a great opportunity to hit a very specific market. If you are interested in participating in your news source, please e-mail [sapphicsentinal@yahoo.ca!](mailto:sapphicsentinal@yahoo.ca)

The Sapphic Sentinel Staff: Sena Hussain, Inika Arentsen, Joelle Touchette, Tami Starlight, Tina Tew  
Please send Letters, Questions/Comments/Suggestions to: [sapphicsentinal@yahoo.ca](mailto:sapphicsentinal@yahoo.ca)

Get online copies from our website at [www.geocities.com/sapphicsentinal](http://www.geocities.com/sapphicsentinal)

## SUPERDYKE.COM

The ultimate free, online community for Vancouver's queer women.

Offering resources, local show and event info, chat, profiles, friendships, love, and more!

"Met the woman of my dreams on sd. We are now engaged to be married."  
*superdyke testimonial*

[www.superdyke.com](http://www.superdyke.com)

