

GIRLTALK

the pride issue



WELCOME TO GIRLTALK

LETTERS *from the* EDITORS

Dear Readers,

I am full of hope for this upcoming year as I take on my role as a Co-Editor-in-Chief of GirlTalk Magazine, along with Eve Kaplan and Lily Kramon.

Before I begin, I would like to briefly introduce myself. I am a rising sophomore at the Cate School in Carpinteria, California. I enjoy writing, coding, playing soccer, and have a passion for issues that impact those who identify as female—our identities, our journeys, and our power.

Even before my arrival at Cate School where I became a leader at GirlTalk, I was fascinated by the works of the magazine and its ability to both connect and elevate so many young perspectives. I began working for the magazine just weeks later, writing an opinion piece about the representation of women in the media and serving as an editor for that same issue. Beyond writing and editing, I had eye opening conversations with fellow Cate writers about their opinions on the topics featured in GirlTalk and their writing in particular. When leadership applications opened up in the spring of this year, I was ecstatic and jumped at the opportunity to more meaningfully impact GirlTalk. And now – here I am, writing my very own “Editor’s Note” – a section I used to only marvel at before scrolling down to see what other bits of wisdom GirlTalk had to offer.

This year, I am looking forward to extending GirlTalk’s outreach and ways of communicating with all of you—our lovely readers! This includes extending our forms of writing (i.e. poetry), writing about feminist book features, extending to new schools around the globe, and much more! I also hope to connect GirlTalk with new organizations around the globe which can help turn our advocacy into tangible change.

It could not be more fitting for my first issue as a Co-Editor-In-Chief to be the Pride issue. The issues of the LGBTQ+ community are of utmost importance to GirlTalk and are a great place to start my tenure. And, more broadly, pride is what I believe the magazine aspires for all of us—pride in who we are today, no matter what our gender, race, or beliefs. My pride extends to GirlTalk—pride for the people, articles, and staff that have come before me as we seek to continue the legacy of the magazine. And, I’m optimistic about the future of the magazine, its outreach, our beautiful team of writers, editors, artists, and managers and you—our amazing community.

On a more personal level, pride is the best fit word to describe how I feel about becoming a leader for so many of you—the amazing activists that make a difference in the world every single day.

So, thank you all for giving me a chance to be a leader. I am thrilled to hear from you and be part of GirlTalk!

Kate Ragatz

HEY EVERYONE!

My name is Lily Kramon and I am ecstatic to be writing my first editor’s note as Co-Editor In Chief to Eve Kaplan and Kate Ragatz. I am a rising senior at Oakwood High School in North Hollywood, California, and I have been a part of the GirlTalk community since I was in 7th grade. My sister, Charlotte Kramon, cofounded this publication in 2016, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to continue the work that she brilliantly did in the past. Our country is in many crises right now, whether it is gun violence, abortion rights, racism, sexism, and more. As a teen, it is challenging to watch these issues unfold in front of me and feel that I don’t have a voice. Writing for and managing GirlTalk is how I ensure that my voice is heard, and I hope our other current, past, and future writers feel this way as well. It has been incredible to watch GirlTalk grow from a publication at a small school in Los Angeles to a publication that gives a voice to many young writers throughout the country, including students in Santa Barbara, New York, and beyond. During my time as Co-Editor, I hope I can help other writers express their views in the best way possible, and I hope each issue can make an impact on each and every one of our writers and readers. This publication means the world to me, and I am eager to see where it goes this year.

*Best,
Lily Kramon*

Editors-in-Chief *Kate, Eve, Lily*

Hi everyone! It's me again. After an amazing year with Alex Wexler, I cannot wait to start another with Lily Kramon and Kate Ragatz. I am fifteen and published my first article for GirlTalk at age twelve. As I have grown up, I have grown into a larger role within GirlTalk and have a clearer vision for our future. The magazine struggled during COVID-19. We had trouble motivating other writers, let alone ourselves. Last year, we spent a large portion of the year trying to rebuild what the magazine once was, trying to grow back the community that had diminished amidst a global crisis. This year, we continue with the same goals, but now we can accomplish them as a community. We have experience building GirlTalk into an active club chapter and inspiring writers. Outreach and community are the two words that will describe the next year of GirlTalk; outreach towards voices that are underrepresented in our magazine and building a community in which GirlTalk writers are able to meet more passionate individuals from across the country. Our editorial staff represents five schools: Dalton School, Fieldston School, Windward School, Cate School and El Segundo High School. A year ago, our editorial staff included four people, this year our editorial staff includes 14 students.

This year's team is a powerhouse. Zohar Lindenman's talent with the pen and incredible descriptions have personally been some of my favorite articles in the past few years. Sophie Saxl has such a beautiful and unique voice. I always look forward to reading what she has to say. Eleni Bahati's commitment to writing and consistent submissions over the last year have captivated our readers. Riley Hurley reached out through Instagram and her incredible art has already bettered the magazine. Sanai Edwards is a driven individual with so much to say and expresses it eloquently. Henry Kaplan did an amazing job running the Instagram of his school's robotics team, and I cannot wait to see what he does with ours. No one on this entire planet is more compassionate for others and passionate about the environment or equality than Tabitha Green, and we cannot wait for her to grow our social media presence. Caden Fuchs took over our layout this year and has made the magazine's aesthetic stunning, he is intelligent and beyond capable. Sabine Fuchs is a nationally recognized artist and there is no teenager in the country who will do a better job with our art department next year. Colette Chang is unmatched in her leadership and organizational skills and will be the best Head of Editing we could ask for. Mia Groeninger is an amazing writer and has a natural aptitude for anything to do with the humanities department. Sabine, Colette and Mia will be excellent Managing Editors. Kate Ragatz is the true definition of a feminist, and I cannot wait to run this magazine with her. No one has been a part of GirlTalk longer than Lily, who has shown her true dedication through years of publications. This group of students is truly incredible. I believe that we can make a significant impact.

Although the process is slow, we are growing. We want to empower the voices of young students for the largest audience possible; we want to create change. These goals are shared by our entire staff, a highly motivated group of young people, that I could not be more proud to lead for a second year. I have given this magazine countless hours in the past year and what feels like pieces of my soul. I do this because I love what we do. I love the people, and I love our mission. I invite readers, college or high school aged, to join us, to submit an article, a piece of art, edit a feature, suggest an idea for a column, and get involved. To get involved with this magazine is to get involved with a spectacular group of people and a movement for a future deeply rooted in equality.

*Until next time,
Eve Kaplan*

E N J O Y



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

By Kate Ragatz, Lily Kramon, Eve Kaplan

Florida's Don't Say Gay—Queer Judicial Rights

By Colette Chang

4-5

Pride Amidst the Pandemic

By Mia Groeninger

5-6

Queer Resources

By Eve Kaplan

6

Roe v. Wade

By Helen Nguyen

6-7

A History of Pride and Progression

By Kate Ragatz

8-9

Performative Bisexuality

By Sophie Saxl

11

The January 6th Hearings: An Overview

By Zohar Lindenmann

12

Pride in Adolescence

By Maya Maestas

13

Stigmas Around Coming Out

By Eleni Bahati

14



**CONTRIBUTORS
CONTRIBUTORS
CONTRIBUTORS**

**Head of
EDITING**

Colette Chang (Cate School)

**SOCIAL
MEDIA
Managers**

Sanai Edwards (Cate School)
Henry Kaplan (Windward School)
Tabitha Green (Windward School)

**Heads of
DESIGN**

Kate Ragatz (Cate School)
Eve Kaplan (Fieldston School)

**crEATIVE
Director**

Sabine Fuchs (Cate School)

**Staff
WRITERS**

Eve Kaplan (Fieldston School)
Lily Kramon (Oakwood School)
Sophie Saxl (Dalton School)
Zohar Lindenman (Dalton School)
Eleni Bahati (Cate School)
Colette Chang (Cate School)
Kate Ragatz (Cate School)
Mia Groeninger (Cate School)

**Staff
EDITORS**

Mia Groeninger (Cate School)
Colette Chang (Cate School)
Lily Kramon (Oakwood School)

**Staff
Artists**

Riley Hurley (El Segundo High School)
Sabine Fuchs (Cate School)

**Managing
Editors**

Colette Chang (Cate School)
Mia Groeninger (Cate School)
Sabine Fuchs (Cate School)

Editors-in-Chief

Eve Kaplan (Fieldston School)
Lily Kramon (Oakwood School)
Kate Ragatz (Cate School)

**CONTRIBUTORS
CONTRIBUTORS
CONTRIBUTORS**

Email us @thegirltalkmagazine@gmail.com if interested in a staff position!



FLORIDA'S "DON'T SAY GAY" BILL

COLETTE CHANG

The "Parental Rights in Education" bill, more well known as the "Don't Say Gay" bill, was signed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis earlier this year. The bill does three things: bans discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in kindergarten through third grade, empowers parents to sue schools when their child is taught something they disapprove, and requires schools to notify parents when their child is using mental health services. Although this bill is meant to return power to parents, it also deeply impacts the students and teachers.

By stifling discussions about LGBTQ+ issues, students are not learning about a community in our world today. The bill also limits students from exploring their own gender identity. Furthermore, queer teachers cannot share their own experiences, and the bill restricts the freedom of all teachers in setting their own curriculum. In an interview with [NPR](#), Paula Stephens, a first-grade teacher, explains that although sexual orientation and gender identity are not in the first-grade curriculum, learning and talking about families is. Some kids have two moms, two dads, or non-binary parents. Stephens wonders, "When I talk about families in my classroom, am I going to be violating this law because the children were having discussions about what their family looks like?" If Stephens follows this bill completely, she will be excluding students who have family members that are LGBTQ+.

Furthermore, allowing parents to sue the school district whenever their chil-



ren are taught something they disagree with sets the precedent for censorship in schools. Schools will stop talking about controversial topics like LGBTQ+ issues or racism—important subjects students should be actively learning about and discussing. The [Washington Post](#) even explains how some librarians across the country are accusing schools of preemptively removing LGBTQ+ and race-related books from shelves before they spark conflict with parents. School districts do not have enough money to even think about going against this law because if they teach anything regarding the LGBTQ+ community, they could get sued. The classroom should be a safe environment for students to ask questions and have conversations, but with this bill, it cannot be.

Lastly, although it is important for parents to be in the loop about their child's mental health, when schools are required to notify parents each time

their child uses a mental health service, it makes kids less comfortable seeking help. For many students, a school counselor is easier to talk to than parents or friends because the sessions are confidential. Sexual identity and gender orientation are personal topics that students may not be open about sharing with their parents, so they turn to school services. However, if schools are required to notify parents, then it takes away a school's ability to serve as a safe haven or outlet for students. This bill immediately drew nationwide controversy with opposers nicknaming it the "Don't Say Gay" bill. According to [The Washington Post](#), "LGBTQ advocates say this legislation furthers a time of intense social activism but when 'more young Americans than ever identify as LGBTQ+'."

to [The Washington Post](#), "LGBTQ advocates say this legislation furthers efforts to paint LGBTQ people as 'other,' or even dangerous" not only during a time of intense social activism but when "more young Americans than ever identify as LGBTQ+." This bill is one of the [240 anti-LGBTQ+ bills](#) filed as of March of 2022 alone, and more than a dozen states have followed Florida by enforcing their own versions of the so-called "Don't Say Gay" bill. Although this bill gives parents more say in their child's education, it also, intentionally or not, targets one of the most marginalized groups in our society. The bill also censors what is taught at school, limiting freedom of speech and taking away students' ability to form their own opinions and ideas about important topics in our world today.

It is important that parents have a say in schools, but not at the expense of their child's education or the targeting of a group. We shouldn't censor what is already being taught in schools just because it makes people feel uncomfortable. Instead, we should let students explore whatever they choose to nurture an open-minded and well-informed generation.

Pride Amidst the Pandemic - Mia Groeninger

Rainbow flags flew high as confetti rained down on the streets of New York city where millions of people marched in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. In June of 1969, police harassed many of the local patrons of a prominent gay bar, The Stonewall Inn. Stonewall had previously been a sanctuary for those a part of the LGBTQ community, where they could socialize and connect with those who had similar experiences. Yet, the police had always kept a close watch on the bar, and one day, arrests began. They arrested bartenders for serving alcohol without a license and also people wearing non-gender-appropriate clothing (which was a law at the time). They arrested bartenders for serving alcohol without a license and also people wearing non-gender-appropriate clothing (which was a law at the time). This discrimination caused an uprising, as queer people barricaded themselves within the bar, and rioters fought outside for nearly five days. Ever since this momentous expression of defiance, the Stonewall Inn has been a-



Riley Hurley, El Segundo High School

symbol for the birthplace of the gay rights movement, as well as the LGBTQ+ community's resistance to oppression and fight for equality. Thus, every year since 1969, celebrations of pride have been held in New York City and across the globe. Landing a spot in the world record book, the year 2019 holds the record for the largest pride celebrations. Yet, the buildup of pride in 2019 certainly died down as the pandemic spread throughout the nation; now, two years later in pride month, as the pandemic falters, we are expecting a massive outpouring of pride celebrations.

COVID-19 negatively affected many marginalized groups, creating a vital need for solidarity. The buildup of pride and the empowerment felt in the LGBTQ+ community during 2019 led to the excitement for 2020's celebration. Many imagined the signs, floats, and events that this year was supposed to hold, but instead, pride events encouraged everyone to "stay home and stay safe." This was certainly discouraging, as 2019 had truly made an impact on the community, but people had to find ways to stand together throughout the ongoing pandemic. At a small procession in Manhattan in 2020, Mayor Bill de Blasio said, "We can't be together, and we're pained by that right now, but there's a tremendous sense of solidarity

in this march. There is an added feeling of solidarity going on right now with the L.G.B.T.Q. community... a sense of shared struggle." As the world fell deeper into a seemingly never-ending quarantine, the self isolation and social distancing was challenging and even dangerous for members of the LGBTQ community. Many LGBTQ people were stuck at home with family who did not accept them and without the support systems of queer friends and clubs at school. There have been countless situations over the past two years where the pandemic has placed LGBTQ people in vulnerable positions. According to KFF, 74% of LGBTQ people reported a decrease in mental health regarding anxiety and depression. It was as if the movement had peaked and was now spiraling downward once again, as if all of the progress in the past fifty years was being erased. Along with the diminished feelings of pride, other issues, including that of race, police brutality, and more boiled over across America. As riots and looting continued, 2020 and 2021 were most certainly quiet years regarding outward celebrations of pride. Yet, leaders and allies created a hashtag, #ShapePRIDE, so that members of the community could connect digitally and spread the sense of solidarity online. Tiktok became an especially popular platform amidst the pandemic and a place where queer content creators could share their experiences and perspectives with a like-minded audience. Although pride events were canceled, the impact could never be forgotten because pride is much more than a parade. Pride is a sense of community that empowers people to be proud of who they are and unite with shared goals.

Pride was somewhat collateral damage in a time of great turmoil and strife. Now, as COVID retreats and people seek a return to “normalcy”, we must acknowledge the hardship many queer people faced and work on healing together, as humans. The impacts of COVID were certainly not all destructive, as many people were able to seek solace online and connect with those who had similar experiences. The expansion of social media and different digital platforms truly helped many through this rocky time, and it continues to increase feelings of solidarity. Pride month has only just begun, but we can already see the plans for celebratory parades, marches, and festivals, including the LGBTQ Pride Fest, Pride Summit, and LA Pride in the park with performers such as Christina Aguilera. Although most students were only in school for a week or two in June, LGBTQ clubs and support groups organized activities for their classmates to enjoy. At Cate School, we played pride trivia and made chalk drawings to spread awareness. As we emerge from the pandemic, light is being shed on many LGBTQ related issues, which will hopefully help the healing process. Although parts of the past two years have been challenging and dark, one thing we have all learned is that pride and its impact can never be forgotten.

ROE VS. WADE BY HELEN NGUYEN

LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

Below a list of different types of non-profits and organizations looking to provide services to queer people. Many of these organizations need volunteers, especially volunteers older than 18!



TREVOR PROJECT

The Trevor Project was founded in 1998. The Trevor Project was founded to combat a public health crisis affecting LGBTQ+. It focuses on suicide prevention for queer youth. The Trevor Lifeline is a toll free confidential hotline with professional counselors.

GLSEN

GLSEN works to end discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in K-12 schools.

GLAAD

GLAAD is a media monitoring organization founded in protest of defamatory coverage of LGBTQ+ people.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN (HRC)

Human Rights Campaign is the largest advocacy group and LGBTQ+ political lobbying organization in the United States of America.



NATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY LAW ASSOCIATION (NLGLA)

LGBT+ Bar Association was founded over thirty years ago during the height of the AIDS/HIV crisis. It is a national association of legal professionals and is affiliated with LGBTQ+ organizations. NLGLA headquarters is in Washington, DC.



THE LGBT NATIONAL HELP CENTER

The LGBT National Help Center was founded in 1996 and provides confidential peer support as well as local resources to LGBTQ+.



On a seemingly uneventful Monday, Politico published an article detailing a leaked Supreme Court majority draft opinion constructed by Justice Alito. The Monday was May 2, 2022 and the nation’s least favorite weekday became all the more devastating. The draft opinion reveals the Supreme Court’s probable decision to overturn the landmark decision, Roe v. Wade, which has upheld a pregnant individual’s right to choose abortion without inordinate government regulation. Written by Justice Samuel Alito, the initial draft opinion declares the 50-year-old ruling as “egregiously wrong from the start”. However, the overturn of this precedent foreshadows a myriad of egregious detriments, for not only women, but for all who are susceptible to pregnancy. The immediate implications of the hinted downfall of Roe would allow 26 states to proceed with abortion bans or restricted access, as well as spark trigger laws in 13 states that would

eradicate abortion instantaneously. Many of these trigger laws charge abortion providers or those who receive abortion with felonies punishable up to 10 years in prison and hefty fines, as well as suspend or revoke the professional license of providers. Furthermore, nearly all 13 states either currently or will move to enforce six-week bans. Unless they are actively seeking pregnancy, most individuals do not know they are pregnant at six weeks. These decisions fail to respect the safety and autonomy of women and those biologically female. Criminalising abortion will not necessarily prevent abortions from occurring. Instead, there will be no choice but for people to resort to dangerous measures such as, but not limited to, infliction of trauma and inhalation of toxic chemicals. Forced pregnancies in trans men, queer, and non-binary people also surface gender dysphoria which can impair the mental wellbeing of these individuals for a lifetime. Reproductive capacity does not translate to the innate capacity to raise another being and never will. Forced pregnancies present physical and mental dangers to both the bearer and the child, especially in a world where psychological and financial services are inadequate for the marginalized such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, and foster children. How can women be expected to raise every fertilized sperm in their body when rape is not regulated appropriately and opportunities are disproportionate?

How can children whose parents did not have the ability to raise them be expected to thrive and succeed when the foster care system lacks in every aspect of safety and development? Moreover, transgender men and non-binary folk rely on abortion clinic services for gender-affirming health care. Denied funding or shut-down of these places removes essential safe havens for the trans and non-binary community,-



Image courtesy of AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall, File.

-especially in this past year where an influx of legislation have been created to antagonize trans youth. Though the opinion draft attempts to reassure that only Roe and abortion rights will be changed, Texas's "SB8" and Florida's "Don't Say Gay" Bill have synonymous roots in creating taboo around what for years had been American liberties. Already, there is a deep stigma around preventative and reproductive healthcare in LGBTQ+ individuals. The National found that 48% of transgender men delay or avoid preventive health care in fear of discrimination or disrespect. An issue lies in healthcare systems when people begin to feel unsafe with medical practitioners due to their identity, yet taking away the limited health clinics that do allow transgender folk to feel welcomed is a humiliation to a nation that vows the pursuit of happiness.

According to Justice Alito, the right to abortion is not "implicitly protected by any constitutional provision". Roe is supported by the right to privacy which other liberties such as same-sex marriage and contraceptives also lie under. The Supreme Court's disregard for long standing precedent raised dire concern across the nation for the possibility of more overtures of landmark decisions that outline rights not explicitly stated in the Constitution, yet nevertheless entirely essential, especially Obergefell v. Hodges. Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas have already signaled their inclination to renounce the 2015 decision and 29 states have trigger laws in place in the event that Obergefell is overruled. The United States' history has been one of revolution and wonder for the world. Developing countries look towards this nation as a hope for their futures, but suddenly, it is taking steps backwards. As of 2021, nearly 50 countries have legalized and expanded abortion rights and 31 countries have recongized same-sex marriage. Fortunately, ridding of Obergefell will not be as simple as the overturn of Roe as it is protected under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment which is clear in the Constitution. LGBTQ+ community's courageous and generational efforts have finally begun to

reap its much deserved rights in recent years; they can not be denied anymore. A change in the makeup of the Supreme Court creates no change in the validity and authenticity of LGBTQ+ love.

A HISTORY OF PRIDE AND PROGRESSION BY KATE RAGATZ

From the United States to Switzerland to Sri Lanka, the world in 2022 is celebrating Pride like never before. Around the globe and mainly in June, countless [parades](#), education forums, runs, movie marathons, Pride-themed concerts, and more mark Pride month across the globe. [In New York City](#), Pride month features various marches for LGBTQ+ groups and allies, immersive art and musical Pride-themed experiences, and showboats adorned with rainbow sails, honoring the importance of LGBTQ+ rights.

Pride was not always celebrated this way, nor in any way at all. In fact, it wasn't until the 1970s that the Pride movement came to be. Pride originated as a result of [the Stonewall Riots](#), a series of riots in New York City in June of 1969 in protest of a police raid of a Greenwich Village bar— the Stonewall Inn. The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in New York City owned by the [Genovese family](#), an Italian-American mafia family who dominated much of New York City at the time. Stonewall was labeled as a “bottle bar”, meaning customers brought their own liquor – and no liquor license was required.

This structure, along with reported bribes from the wealthy Genovese family, allowed the bar to welcome queers without much police interference, despite the fact that same-sex marriage was illegal in New York City at the time. While the bar provided a valued refuge for members of the LGBTQ+ community, the Genoveses cut many corners. Beyond a profit, the Genoveses' bar lacked fire exits and running water to wash dishes—and the family was even known to blackmail the bar's most popular patrons in return for keeping their sexuality a secret. In the years leading up to the Stonewall Riots, the mafia family encountered multiple police raids, but they were alerted before

each raid, allowing them to hide any-illegality. June 28th, 1969, however, was different. While many of the details of the event are still unknown, the Stonewall Riots began with a raid on the Stonewall Inn by a unit of the New York Police Department known as the “Public Moral Squad” due to their desire to rid New York City of activities such as homosexuality, which they deemed to be immoral. It is said that police demanded to “check the sex” of customers, arresting 13 people, and detaining many more. This evoked a violent response from nearby patrons and quickly escalated into a full-fledged confrontation between patrons and police. As police brutally detained patrons, nearby rioters threw large items at them and even attempted to set the Stonewall Inn on fire. While the Stonewall Riots are considered ground zero for the Pride movement, they were in fact the culmination of years of discrimination and persecution of the LGBTQ+ community. Same-sex marriage was illegal in many parts of the world, including New York City until 2011. Members of the LGBTQ+ community were routinely subject to-



discrimination due to homophobic legislation, such as a New York City law that made selling alcohol to gay customers illegal due to its 'disorderly' nature. Even where laws did not explicitly discriminate against queers, police often took it upon themselves to harass the community. This harassment resulted in smaller confrontations in many places across the US, including at an LGBTQ+ popular [donut shop](#) in Los Angeles, and another in response to discrimination against drag queens and [trans people](#) in San Francisco. Following the Stonewall Riots, the LGBTQ+ community and its supporters declared 'enough is enough' and began to rally with an intensity and energy that had not previously been seen. This included a march to Central Park in 1970 with the theme of Gay Pride, inspiring activists globally during the 1970s to begin the "Gay Liberation" movement. Marches also took place on June 28th, 1970 in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco to mark the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. Ultimately, this led to an annual June celebration, which became what we know today as Pride month.

The movement for gay liberation has granted members of the LGBTQ+ community more rights than before, including gay marriage, which is now legal in all 50 states of the United States and 30 countries globally. However, our world still has a ways to go. Members of the LGBTQ+ community still face much adversity today, and this comes at a great cost to their physical and mental health.

For instance, in the Covid-heavy year of 2020, [15 percent](#) of LGBTQ+ Americans said they either canceled or delayed a medical appointment due to discrimination on the basis of their sexuality. According to the [Trevor Project](#), an organization that focuses on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth, 73 percent of LGBTQ+ youth reported symptoms of anxiety, and 58 percent reported that of depression (2022). Reported symptoms of anxiety, and 58 percent reported that of depression (2022). These rates were lower for youth living in communities that accepted LGBTQ+ youth and varied based on how people were treated. 52 percent of LGBTQ+ youth ages 18-24 reported consistent poor mental health during or due to the pandemic. The list goes on. News channels are flooded with stories of [homophobia and violence](#), covering homophobic attacks on doctors, transphobic healthcare legislation in sports and beyond, online threats towards the LGBTQ+ community, and even attacks on Pride marches and events. And now, with the Supreme Court drifting rightward in its views, even the right of gay marriage appears again to be threatened. While heartbreaking stories of homophobia cloud the media, there is still much we can do to recognize LGBTQ+ love today. This includes attending a Pride event in your local area, volunteering or donating to organizations supporting the LGBTQ+ community, writing letters to your members of Congress urging them to support LGBTQ+ rights, learning from LGBTQ+ authors, educating yourself on the community and its history, or supporting LGBTQ+ creators on social media. Resources for donations, volunteering, etc. are detailed by Eve Kaplan later in the issue. Some additional resources include [Trans Lifeline](#) (resources for trans folk), [Victory Fund](#) (supporting LGBTQ+ representation in politics), [The Jim Collins Foundation](#) (financial assistance for gen-



Sabine Fuchs, Cate High School

-der-affirming surgeries), and the [It Gets Better Project](#) (connecting LGBTQ+ with support globally). There is still so much we have yet to do to support the LGBTQ+ community. It is disheartening to live in a world where the concept of same-sex love is rejected – a world where we are told who and how to love. And, suppressing this love under the guise of a higher power or something morally supreme is not true morality, but hatred masked as morality. It's time this changes. A world where we treat everyone with the respect and compassion they deserve will be a better world for all of us.



Riley Hurley, El Segundo High School

Performative bisexuality: Privilege, Fetish, Phase - Sophie Saxl

During pride month, queer sexualities are beautifully celebrated with parades, parties, and commemorations. In the journey to discover your sexuality that so everyone goes through to some extent, seeing celebrities, role models, teachers, or adults who model your sexual orientation is important for shaping your identity. Not seeing these representations is unsettling, sad, and all too frequent. For many, all they see as representation are women who pretend to be attracted to other women, all to please and satisfy the fetishes of a man. Confusing, right?

Society loves to boost people (who are almost always women) engaging in a display of homoerotic action to cater to a male audience that fetishizes women loving women (also known as “wlw”) relationships and sexual encounters- this is known as performative bisexuality. On top of the relentless homophobia seen every day, performative bisexuality normalizes straight women appropriating queerness for sexual approval and validation from males. Performative bisexuality worsens the existing biases in our world to erase queer experiences, and this is where it becomes detrimental to the queer community and queer identities. Hearing about queerness from the sexy straight woman playing into the male desire is so much more appealing to our societal audience than hearing it from a proud and authentic queer person. This silences members of the community, and while giving them false representation, it moves the spotlight off of them: silencing and erasing them. There is privilege for the straight woman who never had to grapple with discovering her sexuality, which creates almost a “rip off” of queer women’s sexualities.

Our society already struggles to accept the concept of “bisexuality”. It’s seen as, “just a step on the path” to being either gay or lesbian. As the 2000’s hit show Glee would say it, “a lie gay guys tell in high school to hold hands with girls in the corridor so they can feel normal for a change”. Bisexuality is often considered illegitimate or fake. However, when seen through the lens of the man, obsessed with the concept of two women’s pure sexuality playing out in front of him, for him, he loves it. The concept can also be seen in the obsession many men and boys have with watching lesbian pornography.

Performative bisexuality of women is rooted in the lack of freedom in exploration of sexual orientation, and the lack of sexual liberation for men. Women are allowed to a higher extent to explore queerness and return to heteronormativity when that feels right. This exploration should be destigmatized, given how fluid sexuality is. While a frequent product of this, performative bisexuality, has its problems, freedom of experimentation is something everyone should have the privilege of; the concept of experimentation and performative bisexuality can and must be separated. The problem with performative bisexuality is that it isn’t just two enjoying the company of one another. The performance of performative bisexuality comes from the fact that these women are engaging for the pleasure of a male audience. In this display, women are bonded by their desire for a man, not by their want for each other. In the case of performative bisexuality, the exploration of sexuality screeches to a stop at the aesthetic and points for validation from men. Performances like these make bisexuality look like a joke or a sexuality based on hyper-sexualization. These displays somehow created an idea within pop culture and-

-even middle and high schools that bisexuality is the same as being poly-amorous (defined by oxford languages as being: “the practice of engaging in multiple romantic (and typically sexual) relationships”). Being attracted to more people than just one specific gender does not equivocate to the desire to have sex all the time. Bisexuality is not consenting to a threesome or an open relationship, and while those are completely valid choices, it’s just not correlated with the concept of being bisexual.

Performative bisexuality must be dissimilated. We must hold accountable the women and the men that put this fetish culture into place and continue pushing it into our societal norms. It’s holding us back, it stops genuinely experimenting women to feel authentic, and it’s letting men continue to find the existence of wlw relationships a sexual thing in itself. Media, celebrities, and content creators/consumers must stop enabling these toxic ideals. If you see it, call it out. With work, accountability, and taking a stand, performative bisexuality can be written out of TV and movies, de-normalized in pornographic culture, and completely removed as something we consume.



Riley Hurley, El Segundo High School

THE FIRST OF THE JANUARY 6TH HEARINGS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

ZOHAR LINDENMAN



Image courtesy of CNN. Paul LeBlanc, "The January 6 committee is about to show its work. Here's what you need to know."

Around this time last year, the House of Representatives agreed to gather a committee completely dedicated to revealing the details, as well as further investigating the motives behind the January 6th riots. A year later on January 9th, 2022, the first-ever congressional hearing on the subject took place to display the findings of the committee, and to [\(as stated by the committee\)](#) "provide the American people an initial summary about its findings about the coordinated, multi step effort to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and prevent the transfer of power." Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the committee along with his vice chairwoman, Liz Cheney, described the riots as a deliberate and thought-out scheme by former President Trump in order to remain in power, and detailed the many dangers it presented towards America's democracy. Thompson and Cheney went on to communicate that Mr. Trump knew all along that his claims of a "stolen election" were completely false, and had spread them around to his supporters with the sole wish to maintain political power. "January 6th was the culmination of an attempted coup," Thompson stated.

With excerpts from interviews with people close to Trump, including his former attorney General William P. Barr, his daughter Ivanka Trump, and Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff at the time, the committee was able to prove that everyone around Trump understood that his endless obsession with uncovering the "truth" about the 2020 election was nothing more than a mere play to, once again, stay in control. Additionally, the committee presented witness Nick Quested, a documentary filmmaker who was amidst filing a documentary on the neo-fascist group the Proud Boys, who stated in a testimony that the Proud Boys were in partnership with another extremist group, the Oath Keepers, to plan the attack. Cheney, who is a Republican representative of Wyoming, stated, "Tonight I say this to my Republican colleagues who are defending the indefensible... There will come a day when Donald Trump is gone, but your dishonor will remain."

Although it is not suspected that the hearings will result in a perfect and unifying moment for our country, this is still an incredibly important event in American politics. [According to the New York Times](#), approximately half of Republican voters maintain the belief that the Capitol riots were a heroic act of patriotism. While it is certain that nothing can erase the painful history of January 6th or the politics behind it, these hearings could have a significant impact on future elections, mostly through stopping claims of voter fraud early on. If nothing else, they demonstrate a broader perspective on the struggles our democracy is currently facing and will continue to face for many years to come.

Pride in **ADOLESCENCE**

By Maya Maestas

I figured out I liked girls when I was 10 years old. By this age, I was already brought up in an environment where gay people were accepted and celebrated by my family and the people around me, but what I didn't know was how this would change my middle school experience. I came out to one of my best friends first, and it did not go the way I expected it to go. Because of the love and support for the community from my family, I didn't understand or expect that someone so close to me would be less than supportive. She told her mom, and although I didn't know about the concept of "outing" (to tell others someone's sexuality without their permission and when they are not comfortable), I knew that I wasn't ready for other people outside of the two of us to know about this part of myself yet. Even though I was out and proud throughout middle school, I was never really comfortable outwardly expressing my attraction to women until these past two years. All my friends and family had been supportive for the most part but I was never as comfortable with my queerness as I told people I was. Middle school was a part of that discomfort.

I was one of the only girls who was out at my middle school. My seventh grade sex education program had a lot of curriculum talking about LGBTQ+ people. At the start I was excited about this, but as the class wore on I grew more and more tired of the constant questions directed at me, as if I, a 12 year old girl, would know any more than anyone else in the room. I was happy to answer questions I knew the answers to, but the reality is that I didn't know everything then, and I don't know everything about myself now. I didn't even know how to express to my best friends that I had a crush on a girl, let alone how to answer 10 questions being fired at me from 10 and 12 year old boys who believe they are entitled to know about my personal life. Currently, I don't have a lot of friends who have been through the

same experiences with their sexuality that I have, and it gets tiring when it feels as if no one else is able to understand how I feel. I've come a long way this year. I've been able to tell my friends about people I'm interested in without internalized fear and homophobia creeping in and telling me not to. I've been able to laugh and talk about crushes and feel the way I've always thought pride should feel. Internalized homophobia is something that is just now being discussed among LGBTQ+ youth and it's so important that we understand that despite what is sometimes going through our heads, we are valid and we are allowed to have the same experiences as straight people. We deserve happiness and romance and we deserve positive experiences.



Coming out as LGBTQ+ comes with a multitude of psychological benefits. Revealing your sexual identity can come with decreased anger, anxiety, and depression, as well as increased confidence and self-esteem. However, this is not the case for all. Often, coming out often elicits reactions like:

“Are you sure?”

“How do you know?”

“Maybe you just haven’t been with the right person.”

“I accept you, but not your lifestyle.”



Demeaning comments like these leave queer people feeling even more isolated from loved ones who previously claimed to be “accepting.” More often than not, the pressure to come out is met with the pressure to live up to other people’s expectations of what a queer person should be. Society wants to place queer people in These harsh and unnecessary reactions beg the question, why do queer people need to come out? Why do people need to disclose a personal part of their identity to feel welcomed and accepted?

Our society constantly wants to place queer people below straight people. The world meant for white, cisgender, heterosexual males does not want queer people to exist comfortably, and society does not want queer people to be able to live as comfortably as straight people do. So, we maintain the system of “coming out” to further complicate queer people’s lives. The act of coming out, however empowering it may be, is isolating and intended to be that way. Even in the most supportive groups, coming out singles someone out and allows others to have an opinion on a person’s life. Subsequently, mental health and coming out are so strongly intertwined. Because there are many negative stereotypes about being LGBTQ+, many people are hesitant to share this important aspect of their identity. When people openly express this aspect of themselves, they risk rejection from peers, colleagues, and friends, which can exacerbate feelings of loneliness. And, even though everyone is dedicated to releasing the stigma surrounding coming out, it’s almost impossible when society sees straight as the norm and everything else as “different.”



Sabine Fuchs, Cate School

