

# beauty mark

A BAY AREA DRAGAZINE ●



spring 2017

## FRIENDS OF DOROTHY

the secret language of gay  
men in the World War II era

## WHY DRAG?

a conversation with  
three drag performers

## MAGNETIC ATTRACTION

being in a relationship  
with an HIV-positive partner





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# FRIENDS

*of*

# DOROTHY

the secret language of gay men in the World War II era

by Anna Phylactic

*“Unaware of the historical meaning of the term, the NIS believed that there actually was some woman named Dorothy at the center of a massive ring of homosexual military personnel, so they launched an enormous and futile hunt for the elusive ‘Dorothy,’ hoping to find her and convince her to reveal the names of gay service members.”*



The evolution of the term “Friends of Dorothy” reaches back more than half a century. Gay historians say that the term came into popular use in the 1940’s as gays and lesbians developed a special connection with the musical icon Judy Garland, whose ballads of hope and despair and whose relentless spirit and tragic history mirrored their struggles in everyday life. Garland’s most famous role – as the ever-optimistic and wistful Dorothy in the 1939 classic “The Wizard of Oz” – gave gays and lesbians “secret” codes which they could use to refer to themselves.

While the pink triangle, rainbow flag, and the Human Rights Campaign equal symbol are proudly displayed today, there was a time when the community was unified by codes that served as identifiers. Fashion is the most easily recognizable code, such as the wearing of an earring for a gay man or a second earring for a

lesbian, although, in all honesty, a man wearing an earring in a barbershop crew-cut era really wasn’t hiding much. Among verbal codes, the term “Friend of Dorothy” dates back to World War II and was a subtle way for those whose gaydar was going crazy to inquire; to ask if one was a friend of Dorothy was tantamount to asking “are you a queer?”

At cocktail parties or company gatherings where one could not be comfortably “out and proud,” gays would inquire discreetly of each other, “Are you a ‘Friend of Dorothy?’” The wink-wink admission of “I am, too!” would likely lead to fabulous and fast bonding in an age when gay bars were clandestine and, even in some various cases, dangerous.

It’s also worth mentioning Donald F. Reuter’s book *Gay-2-Zee: A Dictionary of Sex, Subtext, and the Sublime*.

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”

“You have some queer friends, Dorothy,’ she said. ‘The queerness doesn’t matter, so long as they’re friends,’ was the answer.”

– L. Frank Baum, *The Road to Oz*.

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In Reuter's book, it mentions that the phrase may have another possible origin, the second reference is to biting humorist and wit Dorothy Parker, who was a "fag hag" extraordinaire, long before it became popular to be one. It's not an unlikely leap to assume that the phrase started as a description of Parker's circle of friends, but gained popularity throughout the US in the '40s as gay men unfamiliar with Parker's social life assumed it was an Oz reference.

Today, the term "Friends of Dorothy" is used mostly by an older generation of gays and lesbians; young gay men and women may never have heard the term. Because of this – and because of increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians in mainstream society – many cruise lines are now using the nonambiguous abbreviation of LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender) in programs.

# Queer-Friendly Places



## The Castro Theatre

429 Castro St.  
San Francisco, CA

## Oak Life Church

474 24<sup>th</sup> St.  
San Francisco, CA

## Chow

215 Church St.  
San Francisco, CA

## Outlet

643 Bair Island Road  
Redwood City, CA

## Fentons Creamery

4226 Piedmont Ave.  
Oakland, CA

## Qulture Collective

1714 Franklin St.  
Oakland, CA

## Souley Vegan

301 Broadway  
Oakland, CA

## El Rio

3158 Mission St  
San Francisco, CA

## San Francisco LGBT Center

1800 Market St.  
San Francisco, CA

## Transgender Law Center

870 Market St., Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA



A photograph of three drag performers in a dimly lit room with a strong red light. The performer on the left has long blonde hair and is looking towards the center. The performer in the middle has voluminous, curly red hair and is looking directly at the camera. The performer on the right has long blonde hair, a nose ring, and is looking towards the camera. They are all wearing elaborate, dark-colored outfits.

# WHY DRAG?

a conversation with three drag performers

by Paige Turner

*“Anybody who can step out of the house with a pair of heels and some lipstick on their lips is my hero.”*

— RuPaul, drag queen.

”

Thanks to shows like RuPaul’s Drag Race, and with its 9<sup>th</sup> season coming to a close, drag culture as a whole has become more visible in recent years. In San Francisco’s Castro Street, the writers at Beauty Mark interviewed three local drag queens. In these interviews, we ask about their first time performing in drag, what is their drag style, and we dig deep into the question it seems no one has ever asked them:

***Why do you do drag in the first place?***





### **When did you start performing?**

Praesent eu dignissim eliteistn. Sed sollicitudin mauris risus, quis placerat augue tincidunt vel. Curabitur est quam, rhoncus vel vulputate vitae, mattis at tortor. Etiam semper elit quis lectus aliquam tincidunt. Donec placerat, dui eu fringilla suscipit, ligula velit egestas arcu, non sodales erat quam eget est. Suspendisse potenti.

### **Describe your style of drag.**

Praesent eu dignissim elit. Sed sollicitudin mauris risus, quis placerat augue tincidunt vel. Curabitur est quam, rhoncus vel vulputate vitae, mattis at tortor. Etiam semper elit quis lectus aliquam tincidunt. Donec placerat, dui eu fringilla suscipit, ligula velit egestas arcu, non sodales erat quam eget est. Suspendisse potenti potenti potenti.

### **Why drag?**

I never understood why we had to stick with the gender given to us. It's so over. It's so fluid now.

## NICKI JIZZ

23, Oakland, CA  
IG: @NICKI\_JIZZ

## ABOMINATRIX

25, San Francisco, CA  
IG: @THEABOMINATRIX

### **When did you start performing?**

Praesent eu dignissim eliteistn. Sed sollicitudin mauris risus, quis placerat augue tincidunt vel. Curabitur est quam, rhoncus vel vulputate vitae, mattis at tortor. Etiam semper elit quis lectus aliquam tincidunt. Donec placerat, dui eu fringilla suscipit, ligula velit egestas arcu, non sodales erat quam eget est. Suspendisse potenti.

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### **Why drag?**

It's like making art. It's beautiful. Beats the hell out of working at Starbucks in the Marina.







# SHELIX

28, San Francisco, CA  
IG: @THESHELIX

## *When did you start performing?*

Praesent eu dignissim eliteistn. Sed sollicitudin mauris risus, quis placerat augue tincidunt vel. Curabitur est quam, rhoncus vel vulputate vitae, mattis at tortor. Etiam semper elit quis lectus aliquam tincidunt. Donec placerat, dui eu fringilla suscipit, ligula velit egestas arcu, non sodales erat quam eget est. Suspendisse potenti.

## *Describe your style of drag.*

Praesent eu dignissim elit. Sed sollicitudin mauris risus, quis placerat augue tincidunt vel. Curabitur est quam, rhoncus vel vulputate vitae, mattis at tortor. Etiam semper elit quis lectus aliquam tincidunt. Donec placerat, dui eu fringilla suscipit, ligula velit egestas arcu, non sodales erat quam eget est. Suspendisse potenti potenti potenti.

## *Why drag?*

Why the fuck not? \*laughs\* \*smokes a cigarette\*

# MAGNETIC ATTRACTION

being in a relationship with an HIV-positive partner

by Paris a la Grande + AIDS.gov



A “mixed-status” relationship is a sexual relationship in which one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative. This can involve a couple in a long-term relationship or a single encounter between two partners. You may also hear the term “serodiscordant” or “magnetic.”

The possibility of HIV infection is a constant reality. There is always a risk of transmitting HIV, but you can minimize it. It is important that you and your partner communicate openly and often about safer sex practices and HIV prevention. Healthcare providers and local HIV/AIDS organizations can be important sources of information and support for you and your partner or partners.

Living with or with someone who has HIV is not a death sentence.

Someone’s HIV status does not determine a relationship. Being positive is not a death sentence and neither is being in a relationship with one someone who is positive.

“*Being seen does have value.*

*A voice does have value.*

*I have the support of my boyfriend, my great friends, and my loving parents. Many do not and this is, in part, for them.”*

— Ji Wallace,  
Olympian, gay, and HIV-positive.

## Tips for HIV [-] Partner

1. Encourage your HIV-positive partner to get and stay on antiretroviral therapy (ART).
2. Use condoms consistently and correctly.
3. Choose less risky sexual behaviors.
4. Talk to your doctor about PrEP.
5. Talk to your doctor right away (within 3 days) about post-exposure prophylaxis if you think you have had a possible exposure to HIV.
6. Get tested for HIV.
7. Get tested and treated for other STDs and encourage your partner to do the same.

## Tips for HIV [+] Partner



1. Get and stay on antiretroviral therapy (ART).
2. If you are taking ART, follow your health care provider’s advice.
3. Use condoms consistently and correctly.
4. Choose less risky sexual behaviors.
5. Talk to your partner about PrEP.
6. Talk to your partner about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) if you think your partner has had a possible exposure to HIV.
7. Get tested and treated for STDs and encourage your partner to do the same.





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**1.2 MILLION**

people in the United States live with HIV, and **1 out of 8** of them don't even know it. Gay and bisexual men account for **82%** of that total.

**658,507**

people in the United States have died from AIDS ever since the epidemic began.

**OVER 80,000**

people in the United States are on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) right now, which reduces the risk of contracting HIV by **99%** when taken every day.

*Speak to your physician and partner/s to see if PrEP is right for you.*



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**For more information, visit:**

**For questions on HIV/AIDS...**

[sfaf.org](http://sfaf.org)

Phone: 415.487.3000

[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Phone: 1.800.CDC.INFO

**For questions on PrEP...**

[men.prepfacts.org](http://men.prepfacts.org)

Phone: 415.487.3000

[avac.org](http://avac.org)

Phone: +1 212.796.6423





**THE QUEER LIFE ISSUE**

*For Dorian Corey, Harvey Milk, Audre Lorde, Wanda, David Wojnarowicz, Sylvester, Keith Haring, Marsha P. Johnson, Bayard Rustin, Sylvia Rivera, and the others who paved the way. For Ongina, George Takei, Laverne Cox, Trinity K. Bonet, June Chan, Mykki Blanco, the LGBT+ activists of Russia, and the rest of those who keep fighting the good fight.*

*Good luck... Miss you, too.*



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