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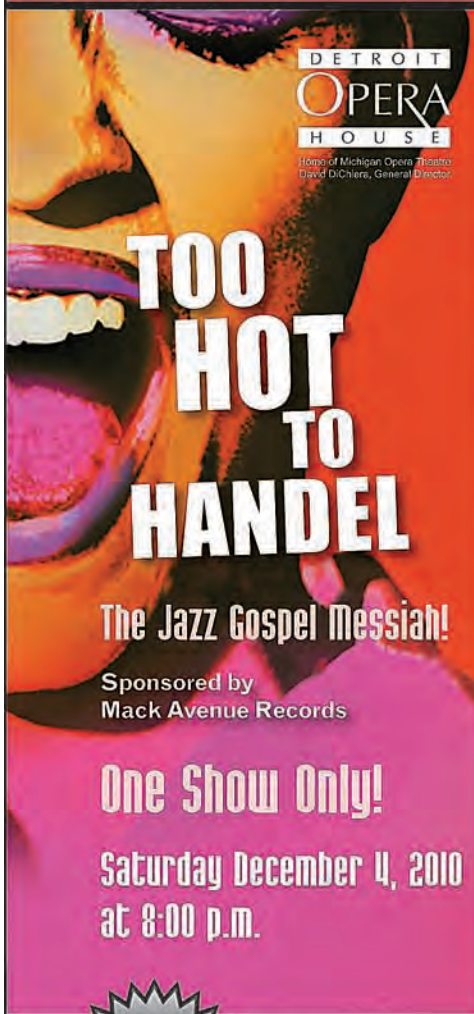
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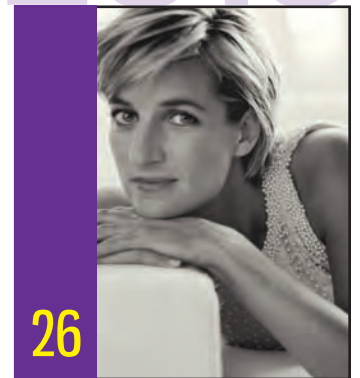
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Chene Koppitz is a doctoral student in Womens' Studies and Communication at the University of Michigan Dearborn. She is active in both the women's organizations and the GSA on campus. As a former staffer at the Triangle Foundation, Chene is a seasoned activist for LGBT rights.

1 What is your involvement in the UofM Dearborn student group, and why did you get involved?

I am fortunate enough to be among the leadership team of Women in Learning and Leadership, which is (for me) not merely an organization, but truly a sisterhood. Much of what WILL does dovetails perfectly with the mission of groups like the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Amnesty International and several other campus organizations focused on making the campus, our state, our country and our planet safe for ALL its people.

Oddly enough, it was my experience in non-profit work that led me to (unfortunately) realize how so often the oppressed become an even worse oppressor. Behavior demonstrated, was in contradiction to both the organization's mission statement and overarching goals, which guided me toward not only broadening my focus to include Women's and Gender Studies, but to seek out like-minded people with whom I could affect change.

2 How does organizing with a student population differ from your previous work as an organizer at The Triangle Foundation?

Ultimately, it's very similar. Because my professional experience is based in publicity and promotion, I approach organizing from an events-focused angle – and EVERYONE is invited to my party. I try to focus on the commonality of an experience – any experience, positive or negative – and offer a concrete reason to become involved, usually at (as a long-term friend of mine often says) a “directed self-interest level.” I think many people, most people, really do want to be involved politically, be emotionally and intellectually engaged, but sometimes hesitate because they feel like they're not “ready” to commit to such a heady task. For me, I approach every organizing situation by taking a mental snapshot of the moment and remembering the amazing advice of Wilma Mankiller, the first female Chief of the Cherokee Nation: “Meet the people where they are.”

3 The LGBT History Project at UofM Dearborn was awesome in October. What impact did it have on the students and the university?

Clearly, I saw immediate impact when I looked out into the audience at various events and saw many new faces, not just people in the GSA or in WILL, but I think the long term



“My hope is that my UofM-D experiences will translate into a life-long commitment to not only political action related to LGBTQ rights, but a continued desire to bring stories of triumph - through art, music, dance, film and television - from that same community to the world stage.”

impact will be – and is – so much greater than simply attending a lecture. Just as in the general population, I think students on campuses all over America (well, probably not at Bob Jones, but still...) are becoming more and more accepting, not simply tolerant, of LGBTQ people. I have no idea how the years following the push for civil rights appeared on campuses nationwide, but I think this must feel quite similar. I love that we had 40-plus students and faculty for a screening of “Screaming Queens,” an amazingly well-done documentary about a little known event in AMERICAN history involving trans activists which pre-dated Stonewall. For me, that's a sign that my country is truly moving toward enlightenment.

4 What do you plan to do with your degree once you finish up at UofM Dearborn?

I specifically broadened my focus to include both Women's and Gender Studies and Communication so I can approach my future using each to complement the other. Whenever I decide to grow-up, I have several paths on which I can tread, but I hope to go back to the film industry, either as a producer of film and television projects related specifically to women, or in festival programming. However, I'd be equally happy if I chose to study law, focusing on human/civil rights.

5 How will you continue working for LGBTQ rights after your university career?

Any and all human rights work is connected – intellectually, politically, socially and spiritually. In the U.S. we have the clear connection of both the first and second wave of the women's movement being tied to first, the abolitionist movement and second, the civil rights movement. In somewhat concurrent modern history, we have the intersectionality of LGBT, women's and civil rights, so I can't imagine a world, whether on or off campus, in which all of these areas aren't part of my everyday life. Currently, I'm privileged enough to be part of a mentoring program at the Huron Valley Correctional Facility in Ypsilanti and every night we teach, I try to think about what five, ten or twenty years means when so many of your rights don't exist. Is it better, worse or exactly the same if you're an LGBTQ person in that situation? This is just another area of human rights which I've been fortunate enough to consider simply because I'm on a college campus...

My hope is that my UofM-D experiences will translate into a life-long commitment to not only political action related to LGBTQ rights, but a continued desire to bring stories of triumph – through art, music, dance, film and television – from that same community to the world stage.

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'How could it get that bad?'

Readers respond to cuts at Community Center

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE – Announcements of cut hours and services at Affirmations have sent shock waves through the community, leaving many to wonder what has been happening at the Center.

"Personally I am very concerned the cutbacks will affect the Center's reputation in the local community. I have already heard some of my friends express this as the 'writing on the wall' scenario," said Mark McMillan, a volunteer who also uses the center regularly. "I truly believe in Affirmations, its mission and over-all need in the community. My hope and wish going into the new year is that more and more individuals begin to rally around this very important cause and get more involved in saving the Center instead of just standing by and commenting on its slow demise."

The Center has had a number of staff and board changes since moving into their 17,000 s.f. state-of-the art "green" building at 290 W. 9 Mile in April, 2007. Most recently, CEO Leslie Thompson resigned in September and Kevin Howley stepped in Nov. 1 to help the organization transition. His first job as Interim CEO was to announce that programs supporting youth, seniors, HIV/AIDS prevention and education, multicultural issues and LGBTQ family issues will continue. However, social activities and recreational activities will no longer be offered, with youth and social departments being "streamlined." The Aff. Cafe has been shut down, and the Center is now only open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays. Three full-time employees and several part-time employees were notified on Oct. 28 that their jobs were eliminated, some effective as soon as Nov. 1. Remaining members of management took pay cuts and less hours of work.

"I think it's safe to say that everyone is unhappy about the cutbacks that were made at Affirmations," said Howley. "The response that we have received to date, however, has been extremely supportive of the actions that had to be taken. The Board and the organization would have been remiss in not addressing the economic realities that the Center is facing."

Howley blames the economy, and said that he is not there to place blame on any leadership in the past. "These cutbacks are driven by the simple fact that Affirmations has no choice but to operate on a balanced budget. The expenses related to the major facilities project left Affirmations without reserves. In fact, it's important to remind folks that Affirmations has been approaching donors during 2010 about the next phase in the capital campaign, the 'Campaign for the Future,' which was to raise \$1.25 million to specifically strengthen the organization's balance sheet. A completed campaign might have provided the organization with a bit more



According to the report (2010 LGBT Community Center Survey Report, a national survey of gay community centers), 69 percent of small centers have no paid staff and all have fewer than five paid staff members. In large centers, 63 percent have fewer than 10 staff members. Large community centers have faced reduction in staff and budget. The 35 largest community centers that responded to both the 2008 and 2010 surveys lost a total of 168 staff members in the past two years, and average number of operating hours went from 61 to 53 hours per week.

flexibility relative to the timing of cutbacks, but it ultimately does not change the fact that your expenses have to match your revenues," Howley added.

Although Howley did not officially come on board until Nov. 1, he and the management team met throughout October to discuss how to address the immediate financial crisis.

"To be fair, the decisions around programming changes were not very difficult nor very much in need of debate," said Howley. "A significant portion of the organization's expenses are fixed; building maintenance, utilities, financial services, etc. Another significant portion of the organization's expenses are related to programming that results from restricted funding and commitments related to that funding. What remains are costs associated with programming that does not come with designated funding that one might call discretionary, including many of the social activities and events that are sponsored by the Center and the extended hours the Center is open. So, in the end, the internal

discussion really did not revolve around programming. The discussions revolved around which employees would be charged with executing which programs."

Victor Walker, a Youth Staff member who was laid off with three days notice, was critical of Howley and the Board's decision. "I trust that the changes that occurred at Affirmations, that subsequently led to the layoff of several staff members, will help the organization rebound from the current situation," she said. "I was told that the logic of my being laid off was because my pay was not linked to a grant. I get that. However, Affirmations is a weaker organization as a result of it. I only hope that these choices, at some point, begin to serve the organization and the community well, or else none of it was worth it."

Downward trend across U.S.

The 2010 LGBT Community Center Survey Report, a national survey of gay

See Affirmations, page 12

CATHY DALEY

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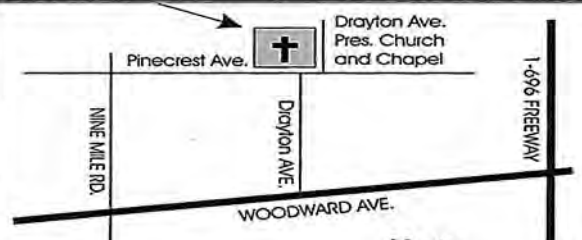
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Video of gay teen at Howell School Board goes viral

BTL STAFF REPORT

HOWELL – It's rare that video from a school board meeting becomes a national viral hit, but that is just what happened to a video of Graham Taylor, 14, who delivered a passionate defense of a teacher suspended for kicking a student out of his class for anti-gay comments.

Last month Howell High School was participating in Spirit Day, which was designed to draw attention to gay bullying. Teacher Jay McDowell asked a student to remove her confederate flag belt buckle. Another student objected to that request, saying the belt buckle was no different than students wearing purple to mark Spirit Day.

After that student made "inappropriate and offensive statements regarding gay students," according to the teachers union, McDowell kicked him and another student out of class.

McDowell was suspended for one day without pay. The teachers union stated that McDowell was just following school rules that allow teachers to ask students to remove "inappropriate" or distracting clothing.

Taylor, who lives in Ann Arbor and does not go to the school, said he applauds any teacher who defends gays. And he ought to know – Taylor attempted suicide when he was just nine years old after being bullied at school.

Here's the link to the video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC5veY34sIY&feature=player_embedded#

East Lansing High target of Westboro hate

EAST LANSING – As BTL goes to press the community in East Lansing and around the region, have been meeting and discussing the best way to respond to the announcement by Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, that they are planning on protesting East Lansing High School. The reason they have given is that the students dared to engage in the civic dialog by writing letters to WBC challenging their behavior. The WBC responded and are now protesting the high school itself, referring to the students as "brats" and saying the district is full of "fags" and "degenerates."

The community will be hosting safe space dialog locations in local LGBT affirming churches, as well as allowing those who want to protest to do so at the church lot of one of these churches.

The students at East Lansing High School also decided to ask anyone who is protesting to donate some money to a collection.

Please go to this site below, and sign the petition in support of the students at East Lansing High school. www.change.org/unity_in_our_community/petitions/view/thank_the_east_lansing_high_school_students_for_standing_up_to_hate

Oakland Univ. moves forward on providing DP benefits

'Institutions can learn and grow' says professor

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

ROCHESTER – Oakland University has come one step closer to restoring domestic partnership benefits to LGBT employees, though that won't be what they're called and there's no set date for their restoration. However, with the revision of OU Administrative Policy #712 they are mandated, and with that there is cause for hope.

Put in place Oct. 29, just 11 days after the tragic suicide on campus of Corey Jackson, Oakland's new policy has been a long time in the making.

"At the time of Corey's death, the final draft was in place and was in the process of being reviewed by the various administrative bodies prior to its final adoption," said Timothy Larrabee, the chair of Oakland's LGBT employee resource group. "That final review process was, indeed, expedited in response to the tragedy on campus; however the text of the policy was finalized before that fateful day."

The policy states that "all faculty and staff and applicants for those positions, students and visitors to the university shall be treated with respect, courtesy and dignity, be valued and supported in a nurturing and welcoming campus community, have their differences celebrated, and collaboration, cooperation and understanding fostered among all persons."

Further, the policy states that those goals will be manifested by "providing equitable rights, privileges, opportunities, treatment, resources, services, participation, access and benefits to all persons through the development, formulation and implementation of university programs, policies, procedures, practices and contractual

"At the time of Corey's death, the final draft was in place and was in the process of being reviewed by the various administrative bodies prior to its final adoption."

– Timothy Larrabee, the chair of Oakland's LGBT employee resource group.

and other commitments."

Shea Howell, a professor at Oakland and longtime Between The Lines contributor, expressed relief at the policy's implementation. "This has been a very long effort and should be celebrated as a sign that institutions can learn and grow," Howell said.

The non-discrimination policy specifically lists sexual orientation, as well as gender identity and gender expression, and means that LGBT employees are entitled to the same rights and benefits as their straight counterparts. Most major universities in the state, including Oakland, offered domestic partner benefits until a few years ago. In 2004, Michigan voters passed Proposition 2, which called for a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman. A lawsuit filed shortly after by the ACLU and Michigan Equality called for clarification on the DP issue and Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Joyce Draganchuk ruled in 2005 that the constitutional amendment did not

impact domestic partner benefits.

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox appealed this ruling, however, and in 2007 the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that the state's marriage amendment prohibited public employers from offering domestic partner benefits. The ruling was upheld the following year by the Michigan Supreme Court.

Not long after, universities across the state began looking for a way to circumvent the ruling.

"The Michigan Supreme Court said that universities can offer benefits to domestic partners of LGBT employees, they just can't recognize that relationship as the basis for wanting to do so," explained Jay Kaplan of the ACLU-Michigan's LGBT Legal Project. "So many universities have said, 'OK, we can't recognize these relationships as the basis for these benefits, but we're going to create an eligibility category that might end up including this group of people' and that's what we're seeing at Oakland as well."

This means that instead of using the term "domestic partner," universities now often simply state "spouse or other eligible person" or use some such other more neutral wording.

The next step is for Oakland's board of trustees to approve a revised equal opportunity statement, which will likely be taken up at the board's December meeting. The university will have to adopt legal language, as well, that meets the new policy's criteria without violating the law.

"The hope is that this will go in pretty quickly as a policy change because the idea is that this is a values statement," said Howell. "This is an over-arching values-driven statement that will drive policy and we expect this to be adopted by the board right away."

DVD partners embrace in faith

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

DETROIT – Two ten minute, thought-provoking DVD videos, "Embracing Inclusion in Communities of Faith" and "Come As You Are," premiered in Detroit last week, co-sponsored by the Arcus Foundation and the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion.

Gathered on Veteran's Day evening for the "spiritual showing forth" were about 150 Michigan Roundtable members, affiliated clergy, LGBT community, and the Sing Out Loud Chorus.

Appropriate setting for the premiere was the sanctuary of historic Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, a Romanesque Revival landmark structure built in 1884, now home of the Ecumenical Theological Seminary, the event host.

"The Arcus Foundation is honored to provide the Michigan Roundtable a funding grant for this important outreach venture," said Johnny Jenkins, Arcus coordinator, who welcomed attendees.



Johnny Jenkins

"While each of you here tonight – many of whom I know personally – is committed to respect, understanding, and support of Michigan's LGBT community, too many other so-called religious organizations are openly, covertly, or carelessly intolerant, or hostile to us. This DVD two-part presentation is an important visual 'missionary' for change."

Tom Costello, Michigan Roundtable spokesperson, humorously describing himself as, "the proverbial Recovering Catholic," stressed that "Embracing Inclusion," is timely, urgently needed when gay teenage suicides and bullying are daily media topics for growing alarm, serious action, resolute activism."

DVD Part I – "Embracing Inclusion in Communities of Faith," focuses on discussion of homosexuality as so-called choice, male-on-male in the Bible: as "abomination," or textual misinterpretation; how churches alienate LGBT persons or church members, failing to minister to them with love, compassion, authentic Christian calling.

Participants are Torah scholar Rabbi Joseph Klein, Temple Emanuel, Oak Park; Rev. Matthew Bode, gay leader, Spirit of Hope, Detroit; Rev. Henrietta Smith-Andrews, United Church of Christ pastor, retired, and The Rev. Dr. Susan McGarry, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, Ann Arbor.

DVD Part II – "Come As You Are," highlights the experiences of parents of LGBT children and a Black teenager who attempted suicide, but found self-acceptance with guidance from a church minister who reached out to him intelligently and supportively. "My sexuality today is

See DVD, page 9

New agency offers Thanksgiving dinner to homeless LGBT youth

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT – Mike Matthews, Jr. is a man on a mission. At 24, he's now the CEO and founder of his own non-profit organization, the Red Tie for Youth Foundation. The agency received its 501c3 status in April.

"I've been working in the HIV prevention world for about five years now and there are some great organizations that are really making a difference," Matthews said. "But I saw some things that are lacking and I'm really just trying to fill a void. That's why I created Red Tie for Youth, to help other organizations reach their potential and to cater to high risk communities that aren't being served."

Matthews began fashioning the Red Tie brand in 2008, when he planned the first Red Tie Affair, a fundraiser that benefitted Mpowerment Detroit.

"The Red Tie Affair was all about encouraging people to talk to their kids about HIV prevention," Matthews explained. "The response from the corporate world was so great that I thought that this initiative was necessary and I wanted to do more."

Matthews produced the event for two years and over the course of that time convinced a great number of local celebrities to pose for the promotional campaign wearing a red tie, including gospel singer Vicki Winans, businesswoman Denise Illitch and newscaster turned politician Charles Pugh.

The success of the campaign encouraged Matthews to take Red Tie to the next level and incorporate the name as a non-profit. Red Tie's newest initiative is Food For Love. Through a partnership with Kaleidoscope Catering and Mpowerment Detroit, along with the financial assistance of corporate sponsor Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Michigan, Red Tie will be serving Thanksgiving Dinner to homeless LGBT youth between the ages of 13-25.

"I've been a part of the executive board for Young Brothers United for over five years and I remember a conversation that we had with one of the young guys who used to come down," said Matthews. "He was homeless and living with a lover, and I just remember the situation that he was in, having to be always in a relationship and having to sleep with this person for a place to stay. Situations like those are in direct relation to how people contract HIV. You get into situations where you don't really have sexual control so you



Mike Matthews is the founder of Red Tie for Youth, a new non-profit that will be providing Thanksgiving dinner to homeless LGBT youth this year.

make decisions that really affect your health. So Food For Love is a way for me to reach out to teens who are homeless or living in youth homes and get them access to great organizations like the Ruth Ellis Center and Mpowerment Detroit. And I thought providing a meal would be a great way to pull them in and let them know how and where to get help."

The meal will be served at Mpowerment Detroit's headquarters, located in Greektown at 743 Beaubien St., Suite 400, from noon to 5 p.m. Other groups and non-profits can order meals from the program and distribute them elsewhere if they wish.

"We're encouraging churches and other non-profits to place orders with us so they can host their own meal program," said Matthews. "They're able to come in and pick up however many meals that they need so they can distribute meals to the youth in their communities."

Red Tie will be taking orders through Wednesday, Nov. 24, and can be reached at 313-914-8012. Matthews plans to repeat the program again on Christmas day, and this campaign marks just the first in a series of new events he plans to roll out.

was desperate, so sure that because of my narrow, bigoted doctrinal beliefs I would reject him. Fortunately – and by God's grace – he survived.

"It was not too late for my full acceptance of him as he is. Bright, talented, gay! My life has changed. Friends in faith, we've got to get the message out."

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion was founded in 1941. It is "a not-for-profit human relations Detroit-based organization working to overcome discrimination and racism by crossing religious, ethnic and cultural boundaries." It began working on behalf of LGBT

"Project Heal is a program that I really want to work on next, providing free therapy sessions for teens who are newly diagnosed with HIV," he said. "Then Reach Touch Change community outreach. That's something that's already done within other organizations but I want to touch places that don't have outreach workers. We want to continue the Red Tie Affair, because that's our way to reach parents. Lastly is our Roadmap To Health, which provides community referral services."

Matthews is busy filling out grant applications to fund additional programs, and he seems to have a knack for grabbing corporate sponsorships. It's a safe bet that the Red Tie for Youth Foundation will be on the local radar for some time to come.

So why, when Matthews could be doing anything with his life, did he decide to take on this mission and commit to doing this work full time?

"I just felt like it was my responsibility to do it," he said. "HIV is ravishing not only my community, but communities everywhere. So I'm just trying to do my part. I'm passionate about helping to stop this epidemic."

human rights two years ago.

"The video is a powerful, thought-provoking tool for change," said Rev. Deb Dysert, associate pastor MCC-Detroit. "The Michigan Roundtable is committed to implementing strategies to provide the DVD to churches in need of inclusivity awareness, instruction and implementation strategies. Without such outreach planning, it just might be another old, sorry instance of preaching to the choir. One hopes not. Too much is at stake for our LGBT youth of today."

To learn more: www.miroundtable.org

Gay flag burned at Albion College

BTL STAFF REPORT

BATTLE CREEK – Students and alumni reacted sharply to reports that three students will not be punished for allegedly burning a gay flag Oct. 18 on the campus of Albion College. The incident followed events to celebrate Coming Out Week.

"This is not about free speech. This is about students who publicly demonstrated hate for the LGBTQA community and how our school has been affected by this," wrote student Eric Highers on a message board hosted by the student newspaper, The Albion Pleiad. Over 55 other students and alumni also reacted to the story on the paper's website, almost all of which condemned the flag burning. The few that defended the action did so on the basis of free speech.

Others were more measured in their response.

"This is not about free speech. This is about students who publicly demonstrated hate for the LGBTQA community and how our school has been affected by this."

"I am proud being an Albion grad because they are handling the situation appropriately," said Alan Semonian, a 1984 graduate of the west Michigan school. "When I went to school there in the early 1980's they had a panel discussion on gay issues, which I thought was pretty progressive for the time."

Albion President Donna Randall issued a statement Nov. 10 in which she wrote, "I want to make it very clear that the College condemns harassment of any member of our College community." Her statement also provided these details of the incident and the college's response;

"On Oct. 19, a student contacted an Albion College staff member to anonymously complain that other students had allegedly burned a Gay Pride Flag on school property. In response to that complaint, Campus Safety promptly initiated an investigation. The investigation was complicated by requests for confidentiality from those who provided information, but Campus Safety was ultimately able to identify the students involved.

"Campus Safety's investigation revealed that the students involved found the flag in a trash can outside of Baldwin Hall and decided to burn it behind Wesley Hall. The only persons present when the flag was burned were the students involved, and the College is not aware of any other individuals who saw the flag being burned."

Efforts to reach school administrators were not successful. Ken Snyder, the director of campus safety, declined to comment to The Albion Pleiad about the decision to not reprimand the three students, citing the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

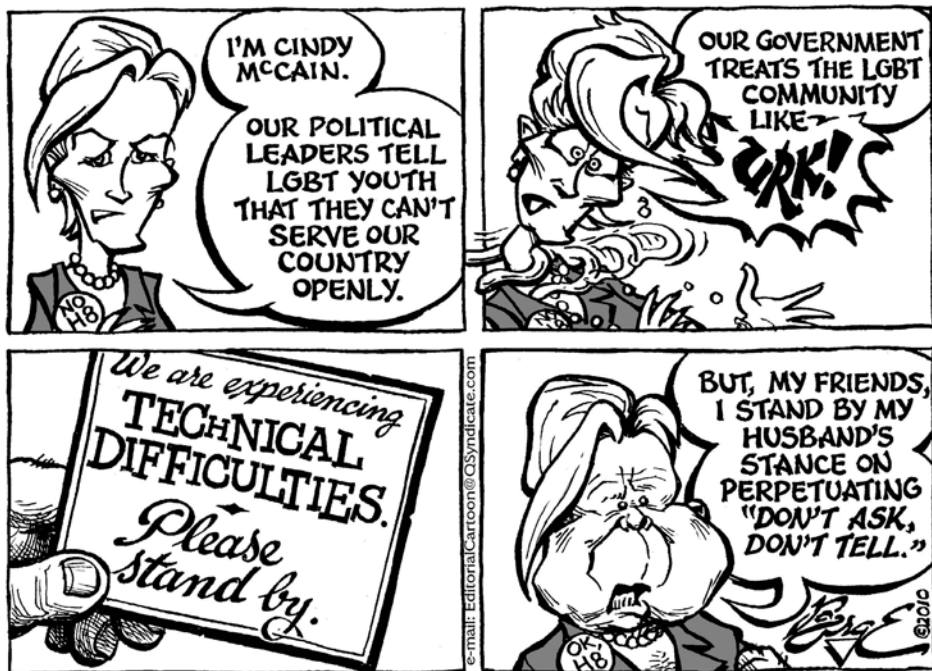
► DVD

Continued from p. 8

a private matter," he said during a Q&A session after the screening.

Two parents, Tom and Linda Karle Nelson, both with gay children by separate marriages, met at a P-FLAG Detroit meeting, subsequently married, and are now active in P-FLAG in a small Upper-Michigan town.

"It was one shocker of a wake up call for me when my 25-year-old son tried suicide," said Tom, now 81. "I had no inkling he was gay. He



BTL EDITORIAL

It's our job to help our Center

Affirmations is going through a really tough time. Because of severe budget cuts, the Center has been forced to drastically cut its hours and to lay off a number of staffers.

People who rely on the Center have been vocal that their "Gay home" is letting them down. We have heard them express their fear and anger – at the Center's management mostly – and we have heard them reach out to try to help. A few, but just a few, have thrown up their hands and said they give up on the Center.

But we cannot give up on Affirmations. For over 20 years, our Community Center has struggled to provide much-needed services. There has never been a time in its long history when the Center was flush with cash, had the perfect staff, met all the needs of everyone that came through the doors and led the community in an unwavering charge forward. Rather, the Center has been, and continues to be, a reflection of the community it serves, with all its beauty, conflicts and strength.

Affirmations completed an enormous capital campaign that resulted in a beautiful new building erected right in the heart of downtown Ferndale. All concerned had assumed that, once the new building was completed, programs and services would expand. But almost immediately after the doors opened the economy went into a free fall, decimating the organization's budget. Center leadership was faced with declining revenues from corporate donors, reduced grant opportunities and a pool of individual donors that were each facing financial hardships of their own.

Now, two years after the financial crash, many of the people have moved on that devoted

The Center has been, and continues to be, a reflection of the community it serves, with all its beauty, conflicts and strength.

We ought to all pitch in to help Affirmations, not because it is perfect. We should help because we respect ourselves, our community and our home too much to let an important asset suffer because we expected someone else to step up and do what we can do ourselves.

years of service to fundraise, meet with architects, plan programming and design a functional Center that is second-to-none. They served us well. They deserve our thanks – and they deserve a break from the long hours of service.

It's up to the rest of us now to step forward and take Affirmations to the next level. It will never be perfect, just as our community will never be. But it is our home – a safe place where LGBT people can gather, get help, volunteer, donate time and resources. It's our flagship organization.

We encourage people to volunteer, donate if you can, be part of the solution. We call on the new leadership – especially the board and the new interim director, Kevin Howley – to listen to the concern being expressed for the Center. Please don't "hunker down" and get defensive, but instead figure out ways to bring in those who want to help. Many centers around the country have been forced to lay off staffers and rely more heavily on volunteers. We have legions of talented people who can help Affirmations, and they must be encouraged and welcomed to do so with visionary, creative leadership.

We ought to all pitch in to help Affirmations, not because it is perfect. We should help because we respect ourselves, our community and our home too much to let an important asset suffer because we expected someone else to step up and do what we can do ourselves.

VIEWPOINT



Reefer Madness

BY CRAIG COVEY

After raids last month by Oakland County against medical marijuana facilities and homes, Sheriff Bouchard at his press conference reportedly quipped, "This is not a Cheech and Chong movie." He was right in that his actions were not representative of a light-hearted comedy. A better comparison might be the 1937 propaganda film "Reefer Madness," with hysterical officials warning about the deadly menace of marijuana. As the dozens of cases from these raids now wind through our courts, it's time for rational discussion about marijuana.

Voters overwhelmingly voted to decriminalize marijuana for persons with medical issues and who obtained recommendations from physicians. Opponents are unhappy with this result and claim that the voters were duped. But in a democracy, the voters are "the deciders." It's not officials' prerogative to decide what voters "meant," rather it's their duty to follow instructions. Elected officials can be disappointed with elections, but woe to those who thwart the will of the people. Authority comes from voters.

The Michigan Department of Community Health says more than 55,000 Michigan residents have applied for medical marijuana permits. Each has seen a physician and sent the state \$100 to process their request. While the state cashes that check right away, there is a seven-month wait to get the permit. Meanwhile the state has received five million dollars under this program.

Ferndale residents voted three times to

As the dozens of cases from these raids now wind through our courts, it's time for rational discussion about marijuana.

legalize medical marijuana. City council determined areas to be zoned for facilities where physicians and others could counsel, prescribe, and/or dispense marijuana. For two months the facility functioned well, with no problems or complaints. According to our police officials, there was no rise in criminal activity in the area.

Two days after Ferndale voted these zoning areas for medical marijuana, sheriff's deputies and narcotics enforcement officers swooped down on homes and businesses across the county, including our little storefront in Ferndale. The raids featured masked officers in full SWAT team uniforms, snarling dogs, and drawn weapons. Elderly patients, nurses, and business owners were thrown to the ground, handcuffed and arrested. Perhaps helicopters buzzed overhead in case someone with severe arthritis or muscular dystrophy tried to make a run for it.

A very disturbing aspect of the raids was the confiscation of patient's private medical records. Ignoring the federal rules on HIPAA, which protect patient privacy, our Sheriff stated that he didn't think marijuana was a proper medication for someone with back or shoulder pain. With

See Covey: Reefer, page 12

VIEWPOINT

Hated to death

Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov. 20

BY TONI CARETTA

...and you may say, "I don't think this has anything to do with me," but did you ever think you could be wrong?" - *It Won't Take Long by Ferron*

Discrimination against gays and lesbians is, at its most basic essence, gender based. We deviate from the binary hetero-normative expectation, by having same-gender partners and by having atypical gender expression. We too are transcending the gender norms.

Research published in The Archives of Sexual Behavior in February 2010 concluded that the assessment of one's sexual orientation by observation (aka "gaydar"), is based on deriving indirect cues about sexual orientation from information about sex atypicality. Specifically, sex atypical movement, speech and appearance, seem to be the aspects of one's behavior that are seen as "gay" - but are really about gender expression.

It is those among us who transgress the

expression of gender that society expects of us, who are the most likely victims of bullying, hate crimes and suicide. Suicide as a result of gay bullying is a transgender hate crime. Murders of transgenders and suicides are only the most visible of the transgender hate crimes that each of us experience every day - but each of us experiences the negative impact of trans-gender hatred.

A Study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force was recently published as The National Transgender Discrimination Survey Report on Health and Health Care. The study identifies both the magnitude and the nuances of suicide among transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 1.6 percent of currently living Americans have attempted suicide in the course of their lives. The NCTE/NGLTF study found that 41 percent of the transgender or gender non-conforming respondents had attempted suicide. Furthermore, analysis of the data showed certain attributes were correlated with an increased rate of attempted suicide. These included variables related to race, age and victimization.

Typically, African-Americans, Hispan-

See Caretta: Hated, page 12

S/he said

Suicide contagion, Dems a heartbreak

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL

It's our job to help our Center

Affirmations is going through a really tough

Wayne Besen

— Wayne Besen, in his column titled "Anti-Gay Nutjob Finally Loses Job After Stalking Gay Student Body President," about Andrew Shirvell, former Michigan Assistant Attorney General, www.truthwinsout.org, Nov. 8.

"Fathers who love their gay sons need to understand the unique role they play in their son's self-esteem and future relationships. Certainly all fathers need to show that they love their sons and daughters, but fathers of gay sons need to find ways to surmount the barrier of homophobia and socially scripted queasiness about gay sex to show their sons that they are indeed lovable and deserve the love of a good man."

—Michael LaSala, in his blog titled "Gay Men and Their Fathers: Hurt and Healing," about the complicated important relationship between gay sons and their father, www.psychologytoday.com, Sept. 13.



Ritch Savin-Williams

adult tendencies to insert our life experiences onto those of youth. Just because we had a difficult gay adolescence does not mean that today's gay youth experience the same pain."

—Ritch Savin-Williams, Ph.D., Professor of Developmental Psychology and Director of the Sex & Gender Lab, Cornell University, in his column titled "The Gay Kids Are All Right," <http://goodmenproject.com>, Nov. 11.

"Shirvell used religion and the constitution to defend his bullying. Is there any doubt that some nutty fundamentalist organizations will use this incident to falsely claim that the goal of the LGBT movement is to persecute Christians and criminalize Christianity? I suppose such claims would be true if one defines Christianity as the right for grown men to pursue college students at their home and haunt them at ungodly hours. Let's be clear: Shirvell is not a martyr, but a menace to society."



"Nascar has more fans who are accepting of me being gay than gays have been accepting of me being a Nascar fan. I'm not there to ask drivers about what they think about gay marriage. I'm there to ask them about racing."

— Michael Myers, creator of Queers4Gears.com, an online site for gay Nascar and car racing fans, in an article titled "A Gay Nascar Fan Is Finding a Growing Audience Online," www.nytimes.com, Nov. 13.

"Your average Democrat doesn't represent my beliefs. Most Democrats don't support full marriage equality, the unequivocal repeal of DADT, the inclusion of LGB and T folks in the civil rights bills, completely universal health care, stronger, larger government enterprises regulating more business and industry, free higher education, publicly subsidized political campaigns, etc. They simply don't support those causes. Occasionally Democrat X or Y might support one or two of these, but never more than that. Why should I accept that my representative only represents a tiny, tiny portion of what I believe in?"

—Dickie, in his blog titled "I Don't Like Voting For You Because You Always Break My Heart," www.imjustgaying.com, Nov. 8.



Parting Glances Then & Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Is your restroom SAVED?

This just in from Wacco TX. Headline: Undercover cops make Sunday surprise restroom arrests. Source: Lone Star Police Gazette & Badge Polisher.

Mark your activist desk calendar...

...While thousands were inside the Hallelujah Handclap of Hope megachurch tabernacle singing "Amazing Grace," some six weeks of amazing undercover police work came to a head last Sunday.

Ten persons were arrested. They were sitting in the wrong church pew at the wrong time. Arrests were made without drawing undue attention to the offenders, each escorted from the church property in either a covering choir or baptismal robe.

Those arrested were fortunately proven to be of age at the Wacco District Six Police Headquarters, once their respective collected wallets, IDs, pants, shirts, under garments were sorted through and matched to the individual arrestee configuration.

The match-up process took a little under three hours, in part due to the asking of what was essentially a touchy theocratic question involving whether or not a violation of the HHH's posted men's restroom requirement occurred.

Those arrested were advised that they had a right to refuse to divulge status vis-a-vis the unequivocal sanctioned use of the facility in question, which was clearly marked in large English Gothic letters SAVED in contradistinction to another similar facility 50 feet away marked plainly UNSAVED.

(There are similar restroom facilities throughout the ten floors of the church itself. Many Wacco gas stations are similarly equipped. Self-service gasoline units are likewise marked.)

Even so, one or two of the arrestees are thinking of asking their respective lawyer to bring legal action against the Hallelujah Handclap of Hope megachurch for what is (at least to arrestee preconceived perception) a clear case of discrimination involving use of a public facility.

Rev. Delbert B. Windwiper, HHH pastor, when contacted on the QT by Lone Star reporter Lois Lane-Kent, is alleged to have said, "I don't see how they have a p-ing leg to stand on. The simple fact is you're either saved or you're unsaved."

"This certainly isn't discrimination in God's sight. If you're going to hell, well, you're going to hell, no matter what restroom you happen to frequent, and for whatever the burning urgency."

"What's really offensive to any fair-minded Christian is that they did their nefarious business a) on Sundays and b) in a restroom clearly marked for the whole world to see, SAVED. That's something that's just not done."

"I want to make it abundantly clear. We — that is our HHH board of directors, our financial banking investment team, our health store employees, our senior citizens retirement association, our American chain of Bible trinket shops, all 5,000 HHH members — we don't discriminate."

"Our members include blacks (at last count 43), Mexicanos (all with appropriate Green Card), Jewish converts (two), assorted others (probably in the neighborhood — maybe a less affluent one at that — of 12).

"We tried to include gays (the balcony last two rows) but look what's happened. Six months ago, it was brought to board attention that these gays were being bold as brass in using the restroom they had no business using. Not one of ten is saved. If you're not SAVED, it would stand to reason that you'd use the UNSAVED facility — which by the way is just as clean, although the Bible-verse paper towels therein aren't blessed."

Charge brought against the bathroom intruders is "disorderly conduct for staging so-called weekly 'nude-in' protests with occasional Gospel Tract toilet cloggings to affect status change of perceived discrimination in the use of a necessary adjunct to optimal daily good health and mental well being of unsaved gay persons."

Note in passing: Restrooms at MCC-Detroit are not similarly marked. Still, check neighborhood RO gas stations. (Choir robes optional.)

Charles@pridesource.com Facebook too!

Arcus Foundation names new CEO

BY BTL STAFF

NEW YORK – Following an extensive search, the Arcus Foundation named Dr. Yvette C. Burton as its new chief executive officer, effective Jan. 4, 2011. She replaces Urvashi Vaid, who left in June.

“Yvette is an intelligent, talented leader and a passionate advocate who is the ideal person to lead Arcus forward as we take on new challenges and opportunities,” said Jon Stryker, president and founder of the Arcus Foundation. “She has a unique professional history of accomplishment in both the corporate and nonprofit worlds, playing key roles in growing businesses and organizations. We considered a number of very strong candidates with impressive backgrounds. In the end, however, it was very clear that Yvette is perfectly suited to build on Arcus’ tremendous success and take the organization into a new era of leadership.”



Dr. Yvette C. Burton

For over a decade, Burton has served as a managing global business development executive, business transformation strategist, and market development research director for IBM’s Sales and General Business Services divisions. She has also led IBM’s commercial strategy for global LGBT partnerships and advised numerous multinational companies on their internal and external outreach to the LGBT community.

She has extensive experience working for LGBT organizations and causes, with a focus on health care advocacy and service delivery. From 1992-1994, she was the Director of Lesbian Health for the New York City Department of Health, where she designed and directed the City of New York’s first department focused on policy development, ethnographic research and program implementation of lesbian health issues. She administered technical assistance grants to community and AIDS service organizations. As the director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center’s Project Connect (1992-1994), Burton led and designed substance abuse prevention and intervention social service programs for LGBT individuals and their families. She also managed the creation, pursuit and implementation of government and private grants.

“I am thrilled and energized to be joining the Arcus Foundation, an organization that is so highly respected and valued in its mission areas,” said Burton. “Nonprofits and companies alike are increasingly challenged to address justice on a social scale. The Arcus Foundation is a unique place of both innovation and impact. I am very excited to work with Jon, and grateful for the opportunity to work with such an accomplished team of leaders.”

Burton has received a number of awards and recognitions for her work serving, leading and advising the LGBT community. This year, she was given the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center’s Award for Visionary Leadership and the Metropolitan Church of New York Award for Exceptional Corporate Leadership on LGBT Issues. In 2009, she received both a GMHC Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in GLBT Equality and HIV Advocacy and a Stonewall Foundation Honor for Outstanding Women.

Her current leadership roles in the LGBT community include her membership on the LGBT Task Force of the NAACP and the New York Steering Committee of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. She is also a member of the Gill Foundation Corporate Giving Advisory Council. Other past leadership roles include: past board director of the Empire State Pride Agenda; a founding board director of the Audre Lorde Project, serving LGBT communities of color; a former director of the Lesbian Health for the City of New York; founding project lead of the service delivery component of the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center of New York among others.

Burton earned her PhD in Organizational Systems and Human Development from Fielding Institute and has studied management at the Wharton Business School. She holds a master’s degree in Criminal Justice and Procedural Law from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

► CARETTA: Hated

Continued from p. 10

ics and Asians have significantly lower suicide rates than whites and Native Americans. In the NCTE/NGLTF study, Native Americans, African-Americans and Hispanics had the higher incidence of suicide attempts.

In the general population there is a higher incidence of suicide attempts among older Americans compared to youth. In the NCTE/NGLTF study the highest rates of suicide attempts were reported among those between the ages of 18 and 44 (45 percent), with only 16 percent of those over 65 reporting a suicide attempt.

Sadly, the NCTE/NGLTF study found that 51 percent of those who had been bullied, harassed, assaulted or expelled from school because they were transgender or gender non-conforming, had made suicide attempts.

Research by Caitlyn Ryan at the Family Acceptance Project found that LGBT youth subjected to higher levels of family rejection during adolescence, were not only 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, but also 5.9 times more likely to report high levels

of depression, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs and 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers who experienced no or low levels of family rejection.

Though murder and suicide are dramatic types of death, the fact is that many more individuals in marginalized groups experience the slow silent death of hatred which leads to increased stress and decreased access to services. The NCTE/NGLTF study found a connection between multiple incidences of discrimination, harassment and abuse, and a high risk for poor health outcomes including, not only suicide attempts, addictions and increased risk for HIV infection, but also restricted access to care.

There is plenty of research documenting that the rates of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, stroke and many other health problems are consistently higher among women and other minority groups. Though there is no data on the rates of chronic and fatal health conditions specifically among the LGBT population, given the data we do have on other aspects of physical and mental health, the conclusion is that we are hated to death, literally.

Though murder and suicide are dramatic types of death, the fact is that many more individuals in marginalized groups experience the slow silent death of hatred which leads to increased stress and decreased access to services.

Transgender Day of Remembrance is not just about the murder of “those” transgenders. It’s about the transgender hatred we as LGBT experience every day which leads us to a host of negative health outcomes that aren’t as sudden or as dramatic as murder or suicide. On Nov. 20 and everyday, I urge you to fight for transgender rights - as if you’re life depended on it.

Antonia Caretto, Ph.D. is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Farmington Hills, Michigan who works with Transgender youth and adults. She can be reached at 248-553-9053.

► COVEY: Reefer

Continued from p. 10

all due respect, he should leave medical diagnoses and medication prescriptions to doctors.

State law governing medical pot was not written well. It is unclear and causing consternation among local officials. But had state leaders done their job, we wouldn’t have had a citizen-led effort to force their issue. Now law enforcement

officials are using their assets to send the political message that they don’t approve of the law. They’re dealing with marijuana in the only way they know how - as a dangerous narcotic no different than meth or heroin.

We do have serious drug problems, including a growing number of addictions to legal pain-killers such as Vicodin and Oxycotin. But it’s doubtful that fighting this epidemic should see raids on the local CVS.

With dwindling resources, law enforcement should focus on the serious

crimes that put residents in true danger. Focus on burglary, auto theft, robberies, and violent crimes. Fight serious drugs like heroin, meth, and cocaine. Send all the political messages you want, with lobbying, petitions, and letter-writing. Spending hundreds of thousands of dollars raiding legal reefer is madness.

Craig Covey is the Mayor of Ferndale and Oakland County Commissioner-elect. He can be reached at cscovey@aol.com.

► Affirmations

Continued from p. 7

community centers which included Affirmations, gives a clearer perspective of what centers nationwide are facing. The report divides centers into large and small, with an annual budget of \$100,000 or more being the dividing line.

According to the report, 69 percent of small centers have no paid staff and all have fewer than five paid staff members. In large centers, 63 percent have fewer than 10 staff members. Large community centers have faced reduction in staff and budget. The 35 largest community centers that responded to both the 2008 and 2010 surveys, lost a total of 168 staff members in the past two years, and average number of operating hours went from 61 to 53 hours per week. Affirmations has cut their hours to just 28 per week.

Though there is a lot of debate about the cause of the cuts, and no clear vision yet for the future, there is hope that with a simple base of service and fresh leadership, the organization will be able

Though there is a lot of debate about the cause of the cuts, and no clear vision yet for the future, there is hope that with a simple base of service and fresh leadership, the organization will be able to strengthen its balance sheet and grow into whatever direction the community wishes to take it.

to strengthen its balance sheet and grow into whatever direction the community wishes to take it.

Michael Lary, who resigned earlier this year after nearly four years as a board member, said that he saw the trouble coming. “I resigned because I was tired of banging my head against a wall,” he said. Lary, who works full time as a professional event planner for The Woodward Dream Cruise, said that many organizations do well with a modestly-paid staff and volunteers. “What happened to the spirit of volunteerism? This is a community center and there are plenty in the community who would help if they felt

welcome to.”

“Taking a ‘step back’ is an understatement,” wrote former staff member Sara Louise “I’m saddened to see it in a place I’ve called home for all of my gay days.”

The Affirmations Board has selected a search committee for a new CEO to take over management of the organization. Center Partners are invited to an appreciation luncheon on Dec. 5 to discuss the future of the center, and those who are interested are encouraged to volunteer at the center or on the Affirmations Board. More information can be found at www.goaffirmations.org.

Supremes refuse to block DADT

BY REX WOCKNER

The Supremes are keeping Don't Ask, Don't Tell in force.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Nov. 12 refused to vacate an order from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that suspended an injunction from the federal District Court in Riverside, Calif., that prohibited the U.S. government from enforcing the Don't Ask, Don't Tell military gay ban.

Which means: DADT can be enforced during appeal of the Riverside decision that found it unconstitutional - unless President Barack Obama, Congress and the Pentagon end the ban in the interim.

Plaintiff Log Cabin Republicans had asked the Supreme Court to vacate the 9th Circuit order, thereby allowing Riverside Judge Virginia Phillips' injunction to go back into force. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, who hears such requests from the 9th Circuit, referred the matter to the full Supreme Court, where Justice Elena Kagan opted not to take part in the decision.

Phillips issued her injunction Oct. 12 after finding that DADT violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantees of free speech, due process and right to petition for redress of grievances.

The injunction remained in place until Oct. 20, when the 9th Circuit issued a brief stay while it decided whether to issue a longer stay, which it did Nov. 1.

During the eight days the injunction was

in force, the military stopped kicking gays and lesbians out of the services and began letting them re-enlist.

The Obama administration's insistence on appealing Phillips' DADT strikedown has been highly irritating to gay activists, given that the president says he strongly opposes DADT. Obama, however, says the policy needs to be ended by Congress, which created it, not the courts.

The administration also has argued that the Justice Department has an obligation to defend federal laws that are challenged, and that DADT should not be ended abruptly because that will disrupt and harm military operations.

The Pentagon recently conducted a massive survey of members of the military to help it decide how to end DADT. Leaked versions of the findings, which will be released officially in December, reportedly reveal that most members of the armed forces are fine with GLB people serving openly.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a measure this year authorizing the military to end DADT but the Senate did not follow suit after Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., staged a filibuster over the matter.

"It is unfortunate that an unconstitutional law that is causing substantial harm to military readiness and to tens of thousands of troops is allowed to remain in effect for even one more day," said Alexander Nicholson, executive director of

The Obama administration's insistence on appealing Phillips' DADT strikedown has been highly irritating to gay activists, given that the president says he strongly opposes DADT. Obama, however, says the policy needs to be ended by Congress, which created it, not the courts.

Servicemembers United.

"This just underscores the need to continue to put pressure on Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to allow the defense authorization bill (which includes DADT repeal language) to come back up and take its first procedural step before the Senate's Thanksgiving recess," Nicholson said. "Servicemembers United, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, Stonewall Democrats, and the Log Cabin Republicans have all strongly and consistently called on Sen. Reid to do just that. It is now time for other organizations, as well as the White House, to publicly do the same."

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

urged supporters to call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and tell both of their U.S. senators to authorize repeal of DADT by voting for the defense-authorization bill this month.

"We can only be assured of having the 60 votes we need if we can change minds before the new members of the Senate take their seats," the group said.

But LCR attorney Dan Woods thinks that ship has all but sunk.

"With the likelihood of Congress repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell fading with each passing day, judicial relief continues to be perhaps the most viable avenue for ending this unconstitutional policy," Woods said. "We and Log Cabin Republicans will continue to fight on to protect the constitutional rights of all Americans who want to serve in our military without regard to their sexual orientation. Our next step will be to ask the 9th Circuit to expedite the government's appeal from Judge Phillips' judgment and injunction."

LCR Executive Director R. Clarke Cooper commented: "We are committed to pursuing every avenue in the fight against this failed and unconstitutional policy. Log Cabin will continue working to secure the votes needed for legislative repeal, and if necessary, we look forward to seeing President Obama's attorneys in court next year to prove, once again, that Don't Ask, Don't Tell doesn't work."

EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONAL

Executive Director

Affirmations Community Center
Metro Detroit's LGBT Community Center

Affirmations is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving people of all orientations and gender identities and their allies. Housed in a state-of-the-art, multi-use facility in Ferndale, Michigan, it is easily accessible from across the Metro Detroit area. Affirmations is the largest LGBT organization in Michigan, and one of the ten largest in the United States.

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Cindy McCain

Wait, what? You just got done telling us in a PSA that the government treats gays like second class citizens ...

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

For about a day Cindy McCain was literally a poster woman against anti-gay bullying. She appears, along with a bunch of celebrities including Gene Simmons, Dr. Drew, Slash, - and a lot of young and impossibly beautiful folks I have personally never heard of because I am too old - in a PSA for the NOH8 Campaign responding to the recent and much publicized string of gay kids committing suicide.

Speaking earnestly while staring into the camera with her icy blue eyes, McCain says, "Our political and religious leaders tell LGBT youth that they have no future.



Cindy McCain

They can't serve our country openly."

After cycling through a few more celebrities who share anti-gay "fun facts" (Dave Navarro: "They can't get married." Steph Jones: "They can't donate blood." Antonio Cromartie: "They're not even allowed to adopt in certain states." Tom "Dancing With the Stars" Bergeron says, "What's

worse, these laws that legislate discrimination teach bullies that what they're doing is acceptable."

This is followed by McCain saying, "Our government treats the LGBT community like second class citizens, why shouldn't they?"

These are some mighty feisty words coming from the wife of John "Filibuster to keep Don't Ask Don't Tell Alive" McCain. For Cindy to be part of the NOH8 Campaign seemed like a pretty big deal.

NOH8 started as a response to the anti-gay Prop 8 in California. It featured celebs, including Cindy and Meghan McCain with duct tape over their mouths and the NOH8 logo painted on their faces like they'd just escaped from the world's most terrifying county fair.

Well, it looks like Cindy should've kept her duct tape on.

Right after the PSA went live McCain took to Twitter and announced, "I fully support the NOH8 campaign and all it stands for and am proud to be a part of it."

Aww, isn't that sweet? Well, not really. Because here's the kicker: "But I stand by my husband's stance on DADT."

Wait, what? You just got done telling us in a PSA that the government treats gays like second class citizens and how that treatment trickles down into the nation's collective psyche and how that's basically waving a red cape in front of gay kids (in this analogy, the bullies are bulls. Get it?). And you very specifically, with your own mouth and voice and weirdly tight face, named the ban on gays in the military as one of these biggest offenders.

John Aravosis of America Blog was particularly incensed as he'd just praised Cindy McCain for the ad the day before. "Did she lie today or lie yesterday? Either way, she's a liar, and she should be removed from the NOH8 video because, as of right now, Cindy McCain is a hater," he wrote. "Not to mention, great message she just sent to gay youth. If someone pressures you, cave and support hate."

My guess is that Grandpa McCain didn't like it. Hence the Tweet indicating that Cindy is, at best, disingenuous and at worst totally clueless. Maybe she actually believes that the Cindy in the PSA and the Cindy with the Twitter account would make really good friends.

Truth be told, they can't. They'd fight all the time. In fact, I suspect Twitter Cindy would eventually kick PSA Cindy's ass. You know, to show her who's boss.

Gays sue feds over marriage again

BY REX WOCKNER

The New England legal group Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders filed a multiplaintiff lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act on Nov. 9.

In *Pedersen v. Office of Personnel Management*, GLAD represents five married same-sex couples and a widower, who live in Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. The 11 plaintiffs all have been denied federal rights and protections solely because they are married to a person of the same sex.

The suit, filed in federal District Court in Connecticut, addresses DOMA's nonrecognition of marriages in connection with federal employee and retiree benefits programs, Social Security benefits, survivor benefits under federal pension laws, work leave to care for a spouse under the Family and Medical Leave Act, and state retiree health insurance benefits that are controlled by federal tax law.

Additional plaintiffs who pay excess federal income tax because they cannot file their federal returns as married couples will join the suit once the IRS officially rejects their requests for refunds.

"Every day that DOMA stands, it arbitrarily divides married couples into two categories," said GLAD Legal Director Gary Buseck.

Also on Nov. 9, the American Civil Liberties Union sued the feds in New York over DOMA.

The group represents 81-year-old Edie Windsor, who had to pay \$350,000 in additional estate taxes because the federal government treated her as single, even though she was married to Thea Spyer and their marriage was recognized by the state of New York.

"(T)he federal government ... taxed Thea's estate as though we were strangers rather than spouses," Windsor said. "(It's) a tax on being gay."

"These cases provide further evidence that the so-called Defense of Marriage Act is not simply an abstract insult to the dignity of same-sex couples and their families -- although it is indeed a deeply offensive law," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "DOMA causes real harm to people like Joanne Pedersen, Ann Meitzen and Edie Windsor, denying them economic security, health coverage and other critical federal rights and benefits that other married couples take for granted."

The section of DOMA that prevents



Edie Windsor, right, and Thea Spyer. ACLU photo

the federal government from recognizing states' same-sex marriages already was struck down as unconstitutional earlier this year in two cases from Massachusetts, but the Obama administration has appealed the rulings.

The section, which the federal District Court in Boston found unconstitutional in three ways, states: "In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."

The language overrides any state's determination that a couple is married and says that they are not married for purposes of all federal laws and programs, even though the federal government otherwise has always deferred to state determinations of marital status.

The Boston court said DOMA violates the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by treating married gay couples differently from married straight couples without any rational basis for doing so. It also found that DOMA violates the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by intruding in areas of exclusive state authority, and violates the Spending Clause in Article 1 of the

Constitution by forcing Massachusetts to discriminate against its married gay citizens in order to receive certain types of federal funding.

President Barack Obama does not support same-sex marriage, although he did in 1996 when he was campaigning for an Illinois Senate seat. But in a recent White House meeting with five progressive bloggers, the president suggested he might be getting ready to change his mind again.

"I do not intend to make big news sitting here with the five of you, as wonderful as you guys are," Obama said at the Oct. 27 meeting. "But I'll say this. ... I have been to this point unwilling to sign on to same-sex marriage primarily because of my understandings of the traditional definitions of marriage. But I also think you're right that attitudes evolve, including mine. And I think that it is an issue that I wrestle with and think about because I have a whole host of friends who are in gay partnerships. I have staff members who are in committed, monogamous relationships, who are raising children, who are wonderful parents, and I care about them deeply. And so while I'm not prepared to reverse myself here, sitting in the Roosevelt Room at 3:30 in the afternoon, I think it's fair to say that it's something that I think a lot about. That's probably the best you'll do out of me today. ... The one thing I will say today is I think it's pretty clear where the trendlines are going ... the arc of history."



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p. 32 for details.

Colombian high court refuses to rule on same-sex marriage

Colombia's Constitutional Court refused to rule in a same-sex marriage case Nov. 11, saying the plaintiffs' legal arguments were not good enough to warrant a hearing from the court.

The petitioners had sought to strike language from the Civil Code that defines marriage as a contract between a man and a woman.

But, in a 5-4 vote, the court said, "The charges of violation of the rights to equality, to free development of the personality and to not receive cruel or degrading treatment, alleged by the plaintiffs, were not sufficiently argued."

The court added that since the case was dismissed on technical grounds, it may be refiled at any time.

In a statement, the LGBT association Colombia Diversa said it had been hoping for a decision on the merits of the case and may file a new lawsuit.

"The nation lost a unique opportunity to achieve a true concept of equality in access to human rights among all Colombian people, be they same-sex or heterosexual couples," said the group's director, Marcela Sanchez.

Lesbian couple denied marriage license in London

A lesbian couple who tried to get a marriage license were turned away at the Greenwich registry office in southeast London on Nov. 2.

Sharon Ferguson and Franka Strietzel were told that only opposite-sex couples can marry, even though the United Kingdom's civil-partnership law lets same-sex couples enter into a union that grants rights and obligations identical to those of marriage.

Ferguson and Strietzel plan to sue the government for violations of the Human Rights Act's rights to marriage, to respect for family life and to protection from discrimination.

They will be joined by three other same-sex couples who plan to seek marriage licenses and by four heterosexual couples who want to enter into one of the nation's gay-only civil partnerships.

"No matter how good civil partnerships are with regard to the legal protections and rights they provide, they are still a separate system that was put together to stop gay and lesbian people from being able to marry," said Ferguson. "Like most people in this world, we were brought up to believe that one day we'd fall in love and get married. This is what we want to do and our sexual orientation should not be an impediment."

The challenges to both laws are part of a new activist campaign called Equal Love, which also seeks to open up the civil-partnership law to straight couples.

"We see the Equal Love campaign as a historic quest for justice - morally equivalent to the campaigns to overturn the bans on interracial marriage in apartheid South Africa and the



Sharon Ferguson, left, and Franka Strietzel were denied a marriage license in London on Nov. 2 and now are suing the government. Photo by Chris Houston

Deep South of the USA," said coordinator Peter Tatchell. "The ban on same-sex civil marriage and on opposite-sex civil partnerships is a form of sexual apartheid -- one law for gay couples and another law for heterosexual partners. Two wrongs don't make a right."

Same-sex marriage is legal in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Mexico City, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Washington, D.C.

LGBT issues included in EU accession reports

LGBT issues figure prominently in the European Commission's Nov. 9 progress reports on the hoped-for addition to the European Union of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The report on Croatia notes that LGBT people face threats and attacks that are inadequately investigated by the authorities. Macedonia's report points out that the nation's laws do not provide adequate nondiscrimination protections.

Turkey violates the human rights of, in particular, transgender people, its report said. Albania and Montenegro ban anti-gay discrimi-

nation but need to do more to prevent actual discriminatory incidents, their reports said.

"We welcome the way in which the human rights of LGBT people are raised in this year's progress reports and encourage the commission to continue asserting the principles of nondiscrimination and equality in accession negotiations with the countries," said Lilit Poghosyan, senior programs and policy officer for ILGA-Europe, the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

It is a requirement of EU membership that a nation have legal protections against anti-gay discrimination.

Tasmania to see same-sex marriage bill

The Tasmanian Greens party said Nov. 7 that it will introduce a bill in the Australian state's Parliament to legalize same-sex marriage.

"If we are fair dinkum about removing discrimination we should give all Tasmanians access to the fundamental institutions of our society, including marriage," said Greens Leader Nick McKim. "If (Australian Prime Minister) Julia Gillard won't move on the issue we will bring our cognate package of bills on for debate

early next year."

"There is no such thing as 'mostly equal,'" he added.

The Australian slang "fair dinkum" means "genuine," in this instance.

Muslims protest for sexual rights in 12 nations

Members of the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies staged simultaneous actions in 12 nations Nov. 9 under the theme "One Day One Struggle."

Hundreds of members of 40 organizations held panels, workshops, film screenings, theater performances, photo exhibits and press conferences in Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Palestinian territories, Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey "to assert that sexual and reproductive rights are universal human rights based on the inherent freedom, dignity and equality of all human beings."

"Rising conservatism fueled by militarism, increasing inequalities, the politicization of religion and Islamophobia have strengthened patriarchal and extremist religious ideologies that use sexuality as a tool of oppression," organizers said. "This has manifested itself in various forms over the last year, be it the revocation of the permit for the regional Asia Conference of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association by the police in Indonesia, or the harassment of conference participants by radical Islamic groups, or political pressure on a women's group promoting women's rights in Islam in Malaysia, or women like Sakineh Ashtiani being sentenced to death by stoning in Iran, or killings of hundreds of women and transsexuals in Turkey under the pretext of honor."

CSBR is a solidarity network of progressive organizations and academic institutions in the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Southeast Asia working to promote sexual and bodily rights as human rights in Muslim societies. For more information, see www.wwhr.org/csbr.php.

U.S. defends its human rights record to U.N.

More than 30 U.S. officials, including senior officials from 11 federal departments and agencies, defended the country's human rights record before the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva Nov. 5.

At the U.N.'s "Universal Periodic Review" session for the United States, the government submitted a report that said, among other things: "In each era of our history there tends to be a group whose experience of discrimination illustrates the continuing debate among citizens about how we can build fair societies. In this era, one such group is LGBT Americans."

The U.S. officials told the U.N. that President Barack Obama is committed to repealing the Defense of Marriage Act and Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and to banning workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

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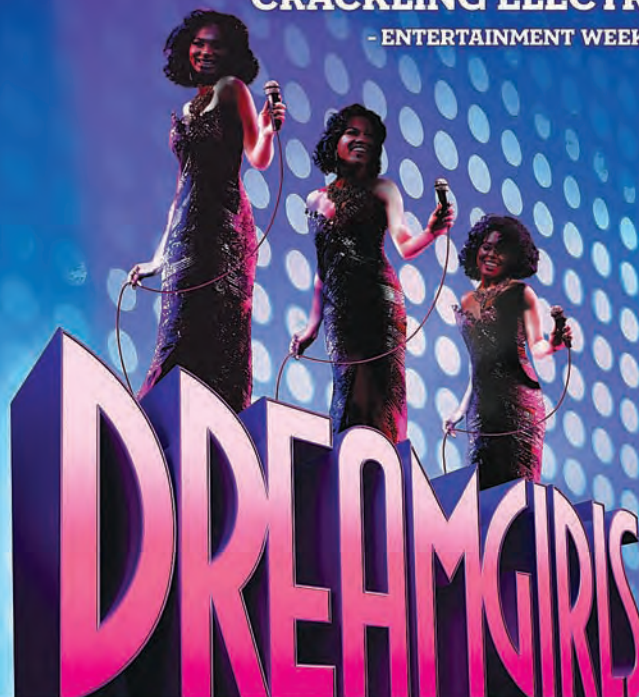


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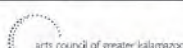
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EXCLUSIVE



Simply Cher

Stanley Tucci and Cher in "Burlesque," out Nov. 24. Photos: Screen Gems

Legend talks film comeback, being a gay icon and son Chaz

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

They don't make 'em like Cher anymore. The superdiva, and queen of all gay icons, has been able to successfully pull off singing *and* acting throughout her nearly 50-year career – and she does both in "Burlesque," her long-awaited return to the big screen out Nov. 24. Cher's role as Tess, an L.A. club owner who gives a small-town girl (Christina Aguilera in her acting debut) a shot at fulfilling her dream as a singer, is the Oscar winner's first major part since "Tea with Mussolini" over a decade ago.

Breaking from her Las Vegas show at Caesars Palace, which closes in February after three years, Cher coolly strutted into a suite at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills,

Calif., with a big smirk and an off-the-shoulder sequined shirt – proof that the legend's not letting her 64 years get in the way of sustaining her sexiness.

Sitting in was Stanley Tucci, who plays her gay assistant and pal (much like the actor did in "The Devil Wears Prada," alongside Meryl Streep). The two stars laughed a lot over the dirty texts they shared and the scenes they shot together. Cher also talked about her indecisiveness over doing "Burlesque," why gay men adore her, and shooting an "It Gets Better" video with daughter-turned-son Chaz Bono.

There's no question that this is an incredibly gay movie.

Cher: (Laughs) One guy said, "This is gay 'Fantasia'!"

How does this rank among the gayest

"Gay men either love you or they don't even notice you're alive on the planet. And if they do love you they kind of stick with you through thick and through thin, even when you're not popular. They recognize kindred spirits that don't really fit into society, either. And, of course, there's sequins."

things you have done in your career?

Cher: Not even anywhere! It doesn't even rank. I don't think of it as a gay film, but of course gay guys love musicals. And it's fun! Gay guys like to have fun, and so I think that's what it is.

Do they, Stanley?

Stanley Tucci: How would I know? (Sarcasm)
Cher: He's just an actor!

You've played gay now for Cher and Meryl Streep. Who's the better boss?

ST: (Points to Cher) Well, she's much nicer.
Cher: That's right – Meryl was horrible! (Both laugh)

Gay men have always been a big part

of your career. Can you reflect on that?

Cher: I've said this many times, but I think gay men either love you or they don't even notice you're alive on the planet. And if they do love you they kind of stick with you through thick and through thin, even when you're not popular. They recognize kindred spirits that don't really fit into society, either. And, of course, there's sequins.

Cher, we haven't seen you onscreen in a long time. What about "Burlesque" drew you back?

Cher: You know, I just wanted to sing. I wanted to sing in a film. It was my heart's desire from the time I was about 4, so that's what I wanted to do. I

See Cher, page 24

The Ultimate Guide to Gay Gift Giving

By Mikey Rox



SNAP TO IT

Ramona Singer infamously called Kodak antiquated, much to the chagrin of Jill Zarin, who was hosting an event on the company's behalf during a season three episode of *The Real Housewives of New York*. Points go to Team Jill for that round, because Ramona was way off base. In fact, the iconic brand is as cutting-edge as they come where affordable consumer technology is involved. Case in point: the EasyShare M580, the world's thinnest 14-megapixel, five-times-zoom digital camera. The pocket-sized point-and-shoot also features a Share Button, which allows users to tag and upload pics to Facebook, YouTube, the Kodak Gallery and Flickr within seconds of plugging it into a computer. Mhmm. Whatcha got now, Ramona? (\$199.95; www.kodak.com)



OFF THE CUFF

Picture it: You're at your fave guppie's Chrismukkah party (because he's still "in lurve" with Seth Cohen) when tragedy strikes; the batteries in the electric bottle opener have died and your sanity is in danger. What to do? You reach for the barware drawer to retrieve a manual device just as you're reminded that such "primitive items" don't reside at that dwelling. Don't slap the bitch. Collect yourself and think. It'll come to you. A-ha! Your stainless steel bottle opener cuff links that you said you'd never use. At least not in public, anyway. But don't be ashamed. You saved the day and, let's be honest, you'll embarrass yourself in other ways. Starting in about three hours. (\$50; www.cufflinks.com)

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Shower time is sacred. And simplehuman aims to make it even better with its twin wall mounts with basket. Wide openings on the shampoo and conditioner dispensers prevent messy spills (is there a such thing in the shower?) and makes refills fast and easy. Convenient storage hooks hold a razor, loofah or other accessories, and the square tissue holder features an integrated clamp that keeps the box from falling out. Although, if you're blowing your nose in the bath, you've likely got bigger issues than escaping tissues. Mount secures to a dry wall in 24 hours with silicone glue. (\$69.99; www.simplehuman.com)



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DRINK TANK

If you're still buying bottle water on a daily basis, you're behind the times. Not only is it expensive, but it's also bad for the environment. In fact, you probably own a small part of your local landfill by now. For shame! Reduce your carbon footprint by investing in 3M's latest innovation, the Filtrete Water Station, which features four reusable water bottles that fill with fresh, filtered H₂O. The liquid station provides the approximate recommended daily water intake – 64 ounces – with each bottle containing 16.9 ounces. The bottles are BPA-free with leak-proof caps and can be washed conveniently on the top rack. Cut down. Drink up. (\$38; www.filtrete.com)



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GARDEN VARIETY

Paging Peg Bundy! Al's trophy wife loved her some bonbons – but probably not this kind. Moulton's Bon Bons are truffle-shaped mounds of clay and organic compost combined with seeds. The Garden pack features two each of basil, parsley, chives and thyme, while the herb tea selection includes double quantities of borage, chamomile, lemon balm and Stinging Nettle. Just toss the handcrafted clay balls into the garden or an indoor container, add water, and watch them grow. Perfect for that crazy uncle who "talks" his plants. Misery loves company. (\$14.95; www.moultonology.com)



Mikey Rox is an award-winning writer/journalist and the founder of Paper Rox Scissors, a copywriting and creative consulting company in New York City. He can be reached at mikey@paperroxscissors.com.

See Gift Guide, page 20

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The Ultimate Guide continues...



THE POTTY EXPRESS

Small children do exactly three things – eat, sleep and wail. That is, when they're not relieving themselves wherever they want like incontinent animals. Since you can't outfit the kid with an electronic collar that'll teach it to piss and poo in the pot (silly laws!), you have to train the little bugger – which can be a nightmare in itself. To make life easier, the people at Baby Signs have created a potty training kit that makes go time interactive, easy and – you can be the judge of this – fun. The kit comes with a parents' guide, the "All Aboard the Potty Train" DVD, All About the Potty Train board book and conductor's whistle, and Job Well Done! stickers. Hooray for stickers! Just wash your hands before you start doling those out, OK? (\$39.95; www.pottytrainwithbabysigns.com)



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BIKES FOR DYKES

Sexy ladies have long had a love affair with motorcycles. Seems unlikely, but examine the evidence; nobody's forcing those busty blonds and brunettes to bend over the handlebars in every bike rag sitting on newsstands. One could argue that the female species likes the feeling of all that power between their legs, no? (Insert your own dirty joke here.) Whatever the case may be, California Scooter Co. has carved a niche in the market for women who have a need for speed with three styles – Classic, Greaser and Babydoll – and a custom-built option. The company claims on its website that you're in for the ride of your life. And if one of these is waiting for your honey in the garage on Christmas morning, you probably will be. (\$4,995 and up; www.californiascooterco.com)



COME WHAT CLAY

Crate & Barrel and Bed Bath & Beyond deserve mad props – mostly because they've got the wedding-gift market on lock. Think about it. Even when you don't know where a dear friend (or a not-so-dear friend for whom you're obligated to buy a gift) is registered, you can bet they've signed up for swag at one of those stores. But don't fall prey. You're faboo – and so should your gift be. Enter Maid of Clay Ceramics, handmade pottery with custom monograms sculpted by a little lady named Felicia in her California studio. Two styles of vases as offered – Wedding and Sweetheart – but rest assured that each is one of a kind. (\$99-\$110; www.etsy.com/shop/maidofclay)



GO THE EXTRA SMILE

Unless your dentist looks like John Stamos, you'd rather stay away. Which presents a problem if you covet bright white chompers. Sure, there are over-the-counter bleaching methods – and they're relatively inexpensive – but they're also messy and often painful. Simple, safe and effective, Supersmile takes a bite out of the competition with a clinically proven gift set that includes a Professional Series II LS45 Advanced Sonic Pulse Toothbrush (with patented 45-degree angled bristles) and a three-month supply of its professional whitening system. The system safely whitens natural teeth and restores bonding, veneers, caps and dentures to their original splendor. It also strengthens enamel and eliminates harmful bacteria, plaque and gingivitis. The one thing it won't do, however, is cure morning breath; dude is still gonna taste icky in the a.m. (\$159; www.supersmile.com)



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While movie tickets continue to climb, the ultimate in home-viewing entertainment gets more accessible. The Toshiba WX800 Cinema Series 3D LED HDTV delivers an impressive three-dimensional experience within a premium, ultra-thin package. Beyond its luxe look, the WX800 is a wonder worthy of the Cinema Series label, with an array of picture enhancements and wireless access to hundreds of streaming content options. In addition, beautiful cosmetics (a depth of less than 1.2 inches and sleek chrome trim) and state-of-the-art features (multiple 3D input formats, including MPEG4-MVC, RealD) make this powerhouse the perfect choice for today's most demanding home theater connoisseurs. It goes without saying, too, that it's conducive to some serious cuddling. (\$2,599 and up;



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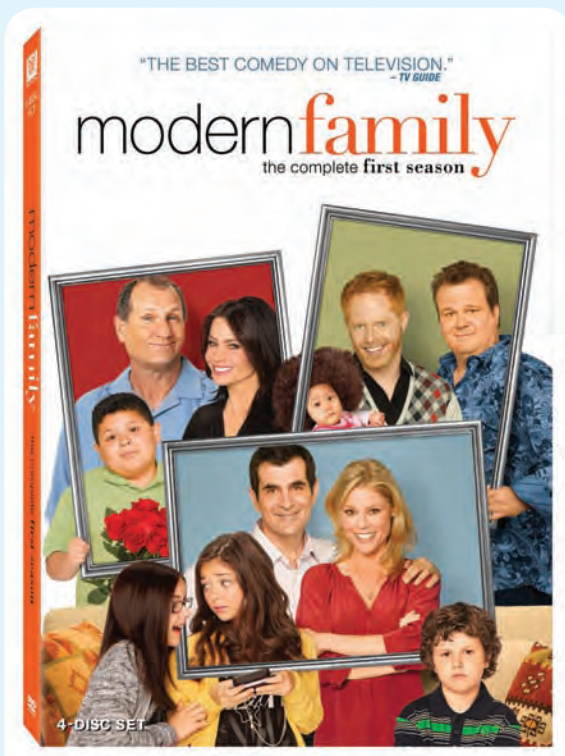
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His bulbs will shine bright in these festive trunks from Pact, an eco-friendly and cause-conscious underwear shop. A portion of the proceeds will help charitable organizations EarthSpark and Citizen Effect send handheld

solar lanterns to Haitians in need. (\$22; www.wearpact.com)

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► Cher

Continued from p. 17

didn't want the film (at first); this was a process. I thought that (Tess) could be a good role. It wasn't exactly what I wanted in the beginning, but she did turn out to be who I thought she should be.

What do you love about Tess?

Cher: She's my kind of girl. I love that she's working really hard and she's not getting anywhere but she's not giving up. I love the relationship she has with all the (burlesque) girls and with him (Tucci).

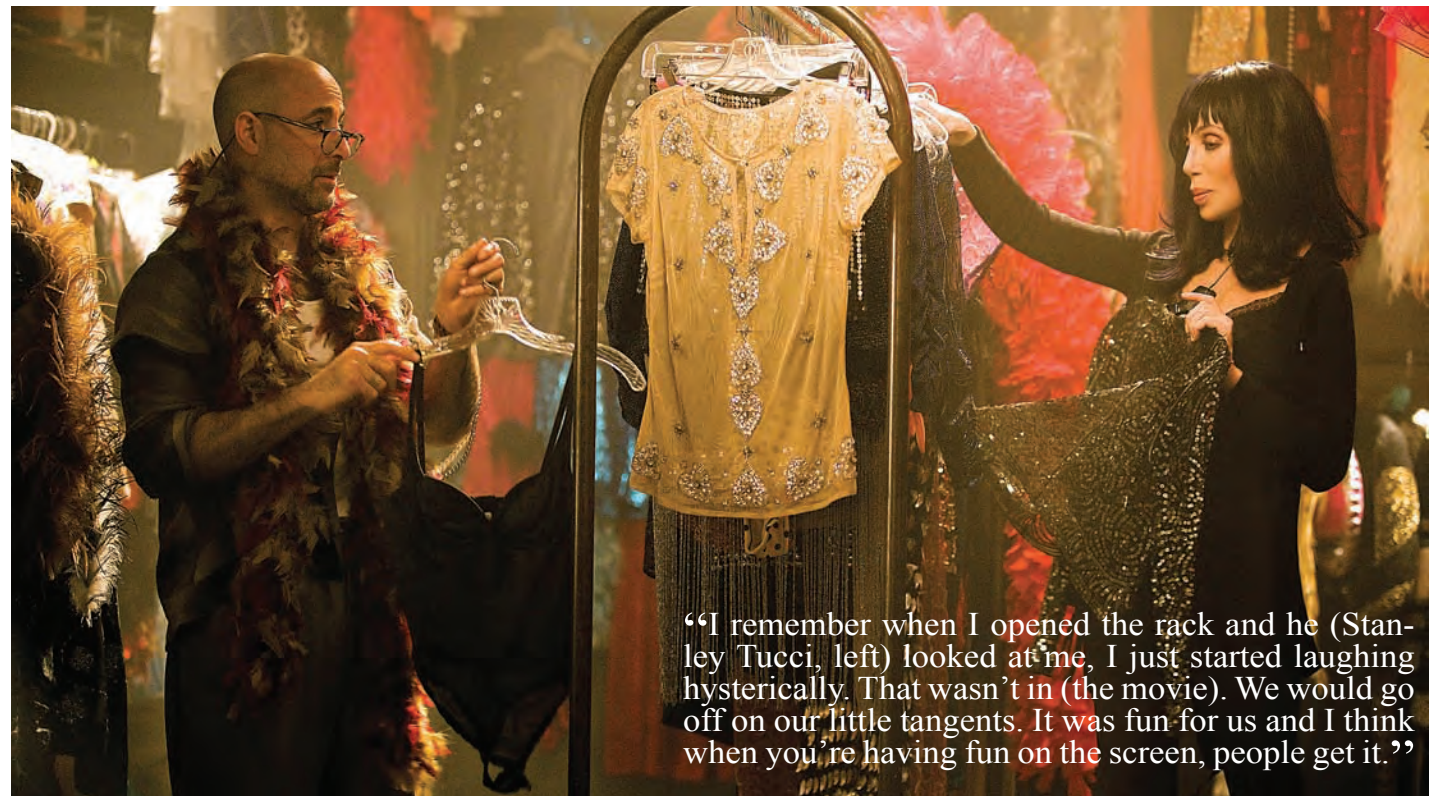
She's a very likable character, so it's not like you're taking a big risk. In the beginning she was so not likable, and I just kept saying, "She's just complaining and she's angry with the girls and yelling at them all the time." I just thought somebody like this would've just sold the club.

One of Tess' best moments is the musical number "You Haven't Seen the Last of Me." How do you personally identify with that song?

Cher: Stanley and I were talking about this. If you've been in this business, you know what being down is, and if you keep going then you know what struggling through down means.

Many have tried to transition from pop diva to actress, and many have failed - but you were one who's done it spectacularly. What advice did you have for Christina?

ST: It's not going to work for Christina. We've



"I remember when I opened the rack and he (Stanley Tucci, left) looked at me, I just started laughing hysterically. That wasn't in (the movie). We would go off on our little tangents. It was fun for us and I think when you're having fun on the screen, people get it."

discussed this, and Christina knows it. (Laughs) Cher: (Laughs) I think a couple of things had to happen for her to feel comfortable with me because she didn't know me. We met a week before (filming began), and she had to realize that I was going to be there to support her and not do any kind of weird actress crap. I really saw as we went on, our scenes together just got

better and better. I think she really has the talent to keep going.

I would've never done this (as my first film). The first thing that was on film (in my acting career) was an ensemble piece, but the first thing that was a film (1983's "Silkwood"), I had no idea what I was doing and I was holding (Meryl Streep's) hand through it.

How do you think your performance playing gay in "Silkwood" stands up to gay characters now?

Cher: I don't think you "play gay."

ST: You don't.

Cher: I didn't. If you look at her, she was just a person, and you just play a person. I think for Stanley it was more of a stretch, but the truth

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is we giggle like (we did in) that first scene all the time. He makes me laugh hysterically, and I just don't think you play that. (Looks at Tucci) I don't think in "The Lovely Bones" you played a murderer; you played a person.

How was it for you and Stanley to connect as the characters?

Cher: We don't get along to this day! (Laughs)
ST: It was awful; they're paying me for these interviews. (Laughs) It was great. I was very nervous to meet Cher, there's no doubt about it. But once we started working, we got along very well and we had a great time. In fact, they had to wrangle us in to keep us from laughing all the time.

Did you improvise while filming?

Cher: There's that part where we're at the rack hanging clothes and at the end he grabs me with his legs – that was so not expected! (Laughs)
ST: (Laughs) No one would actually write that in the script.
Cher: I remember when I opened the rack and he looked at me, I just started laughing hysterically. That wasn't in (the movie). We would go off on our little tangents. It was fun for us and I think when you're having fun on the screen, people get it.

Some of the best scenes in the film are the ones you both share. What was it like off-screen?

ST: What you saw onscreen is exactly what was happening off-screen, and I'm not kidding. Whatever that relationship was is the relationship that this is.
Cher: He makes me laugh hysterically, and I just make him roll his eyes and smile. That's the truth. (Both laugh)
ST: It's true, because she's really filthy.
Cher: No, it's not true! I swear!
ST: I'm going to show you a text... (Laughs)
Cher: We do have several texts that I hope never see the light of day.



Cher (right) with son Chaz Bono at the "Burlesque" premiere on Nov. 15.

Next week: Part two of BTL's 'Burlesque' exclusive

Read what **Christina Aguilera** had to say about her first film role

Cher, did you get to wear any Bob Mackie?

Cher: One (for the number) "Welcome to Burlesque." That was done specially for the film; I just don't happen to have those things (in my closet). I have a lot. In my auction I gave the ones I didn't really love away, but the ones I love, I'm going to keep them until they fall apart.

What's next for you?

Cher: There's an album, but I haven't been able to get to it. That's going to be the next thing I really want to do – unless a movie with Stanley comes up.

You also voice a character in 2011's animated film "Zookeeper."

Cher: Yeah, I play a lioness: Sylvester Stallone's wife (laughs). It's not a big part; it was my first voiceover and it was really great. That's how they cornered me, because when I came out – I had been there for hours and I was really tired and I walked out the door – there was Steven (Antin, the "Burlesque" director) and Clint (Culpepper, president of Screen Gems). Clint got down on one knee and said, "You have to come to the office!" And so I did.

Clint said you tried to pull out of the film. Was that only because of the character?

Cher: Yeah. In life I don't know what I want nearly as much as what I want in a character. I complained a lot about the hours – we had many 16-hour days in heels. It was hard.

Are there plans to film a video with Chaz for the "It Gets Better" campaign for LGBT youth?

Cher: We haven't talked about it. She's been... she, I do this all the time; the pronouns are just fucked. He's doing the documentary and this book, so that's been taking up all the time.

Looking back at your early career, what advice would you give yourself?

Cher: Shut my mouth! (Laughs)
ST: You would shut your mouth?
Cher: Yeah, I would shut my mouth a lot more than I have in my life. I wouldn't have done anything different because you just do what you do, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. You just have to keep going. Mistakes are just mistakes.

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Between The Lines

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In November of 1998, Rita Hester, a transgender African-American woman, was murdered in an act of transphobia. Since the tragedy, a web project to honor deaths such as Rita's – called "Remembering Our Dead" – was created, an annual candlelight vigil in San Francisco began, and Nov. 20 became Transgender Day of Remembrance – a day to recognize and honor those whose lives have been cut short due to prejudice against transgender people.

What began as an online project, and a San Francisco candlelight vigil, has become a national day for recognition – even at universities. On Nov. 18, The UM-Dearborn's Gender & Sexuality Alliance is teaming up with Transgender Michigan to provide a candlelight vigil and reception on campus. On Nov. 19, MSU and LAHR will be hosting a discussion of Transgender issues in Bessey Hall, then moving outdoors for a candlelight vigil. Throughout that week, UM-Ann Arbor's Spectrum Center will be presenting their event series, (Trans)gender Awareness Week, offering ally training, a panel with Drag Queen Rebellion, documentary viewings, outreach for gender neutral restrooms and safe spaces, and much more.

All of these events are open to the public. For more information: MSU : beachlerb@sbcglobal.net, UM-D : <http://umdgsa.weebly.com>, UM-AA : <http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>



EDITOR'S PICK

OUTINGS

Thu, Nov. 18

Perceptions Annual Thanksgiving Potluck and Food Drive, 7 p.m. Collecting food and personal hygiene items for the BASIS HIV/AIDS Care food pantry. All are welcome. 123 N Michigan Ave, **Saginaw**. 989-891-1429. info@perceptionssv.org. www.perceptionssv.org

UMD - Gender & Sexuality Alliance : Transgender Day of Remembrance, 7 p.m. Come recognize Transgender Day of Remembrance with Transgender Michigan, The Gender & Sexuality Alliance, and all of U of M Dearborn's Campus. Panel discussion, calm vigil, and light refreshments. 4901 Evergreen Rd, **Dearborn**. 1 734 776 8104. bj@pridesource.com. umdgsa.weebly.com

School of Social Work and Rainbow Network "Transgenderation" A documentary screening of Transgenderation as part of campus wide Trans Awareness Week activities. Trans generation is an eight part documentary series illuminating both the hopes and struggles of four transgender college students who are transitioning. Movie snacks will be provided. School of Social Work Room 2752, 1080 South University Avenue, **Ann Arbor**. 5 p.m. <http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/5992>

Outbreak, U-M School of Public Health, Spectrum Center "Transgender Awareness Week: Southern Comfort Screening" OUTbreak wishes to inform the university community about the barriers to health faced by transgender individuals. There will be a screening an award-winning documentary, Southern Comfort, which tells the story of Robert Eads, a trans-man with ovarian cancer. Following the movie will be a discussion of the film and how the documentary has altered the way people view the

world and how people can be cognizant of transgender identities. U-M School of Public Health, 1415 Washington Heights, **Ann Arbor**. 5 p.m. <http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/5992>

Fri, Nov. 19

(Trans)gender Awareness Week: Transgender Day of Remembrance, 6 p.m. A day set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. We will take time to both remember our past and celebrate our future. Spectrum Center, 100 Washtenaw Avenue, **Ann Arbor**. willsberry@umich.edu. spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/5992

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. The film, Hide and Seek, is a daring exploration into wild, uncharted territory--lesbian adolescence in the 1960's. Lou is a 12 year old girl who daydreams in a tree house, tries not to watch a sex education film, wins a rock throwing contest, and is horrified to discover that her best friend is taking an interest in earrings and boys. For every woman who's been to a slumber party and every man who wonders what went on at one. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ "Coffee House" Featuring local musicians Randy Roy, Tania Hayward and others. Free and open to everyone, all ages welcome! Right after Silver Bells in the City, Downtown Lansing Stop in right after the tree lighting! Open and Affirming Church, Strong supporter of Pride community. Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave., **Lansing**. 8 p.m. 517-484-7434. www.PilgrimUCC.com

Sat, Nov. 20

Standing on the Side of Love, 8:30 a.m. An event for immigration reform and LGBT justice fighting oppression. Registration: \$40, or \$20 for students and those on a low income. Unitarian Universalists, 23925 Northwestern Highway, **Southfield**. www.uujustice.org

Hepatitis A and B Vaccinations, 11 a.m. In partnership with ACCESS. Free, with HIV testing also available. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

A2's Got Talent, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m.. A talent show to benefit Together We Can, beginning with an AA Open Talk. \$5 suggested donation. 306 N. Division, **Ann Arbor**. twcdetroit.com. twcdetroit.com

Wed, Nov. 24

Women Loving Women Healthy Relationships Workshop Series, 7 p.m. Healthy relationship workshop series for women loving women Women's Center of Greater Lansing. 1712 E. Michigan Avenue, **Lansing**. 517-372-9163. womenscentergl@yahoo.com

Sun, Nov. 28

PFLAG Tri-Cities Monthly Meeting, 1 p.m. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Midland, Bay City, and Saginaw. PFLAG Tri-Cities offers Support, Education and Advocacy for LGBT people, families and friends. 2525 Hemmeter Rd at Weiss St, **Saginaw**. 989-941-1458. pflag@pflag-mbs.org. www.pflag-mbs.org

Wed, Dec. 1

LGBT in the Park, 5:15 p.m. A group for gay, bisexual, transgender and our allies for support will be meeting twice a month. 123 E. Nine Mile Rd, **Hazel Park**. 248-460-3251. Jffryoliver@yahoo.com

World AIDS Day 2010 Candlelight Vigil, 6 p.m. Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil. This event is free and open to the public. HIV/AIDS Care Services, 120 Ezra Rust Drive, **Saginaw**. 989-776-6000. tbrubaker@sacredheartcenter.com. www.sacredheartcenter.com

See Outings, page 28

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Voted WDIV Best Theatre Group 2010

The Gem serves up a sweet holiday treat

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

To be totally honest, the last place I wanted to be on a recent Thursday night was sitting in a dark theater. It had nothing to do with the show I was there to review, "Plaid Tidings" at The Gem Theatre. But a partially sleepless night, a 5:30 a.m. start to the business day, a more-hectic-than-usual workload and the start of a sinus headache all took their toll by late afternoon. So there I sat, wishing I was at home and getting ready for bed, when the lights dimmed and the show began. And thus it came to pass that within mere seconds - yes, seconds, thanks to a delightful curtain speech that set the tone for the rest of the evening - the superb harmonies, the excellent accompaniment, the laugh-out-loud humor and the sweet personalities of the four performers all combined to melt away the tensions of the day. The result was one of the most

REVIEW

'Plaid Tidings'

The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Wednesday-Sunday through Dec. 31; no shows Nov. 25 & Dec. 20-26. \$27.50 - \$32.50. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com



The Gem Theatre presents "Plaid Tidings" through Dec. 31. Photo: Courtesy of The Gem Theatre

enjoyable holiday shows I've seen in years! "Plaid Tidings" follows the unexpected reappearance of Jinx (Scott Barnhardt), Frankie (Bradley Beahen), Sparky (Jared Gertner) and Smudge (Kevin Vortmann), collectively known as The Plaid's, a '50s-era semi-professional harmony group killed in 1964 on their way to their first major gig. Their first return from the afterlife was chronicled in "Forever Plaid," in which the boys were given a once-in-a-post-lifetime

opportunity to perform their ill-fated show. And now they're back - in Detroit of all places - but why? That's what they've got to figure out, or they risk losing their heavenly positions as guardians of harmony.

To read the complete review, log on to ... www.EncoreMichigan.com or PrideSource.com

'Cabaret': Whistling past the graveyard

BY JOHN QUINN

"There was a cabaret, and there was a master of ceremonies ... and there was a city called Berlin, in a country called Germany...and it was the end of the world." That's an unusual ending to an American musical, but "Cabaret" is an unusual play. Far from the light themes of musical comedy, it's better described as musical tragedy. It's also an unusual choice for a university production, since the plot's nihilism seems out of place in a setting associated with bright futures. But director Greg Grobis and the University of Detroit-Mercy Theatre Company have mounted an emotional rollercoaster ride. In fact, casting students in these roles adds an extra somber note: One wonders how characters so young can be so jaded.

"Cabaret," with book by Joe Masteroff and music and lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb, is a peek at the last days of the Weimar Republic and the people who

REVIEW

'Cabaret'

UDM Theater Company & Marygrove College Music and Dance at Marygrove College Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit. Thursday-Saturday through Nov. 21. \$25. 313-993-3270. <http://theatre.udmercy.edu>



Maxwell Bolton as the Master of Ceremonies in the UDM Theatre Company's production of "Cabaret." Photo: Greg Grobis

diddled while Berlin burned. They "...have no problems?" They've masked their problems with denial, compromise and a thick coat of greasepaint.

American writer Clifford Bradshaw (Patrick O'Reilly), one novel into his career, is bumming around Europe seeking inspiration for the next. On the train to Berlin he meets a friendly German, Ernst Ludwig (Joel A. Frazee), who recommends places of lodging and entertainment. Those are the boarding house of Fraulein

Schneider and the Kit Kat Klub, a seedy dive if ever there was one. Cliff meets the headliner of the review, young Brit Sally Bowles (Susan Boonenberg) and a quirky relationship blooms.

To read the complete review, log on to ... www.EncoreMichigan.com or PrideSource.com

Play and playwright make a delightful debut

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

In the first act of his first produced play, a traditional but refreshing comedy called "The Current," Sean Paraventi offers more genuine laughs than anything I've seen all year. If he doesn't watch himself, Paraventi is in danger of becoming the next Neil Simon.

Now, why in the 21st century, the age of irony, multimedia and cutting-edge stagecraft, would any writer want to be the next Neil Simon? Could you possibly get more unhup? Simon has written some three dozen plays (possibly more, he works fast), perhaps 40 screenplays, won four Tonys (plus an honorary one), a Pulitzer Prize, has had a Broadway theater named after him and, along the way, brought laughter to millions of theatergoers around the world. Eww.

Yet, here, enabled by director Molly McMahon and a willing Magenta Giraffe

REVIEW

'The Current'

Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at 1515 Broadway St., Detroit. Thursday-Saturday through Dec. 4, plus Wednesday, Nov. 24; no show Thanksgiving Day. \$18. 313-408-7269. www.magentagiraffe.org



Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company's "The Current" can be seen at 1515 Broadway in Detroit through Dec. 4. Photo: Charles Nowak

Theatre Company cast and crew, is Paraventi writing the kind of play that might have had your parents in stitches - something about a bride-to-be and her three pals dropping in on a psychic, Madame Camille, before they get plastered at their bachelorette party. Bridesmaids? Psychics? Drunks? Theater doesn't get more old-school than that.

OK, bowing to contemporary sensibilities "The Current" is raunchier than your traditional comedy, so don't bring the

kids. "The Current" is current. "The Odd Couple," it ain't.

But Paraventi can sling a zinger with the best of 'em. Intently watching the pointer move on a ouija board, one character observes, "It's like a really slow text message."

To read the complete review, log on to ... www.EncoreMichigan.com or PrideSource.com

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Between The Lines™

MICHIGAN'S WEEKLY NEWS FOR LESBIANS, GAYS, BISEXUALS, TRANSGENDERS AND FRIENDS

Happenings

EDITOR'S PICK



Regardless of whether you grew up in the '70s listening to them or you've simply been to enough roller rinks (or pep rallies) to know every word to their smash hits, you won't want to miss Village People performing with The Trammps at Disco Party 2010 at the Sound Board in MotorCity Casino Hotel at 8 p.m. Nov. 19.

Last week, Felipe Rose, "the Indian," sat down with us to chat about the new show,

which will be traveling around the world: "The show's a time capsule of the era, which if you've never seen the group live, it'll give you a good sense of what we do and what we did back then – what made us good in that respect."

Tickets for the show are \$33-35 and can be purchased at any Ticketmaster outlet or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

► Outings

Continued from p. 26

Remember. Celebrate. Hope. 7 p.m. Grand Rapids' third annual World AIDS Day event to be held after many years without an associated event. East Congregational United Church of Christ, 1005 Giddings Avenue, **Grand Rapids**. 616-742-1116. <http://www.worldaidsgr.com/>

Chamber Music Society of Detroit presents Simone Dinnerstein, Piano Artist Repertoire: J.S. Bach, The Goldberg Variations. BWV 988 Seligman Performing Arts Center located at Detroit Country Day School, 22305 West 13 Mile Road, Beverly Hills. 7 p.m. Dec. 4. 248-855-6070. <http://www.comehearcmdsof.org/>

Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra "G.F. Handels Messiah", Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra in historic Fort Street Presbyterian Church in downtown Detroit. Tickets are \$20. Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort Street, Detroit. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 4. 313-961-3617. www.fortstreet.org

Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Holiday Brass" Two brass arrangements of familiar Handel tunes will evoke the season: "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Solomon and "Let the Bright Seraphim" from Samson. Music with holiday flair will include the overture to The Nutcracker, "I'll be Home for Christmas," "The Twelve Days of Christmas," "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World." Tickets are \$10-\$35. First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, 529 Hendrie Blvd, Royal Oak. 7:30 a.m. Dec. 5. 248-559-2095. <http://www.detroitchamberwinds.org>

Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra "G.F. Handels Messiah", Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra in historic Fort Street Presbyterian Church in downtown Detroit. Tickets are \$20. Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort Street, Detroit. 2 p.m. Dec. 5. 313-961-4533. www.fortstreet.org

Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Holiday Brass" Two brass arrangements of familiar Handel tunes will evoke the season: "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Solomon and "Let the Bright Seraphim" from Samson. Music with holiday flair will include the overture to The Nutcracker, "I'll be Home for Christmas," "The Twelve Days of Christmas," "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World." Tickets are \$10-\$35. Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, 16 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Farms. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12. 248-559-2095. <http://www.detroitchamberwinds.org>

CONCERTS

MSU College of Music "Musique 21" A free concert with music by Bates and Ruggiero. Music Building Auditorium, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18. 517-353-5340. www.music.msu.edu

Olympia Entertainment "John Mellencamp" The No Better Than This Tour. Tickets are \$42.50-125. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:45 p.m. Nov. 19. www.ticketmaster.com

Everybody Reads "Carrie Newcomer" A concert by the Grammy Award-winning

singer/songwriter. Everybody Reads Bookstore, 2019 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 11 a.m. Nov. 19. 517-346-9900. www.becauseeverybodyreads.com

Motor City Casino "Disco Party 2010" Featuring the Village People and The Trammps. Tickets are \$32-35. Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Avenue, Detroit. 7 p.m. Nov. 19. www.motorcitycasino.com

Kerrytown Concert House "David Sharp and the Secret Seven" Part 1: Journey to Africa. Tickets are \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Nov. 19. 734-769-2999. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Corner Brewery "Tret Fure" The artist's CD release tour. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. Corner Brewery, 720 Norris Street, Ypsilanti. 8 p.m. Nov. 20. www.tomboygirl.com

The Macombers "Macombers Fall Extravaganza" This year Magic Company and Vocal Pointe, as well as Macombers' Alumni, will join The Macombers in performing a range of music styles including Pop, Broadway, Big Band and a brand new "Glee" medley based on the popular television show. Advance tickets \$12 or \$14 at the door. 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 20. 586-286-2222. <http://www.macombcenter.com>

Kerrytown Concert House "Boogie-Woogie in the Afternoon" Three generations of boogie-woogie pianists meet at the KCH Steinway. Tickets are \$10-30. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Nov. 21. 734-769-2999. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

The Crosswell Opera House "Dueling Pianos at the Crosswell" Dueling Pianos with Marc Doiron and Smokin' George from Pontiac's JD's Key Club Thursday. Request any song and one of the rowdy piano players will bring it to life. Tickets \$14 to \$16. 129 E Maumee St, Adrian. 8 p.m. Nov. 24. 517-263-6868. <http://www.crosswell.org>

Franke Center For The Arts "Beatlemania" The captivating, fun, exciting spirit that came to be known as "Beatlemania" is alive again in the return of Jim Oliver and friends for another Thanksgiving weekend tribute to the Beatles. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for students and children under 12 years of age are free. 214 E Manson St, Marshall. 8 p.m. Nov. 27. 269-781-0001. <http://www.frankecenterforthearts.org>

Wharton Center "ABBA Mania" A performance by the premiere ABBA cover band. Tickets are \$32-42. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 3 p.m. Nov. 28. 517-353-1982. www.whartoncenter.com

See Music, page 30

MOT makes a meal out of Puccini's 'La Boheme'

BY MICHAEL H. MARGOLIN

"La Boheme" is the comfort food of opera – you know what to expect, it goes down easily and it is very satisfying. In the production that Michigan Opera Theatre opened Saturday night, the waitstaff, the maitre d' and the entire food prep crew – if you don't mind a metaphor stretched to the limit – made it a tasty evening.

After seeing and hearing more "Bohemes" than I have fingers (and maybe toes) I find it still has the capacity to move me: Mimi and Rodolfo meet cute in a 19th century attic apartment in Paris' Latin Quarter; they go to a big blowout at the Cafe Momus on Christmas Eve with half of Paris joining in. There one of Rodolfo's chums, Marcello, reunites with his former lover, Musetta, who sings one of the opera's greatest hits, "Quando m'en vo" that, like the rest of the opera, is surtitled.

In a cold February, Mimi and Rodolfo break up, in a beautiful snowy scene; then in the summer, back in the attic, Mimi enters wanly and with her fellow bohos at her side, she dies.

Boy meets girl, boy and girl part, girl dies – in four acts, nine months and just under three hours. And tears are shed, onstage and off.

As to my metaphor, here is the recipe that MOT used for this production: fresh, young talent well within the believable age range of the characters, an orchestra sounding like a Rolls Royce engine, and a production that is more intimate than many, emphasizing the characters and the drama without excess.

Originally created for l'Opera de Montreal, this production is nicely scaled, intimate – even the small attic is without the balcony where the roughhousing boys usually have their mock



Andrew Gray (Colline), Lee Gregory (Shaunard), Kelly Kaduce (Mimi), Kimwana Doner (Musetta) Francesco Demuro (Rodolfo), Marian Pop (Marcello) in Michigan Opera Theatre's production of "La Boheme." Photo: John Grigaitis

sword fight and the Cafe Momus scene seems like a charming place rather than a Las Vegas blowout so often seen in "Boheme" productions.

MOT's productions - for those with a memory - have showcased talents who have gone on to major careers such as Nicole Cabell, Charles Castronovo and Marius Kwieczen, most recently. This production has Kelly Kaduce, a major, rising star – she sang Donna Elvira last season in "Don Giovanni" and before that in the

REVIEW

'La Boheme'

Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Nov. 17, 19-21. \$29-\$121. 313-237-SING. www.MichiganOpera.org

world premiere of "Margaret Garner" at MOT.

Kaduce's voice is capable of big, lustrous climaxes and small subtle vocalization – she can be so many things that one hopes she will not settle into a Puccini-Mozart rut without testing herself in Verdi. Her Mimi was subtle and beautiful of voice.

As her lover, Detroit debutant, Sardinian tenor, Francesco Demuro has a lovely lyric tenor, though it was not able to be heard well in the climaxes. But he is boyishly handsome and has a voice that can only sound bigger and better as time goes on.

As the remaining bohemians, Andrew Gray as Colline, Lee Gregory as Shaunard, both very young and just starting careers show a degree of acting chops and smooth vocalizing that bode well. In the dual role of the landlord and Musetta's momentary companion, Jason Budd was fine. The sergeant and the Custom House officer in Act III were Christopher Vaught and Edward Hanlon, respectively.

The last set of lovers, Musetta and Marcello, were brought to life by Kimwana Doner and Marian Pop. Pop, familiar to MOT audiences, was the lead in MOT's world premiere of David DiChiera's "Cyrano". A fine singing-actor, Pop was a mellifluous Marcello. Doner graduated from Cass Tech, then sang in productions of the University of Michigan School of Music Theatre and was in the second cast of MOT's "Don Giovanni" last season. She is developing into a first-rate dramatic soprano with good looks and acting acuity.

Those are most of the ingredients: stirred together by stage director Mario Corradi whose only false step was the rather vulgar ass wiggling he devised for Musetta at the Cafe; and conducting by Giuliano Carella (he thrilled with last season's "Tosca") who knows how to get the product on the table with panache. This is a "Boheme" to please the cognoscenti and the first-time operagoer as well.

Bon appetit!

'The art of the possible' at The Box Theatre

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

When you think about the Tony Award-winning musical "Evita," what comes to mind? Most people, I imagine, envision a large, splashy production with about four dozen actors parading about a huge stage with expensive sets and colorful costumes. After all, that's what co-creator Andrew Lloyd Webber is known for – the spectacle disguised as theater – and that's what most people expect from his works.

But that's *not* what's on stage at the recently relocated Box Theatre – still in downtown Mount Clemens.

Rather, co-directors Rodel Salazar and John Forlini have boldly staged a production that harkens back to Eva Peron's lower class roots - that is, a scaled-back, small-budget venture that's slim on the visual trappings of the art form and stuffed into half of a not-yet-fully-renovated storefront. As such, the traditional and impersonal pageantry of the musical has been replaced by an intimate examination of the rise and fall of one of the most intriguing women of the mid 20th century. And for the most part, the concept works quite well. Because for all niceties their production lacks, the fiery passion of the material is well served by its hard-working, energetic and very capable cast.

"Evita," as pretty much everyone interested in musical theater knows by now, is the rock-opera story of the rise and fall of Argentina's



Christopher Dybash and Diana Turner from "Evita." Photo: The Box Theatre

one-time beloved first lady, Eva Peron. From humble beginnings and with a desire for a better life, 15-year-old Eva moved to the big city – Buenos Aires – to become an actress. From there she slept her way up the ladder of success until she reached the bedroom of Colonel Juan Peron, a rising political star with presidential aspirations. He wins – and so does she, as Eva (now Eva Peron) uses her charms (and further aspirations) to become a cult-like figure to the country's working class people. But before her dream of

REVIEW

'Evita'

What's That Smell? Productions at The Box Theatre, 51 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens. Nov. 12-14, 18, 20-21, 26-28 and Dec. 3-5. \$20. 586-954-2311.

becoming vice-president can come true, cancer makes other plans for her all-too-short future.

Perpetually popular on Broadway and throughout the world thanks to seemingly never-ending tours, "Evita" started out as a concert album by Webber and Tim Rice in 1976, became a film in 1996 and is scheduled for a Broadway revival in 2012. Along the way, it's not uncommon for theatergoers to catch the show multiple times (which, of course, theater owners *love*).

The show, however, may not be for everyone's taste, since "Evita" is more "opera" than "musical theater" - which means there is very little spoken dialogue. And the music is an eclectic mix - from rock to chorale, with a Latin influence dominating a handful of numbers.

So as you can imagine, any production of "Evita" demands a troupe of skilled singers who must have the chops to conquer Webber's occasionally difficult score. And in that regard, The Box has succeeded quite well.

In particular, John Forlini as Juan Peron and Diana Turner as Eva masterfully sing their roles. Forlini, too, is superb at conveying his character's thoughts with nothing more than a glance here and a gleam there. (One slight problem, though, is the lack of any sexual heat or tension between the two lovers.)

Turner, however, does her best work with Christopher Dybash, who plays Che, the production's narrator and "Greek chorus." The cynical Che sees all and knows all – and he's not afraid to share his thoughts with the audience. Dybash not only sings the role remarkable well, he also gives the character a razor-sharp edge that adds a delightful touch to this intimate production.

Also impressive is the body of singers/actors/dancers who round out the show. Their voices are smooth and blend together quite beautifully. And given the stage is about the size of my family room (although *they* have an upper level that I don't), the dance numbers as choreographed by Yana Levovna never look too crowded. (A few dancers *do* need to become more comfortable with their work, however. I could see one of them counting out the steps and looking scared as hell that he was going to miss one!)

All told, The Box Theatre's inaugural production in its new home is "Exhibit A" when it comes to a young and energetic company taking risks – and succeeding. It's not perfect, but it sure is a hell of a lot of fun!

► Music

Continued from p. 28

Greater Lansing Gay Men's Chorus The Lansing Community College Concer Choir, and Sistrum Lansing Women's Chorus "I Believe Holiday Concert" Tickets \$15 online and \$20 at the door. \$2 of each ticket goes to scholarship fund. Dart Auditorium, LCC Campus, Lansing. 8 p.m. Dec. 3 & 8 p.m. Dec. 4. <http://www.sistrum.org>

Detroit Together Men' Chorus "Spirits of Christmas Past" Tickets are \$18-25. Brian Londrow, Artistic Director. Tickets available online, or at Just4Us Ferndale, and Five15 Royal Oak. Lamphere High School Auditorium, 610 W Thirteen Mile Rd, Madison Heights. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 18. 248-544-3872. <http://www.dtmc.org>

DANCE

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble "20/20 Dance" The concert will present revivals of audience favorites and a new work by EDE Choreography Competition winner Daniel Gwartzman, celebrate 20 years of visionary dance. Tickets are \$16, \$12 for seniors, and \$8 for students. Seligman Performing Arts Center, 22305 W 13 Mile Rd, Beverly Hills. 8 p.m. Dec. 10. 248-559-2095. <http://ede-dance.org/>

Grand Rapids Bailey Company "The Nutcracker" A performance of the holiday favorite. Tickets are \$25-72. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Nov. 26 - Nov. 28. www.motopera.org

FESTIVALS

Fair Food Matters The "Fair Food Food Fair" is an evening of food-related fun, silent auction, live music and more. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. 6 p.m. Nov. 20. 269-492-1270. www.fairfoodmatters.org

FILM & VIDEO

Detroit Film Theater "My Dog Tulip" Based on the celebrated 1956 novel by J.R. Ackerley (We Think the World of You), the deeply touching My Dog Tulip is the first animated film to ever be entirely hand drawn and painted using high-definition paperless computer technology. Tickets \$6.50 members, \$7.50 non-members. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. Nov. 19 - Nov. 28. 313-833-7900. <http://www.dia.org>

Detroit Film Theater "Enamorada" Directed by Emilio Fernandez, and starring the incomparable Maria Felix and luminous cinematography by Gabriel Figueroa, Enamorada is one of the most memorable romances produced in the golden age of Mexican cinema during the 1930's and 40's. Tickets are \$6.50 for members and \$7.50 for non-members. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 8 p.m. Nov. 20. 313-833-7900.

Michigan Theater "A Christmas Story" Part of the Family-Friendly Film Series. Tickets: \$9 adults, free for kids 12 and under. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. 1:30 p.m. Dec. 5. www.michtheater.org

OTHER

Univ. Of Michigan Women's Studies "Drop The Knife: A Memoir in Song" Activist and singer/songwriter Jeanne Mackey marks her 60th birthday with a disarmingly honest and wryly funny musical chronicle of her search for personal and ancestral healing, from the high desert of the Eastern Sierras to the verdant Irish countryside. Free admission, donations benefit Peace Neighborhood Center's Performance Arts Academy. Keene Theatre, University of Michigan's Residential College, 701 E. University Street, Ann Arbor. 2 p.m. Nov. 21. <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mackeyj/>

Dawn Farm "Suicide and Recovery from Addiction" A presentation on suicidal thinking and its connection to recovery, free to the public. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 30. 734-485-8725. www.dawnfarm.org

Detroit Science Center "Noel, Noel"

Explore the wonders of winter as part of Ford Free Fundays. Detroit Science Center, 5020 John R Street, Detroit. 10 a.m. Dec. 4. 313-577-8400. www.detroitsciencecenter.org

SHOWS

AEG Live "Norm MacDonald" A performance by the actor and stand-up comedian. Tickets are \$29.50 in advance, \$35 day of show. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth Street, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Nov. 20. 248-399-2980. www.royaloakmusictheatre.com

MotorCity Casino "George Wallace" A performance by the stand-up comedian. Tickets are \$35-55. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Nov. 24. www.motorcitycasino.com

Olympia Entertainment "Mike Epps" A stand-up comedy performance, with special guest Bruce Bruce. Tickets are \$48-78. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Nov. 27. www.ticketmaster.com

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

24 Hours PM \$12. Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through Nov. 21. 1-877-636-3320. www.michiganactorsstudio.com

A Christmas Story \$15. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Nov. 19 - Dec. 12. 248-553-2955. www.farmingtonplayers.org

Annie \$18-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Civic Auditorium, 329 South Park St., Kalamazoo. Nov. 26 - Dec. 12. 269-343-1313. www.kazooocivic.com

Escanaba in Love Dinner served one hour prior to show time; advance reservations required. \$23 dinner & theater; \$10-\$12 show only. Thebes Players at Larkins Restaurant, 301 W. Main St., Lowell. Through Nov. 20. 616-897-8545. www.lowellartscouncil.org

Forever Christmas A Christmas to Remember \$16-18. Avon Players, 1185 Washington, Rochester Hills. Nov. 26 - Dec. 11. 248-608-9077. www.avonplayers.org

Hamilton Bus Stop \$15. Hammertheatre, Artword Artbar, 15 Colbourne Street, Hamilton, Ontario. Nov. 18 - 28. 905-543-8512. www.artword.net/artbar

One-Act Play Festival Five Bowls Of Oatmeal \$15. 826 Michigan at Mendelssohn Theater, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. Nov. 22. 734-761-3463. www.826michigan.org

Palmer Park \$14-\$26. The Park Players at North Rosedale Park Community House, 18445 Scarsdale, Detroit. Through Nov. 21. 313-835-1103. <http://parkplayers.wordpress.com>

Proposals \$15. Spotlight Players at The Village Theatre at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Rd., Canton. Through Nov. 21. 734-394-5300. www.spotlightplayersmi.org

Silver Bells in the City Free. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. 6 p.m. Nov. 19. 517-482-5700. www.riverwalktheatre.com

Some Enchanted Music, a Tribute to Rodgers and Hammerstein \$5. The Kalamazoo Civic Senior Class Reader Theatre at Carver Center Studio, 426 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Through Nov. 20. 269-343-1313. www.kazooocivic.com

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee \$18. The Players Guild of Dearborn, 21730 Madison St., Dearborn. Through Dec. 5. 313-561-8587. www.playersguildofdearborn.org

White Christmas \$12. Downriver Youth Performing Arts Center at Trenton Village Theatre, 2447 W. Jefferson, Trenton. Through Nov. 20. 734-362-8153. www.dypac.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

As You Like It \$15. Michigan State University Department of Theatre, Pasant Theatre, 150 Wharton Center, East Lansing. Nov. 16 - 21. 517-353-1982. www.whartoncenter.com

Gibson Fleck Written by current MT students of U of M. \$24. The University of Michigan Department of Musical Theatre at The Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. Nov. 18 - 21. 734-764-2538. www.music.umich.edu/performances

La Finta Giardiniera \$20. MSU Opera Theatre at Fairchild Theatre, 150 Auditorium, East Lansing. Nov. 19 - 21. 517-432-2000. www.whartoncenter.com

My One and Only \$20. Western Michigan University at Shaw Theatre at the Gilmore Theatre Complex, 1903 W Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Through Nov. 21. 269-387-6222. www.wmuthattheatre.com

PROFESSIONAL THEATER

A Strange Disappearance of Bees \$17, \$20 at the door; \$70 New Year's Eve. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson St., Detroit. Through Dec. 26. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

Bag Lady \$15. Dancing Shoes Productions at Boll Family YMCA Theatre, 1401 Broadway St., Detroit. 8 p.m. Nov. 20. 313-570-2605.

Best Damn Holiday Show \$10-\$15. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Nov. 18 - Dec. 23. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Best of Friends \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 18. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

Cabaret \$25. UDM Music Company & Marygrove College Theater and Dance at Marygrove College Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit. Through Nov. 21. 313-993-3270. <http://theatre.udmercy.edu>

Christmas on Mars \$10-\$20. Who Wants Cake, The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Nov. 19 - Dec. 13. 248-545-5545. www.who-wants-cake-theatre.com

Dance Xanax Dance \$20; half-price nights are Nov. 24 and Dec. 7. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Nov. 24 - Dec. 18. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Detroit Be Dammed A Beaver's Tale \$25. Planet Ant Theatre at Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Nov. 24 - Dec. 18. 313-365-4948. www.parkbardetroit.com

Don't Be Cruel - The Life and Times of the King \$25-\$35; Dinner and show packages available Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday for \$69.95 per couple. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Through Nov. 28. 248-348-4448.

Driving Miss Daisy \$23-\$25. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Nov. 21. 269-343-2727. www.farmersalleytheatre.com

Every Christmas Story Ever Told And Then Some \$18 show only; \$30 for dinner and show. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for dinner, and 7:30 p.m. for those just seeing the show. Gourmet buffet-style dinner; reservations required. AP Theatrical Productions, Baker Lofts, 171 E. 24th St., Holland. Nov. 19 - Dec. 4. 616-772-5697. www.aptheatrical.com

Evita \$20. What's That Smell? Productions at The Box Theatre, 51 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens. Through Dec. 5. 586-954-2311.

Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy! \$15 per show; "Dark Matter" is free. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Greater Tuna Previews Nov. 18 (\$15). \$18-\$24. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Rd., Williamston. Through Dec. 19. 517-655-7469. www.williamstontheatre.org

Guys On Ice Previews Nov. 18-19 (\$20). \$28-\$30 adults; \$75 New Year's Eve. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Nov. 18 - Jan. 15. 248-347-

EDITOR'S PICK



0003. www.tippingpointtheatre.com

I've Been Through 2 Much Already \$20. Brothers On The Move Productions & J Mayes Productions at WSU Community Arts Auditorium, 451 Rether Mall, Detroit. Nov. 27. 313-478-4250.

In The Mood \$37-\$52. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44757 Garfield Rd., Clinton Township. 3 p.m. Nov. 21. 586-286-2222. www.macombcenter.com

It's a Wonderful Life \$28. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Nov. 26 - Dec. 23. 734-268-6200. <http://theencoretheatre.org>

La Boheme \$29-\$121. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Nov. 21. 313-237-SING. www.MichiganOpera.org

Laugh-A-Palooza \$15 general admission, \$22.50 reserved, and \$27.50 VIP. The Palace of Auburn Hills, 6 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 27. 248-377-0100. www.palacenet.com

Legally Blonde The Musical \$27.50 and above. Broadway Grand Rapids at DeVos Performance Hall, 303 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids. Nov. 23 - 28. 1-800-745-3000. www.broadwaygrandrapids.com

Mary Poppins \$17.50 and above. Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Through Nov. 21. 1-800-942-7866. www.MaryPoppins.com

Of Mice and Men Plays in rotating repertory. \$25 - \$30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 5. 313-577-2972. www.wsushows.com

Plaid Tidings \$27.50 - \$32.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Through Dec. 31. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com

Richard III \$25-\$30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Plays in rotating repertory Nov. 19 - Feb. 25. 313-577-2972. www.hilberry.com

Rock of Ages \$29-\$79. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Through Nov. 21. 313-872-1000. www.broadwayindetroit.com

Sherlock Holmes Is Coming To Dinner \$16. Dennis Wickline Productions, Inc. at Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Rd., Eastpointe. Through Nov. 20. 586-771-6333. www.broadwayonstage.com

Sister's Christmas Catechism Previews Nov. 17-18 (\$15). \$27.50-\$32.50. The Century Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Nov. 17 - Dec. 31. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com

Sundays at Go Comedy! \$7 for the evening. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

t&a \$5. Crawspace Theatre Productions at Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Nov. 19 - 20. 269-599-7390. www.crawspacetheatre.com

The Current \$18 adult. Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company, 1515 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Dec. 4. 313-408-7269. www.magentagiraffe.org

The Drowsy Chaperone Previews Nov. 18 (\$10-\$37). \$30-\$46. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Dec. 26. 734-663-0681. www.performancecenternetwork.org

The Key \$15-\$75. Key Performing Arts, Inc. at The Seigman Performing Arts Center, 22305 W. 13 Mile Rd., Beverly Hills. Nov. 20 - 21. 248-683-3637. www.thekeythemusical.com

Thursdays at Go Comedy! \$10 for the evening. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Topdog/Underdog \$15-\$25. The Blackbird Theatre, 325 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. Through Nov. 20. 734-332-3848. www.blackbirdtheatre.org

Two's Company, Four's a Blizzard Dinner theater performances Nov. 27 & Dec. 11 (\$36; buffet begins at 6:30). \$19. Van Buren Street Theatre, 701 N. Van Buren St., Bay City. Through Dec. 11. 989-893-9399. www.vanburenstreettheatre.com

Wednesdays at Go Comedy! \$5-\$7. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

ART 'N' AROUND

Riverside Arts Center "Live Inspired Art" Works by Ypsilanti artist Steve Allen. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti. Nov. 4 - Nov. 21. 734-480-2787. www.riversidearts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Nature 2 Nature" Works by artist Tim Marsh. Opening reception held 6-9 p.m. Nov. 5. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Nov. 3 - Nov. 27. 248-544-0394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

Leon & Lulu "Artists' Market" Featuring hand-crafted items by local artisans. Free. Leon & Lulu, 96 W. 14 Mile Road, Clawson. Aug. 29 - Nov. 30. www.leonandlulu.com

Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery "Picking Up the Pieces" With works from the Mariner's Inn and N.O.A.H./Art & Soul participants. Opening reception held 1-4 p.m. 33 E. Adams,

Princess Diana was no doubt an inspiration to not only countless Britons but people across the world. She was bold, honest and shockingly human as a member of the royal family, and her personal story both touches the heart and inspires. She brought attention to the epidemic of AIDS and worked to create and support many charities. Until Feb. 16, the Grand Rapids Art Museum will showcase the award-winning "Diana, A Celebration" exhibition, an opportunity to add an entirely new dimension to your understanding of this historical woman. The exhibition features nine galleries of designer outfits, family heirlooms, mementos, home videos and even the royal wedding gown.

Tickets – \$20 for adults (student, senior and child discounts are available) – can be purchased at the GRAM info desk, online at startickets.com or by calling 1-800-585-3737.

Detroit. Oct. 23 - Dec. 4. 313-963-7575.

The Art Experience "Ports O Call" 10th annual fundraiser. Scheduled events include silent and live auctions, a grand raffle, food, entertainment and cash bar. Original artwor The Crofoot Ballroom, 1 South Saginaw, Pontiac. 4 p.m. Dec. 5. 248-706-3304. <http://www.theartexperience.org>

Kresge Art Museum "The Power of Design" An exhibition of Chinese textiles, costumes and accessories. Free. Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Oct. 9 - Dec. 17. 517-884-0659. www.artmuseum.msu.edu

MSU Museum "Dear Mr. Mandela, Dear Mrs. Parks" Children's Letters, Global Lessons. Showing in the Main Gallery. MSU Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Dec. 20 - Jan. 3. [museum.msu.edu](http://www.museum.msu.edu)

Sherry Washington Gallery "Free Radicals", paintings by Senghor Reid Sherry Washington Gallery, 1274 Library St, Detroit. Nov. 20 - Jan. 22. 313-961-4500. <http://www.sherrywashingtongallery.com>

Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum "Artists Portray Artists" An exhibition of 35 portraits and self-portraits. Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum, 7400 Bay Road, Saginaw. Oct. 1 - Jan. 29. 989-964-7096. www.marshallfredericks.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Simon Dybbroe Moller" Sculptures and other works by the Danish-born artist. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State, Ann Arbor. Nov. 6 - Jan. 30. 734-763-UMMA. www.umma.umich.edu

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Diana, A Celebration" An exhibit with personal objects of Princess Diana, including dresses, home movies and more. Tickets: \$20 adults, \$18 seniors and college students, \$15 youth. Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Nov. 9 - Feb. 16. www.artmuseumgr.org

The Henry Ford "George Washington Carver" An exhibit celebrating the work and life of the extraordinary American. Admission: \$15 adults, \$14 seniors, \$11 youth. The Henry Ford Museum, 20900 Oakwood, Dearborn. Nov. 1 - Feb. 27. 313-982-6001. www.thehenryford.org

Midweek Meditation Group We are a group of local folks of all ages, backgrounds and traditions who meet every Wednesday in downtown Ferndale. All are welcome. Non-religious, non-sectarian group purely interested in creating a safe and welcoming space. \$3 donation suggested. 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. The Dharma Room, 195 West 9 Mile, Suite 106, Ferndale. Nov. 3 - April 27. 248-547-2987. <http://www.meetup.com/Midweek-Meditation-Group/>

“By Nightfall,” by Michael Cunningham. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 256 pages, \$25 hardcover.

The allure of astounding beauty and how the mind can betray the body are the core of Cunningham’s elegant novel, whose efficient narrative arc echoes that of Thomas Mann’s “Death in Venice” (Cunningham prefaced a new translation a few years ago): older man is enraptured by younger man’s physical perfection. Here, the older man is Peter Harris, happily married to Rebecca, with a burgeoning career as a middle-aged art curator in Manhattan. The younger man is his wife’s rascalion brother, Ethan, a lithe 23, known to the family as Mizzy, “the mistake” – his birth, decades after Rebecca’s, wasn’t planned. He’s a moocher, a drug addict, a Yale dropout and, in Peter’s eyes, hypnotically handsome, all the more so because he is his much older sister’s male-model look-alike, recalling for Peter Rebecca’s beauty when they first met. Mid-age angst, the hollow nature of elites, the elusiveness of once-dreamed goals, the vanity of unexamined lives – all are qualms confronted in a poetically pyrotechnic mix of humor and pathos about achieving the strength to forgive self and others.

“Missed Her,” by Ivan E. Coyote. Arsenal Pulp Press, 148 pages, \$16.95 paper.

There is something to be said for knowing what to expect from an author. From Coyote – certainly for her story collections – that means a divinely astute and gently witty lot of life-based vignettes (though the book is labeled



Featured Excerpt

“When is Mizzy coming?” he asks. “He said sometime next week. You know how he is.” “Mm.” Peter does, in fact, know how he is. He’s one of those smart, drifts young people who, after certain deliberations, decides he wants to do Something in the Arts but won’t, possibly can’t, think in terms of an actual job; who seems to imagine that youth and brains and willingness will simply summon an occupation, the precise and perfect nature of which will reveal itself in its own time. This family of women really ruined the poor kid, didn’t they? Who could survive having been so desperately loved?”

–from *By Nightfall*, by Michael Cunningham

fiction). The short-shorts – most just four pages long, revised from Coyote’s regular column in the Vancouver paper “Xtra West” – cover a spectrum of situations and experiences, but most are rooted in the author’s mixed-signal gender identity: she’s a boyish-looking butch lesbian with a lapdog for a pet. The 30 tales, a bracing blend of self-effacing and brave, embrace universal themes within singular

moments – “Good Old Days,” about teaching memoir writing to a class of senior citizens, confronts Coyote’s concerns about their potential prejudice and realizes the sentiment that “love is just love.” Fans of the author’s four previous collections won’t find a new take on queer life here, or a distinct departure in style. But in the case of Coyote’s warm, perceptive storytelling, familiarity breeds contentment.

“The Right to Be Out: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in America’s Public Schools,” by Stuart Biegel, 300 pages, \$19.95 paper.

With queer-teen suicides suddenly in the news – not that they haven’t deserved coverage before now – Biegel’s academic analysis of how America’s educational system handles sexual orientation takes on a deserved populist mantle. That said, this isn’t always an easy read – though it demands to be read by more than the education professionals constituting its primary market, it definitely belongs in every school library, and Biegel often humanizes the abstract by telling the stories of teens who have confronted homophobia. From examining the legal foundations of the right to be out and the tension between rights on paper and the realities of the classroom, and from exploring how to create change in the classroom to the oppressive culture of school sports, teen bullying – though not the book’s focus – is a thematic, timely presence; so is a concluding chapter on challenges faced by transgender teens, the newest frontier in the struggle for gender identity rights and freedom. Rigorous scholarship and empathic writing come



together to shape a breakthrough book.

“Something About Trevor,” by Drew Hunt. JMS Books, 184 pages, \$12 paper.

One “something” about Trevor is that he’s gay – and pretty proud about it, or at least defiantly open.

Another “something” about Trevor is that cricket player Paul – not quite a stereotypical straight man, though not far from one either – verges on panic when, homeless because of a flood, Trevor offers a spare room in his flat. Paul demurs, but after a couple of nights on the lumpy couch of a loutish friend, he girds his emotional loins and accepts. Yet another “something” about Trevor is that, as time passes, Paul’s tolerance of his queer ways increases – especially after the flamboyant lad proves to be something of a whiz cricket bowler (the novel is set in small-town England, where weekend cricket is a jockish norm; think of the bowler as the pitcher in baseball). Hunt’s easy-read romance, aimed at readers slightly older than young adult, tackles sports bullying, cultural homophobia, fear of intimacy and coming out with storytelling that is more earnest than stylish, yet with an emotional honesty that propels the tale.

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Holiday parties not what I planned for

Q. It's getting close to holiday time again, and I can feel myself starting to get depressed. I just know that this happens every year and, usually, I just wait it out. Once the holidays are over I feel better and start functioning again. During the holidays I usually just quit doing things, sleep as much as possible, and try to ignore all the excitement and "happiness" (fake or real) around me.

This has worked for me my whole life, but now I have moved in with a woman "Karen." (We only dated for several months). Little did I know that she "loves" the holidays. She says she always has a huge Thanksgiving dinner for all her friends and anyone else who doesn't have a place to be – usually between 25 or 30 people come to dinner.

I didn't know this until the other day when she started planning all the things "we" needed to do, what recipes we would be using, the food we needed to pick up, and then who we would be inviting. I didn't know what to say and was just sitting there in shock when she told me. Karen noticed I was being quiet and asked what was wrong. When I told her I didn't do holidays, she informed me that I would need to start because not only is Thanksgiving a big deal, but Christmas is an even bigger deal.

She apparently starts decorating the house as soon as Thanksgiving is over. She has several parties during the Christmas season, and then there is another big dinner for all her friends and anyone not having a place to go on Christmas Day. Karen said she has been doing this for years and is not about to change. Not only does she not plan on changing, but she wants me to be part of the whole thing.

I don't think I can be part of it and I don't even know if I want to. How do I get Karen to see my point of view and tone down the whole holiday scene?

Bah Humbug

A. Apparently, the two of you met and moved in together before you really knew each other very well. And now you have found out that you and Karen are polar opposites when it comes to the holiday season.

You both are going to have to give a little and be more understanding of each other. You and Karen need to have a time to express how each of you feels about the holidays. Let Karen know that you feel depressed and sleep your way through that time. Listen to Karen about why it is important to her and how she feels. You can't expect Karen to give up her holiday excitement any more than she can expect you to feel the same way over the upcoming season.

See if the two of you can come up with a compromise so that she can enjoy the holidays and her friends, and you can take a lesser role in all the hoopla of the season.

In the meantime I suggest you go to your primary physician and tell her about your depression during the holidays – she may be able to give you something to help with it. You didn't mention why you get depressed during the holidays; this may be a good time for you to seek counseling to look at what the holiday season means to you and why you get so depressed, since you don't suffer from depression.

I'm guessing that this will not be the only surprising difference between the two of you, since you don't know each other that well. If the two of you can make your way through this situation by listening to each other, honoring the needs of the other and compromising, you stand a very good chance for a long and loving relationship.

Sadness and depression are not uncommon during the holiday season, but it can be avoided, or at least lessened. To learn more about coping strategies for the holiday blues, check out *Dear Jody Valley* on Facebook.

Jody Valley spent 12 years as a clinical social worker. She worked with the LGBT community both as a counselor and a workshop leader in the areas of coming out, self-esteem and relationship issues. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly. Reach Jody at DearJodyValley@hotmail.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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Have fun searching, and good luck!

FIND THE FAKE AD CONTEST

by Jack Fertig

Don't change now, Capricorn!

Venus turning direct in Libra offers new chances to fix love affairs, creative projects and political efforts that have been recently going nowhere. Embrace new ideas and inspirations, even if they may need some critical examination and improvement.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Sex can be a distraction from your worries and doubts – or it can be the way to open them up. Deep, honest intimacy with your partner is the key. That can be a frightening challenge, but if you can't do that, what kind of relationship is it?

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): You can finally clean up recent misadventures in teamwork. Some diplomacy may be required to handle obstinate colleagues, but the boss is in your corner. Have clear goals and plans, but also be willing for them to get tweaked.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): All work and no play may be your best strategy for now. Your efforts and dedication will be noticed and rewarded. At games it seems you can't win for losing. Explore new creative expressions, but take time to absorb the new perspectives.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Get creative and fix up problems around the house that have been bugging you lately – new lamp? new partner? A romp in the sack with a little fantasy play or revealing other untold desires could be all the change the bedroom needs.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Something creative from the kitchen could get neighborly relations back on the track. OK, it doesn't have to be your own kitchen! Padding the bedroom walls with an effective sound absorbent could help too.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Efforts to get ahead at work may be more eager than effective. Your partner and close friends have helpful ideas. They could be brilliant with some discussion and tweaking – or rather "adjustment." Someone at work likely has a drug problem. Examine your own habits first.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Even the fairest in the land could stand some improvement. A new, fun, creative look doesn't have to get expensive. Set a budget and start at the thrift

stores. The best cosmetic is still and always an upbeat attitude.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): You've been too aware lately of your inner flaws. Nobody's perfect; welcome to humanity! For every problem there's a solution. Examine old negative messages from childhood and rewrite them with creative affirmations.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Your friends are only human. Forgive them when they disappoint you. Stay true to your deepest self. You may find surprising insight either from parental influence or your rebellion against it. At least this you can discuss with friends for better insight.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Reevaluate your ambitions and hopes. Don't change now, but consider ideas for later course corrections. Criticism from friends should be welcome; the more blunt and honest, the better! The occasional shock is good for your system.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Entertain new ideas from the experts. The more challenged you are, the more you can change your mind, the more you can grow and improve! Let yourself feel a bit lost. That's the first step to really finding yourself.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): What do you really want in bed? Getting to the root of recent sexual frustrations will mean losing old ideas, and perhaps some cherished but obsolete dreams and ideals. Real growth requires vulnerability and letting go.

Jack Fertig, a professional astrologer since 1977, is available for personal and business consultations in person in San Francisco, or online everywhere. He can be reached at 415-864-8302, through his website at www.starjack.com, and by e-mail at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.

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Solution to puzzle from page 34

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P	E	N	N	T	R	I	P	N	C	A	A		
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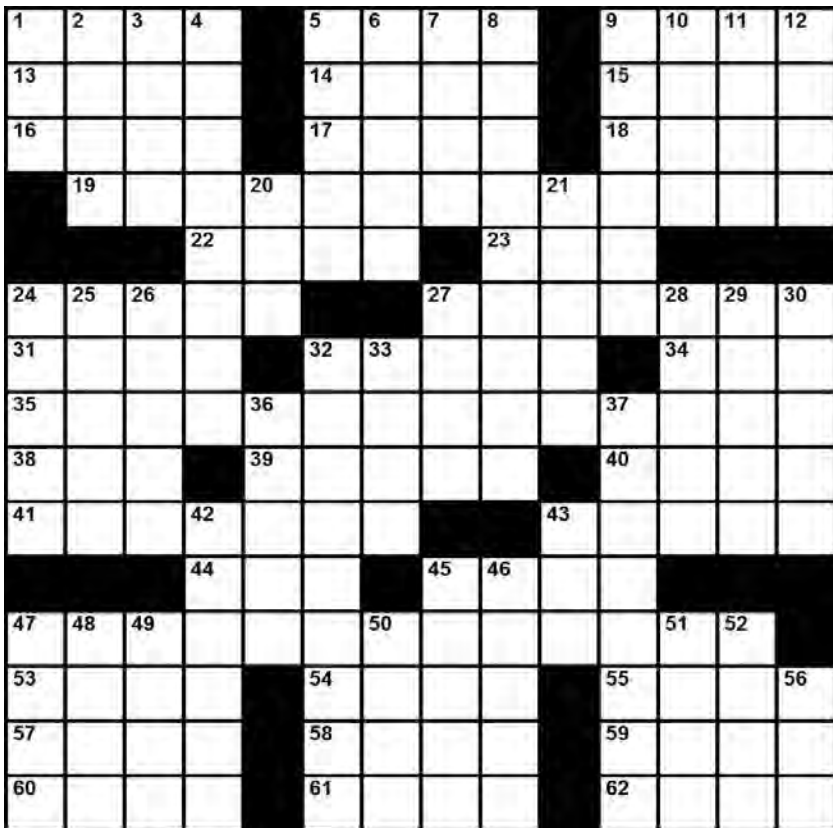
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Across

- 1 Well endowed
- 5 Cole Porter's Indiana home-town
- 9 Tie it to become wife and wife
- 13 Seesaw sitter of verse
- 14 Sparkle
- 15 Wilde land
- 16 Harvey Milk portrayer Sean
- 17 Send tumbling
- 18 Final Foursome org.?
- 19 Half of a lesbian couple with 10 kids
- 22 Madonna, in a creche
- 23 Mary Cheney's partner Heather
- 24 Escorted from the door
- 27 Streep kisser at the Oscars
- 31 "Why should ___ you?"
- 32 "Bear" that's not a bear
- 34 Nureyev's nyet

- 35 Partner of 19-Across Tracy
- 38 Catchall abbr.
- 39 "What does she see ___?"
- 40 Go bananas
- 41 Saltwater swimmer
- 43 Swamp critter
- 44 Pique condition?
- 45 Porn star Long ___ Silver
- 47 Nickname of 19-Across for her family
- 53 "I Sing the Body Electric" poet Whitman
- 54 Room for Marga Gomez
- 55 "East of Eden" director Kazan
- 57 Norse port
- 58 Shiite leader
- 59 Jethro of rock
- 60 From A to B, to Debussy
- 61 Warrior Princess of the boob tube
- 62 Bear market order

Down

- 1 Like some cats
- 2 Visitor at lesbianation.com
- 3 Second starter
- 4 Maker of things you shoot off
- 5 Pears of a gay pair
- 6 Judy Jetson's brother
- 7 Police incursion at Stonewall
- 8 Eliciting boos, perhaps
- 9 Where bitches hang out
- 10 Easy partner
- 11 Kind of stimulating
- 12 Pond swimmer
- 20 "At Seventeen" singer Janis
- 21 Faith in music
- 24 These are a few of my favorite things
- 25 Make heady
- 26 Old record label
- 27 Overdo it at South Beach
- 28 "___ at time!" (No three-somes!)
- 29 Sailor's load
- 30 Comical bandleader Kay
- 32 Totally gay guy
- 33 Publisher Adolph
- 36 Diana's accessory
- 37 Stocking material for queens?
- 42 Bottom's circus favorite?
- 43 Horny animal
- 45 Thomas of poetry
- 46 Care prefix
- 47 Groups waiting for wedding licenses
- 48 Doest own
- 49 Woods of "Legally Blonde"
- 50 Edna, for one
- 51 Crime-solving game
- 52 San Francisco's Nob ___
- 56 Pledge of Allegiance ender

Solution on 33

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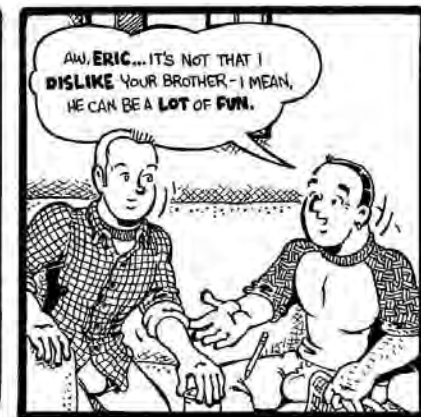
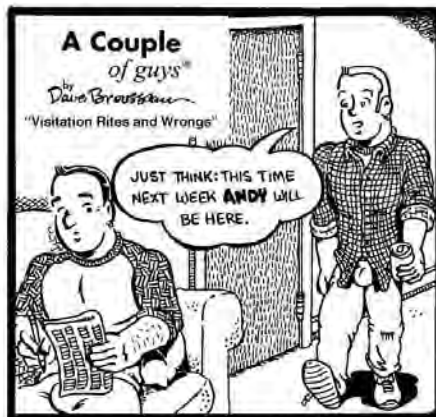
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In the Drink: Grappa vs. the Bellini

“Let’s go to Italy,” Dan suggested out of the blue.

“Yay!” I cried and jumped onto his lap. He was reading “The Economist,” which got badly crushed, and he spilled his seltzer, and I got chewed out.

I’d never been to Italy, so to me, it was a dream-like country with 583 kinds of pasta (like strozzaprelli, or choked priests, which conjured images of kinky intra-clerical sex acts gone terribly wrong), seafood antipasti, fabulous wines and deep-fried artichokes. Oh, and the great gay artists: the repressed Michelangelo and Caravaggio, the bad boy of the Baroque who wasn’t repressed at all.

Venice came first. I convinced Dan that we should take a private water taxi to our hotel, so we sped along the waterways directly to the front door. That’s when Dan fell into the Grand Canal.

There he was, bobbing in the filthy water, clutching his sinking suitcase with one hand and grasping the dock with the other. The taxi guy fished him out rapidly, and the hotel staff came rushing out shouting, and the only things that went missing were a guidebook and Dan’s entire self-esteem.

Reader, I couldn’t help myself: I laughed. This was not a wise move.

We had dinner last night with our Pines housemate Chipper, who was aghast at the waterlogged details I dropped. “No,” he said. “*Ja wohl*,” I replied darkly. Dan was furious. “You promised you weren’t going to tell,” he complained. “And anyway, that’s not Italian; it’s German.”

He must have been truly offended by my little breach of a major confidence to miss the “My Fair Lady” reference. I do feel guilty – but not guilty enough to withhold from you the supremely hilarious sight of a dripping Dan being hoisted out of the drink by a young boater with great lats. And the way he reeked as he trickled onto the dock! *Molto disgustoso!*

Chipper changed the subject: “Did you go to Harry’s Bar for Bellinis?” Now I was indignant. “I would not set foot in that, that *trappola per turistica*, if Hemingway’s life depended on it. Besides, I hate Hemingway.” The Bellini was indeed invented in Harry’s Bar in Venice, where the alcoholic, overrated writer hung out. We had our guidebook Bellinis in the more gracious Danieli Hotel, which is equally *trappola*, but at least there are some gorgeous young Venetian waiters who look like they’d rather be in South Beach.

The Bellini is an overly sweet mess of a drink that should only be made with fresh peach juice and good Prosecco. Most places use sweetened peach nectar and cheap bubbly. I’ll stick with Italy’s more chest-hair-oriented grappa. Grappa is essentially firewater. It has the clear, clean taste of grain alcohol – but it’s kissed by the faint essence of the grape from which it’s distilled. I ordered it at cocktail hour. Dan was embarrassed. “You’re not supposed to drink that before dinner!” “Oh, pooh! Supposed by *who?*” I said, admiring my impromptu rhyme. The point is: drink grappa when you want grappa. And I’ll take a mediocre grappa over a bad Bellini any day.

The Bellini

Get yourself an electric juicer, run perfectly ripe peaches through it, and mix with chilled Prosecco.

Grappa

Buy a bottle. Drink it. What? You don’t like your new chest hair? So shave it.

Ed Sikov is the author of “Dark Victory: The Life of Bette Davis” and other books about films and filmmakers.

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Tom Cruise (with Cameron Diaz) from "Knight and Day." Photo: Twentieth Century Fox.

Does Tom Cruise wanna 'Rock'?

When you think of Tom Cruise and the 1980s, what's the first thing that comes to mind? "Cocktail" is the right answer, obviously, and it's clearly on the minds of gay director Adam Shankman and his new collaborator, Chris D'Arienzo, too. Together, the pair will bring D'Arienzo's Tony Award-nominated hair-metal musical "Rock of Ages" to the big screen and they'd like Tom Cruise to join in on the fun. If Cruise agrees, he'll be playing a supporting role, a bartender who loves to belt out '80s hits by Def Leppard and Poison. And if he wants to juggle a few booze bottles while doing so then

who's going to stop him? The guilty-pleasure musical is also rumored to be casting the equally unlikely musical talents of Seth Rogen and that well-established song delivery system named Taylor Swift. So please, Mr. Cruise, consent to this role. They have this thing called AutoTune now and it does wonders for people like you. Furthermore, if a poll were taken right now, it would be unanimous that audiences really want to hear you take on Warrant's "Cherry Pie."

Drew Barrymore's next 'Angels' idea

You can thank Drew Barrymore's tenacious producing skills and this season's successful

reboot of '70s TV staple "Hawaii Five-0" for the following bit of news: "Charlie's Angels" may be returning to your television screens. The big-screen version starring Barrymore, Lucy Liu and Cameron Diaz was successful enough to spawn a somewhat less successful sequel. But the Angels have always really been more at home on the small screen. And after a year in development, three new crime-fighting ladies are headed back to the set for a pilot. Production is scheduled to take place in Miami early in 2011, which means there's not much time to assemble a powerful triad of sexy, smart, hair-flipping women to fill the shoes of the legendary Kate, Jaclyn and Farrah. An entire squadron of executives is trying to figure out how to meet Megan Fox's salary quote right now.

'True Blood' to feature even more lesbians

In the great battle of Gayest Show On Television That's Not Already "The A List: New York," most people would simply declare "Glee" the winner. But that's just because those people haven't gotten on board the "True Blood" train yet. Not even counting the gay man-vamps, "TB" is a homopalooza of sexy femme ghouls, a lesbian blood utopia. So why not add another next season? That's what will happen with new character "Naomi," an Asian-American cage fighter who enjoys the company of other females when not fighting them to the death. The possibilities for entanglements with the shows other lez-leaning ladies like Kristin Bauer, Evan

Rachel Wood, Jessica Tuck and Lindsey Haun are practically endless. No one's been cast in the role of Naomi yet, but that sound you just heard was every Asian actress in Hollywood practicing kickboxing moves and their sensually-biting-stuff techniques.

Sarah Silverman takes off her clothes for Sarah Polley

Acclaimed actor-director Sarah Polley ("Dawn of The Dead") has already wowed critics with her Julie Christie-starring feature "Away From Her" and expectations are high for her upcoming comedy "Take This Waltz," starring Michelle Williams and Seth Rogen. Sarah Silverman has been part of the cast for a while now, as Rogen's sister, but news of her shooting a nude scene for the film has just surfaced. Strangely enough, this news has reverberated around the Internet not so much among lesbians or straight men, but among her gay male fans. Silverman has long been a champion of gay rights and of hilariously edgy gay jokes, so she's become something of a queer comedy diva. And even if her following isn't so into the lust-inducing properties of her "big naturals" (as she frequently refers to them) it seems they're very much on board for her decision to finally show them off to the world. The opportunity to pay good money for this show of flesh is coming along in 2011.

Romeo San Vicente believes that naked people are inherently hilarious. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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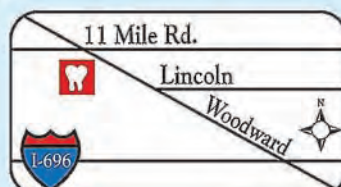
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