



VOICES

Winter '24

From the Editors

Hey everyone!

Thank you for opening up this year's edition of Voices Magazine. This edition represents the collective passion and dedication of everyone on our masthead, from the layout editors who crafted each page with care, to the graphics editors whose creativity brings our stories to life, and of course, our talented writers who poured their hearts into their work.

In this issue, you will find an in-depth exploration of queer history and rights across the globe, an original collection of poetry that beautifully encapsulates the LGBTQ+ experience, a thoughtful analysis of queer representation in modern media, and there's even more waiting for you within these pages.

We hope these pieces inspire reflection, spark conversations, and, above all, remind you of the vibrant and resilient community we're all a part of.

Thank you for reading, for supporting us, and for celebrating these voices. Enjoy!

-Blake and Sarina

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Editor-in-Chief: Sarina Fernandez-Grinshpun '25

Managing Editor: Blake Steremberg '26

Senior Editor: Grace Yoon '26

Graphics Editors: Xyla Kiang '26

& Teniola Obayomi '25

Editors: Jinx Harton '27 & Erika Santamaria '27

Advisor: Ms. Howland

QUEER HISTORY OF NEW HAVEN

Kaitlyn Yu '27

New Haven's rich history intertwines with its vibrant atmosphere, making it an enjoyable place for all. The city is also no stranger to queerness—in fact, the walking tours by John Allen and Keith Hyatte offer insight into over 400 years of its LGBTQIA+ past. Let's take a look at some events that have influenced the queer atmosphere in New Haven.

THE 17TH-19TH CENTURY

New Haven's history dates back to 1638 when the city was founded. The colony followed biblical laws strictly, sentencing people to death because of their sexual orientation. As such, three gay Puritans of low social standing were executed in the New Haven Green between 1646 and 1655.

The St. Mary's Catholic Church in New Haven served as the founding site of the Knights of Columbus, a notable anti-gay rights organization in the late 1800s. The Knights of Columbus also donated excessive funds in support of California's Proposition 8 in 2008, which would allow the Supreme Court to ban gay marriage in the state.

THE 20TH CENTURY-NOW

It wasn't until the 1970s that the New Haven queer scene started to flourish. Gay bars and theaters became a prominent aspect of queer social life in the city. It was in one of these bars that tour guides John Allen and Keith Hyatte met. However, most of these places burned down in 1978 because of anti-gay protests.

During the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, many members of the LGBTQIA+ community were impacted severely. However, more people were coming out and expressing their identity, like Rev. James Burns, an openly gay man who wrote a monthly column in the New Haven Register during this time.

The 1990s saw the most prominent social movements for New Haven's queer community. Many LGBTQIA+ activists advocated for a proposal in 1993 that would acknowledge the relationship between same-sex couples. However, many religious groups protested the proposal and grew hostile toward the social activists. As such, Allen founded the New Haven Pride Center in 1996, a safe space where LGBTQIA+ groups could host events and gatherings.

In 2008, same-sex marriage was legalized in Connecticut, and society has become much more accepting of LGBTQIA+ relationships. Nowadays, many towns across the state are celebrating Pride along with the LGBTQIA+ community. Hyatte and Allen's walking tours take center stage in expanding the public's knowledge of New Haven's queer history, spreading a positive light on the community, and solidifying their queer presence in the city.



QUEER RIGHTS IN TAIWAN

Elizabeth Burgstahler '26

Throughout Asia, LGBTQIA+ acceptance and tolerance is relatively low. With over twenty countries still banning same-sex marriage, and the majority of the continent not supporting transgender rights, some Asian countries still imprison members of the LGBTQIA+ community for living their identity or marriage. LGBTQIA+ support, however, has grown significantly in Taiwan. Taiwan hosts one of the most liberal communities in Asia, being a center for activism and political literacy among its youth population. Despite the progressive nature of Taiwan, it was still challenging to be an LGBTQIA+ member of society.

With several colonial influences, Taiwan has had an extensive history of LGBTQIA+ rights. During the very conservative Qin Dynasty of China, homosexuality was considered an elite marriage choice. However, in the 1990s, the Queer movement in Taiwan began to spread with the addition of Between Us, a national support group for lesbians. Unlike other parts of the world, the Taiwanese queer community was led and expanded by women.

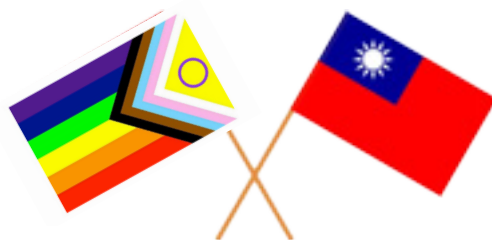
On May 24, 2019, Taiwan became the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage, enabling a new movement to support members of the queer community. However, before the legalization of same-sex marriage, LGBTQIA+ couples faced greater challenges than heterosexual couples, including restrictions to health care and insurance. The legalization of same-sex marriage was a historic and celebrated moment by the Taiwanese LGBTQIA+ community because it took hard work, dedication, and unity from the country. In fact, in the first year that same-sex marriage was legalized, more than 3,500 couples got married.

The introduction of COVID-19 also did not stop the movement for progressing LGBTQIA+ rights. In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, many Pride events had to be scaled down. However, very few people in Taiwan were actually affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, so they were still able to celebrate pride events. Pride in Taipei, Taiwan's capital, usually happens in October, and is one of East Asia's largest Pride events, attracting members of the queer community from countries that discriminate against the community.

As of 2023, the Taiwanese community believes that Taiwan is a safe place for the gay community, with 60% of Taiwanese citizens believing that the area is a good place for same-sex couples. However, many Taiwanese people still oppose the rights to homosexuality, and the country is split over supporting same-sex marriage and transgender rights.

It is legal to be transgender in Taiwan, and overall, the country is open to educating its children about LGBTQIA+ topics. However, the legalization of same-sex marriage has encouraged more transgender activists to speak up.

The fight for transgender rights started long before 2019, especially with the formation of the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association in 2008, a support service for the transgender community. Since the 2019 same-sex marriage act, the Hotline organized the first Taiwan Trans March in 2019. And although over 1000 people attended the first year of this march, each year it's been held the number of participants has steadily increased every year. Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights has been another active support group for the trans community fighting for the abolition of surgery in order to change gender & protection of transgender students. They also host several film events and information sessions to educate their community about Taiwanese trans rights.



Aya Kamikawa: Queer Activist Extraordinaire

Elizabeth Burgstahler '26

Japanese Politician Aya Kamikawa was the first openly transgender person to seek and win an assembly position in Japan. She has devoted her career to advancing LGBTQIA+ and other minority rights. Kamikawa was born in Tokyo on January 25, 1968. Not much is known about her childhood; however, she was well-educated and graduated with a business degree from Hosei University. She continued to work in the public relations field while presenting as masculine for several years, until in 1998, a psychiatrist officially diagnosed her with gender identity disorder, leading to her name change.

In 2003, Kamikawa submitted her election application. Her application received significant media attention because she did not fill out the “sex” space in the application. The government tried to put her into the box of working as a man in office; however, she declared she would work as a woman. While in office, she made significant contributions to advancing gender rights in Japan. Starting in 2003, she helped establish the law making gender change possible. In the following years, she established support groups for mothers, children, and those with disabilities. However, one of her most recent policy statements was the Setagaya Ward Ordinance in 2018, specifically banning LGBTQIA+ discrimination for the first time in Japan. In general, Kamikawa’s policies focusing on gender rights and representations of minorities sparked debate throughout Japan; she led these types of discussions within the government to further advance the enactment of these policies.

A Collection of Poems

Kaitlyn Yu '27

card tricks

nobody ever taught me how to play the game
but i know how the poker face works—
a double edged sword, cards folded in secrecy.
lines blurred, hands drawn, all in.

i had no double in my starting hand
but one day i drew from the deck—
put a royal flush down
on one of the tables in the back corner
near the closet, but not quite.

the entertainment began.
they conjured up rainbow scarves out of top hats.
'pick any card,' they drew hearts and spades
clubs and diamonds
but what if the suits on mine kept changing?

the questions wouldn't end
rulebooks were consulted but
it's so *tiring* to repeat myself—
and the dictionary definitions
don't make things any clearer.

i have no magician's secrets
i have never called a bluff
but that poker face seems more real
every time i use it.

untitled

set the scene
curtains are drawn
the act begins -
it never ends.

like a masquerade.
poised and flawless
waltzing in step
perchance i fall -
it never happens.

paper airplanes fly -
the cut bleeds.
tears are shields
they never crumble.

it's worthless art
faded into dust
the boulder rolls
and never stops.

i still can't
lose my mind.
i never will.

I know
(a calligram)

i
know
that rain isn't
so different from
the reardrops that
threaten to fall at any
time. i know bliss is inevitable,
but ephemeral and terribly naive.
"shall we dance?" he says, his arms
outstretched. the umbrella has been
cast aside, engulfed in a wet embrace.
rainwater runs down my cheeks
we sing, fly—but it's only
for a moment.

now
the rain
mixes in with
tears, a mess, an
indistinguishable mess of
emptiness and pent-up anger.
when has the rain ever brought joy?
the stereo is long abandoned, and all i
hear during the storm are mother nature's
tears. is she crying for what could have been?
it doesn't matter. i've lost too much sleep over
unanswered questions. i know rain
isn't for dancing, it's for the
silent waterfalls.

QUEER REPRESENTATION IN RECENT MEDIA

Erika Santamaria '27

According to a study made by the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), in 2023-2024 there were 64 LGBTQIA+ characters on prime-time scripted broadcasts. Of them, 35 were women, 27 men, and two nonbinary. Of them, 20 were lesbian, 10 were bi+ women, and 5 were queer women, with one of the bi+ women being trans. 24 were gay men, two bi+ men, and one straight trans man. These numbers mean that there was a decrease in bi+ men and women, lesbian women, trans men and women, and nonbinary characters. There was also a shift in favor of men. On primetime scripted cable, there were 77 LGBTQIA+ characters. 27 women, 47 men, and three nonbinary. 19 lesbians, six bi+ women, one queer woman, and one straight trans woman. 35, almost half, were gay men. There were 12 bi+ men and no trans men. This counts as a large decrease in bi+, lesbian, trans women, trans men, and nonbinary characters. The only increased demographic was cisgender men. On scripted original streaming series, there was a slight lean toward women, with 158 of the 327 LGBTQIA+ characters being women. There were also 150 men and 19 nonbinary characters. Of them, 79 characters were lesbian, 53 were bi+ women, and 19 were queer women. There were 9 trans women with four being straight, two queer, and one bi+. There were 108 gay men, 24 bi+ men, and 15 queer men. Four trans men were counted, three queer and one straight. There was an increase in nonbinary characters, a decrease in gay men and lesbians, and bi+ representation was steady. There was a decrease in trans characters, but a significant increase in queer characters who don't identify with any other label. In all platforms, men and nonbinary characters slightly outnumbered women, which marks a decrease in LGBTQIA+ women. Despite this, there was also an increase in women who exclusively identified as queer and a decrease in trans men.

Spectrum News 1 expanded on this study, adding that there were 62 fewer LGBTQIA+ characters on primetime scripted cable shows and 29 fewer on streaming scripted original programming. Of the 468 LGBTQIA+ characters counted across all platforms, 5.1% were transgender and 50% were people of

color. More than a third of the characters won't be returning because of a series cancelation, ending, a show's miniseries, anthology format, a character dying, or otherwise exiting the show. Both of these sources illustrate a change in recent television, tending to favor men over women when it comes to the queer community.

Another study by GLAAD, centered around gaming, reported on how many games have been tagged as having LGBTQIA+ content, and also found that 17% of active gamers are queer. The study counted the games from Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo, and Steam (PC). According to Microsoft, the Xbox store had 146 games. PlayStation had 90 games, the Nintendo Switch eShop had 50 games, and Steam had 2,303 games in English, but this number was reduced to 1,506 when games with "adult-only content" were filtered out. These games account for less than 2% of Xbox, Playstation, and Nintendo's libraries. They account for less than 2.5% of Steam's library but drop to 1.7% without adult-only games. The Nintendo Switch eShop had the least amount of games with LGBTQIA+ characters or storylines, despite the fact that 39% of LGBTQIA+ gamers play on switch consoles, compared to the 32% of non-LGBTQIA+ gamers. This study makes it clear that the gaming industry is far behind other media industries when it comes to LGBTQIA+ representation. Even just compared to the television industry, it falls short despite being one of the most well-known forms of media nowadays.



Image from Netflix