

# 'American Idol' Cast-off MK Nobilette Hopes to "Be a Good Role Model" for the LGBT Community



By Louisa

Gonzales

MK Nobilette made headlines early on during this season of *American Idol* when she became the first openly gay contestant. Of the attention on her sexual orientation instead of her singing skills, she says, "I was definitely a little taken aback at first, but I get that it plays a role. I'm a singer, and I'm also gay. I felt like it was important to address that. I'm very proud of it and open about it."

Although her time on the show has ended, she's hopeful that she can continue to be a source of inspiration for other members of the LGBT community. "I want to be a good role model for other queer people who are afraid to come out or think they can't do something as big as *American Idol*. I really hope I influence a lot of people."

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One person who she's certainly inspired is her girlfriend Casey Ellis, who is also a singer. "It was great to have her on my side for all of this. It was really great," the California native said of her partner who she calls "wife" on her Twitter profile.

For same-sex couples struggling to find their place in the world, Nobilette encourages them to talk to their loved ones. "And just be proud of yourself. Remind yourself that, no matter what happens, you still have you, and that's the most important thing."

So what's next for the singer? First, she'll be going home to San Francisco to spend time with her family and friends before heading out on the *American Idol* summer tour with the other top 10 contestants. There's no doubt she'll be taking her newfound gumption with her on the road: "Before *American Idol*, I was still a performer and a singer, but I never thought that being a musician was an achievable goal for myself as a career. I think, through this process, I realized that's the only thing that I want to do. I'm definitely going to make that happen."

**Related Link:** [Emily Piriz from ‘American Idol’ Thanks Her Boyfriend for His Support](#)

For the remaining contestants battling for that number one spot, she has this piece of advice – something that she learned from judge Harry Connick Jr. "Just really sell

yourself,” she says. “Live every performance like it’s your last and really make sure that you want to be there, exactly like Harry said. Prove to the judges that you deserve to be on that stage.”

*You can catch Nobilette on the American Idol tour this summer. In the meantime, keep up with her on Twitter @Mknobilette.*

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## ‘American Idol’ Contestant Ben Briley Sings to Better His Family’s Future



By Liz Kim

Ben Briley quickly became a fan favorite on *American Idol* this season during rush week when the judges couldn't decide between him and Neco Starr to advance to the top 13. They put the decision in America's hands, and Briley was voted to move forward. From his southern drawl to his love for everything Tennessee, he might seem like the token country singer, but one look at the 24-year-old's YouTube channel, and you'll quickly learn that he enjoys music ranging from John Mayer to James Taylor.

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The contestant admitted that he never even intended on auditioning for the show. "The entire reason I tried out was so I could be a supportive father and husband," he shared. "Being on the show and being married is definitely tough. I don't know too many newlyweds that have spent their first year of marriage like this." The bright side of getting eliminated before the top 10, though, is that he won't have to go on the *American Idol* summer tour, which would keep him away from his wife Courtney even longer.

Before each performance on Wednesday, the contestants all did impressions of each other and almost every impression of Briley was about his two loves: Tennessee and Courtney. With a wife as supportive as she is, it isn't surprising that he loves out loud. "The only week she wasn't in Los Angeles was last week, but she's been here every other week supporting me and making sure I stay focused," he said. "She would tell me that she doesn't want to distract me and wants to make sure I get votes. She's definitely my biggest fan and my biggest supporter."

This week, he sang Elton John's "Bennie and the Jets," a song that he picked "to show my diversity and to show that I can do something else beside country music. I also wanted to break out the piano and show that I could play because I hadn't done

that yet. It wasn't a permanent change to who I am as an artist; it was more about showing something different."

**Related Link:** ['American Idol' Contestant Emily Piriz Says "I Couldn't Ask for a Better Boyfriend"](#)

The judges, however, were confused and felt he lacked a connection to it. While Briley didn't like what they had to say after his performance, he tried not to take it personally. "Their words did sting," he admitted. "For one contestant, they'll say, 'You're consistent, but you need to change it up.' To another person, they'll say, 'You need to stay in your lane and not venture out,' but when someone finally does take a risk and a step forward and tries to be different, it gets shot down on national television."

Briley is looking forward to returning home to his friends and family, eating some Tennessee pizza, and continuing to work on music career. "This is the definitely not the last you'll see of me, and nobody works harder than me. I'm not in it for the money or the fame. I'm in it to be a good father and provide for my family."

*You can keep up with Ben on his [www.facebook.com/ben.briley](http://www.facebook.com/ben.briley) and on Twitter @BenBriley. American Idol is on Wednesdays and Thursdays on FOX.*

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## **'American Idol' Contestant Emily Piriz Says, "I Couldn't**

# Ask for a Better Boyfriend”



By Liz Kim.

Emily Piriz may be done on the *American Idol* stage, but she believes this is only the beginning of her music career. The 18-year-old is no stranger to reality television, having auditioned for *The X-Factor*, *America's Got Talent*, and *The Voice* before finally making it through on *Idol*. She made the brave decision to sing Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud" this week, a song that she used "to sing along to, hairbrush in hand." Of her final performance, she says, "I don't regret doing it. That song is home to me."

**Related Link:** [Kristin O'Connor from 'American Idol': "My Boyfriend Never Held Me Back From Pursuing My Dreams"](#)

While Lopez and Keith Urban applauded her energy, Harry



Connick Jr. felt her vocals were overpowered by the band and that she lost a little bit of control. Although harsh, she appreciates the criticism. "I like when people tell me what I need to work on. You don't improve if you only get positive feedback." The judges also told her to be confident and this piece of advice, the singer believes, is what will stay with her long after the show ends.

Piriz and her fans were moved by a surprise video message from her boyfriend Matthew Walesch of the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines Fox Company. She admits she was a little shaken. "I had no idea they were going to show that video," she shares. "It was kind of hard to sing afterwards. It was hard to see him because I missed him and hadn't seen him in a long time. But I sucked it up and tried to use that emotion in my performance."

When asked about her relationship, the contestant thanked Walesch for always standing by her side. "Before *American Idol*, he would go to shows and open mics with me. And likewise, I supported him joining the Marines. He's been with me since day one, and I couldn't ask for a better boyfriend."

Their relationship may be long-distance, but she believes that love is possible even if you aren't physically near each other. Her advice for other couples in similar situations is "just trust each other and keep it free. Don't suffocate each other." She adds, "Matt and I have a great relationship because we love each other and trust each other and don't constantly keep up on the other person. We support each other. You just have to be happy with each other, no matter what you're doing."

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Moving forward, the performer plans on finishing high school and then moving to California to continue her music career.

She already has plans for her first album too: "I definitely see a pop/rock kind of vibe; I want some funky songs on there that have a little edge to them. I also want to be behind the piano and do some softer songs."

For others hoping to make it the music industry, Piriz thinks that dedication is the key to pursuing your dreams. She's been auditioning since the age of 13 and dealt with years of rejection. "Don't take no for an answer," she says. "I was told no a lot, but I never gave up, and look at me now! It's going to be hard at first, but you have to keep practicing and keep going and just believe in yourself."

Keep up with Piriz on [www.facebook.com/emilypirizmusic](http://www.facebook.com/emilypirizmusic). American Idol is on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8/7 c on FOX.

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## **'American Idol' Contestant Kristen O'Connor: My Boyfriend "Never Held Me Back from Pursuing My Dream"**







Interview by [Whitney Johnson](#). Written by Liz Kim.

This week, *American Idol* decided to let the audience get a better sense of the thirteen finalists by giving the singers free rein in terms of song choice. Kristen O'Connor, a 24-year old nurse tech, chose Kelly Clarkson's "Beautiful Disaster." On Wednesday night's show, she explained, "This song is typically about a boy, but I interpreted this song to be about me." Judges Jennifer Lopez, Keith Urban, and Harry Connick Jr. gave generally positive – but slightly underwhelmed – feedback.

**Related Link:** [For 'American Idol' Winner Candice Glover, Third Time's a Charm](#)

O'Connor, along with M.K. Nobilette and Malaya Watson, was in the bottom three, and she admits that, while she was disappointed to be eliminated, she wasn't shocked. Competing against highly talented singers requires that each and every performance be the best that it can be. "It's unpredictable at this point – who America loves will change from week to week. It was important for me to go out with my head held high and

on a good note. I wanted to leave in a way that I could be proud of.”

Although she may not have gotten rave reviews for her last performance, O’Connor remains upbeat and confident. “One of my strengths, I think, is that I have a really strong voice. Chris Daughtry said my voice was his favorite, and Randy Jackson said I gave him chills. I’ve gotten a lot of really awesome compliments.”

It’s this confidence that has driven the Florida native to sing ever since she was a child. “My experiences growing up definitely prepared me for the competition. I learned everything I know about music from singing in church. I was a music major during my first year of college too.”

She’s also lucky enough to have unwavering love from her family, friends, and longtime boyfriend Renny Whidden. Speaking about Whidden, she thanked him for supporting her throughout her journey. “He never held me back from pursuing my dreams. He is so understanding and gets how important this is to me.” She credits trust with being the major quality that helps them maintain a long distance relationship.

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She may not have won the competition, but O’Connor is leaving *American Idol* with new friends. “Before the show even started, Malaya and I were talking, and we thought it would be the two of us in the bottom. We both struggled with the song choices we made. We were just kind of holding on to each other, saying, ‘No matter what happens, we’re going to stay friends’.”

The aspiring singer has no plans to give up her dreams of having a career in music – but she does have a practical backup plan for her future. She recently graduated from the University of Central Florida with a degree in nursing. “I’m very self-sufficient and have worked very hard for everything

I have. I knew that I had to get a degree in something that would give me security," she shared.

She also said that one of the perks of nursing, besides helping others, is that it gives her enough time to keep singing. As for what sort of album she hopes to make, "I see myself as an R&B/pop/soulful singer. I love sultry music."

*You can follow O'Connor on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. American Idol is on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8/7 c on FOX.*

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## **'Idol' Couple Ace Young and Diana DeGarmo Are Married**





By Kerri Sheehan

*American Idol* crooners Ace Young and Diana DeGarmo have officially tied the knot. According to [UsMagazine.com](https://www.usmagazine.com), the two got married on Saturday, June 1 at the Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel in Bel Air, California. The couple tried to make their ceremony specialized to really reflect who they are. “We want everybody to have fun, let their guard down,” said Young.

**What are some ways to incorporate personal elements in your wedding?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Your wedding is the perfect time to add some personal flare for guest to enjoy. Cupid has some advice on how to do so:

**1. Food:** Everyone that has ever been to a wedding knows that food is one of the most anticipated elements of the event. Adding your own favorite foods to the menu will help you share your likes with your guest. Also think about creating a signature “wedding cocktail” to be served to guests.

**2. Décor:** Decorations tell a lot about a ceremony. Whether you’re a big beachgoer, a world traveler, or a huge fan of a

certain book or movie, you can easily incorporate those elements into your décor. You want the ceremony to really reflect who you and your partner are.

**3. Wedding favors:** This is another way to show guest who you are. If you're a music lover then a mix CD is a good idea for a favor, or if you're more of a foodie then some sort of wine or candy is another way to go. The possibilities are endless!

**What are some ways you can think of to incorporate personal elements into your wedding? Share below.**

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## **For 'American Idol' Winner Candice Glover, Third Time's A Charm**





By [Whitney Baker](#)

## [Johnson](#)

Soul singer Candice Glover has been a frontrunner since the start of season 12 of *American Idol*, so it wasn't surprising when she took home the crown on last night's finale. Glover, though, was sure to take things slow. "My goal was to make it to the top 20. If I got that far, I knew I'd have a fan base that would keep voting for me," she shares. "Then, I made it to the top ten, the top five, and finally the top two. That's when I knew I could win this whole thing."

Of course, the 23-year-old had judges Nicki Minaj and Mariah Carey in her corner from the beginning. "Nicki told me at my original audition that if I didn't make it to the finale, something was wrong with the competition. That really stuck with me. And Mariah asked for a mix-tape."

**Related Link:** [Janelle Arthur Talks About Her "Incredible Journey" on 'American Idol'](#)

Glover's journey wasn't always such smooth sailing though. This year was her third-time to audition; the best she'd done previously was end up in the top 60. So what did she do



differently this time around? “I definitely increased my musical knowledge – I listened to every genre of music,” she explains. “I was more confident too. I really focused on being myself and being different.”

“I was hurt and broken-hearted when I got cut. I kept saying that I wasn’t going to come back, but I always thought it may work next time,” the songstress adds. “I’m so glad I was right this year!”

When Ryan Seacrest announced her name, Glover immediately thought of her upcoming album, out on July 16th, and the *American Idol* summer tour, which begins on June 29th. She says that she “really connects” to the lyrics of her first single “I Am Beautiful” and even likes “the touch of pop.” In fact, she wants to keep that unexpectedness going when it comes to her entire album.

As for her career, she hopes to model it after the likes of Minaj, Carey and Jennifer Hudson, who she sang with on last night’s show. “I was so nervous to do a duet with Jennifer – I didn’t think I was good enough to be up there,” she shares of the experience. “She’s so phenomenal, and I look up to her.”

**Related Link:** [‘American Idol’ Runner-Up Kree Harrison Has “The World in Her Hands”](#)

Glover is walking away from the *Idol* stage with more than just a title; she made lifelong friends too, including runner-up Kree Harrison. They may have been competing for the coveted crown, but that doesn’t mean there’s any animosity between the two talents. “Kree’s amazing!” the winner exclaims. “While we were waiting for the results to be called, we were both saying, ‘You won!’ and ‘No, you won!’”

Given her unique path to the top, the commanding singer is in the perfect position to offer advice to future contestants and says, “Just pace yourself and take it one day at a time. Always be yourself.” It’s important that Glovers keeps these

words of wisdom in mind as she takes her own next steps as well.

Be sure to catch Glover on the American Idol [tour](#) this summer! You can also follow her on [Twitter](#).

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## ‘American Idol’ Runner-Up Kree Harrison Has “The World in Her Hands”



By Kerri Sheehan

After a long season of strained vocal cords and sad goodbyes, we finally have a new *American Idol*, Candice Glover. But she’s

not the only one headed for stardom: runner-up Kree Harrison has a bright future ahead of her as well. Viewers first became acquainted with the songstress when she performed with three other country crooners during Hollywood week. During the *Idol* segment, “Kree Harrison Comes Home,” fans learned that the 22-year-old singer lost both parents, her mother to an accident at age 19 and her father to a plane crash at age 12. Many found it refreshing to see the stunning brunette return to her roots in Texas.

It makes sense, then, that judge Keith Urban is a fan of Harrison. His critiques on her performances weren’t always positive; even so, she took the criticism with stride. “I respect the four judges so much, especially Keith because we’re both country singers. Whenever he gave me feedback, I took it as constructive criticism. At the end of the day, you can’t really grow if you’re not listening and learning from your peers.”

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She believes that being on *Idol* helped her in other ways as well. “I always had a problem at the beginning of my career with letting the wall down and being able to connect emotionally,” she explains. “It’s a hard thing to do, but I feel like through this process, it’s really happened for me. I feel so good about it.”

Although she didn’t win the competition, Harrison’s excited for what comes next. “I think that we were all in it to win it, but at the end of the day, I still was able to create a following.” She’s already released her first single too: “All Cried Out” is currently on iTunes. Plus, she’ll be making her debut on the Grand Ole Opry stage on Tuesday, June 4th. As for the very near future, she says she is looking forward to some well-earned rest. “We’ve been working our butts off!”

**Related Link:** [Amber Holcomb Bids a Sad Farewell to the 'American Idol' Stage](#)

She's not really sure where she's going from here, but she's not worried. As she shares, "I feel like I have the world in my hands right now. As soon as I can, I'm going to start writing and collaborating with other singer-songwriters, and we'll see what happens. I will definitely let y'all know because I can't wait to share it."

As for her feelings about winner Glover, Harrison says that she could not be prouder of the soul singer. "Go get both of our singles!"

*Be sure to catch Harrison on the American Idol [tour](#) this summer! You can also follow her on [Twitter](#).*

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## Angie Miller's "Amazing Journey" on 'American Idol'





By [Kerri Sheehan](#)

The [American Idol](#) road ended last night for 19-year-old Massachusetts native Angie Miller. Known for winning over the judges during her first audition by performing an original song and playing the piano during many of the live shows, fans were surprised to see her go. She sobbed throughout her goodbye song “Never Gone,” originally sung by *Idol* alum Colton Dixon, as Mariah Carey encouraged her from the judges’ table.

Miller admits that she was surprised to be voted off this week, as she had high hopes of making it to next week’s finale. “Every Thursday night is shocking. It’s always an emotional and crazy night, but I did feel confident in my performances and everything. I honestly did. I was hoping and dreaming of being a part of that finale, and I really wanted it, so of course, it was disappointing.”

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However, there were no bitter feelings towards fellow contestants Kree Harrison and Candice Glover. “ I love both of those girls, and they deserve to be there,” says the

songstress. “Kree never thinks about herself – she’s so selfless. And Candice is just the most fun person to be around.”

Staying positive, Miller is looking forward to performing in the finale show. “I’m not going anywhere; I’m still here. I’m going to start rehearsing and practicing for the finale this week. I don’t know 100 percent what’s going on yet, but I’m so excited to sing again.”

Overall, the songwriter says she’s very grateful for her *Idol* experience and believes it’s really jump started her career. “I learned so much, and I’ve grown so much in this competition. I definitely know so much more about who I am musically and as an artist.” She’s not sure what specific genre of music she wants to fall under, but she does know this: “I want to have music that has meaning and is real. I don’t want to have dance party music, but at the same time, I don’t want to put people to sleep. I definitely want to incorporate the soulful piano sound with a lot of edge.”

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As for the future, there are a lot of things Miller sees on her horizon. “There’s the tour, and then I hope to get signed and record an album. First, I want to pursue my music, and then eventually, I want to act. I just want to do so much; I’m excited! Even though it’s the end of *American Idol*, it’s just the start of this journey.”

You can see Angie Miller on the American Idol [tour](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#) for updates.

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# Amber Holcomb Bids a Sad Farewell to the 'American Idol' Stage



By Kerri Sheehan

[American Idol](#) viewers were disappointed to say goodbye to 19-year-old Texas native Amber Holcomb last night. After her elimination from the competition was announced, Holcomb broke down in tears as she belted out her last song "I Believe In You and Me," originally sung by Whitney Houston. "Before the performance, we watched the video of memorable clips, and that always gets to me every single week. It was just a lot. It was really overwhelming."

While her impromptu waterworks may lead some to think that the elimination blindsided the singer, Holcomb says

otherwise. “They always say an Idol can feel it when it’s time, and I’m not going to lie; I honestly did feel like I was the next to go.” However, she realizes that even though the competition has reached an end for her, it’s not the end of the experience. She gets to join the other contestants for the tour this summer. “I was really sad, but at the same time, I told myself that I still get to go on tour. I’ll see them all again, so I was happy. Tickets are on sale today, by the way!”

**Related Link:** [Burnell Taylor of ‘American Idol’: I “Really Like” Amber Holcomb](#)

Speaking of the connections she made during her time on *American Idol*, it seems the relationship between Holcomb and former cast-off Burnell Taylor is still brewing. Holcomb played it coy when asked about the New Orleans crooner, only saying, “We text a little bit, but we’re just really excited to go on tour together and see each other then.”

In addition to the tour, Holcomb has big plans for her future. The southern songstress believes that there is room in the industry for someone with her prowess, and she plans to keep the onstage persona she developed on the show, something that judge Nicki Minaj often praised. “My style, personally, it changes depending on my mood. I feel like, right now, there’s nobody like me, so why fix something that isn’t broken?”

The sky is the limit when it comes to her career. “I see myself in magazines, on every television channel, on Billboards, on the Grammys – all that good stuff.” She also hopes to dabble in acting and thinks *Glee* is “really relatable right now” for her. When it comes to singing, Holcomb names Minaj, Lil Wayne, Rihanna and Frank Ocean as artists she hopes to collaborate with someday.

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As a shout-out to her fans, she exclaims, “I want to say thank you to everyone who supported me. Expect great things from me!”

*To keep up with Holcomb, you can follow her [Twitter](#) or catch her on the American Idol [tour](#) this summer.*

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**‘American Idol’ Contestant Lazaro Arbos Says, “I’ve Always Been the Kind of Guy Who Wanted to Do Something Big With Myself”**





By [Whitney Baker](#)

## [Johnson](#)

Lazaro Arbos was a fan favorite on this season of *American Idol* from his first audition, capturing our hearts with his rendition of “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” He struggles with stuttering when he speaks, but when he sings, it’s not an issue. Ultimately, his talent carried him to a sixth-place finish, outlasting the other male contestants and leaving an all-female top five for the first time in the show’s history.

During his time on the show, the Cuban-born singer says he got to meet a lot of amazing people who he’ll be friends with for life. Plus, it helped improve both his confidence *and* his speech impediment. “It definitely gave me a stronger mindset,” he explains. “My stuttering has subsided a bit, and I think it has a lot to do with me learning to control my nerves better.”

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Arbos wasn’t surprised that it was time to go, and he’s excited for what the future holds. “I’m so far from sad. Winning the competition wasn’t my main goal,” he shares. “My

goal was to become known and become a better performer, and I think I achieved that.”

Still, saying goodbye is never easy. “The part that was the hardest was that I made such good friends with all of the remaining girls. So the thought that I wasn’t going to be with them anymore on the show really got to me.”

As for what comes next, Arbos says that he loves love songs and wants to record a pop album. Until the tour kicks off this summer, he’s excited to return home to Naples, Florida. “The first thing I’ll probably do is go to the park with my family. I miss them a lot,” he says. “Plus, my old high school has a pep rally planned for me, so I’m looking forward to that.”

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He has no plans to step out of the spotlight either: “I would love to be on *Glee* – that’s one of my goals after the tour. I’d love to be on *Modern Family* too.”

The contestant also shares that he’s hoping to sing with icon Cher on the *American Idol* finale. “I met her at the start of the show, and we’ve been talking back-and-forth since then. She follows me on Twitter, too.”

Despite some criticism from the judges and mentor Jimmy Iovine, Arbos has no regrets. “I believe that everything happens for a reason,” he says with optimism.

“My love for performing and for music motivated me to audition for the show,” he adds. “I’ve always been the kind of guy who wanted to do something big with myself.”

You can keep up with Arbos on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). You can also catch him on this summer’s *American Idol* tour.

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# Burnell Taylor of 'American Idol': I "Really Like" Amber Holcomb



By [Whitney Baker](#)

[Johnson](#)

*American Idol* viewers were surprised to see New Orleans native Burnell Taylor sent home last night. Even mentor Jimmy Iovine predicted that he would be the last guy standing, saying at the start of the elimination show that Lazaro Arbos should be voted off. Taylor, though, says he "had a feeling it was going to be me this week. I was prepared – it's always a possibility."



Still, he's proud of himself for his performance of Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name" on Wednesday night. "I can't believe I performed a rock song on live television," he says with a laugh. "If somebody would've told me I was going to do that, I never would've believed them." He adds that he "learned to roll with the punches" during the competition.

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Of his save song, the singer says that it wasn't about him being saved by the judges. Instead, he wanted to leave his mark. He certainly did that, ending the song by kissing fellow contestant Amber Holcomb on the cheek. Of his relationship with the singing beauty, he says, "We're still learning about each other. We're not moving too fast. We're both young, but we really like each other."

Taylor also had a big effect on judge Mariah Carey and contestant Candice Glover, who were both in tears over his departure. "I never knew how much they cared about me. To see that they were so genuine really touched me. I broke down too." As for Carey's advice, Taylor says, "She told me that this wasn't the end, that I should run with it. And that's what I'm going to do. I feel like it's about what you do after the show."

So what does the crooner want to do now? "I want to be a storyteller and get as personal as I can with my album. I want to be honest. That's what I feel is missing from the industry." When asked about comparisons to John Legend, he shares that the Grammy winner is definitely of his inspirations. "As far as my music, though, I want to be as original as I can and do something that nobody's ever done before."

He graciously thanks his fans – who he calls family – for their support and adds, "We shall meet again – and it's won't

be too long.”

You can follow Taylor on [Twitter](#). Be sure to check him out on the American Idol summer tour too!

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# ‘American Idol’ Performer Paul Jolley Talks About His Future Plans



By [Whitney Baker](#)

[Johnson](#)

Many viewers were disappointed to see Paul Jolley eliminated on last Thursday's *American Idol* episode. The sweet Southern

boy from Palmersville, Tennessee, knew that it would be his final week though. "I was just so ready for it," the performer said of leaving the show. "I talked about it throughout the day. Everybody could see that I was going to be okay no matter what."

As for his future plans, Jolley hopes to record a pop country album. "I don't want to change what I feel in my heart. That's what my calling is, and that's what I need to be doing," he shares. Of course, his dreams aren't limited to music: "I want to have my own clothing line. That was a custom shirt that we had made during my 'Eleanor Rigby' performance. I also want to act. I want to dabble in a lot of different areas, put my Paul Jolley stamp on everything."

To his fans – affectionately known as Troopers – Jolley wants to say a "huge thank you. It's a true blessing to have such loyal people that are there for me no matter what." If you want to see more of him, don't miss the *American Idol* tour this summer!

*To keep up with Jolley, follow him on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).*

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## **'American Idol' Star Danny Gokey Welcomes a Baby Boy**





By [Nic Baird](#)

*American Idol* season eight finalist and [wife](#) Leyicet had their first child on Sunday, [People](#) reports. The [newborn](#) boy, Daniel Emmanuel Gokey, weighed 8 lbs. 11 oz. and arrived at 9:52 p.m. EST. “Leyicet and I are overjoyed to welcome the new member of our family. I’m ecstatic to be a first time dad and to have a new little buddy to hang out with,” Gokey said.

**How do you decide how to long to wait to have a child after marriage?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

[Marriage](#) is a new dynamic and a new identity for your relationship. As you figure it out, realize that having a child means more change as well. Take time to appreciate what you have, but be optimistic about the future. If you’ve always wanted a family, don’t be afraid to pursue that goal!

**1. Relationship stability:** When it comes to making the committment of a child, you have to make sure you’re both ready take this next step. Make sure neither of you have any serious problems that must be addressed before starting a

family. A developing child will greatly benefit from the strength of you've already built as a couple. is now physically represented by your offspring. Procreating and raising a child is the most tangible purpose human beings can find. Make sure the [love](#) is there.

**2. Ready to change:** It'll be hard to adjust. You'll no longer simply be a couple, but a family. This will influence your career, friendships, and any future relationships. Your partner is now cemented with a fixed level of importance as the co-parent of your child. This shift is a major escalation of your relationship. Realize this new dynamic must change your [relationship](#), but find stability in the aspects that stay the same.

**3. Prepare yourself:** Having a child will really test how you've developed time management, responsibility, and determination. Keep in mind that you and your partner are caring for this child as a team. Make sure you consider how to manage a child in your life and what compromises you'll have to make.

**When do you think it's time to have a child? Share your comments below!**

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## Mark Ballas and Ex-Girlfriend Pia Toscano Reunite at Show





By Jennifer Ross

Although Pia Toscano was the one to end their relationship, neither she nor ex Mark Ballas had any hard feelings about it. Ballas, 26, was recently reunited with Toscano, 24, at the annual Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times Halloween carnival in L.A., where both performed separately, according to [People](#). The professional ballroom dancer even uploaded Instagram photos of the two after the event. Even before meeting up at the event, Ballas told L.A.'s 104.3 radio station that the two have ran into each other before. "She lives down the street, so we ran into each other the other day at Starbucks. It's cool. We're still friends. It's all good."

**What are some ways to get your relationship to a civil place after a breakup?**

### **Cupids Advice:**

Once a relationship is broken, it may take some time for your ex to completely exit your life, if it is even possible. If you and your ex still work together, run in the same social circles or share custody of any children, you will need to speak to him eventually. Even if you don't want to have



meaningful conversations with your [ex](#), you still will need to at least be cordial. In this situation, here are a few pointers on how to keep the peace with your ex:

**1. No fighting:** To begin the civility, you and your ex must be civil with each other. That means no fighting or pushing each other's buttons simply because you can. The way to have a nice platonic relationship is to get over him and remove any strong hostile emotions.

**2. Avoid nicknames:** As with any negative emotions, it is best to also remove the intimate ones as well. Any loving nicknames, inside jokes or other mementos of your intimate relationship should be left in the past. This will help in allowing you two to form a different relationship moving forward.

**3. Time:** Before all else, the only way your previous relationship will get to a civil place is with time. You need time to cool down; time to heal any heartaches and regroup yourself back to the wonderful single person you always were.

Were you and your partner able to be civil with each other after a breakup? How did you do it? Tell us below.

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## American Idol's Diana DeGarmo Speaks Out About Her Romance with Ace Young





*American Idol*

alumna Diana DeGarmo is bringing her personal life into the spotlight. In a recent interview, DeGarmo explained exactly how she bonded with long-term boyfriend Ace Young, a fellow *American Idol* contestant, reports [UsMagazine.com](https://www.usmagazine.com). “We are best friends! I truly believe us having been through ‘Idol’ is one of the big reasons as to why we understand each other so well; unless you go through it, you don’t get it,” said DeGarmo. “We were the first Idols to do a Broadway show together, the first Idols to live together—and the first to write a country song for a soap opera together!”

**Is having a lot in common a requirement in a relationship?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Though opposites may attract, they do not always stay together. Here are a few reasons why having a lot in common with your partner makes for a better relationship:

**1. Conversation:** Especially when you first start dating, having a lot in common makes for easier conversation. Talk about your favorite places or your mutual love of action movies.

**2. Dating:** Dating becomes much easier when the two of you have similar tastes. When you and your partner agree often, there's usually no need to debate over where to go or what movie to see.

**3. Compatibility:** If your relationship is getting serious, you may need to discuss long-term goals and plans. When you have a lot in common with your partner, you may find this discussion easier.

**Do you think you should have a lot in common with your partner? Feel free to leave a comment below.**

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## **'American Idol' Star Danny Gokey Ties the Knot**





Former *American*

*Idol* star Danny Gokey is once again a married man. The singer exchanged vows with his fiancée, Leyicet Peralta, in a small ceremony among 100 of their family and closest friends, Gokey's manager confirmed to [People](#). The intimate ceremony celebrated the theme of "romance and love" and took place in Florida on Sunday. "We are so thankful to have found each other and now be able to spend the rest of our lives together," the newlyweds said in a statement. "We pray our gratitude grows more every day because there is so much for us to do now." This is the second marriage for Gokey, who lost his first wife Sophia in 2008 after undergoing a routine surgery for congenital heart disease. The newlyweds paid tribute to Sophia by asking their guests that all gifts be in the form of donation to Sophia's Heart, the children's charity founded by Gokey to honor his late wife.

**If your partner passes away, how do you know when to move on?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Dealing with the death of a loved one is never easy, especially when you're dealing with the passing of your spouse. However, there a comes a time when you have to move

on and find happiness again. Here are few signs you're ready:

**1. You shut yourself out from the world:** The inside of your house hasn't had any sun beaming through its windows, you rarely answer your phone and the grass on your lawn is now passed knee length, leaving people to wonder if anyone lives at your house anymore. The situation is tough, but shutting yourself out from the world only makes it worse. You still have to live your life, and while moving on may take some time, you have to get yourself back into the swing of things.

**2. Acceptance:** You begin to accept the loss of your spouse when you start replacing their physical presence with memories of them. And while the grieving process is unique to individuals, you can slowly begin to enter back into the dating scene when you feel comfortable.

**3. You find comfort in a potential partner:** When you find someone who shows you unconditional love by being patient and understanding of what you've experienced, that may be just what you need in your life.

**How do you know when it's time to move on? Share your comments below.**

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## **'American Idol' Alum Brooke White Is Expecting Her First Child**





Brooke White, who made her performing debut as a finalist on season 7 of *American Idol*, is expecting her first child in May with husband, Dave Ray. “By the time the baby’s born, we’ll have been married eight years. I met Dave when I was 19 years old – we’ve been together a really long time, and we’ve always wanted to be parents,” White told [People](#). Last January, the *Idol* alum showed off her acting skills in the FOX TV movie *Change of Plans* ironically about how the unexpected things in life end up being the best.

### **How do you prepare your relationship for a child?**

#### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Having your first child is one of the most exciting and scary experiences you’ll have in your life. Here are some ways to embrace it:

**1. Enjoy your alone time (while you still can):** Welcoming a new baby into the world is a big responsibility that involves almost all of your time and energy. Spend as much quality alone time with your partner as you can before the baby is born.



**2. Decide on how the child will be raised:** Prior to bringing a baby into the world, you need to make important decisions about issues such as what religion you will be raising your child with and what school they will attend.

**3. Baby proof your home:** Getting your home ready for a new baby can be a great bonding experience for you as a couple. It's a form of "nesting."

**What are some other things to prepare for before having a child? Share your thoughts below.**

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## Jennifer Lopez Reportedly Brings Her New Man to 'Idol' Set





Friday was bring your boyfriend to work day, or at least it was for Jennifer Lopez. Lopez's new boy toy, Casper Smart, was seen arriving to the *American Idol* set in Lopez's Bentley as he stopped by to visit his new lady. The new couple have been inseparable, having recently spent Thanksgiving in Hawaii with Lopez's twins before jetting off to Morocco. While the singer seems to be wearing divorce well, her ex-husband Marc Anthony, isn't quite complimenting her style. According to various sources, not only does Anthony not want smart to drive his kids around due to his arrest for drag racing, but he apparently doesn't want Smart around his kids at all, according to [Hollyscoop](#).

In the meantime, Lopez and Anthony have continued working together in their Latin-American talent show venture, *Q'Viva!*

**What do you do if your ex is upset with your new relationship?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Unfortunately, when you move on from your last relationship, it's not always going to be a smooth transition. Cupid has some advice:

**1. Give space and time:** It's always best to allow both you

and your ex time to heal and get your emotions together after a breakup.

**2. Be understanding:** Understand that while it may have been easy for you to let your previous relationship go, depending on the circumstances, it may not be as simple for your former love.

**3. Minimize contact:** While cutting off ties to a past relationship is an easy solution, it may not be a quick fix when you have kids, work or share the same friends. If this is the case, minimize contact to a speak-only-when-necessary basis until you can interact normally with each other again.

**How did you handle your ex being upset with your new relationship? Share your comments below.**

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## Former 'Idol' Fantasia Barrino Has a Baby Boy





Fantasia Barrino, *American Idol*'s season three winner, gave birth to a baby boy on Tuesday. According to [People](#), Dallas Xavier Barrino was born in North Carolina at 7 lbs., 9 oz. and was 21 inches long. Dallas joins his big sister Zion, 10. Barrino does not comment on the father of her children, although she has been seen with Antwaun Cook since summer 2010. "I feel so blessed that my son Dallas Xavier was born healthy, and is a wonderful new addition to our family," said the singer. "I thank all my fans for their well wishes and continued support."

**How do you introduce a new baby to an older child at home?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

It's not always a smooth transition when you bring a new baby home to introduce to existing children. Cupid has some tips:

**1. Let your older child help prep for the new baby:** When decorating the new baby's room, let your older child help prepare. Even if they are just choosing a few stuffed animals and some of their old favorite toys, it is still nice for them to feel included in all of the changes.

**2. Make your older child feel special:** Do something to celebrate your older child becoming the big sister or big brother. Making cupcakes is a fun idea and your older child can take part in the decorating process. A big sister/big brother t-shirt may also ease your older child into the excitement of their new role.

**3. Have gifts for the new siblings:** Have your older child pick out a gift for their new sibling and buy a gift from the baby to their new big brother or sister, too. They'll no doubt love each other immediately.

**How did you introduce your new baby to an older child? Share your stories below.**

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## **Ruben Studdard Files for Divorce From Wife Surata Zuri McCants**





*American Idol*

Season 2 winner Ruben Studdard is divorcing his wife of three years, reports [UsMagazine](#). "Ruben and Zuri have gone their separate ways," said Studdard's rep. Studdard, 33, married Surata Zuri McCants in Mountain Brook, Alabama on June 28th, 2008. The couple shares no children.

**What are three things to consider before filing for divorce?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Even when a relationship seems over, it may still have some redeeming qualities. Here are a few things to consider before filing for divorce:

- 1. Your emotions:** Many relationships go through rough patches. Make sure that your relationship is beyond repair and that you have absolutely no feelings left for your partner when you file for divorce.
- 2. Children:** If you and your partner share children, you may want to consider extensive couple's therapy. Your decision will affect not only you and your partner's lives, but your children's lives as well.



**3. Financial stability:** Going through a split can be very expensive. If you and your partner can't afford to pay for lawyers, it might be best to hold off for a time when the divorce settlements can be handled properly.

**Have you gone through a divorce? Feel free to leave a comment with your thoughts below.**

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## 'DWTS' Pro Mark Ballas and 'Idol' Alum Pia Toscano Split



The party is over for Mark Ballas and Pia Toscano. After a long heartfelt talk, the singer and the ballroom dancer have decided to call it quits. According to [People](#), the split was a mutual decision.

“They both decided with everything going on that they couldn’t give each other what would be fair,” said a source close to the former couple. Though the relationship is over, Ballas and Toscano are both experiencing great career success. Ballas is rehearsing for the next season of *Dancing with the Stars* and Toscano is finishing up a successful *American Idol* tour.

**How do you keep career demands from ruining your relationship?**

### **Cupid’s Pulse:**

With the right person and the right attitude, you can be successful in both love and your career. Here’s how:

**1. Be understanding:** Everyone wants to get ahead at work. If your partner cancels a date with you because they have to stay late at the office, don’t give them a hard time about it. You will want them to do the same when you get caught up at work.

**2. Be willing to say no:** If you’ve been planning something big like an anniversary trip with your partner and something comes up at work on that date, you may need to put your foot down and kindly say that they need to pick a different date or get someone else. If you pull this off in the right way, it can also make you look more assertive and more of a leader at work, which can help your career.

**3. Show your support:** If you know your partner spent a long night at work, take the initiative to get things done around the house so they can finally relax when they get home.

**Would you be able to date someone who works long hours at work? Share your experiences below.**

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# 'American Idol' Alum Jason Castro Welcomes a Baby Girl



*American Idol*

alum Jason Castro and his wife Mandy welcomed a beautiful baby girl into the world this past Sunday, according to [People](#).

The baby girl, named Madeline Emilia Castro, is the first child for the Castros and they are ecstatic. On his website back in April when he first announced they were expecting, Jason's quoted as saying, "We just found out yesterday that it is going to be a girl! That makes me laugh ... what am I going to do with a sweet little girl?! Probably just smile a lot ... I cannot wait!!!" Congratulations to these two love birds and their growing family.

**What are some ways to prepare your lifestyle for a child?**

**Cupid's Advice:**

Bringing a baby into the world is a pretty big task, and Cupid has some tips on how to prepare your lifestyle:

**1. Make 'me' time:** Even though you're about to have a child, that doesn't mean you and your partner have to give up time for yourselves. The most important thing to remember is to continue to maintain a healthy and loving relationship.

**2. Get advice:** A great way to prepare for a baby on the way is to get advice from family and friends on what to expect. This way you know what you're getting into, and you can prepare accordingly.

**3. Coordinate your schedules:** Make sure you and your partner have a plan when it comes to taking care of the new addition to your family. Whether it be who is on diaper duty or who is going to stay home with the baby, making appropriate plans is the key to preparing your lifestyle for a child.

**What are some ways to prepare your lifestyle for a child? Share your thoughts below.**

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## Former 'Idol' Star Justin Guirini Welcomes a Baby Boy





Former *American*

*Idol* star, Justin Guirini, welcomed a son, William Neko Bell Guarini, on Tuesday, April 26. “Reina is doing wonderfully and should be given a medal for going 10 months and 1 week with child,” Guirini said about his wife. He added, “We’re resting comfortably in the hospital and can’t wait to introduce him to his big sister...”

**How does the dynamic change when you add a second child to the family?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Many consider having a second child so that their first will have a sibling. The thought of having two children might sound amazing, but changes to the family will occur. Here are just a few:

**1. Expenses:** Having another child means there will be more expenses. Therefore, you might have to limit how much you give your first child. It’s all about compromise and sharing.

**2. Daily routines:** All of your daily routines will change in order to accommodate the new member to your family. This may

mean your first child won't get as much attention.

**3. Balance your time:** Since you aren't taking care of one child any more, you will have to balance your time to make sure each of your children get what they need. If you don't, as your children get older, there might be some competition between them.

**What things changed when you added a second child to your family? Share a comment below.**

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## **'Idol' Contestant Stefano Langone Is Single and "Mingling"**







Stefano Langone may have been eliminated from *American Idol* after his performance of “Lately,” however, according to [People](#), the breakout star is single and ready to live it up. Though the singer says he’s playing the field, he’s also dedicated to putting his music first. “I’m single and very happy, but I am mingling and having fun. But, worrying about my music is number one,” he said. Along with making an impact on the American public, Langone has grown very close to celebrity couple Marc Anthony and Jennifer Lopez through his *American Idol* experience.

**Is it important to be established in your career before entering a relationship?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Having satisfaction in your love life and your career are very important parts to leading a happy life. However, it ‘[s impossible to predict which will strike first:

**1. Work hard, play hard:** To have a great career, you must work hard. However, when it comes to finding love, trying too hard is not the way to go when you want to find love. Love strikes

when you least expect it.

**2. Career confidence:** Being established in your career can make you exude confidence that can be very appealing to a potential lover.

**3. Find balance:** Never overwhelm yourself with worry about either your career or your love life. If you're unhappy with either of these aspects of your life, be proactive.

**Do you think that someone who is confident with their career is more appealing to date? Share a comment below.**