



The Queer Foundation Scholar

Publication of the Queer Foundation

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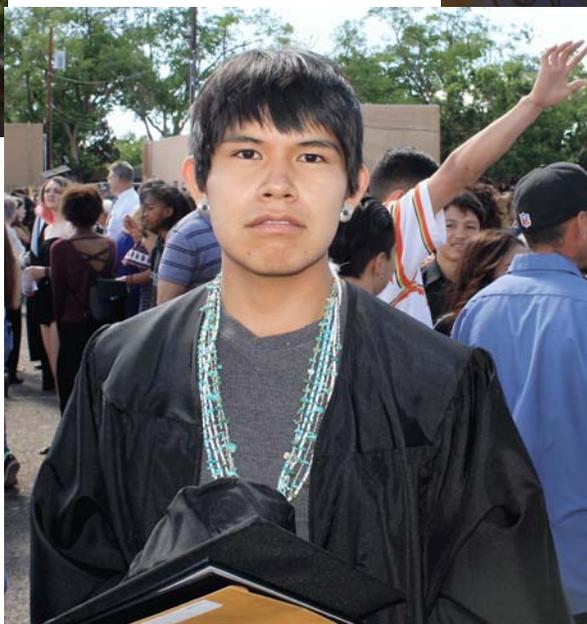
2017-18 QF Scholars



Hannah Gálvez-Arango
California



Madison Aurnou
Virginia



Joshua Dixon
New Mexico

MADISON AURNOU graduated from Hidden Valley High School in Roanoke, Virginia. She was a member of her high school choir all four years, and a member of District VI Virginia High School All District Choir for three.

Academically, she was admitted to the French Honor Society her sophomore year and to both the English and Science Honor Societies her junior year.

Ms. Aurnou will attend The University of Virginia where she will major in English and minor in either math or chemistry. Ce also hopes to continuing in a choir. As an aside, that wasn't a typo. Ms. Aurnou uses both she/ce, etc. and prefers to mix them, e.g., "Ce left the store and found her car."

Ms. Aurnou hopes to pursue a career in the publishing field, either as an author or perhaps an editor.

Ms. Aurnou will be paired with a doctoral student in English.

Joshua Dixon graduated from Volcano Vista High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mr. Dixon will attend the Institute of American Indian Arts, focusing on creative arts, studio arts, and linguistics. After completing his studies at the Institute, he intends to return to the Navajo Reservation to attend Dine College in Tsalle, Arizona, to pursue a degree in Navajo Language and Culture and a teaching license.

His academic interests also include agricultural science, history (Navajo, Japanese, Central American, Andean), business and entrepreneurship, and the performing arts.

His teachers also describe him as a gifted Navajo storyteller and artist.

Mr. Dixon joins three former QF Scholars in having participated in Cross Country for all four years in high school, as well as other Track & Field events. He was also Editor-in-Chief of his high school newspaper, and served on the Student Council as his Class Rep. and as Secretary.

Appropriately, Mr. Dixon describes himself as "a Native American farmer. I really enjoy planting and tending to my crops. It was one of the things I would do over the summer that brought me much joy. It's hard work but it soothes my soul. I grew Blue Corn (Nadaa' Doiotl'izh), White Corn (Nadaa'lgal), Speckled Corn, all kinds of squash (Naylzl), and different varieties of watermelon, and beans (Naa'oli). These kinds of simple joys in life bring more happiness than any story we may have about ourselves."

Mr. Dixon has been paired with a former QF Scholar.

HANNAH GÁLVEZ-ARANGO is a graduate of Fountain Valley High School in Fountain Valley, California.

Ms. Gálvez-Arango will attend Stanford University with a major in sociocultural anthropology and a minor in urban studies. She will also continue her studies of Spanish and Portuguese and add other languages to her repertoire.

Ultimately, she hopes to earn a master's degree and possibly a Ph.D. in anthropology, with the goal of either becoming a university professor, a Foreign Service officer, or working for an NGO.

In high school her extracurricular activities included participating in her high school's marching band, wind ensemble, honor band, symphony orchestra, and pit orchestra – as both a flute and piccolo player. She was also a competitive recurve archer, and the treasurer of the high school's Health and Cancer Awareness Society.

Eventually, Ms. Gálvez-Arango envisions herself conducting research and helping to preserve the language and culture of a small community. She also hopes to get married and to adopt a dog.

As yet, we have not found Ms. Gálvez-Arango a mentor. She would like someone with a background in anthropology or a related social science.

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Over 125 high school seniors from schools in 32 states in all regions of the United States participated in this year's Queer Foundation English Essay Contest: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

The contest welcomes submissions from all students, emerging as well as accomplished writers of English.

Three essayists have been selected to receive \$1,000 Queer Foundation Scholarships for use at the U.S. college or university of their choice.

All participants are eligible, in future years, to compete for Queer Foundation Publication Awards by submitting additional writings that demonstrate their continuing development as writers. Authors of pieces selected to appear in the *Queer Foundation Scholar* may also receive scholarships of \$500 or \$1,000.

Scholarships are made possible through generous donations to the Queer Foundation Scholarship Fund. Please consider donating today. Contributions, no matter how small, are greatly appreciated.

Mail your check to Scholarship Fund, Queer Foundation, P.O. Box 1206, Ravensdale, WA 98051. Or donate online at

<http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/90-0198562/queer-foundation.aspx>

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From the editor's desk

Quando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí. “When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.” Augusto Monterroso, “El dinosaurio,” in *Obras completas (y otros cuentos)* [in *Complete Works (and other stories)*]. Mexico, 1959.

Augusto Monterroso (1921-2003), born in Honduras and a citizen of Guatemala, spent most of his adult life in political exile in Mexico. “El dinosaurio” is considered the shortest short story and it leaves us puzzled. Who is the subject of the clause, “When he awoke?” A dreamer who’d had a nightmare, or the dinosaur?

Some Americans believe that human beings and dinosaurs cohabited on the earth as little as 4,000 years ago. Sometimes I think we still do.

● **Worth reading:** Dr. Katherine Pickering Antonova’s history lesson:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/republicans-no-longer-conservative-party_us_59767dd6e4b0e201d5776f8c?chv&ncid=inbInkushpmg000009

● If you were observant, we did not publish a spring issue this year. If you didn’t notice, you are probably in the majority. At any rate, continuing health problems and the inanities emanating from our nation’s capital left me with a mild case of depression and I’m just now catching up with my volunteer work.

You may notice that we do not announce any Special Mention students in this issue. Dr. Dial invited some twenty students to allow the QF to publish their essay on the QF website, and to let me introduce them to our readers in these pages. So far only one student has responded and I’ve not yet had time to do follow-up. As I’ve written in these pages before, the QF does not out students without their permission or, if they are not yet 18, the signature of a parent or legal guardian. Only about a third of those students whose essays receive one or more votes in the initial adjudication round eventually agree to let us list them. Hopefully, we’ll be able to introduce you to several Special Mention students in our fall issue. In the meantime, you can read the pieces by the three QF Scholars for 2017-18 at www.queerfoundation.org

● Former QF Scholar **Brandon Lambert** is co-starring in *Murder for Two* at the West End Theatre in Calgary, Alberta, until early September. He previously participated in an Irish Review in New York City. He did send me a recording of him singing “Danny Boy” and I wish I knew how to provide a link. But, I’m almost 80 and haven’t learned that trick yet! As I wrote Brandon, his beautifully sung “Danny Boy” brought back horrid memories of my third grade experience with the song. Well, our teacher, Mrs. Doane (as Irish as one can get) insisted that all the boys in the class would sing “Danny Boy” at the all-school (K-8) talent show in the spring. Mrs. Doane did play the piano, but she’d not learned to transpose the song to fit the musical range of 7 and 8 year olds. At the talent show, we were more or less laughed off the stage. There was no way we could cover the range of “Danny Boy.”

● The recipients of the 2017-18 Publication Awards will be announced in the fall issue. We had more submissions (13) this year than ever before. You’ll be reading some of them in the next three issues of *The QF Scholar*.

● **Fair-weather friends.** Yes, corporations can be fair-weather friends as we’ve seen in North Carolina after the passage of the “fake” repeal of the “bathroom bill.” However, advertising usually does change attitudes and buying habits and, ultimately, in the process, beliefs. To the extent that the media now influence our lives, at what point do TV ads like those listed below do as much or more to change the public’s perception of queers

as any arguments we might have?

- **Kodak.** Intentionally or not, ever since Kodak made its box camera the first mass marketed invention worldwide (1893), the company has played an important role in undermining 15th-16th c. European sexual prudery. The updated “box camera” became the “Brownie” in 1900. The Brownie sold for \$1.00 (roughly \$29.25 today), and Eastman Kodak film cost 15¢ (about \$4.50 today, and it included development for 16 prints). The Brownie was well within the buying power of a slowly expanding middleclass and even found its way into the homes of some working-class families worldwide.

In the 1890s federal and state governments were slow to react to new technology. It wasn't really until the late 1920s and early 1930s that the sexual prudes gained enough power to pass new anti-pornography and anti-sodomy laws. But to little avail. If Kodak sold millions of Brownies worldwide, it also convinced thousands of photographers to develop their own film, thereby avoiding government scrutiny. One result is the wonderful collection of old photographs assembled online in “Homo History” by Jeffrey Gent:

<https://www.pinterest.com/Jeffreygent/homo-history-com/>

Of course, as I've written in these pages before, not all of the photos in Gent's collection are of LGBTQ people. Anglo-Germanic-Nordic people were often shocked by the behavior of southern, central, and eastern European immigrants. Why, men danced together, as did women. They embraced and kissed each other on the cheeks. If they were Slavic (from which we get the word 'slave') men, they might even kiss each other on the lips.

So, okay, there's an essay in Kodak's “Understanding” video somewhere! Audience: white and middleclass. A middle-aged father confined to a wheel chair. Meaning? Was he wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan? He has one son who happens to be a baseball star at his high school. Why baseball? There have been reams written about why gay men shun baseball. To my knowledge, only one professional baseball player has come out, but only after he retired.

A subtle message about it now being okay? But, of course, we are selling cameras and photography.

[Http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omadTZg2ask](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omadTZg2ask) Still, for every queer whose father has disowned them, a wished for nostalgic moment.

- **Coca Cola** I'm no partisan of any of the soft drink companies, although I consume too many of their products, but this ad is a spoof on “the southern California gay pool boy” stereotype. It's a clever mixture of 1970s nostalgia and contemporary mores.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWBQP-bxfX0>

The ad started out in Italy, and was recently on Spanish TV. I don't know if it has aired anywhere in the U.S., but reading the negative comments on the YouTube vlog is proof enough that homophobia is alive and well in the U.S. (as if we need to be reminded). It's not even a “gay” ad. Christianists fume because it “suggests” that the mother is going to have an extramarital affair with the pool boy or that it will turn into a four-way orgy!

The song *Come prima* in the ad first became a hit in Italy in 1958, but I suspect it was best known in the U.S. by Dean Martin's rendition (1965). Indeed, the ad is set in late 1960s or early 1970s southern California: an older home without air-conditioning, and an already established stereotype of “gay pool boys” in West Hollywood, but I interpret the mother's facial expression and slight shrug of her shoulders as, “What did you kids expect? It's hot. Sorry if I upset your plans!!” Leave it to the religious fanatics to interpret her action as sexual in nature.

- **Heineken.** If Pepsi's TV ad with Kendall Jenner created a firestorm of protests that led the company to remove the ad a day or so later, Heineken's U.K. TV ad could have taught Pepsi what to do instead.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVC6FIDKvmA>

- **Kingis.** I'd order ice cream from this Finnish ice cream company if they'd guarantee the service shown in their ad.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_70w8s9-hU

This ad first ran on Finnish TV back in 2010 and there is more than one version.

Against the chaos and madness in the White House, I find some comfort in the spate of queer films and videos, some dating from 2014, 2015, or 2016, that have become available on various streaming services since last November. Unless otherwise noted with a link, all are now available on one or more of the streaming services.

O Perfume da Memoria (Brazil, 2016) [The Scent of Memory] is the story of two women who, although very much in love, have radically different world views. The award-winning film is available on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7quKu3Vlpg>

Man on High Heels (South Korea, 2014) follows a bad-ass cop who, in keeping with South Korean detective films, has no compunction about beating up suspects even though in her case, she is transitioning.

In *Fire Song* (Canada, 2015), Shane, a gay Anishnabe teenager in northern Ontario, struggles between the responsibility of supporting his family after his sister's suicide or following his own dreams.

In *How to Win at Checkers (Every Time)* (Thailand, 2015), young Oat plots to keep his older (and gay) brother from having to do military service only to discover too late that playing with a boss of the underworld can have tragic consequences. The film reveals the "live and let live" attitude of the Thai people when it comes to human sexuality, while also exposing society's corrupt political system. Young Oat is utterly convincing in his love for his older gay brother and his brother's lover.

Laerte-se (Brazil, 2017) is a documentary about Brazil's best known cartoonist who transitions late in life.

In *Loev* (India, 2016), a successful Wall Street broker returns to India on vacation to visit family and friends. On a weekend trip with his best friend, the two confront feelings for each other and question the meaning of love. This is no longer standard Bollywood "gay" fare.

Zenne Dancer (Turkey, 2011) takes us inside

the world of Turkey's flamboyant male belly dancers, a world that in this film brings together three unlikely friends: Can, a young and gay belly dancer; Daniel, a middle-aged German photo-journalist who knows nothing about Turkish values; and Ahmed, his middle-aged Turkish lover who comes from a rural family. When Daniel convinces Ahmed to come out to his parents, Ahmed's father is obliged to kill his son.

In *Girls Lost* (Sweden, 2015), three teenaged girls who are constantly bullied at school discover a plant whose flower allows them to experience the world as boys, but the consequences aren't quite what any of them expected. There's a hint of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* here. We make our own hell (or heaven), as it is.

In *Being 17* (France, 2017), two teenaged boys living in a small town in the French Pyrenees, one the son of a doctor and of a French Air Force helicopter pilot in Afghanistan, and the other the adopted Algerian son of a dairyman and his wife, seem determined to kill each other or, at least, to be expelled from school for constantly fighting each other. The testosterone is thick in the air. It takes a tragedy for both to realize that their antipathy toward each other stems from their inability to accept the fact of their sexual attraction. *Being 17* is the latest film by director André Téchiné whose first film *Les Rouseaux Sauvages* (Wild Reeds, 1994) remains a classic, and the first in a series of French films that have explored homosexuality and French politics and social values, and are much more than coming-of-age tales.

Handsome Devil (Ireland, 2016) might be *Friday Night Lights* with a couple of changes: it's rugby instead of American football, and the star is gay. Otherwise, the private boarding school faculty, staff, students, and alumni live and breathe rugby and the coach is an asshole. But the star athlete and his nerd roommate have the last word on the subject. Ultimately, a feel-good film, but one with a great script and well-acted by the two protagonists.

Die Mitte der Welf (German, 2016) is a coming-of-age story based on a best-selling novel

variously translated as *The Center of the World* and *The Centre of My World*.

Esteros (Argentina, 2016) is also a coming-of-age story of two adolescent boys.

My Roommate is a Fairy Fox, aka *The Fairy Fox* (China, 2017) is both a TV series and a full-length movie loosely based on a Chinese legend of an ancient warrior who is resurrected to rescue another ancient warrior who sacrificed himself, but is now living a humdrum life.

Naz & Maalik (USA, 2016) is the story of two gay Muslim teenagers who hawk merchandise in Brooklyn but who, in an effort to keep their relationship a secret, find themselves swept up by a government sweep of suspected terrorists.

The Falls (USA, 2012, 2013, 2016) is the story of two young Mormons who fall in love while on their Mission, tell their parents and the Church (which disciplines them), and who some six years later make plans to rekindle their relationship permanently.

There have also been recent releases of queer films, videos, and TV series in Japan, Taiwan, Australia, Denmark, Spain and, no doubt, others I'm not aware of. I'm told by friends that there are now three TV series in Catalan that focus on queer characters. Also interesting, someone is posting Russian subtitles on quite a few foreign-language (foreign to Russians) films, videos, and TV series or episodes on YouTube, with young queer characters. I would imagine that whoever is doing the subtitles is outside of Russia, and so far, except for Chechnya, I've not heard of a crackdown in Russia against internet usage—although, as in China, the government no doubt blocks access to certain channels.

Sadly, of course, our Justice Department is no longer granting visas to gay men trying to flee Chechnya.

Are you willing to mentor a young QF scholar? I especially encourage former QF Scholars who have graduated and are now

working in “the real world.” Please contact me if you want more information, rverzasconi@msn.com To all former QF Scholars: please make an effort to keep in touch. Let us know what you are doing. I know, your generation leans heavily on the social media to communicate. I have a Facebook account I've never used; I have never tweeted! But a 2-3 sentence email once a year won't weigh heavily on your time. You become the test of how successful the QF is or isn't. You can contact me at rverzasconi@msn.com or Joe Dial at jdial@queerfoundation.org.

To our donors: you can now donate to one or more QF funds:

(1) the endowment that will support the future of the three \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors.

(2) an expendable fund that supports the Publication Award scholarships. The amount and number of scholarships awarded each year varies depending both on the \$ amount available and the evaluations of the jurors.

(3) an expendable fund that will allow the QF to contract publishable materials from previous QF Scholars who have graduated and no longer qualify for the Publication Awards.

You can designate your donation to one, two or all three of the funds. Simply specify (1) endowment, (2) Publication Awards, or (3) Commissioned work. See page 3 for how you can donate.

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