

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

# **BTL** Between THE Lines™

FREE | DEC. 9, 2010 | VOL. 1849

'BLACK SWAN' CAST ON  
LESBIAN SEX SCENE

AFFIRMATIONS FACES  
SERIOUS BUDGET PROBLEMS

MI LAWMAKERS LEAVE WITH  
NO ANTI-BULLYING VOTE

# FERNDALE'S CLUB 9 GETS REFRESHED

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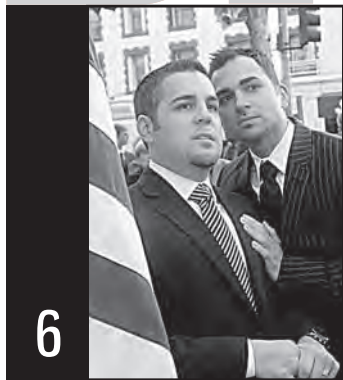
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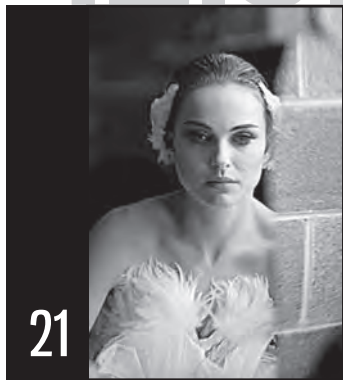
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**Cover**

Young new owners Angela Vincents and Kiana Dennis, refresh Ferndale's Club 9  
Photo by Andrew Potter



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# The DADT report makes the case for gays to openly serve our country

The Pentagon has released its long-awaited report on the potential impact of allowing lesbians and gays to serve openly in the military. Unsurprisingly, the comprehensive survey of 115,000 service members finds that the vast majority of American soldiers would have no major problems serving with openly gay and lesbian soldiers. Gays and lesbians have served in the U.S. military since the beginning of the Republic, though never openly. Until 1993, the military refused to allow gay people to serve in the military at all, though many closeted gays and lesbians served with great distinction. Straight service members knew that they served with gay people, yet most didn't object. In a life-threatening career, the sexual orientation of one's comrade-in-arms is of little concern. As the late conservative senator Barry Goldwater once remarked, a person doesn't need to be straight to serve in the military, he or she only needs to "shoot straight."

In 1993, President Bill Clinton attempted to end the military's prohibition on gays and lesbians serving openly in the military. Unfortunately, Clinton did not anticipate the firestorm of criticism his effort elicited. Military leaders and members of Congress strongly objected to Clinton's effort to allow gays and lesbians to serve without discrimination. Within months of taking office, President Clinton was forced to accept the "Don't ask, Don't tell" compromise; in 1994, the DADT policy was enacted as a federal law. According to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, over 14,000 soldiers have been discharged under DADT since 1994. Discharging so many qualified soldiers from the military during a time of great danger for our country has only served to make our nation more vulnerable to those who would hurt us. Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT) has correctly observed that DADT is "un-American."

When Barack Obama campaigned for president in 2008, he promised to end the DADT policy. While many people in the LGBT community have been disappointed in the president's slow movement on fulfilling this promise, he is moving aggressively on it now. Throughout 2010,

**Unsurprisingly, the comprehensive survey of 115,000 service members finds that the vast majority of American soldiers would have no major problems serving with openly gay and lesbian soldiers.**

the Department of Defense has conducted an exhaustive study on how allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would affect the morale and commitment of active duty service members. While some would argue that such a study should not be necessary since bigotry of any kind should not be tolerated in the military, the president recognized the political reality of our times on this issue. The strongest proponents of the existing policy stated that they would only consider changing the policy if the Pentagon would exhaustively review and study the impact of ending DADT.

Beginning last March, the Department of Defense surveyed approximately 115,000 service members on their feelings about ending DADT. This survey was unprecedented in size and demonstrates the seriousness of the military's desire to end this policy in a fair manner. The most important number from the report is 70 – this represents the percentage of active duty members of the military who would not object to ending DADT. The report also found that of those troops who had served with soldiers whom they believed to be gay, the vast majority found that their presence did not negatively affect their unit's cohesiveness. The bottom line with the military is what we know from personal experience: when people know a person who is LGBT, they are less likely to exhibit bigoted attitudes based on ignorance. Of course, not all soldiers would be fine with the end of DADT. However, the purpose of the survey was not to solicit opinions on whether the policy should be ended. The report was focused on what the impact of ending the policy would be on the military

as a whole. This study demonstrates that the U.S. Armed Forces would experience minimal disruption in opening their ranks to openly gay and lesbian soldiers. The members of the U.S. military have demonstrated throughout our history that they know how to take orders and execute them well. This study confirms the wisdom of our nation's founders in placing the military under civilian leadership in the U.S. Constitution.

What is clear now is that only the most virulent opponents of equality support continued discrimination against gays and lesbians in the military. Military commanders, soldiers, the president, moderate Republicans, and the vast majority of American citizens all now support allowing gay and lesbian soldiers to serve openly. Two federal courts have already ruled against DADT. The end of DADT is now inevitable. It's now the U.S. Senate's job to do the right thing and end it legislatively. If the Senate won't act, then the courts certainly will. Despite this nation's long history of discrimination, equality always wins out in the end. Those are the very values for which our soldiers – gay and straight – so bravely fight.



**Voice your support for ending DADT NOW, before Congress adjourns for the year:**

**Senator Carl Levin:** <http://levin.senate.gov/contact/>

**Senator Debbie Stabenow:** <http://stabenow.senate.gov/email.cfm>

**Pentagon website on DADT – includes the comprehensive report:**

[http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610\\_gatesdadt/](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610_gatesdadt/)

**Servicemembers Legal Defense Network website:** <http://www.sldn.org/>



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## MICHIGAN

## National PFLAG board of directors welcomes Julie Nemecek



Julie Nemecek

Last month, Julie Nemecek was voted onto the national board of directors of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Nemecek, who attracted national media attention in 2007 for being fired from Spring Arbor University because she transitioned from male to female, has served on the PFLAG board in Jackson for three years.

Nemecek said PFLAG promotes support, education and advocacy. "I think all three of those things are so important," she said. "Historically (PFLAG) has been more about support because that was needed for people coming out as LGBT, but increasingly the need to educate non-LGBT people and promote advocacy has moved to the forefront."

Nemecek likes that PFLAG is open to working with other organizations, especially because she is on the advisory board of Trans Youth Family Allies and on the board of directors of Soulforce. "There's networking I'd like to do to double their voice and clout and power," she said.

## Lawmakers end voting without anti-bullying legislation vote

LANSING (AP) – The Senate did not move on legislation that would require school districts to adopt anti-bullying policies, continuing a stalemate that has lasted the better part of a decade. The Democrat-run House had passed anti-bullying legislation.

"I regret that we couldn't protect all of our children from those that would pick on them," Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks, said during his farewell speech on the Senate floor. "No person should be subjected to criticism or physical abuse from another person in a free, under God, democratic society - not for any reason."

The anti-bullying legislation has been tangled in a web of competing interests - including both sides of the gay rights debate and politicians with both liberal and conservative leanings.

## NATIONAL



Plaintiffs Jeffrey Zarrillo, left, and Paul Katami are seen outside of the courthouse before a hearing in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010, in San Francisco. The federal appeals court in San Francisco heard two hours of arguments Monday about the voter-approved ban known as Proposition 8. A trial court judge overturned the measure as a violation of gay Californians' civil rights in August. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

## Feisty panel of judges asks critical questions of Prop 8

BY LISA KEEN

SAN FRANCISCO – Famed attorney Ted Olson told a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel Monday that the reason proponents of Proposition 8 have proffered to justify their ban on same-sex marriage is "nonsense."

That reason, Olson said, reading from a page in the argument brief filed by attorneys for the Yes on 8 coalition which promoted passage of California's ban on same-sex marriage, was that same-sex marriage "will make children prematurely preoccupied with issues of sexuality."

"If believed," Olson said, "that would justify the banning of comic books, television, video games, and even conversations between children."

That was not exactly the reason Yes on 8 proffered during their successful 2008 campaign to amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Back then, the primary reason, Olson noted, was "protecting children" from the notion that marriage between same-sex couples was OK.

So, what should the court consider as the reason to deny same-sex couples the right to marry, asked Judge Michael Hawkins.

"Should we look just at the record in the district court," he asked, or should we "imagine

whether there is any conceivable rational basis" to ban gays from marriage?

Olson urged the court not to use its own imagination to figure out whether there might be any conceivable rational reason, but to look at the reasons proffered by the Yes on 8 proponents and to determine whether they "make sense" and whether they are "motivated by fear" or a dislike of gay people.

"Protecting our children," said Olson, "is not a rational basis. It's based on the idea there's something wrong with" gay people.

Both Olson and his legal counterpart, Charles Cooper, argued with greater passion and animation during Monday's argument before the federal appeals court than they did in January and June before U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker. It was Walker's ruling in August - that California's ban on same-sex marriage violated the U.S. Constitution - that brought them to the appeals court in San Francisco Dec. 6. Unlike at the district court trial, where the U.S. Supreme Court forbid any television or web broadcast, the appeals proceedings were carried live on national television by C-SPAN and several California stations. Demonstrators crowded outside the federal building in San Francisco under the watchful eye of federal protection service officers. And interested observers and

journalists packed the courtroom and watched broadcasts all over the country.

Any pre-courtroom second-guessing that observers may have harbored over the political leanings of the three judges seemed to be put to rest fairly quickly, as the judges vigorously challenged each side's arguments on both matters before the court - Yes on 8 and Imperial County's legal qualification (standing) to appeal and the validity of Walker's declaration that Proposition 8 violates the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Judge N. Randy Smith, an alum of the Mormon-run Brigham Young University, came out swinging hard questions for Cooper over Yes on 8's claim to have legal standing to press the appeal.

The three judges were also tough in questions about the merits of Judge Walker's decision. As Cooper attempted to read from his prepared statement, Judge Hawkins interrupted almost immediately to ask him whether voters have the right to reinstate segregation in public schools.

"No," said Cooper.

"Why not?" asked Hawkins.

See Prop 8, page 9



# Affirmations faces serious budget problems, maps out solutions

## One of the largest LGBT centers in the country reveals reasons behind its cutbacks and asks for help

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

FERNDALE — Snow drifted dreamily outside the center's floor-to-ceiling windows as the staff at Affirmations served up a hot brunch and friendly conversation to some of the center's supporters Sunday morning.

But the staff also served up a cold, harsh truth: The center's budget is a wreck.

Affirmations is facing a huge budget deficit and has made serious cuts in programming and staffing over the past year. On Sunday, the center's supporters learned the causes behind the cuts.

Kevin Howley, who was assigned as interim director in October after CEO Leslie Ann Thompson resigned in August, said the projected budget for 2010 was \$1.3 million, but the center only ended up with \$844,000 to work with.

One reason for the big difference? The tough economy, which led to fewer corporate and grant donations. In 2010, Affirmations was supposed to receive \$750,000 in such money, but it only got \$314,000.

But the financial problems didn't just start this year.

Affirmations raised \$5.3 million for a new space that was completed in Ferndale in 2007. The building boasts LEED-certified design, a large teen area, a cyber cafe, modern decor and plenty of natural light.

The \$5.3 million was supposed to help Affirmations own the building outright and not need a mortgage. The new space was supposed to help broaden the center's activities and attract more donors. But the economic crisis of 2008 and the ensuing financial difficulties of key donors caused the center to lose donations and grants. Affirmations now has a \$460,000 mortgage with J.P. Morgan Chase, and it is due in April.

"The mortgage is the saddest part of the story," said Carolyn Burdi, a former board member and co-chair of the Capital Campaign, the funding campaign for the current building. "But the money (to operate) had to come from somewhere."

For 2011, Affirmations will cut nearly \$250,000 in payroll expenses, \$11,000 in programming, and \$126,000 in "discretionary spending," which Howley described as money for ads, conferences, training and other extra expenses.

The only planned increase in expenses in 2011 is \$12,000 for utilities and maintenance, because Affirmations needs to catch up on payments to vendors, Howley explained.

"We tried to reduce the depth of the programming, not entire programs," Howley said. For example, the center reduced its hours, so instead of being open from 1 to 9 p.m., it now opens at 4 p.m.

For now, Howley said, "We're paying the day-to-day stuff," but the center is not contributing much toward its future.



"Every non-profit should have three to four months' worth of cash," he said. "We haven't had that luxury."

### Campaign for the Future

Howley explained that the center needs to raise \$1.2 million to pay off the mortgage and a line of credit, and bring payables current. To accomplish this, the center launched the Campaign for the Future several months ago. To date, \$541,000 has been raised, which includes a recent and unexpected \$250,000 bequest from an anonymous donor.

One goal for Sunday's event was to entice supporters to make a special pledge to the Campaign for the Future, in addition to what they had already pledged for operating expenses.

But until the center reaches its goals, the decrease in hours and programming will continue to be noticed by the community. Alice McKeage, a longtime Affirmations supporter who also co-founded an LGBT network at Ford, said she's "definitely felt an impact."

McKeage said her stitching group changed its meeting place from Affirmations to a private home because not everyone could meet during the new hours.

But McKeage, like all of the 100 attendees Sunday, is happy Affirmations exists. She wore her Affirmations t-shirt in support of the center, she said. Her enthusiasm was mirrored in the other attendees who just wanted to learn how they could help.

"I love Affirmations. I had a bad experience coming out, so I'm so glad there's a place for young people to come," McKeage said, adding that people who come out when older also find Affirmations comforting.

Jim Townsend, who was elected in November to the Michigan House of Representatives from Royal Oak, also came to the brunch to voice



Affirmations Interim Director Kevin Howley talks frankly about the center's financial difficulties. BTL photos: Tara Cavanaugh.

his support for the center.

"I love this organization, and I think it's extremely important," Townsend said, after making jokes about Glenn Beck.

Howard Israel, an Affirmations supporter who is also helping select the next executive director, expressed just how important the center is. "Affirmations is symbolic," he said. "It's the emotional center of the LGBT community, if not in the state, then at least in southeast Michigan."

Learn more about volunteering and upcoming events at [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org).

## Heard on Facebook:

### Should Affirmations merge with Equality Michigan?

Each LGBT agency struggles for funding and now looks for new executive directors. BTL's Facebook fans weigh in.

"I don't see how combining two leaderless organizations would solve the problem. Hire good executive directors and allow them both the opportunity to excel and they can with the right leadership."

— Ann Cox

"No, they have different missions. Affirmations is a local community center (that historically has served only certain age and gender segments of the community) and Equality is a statewide political organization. There may be opportunities for cooperation but not merger."

— Alex Hardesty

"If resources and money are drying up and neither is having an effect on their respective programs what harm would it cause for them to merge. We will never have the economy of 15 years ago so they need to both do something. It's sad to say this, but as Affirmations is well aware of the belt tightening they've had to do, they need to explore all the options open to them."

— Michael Petroni

## Affirmations executive director search effort

The LGBT center has assigned a ten-person committee to help find a new executive director. The diverse committee consists of board members, staff, volunteers and supporters of the metro Detroit LGBT community.

The committee hired Evergreen Executive Source, LLC, a search firm in New Jersey, to advertise the position and screen potential candidates. The firm has experience in placing directors of LGBT agencies.

The firm is conducting the nationwide search for a \$7,000-\$10,000 fee. Search firms usually charge between \$30,000 and \$50,000 to find worthy candidates for executive director positions.

The committee plans to interview candidates in January, and hopes to have the new director start April 1.

For a complete description of the position and information about applying, visit Affirmations' website at [www.GoAffirmations.org](http://www.GoAffirmations.org) or contact Robert Perodeau, Principal of Evergreen Executive Source, LLC at 800-286-4009, fax 800-451-1451, or email [evergreen.source@att.net](mailto:evergreen.source@att.net).



# Young new owners refresh Ferndale's Club 9

BY CRYSTALA. PROXMIRE

**FERNDALE** —When the giant paneled windows of the old Comerica bank building light up with a rotation of rainbow colors, and the disco-ball-like number 9 in the front spins wildly, it's time to party in downtown Ferndale.

Club 9 attracts one of the most diverse crowds of any gay club in Ferndale, with Monday night football, Hump Night on Wednesdays for the boys, Trend-Sexy Fridays for hip-hop lovers and Sweet Saturdays, when a predominantly female crowd kicks it to the latest top 40 jams.

The club also attracted a pair of young and ambitious women. In October of 2009, Kiana Dennis, who is just 29, and Angela Vincents, who just prefers "thirty-something," purchased the business and expanded it. They added TV's, dance poles, a T-shaped stage for fashion shows and a new sign out front. They painted the walls and made the events calendar more diverse.

"Now there are nights for men and women," Dennis said. "We take pride in that diversity. You can come on any day and it's a different feel. And we've been making the changes that customers have been asking for."

Dennis and Vincents, who met at Western Michigan University, said their emphasis is on promoting the club, not necessarily themselves.

"To be honest, we were kind of leery about Ferndale because we were unsure about how people were going to take it - us being women



Angela Vincents and Kiana Dennis, co-owners of Club 9. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

and being black, and so young, and owning our own business," Dennis said. "But so far it's been great. We've had so much love, and I think people are surprised by us because we give them what they want. We're all about diversity and not just catering to one crowd. We switch things up and keep it interesting - we get bored fast too!"

In addition to the new club nights, Dennis and Vincents added poetry slams, fashion shows, dance-offs and rap battles into the schedule. They also brought in talent from out of town, including the sexy dancers from the 2012 club in Windsor and Spinderella, the turntable genius from the iconic rap group Salt-n-Peppa.

Dennis and Vincents also worked to make Club 9 a part of both the gay community and the Ferndale scene. The club was a gold-level sponsor for Motor City Pride, a participant in the annual Ferndale Pub Crawl, and a club sponsor for Hotter than July, an LGBT celebration organized by the Black Pride Society.

Dennis and Vincents knew since college they wanted to run a club together. Dennis, who has a degree in engineering, always enjoyed event planning and promotions. She also owns her own graphic design agency called Jus' Bein' Kiwy, and is part of the promotions company Group 411.

Vincents is a real estate agent with Worldwide Reality and is also well known in southeast Michigan as DJ Lynda Carter. Dennis pushed Vincents to go public with her talent, and even got Vincents her first gig at Western.

Now, Vincents plays regularly at clubs and events, including at Club 9 and Motor City Pride. Her master's in education from Wayne State University wasn't a complete waste, she said. She'll teach the art of DJing as part of an after-school program next year.

In the meantime, the owners of Club 9 plan to expand their club and create an environment where, Dennis said, anyone can "run away from it all, forget your troubles, and have fun in a place that is safe and welcoming for all."

Club 9 is located at 141 W. 9 Mile, and can be found on Facebook.

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# New 2011 national rules for hospital visitation rights will impact LGBT patients

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

LGBT patients will have the right to determine who can visit them, including their domestic partners, according to new rules regarding hospital visitation rights set forth by U.S. President Barack Obama. However, the rules do not completely protect the rights of domestic partners in some traumatic circumstances.

A regulation published Nov. 17 by the Department of Health and Human Services will require any hospital that receives federal Medicare and Medicaid funding to allow patients the right to decide who visits them. The regulation also prohibits discrimination against visitors based on their gender identity, sexual orientation and other protected classes. Hospitals must also now inform all patients of their right to select visitors.

In April, Obama wrote a memo to the DHHS: "It should be made clear that designated visitors... should enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those that immediate family members enjoy. Every day across America, patients are denied the kindness and caring of a loved one at their sides—whether in a sudden medical emergency or a prolonged hospital stay."

Patients in Michigan, who have had the freedom to choose visitors guaranteed since the early 90s, can now rest assured that right is theirs no matter where in the country they travel. However, the policy does not automatically protect partners and family members when a patient is incapacitated and unable to communicate his or her wishes.

"Don't rely on the government to come up with all the solutions," said estate law attorney Michael Witzke of Witzke Berry PLLC in Bloomfield Hills. "Take advantage of the rules we have now. The people you care about are the ones who are going to be taking care of you in an emergency. That's why you should set up proper legal documentation."

The regulation allows gay and lesbian partners to determine visitors for an incapacitated patient and states that hospitals should ask for



**"Where we have heard complaints is where family members have refused to allow a patient's partner to visit or have chosen to disregard**

**what the patient has indicated in their Durable Power of Attorney for Medical Care document regarding visitation."**

**- Jay Kaplan, staff attorney,  
Michigan ACLU LGBT Project**

legal documentation of a relationship only if a patient cannot speak and there is a dispute among parties.

Witzke said that individuals can protect the rights of a partner to make decisions and to be able to receive information about medical care if they have an attorney set them up with a patient advocate designation and a HIPAA medical privacy release. He also said that parents should

**Individuals can protect the rights of a partner to make decisions and to be able to receive information about medical care if they have an attorney set them up with a patient advocate designation and a HIPAA medical privacy release.**

consider a delegation of parental powers form. This is useful for any parent with a child who is over 18 but would still like their parent to have control in an emergency situation.

"Patients' families have denied significant others from being in the room. Unless documentation is in place they can still be shut out of their loved one's care," Witzke said.

Jay Kaplan, staff attorney with the Michigan ACLU LGBT Project said that his organization has not received many complaints about hospital visitation issues.

"Where we have heard complaints is where family members have refused to allow a patient's partner to visit or have chosen to disregard what the patient has indicated in their Durable Power of Attorney for Medical Care document regarding visitation," Kaplan said. "I am aware of one particular incident, where a lesbian patient's partner was not informed about the progress of the patient's surgery by the hospital, even though she was the listed contact person on the Power of Attorney."

Kaplan praised the regulation as "a good first step," and added that it can help improve life for people in more than just the emergency room setting. "I believe that this rule could have a large impact on LGBT patients living in nursing homes and assisted care facilities (that accept Medicare payments), who may have been forced to go back into the closet out of fear and are afraid or concerned that their visitation preferences would not be honored."

The new regulation takes effect Jan. 18, 2011.

## LGBT activist loses battle with cancer

**Roger Reisdorf**  
May 30, 1949 - Nov. 21, 2010

BY TARA CAVANAUGH



Roger Reisdorf

Roger Reisdorf, a renowned activist in the LGBT community, died Nov. 21 after battling colon cancer for three years. He was 51.

Reisdorf was heavily involved with Affirmations Community Center in Ferndale. He volunteered, served on the board of directors, helped raise more than

\$5 million needed to open the new center in 2007, and also helped create a \$500,000 endowment. The center honored Reisdorf with the Jan Stevenson Award for commitment and dedication in 2006, and the Chuck Moyer Philanthropic Award in 2010.

Kat LaTosche, the chief operating officer at Affirmations, knew Reisdorf for five years. "He was a very kind, gentle person," she said, "one of those people who was always behind the scenes, a quiet understated guy."

Even after being diagnosed with cancer, "He never missed a meeting," LaTosche said. "He was always at the fundraising events and extra center gatherings and doing what he said he would do."

In addition to his work for Affirmations, Reisdorf contributed to many other organizations. He was dedicated to his faith as a reader at the First Church of Christ Scientist in Plymouth. He was a member of the President's Club at Ferris State University until his death.

Reisdorf, who had a B.S. in public administration from Ferris, also worked for the Wyatt Corporation and Grandview Nursing Home.

Later in his life, Reisdorf served as V.P. with McWilliams Credit Reports in charge of operations. For the last five years, he worked as the executive assistant to the director of the Detroit Transportation Corporation.

Reisdorf is survived by two brothers, Robin and Christopher Reisdorf, and special friends Stephen Ross, Donn Tufts, and Michael Sawdy.

Memorials are encouraged to the St. Joseph Mercy Health System Oncology Department in Ann Arbor, Affirmations in Ferndale, or First Church of Christ Scientist in Plymouth.

### ► Prop 8

Continued from p. 6

"Because it would be inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution," said Cooper.

"As interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court," interjected Hawkins.

"Yes," conceded Cooper.

But in 1870, the U.S. Supreme Court probably would not have interpreted the constitution to forbid segregation, would it? asked Hawkins.

Cooper conceded that was probably true.

"Well, how is this different?" asked Hawkins.

When Cooper tried to argue that society has a rational interest in the creation of chil-

dren and in promoting responsible procreation to ensure that children are adequately cared for, Judge Reinhardt suggested that might be a "good argument for prohibiting divorce."

Judge Smith jumped in to challenge Cooper on this point, too. He noted that California domestic partnership laws provide same-sex couples with all the same benefits and rights to marriage, including those involving child-rearing. What is the rational reason for denying same-sex couples the designation of the word marriage, he wondered.

Gay legal activists seemed pleased with how the arguments went Monday.

Evan Wolfson, head of the national Freedom to Marriage Project, said that, overall "it looks promising, both on standing and on the merits."

Jenny Pizer, head of Lambda Legal Defense's Marriage Project, said she wouldn't be surprised if the panel's eventual ruling includes "multiple decisions" on how they reached the same outcome "with different reasonings."

"And if they conclude Prop 8 is invalid while disagreeing about the details of why," said Pizer, "that may be just fine."

The panel is expected to render its decision on both the standing issue and the constitutionality of Proposition 8 within a few months. Boies speculated during a post-argument press conference that the earliest the panel would likely render a decision is early next year and the earliest the case might be heard by the Supreme Court - during its almost inevitable appeal - would be 2012.

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## Freedom Federation

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

By the time you read this, no doubt “don’t ask, don’t tell” will be but a sad blip in our nation’s long and storied anti-gay history. No doubt Congress will have repealed this arcane and idiotic measure that keeps gays and lesbians out of the army and forces gays and lesbians in the army deep into the closet.

Wait, what’s that you say? Congress hasn’t done a damn thing? How can that be? The majority of the country supports repeal, even Republicans! Repealing DADT is a no-brainer. That is, unless Congress recently received a letter urging them to keep DADT in place. A letter signed by, oh, I don’t know, 40 million anti-gay constituents – or at least the leaders of nearly 90 anti-gay groups and organizations who claim to represent 40 million members.

A letter from the so-called Freedom Federation, a group made up of many Creep alumni like Tony Perkins, Lou Sheldon, and Don Wildmon, was sent to Congress on Dec. 2 urging them to ditch any plans they might have to overturn DADT.

“We ask that you delay consideration of the bill until January when the new Congress convenes,” the letter reads. Gosh, why ever would the Freedom Federation want Congress to wait until January? I don’t know. Total mystery. (Hint: Republican majority).

The Freedom Federation, a veritable who’s who of the blogosphere, argues that letting gay and lesbian soldiers serve openly “would change our military in ways we cannot yet measure or understand.”

Really, FF? You can’t “measure or understand” what it’s like to be around a gay person, even one with a gun? This isn’t exactly uncharted territory here. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Spain, and a good number of other countries let gays serve and none of their forces shriveled up and died once homos were allowed in.

But the FF folks want to see more proof, evidentially borrowing their talking points from John McCain. “It is a serious risk to national security to repeal DADT without first investigating thoroughly - in public hearings - the effect of the proposed repeal,” the letter reads. “Our troops are in harm’s way in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. This is no time to experiment with social engineering of the military.”

Social engineering? To let people who are already serving our country come out of the closet if they wished is hardly social engineering. The letter reads, “It is conceivable that chaplains will be forbidden to preach or speak about their denomination’s position on homosexuality.”

If you’ll recall, the military just released the results of a questionnaire they gave to thousands of service members and their families. The results were that most of the folks in the military were fine with repealing DADT.

Well, the Freedom Federation knows why: service members were bullied into it by the big bad gay supporters.

“We are deeply concerned about the methodology of the DOD report and survey. In view of ... Admiral Mullen’s and Secretary of Defense Gates’ unseemly cheerleading on this issue, we believe it behooves the next Congress to investigate whether proponents of repeal tried to create a climate of not-so-subtle intimidation in the Pentagon.”

That’s right. FF wants an investigation launched into whether Mullen and Gates’ were strong-arming support for the gays. This would mean, of course, more delay.

“The rush to repeal DADT by January of 2011 is a slap in the face of the American people who are tired of bully politics,” the letter reads, seemingly oblivious to the irony of sending this message while gay and lesbian service members continue to get thrown out of the armed forces just for being gay.

“Moreover, the consequences of repealing DADT will no doubt result in service members leaving the military or refusing to join,” the letter continues. “We cannot afford attrition or demoralization of our military.” Yes, because it would be so demoralizing to have to look at a homo. Honestly, if military people are going to truly quit or leave in droves, then maybe gay people are not the ones with the problem.

Most military leaders expressed concern during the hearings that Congress should take a vote now and they expressed enormous and unanimous confidence that Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen would not sign the necessary papers for repeal implementation to begin until they were certain the service chiefs agreed the military’s readiness would not suffer.

## Will the repeal of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ make it to the Senate floor for vote?

BY LISA KEEN

WASHINGTON, DC – After the Senate hearings on DADT Dec. 2 and Dec. 3, battle lines are still very much where they were at the beginning, with one exception.

Massachusetts’ Republican Senator Scott Brown said he would vote for repeal, once it reaches the floor. He did not say whether he’d be willing to rebuff Republican Party leaders in order to help bring the measure to the floor.

And there’s the rub. Unless 60 votes can be mustered to call the Defense Authorization bill to the Senate floor, Brown’s support will be of minimal consequence.

The hearings made clear that the military leadership concedes – if not agrees – that the current ban on gays in the military should be repealed. The service chiefs of all four branches of the armed forces, plus the Coast Guard, believe repeal can be implemented without sacrificing readiness and unit cohesion. They believe the Pentagon report released Nov. 30 provides a solid plan for implementation.

But not everyone agrees on timing, and discussion during the hearings went a long way to muddle exactly which timing everyone does not agree with: Timing for implementation, timing for full implementation, and timing for a Congressional vote on repeal.

This much is clear concerning implementation: Army General George Casey said “not now,” Air Force General Norton

Schwartz said “not until 2012,” and Marine General James Amos said it should begin “when our singular focus is no longer on combat operations or preparing units for combat.”

“At that point,” Amos said, “then I’d be comfortable with implementing repeal.”

Other military leaders would be comfortable beginning the process now, such as Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen, Joint Chief Vice Chairman General James Cartwright, Navy Admiral Gary Roughead, and Coast Guard Admiral Robert Papp.

These leaders believe DADT should be repealed, along with at least 56 senators, 234 members of the House, and 50 to 70 percent of Americans (depending on which recent poll you look at). And, according to the Pentagon study, at least 70 percent of servicemembers say repeal would have a “positive, mixed, or no effect” on task cohesion.

The sticking point for senators is the timing of the Senate’s vote on whether to repeal. Republicans, led by Arizona Senator John McCain, are steadfastly against allowing a vote and have vowed to prevent the underlying Defense Authorization bill to the floor. They say it’s because the nation has more urgent matters, such as taxes and job creation, that the Congress should concern itself with in the waning days of the 111th Congress. Others say it’s because they want to stall issues they oppose, such as DADT repeal, from reaching the floor

until next year, when they take control of the House and have a stronger posture in the Senate.

Most military leaders expressed concern during the hearings that Congress should take a vote now and they expressed enormous and unanimous confidence that Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen would not sign the necessary papers for repeal implementation to begin until they were certain the service chiefs agreed the military’s readiness would not suffer. Their urgency was driven by concern that lawsuits are making their way through the federal court system now that have the potential to force the military to accept openly gay people immediately. Such a sudden demand, they said, would be seriously detrimental to military readiness.

The focus now shifts back to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and whether they will be able to come to an agreement that will allow the defense authorization bill to come to the floor. Prior to Dec. 1, such an agreement seemed to pivot on whether Reid would allow Republicans to proffer numerous amendments to the bill, including one to strip DADT repeal from the measure. But on Dec. 1, McConnell and all 41 other Republicans in the Senate signed a letter to Reid, saying they would not vote to proceed on consideration of “any legislative item until the Senate has acted to fund the government and we have prevented the tax increase.”

## Gates doubts military rules on gays to change soon

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) – Defense Secretary Robert Gates is predicting the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on gays in the armed forces will be around for a while longer.

He addressed the matter in remarks to sailors Monday aboard the aircraft carrier

USS Abraham Lincoln in the Arabian Sea. Gates said that he was “not particularly optimistic” that Congress would overturn the policy soon, even though he wishes it would.

Senate Democrats want to vote this month to overturn the 1993 law, which

bans gays from serving openly. But Republicans have blocked the proposal, insisting that Congress deal instead with tax cuts and spending.

Gates said he is concerned that Congress will drag its feet too long and federal courts will intervene.

## Maine’s Collins supports repeal of ‘don’t ask’

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) – Sen. Susan Collins of Maine is reiterating her support for allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military.

The Republican senator released a statement in support of repealing the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy following Friday’s Senate Armed Services

Committee hearing on the matter.

Collins supports allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military.

Collins said after reviewing the Pentagon report on the policy and hearing testimony from Secretary of State Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Allen, she remains convinced that the law should be repealed.

The policy prohibits service members from revealing if they’re gay and recruiters from asking about people’s sexual orientation.

Collins said she also thinks the issue should be decided by Congress, not in the courts.



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**ISENTRESS**  
raltegravir tablets





## **INDICATIONS**

ISENTRESS is an anti-HIV medicine used for the treatment of HIV. ISENTRESS must be used with other anti-HIV medicines, which may increase the likelihood of response to treatment.

The safety and effectiveness of ISENTRESS in children has not been studied.

It is important that you remain under your doctor's care.

ISENTRESS will NOT cure HIV infection or reduce your chance of passing HIV to others through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood.

## **IMPORTANT RISK INFORMATION**

A condition called Immune Reconstitution Syndrome can happen in some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS) when anti-HIV treatment is started. Signs and symptoms of inflammation from opportunistic infections may occur as the medicines work to treat the HIV infection and strengthen the immune system. Call your doctor right away if you notice any signs or symptoms of an infection after starting ISENTRESS.

Contact your doctor immediately if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness while taking ISENTRESS. This is because on rare occasions muscle problems can be serious and can lead to kidney damage.

When ISENTRESS has been given with other anti-HIV drugs, side effects included nausea, headache, tiredness, weakness, trouble sleeping, stomach pain, dizziness, depression, and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Rash occurred more often in patients taking ISENTRESS and darunavir together than with either drug separately, but was generally mild.



# I am outgoing. I am on the go. I am a newlywed. I am HIV positive.

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  - The most common side effect of moderate to severe intensity (that interfered with or kept patients from performing daily activities) was trouble sleeping
  - This side effect occurred more often in patients taking ISENTRESS plus *Truvada* (4%) versus *Sustiva* plus *Truvada* (3%)
- ◆ Experienced less effect on LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol)
  - Cholesterol increased an average of 7 mg/dL with ISENTRESS plus *Truvada* versus 21 mg/dL with *Sustiva* plus *Truvada*

**Ask your doctor about ISENTRESS.**

**Not sure where to start? Visit [isentress.com/questions](http://isentress.com/questions)**

People taking ISENTRESS may still develop infections, including opportunistic infections or other conditions that occur with HIV infection.

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you have any allergies, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. ISENTRESS is not recommended for use during pregnancy. Women with HIV should not breast-feed because their babies could be infected with HIV through their breast milk.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription medicines like rifampin (a medicine used to treat infections such as tuberculosis), non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

For more information about ISENTRESS, please read the Patient Information on the following page.

**Need help paying for ISENTRESS?** Call 1-866-350-9232

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**ISENTRESS**  
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**Patient Information**  
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Read the patient information that comes with ISENTRESS<sup>®</sup> before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet is a summary of the information for patients. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you additional information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or your treatment.

**What is ISENTRESS?**

- ISENTRESS is an anti-HIV (antiretroviral) medicine used for the treatment of HIV. The term HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). ISENTRESS is used along with other anti-HIV medicines. ISENTRESS will NOT cure HIV infection.
- People taking ISENTRESS may still develop infections, including opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection.
- Stay under the care of your doctor during treatment with ISENTRESS.
- The safety and effectiveness of ISENTRESS in children has not been studied.

**ISENTRISS must be used with other anti-HIV medicines.**

**How does ISENTRESS work?**

- ISENTRESS blocks an enzyme which the virus (HIV) needs in order to make more virus. The enzyme that ISENTRESS blocks is called HIV integrase.
- When used with other anti-HIV medicines, ISENTRESS may do two things:
  1. Reduce the amount of HIV in your blood. This is called your "viral load".
  2. Increase the number of white blood cells called CD4 (T) cells.
- ISENTRESS may not have these effects in all patients.

**Does ISENTRESS lower the chance of passing HIV to other people?**

No. ISENTRESS does not reduce the chance of passing HIV to others through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood.

- Continue to practice safer sex.
- Use latex or polyurethane condoms or other barrier methods to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids. This includes semen from a man, vaginal secretions from a woman, or blood.
- Never re-use or share needles.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about safer sex or how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

**What should I tell my doctor before and during treatment with ISENTRESS?**

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions. Include any of the following that applies to you:

- You have any allergies.
- You are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
  - ISENTRESS is not recommended for use during pregnancy. ISENTRESS has not been studied in pregnant women. If you take ISENTRESS while you are pregnant, talk to your doctor about how you can be included in the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- You are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.
  - It is recommended that HIV-infected women should not breast-feed their infants. This is because their babies could be infected with HIV through their breast milk.
  - Talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby.

**Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take. Include the following:**

- prescription medicines, including rifampin (a medicine used to treat some infections such as tuberculosis)
- non-prescription medicines
- vitamins
- herbal supplements

**Know the medicines you take.**

- Keep a list of your medicines. Show the list to your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

**How should I take ISENTRESS?**

**Take ISENTRESS exactly as your doctor has prescribed. The recommended dose is as follows:**

- Take only one 400-mg tablet at a time.
- Take it twice a day.
- Take it by mouth.
- Take it with or without food.

**Do not change your dose or stop taking ISENTRESS or your other anti-HIV medicines without first talking with your doctor.**

**IMPORTANT: Take ISENTRESS exactly as your doctor prescribed and at the right times of day because if you don't:**

- The amount of virus (HIV) in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short period of time.
- The virus may develop resistance to ISENTRESS and become harder to treat.
- Your medicines may stop working to fight HIV.
- The activity of ISENTRESS may be reduced (due to resistance).

**If you fail to take ISENTRESS the way you should, here's what to do:**

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you do not remember until it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule. Do NOT take two tablets of ISENTRESS at the same time. In other words, do NOT take a double dose.
- If you take too much ISENTRESS, call your doctor or local Poison Control Center.

**Be sure to keep a supply of your anti-HIV medicines.**

- When your ISENTRESS supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy.
- Do not wait until your medicine runs out to get more.

**What are the possible side effects of ISENTRESS?**

**When ISENTRESS has been given with other anti-HIV drugs, side effects included:**

- nausea
- headache
- tiredness
- weakness
- trouble sleeping
- stomach pain
- dizziness
- depression
- suicidal thoughts and actions

**Other side effects** include rash, severe skin reactions, feeling anxious, paranoia, low blood platelet count.

A condition called Immune Reconstitution Syndrome can happen in some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS) when combination antiretroviral treatment is started. Signs and symptoms of inflammation from opportunistic infections that a person has or had may occur as the medicines work to treat the HIV infection and help to strengthen the immune system. Call your doctor right away if you notice any signs or symptoms of an infection after starting ISENTRESS with other anti-HIV medicines.

Contact your doctor promptly if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness while taking ISENTRESS. This is because on rare occasions, muscle problems can be serious and can lead to kidney damage.

Rash occurred more often in patients taking ISENTRESS and darunavir together than with either drug separately, but was generally mild.

Tell your doctor if you have any side effects that bother you.

These are not all the side effects of ISENTRESS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

**How should I store ISENTRESS?**

- Store ISENTRESS at room temperature (68 to 77°F).
- **Keep ISENTRESS and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

**General information about the use of ISENTRESS**

**Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets.**

- Do not use ISENTRESS for a condition for which it was not prescribed.
- Do not give ISENTRESS to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

**This leaflet gives you the most important information about ISENTRESS.**

- If you would like to know more, talk with your doctor.
- You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for additional information about ISENTRESS that is written for health professionals.
- For more information go to [www.ISENTRESS.com](http://www.ISENTRESS.com) or call 1-800-622-4477.

**What are the ingredients in ISENTRESS?**

**Active ingredient:** Each film-coated tablet contains 400 mg of raltegravir.

**Inactive ingredients:** Microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, calcium phosphate dibasic anhydrous, hypromellose 2208, poloxamer 407 (contains 0.01% butylated hydroxytoluene as antioxidant), sodium stearyl fumarate, magnesium stearate. In addition, the film coating contains the following inactive ingredients: polyvinyl alcohol, titanium dioxide, polyethylene glycol 3350, talc, red iron oxide and black iron oxide.

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# Iowa's Branstad: Gronstal 'dictator' for marriage stance, seeks ban on marriages

BY MIKE GLOVER

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Republican Gov.-elect Terry Branstad urged lawmakers Monday to let Iowans vote on a proposed gay marriage ban, calling the Senate's top Democrat dictatorial for not allowing senators to take up the matter.

Speaking at a gathering organized by The Associated Press, Branstad said Democrats had already paid a price for opposing efforts to let the public vote on a gay marriage ban. Democrats lost the governorship and control of the state House, and they barely hung on to their majority in the Senate.

Branstad also noted that voters removed three Iowa Supreme Court justices after a campaign that targeted them for their support of a unanimous 2009 ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in the state. The court ruled that a state law limiting marriage to heterosexual couples violated the constitutional right of equal protection.

It was the first time in nearly 50 years that voters had removed Supreme Court justices in retention elections.

Branstad said voters had lost confidence in the Iowa Supreme Court, and he put special

blame on Senate Majority Leader Michael Gronstal, who has promised to block efforts to amend the state constitution to ban gay marriage.

"Just because you're a leader in the Legislature doesn't mean you're a dictator where you have the right to make a unilateral decision, I think, on an issue of this importance and magnitude," Branstad said. "Certainly the senators should be given an opportunity to vote on this."

Asked about Branstad's comments during a separate session at the seminar, Gronstal said he has no intention of reversing course.

"Dictators are people who take away other people's rights," said Gronstal. "I'm not going down that road."

During the campaign, Branstad made clear that he intended to focus on state spending and the economy, but when asked about gay marriage he offered strong support for changing the Iowa Constitution. That requires approval by legislatures elected by voters in consecutive elections, then the support of voters.

"The Supreme Court, I think, made a tragic mistake in their decision on same-sex marriage," said Branstad. "The voters of Iowa have overwhelmingly rejected three members of the Supreme Court because of it and I think we need to restore support for the judicial system,

**"The Supreme Court, I think, made a tragic mistake in their decision on same-sex marriage. The voters of Iowa have overwhelmingly rejected three members of the Supreme Court because of it..."**

— Iowa Rep. Gov.-elect Terry Branstad

and one way to do that is to give people the opportunity to vote on restoring the one-man, one-woman marriage."

Branstad acknowledged that he appointed two of the three justices removed by voters during his previous four-term tenure as governor. Asked if he regretted appointing those justices, he said, "I never look back."

He also said he supported changing Iowa's process for nominating justices, in which a Judicial Nominating Commission takes applications for openings then forwards the names of three

finalists to the governor. Branstad noted that nearly all the panel's members are Democrats, and he said he supported requiring more equality among the parties.

"I'm hopeful that they will recognize and respect the will of the people in this state," said Branstad. "I think they want a change in the philosophy of the court. I think they want to see more judicial restraint."

It's possible the commission will choose potential replacements before Democratic Gov. Chet Culver's term ends, but it's likely the task will be left to Branstad, who will be sworn into office on Jan. 14.

In interviewing potential justices, Branstad said he wouldn't ask about specific issues but would look for a judicial philosophy that respects the separation of powers, leaving the passage of laws to the Legislature.

"I don't think you can anticipate every single issue that's going to come before the court, nor do I think it's appropriate for the governor to ask about every single issue, but I think the philosophy of the people who serve is important, especially as it goes to the separation of powers," said Branstad.

He said a goal would be to "restore support for the judicial system after what's happened in the last couple of years."

## GLAAD celebrates 25th anniversary

DERRIK J. LANG

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The gay advocacy group GLAAD is happy to be turning 25 years old.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation celebrated its anniversary Friday night with a swanky cocktail party at the Harmony Gold Theatre in Los Angeles. Chaz Bono, Jean Smart, Amber Heard and Ed Begley Jr. were among the celebrity attendees who toasted the group, which focuses on how lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender folks are presented in the media.

"We've made great progress in these media capitals," said Jarrett Barrios, president of GLAAD. "Beyond Hollywood, beyond New

York, between these blue states, right at this nation's red center, we have miles to go. How far do we still have to go to ensure that an environment of respect exists for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people?"

GLAAD was first formed in 1985 in New York to protest the New York Post's coverage of AIDS. The organization went on to push for several changes throughout the media, such as the inclusion of a same-sex couple on the viewer-voted wedding contest on NBC's "Today" show and modifications to how gays are referred to in The Associated Press Stylebook.

The group now annually holds the GLAAD Media Awards, which actor Steven Weber called the "gayer Oscars," and releases the "Where We Are on TV" report, which tracks LGBT charac-

ters on network shows. This year's report found that there were 23 gay and bisexual characters on scripted network TV out of a total of 600, up 3 percent from last season.

"The steady stream of negative portrayals and censorship of gay and lesbian lives on film and in television has given way to much more realistic and life-affirming depictions, such as this year's 'The Kids Are All Right' and TV's 'Glee,'" said Richard Jennings, a former president of GLAAD who received the first-ever Founders' Award at the event.

Throughout the ceremony, attendees heard from former GLAAD board members, watched video montages of hallmark moments from the organization's past 25 years — such as when Ellen DeGeneres' character revealed she was a lesbian

on her ABC TV comedy series in 1997 — and hissed at mentions of opponents of gay rights initiatives — Anita Bryant, Laura Schlessinger, Mel Gibson and Sen. Mel Gibson.

Jonathan Murray, co-creator of MTV's "The Real World," the long-running cable TV reality series that regularly includes gay and lesbian cast members, was bestowed with the Pioneer Award, given to a person or organization who significantly contributes to raising LGBT visibility in the media. Murray admitted the series never received much criticism.

"I think it's because it was real," he said. "How can you argue with something that's real?"

Learn more @ [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)



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## EU report: Europe is inconsistent on LGBT rights

There is an uneven landscape in protection of LGBT rights in Europe, the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency said Nov. 30 in a comprehensive report to the European Parliament.

"In some EU member states, legislation and practice is increasing the protection of LGBT people, while in others the rights of LGBT persons are being restricted or neglected," said ILGA-Europe, the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, in an analysis of the FRA report on homophobia, transphobia and anti-LGBT discrimination.

The report was produced in response to the Parliament's request for an in-depth examination of the situation of LGBT people, after anti-gay laws were proposed or passed in some EU nations.

ILGA-Europe said the document also "clearly highlights the hardship that transgender people still face in changing their legal gender, which often includes forced sterilization and compulsory divorce."

"Additionally, the real-life test requirement oftentimes leads transgender people into unemployment and social marginalization," the group said.

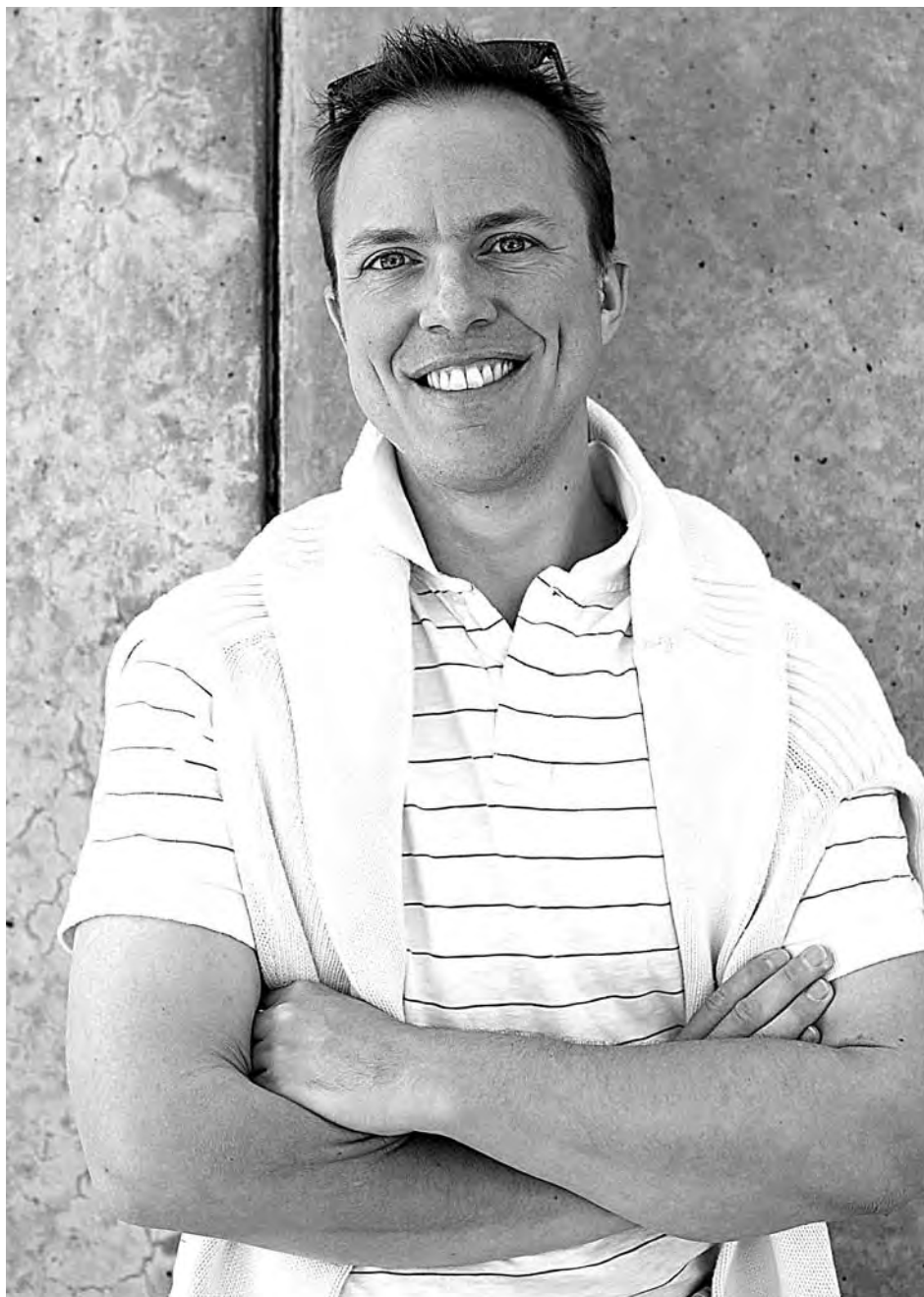
The FRA called on EU nations to "abolish divorce and genital surgery as preconditions to the rectification of the recorded sex or alteration of name on official documents."

"LGBT people in some EU member states still suffer from violations of their basic fundamental rights to safety, peaceful assembly and are restricted in their ability to move freely across the EU," said ILGA-Europe Executive Director Evelyne Paradis. "Some member states are single-handedly blocking the adoption of a new anti-discrimination directive which would level up the protections available to various communities, including LGB people, from discrimination in the areas of EU competence highlighted by the FRA report."

The co-president of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights, Michael Cashman, added: "The Fundamental Rights Agency provided the Parliament with an invaluable tool to assess the legal situation of LGBT people throughout the EU. This report shows the EU might be the world's most advanced region in terms of legal protection for LGBT people, but also that much more needs to be done for genuine equality."

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights is mandated to provide evidence-based advice to decision makers in the EU. The evidence aims at informing EU and national policymakers about fundamental-rights challenges on the ground and at contextualizing debates on fundamental-rights issues. See [www.fra.europa.eu](http://www.fra.europa.eu).

Member nations of the European Union are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Currently seeking to join the EU are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.



Transgender people in the Netherlands have won the right to receive new school diplomas that reflect their correct name and gender. Activist Justus Eisfeld led the charge. Photo by David Hartfiel

## Malta OKs trans marriage

Malta's Constitutional Court OK'd transgender marriages Nov. 29, reported Transgender Europe.

In a case brought by Joanne Cassar, the court ruled she now is free to marry her boyfriend.

The decision, which overturned earlier Maltese rulings, cites a 2002 European Court of Human Rights case that established transsexuals' rights to respect for their private and family life and right to marry.

## Dutch transgenders will get new diplomas

Transgender people in the Netherlands have won the right to receive new school diplomas that reflect their correct name and gender.

The change resulted from a legal action against the University of Amsterdam by transgender activist Justus Eisfeld of Global Action for Trans Equality.

The Dutch Equal Opportunities Commission ruled that the university had engaged in illegal indirect sex discrimination against Eisfeld, who had been fighting with the school since 2004.

Education Minister Marja van Bijsterveldt responded to the ruling Nov. 30 by instructing all educational institutions to adhere to it.

"I am very happy not only about my own diploma, but especially about the possibilities for all trans people to change their diplomas in the Netherlands," Eisfeld said. "Hopefully the illegality of trans discrimination in all EU (European Union) member states will receive more attention. Knowledge is a first step towards a change of practice."

## Kenyan PM: Arrest the gays

Kenya's prime minister, Raila Odinga, said Nov. 28 that people who have gay or lesbian sex should be arrested, and that he wants the nation

to have no gay people.

Speaking in a local language at a Nairobi rally, Odinga said: "You, young man, are you mad that you leave these girls and marry another man? Why? Is this not madness? And you girls ... what is wrong with you? ... Instead of looking for a man, you go looking for another woman. You cannot get children from her. You go looking for other women. Is this right? Is this right? If you get another man sodomizing another, arrest him and take him to the police. Or if a woman is found inserting a finger inside another woman, arrest her and take her to the police. ... We want a clean nation, clean ways, clean ethnic groups, where there are no gays or sodomy."

Odinga later said his remarks had been misinterpreted by the media and he agreed to meet with LGBT people, according to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, which translated the comments from the Kiswahili language. He said the anti-gay statements actually had not been his own thoughts but rather his paraphrasing of "propaganda" that has been employed by opponents of the nation's new constitution.

In the translation provided by IGLHRC, Odinga does summarize some of the anti-gay propaganda used by opponents of the constitution but he then seems to segue into speaking for himself in the segment of his speech quoted above.

IGLHRC Executive Director Cary Alan Johnson called Odinga's remarks "a shame."

"Kenya has been making great strides in terms of recognizing a broad set of human rights, in promoting a live-and-let-live attitude in both law and practice," Johnson said. "Raila Odinga's remarks could easily lead to a setback for human rights and a setup for violence. Interestingly, he made these distasteful remarks at a rally in Kibera, one of Kenya's most impoverished communities. In a place where people have no clean water, lousy housing, poor sanitation and bad health, is homosexuality really the most important issue?"

## HRW: Senegal gay ban promotes violence

Senegal's law criminalizing adult gay sex contributes to anti-gay abuse by police and the public, Human Rights Watch said in a 95-page report issued Nov. 30.

The African nation's Penal Code Article 319.3 punishes "unnatural" sexual acts with five years in prison.

"While the law ostensibly criminalizes conduct, not character, it is in fact used as a tool for targeting certain 'types' of individuals," HRW said.

The report explores "the manipulation of public sentiment by some Senegalese political and religious leaders who have been instrumental in creating a climate of virulent homophobia," the group said. "It also documents the prominent, one-sided, and at times hate-mongering coverage by many Senegalese media outlets."

The report, "Fear for Life: Violence Against Gay Men and Men Perceived as Gay in Senegal," includes interviews with dozens of people who have faced threats and violence at the hands of police and others. It is online at <http://www.hrw.org/node/94451>.



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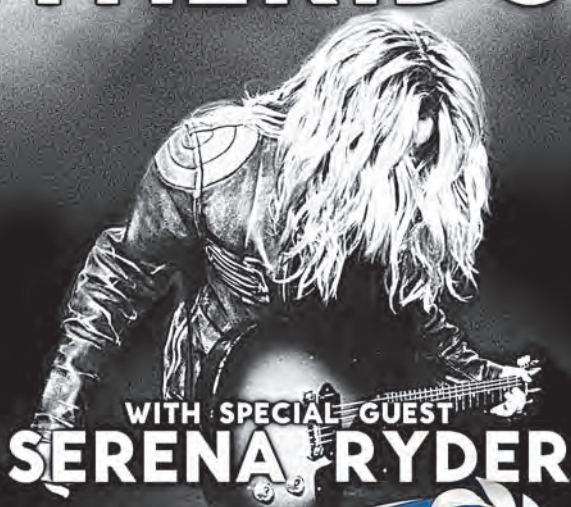


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BTL EDITORIAL

## Prop 8 trial encouraging and enraging

On Monday we watched with intense interest as the attorneys both for and against the constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in California argued before the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. It was exciting to hear the three judge panel grill the lawyers as they tried to sway the court in their favor, and fascinating to hear them argue whether they believed that gay and lesbian people should have the same rights as others.

It was also somewhat enraging to witness attorneys' efforts to make the case that marriage is a special right reserved exclusively for straight people. They tried the line that procreation and protection of children is the main reason for marriage. One judge shot back that if protecting children is the main goal of marriage, then divorce should be banned. Point well taken.

They tried the line that history is on their side – that marriage has always been a unique bond between one man and one woman. That, of course, is simply not true. The history of marriage is as complicated as the people who have lived it, including variations like multiple wives, same-sex marriages as far back as the Middle Ages, cross-generational marriages, and of course, serial monogamy. In fact, the institution of marriage has always been more a reflection of the society it exists within, rather than a definer of that society.

We believe that same-sex marriage is as sacred, as serious and as permanent as opposite-sex marriage. We believe that the right to select one's spouse is a fundamental right of all people, including people who may chose a same-sex partner, and that the state has no rational reason to disallow it. We agree with our unlikely

**The fact that such basic rights would be argued on TV, in a federal courtroom is a testament to how far we have come in our struggle for equal rights in America. But ... it is still unnerving to hear educated, respected lawyers say out loud and in public that gays and lesbians are lesser-than everyone else ...**

champion, attorney Ted Olsen, who said that the reason proponents of Proposition 8 have professed to justify their ban on same-sex marriage is "nonsense."

The fact that such basic rights would be argued on TV, in a federal courtroom is a testament to how far we have come in our struggle for equal rights in America. But even taking that historical context into account, it is still unnerving to hear educated, respected lawyers say out loud and in public that gays and lesbians are lesser-than everyone else, and that the state should exclude us from one of modern life's most important and personal experiences. It is insulting.

Perhaps the essence of LGBT pride is to feel the insult when someone attacks our basic humanity. If that is the case, we are feeling hopeful, motivated – and insulted.

Perhaps that's just the right mix.

GENERAL GAYETY



## Winging their way to gayness

BY LESLIE ROBINSON

Scientists in Florida have discovered that when male white ibises eat too much mercury, they turn gay.

Don't blame an overbearing ibis mother. Blame the metal.

Suspicious that mercury had led to lower breeding levels among the wading birds, researchers fed groups of ibises varying levels of mercury over three years. The results shocked the stuffing out of the scientists.

The higher the mercury dose, the more likely a bird was to sing show tunes.

These new Friends of Dorothy "pretty much did everything except lay eggs," said study leader Peter Frederick to The Miami Herald. "They built nests, they copulated, they sat in the nests together."

They went to a lesbian flamingo therapist when no egg appeared.

Male ibises with any mercury intake were more reticent to perform ritual courtship displays, causing numbers of female ibises to cry together over Cosmopolitans.

In the high-mercury birds, reproduction plunged 35 percent. Complaints from wannabe grandparents soared 65 percent.

The mercury levels in the experiment mirrored those found in the birds' natural wetland habitats. Frederick, a wildlife ecologist at the University of Florida, told Nature.com "the implication is that this is probably happening in wild bird populations."

Which means the wilderness is getting wilder.

Not a good thing, in this case. These beautiful, long-billed birds are being poisoned into gayness. In wild populations of ibis with no mercury exposure, same-sex pairings don't occur.

Well, it probably happens once in a while, when the tequila is plentiful and the birds are bi-curious, but not as a rule.

We should go with what nature intended. Let's keep the ibises straight and the people gay!

In south Florida, mercury leached into the Everglades for years, mainly from the burning of municipal and medical waste. "Most mercury sources are local rather than global--local enough that we can do something about it, such as installing scrubbers on smoke stacks," Frederick said. "Ecosystems respond very quickly to regulatory action when it comes to mercury."

But how will the birds respond? If their diet is cleaned up, will they revert to being straight?

Speaking of people, Frederick frets that "people will read this and immediately jump to the conclusion that humans eating mercury are going to be gay. I want to be very explicit that this study has nothing to say about that."

If they need a little help, then by George, we might've found an actual use for ex-gay groups. Ex-gay leaders can take ibises under their wing and lead them back to heterosexuality. The success rate can only be higher than it is with people.

Speaking of people, Frederick frets that "people will read this and immediately jump to the conclusion that humans eating mercury are going to be gay. I want to be very explicit that this study has nothing to say about that."

Doubtless some parents have nonetheless purged their larder of tuna fish, tossed the thermometer, and made a date at the dentist to convert all of Junior's mercury fillings.

And if they hadn't already banned from the house the music of Freddie Mercury, they have now.

Frederick also said that what's true for ibises isn't necessarily true for other species, even other bird species. So jump to no conclusions about a couple of male green herons that adore each other's company. Make no assumptions about the two roseate spoonbills with a passion for pomegranate martinis.

The turtles that hide during mating season are simply shy. And the alligators that agree they'd make lovely boots are just metrosexual.

I visited south Florida this past year, and I watched ibises. I admit to my shame that I didn't notice any gay goings-on. This is probably because I can't tell males from females.

I needed obvious indicators of homosexuality. Now, had two canoodling birds sported Prada shoes, I would've caught on.

*Leslie Robinson should learn to tell male from female. E-mail her at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and check out her blog at www.generalgayety.com.*



# S/he said

## War and marriage, status and dignity

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Linda Hirshman

*"Conservatives are normally out there urging people to fight and to marry. A conservative president launched two wars, and conservatives tried to impeach the adulterous Bill Clinton. When it comes to gays and lesbians wanting to defend their country or provide a stable, loving union, the right wing is suddenly on the other side."*

— Linda Hirshman, in her column titled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Turncoats," [www.thedailybeast.com](http://www.thedailybeast.com), Dec. 01.



Pat Griffin

*"Thank you for voting to change your by-laws by deleting the requirement that members must be 'female at birth.' I know this change was prompted by a lawsuit, but nonetheless, I applaud your decision to join other sports organizations that have eliminated policies that bar transgender athletes from participating in their self-identified gender. Please provide your leadership and your membership with some good education about transgender identity and the issues related to transgender athletes. Institute a policy that is based on the latest research and medical information. Most of all, be your best selves. Welcome your new transgender members into your sisterhood and may the best golfer win."*

— Pat Griffin, in her blog titled "An Open Letter to the LPGA," Pat Griffin's LGBT Sport Blog, <http://ittakesateam.blogspot.com>, Dec. 1.

*"It's the federal employee's version of the Gay Bill of Special Rights... That means the next TSA official that gives you an 'enhanced pat down' could be a practicing homosexual secretly getting pleasure from your submission."*

— Eugene Delgaudio, an elected official in Loudoun County Virginia, and president, Public Advocate of the United States, in a widely distributed e-mail claiming that airport security pat downs are part of a "homosexual agenda," [www.wusa9.com](http://www.wusa9.com) Nov. 30. Public Advocate of the United States fights "liberals tyrants, elitists, homosexuals, Barack Obama, pornography, gay marriage, same-sex marriage, high taxes, over-regulation, abortion and atheists."



*"I am an HIV negative man. I'm neither proud nor ashamed of the status itself, but I'm proud that I know my status as yet another World AIDS Day has come and gone. Whether I would be bold enough to reveal the status if it were the other way around, I don't know. But if I've learned anything from the past few days, it's that combating HIV/AIDS stigma starts with talking a bit more honestly and openly about it."*

Rob Smith in his "Black, Gay and Twentysomething" column, this posting titled "HIV and Me," [www.afterelton.com](http://www.afterelton.com), Dec. 2.

### Letter: Correction on APM article

In BTL's Dec. 2, Vol.1848, you ran a story about a new marketing campaign being developed by AIDS Partnership Michigan under the headline, "Huge donation to encourage HIV prevention in SE Michigan." Referring to the funding for the campaign as a "donation" does not accurately reflect the press release we submitted.

While AIDS Partnership Michigan would be delighted to receive such a generous gift and certainly would encourage it, the truth is that the funding was not a "donation" of any kind. As stated in our press release, the \$300,000 actually came to us in the form of a one-year grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health. Obtaining that grant was part of a competitive process required by the state of Michi-

gan to see which organizations can most effectively meet the specific objectives of the state's health initiatives, in this case for a community mobilization project. APM was one of many organizations that submitted a proposal in May 2010 for this state-funded HIV prevention campaign. After reviewing the various proposals, the MDCH awarded that grant to APM and HARC for contract year July 2010 - June 2011, based on the strength of our proposal.

Thank you for your continued interest in our efforts.

AIDS Partnership Michigan  
Bill VanHemert, MSW, Community Mobilization Project Manager  
Wil Bowen, Community Mobilization Project Associate



## Parting Glances Then & Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

## Don we now our CENSORED apparel...

I hate to play the Gay Grinch Who Stole Christmas, but there's a movement afoot by the Southern Comfort Baptists to do away with all suspected gay references in Christmas carols and holiday traditions. (Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Veterans Day are targeted next.)

Unless we act with a united front (and a well-padded backside), "Don we now our GAY apparel" is doomed. "God rest ye, MARY gentlemen" is a goner. Gold frankincense & myrrh (along with patchouli) are out. Mince pie and sugar plum you-know-whats are things of the past.

Rainbow ribbons and wrapping paper are taboo. Red stockings for the chimney will be minus silver belles or D&G designer fur trim. Dancer, Prancer, and Cupid are dead ducks. (Substitute: Butch, Bouncer, Bimbo.)

Yes, Christmas may never be its gay old self again. And Mr. Gailey will forever be deleted from "Miracle on 34th Street." (How gay, by the way, is Kris Kringle? He even looks a bit, well, you know, suspect. And what's all this fascination with kids, anyhow? Has he ever had an authentic FBI security check?)

For readers who are in the dark about the Southern Comfort Baptists — a boisterous offshoot of gay bashing, Disney boycotting, 15-million-strong Southern Baptists — the Southern Comforters swarm like a plague of biblical locust. And they're two-fisted when it comes to minding other people's business and sampling other people's Texas Tea.

Every neighborhood has one or two Southern Comforters living things up way into the wee-wee Sabbath hours. (I passed one leaning against a lamppost and singing the doxology to my neighbor's calico just the other morning. The cat has yet to return - saved or unsaved. Neutered or otherwise.)

Southern Comforters are headquartered in Myopic Flats TX, home of the world-famous batter-dipped, low-cal Gila Burger. ("The burger with a bite to die for!") They broadcast over radio station TPARTY-AM, and their TV program, "The Church Key Hour" is syndicated worldwide. (Sarah Palin, who likes peeking through an occasional narrow-minded keyhole, is thinking about converting. Again.)

The Southern Comforters perform what they call brinkmanship baptism. ("We don't sprinkle. We dunk, count to ten very slowly, and ask God for a miracle.") They don't smoke weed, boogie down, play Bridge, skinny-dip, practice Feng Shui, eat kosher mayonnaise, or play kissy face on the first and last date. Their motto: "One taste of 100-proof heaven goes a long, long way."

More than likely you've seen a controversial full-page ad the Southern Comforters took out in National Expirer tabloid recently (appearing next to Lady Gaga's 'candid camera cuties'.) SANTA: A GAY AGENDA PLOT! Homos put the X in X-Mas! Are There 'Toys' Under Your Tree? Is Your Sock 'Hung' by the Chimney with 'Care'? Beware! The GAGs are coming.

In case you're too busy to speed-read the scandal sheets at checkout counters, Santa really got a few below-the-belt punches from these burning bush holly rollers: "It's bad enough the Gay Agenda Gang (GAG) has shoved TV's Burt & Ernie and Tinky Winky down our collective throats, but the real Trojan Horse is Old St. Nick himself!

"It's true. Santa, who wears a leather belt and boots, sports a beard and a big beer belly, is what GAGs call a card-carrying 'bear.' His red suit is color-coded to convey a deep-seated message. (Years ago, gay men wore bright red ties. And, those unmentionable hankies!) And while there may be a Mrs. Santa — a 'beard' of another kind — what grown man in his right mind breaks bread with elves, second cousins to hobbits, twinks and fairies?

"Be forewarned. Sitting on Santa's ample knee and telling him you're naughty or nice, Äi when God knows you're a loathsome, rotten, stinking sinner, Äi is an invitation to disaster and damnation. Repent before it's too late. Santa, and all he stands for (which includes same-sex marriage), is anti-American, antifamily Values, anti-Republican, and a GAG plot to boot. Amen."

PS: The less said about Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, the better. Mary Christmas, PGers!

CHRISTMAS TIP: Instead of donating LGBT dollars to the Salvation Army this year, put a note in the little red kettle: "The Salvation Army's homophobic! No donation from me, my family, my friends. Get stuffed!"

[Charles@pridesource.com](mailto:Charles@pridesource.com), Facebook, too!



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# Dirty Dancing

## Natalie Portman and 'Black Swan' cast talk ballet thriller – and that girl-on-girl sex scene

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Natalie Portman flaps her arms and moves as gracefully as a bird in the twisted psychosexual thriller "Black Swan," but the comparisons don't stop there. The actress ate like one, too.

To transform into mentally unstable ballet dancer Nina Sayers, a darkly disturbing role that's already giving Portman major Oscar pull, the 29-year-old had to train intensely – for nearly eight hours a day she exercised, toned and practiced – and eat lots of carrots and almonds. Then, as soon as production wrapped, she stuffed her face with pasta... for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"The physical discipline really helped for the emotional side of the character," Portman says, a sweet laugh escaping her as she discusses the film – opening Dec. 10 at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak – during a press day at Los Angeles' Pantages Theatre. "That's a ballet dancer's life – you don't drink, you don't go out with your friends, you don't have much food. You are constantly putting your body through extreme pain, and you get that understanding of the self-flagellation of a ballet dancer."

But simply twirling around in pointe shoes, in Nina's case anyway, is only the half of it. Pressure to be the best, to succeed in every way for everyone – herself, her mother (Barbara Hershey) and her instructor (Vincent Cassel) – mounts in mental madness, as "Black Swan" becomes less about dance than the psychosis of performing it. New dancer Lily (Mila Kunis), who impresses with her dark Black Swan personification, only adds to the fire burning inside Nina, throwing her into a charged competition that's as destructive as the dance form itself.

"It's really just a retelling of 'Swan Lake,'" says director Darren Aronofsky ("The Wrestler"), "but it definitely shows the challenges and the darkness and the reality of how hard it is to be a ballet dancer."

Hype, however, isn't over how much weight Portman and co-star Kunis ("That '70s Show") shed to play rivals – about 20 pounds each – or that it took a grueling year for Portman to move as skillfully as she does onscreen. All anyone's talked about is how they get it on (intensely), how far they go (pretty far), and how much of Portman you see (sorry, zilch). Recently, Portman told V Magazine, "It's not raunchy – it's extreme."

At the November premiere in New York, she also insisted that shooting sex is hard whomever it's with: "It doesn't matter if it's a friend, a male, a female," she told The Huffington Post from the red carpet. "You're with 100-something crew members, lighting you, repositioning you; there's no comfort whatsoever."

It was just as awkward for Kunis, who spoke about the scene at the Pantages Theatre: "Whether you have a same-sex scene or a scene with the opposite sex, it's a sex scene nonetheless," says the actress, who suggestively bedded another woman – but not so graphically – in 2007's "After Sex." "Doing something like this with Darren was very safe and as comfortable as it could be. I never had a fear of being exploited."



Photos: Niko Tavernise

See Black Swan, page 22



► **Black Swan**

Continued from p. 21

The steamy scene, a switch from Portman's usually prim-and-proper image (there's a reason we fell madly in love with her in "Garden State"), is pivotal in creating Nina, whose newfound liberation after years of repression leads to a raging sexual awakening.

She masturbates, vomits, hallucinates and anxiously scratches herself until she bleeds. The Harvard-educated actress — who says, "This was actually a case where something I learned in school *did* turn into something practical" — has a name for it: "religious obsession-compulsion." And then there's Nina's smother-mother. Think "Mommie Dearest," but with Hershey in Faye Dunaway's place.

"It was really exciting to come in and do this insular, claustrophobic, intense relationship," says the "Beaches" actress. "(Portman and I) got to a feeling of ritual. And I tried to copy her eyebrows as much as I could. We were very aware of the symbiotic everydayness of living together forever, and that was fun. We didn't talk about it too much, but we knew it."

How they reached that unique bond was the product of Aronofsky's genius suggestion: Exchange letters in character, as mother and daughter.

Portman starts, "Barbara wrote gorgeous letters that were really in character that really gave a sense —"

"Of our history," Barbara adds. "To suggest that was just amazing preparation and it gave me the door to my character, which was great."

Singularly, as Nina, Portman was made for this role. Until age 12, she was a dancer and dreamed of growing up to be one.

"I always idealized it, as most young girls do, as the most beautiful art," Portman says. "I always wanted to do a film related



Mila Kunis (left) and Natalie Portman in "Black Swan."

**"I always wanted to do a film related to (ballet). So when (director) Darren (Aronofsky) had this incredible idea that wasn't just related to the dance world but also had this really complicated character, it was just something completely exciting."**

— Natalie Portman

to that. So when Darren had this incredible idea that wasn't just related to the dance world but also had this really complicated character — two characters, really — it was just something completely exciting."

Really tough, too. Training aside, it's one of the actress' most complicated characters, a role that summons an extensive out-of-body performance that only someone with Portman's range could pull off. And she has before, effortlessly slipping into the erratic seductress role in "Closer," as a stripper, and in period pieces like "The Other Boleyn Girl." In January, she'll star alongside Ashton Kutcher in the sex farce

"No Strings Attached." Aronofsky was sold far sooner, though, with one of the actress' first films, starring a then-13-year-old Portman as a precocious sidekick to a hit man in "The Professional."

"One of the reasons I think Darren and I had such telepathy during this was because he's as disciplined and focused as could possibly be, and that's what I try to be," Portman muses, mulling over her "Black Swan" character. "And I'm not a perfectionist but I'm definitely... I think I like discipline." Laughing, she insists: "I'm obedient!"

Big shock.

## Five of the best lesbian love scenes

BY CHRISTY LEMIRE, AP MOVIE CRITIC

Natalie Portman and Mila Kunis play bitter ballet rivals in Darren Aronofsky's trippy "Black Swan." But the heightened emotion they feel for each other ends up bubbling over into a passionate sex scene that's had people talking for months before the film's release.

Well, now "Black Swan" is finally here, so it's a great opportunity — and not gratuitous at all, really — to take a look at the five most famous lesbian scenes on film.

**"Mulholland Dr."** (2001): The first intimate encounter between Naomi Watts and Laura Elena Harring is soft and sweet... but because this is a David Lynch movie, naturally the relationship between these two women becomes darker and more complicated. Watts, as aspiring starlet Betty Elms (at this point in the film, at least), gets tangled up with Harring's gorgeous amnesiac Rita. As the two embark on an adventure, playing girl-detective to solve the mystery of Rita's past, their fear and loneliness lead to a kiss which leads to one of the loveliest lesbian scenes ever filmed. In a movie full of twists, this is a rare moment of pure, instinctive emotion.

**"Wild Things"** (1998): It starts out as a face-slapping, hair-pulling cat fight in a swimming pool and ends up in a make-out session, complete with bikinis and T-shirts being tossed aside with sultry music in the background. Denise Richards plays the naughty rich girl and Neve Campbell plays the naughty poor girl; despite coming from opposite sides of the tracks, they manage to get together to concoct some rape accusations against their high school guidance counselor (Matt Dillon). The fact that this takes place in South Florida makes the whole movie feel even more steamy and tawdry.

**"Bound"** (1996): Before The Wachowski Brothers entered the Matrix, the writing-directing duo made their debut with this funny, tense and sexy neo-noir. Jennifer Tilly plays Violet, the seemingly ditzy girlfriend of a mobster; Gina Gershon plays Corky, the maintenance woman in their apartment building who just got out of prison. Violet's attraction to Corky is instantaneous, and eventually the two cook up a scheme to steal \$2 million in stashed cash from Violet's boyfriend. A ridiculous amount of contrived meetings and flirting leads to an intense — but artfully photographed — love scene between the two women.

**"D.E.B.S."** (2004): As if it weren't enough to have a bunch of beautiful, teenage spies dressed in naughty schoolgirl outfits, their leader (Sara Foster) ends up secretly falling for the deadly criminal (Jordana Brewster) who is their primary target. Writer-director Angela Robinson's film isn't exactly great cinema, but it also doesn't take itself too seriously and features plenty of fun, cheeky moments. (Its tagline: "They're crime-fighting hotties with killer bodies.") That's indeed true of Foster and Brewster, who share a few kisses and teasing moments before their eventual playful and passionate hook-up.

**"Cruel Intentions"** (1999): The most chaste of the five on this list, but it did earn Sarah Michelle Gellar and Selma Blair the highly coveted "Best Kiss" prize at the MTV Movie Awards. In this prep-school version of "Dangerous Liaisons," Gellar functions in the Glenn Close role as a conniving and manipulative rich girl who dominates Manhattan's Upper East Side. Blair is in the Uma Thurman role as a malleable innocent. Since Blair's character has never kissed a boy before, Gellar's teaches her what to do during a picnic in Central Park: "I'm gonna stick my tongue in your mouth, and when I do that I want you to massage my tongue with yours." It all sounds pretty straightforward.

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## Chris Willis: 'Louder' and Prouder

Dance artist goes out on his own with new album

BY PETER GALVIN

The power of his voice can shake the rafters. The power of his performances has moved clubgoers in every way possible – physically, emotionally, spiritually. Of course, we're talking about the force that is Chris Willis, the artist, who, as singer, songwriter and producer, is now manifesting love and joy to audiences around the world with his new solo single, the Billboard club smash "Louder (Put Your Hands Up)."

The song's video, which has held the distinction of being the No. 1 most viewed video on YouTube in 19 countries, has Willis center stage, soaking up the light and beaming it straight to his fans.

Much has been said of the musical collaborations between Willis and world-renown producer and DJ David Guetta. Together, the two have created some of the most memorable club hits of the last several years, including "Love is Gone," "Love Don't Let Me Go" and their most recent global hit "Gettin' Over You," featuring Willis on vocals along with Fergie and LMFAO. Much has also been said about Willis as an in-demand session singer, songwriter and backing vocalist, who's worked with such talent as Quincy Jones, Kelly Clarkson, Ricky Martin, Kelly Rowland, Dusty Springfield, Dolly Parton and Brooks & Dunn.

But now on the cusp of a larger, much-deserved notoriety – and on the eve of the release of his new solo album – it's time for Willis to tell us more about himself in his own words. Here, the singer talks about his exciting musical journey as a solo artist, his devotion to the art form known as dance music, and the impact of his sexuality on his personal and professional life.

**You're putting out your own album after being part of other people's recordings for many years. How do you like being the one in charge?**

Well, I've put out music before on my own, but this feels like my first. It's coming out on my own label, and it's my own brand – it feels like a full-circle moment. It's another one of my dreams to reach a mainstream audience, and I feel like this is the beginning of that dream.

**How much creative input did you have in the making of the album?**

Basically, I was involved in all of the writing, which I had already been doing with David (Guetta) for many years. I wrote all the lyrics and the melodies. Most of the other work I've done was a collaboration with other artists, mostly for their projects. It's really about me this time. It's a chance to put a really cohesive theme together.

I've been living with a lot of these tracks that I've collected over the years during the process of working with various DJs around the world. Some of the songs were written just for fun. Some were writ-

ten off the top of my head, as a way to express the feelings I was having right at that moment. There are songs from both the past and the present.

**What inspirations do you draw from in your songwriting?**

The thing that inspires me most is love – having love, losing love, dreaming of love, praying for love. Another one of my muses is the dance floor. I always like to imagine what it would be like if I was on the dance floor and saw someone that I liked. I'd start out feeling afraid and insecure – what would I say to them? Then all of the sudden, with the help of the music, I'd develop this confidence in myself, and I'd know what to say. Or what if I was in a relationship that was on the verge of ending – what would I say to save it? I like expressing these kinds of feelings when I'm onstage because I know there are people on the dance floor who feel the same way.

**Has being out front and on your own as a solo artist brought a whole new set of pressures to your career?**

There is definitely an intimidation factor, but I've had a lot of successes and failures in my career, so I draw on all of that to help me. I've been in the business many years, and there are always pressures and deadlines. I'm accustomed to that kind of stress, having had to pull it together to perform after flying eight hours over the water. I like that pressure – it's my job, it's my lifestyle. But I'm not doing this in a bubble either; I've got an incredible team behind me.

**How was it working with Fergie and David Guetta on the "Gettin' Over You" video?**

The thing about videos is they are one of the most grueling elements of working in the business. And Fergie and David made it seem so effortless. I realized in that situation, I was the rookie. But I was just glad to have some face time alongside them and get a chance to watch them do what they do. I really learned a lot from being there.

**What's it like for you to perform live in front of club audiences all over the world?**

I really love performing. I call myself a show off. I love being onstage, love being in the light, love having all of those eyes on me. I feed a lot on the audience. They give me energy, which makes me want to give more. Each song is an opportunity to give from my soul. To have the oppor-



tunity to do that all over the world gives me a feeling I can't really put into words.

**Do you have a favorite city that you like to perform in?**

I really love everywhere I get to play, but Russia and Brazil are probably my favorite places to go. The Russians and the Brazilians really respond to my music. I feel like Michael Jackson when I go to those countries.

**How does your sexuality as a gay man impact your music, if at all?**

It's definitely a part of my personality that's very real. But it's not something I focus on. I don't think it has as big an effect on me as it did when I was younger. In the past, I focused on it so much that I felt I could be crippled by it. I spent most of those years doing what I could to disarm the fears, doubts and self-hatred that can come with being gay.

I had to come to terms with myself so when I step out on stage, I can be honest, open, compassionate and vulnerable. I don't focus on it so much now. I focus on the band, on the enthusiasm of the audience, on just trying to make it a great night. For the people that come to see me, it doesn't matter what my sexuality is. It's all about the party.

See Willis, page 29





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# Sounds of the season

## New Christmas music releases worth worshipping

BY BRIAN Q. NEWCOMB

I think by now we can all agree with the logic that we don't need any new Christmas music. It's all been done, from traditional to country and hip-hop.

But still they come, variations on the same 50 or so songs, the "hopes and fears of all the years" expressed in Christian hymns and secular stories of Santa, snowfall, family warmth and romantic possibilities. The music we hear in stores, on the radio, in our homes capture the complicated relationship we have with the Christmas season. Perhaps a focus on the fun music and "tidings of comfort and joy" are just what we need to get us through to the new year.

I've written a lot about that, and lots about Christmas music in the past. Here are the highlights selected from this year's offerings:

**"Christmas Comes Alive," The Brian Setzer Orchestra**

If you've followed former Stray Cat, Brian Setzer's storied solo career with his big-band brass Orchestra, you know he's done a number of Christmas music albums in the wake of songs requested for Gov.

Schwarzenegger's holiday film "Jingle All the Way."

"Comes Alive" brings all the best of that material with vibrant energy and stellar performances to a live audience, and thankfully this great recording. Setzer's great guitar playing thrills throughout, mixing that unique blend of old-school rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, blues and jazz that he's occupied for several decades.

**"Crazy For Christmas," Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks**

This one's in a similar vein, but with an almost country acoustic vibe that has run through Hicks' sneakily subversive swing music. "Cool Yule" is the descriptive here—and Santa's the hero, as most of these songs move toward the more secular expressions of the holiday. There's also toe-tapping, pickin' and grinnin' takes on "Santa Gotta Choo Choo" and "I've Got Christmas By the Tail."

**"Merry Christmas," Shelby Lynne**

Country singer Shelby Lynne smartly keeps her soulful vocals front and center on this self-produced record of longtime favorites that lean toward the sadder songs

of longing, like "Silver Bells" and similar readings of "O Holy Night," "Silent Night" and "White Christmas." "Christmastime's A-Coming" gives her fine pickers a little room to shine on a country trotter.

As we all know, some of the best Christmas gifts are found in unexpected places, like a homey kitchen, a candlelit sanctuary on a snow evening or a manger surrounded by animals where a poor expecting couple might find a little protection from the weather. Some of the best music this season will be the same, not in stores or big studios, but around pianos in homes, at church caroling parties and on Christmas eve in the candles' glow.

*The Rev. Brian Q. Newcomb is senior minister at David's United Church of Christ in Kettering, Ohio, and a longtime music critic published in Billboard, CCM Magazine, Paste, The Riverfront Times and St. Louis Post-Dispatch, among others. Additional content from Brian is available on his Quincessentials blog at [community.ucc.org](http://community.ucc.org).*



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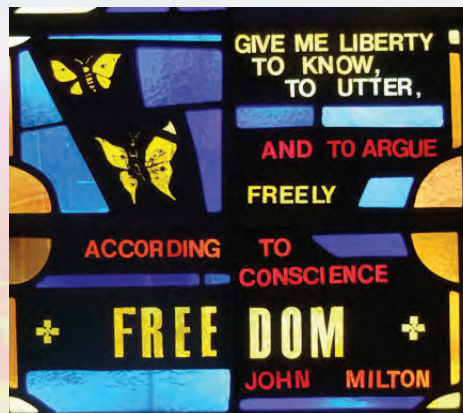
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# Glenn Burke's story

"Glenn was comfortable with who he was. Baseball was not comfortable with who he was."

That encapsulates the life and career of Glenn Burke, Major League Baseball's first openly gay player. And it is a measure of the sports world's continuing discomfort with homosexuality that it has taken three decades for his compelling tale to be told.

"Out. The Glenn Burke Story" premiered last month in San Francisco. The one-hour documentary played to a sold-out audience at the Castro Theatre – Burke's old backyard. It described his rise, from multi-sport star at Berkeley High School to his heralded signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers as "the next Willie Mays." And then his fall.

In 1978 – one year after starting in the World Series – Burke was traded to the Oakland Athletics. By 1980 he was out of baseball. Despite being loved and admired for both his athletic skills and great clubhouse personality, it is widely believed that Burke's tacit acknowledgement of his sexuality led to the quick end of a promising career.

The documentary details his public announcement of his homosexuality in 1982 (on the "Today" show with Bryant Gumbel), to a life filled with drugs and prison, through a period of homelessness and his AIDS diagnosis in 1994.

Burke succumbed to the disease – but his story ends with support from the A's and some former teammates.

The documentary pulls no punches. Claudell Washington recalls Oakland manager Billy Martin introducing Burke to his new teammates: "This is Glenn Burke and he's a faggot."

A high school classmate says that Dodger executives offered Burke \$75,000 to get married. His response: "I guess you mean to a woman?"

Former sportswriter Lyle Spencer

remembers Burke's popularity. When he was traded, several Dodgers cried.

And Pamela Pitts, Oakland's director of baseball administration, says Burke was amazed his former team would reach out to a man with AIDS. "I can't believe someone wants to help me," he said.

It is a sad testament to his life that Pitts had to say this about his death: "I do believe he was in a much better place. His demons were gone."

After the premiere, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area hosted a town hall meeting in the theater. Bay Area professional athletes, journalists and sports executives discussed the film and whether the sports climate has changed in the three decades since Burke played.

San Jose Sharks hockey broadcaster Drew Remenda took his 14-year-old son to the screening. The boy could not understand why anyone cared about sexuality, but Remenda took a more nuanced view. With Americans still battling over issues like gay marriage and Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Remenda said, "I don't know how far we've come." Gay athletes, he said, are still "fearful" about coming out.

Remenda described the movie as "a great story of courage" about Glenn – but a story of cowardice about society.

San Francisco Giants president and chief operating officer Larry Baer countered that "there is enlightenment in sports." He pointed to his team's promotion of the AIDS-awareness Until There's a Cure Day as far back in the early 1990s. Giants manager Dusty Baker took a lead role in the event.

The Giants stood up – as Burke did – for "what's right," Baer said.

Discussing any potential problems his team would face today from advertisers if a Giant came out, Baer replied: "The answer should be, 'Too bad.' At the end of the day, we have to do what's right." Of course, he

acknowledged, things might be easier in San Francisco than other cities.

Four-time Super Bowl champion Bill Romanowski said that nearly every day in the San Francisco 49ers locker room, he hears gay slurs. "It's not right," he noted. "But it just is."

Asked whether having an openly gay athlete would divide a team, Romanowski said "probably." But, he added, far smaller issues divide teams too. "That's reality," he explained.

The 49ers' trainer was openly gay, Romanowski said. "That opened my eyes. He was a phenomenal trainer – and a really good man."

Fourteen-year NFL fullback Lorenzo Neal said flat out: "People will feel uncomfortable" with a gay teammate. "We're humans. We can't control other people's emotions."

But Bay Area sports columnist Ray Ratto thinks things will be fine – if the openly gay athlete is "an indispensable player." That, he said, would force teammates to realize that their feelings of discomfort were less important than the opportunity to win big with a gay guy.

Jackie Robinson's teammates didn't like him at first, Ratto said, "but they came around when they realized he'd help them make money."

Robinson was, of course, the first black Major League Baseball player. His team was the Brooklyn Dodgers. They moved to Los Angeles in 1958 – where, 20 years later, they cast aside the man who eventually became the first openly gay baseball player.

Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach, gay activist, and author of the "Jocks" series of books on gay male athletes. Visit his website at [www.danwoog.com](http://www.danwoog.com). He can be reached care of this publication or at [OutField@qsyndicate.com](mailto:OutField@qsyndicate.com).

## ► Willis

Continued from p. 24

**For many years, to be a dance artist was to sing in a kind of pop ghetto. But now dance music is providing the basis for many of the biggest hits on the charts. With that in mind, would you call yourself a dance artist or a pop artist?**

I'm of the persuasion that dance music and pop music are the same things. I started out as a gospel artist, and that was what I was most passionate about at the time. In many ways, I was singing gospel as a way to release fear. I felt if I wasn't singing gospel, I was going to hell – literally.

But I had all this other music in my soul, and I thought it would be a shame not to pay homage to all the other kinds of music that I loved. I like pop, country, soul, rock. But then dance music came out of nowhere. I found dance, and it found me. It was a window of opportunity that I leaped through. Dance music has allowed me to be so many things. I intend to explore this art form as

**"Mainstream music has given me the permission to really push the envelope and be who I am."**

long as there's a taste for it. I love it.

**Being a solo artist means you are styling yourself in a certain way. You don't have to compromise to someone else's view of what you should look like or dress like. Is that fun?**

I love fashioning my own image. One of my original ambitions was to be a fashion designer because I absolutely love fashion. I really keep up with what's going on and always have my face buried in the latest fashion magazine. Being my own artist and creating my own brand has given me the chance to focus on fashion even more.

When I was doing gospel, that was

harder to do. In gospel music, the image that you're creating is one that reflects Christ. With the music I'm doing now, I get to be different characters, tell stories and create all kinds of fantasies with both my music and my image. Mainstream music has given me the permission to really push the envelope and be who I am.

**Your struggle to be who you are makes me think about all of the gay kids who are trying to transcend the bullying that's going on right now so they too can be who they are without fear of violence or persecution.**

I'm very passionate about the struggle to put an end to the bullying of gay teens and have sent out many messages on Twitter and Facebook in support of these kids. All of this bullying makes me think of a Dr. Seuss quote that's had particular resonance for me over the years: "Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."



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# Rules be damned! Revised comedy merits second look – and it's a winner!

BY JOHN QUINN

Here's one that almost got away. When Hamtramck-based Planet Ant Theatre announced it was re-mounting its comedy "Detroit Be Dammed: A Beaver's Tale" in the performance space above the Park Bar, around here we thought it was the same old, same old – a show we'd already reviewed. This is not the case. Script and score were revised, a few roles were recast and a spacious stage downtown allowed for big changes. While your humble reviewer didn't see the original production, he can say without qualification the new one provides an entertaining evening. It is a shot in the arm for Detroit's image, and playwrights Shawn Handlon and Mikey Brown have done us proud.

Detroit's history is relived in song, dance and audio visuals by an ensemble of five tireless actors who don multiple hats (not to mention wigs, mustaches and sketchy costumes) to flesh out dozens of characters. This breathless band of troupers includes Dawn Bartley, Sharon L. Brooks, Mikey Brown, Chris Korte and Dez Walker, set loose to work their magic by director Shawn Handlon. Between Brown's rocked-out score and Jill Dion's crisp choreography, the fun never stops. In addition, as a history buff, I can tell that the playwrights have done a remarkable job of research. The script is as entertaining for its history lessons as it is for its satire.

Jaques LeMerde stepped off the canoe at d'etroit with Cadillac in 1701, much to the chagrin of the local Wyandotte. Three hundred years' worth of LeMerdes participated in the building of the city, but never reached the prominence of the Woodward or Williams families. (What a coincidence! The theater sits at a cross street named for Elizabeth Williams, daughter of John R.) They just endured; through fire and wars, through revolutions in industry and economic catastrophes, there was always a LeMerde in Detroit. We're led forward through generations of LeMerdes (sorry, I've fallen in love with that name), with some flash forwards to modern times. It



**REVIEW**

**'Detroit Be Dammed: A Beaver's Tale'**

Planet Ant Theatre at the Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Thursday-Saturday through Dec. 18. \$25. 313-365-4948.  
www.parkbardetroit.com

would be impossible to sort out all these characters without the accompanying video, hosted by a friendly beaver. (This IS a Beaver's Tale, you know.) Additions of video to Planet Ant productions are pretty standard; here it's exceptionally well integrated.

The theater at the Park Bar appears a work in progress, but already holds a lot of potential. The atmosphere is kind of Shakespearian Industrial. The stage is well proportioned and much deeper than Planet Ant's home base. "Detroit Be Dammed" must have been totally re-blocked to let it flow so naturally in a new venue. Be advised: The room is heated by a furnace too noisy to run during the show. It's winter. It's Detroit. Dress accordingly, since it can get a little nippy near the end of Act I. This is not the first theater I've encountered with this problem, and it's only a minor

A revised "Detroit Be Dammed: A Beaver's Tale" is now playing in the city of its origins – at the Park Bar in downtown Detroit. Photo: Planet Ant Theatre

inconvenience.

The performance space is all hard surfaces now, so acoustics are a problem. Mikey Brown's sharp score and video work can be a little overwhelming, tending to drown the singers in ensemble numbers. This is no problem in solo numbers for the formidable voices of Dawn Bartley and Sharon L. Brooks.

There was a time in my miss-spent youth I was a lighting designer, and let me tell you those gaslights were a pain. So Rollo, technical director and designer, is justifiably proud of the state-of-the-art, low wattage LED stage lighting. It is, however more flexible than flattering, casting a fish belly pallor on fair skinned cast members. It'll take getting used to.

If we're to take something away from "Detroit Be Dammed: A Beaver's Tale," we might sum it up so: Progress needs risk. Risk didn't always work for the LeMerdes or for Detroit. Planet Ant Theatre takes risks; some successful, some not so successful. If this salute to a down-and-out hometown and the city it can become is any indication, we're making progress!

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### EDITOR'S PICK

The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan and Ruth Ellis Center will celebrate their new collaborative effort which will train and educate homeless, runaway and kicked out LGBTQ youth. The hope is the training will empower youth to become advocates for anti-discrimination and provide them with the tools to become "tomorrow's activists."

To celebrate, young LGBTQ activist, writer and editor of the "Kicked Out

Anthology" Sassafras Lowrey has agreed to speak at the event on how personal stories can invigorate youth to become leaders. The celebration will also include speeches from executive director of REC, Laura Hughes and staff attorney of ACLU Michigan, Jay Kaplan. You won't want to miss this opportunity to get involved this Friday, International Human Rights Day.

The celebration will take place in ACLU's Detroit office at 5 p.m. Dec. 10. For more information, contact Rana Elmir at 313-410-5509 or [relmir@aclumich.org](mailto:relmir@aclumich.org).

## OUTINGS

### Friday, Dec. 10

**Sassafras Lowrey**, 5 p.m. The ACLU of Michigan and the Ruth Ellis Center present author, artist and LGBTQ activist Sassafras Lowrey who will speak on how articulating personal crisis stories can empower LGBTQ youth to become leaders in the creation of social change. ACLU, 2966 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-410-5509. [relmir@aclumich.org](mailto:relmir@aclumich.org)

**Womyn's Film Night**, 7 p.m. Film: The Secrets-Devote but lively, Naomi and her new friend Michelle befriend a beautiful, mysterious older woman, Anouk, who is ill and living nearby who may or may not be Jewish, and may have committed a crime of passion. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Saturday, Dec. 11

**Holiday in December**, 6 p.m. Gala theme and attire in elegant black and Tiffany blue. A fundraiser and holiday celebration of families, friends and community. Event funds free programs and services offered by KICK. 33 East Forest Avenue, **Detroit**. 313-285-9733. [info@e-kick.org](mailto:info@e-kick.org) [www.e-kick.org](http://www.e-kick.org)

**Lansing Community College GSA Drag Show**, 8 p.m. Candy Land on Drag. Tickets: \$5. 500 North Capital Avenue, **Lansing**. [SpennyJ@lcc.edu](mailto:SpennyJ@lcc.edu)

### Wednesday, Dec. 15

**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 Ave., **Lansing**. 517-372-9163. [womenscentergl@yahoo.com](mailto:womenscentergl@yahoo.com)

### Friday, Dec. 17

**Womyn's Film Night**, 7 p.m. Film: Fun in Girls' Shorts. San Francisco's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender film festival

-- rounds up six of its best lesbian-themed shorts from America, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Saturday, Dec. 18

**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](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Thursday, Jan. 6

**Euchre Tournament**, 7 p.m. Euchre tournament fundraiser to benefit Out Loud Chorus, Washtenaw county's original GLBT chorus. Tickets: \$10. Cash prizes. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 South Industrial Hwy, **Ann Arbor**. 734-973-6084. [outloudchorus@gmail.com](mailto:outloudchorus@gmail.com) [www.olconline.org](http://www.olconline.org)

### Friday, Jan. 7

**Womyn's Film Night**, 7 p.m. Film: The Brave One-Oscar winner Jodie Foster stars in this dramatic thriller as Erica Bain, a New York City radio host who decides to take the law into her own hands after losing her fiancé in a brutal Central Park attack. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Thursday, Jan. 13

**Meet 'n Greet**, 7 p.m. A meeting for LGBT and allied people ages 18-33 for dinner, drinks and conversation. 20 Somethings, 222 E. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. [www.the20somethings.org](http://www.the20somethings.org)

## MUSIC & MORE

### BENEFITS/SOCIAL EVENTS

**Harmies Army** "Comics for Change" Tickets: \$100 VIP, \$50 IP, \$25 general

available online and at Mark Ridleys Comedy Castle. 7 p.m. Dec. 14. 310 S. Troy, Royal Oak. 248-542-9900. [harmiesarmy.com](http://harmiesarmy.com)

### CLASSICAL

**Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings** "Holiday Brass" Two arrangements of Handel tunes to evoke the season: "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Solomon and "Let the Bright Seraphim" from Samson and more. Tickets: \$10-35. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12. Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, 16 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Farms. 248-559-2095. [detroitchamberwinds.org](http://detroitchamberwinds.org)

### CONCERTS

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

**West Michigan Gay Men's Chorus** "A Holigay Party" Holiday Concert. Tickets: \$15. Available online starting the 22nd. 8 p.m. Dec. 17-Dec. 18. East Congregational Church, 1005 Giddings Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. 616-328-0202. [wmgmc.org](http://wmgmc.org)

**MSU College of Music** "Home for the Holidays" Festive holiday showcase featuring MSU Symphony Orchestra, Men's and Women's Glee Clubs, State Singers, and the MSU Children's Choir. Tickets: \$20 general, \$18 senior citizens, \$10 students and children. 8 p.m. Dec. 11. Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 800-WHA-RTON. [whartoncenter.com](http://whartoncenter.com)

**Sky Production** "Wednesday Night Concert & Jam ft. Sky Covington" Sep. 29-Dec. 29. Harbor House, 440 Clinton St., Detroit. 313 424 3458. [skycovington.com](http://skycovington.com)

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See Music, page 34

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## 'Wonderettes' serve up marvelous fun

BY JUDITH COOKIS RUBENS

The high school experience is so brilliantly universal, that most people – no matter what year they graduated – can relate to the first love and heartbreak that permeate those crucial teenage years.

It's a fitting backdrop, then, to meet "The Marvelous Wonderettes," a bubbly quartet of high school girlfriends who fill in as the last-minute entertainment at their Springfield High School senior prom in 1958. There's blonde, slightly conceited Cindy Lou; her best friend and wise-cracking arch rival, Betty Jean; the ditzzy, cheerful Suzy; and slightly nerdy teacher's pet, Missy. Oh, and did we mention all the ladies are competing against one another for the prom queen title?

"The Marvelous Wonderettes," now at Farmers Alley Theatre, is a pleasing musical flashback to the shoop, shoop hits of the '50s ("Mr. Sandman," Lollipop," "Stupid Cupid"), alongside more soulful

REVIEW

### 'The Marvelous Wonderettes'

Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Wednesday-Sunday through Dec. 26, plus Tuesday, Dec. 21; no performances Dec. 24-25. \$29-\$33. 269-343-2727. [www.farmersalleytheatre.com](http://www.farmersalleytheatre.com)

'60s tunes ("You Don't Own Me," "Son of a Preacher Man" and "Respect"). It's more fleshed-out songbook than a true, full-length musical. But once you get a few songs in, you realize there's a lot going on, even within the songs, to tell the story of changing friendships and evolving lives.

The second act cleverly skips ahead 10 years, finding the girls reunited and performing (where else?) at their 10-year high school reunion. Things haven't gone quite as planned for any of them, but they



Enjoy "The Marvelous Wonderettes" through Dec. 26. Photo: Farmer Alley Theatre

still find the perfect song to explain it all. This time around, the more mature ladies revel in '60s classics by Aretha Franklin, Dusty Springfield, Lesley Gore and others.

To read the complete review, log on to ... [www.EncoreMichigan.com](http://www.EncoreMichigan.com) or [PrideSource.com](http://PrideSource.com)

## Have yourself an airy little Christmas

BY JOHN QUINN

"The Nutcracker's Nuts" – VULGARITY at Christmas!

Thank you. Now that I have your attention, class, let's parse that show title. "Nutcracker's" is not possessive; it's a contraction. The synonym for "nuts" is "deranged." Now that your mind is out of the gutter, we may proceed. Our scene opens at a meeting of the Residents' Council of Simon's Rest, a retirement community in Frankfort, Michigan. For years the committee has relied on an annual performance of "A Christmas Carol" as a holiday fundraiser, but the recent death of one of their own has dampened enthusiasm. When shy Minnie Winchester suggests shaking things up by producing "The Nutcracker" instead, the idea is a hit. It's not until the first rehearsal, though, that her five colleagues discover that they've committed themselves to perform a ballet. Just the thought

REVIEW

### 'The Nutcracker's Nuts'

Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Rd., Eastpointe. Friday-Sunday through Dec. 18. \$16. 586-771-6333. [www.broadwayonstage.com](http://www.broadwayonstage.com)

of dancing in public with creaky knees and bad backs lead Malcolm (Stan Newman) to shout, "'The Nutcracker's' nuts!"

Broadway Onstage in Eastpointe is staging Dennis Wickline's quirky little comedy for a 10th holiday season. The first act defines the personalities of our stalwart crew; the second is "show time" for a sold-out audience. While the cast members are nowhere near the ages of their characters, they still manage to pull off earnest read-



"The Nutcracker's Nuts" returns to Broadway Onstage for its 10th season! Photo: Broadway Onstage

ings of cranky, crusty senior citizens. Think of it as "A Charlie Brown Christmas" for septuagenarians.

To read the complete review, log on to ... [www.EncoreMichigan.com](http://www.EncoreMichigan.com) or [PrideSource.com](http://PrideSource.com)

## Actors paint a sweet comedy in Ferndale

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Independent producer SweetLove Productions returns to The Ringwald with its second annual Christmas comedy, "F\$\$\$ the Holidays: A Seasonal Retail Story." And while it would have been understandable to come back with a sequel to last year's Wilde Award-nominated "The Real Housewives of the North Pole," creators Cara Trautman and Marke Sobolewski have instead teamed up to create a totally different holiday treat that had a recent Saturday night audience laughing pretty much from start to finish.

And for good reason: For not only does the script offer a sweet, but unique look at the holiday spirit, notable performances by two of its actors lift the production from "thoroughly entertaining" to "memorable."

REVIEW

### 'F\$\$\$ the Holidays: A Seasonal Retail Story'

Sweet Love Productions at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Friday-Sunday through Dec. 19, plus Monday, Dec. 20; times vary. \$10. 248-545-5545. [whowantscaketheatre.com](http://whowantscaketheatre.com)

Set in nearby rival paint stores, Kirsten (Trautman) is the aggressive, by-the-book manager of a local Paintco outlet. Thoroughly dedicated to her job, the nonsense woman has plans to one day rise to the top of this regional chain – despite

the toll it's taking on her personal life. (She has none, thanks to her intense drive and sour attitude.)

The opposite story is found at Jablonski & Son's Paint Store, where Jeremy (Sobolewski) – the second generation manager – would rather follow his dreams than work in the family business. But an obligation is an obligation – which means he too lives an unhappy and unfulfilled life.

So as you can imagine, working for either boss is no picnic. Yet both 47-year Jablonski employee Eleanor (Melissa Beckwith) and Paintco's Andy (Joe Hingelberg) persevere – at least until the young man gets fired for failing his random drug test. And that's when the caulk gun hits the fan!

To read the complete review, log on to ... [www.EncoreMichigan.com](http://www.EncoreMichigan.com) or [PrideSource.com](http://PrideSource.com)

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## EDITOR'S PICK

Affirmations and the Ringwald Theater will collaborate 8 p.m. Dec. 9, with a holiday benefit performance of Christmas on Mars.

In the show, Bruno and Audrey investigate a potential apartment with a swift marriage proposal and surprise pregnancy marshaling them along. When Bruno's obsessed roommate and Audrey's estranged mother arrive for a holiday visit, future plans give way to

head-shaking comedy and hilariously off-kilter dialogue. Watch this strange assortment of characters live together as their overt and hidden agendas collide.

Name your price for tickets – all proceeds benefit Affirmations Community Center. Tickets can be purchased at the door the night of the show. The Ringwald is located at 22742 Woodward Ave. For more information, e-mail Jeannine Simpson, Affirmations development associate, at 248-398-7105.

## ► Music

Continued from p. 32

### DANCE

**Eisenhower Dance Ensemble** "20/20 Dance" Presents revivals of audience favorites and new work by EDE Choreography Competition winner Daniel Gwartzman. Tickets: \$16 general, \$12 senior, \$8 students. 8 p.m. Dec. 10. Seligman Performing Arts Center, 22305 W 13 Mile Rd, Beverly Hills. 248-559-2095. [ede-dance.org/](http://ede-dance.org/)

MoreDances Contemporary Dance Company "December Dances" Janet Clayton-Reid, Artistic Director. Tickets \$16 adults, \$14 students and seniors. 8 p.m. Dec. 11. Southfield Parks & Recreation Auditorium, 26000 Evergreen, Southfield. 586-899-2629. [moredances.org](http://moredances.org)

### OTHER

**Spring Arbor University** "10th Annual Hanging of the Greens" Christmas Concert, Tree Lighting Ceremony and Fireworks, Student art and Christmas Wagon Rides. Free. 7 p.m. Dec. 10. Spring Arbor University, Various locations on campus, Spring Arbor. 517-750-6641. [arbor.edu](http://arbor.edu)

### SHOWS

**Alzheimer's Association and Affirmations** "Caring Caregiver" A support group for anyone caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia. Open to family, friends, spouses and partners. Nov. 17-April 27. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. [goaffirmations.org](http://goaffirmations.org)

**Sing Out Detroit** "Holiday Music Sing-A-Long" Music, food, sing-a-long. Tickets: \$5 to benefit Sing Out Detroit. 8 p.m. Dec. 18. AJ's Cafe, 240 W 9 Mile, Ferndale. 248-943-2411.

**The Leaven Center** "16 Days Lansing" Where arts and activism meet. Local program observes the international movement 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. 7 p.m. Nov. 30, 6 p.m. Dec. 10. Multiple locations, Lansing and East Lansing. 586-291-8877. [facebook.com/16dayslansing](http://facebook.com/16dayslansing)

**The Whitney** "Kimberly Fairchild Live" Sexy, Sassy Detroit Diva entertains a diverse crowd with eclectic song selections. Oct. 15-Jan. 28. The Ghost Bar, 4421 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 313-832-5700. [kimberlyfairchild.com](http://kimberlyfairchild.com)

## THEATER

### BENEFITS AND FUNDRAISERS

**Pancakes with Santa** Join the jolly old elf at a pancake breakfast fundraiser for the onstage production of "It's a Wonderful Life." \$5 in advance; \$6 at the door. Warren Civic Theatre at Warren Community Center, 5460 Arden Street, Warren. Dec. 11. 586-268-8400. [www.warrencivic.org](http://www.warrencivic.org)

### CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

**A Christmas Story** \$15. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Through Dec. 12. 248-553-2955. [www.farmingtonplayers.org](http://www.farmingtonplayers.org)

**A Tuna Christmas** \$15. St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook, 400 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Through Dec. 12. 248-737-3587. [www.stdunstanstheatre.com](http://www.stdunstanstheatre.com)

**A Tuna Christmas** \$30, \$25 for seniors (62+) and students 22 and under with a valid student I.D. Prices include dinner and the show. Show only tickets are also available for \$15, and can be purchased at the door. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. Starlight Dinner Theatre at Waverly East Intermediate School, 3131. W. Michigan Avenue, Lansing. Through Dec. 11. 517-243-6040. [www.starlightdinnertheatre.com](http://www.starlightdinnertheatre.com)

**Annie** \$18-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 South Park Street, Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 19. 269-343-1313. [www.kazoocivic.com](http://www.kazoocivic.com)

**Forever Christmas:** A Christmas to Remember \$16-18. Avon Players, 1185 Washington, Rochester Hills. Through Dec. 11. 248-608-9077. [www.avonplayers.org](http://www.avonplayers.org)

**In the Nick of Time:** A Red Mistle Mystery \$10. Spotlight on Youth at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Dec. 9 - 12. 734-394-5300. [www.canton-mi.org/villageattheater](http://www.canton-mi.org/villageattheater)

**Irving Berlin's White Christmas** - The Musical \$18-\$20. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. Through Dec. 19. 248-541-6430. [www.stagecrafters.org](http://www.stagecrafters.org)

**It's a Wonderful Life** \$10. Warren Civic Theatre at Warren Community Center, 5460 Arden Ave., Warren. Dec. 17 - 19. 586-268-8400. [www.warrencivic.org](http://www.warrencivic.org)

**Meet Me in St. Louis** \$25. The Crowell Opera House & Fine Arts Association, 129 E. Maumee Street, Adrian. Through Dec. 12. 517-264-7469. [www.crowell.org](http://www.crowell.org)

**Misdirected** Pay-what-you-can. Flint City Theatre at The Good Beans Cafe, 328 N. Grand Traverse Road, Flint. Through Dec. 11. 810-237-4663. [www.flintcitytheatre.com](http://www.flintcitytheatre.com)

**The Merry Frickin' Xmas Show** \$10. Fancy Pants Theater at Studio 246, 246 N. Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo. Dec. 15 - 19. [www.fancypantsattheater.webs.com](http://www.fancypantsattheater.webs.com)

**The Norman Conquests** PTD Productions at Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron Street, Ypsilanti. Dec. 9 - 18. 734-483-7345. [www.ptdproductions.com](http://www.ptdproductions.com)

**The Nutcracker's Nuts** \$15 adult; \$12 senior & student. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Dec. 10 - 12. 517-482-5700. [www.riverwalktheatre.com](http://www.riverwalktheatre.com)

### COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

**Much Ado About Nothing** \$18-\$24. University of Michigan Department of Theatre & Drama at Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 N. Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. Dec. 9 - 12. 734-764-2538. [www.music.umich.edu](http://www.music.umich.edu)

**To Kill A Mockingbird** \$15. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Dec. 12. 313-577-2960. [www.bonstelle.com](http://www.bonstelle.com)

### PROFESSIONAL THEATER

**9 to 5:** The Musical \$32.50+. Wharton Center, 1 Wharton Center Dr., East Lansing. Dec. 15 - 19. 517-432-2000. [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

**A Christmas Cabaret** \$33. Wharton Center at Pasant Theatre, 1 Wharton Center Dr, East Lansing. Dec. 10 - 11. 517-432-2000. [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

**A Christmas Carol** \$25-\$40. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through Dec. 23. 248-377-3300. [www.mbrotheatre.com](http://www.mbrotheatre.com)

**A Sock Hop Christmas** \$39.95 plus tax and tip; price includes a four-course meal with your choice of four entrees. Reservations required. Williamsburg Showcase Dinner Theater at The Williamsburg Dinner Theater and Conference Center, 4230 M-72 East, Williamsburg. Through Dec. 23. 231-938-2181. [www.conventiondinnertheater.com](http://www.conventiondinnertheater.com)

**A Strange Disappearance of Bees** \$17, \$20 at the door; \$70 New Year's Eve. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson Street, Detroit. Through Dec. 26. 313-868-1347. [www.detroitreptheatre.com](http://www.detroitreptheatre.com)

**Best Damn Holiday Show** \$10-\$15. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. Through Dec. 23. 248-327-0575. [www.gocomedy.net](http://www.gocomedy.net)

**Best of Friends** \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park Street, Chelsea. Through Dec. 18. 734-433-7673. [www.purpleosetheatre.org](http://www.purpleosetheatre.org)

**Broadway Holiday** \$17.50-\$29.50. The Palace of Auburn Hills, 6 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 8 p.m. Dec. 10. 1-800-745-3000. [www.palacenet.com](http://www.palacenet.com)

**Chat Line** \$10-\$15. Redline Cinema Productions at The Charles H. Wright Museum, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. Dec. 18. 313-433-8384.

**Christmas on Mars** \$10-\$20. Who Wants Cake? at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Dec. 13. 248-545-5545. [www.whowantscaketheatre.com](http://www.whowantscaketheatre.com)

**Dance Xanax Dance** \$20; half-price night Dec. 7. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Street, Hamtramck. Through Dec. 18. 313-365-4948. [www.planetant.com](http://www.planetant.com)

**Detroit Be Dammed: A Beaver's Tale** \$25. Planet Ant Theatre at Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Through Dec. 18. 313-365-4948. [www.parkbardetroit.com](http://www.parkbardetroit.com)

**F\$\$\$ the Holidays:** A Seasonal Retail Story \$10. Sweet Love Productions at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Dec. 20. 248-545-5545. [www.whowantscaketheatre.com](http://www.whowantscaketheatre.com)

**Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy!** \$5-\$15; "Dark Matter" is free. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. [www.gocomedy.net](http://www.gocomedy.net)

**Greater Tuna** \$18-\$24. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through Dec. 19. 517-655-7469. [www.williamstontheatre.org](http://www.williamstontheatre.org)

**Guys On Ice** \$28-\$30; \$75 New Year's Eve. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady Street, Northville. Through Jan. 15. 248-347-0003. [www.tippingpointtheatre.com](http://www.tippingpointtheatre.com)

**I'll Be Home For Christmas** \$25-\$35. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Dec. 9 - 12. 1-800-982-2787. [www.broadwayindetroit.com](http://www.broadwayindetroit.com)

**If Only In My Dreams** \$15-\$25. The Blackbird Theatre, 325 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. Dec. 9 - 18. 734-332-3848. [www.blackbirdtheatre.org](http://www.blackbirdtheatre.org)

**It's a Wonderful Life** \$28. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad Street, Dexter. Through Dec. 23. 734-268-6200. [www.theencoretheatre.org](http://www.theencoretheatre.org)

**Lines A la Carte** \$40 (includes three-course dinner and performance). Mixed Company Troupe at Portage Yacht Club, 8390 Dexter-Pinckney Road, Pinckney. 7 p.m. Dec. 10. 734-426-4155. [www.mixedcompanytroupe.com](http://www.mixedcompanytroupe.com)

**Mary Poppins** \$25 and up. Broadway In Detroit at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway Street, Detroit. Dec. 16 - Jan. 2. 313-872-1000. [www.broadwayindetroit.com](http://www.broadwayindetroit.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](http://www.wsushows.com)

**Opera at The Acorn** \$25. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. 8 p.m. Dec. 18. 269-756-3879.

**Plaid Tidings** \$27.50 - \$32.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Street, Detroit. Through Dec. 31. 313-963-9800. [www.gemtheatre.com](http://www.gemtheatre.com)

**Richard III** Plays in rotating repertory. \$25-\$30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 25. 313-577-2972. [www.hilberry.com](http://www.hilberry.com)

**Sister's Christmas Catechism** \$27.50-\$32.50. The Century Theatre, 333 Madison Street, Detroit. Through Dec. 31. 313-963-9800. [www.gemtheatre.com](http://www.gemtheatre.com)

**Sonia Flew** A co-production with Performance Network Theatre. Previews Dec. 8, 9 & 5 p.m. Dec. 11. \$32-\$41. Jewish Ensemble Theatre, Aaron DeRoy Theatre, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Dec. 8 - Jan. 2. 248-788-2900. [www.jettheatre.org](http://www.jettheatre.org)

**Sundays at Go Comedy!** \$5-\$7. Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. [www.gocomedy.net](http://www.gocomedy.net)

**The Drowsy Chaperone** \$30-\$46. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron Street, Ann Arbor. Through Jan. 2. 734-663-0681. [www.performancenetwork.org](http://www.performancenetwork.org)

**The Marvelous Wonderettes** \$29-\$33. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 26. 269-343-2727. [www.farmersalleytheatre.com](http://www.farmersalleytheatre.com)

**The Nutcracker's Nuts** \$16. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Dec. 18. 586-771-6333. [www.broadwayonstage.com](http://www.broadwayonstage.com)

**The SantaLand Diaries & Season's Greetings** \$10-\$20. Who Wants Cake? at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Dec. 18 - 22. 248-545-5545. [www.whowantscaketheatre.com](http://www.whowantscaketheatre.com)

**The Seafarer** This staged reading is part of A Christmas Ceili at the FYT. \$50 (includes meal before and performance after). Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley Street, Flint. 6 p.m. Dec. 12. 810-237-1530. [www.flintyouththeatre.org](http://www.flintyouththeatre.org)

**Thursdays at Go Comedy!** \$5-\$10 per show. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. [www.gocomedy.net](http://www.gocomedy.net)

**Two's Company, Four's a Blizzard** Dinner theater performance Dec. 11 (\$36; buffet begins at 6:30). \$19. Van Buren Street Theatre, 701 N. Van Buren Street, Bay City. Through Dec. 11. 989-893-9399. [www.vanburenstreettheatre.com](http://www.vanburenstreettheatre.com)

**Wednesdays at Go Comedy!** \$5-\$7. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Through Dec. 22. 248-327-0575. [www.gocomedy.net](http://www.gocomedy.net)

**Wicked** \$40-\$135. Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 12. 269-387-2300. [www.millerauditorium.com](http://www.millerauditorium.com)

**Woodward Wonderland:** A Detroit Holiday Celebration \$10-\$20. Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit at the Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 10 - 12. 313-833-4005. [www.mosaicdetroit.com](http://www.mosaicdetroit.com)

### THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

**Duck for President, Fancy Nancy** and Other Story Books \$12-\$14. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, Ann Arbor. 1:30 p.m. Dec. 12. 734-668-TIME. [michtheatre.org](http://michtheatre.org)

**King Midas and the Golden Arches** \$15 adult, \$8 student; Dec. 10 is pay-what-you-can preview (\$5 min, please). Korda Artistic Productions at The Kordazone Theatre, 2520 Seminole Street, Windsor. Dec. 10 - 19. 519-562-3394. [www.kordazone.com](http://www.kordazone.com)

**Pippi Longstocking** \$15 adult; \$12 for students, and \$7 for kids ages 6-12. Eastern Michigan University, Quirk Theatre, 124 Quirk Hall, Ypsilanti. Through Dec. 11. 734-487-2282. [www.emich.edu/emutheatre](http://www.emich.edu/emutheatre)

**Puppet Scrooge** \$10 adult, \$8 for students w/ID and seniors, \$5 kids 14 & under. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. Through Dec. 19. 313-967-0599. [www.matrixtheatre.org](http://www.matrixtheatre.org)

**Stories for the Season of Light** \$10 adult, \$7 ages 15 and under. Children's Theatre Network at Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron Street, Ann Arbor. 1 p.m. Dec. 18. 734-663-0681. [www.performancenetwork.org](http://www.performancenetwork.org)

**The Firebird** \$15 adults, \$10 children. Wild Swan Theater at Towsley Auditorium, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. Dec. 9 - 12. 734-335-0530. [www.wildswantheater.org](http://www.wildswantheater.org)

**The Homecoming** \$12-\$18. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley Street, Flint. Through Dec. 18. 810-237-1530. [www.flintyouththeatre.org](http://www.flintyouththeatre.org)

**The Sleeping Beauty** \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetART, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Saturdays in December (except Dec. 25), plus Sunday, Dec. 26. 313-961-7777. [www.puppetart.org](http://www.puppetart.org)

### AUDITIONS

**DOWNRIVER YOUTH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER** – auditions for "Dearly Departed." Dec. 19-20, 313-523-1569; **SRO PRODUCTIONS** – auditions for "Daddy's Dyin' Who's Got the Will," Dec. 14, 248-796-4645.

# ART'N' AROUND

**Charles H. Wright Museum** "Portraits of Life and Landscapes" The Art of Frank Kelley Jr. 6 p.m. Aug. 27-Dec. 12. 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. 313-494-5800. [charleshwrightmuseum.org](http://charleshwrightmuseum.org)

**Detroit Institute of Arts** "In Your Dreams" 500 years of imaginary prints from Europe and America. Admission: \$8 adults, \$6 seniors, \$4 youth. Sep. 8-Jan. 2. 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900. [dia.org](http://dia.org)

**Detroit Institute of Arts** "An Intuitive Eye: Andre Kertesz Photographs, 1914-1969" Celebrates the photographic achievements of Andre Kertesz. Kertesz originated a style that combined the "snapshot" compositions of photojournalism with the aesthetic sensibilities of early twentieth-century modernism. Nov. 24-April 10. 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 313-833-7900. [dia.org](http://dia.org)

**Friends of Renee Harmon** "Comics for Change" A fundraiser for legal fees for parenting rights of Renee Harmon. Starring Phenecia Banks, Jeff Dwoskin, Dwayne Gill, and Julie Lyons. Hosted by Leslie Thompson. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 14. Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 310 S. Troy, Royal Oak. 248-542-9900. [harmiesarmy@yahoo.com](mailto:harmiesarmy@yahoo.com)

**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 students, \$15 youth. Nov. 9-Feb. 16. 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. [artmuseumgr.org](http://artmuseumgr.org)

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## Happenings

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### EDITOR'S PICK

This winter, Michigan's Holocaust Memorial Center has received the honor of hosting an extremely unique exhibit: "A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto: A Birthday Trip in Hell." The Warsaw Ghetto, Nazi Germany's largest ghetto during World War II (located in what's now Poland), was illegally photographed by a Wehrmacht Sergeant, Heinz Jost, on Nov. 19, 1941, his birthday.

The photographs, which Jost had kept hidden for over 40 years, are devastating depictions of the people and living

conditions of the Warsaw Ghetto, the likes of which had not existed prior to their emergence. "This exhibit is an opportunity to get a glimpse of the life that went on under the most deplorable conditions in the Warsaw ghetto," said HCM executive director Stephen M. Goldman. "Amidst starvation, degradation and death, the Jewish people tried to keep a semblance of daily normalcy and human dignity."

The exhibit will be on display at Farmington Hill's Memorial Center Dec. 12-March 13. Tickets: \$8 adults, \$6 students. More information can be found at [holocaustcenter.org](http://holocaustcenter.org).

\$5 donation to benefit Sing Out Detroit

# Sing Out Detroit

## Holiday Party and Sing-A-Long

Saturday Dec. 18th - 8pm  
 Ad's Café - 240 W. 9 Mile  
 Ferndale (W. of Woodward, Northside of 9 Mile)

### ► Art & Around

Continued from p. 34

**Holocaust Memorial Center** "A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto: A Birthday Trip in Hell" Opening day. 85 of the still photographs that Wehrmacht Sergeant Heinz Jost took illegally while wandering inside the Warsaw Ghetto on his birthday in November 1941. He hid the pictures for about 40 years until he knew that he was dying. 1 p.m. Dec. 12., 28123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. 248-855-6777. [holocaustcenter.org/](http://holocaustcenter.org/)

**Kalamazoo Institute of Arts** "In Focus: National Geographic Greatest Portraits" A traveling exhibition created in collaboration with Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Free. Oct. 30-Jan. 2. 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. 269-349-7775. [kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org)

**Kresge Art Museum** "The Power of Design" An exhibition of Chinese textiles, costumes and accessories. Free. Oct. 9-Dec. 17. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 517-884-0659. [artmuseum.msu.edu](http://artmuseum.msu.edu)

**Kresge Art Museum** "Designing Women of Postwar Britain" Their art and the modern interior. Free. Oct. 16-Dec. 17. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 517-884-0659. [artmuseum.msu.edu](http://artmuseum.msu.edu)

**Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum** "Artists Portray Artists" An exhibition of thirty-five portraits and self-portraits. Oct. 1-Jan. 29. 7400 Bay Road, Saginaw. 989-964-7096. [marshallfredericks.org](http://marshallfredericks.org)

**Midweek Meditation Group** "Midweek Meditation Group" Group meets every Wednesday in downtown Ferndale for two sessions: a guided meditation followed by a short break, and a silent, seated meditation. All are welcome. \$3 donation is suggested. Nov. 3-April 27. The Dharma Room, 195 West 9 Mile, Suite 106, Ferndale. 248-547-2987. [meetup.com/Midweek-Meditation-Group/](http://meetup.com/Midweek-Meditation-Group/)

**MSU Museum** "Dear Mr. Mandela, Dear Mrs. Parks" Children's Letters, Global

Lessons. Showing in the Main Gallery. Dec. 20-Jan. 3. Michigan State University, East Lansing. [museum.msu.edu](http://museum.msu.edu)

**Sherry Washington Gallery** "Free Radicals", paintings by Senghor Reid" Nov. 20-Jan. 22. 1274 Library St. Detroit. 313-961-4500. [sherrywashingtongallery.com](http://sherrywashingtongallery.com)

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

**Toledo Museum of Art** "Voices That Taught Me How to Sing" Two- and three-dimensional works by Ohio artist Aminah Robinson. Nov. 19-Feb. 27. 2445 Monroe Street, Toledo. 419-255-8000. [toledomuseum.org](http://toledomuseum.org)

**University of Michigan Museum of Art**

"Mai-Thu Perret: An Ideal for Living" The first large scale North American survey exhibition of the contemporary Swiss artist. Synthesizing a range of media and genres-including painting and sculpture, but also literature, design, craft, film, and performance. Dec. 18-March 13. 525 South State Street, Ann Arbor. 734-763-UMMA. [umma.umich.edu](http://umma.umich.edu)

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

**West Michigan Gay Mens Chorus** "A Holligay Party" Directed by Co-Artistic Directors-Phillip Pletcher and RT Williams. East Congrtational Church, 1005 Giddings Ave, Grand Rapids. 7 p.m. Dec. 17 & 18. [wmgmc.org](http://wmgmc.org)

## 'Comics for Change' to raise money for non-biological mother's legal fees

Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak will feature four comedians Dec. 14 to raise money for Renee Harmon's legal fees. Harmon seeks visitation and custody rights of three children, whom she raised with her former partner of 19 years. The case has moved up to the Michigan Supreme Court.

Doors open at 7 p.m. For tickets, email [harmiesarmy@yahoo.com](mailto:harmiesarmy@yahoo.com) or call Mishael Bardoni at (248) 339-6192. VIP tickets cost \$100 or \$150, and general seating costs \$25.



# A festive selection of TV favorites and specials

**Dec. 9**

**Rudolph's Shiny New Year** (ABC Family; 6 p.m.)

**The Gruffalo** (ABC Family; 7 p.m.) IMDB says, "A cunning mouse goes for a walk in the forest and outwits a succession of predators." Maurice Sendak should sue. Watch it and you'll see why.

**Santa Claus is Comin' to Town** (ABC Family; 8 p.m.)

**Shrek the Halls** (ABC; 8 p.m.) Mike Myers and Cameron Diaz reprise their roles as America's favorite ogre family in this fun-filled yuletide tale. Also featuring the voices of Eddie Murphy as Donkey and Antonio Banderas as Puss In Boots, this nouveau Christmas classic finds Shrek channeling the holiday spirit as only an ogre can. But as the putrid patriarch plans for a cozy family celebration, his friends make sure that it's one he won't easily forget.

**The Santa Incident** (Hallmark; 8 p.m.)

**The Year Without Santa Claus** (ABC Family; 9 p.m.)

**Dec. 10**

**Scrooge** (1970) (TCM; 9:30 p.m.)

**The Santa Clause 2** (ABC Family; 10 p.m.)

**The Man Who Came to Dinner** (TCM; 11:30 p.m.)

**Dec. 11**

**Jack Frost** (ABC Family; 3 p.m.)

**Sarah's Holiday Party** (HGTV; 4 p.m.)

During this one-hour special, designer Sarah Richardson will show viewers her time-tested methods for hosting a grand holiday party for family and friends. Sarah and her design assistant, Tommy, will demonstrate every detail - from planning and decorating to cooking and gift giving - as they pull together a memorable holiday soiree.

**National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation** (TV Land; 5:30 p.m.) The irony of this beloved comedy classic is that 20 years later Randy Quaid is now Cousin Eddie in real life. Poor Dennis.

**An Old-Fashioned Christmas** (Hallmark; 8 p.m.)

**Frost the Snowman** (CBS; 8 p.m.) Jimmy Durante narrates this 1969 fave, in which a discarded silk top hat ignites a fight between a washed-up stage magician and a group of schoolchildren after it magically brings a snowman (voiced by Jackie Vernon) to life.

**Frosty Returns** (CBS; 8:30 p.m.) There's still magic in that old silk hat as Frosty (voiced by John Goodman) continues his adventures and skates on the edge of danger in this 1992 animated musical special, narrated by Jonathan Winters.

**Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause** (ABC Family; 9 p.m.)

**Dec. 12**

**Santa Baby** (ABC Family; 2 p.m.)

**Santa Baby 2: Christmas Maybe** (ABC Family 4 p.m.)

**Christmas Cupid** (ABC Family; 8 p.m.)

**Dec. 13**

**Holiday in Handcuffs** (ABC Family; 9 p.m.) In this romantic comedy, Clarissa snaps and kidnaps A.C. Slater after a series of personal letdowns. At the very least, it'll bring back fond memories of 1991. Melissa Joan Hart and Mario Lopez star.

**Mariah Carey: Merry Christmas to You** (ABC; 9 p.m.) Hey, lady's got a new album to promote - and, soon, another mouth to feed. Besides, nobody does Christmas carols better than this diva, daaahling.

**Dec. 14**

**Dr. Seuss' The Grinch Grinches The Cat in the Hat** (ABC Family; 7 p.m.)

**I Want a Dog for Christmas**, Charlie Brown (ABC; 8 p.m.) Blockhead takes the backseat in this Peanuts Christmas special, allowing the often-overlooked ReRun - younger brother of Linus and Lucy - to take center stage. When Snoopy can't fit ReRun into his busy holiday schedule, he invites his brother Spike to help his human friend fill up on yuletide cheer.

**Three Wise Women** (Hallmark; 8 p.m.)

**Dec. 15**

**Disney Prep & Landing** (ABC Family; 8 p.m.) An animated special about two elves whose number one priority it is to prepare for Santa's arrival at every house. But after they're caught by little Timmy, the jig may be up.



"Mariah Carey: Merry Christmas to You" airs at 9 p.m. Dec. 13 on ABC.

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# 'Wicked' still casts a powerful spell

BY JUDITH COOKIS RUBENS

Nearly 10 years after its Broadway premiere, "Wicked" is still going strong.

Theaters sell out, super-fans bring their witch hats and quote favorite lines. The show – a prequel to the Oz story – has spawned long-running productions in several cities and two national tours.

This second tour, at Kalamazoo's Miller Auditorium through Dec. 12, reminds us why it became so popular. Two reasons, really: Elphaba and Glinda.

Elphaba being the Wicked Witch of the West, and Glinda, the sparkly Good Witch. Before they were the witches from the movie classic, "Wicked" shows us they were just girls in Oz, roommates at a sorcery school who mooned (and fought) over the same dashing guy, Fiyero.

Elphaba (Vicki Noon) is the outcast, whispered about because of her emerald-green skin, socially awkward, yet outspoken when she spots injustice. Glinda (Natalie Daradich) is the popular flirt who's used to getting what she wants. At first, they're oil and water together. But as the story progresses, we see each girl having a positive influence on the other (as the show stopper "For Good" explains).

The musical also reveals the backstory on the Tin Man, Lion and Scarecrow, not to mention those flying monkeys and the Wonderful Wizard. There are plenty of laughs in the cleverly placed references

to characters and movie dialogue.

But, setting aside an occasionally contorted plot, the gem of this musical is the girls' complex friendship. There's no clear villain or hero here. Each character possesses some qualities of dark and light.

It's necessary, then, to have lead actors who can mine that. The chemistry between Daradich's Glinda and Noon's Elphaba feels authentic – like the frenemies that teenage girls so often are. Their voices blend amazingly well, and, without trying to imitate

other famous leads before them, Daradich and Noon quietly bring their own gifts to the parts.

Noon (plucked from the Chicago "Wicked" cast) lets us peek at Elphaba's sadness, not just her defiant nature. Her powerful, trust-yourself anthem, "Defying Gravity," is worth a ticket alone. Watch for more of this young star.

Daradich, too, makes a perfect Glinda, preening and perky to start, though slowly softening. She never lets her slip into cartoonish caricature either (not even in the tempting "Popular").

Both actors are supported by a fine



Vicki Noon and Natalie Daradich in "Wicked" at Miller Auditorium. Photo: courtesy Miller Auditorium

## 'Wicked'

Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 12. \$40-\$135. 269-387-2300

[www.millerauditorium.com](http://www.millerauditorium.com)

cast, with standouts including Michelle London as the tragic Nessarose, Zach Hanna as lovesick Boq, and Don Amendolia, as the not-so-powerful Wizard. A polished singing and dancing ensemble keeps the energy high and the choreography tight.

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# St. Petersburg's Renaissance

BY ANDREW COLLINS

Although Florida's fourth-largest city has seen a minimal increase in population over the past 30 years, this sunny metropolis on a peninsula between Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico has changed a great deal demographically. Once unflatteringly dubbed "God's Waiting Room" for its predominant retirement-age population, the city and surrounding beach towns have become dramatically more youthful and vibrant of late, and this extends to the region's gay community, which has grown significantly. St. Petersburg now hosts the state's largest gay pride march (in late June), and the region is home to dozens of LGBT-owned businesses.

Greater St. Petersburg is made up of numerous distinct neighborhoods and municipalities, from downtown – which fringes Tampa Bay – to the many beach towns that extend south to north some 50 miles from Fort De Soto State Park (which regularly notches awards for having one of the cleanest and most beautiful beaches in the country) to Clearwater, Dunedin and Tarpon Springs. Much of the region's emerging gay scene is focused on downtown, a historic mid-city neighborhood called Kenwood, and the small town of Gulfport, which lies just across lovely Boca Ciega Bay from St. Pete Beach and the Gulf of Mexico. All of these areas have been integral in St. Petersburg's steady renaissance, increased hipster appeal and continued popularity with LGBT visitors.

Downtown St. Petersburg is home to several noteworthy hotels as well as a bumper crop of trendy restaurants and boutiques, many of these located in the upscale, open-air BayWalk shopping center. What's particularly special about downtown is the wealth of internationally renowned arts and cultural attractions. The one receiving the most attention right now is the iconic Salvador Dali Museum, which has been a fixture in St. Petersburg since the early 1980s but is slated to reopen in a dramatic new waterfront space on the south edge of downtown in January 2011 – right beside the impressive Mahaffey Theater performing arts complex.

Another must is the acclaimed Museum of Fine Arts, which has a sterling permanent collection and also mounts important traveling shows. Steps away is the striking Chihuly Collection, opened in summer 2010 and containing works by seminal glass artist Dale Chihuly. Both attractions are along leafy Beach and Bay Shore drives, which straddle a lush park and overlook Tampa Bay. From here it's a short stroll along 2nd Avenue out to St. Petersburg Pier, which is presently anchored by a kitschy-looking inverted-pyramid with touristy shops and an aquarium (it's currently slated to be razed and replaced with a new building in a few years).

Head just a couple of miles west of downtown to reach the Grand Central District, the commercial center of historic Kenwood and home to the highest concentration of gay-owned businesses in the city, not to mention dozens of impressively restored Craftsman bungalows. About four miles southwest, funky and historic Gulfport is notable for its offbeat cafes and galleries, and for hosting a popular Art Walk the first Friday and third Saturday of each month.

Continue west across the Highway 682 causeway to reach the string of barrier islands that hold the region's beach communities – turn

left (south) to reach pristine Fort De Soto State Park and the charming town of Pass-A-Grille, or turn right (north) to visit tony St. Pete Beach, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach. In Treasure Island, you'll find the most gay-identified of the region's beaches, the so-called "Bedrocks Beach." It's a little tricky to find – when you cross the bridge from St. Pete Beach onto Treasure Island, turn left at the 7-Eleven onto West Gulf Boulevard and follow it south for a mile to the parking area just north of the Mansions by the Sea condo tower. Follow the boardwalk over the short span of dunes, and you'll typically find plenty of gays and lesbians tanning their hides along the beautiful beachfront.

Head a bit north up the coast and you'll come to the resort city of Clearwater, which has a lively, somewhat up-market beachfront separated from downtown by a picturesque harbor. And still a bit farther north is the funky little town of Dunedin, which has a charming, gay-friendly cluster of shops, boutiques and restaurants along its historic downtown Main Street.

St. Petersburg has seen an influx of notable restaurants in recent years. One of the city's classics is Marchand's Bar & Grill (<http://www.marchandsbarandgrill.com>), a refined venue inside the historic Renaissance Vinoy Resort – for a special occasion, this is one of the top spots in town, whether for dinner or Sunday brunch. Overlooking the marina at the foot of the pier, Fresco's Waterfront Bistro (<http://site.chefjasonesposito.com>) pulls in a festive happy-hour crowd, serves mouthwatering haddock po'boys, and provides lovely views of the waterfront.

A relative newcomer, Cassis (<http://www.cassisab.com>) serves reliably good French bistro fare in an urbane setting – choose a table on the sidewalk when the weather is nice. A few blocks north, Hooker Tea Company (<http://hookertea.com>) is a cheery option for gelato, pastries and toothsome breakfast fare. Drop by slick and arty Kahwa Coffee (<http://www.kahwacoffee.com>) for first-rate espresso and drip coffee. Bella Brava (<http://www.bellabrava.com>) and Ceviche Tapas Bar (<http://www.ceviche.com>) are two additional downtown notables, each cultivating a fairly trendy crowd. And the see-and-be-seen Independent (<http://www.independentbeer.com>) attracts a stylish, arty crowd for hard-to-find imported beers, fine wines by the glass and live music.

In Gulfport, head to Habana Cafe (<http://www.habanacafe-usa.com>) for authentic Cuban fare (including delicious drunken shrimp with garlic and mojo sauce); and La Fogata Churrascaria (<http://www.lafogataonline.com>) for well-prepared seafood, steaks, tapas and elegant cocktails. MadFish (<http://www.madfishonline.com>) is a slick spot set inside a shimmering stainless-steel diner in St. Pete Beach – the kitchen here turns out creative contemporary fare. At nearby Wildwood BBQ & Burger ([http://www.brguestrestaurants.com/restaurants/wildwood\\_bbq](http://www.brguestrestaurants.com/restaurants/wildwood_bbq)) you can feast on tasty comfort food – note the impressive list of small-batch bourbons.

Tiny downtown Dunedin has several good restaurants, including Pan y Vino (<http://www.panyvino.com>), for brick-oven pizzas and a nice selection of wines by the glass; and the gay-popular Mexican restaurant Casa Tina (<http://www.casatinas.com>).

St. Petersburg's Grand Central District has a few good restaurants, one of which, the stylish Queen's Head (<http://www.thequeensheadbar.com>), is also one of the city's top LGBT nightlife options.



Downtown St. Petersburg's beautiful waterfront, with the elegant (and very pink) Renaissance Vinoy Resort in the background. Photo by Andrew Collins

com), is also one of the city's top LGBT nightlife options. Sip cocktails in one of the outdoor cabanas or inside the slick bar and dining area, where you might enjoy a dinner of pan-roasted skate with truffle-mash carrots, beetroot-vanilla chutney and lemon oil. A few blocks away is arguably the most gay bar in the city, Georgie's Alibi (<http://www.georgiesalibi.com>), which pulls in a youthful, see-and-be-seen crowd.

Other good bets along the Grand Central corridor include Gemini Lounge ([http://www.myspace.com/gemini\\_lounge](http://www.myspace.com/gemini_lounge)), which books fun live bands; Detour, a laid-back watering hole; quirky Lucky Star Lounge (<http://www.myspace.com/luckystarlounge28>), which is tucked behind a liquor store; and Beak's Old Florida, an inviting tavern and grill that has a popular following with straights and gays.

You'll find a few other neighborhood bars around the city, such as Haymarket Pub, a low-keyed dive bar on the north side of the city – it's next door to the Hideaway, which bills itself the longest-running lesbian bar in the United States. Gulfport gay lounges include the Oar House Bar and Pepperz Lounge, both of which are a bit down at the heels. You may have a better experience strolling along the community's main drag, Beach Boulevard, and stopping by any of the many gay-friendly bars and eateries – Peg's (<http://www.pegscantina.com>) is a particular standout, known for terrific hand-crafted ales with a kitchen serving fresh and well-prepared in Mexican food.

In downtown Clearwater, the convivial Pro Shop Pub (<http://www.proshoppub.us>) is one of the oldest gay bars in the state and has a popular following at happy hour. Just north in downtown Dunedin, the Kelly's/Blur (<http://www.kellyschicaboom.com>) complex comprises an LGBT-friendly nightclub, showbar, martini lounge and casual American restaurant.

St. Petersburg is home to one of the largest gay resorts in the country, the Flamingo (<http://www.flamingofla.com>), which in addition to being a popular LGBT nightlife venue has a large central pool, a good restaurant and 130 simply but pleasantly furnished – and reasonably priced – hotel rooms.

The city's grandest and most famous hotel is the swell-elegant Renaissance Vinoy Resort (<http://www.marriott.com>), which has long been a friend to the gay community. This pink palace overlooks the downtown waterfront, comprising both a historic main building, which opened in 1927, and a newer wing with roomier accommodations but a still-classic color scheme and

design. Amenities include an impressive health club and spa, golf at the resort's private course a couple of miles away, and excellent dining at three different restaurants.

There are also several excellent, mid-priced chain properties downtown, including the Courtyard Marriott (<http://www.marriott.com>), the Hampton Inn and Suites (<http://www.stpetehampton.com>) and the hip, lime-hued Hotel Indigo (<http://www.hotelindigo.com>) – all are just a few minutes' walk from Tampa Bay and major museums. You'll also find few gay-friendly and very charming B&Bs in the Old Northeast Historic District, which flanks downtown and is a pleasant walk from shops and restaurants. Among these, the gay-owned Dickens House (<http://www.dickenshouse.com>) is a stunning example of Arts and Crafts architecture with plush, beautifully furnished accommodations. Also consider the Mansion House B&B (<http://www.mansionbandb.com>), with its glorious full-size pool; and the Beach Drive Inn (<http://www.beachdriveinn.com>), which is across from the famed Renaissance Vinoy Hotel.


The well-priced and popular clothing-optional GayStPete House (<http://www.gaystpetehouse.com>) is an excellent base for proximity to the bars and restaurants of the Grand Central District, and in Gulfport, consider the marvelous Sea Breeze Manor Bed & Breakfast (<http://www.seabreezemanor.com>), a historic Tudor-style 1920s house that overlooks Boca Ciega Bay and has spacious, warmly appointed rooms.

Across the bay in St. Pete Beach you'll find the area's other famous grande dame, the Loews Don Cesar Resort (<http://www.loewshotels.com>), an opulent, pink wedding-cake of a hotel that's hosted countless celebrities and appeared in such prominent films as *Health and Once Upon a Time in America*. Nearby, the circa-1957 Postcard Inn on the Beach (<http://www.postcardinn.com>) is a sleek, surfer-chic boutique hotel on the water that's steadily developed a gay following – book a poolside cabana room for optimum swank factor.

For easy access to Clearwater and a location in the heart of charming downtown Dunedin, look no further than the stylish Meranova Guest Inn (<http://www.meranovaguest.com>), which has eight tastefully furnished rooms, each with private entrances.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website *About.com* and is the author of *Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA*. He can be reached care of this publication or at [OutofTown@qsyndicate.com](mailto:OutofTown@qsyndicate.com).





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**Q.** I have a problem that I am quite embarrassed about and, because of that, I don't want to ask anyone's advice or tell any of my friends what is going on in my life.

Here I am, 43, and with a pretty good job – not fantastic but it's OK. I've worked for the same company for five years. I've been working one job or another since I've been 16, so it's not like I am lazy or anything. I bought a house 10 years ago which I've fixed up. I have a few toys like a small water skiing boat, a snow mobile and a small travel trailer. I love to snowboard, water-ski and travel. I don't travel as much as I would like to but usually take a couple trips a year.

My life has been very good up until the economic crash. I have huge credit card debt. I am maxed out on most of my cards and usually I just pay the minimum on each one – and sometimes I can't make even the minimum. I am still paying on my student loans but right now I have them deferred because I cannot afford to make payments anymore.

I took out a second mortgage five years ago to pay for some of my toys, do a little traveling and upgrade my house. I redid my kitchen and put in a hot tub on my new patio. Even though I have upgraded my house, I can't sell it because, in today's market, it wouldn't bring how much I owe on it. The realtor called it being "upside down" on my mortgage.

I guess I was living the "American Dream." Then the bottom fell out of the housing market so I don't have the house to fall back on as an income source.

I don't know where to turn. I don't think I can get a better job right now, and I can't afford all my payments. I get calls from collection agencies. I don't know what to tell them so I just don't answer the phone anymore. I don't want to open my mail, so it just sits on the counter for days before I get up the courage to open it up – if I open it at all.

I can't sleep, and I am anxious all the time. I am thinking about taking out bankruptcy and am looking for a lawyer to handle it for me but really don't want to lose everything and have to start all over. Do you have any suggestions as to how I can get out of this mess that I've made for myself without losing everything?

Over My Head

**My life has been very good up until the economic crash. I have huge credit card debt. I am maxed out on most of my cards and usually I just pay the minimum on each one – and sometimes I can't make even the minimum.**

**A.** There are a couple of things to do before you make any decisions:

Make an appointment and meet with a not-for-profit credit counselor, preferably one that is affiliated with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, to look at your options. Credit counselors can give you advice on managing your money and debt, help with a budget and offer financial educational materials. If you are severely in debt, you may be eligible to enroll in a "Debt Management Plan." (Also, there are websites that can help you look at ways to get out of debt and budget your money.)

Next, make an appointment and meet with a bankruptcy attorney so you can understand the different types of bankruptcy and how it would affect you and your credit.

You might want to discuss what is going on with friends whom you trust. It's important that you have the backing of friends as this is a stressful situation and one that will involve changing your lifestyle in order to get out of debt. Good luck; you're not alone.

**Find Jody on Facebook!**

Living the American Dream, financially, has gotten many of us in trouble with financial commitments. If you find yourself in this situation, there are websites that can help. Go to Facebook/Dear Jody Valley to find a few of them.

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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1. Search this issue of Between The Lines for the one ad that is the fake ad. Here's a clue: the fake ad will include the line "between the sheets" somewhere within the text of the ad.
2. Go online at [www.Pridesource.com](http://www.Pridesource.com) and click where it says "Click here to win!"
3. Scroll down to the entry form for the fake ad contest and enter your name, etc.
4. In the notes field, put the date of the BTL issue, page number where you found the fake ad and the name of the fake advertiser.

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**FIND THE FAKE AD CONTEST**



by Jack Fertig

## Be careful, Virgo!

*Mercury turning retrograde in Capricorn reveals systemic errors great and small. Look for flaws in hierarchies and collect info to solve problems next month. Mercury's conjunct Pluto and sextile Venus so challenges in relationships seem to be everywhere. Sexual tension is often, but not always the issue. Be careful!*

**ARIES (March 20 – April 19):** Assertions of authority can go overboard too easily. No matter who's at fault, you may need to back off. Think ahead very carefully. Giving up a battle may be necessary to win your long-range struggle.

**TAURUS (April 20 – May 20):** Once you accept that your partner is always right, life will be much easier. Yeah. OK... Reasonably nobody is always right, but being open to new ideas and rethinking old ones will help you to be much more correct in the long run.

**GEMINI (May 21 – June 20):** New sexual directions can help motivate you to exercise more (or more intelligently) or attend to health matters. Long simmering problems with colleagues are likely to explode. Focus on listening and laying the groundwork for future solutions.

**CANCER (June 21 – July 22):** The bedroom is as good a place as any to resolve partnership trouble. Talk about anything you've been frustrated with, starting with sex. Just getting out together and having some fun will also help get you back into sync.

**LEO (July 23 – August 22):** Awareness of your physical limitations is important for knowing how best to shape up and stay healthy. Dig into the family history to see what strengths and problems you may have inherited.

**VIRGO (August 23 – September 22):** Welcome criticism to help you solve creative blocks. Even a good argument can open terrific new ideas and perspective. You're coming off a bit sexier and more challenging than usual. Be careful where you aim that!

**LIBRA (September 23 – October 22):** Challenges that put you up against the wall will bring out inherited strengths that you have yet to acknowledge. It may be painful, but admitting your parents were right about something could save your ass!

**SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21):** Take up a new study to challenge your brain. It may take something as deep and complex as archaeology or surgery to keep you out of trouble. If you can't get out of your obsessions, at least take a good hard look at them.

**SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20):** If you must argue over money, at least keep it inside your own head. Any problems you have with other people is a reflection of your own internal conflicts over values. Some introspection will save you trouble and embarrassment.

**CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19):** Daring outspokenness could be polarizing, but it will also win more friends than enemies. Sitting quietly on problems will only be worse, promoting resentments and continued tension. Better to have it out in the open at least.

**AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18):** Finding out what people have been saying behind your back can help you strengthen your own reputation. Fighting some lies might make them seem truer. Be careful what rumors you fight – and how.

**PISCES (February 19 – March 19):** Explore some dark, scary or erotic art – maybe a film by Pier Paolo Pasolini or Takashi Miike – to challenge your imagination. Be willing to be shocked or scared. Let new images open new ideas. It's time to break out from unconsciously held dogmas and prejudices.

*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](http://www.starjack.com), and by e-mail at [QScopes@qsyndicate.com](mailto:QScopes@qsyndicate.com).*

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Solution to puzzle from page 42

A	C	D	C		O	L	D	H	A	M		F	A	B
R	A	C	E		T	E	R	E	S	A		I	C	U
A	M	E	N		H	E	A	R	T	S		G	A	R
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T	R	Y		P	L	E	A	S	E		L	I	D	S

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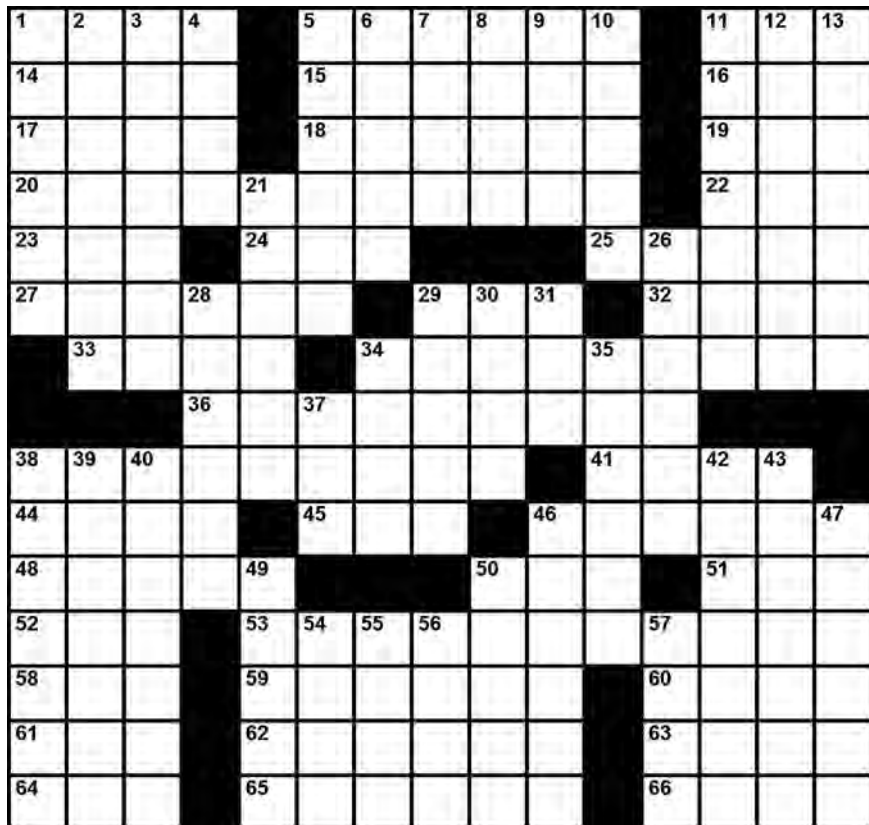
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**Q U I Z** Ticklish Situation

**Across**

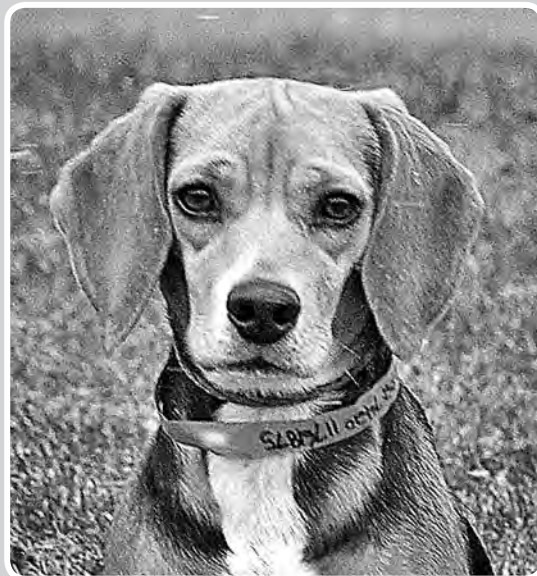
- 1 Bi
- 5 Todd or Kevin
- 11 British sitcom "Ab \_\_\_\_"
- 14 Marathon, for one
- 15 Weatherspoon of the WNBA
- 16 Hosp. ward
- 17 Jane Spahr's last word, perhaps
- 18 "Desert \_\_\_\_"
- 19 Toothy swimmer
- 20 A danceuse with lots of \_\_\_\_
- 22 QB successes
- 23 Math subj.
- 24 Caesar's arts
- 25 Downy wader
- 27 "Twilight of the Golds" writer Jonathan
- 29 Pink diamond, for one
- 32 Maria's "Do- \_\_\_\_"
- 33 Take care of
- 34 ... at first refused to lend any to her friend the \_\_\_\_
- 36 Incidental matter
- 38 ... but after a long discussion \_\_\_\_ (with 53-Across)
- 41 Charitable donations
- 44 "Uh-oh!" to Shelley
- 45 Mineo of movies
- 46 Nice buns, e.g.?
- 48 Lets out
- 50 Dam agcy.
- 51 R. Mapplethorpe supporter
- 52 Winery container
- 53 See 38-Across
- 58 Old Spanish queen
- 59 James Cameron film of 2009
- 60 State on the Seine
- 61 Signal that goes either way
- 62 Figure skater Doug
- 63 Razor handle?
- 64 Take a crack at

**Down**

- 1 PLO VIP
- 2 Robert Goulet musical
- 3 Washington bar
- 4 Relief of Lincoln
- 5 Maupin's "Significant \_\_\_\_"
- 6 Looks at a hottie in a bar
- 7 Like Cammermeyer's fatigues
- 8 Decorated man, maybe
- 9 Nick was his master
- 10 Stroke with an upright stick
- 11 Fruit source
- 12 Campus scene
- 13 Catch your lover with another, perhaps
- 21 Submit to the teacher?
- 26 Meager bowlfuls in "Oliver!"
- 28 Be firm
- 29 Cook on the barbecue
- 30 Not hard to get in bed
- 31 Classic Brit cars
- 34 Oscar \_\_\_\_ Renta
- 35 Deep-space energy source
- 37 Article of Marlene Dietrich
- 38 Field gathering
- 39 She loved Franklin and Lorena
- 40 Marion Zimmer Bradley's genre
- 42 Barber's partner
- 43 Flight attendant
- 46 Strongly opposed
- 47 Guys with three ho's?
- 49 Home for alligators
- 50 Bangkok natives
- 54 Shape of George Frenn's track
- 55 Part of APR
- 56 Jazz singer James
- 57 Stud poker demand

**Solution on 41**

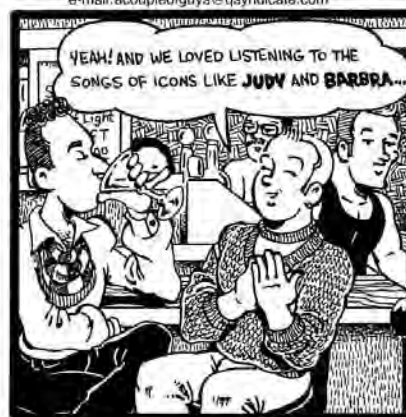
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# Don't Heart My Lover

Did I do something wrong? Please, tell me. Have I maddened the gods? Well, if so, I apologize. I mean, I'm all for taking my share of bullets, but can we maybe, possibly, allow

time in between rounds?

I mean, seriously. Was getting the flu not enough? No? Well, fine. I'll take that. I suppose that's the fate of any man facing the change of season. But when you're single and vomiting your stomach out, the last thing you give a damn about is the concept of inevitability. Why? Well, because somewhere in the pit of your stomach, you know the inevitable is bound to happen — you're going to get a call from your ex, just to say hello and inform you he has a date.

Thank god I'm already kneeling in front of the toilet. But don't mind the multi-colored puke on the seat. Gays, we call that glitter!

"A date? That's...great!" I say, perfecting my pitch.

"Yeah, we met on a plane," he says. "And he's got one-up on you. He's a doctoral candidate." Vomit. Vomit. Vomit. "You don't say?"

Yes, welcome to my life as a single. How soon my ex forgets my PhD in fellatio, even though his dick was the subject of my thesis. But I'm not going to say that. No! No! I'm going to pretend everything is peachy fucking keen, even if my temperature's risen five degrees in the last five seconds.

"Do you have any ideas about where I should take him?" he asks. "I haven't been out in forever."

"Uh, I have to go," I say.

"Go? Why?"

"Because I...I have to go. Have fun tonight." Hanging up, I stumble out of the bathroom.

Where I'm headed, I don't know, but my father, planted on the couch, stops me.

"You're sick. Get back in bed!" he yells.

On his feet, he trails me as I zigzag on the white tile. Crying, I try to lose him. "What's the matter?" he asks.

"What's the matter? WHAT'S THE MATTER? You know what, dad?" I say, turning violent in the kitchen. "There are some things I really don't need to hear in my 30s. Like, I don't need to hear my dad telling me to get back in bed, and I don't need to hear my ex calling to tell me he has a freaking date!"

"Well, I told you not to answer the phone on the toilet," he chuckles. "It never ends good."

"Ugh, you're enjoying this," I moan. Then dashing off to my room, I lock the door. Outside, I hear the footsteps of dad. Pacing back and forth, he reminds me that I'm not supposed to talk to my ex. It'll only worsen things, especially if I still have feelings for him. "I don't have feelings for him," I respond.

Then with a slug of flu medicine, I turn off the light, stirring for two hours until the nightmares hit. Each one, more unpleasant than the last, paints the image of my ex's happy face, cutting and slicing my heart. And yes, on several occasions, my entire body

**I was drowning — in cat litter, in laundry, in dishes — and I resented him for it, resulting in a separation and a break-up, leading to paralyzed state, where I haven't been capable of going on one date in a year. And now I find myself miserable without him. Why? Why? Why? It seems I hadn't been prepared for the worst after all.**

spasms to the point where I'm propelled out of bed, doomed to remain awake, thinking of his "date."

"Feeling better?" my ex texts the next morning.

I don't want him to know...to know that I'm mad with jealousy, with hatred, that this entire time apart, I never actually considered the possibility of losing him.

I don't want him to know, but then again, I do.

"Feeling better?" I text back. "Well, I was until my ex told me he had a fucking date!"

"Well, I never wanted to be your ex," he writes.

And I give him credit. "Hm. Good comeback," I admit, electronically. You see, the break-up was my choice. I was young when I moved in with him. It was all a whirlwind — so quick, so fast. I was literally planning out my will and my funeral with him a year later. He's a "planner," and he wanted each of us to be prepared for the worst, just in case.

But in this case, in the process of living for the future, I lost sight of the present day.

I was drowning — in cat litter, in laundry, in dishes — and I resented him for it, resulting in a separation and a break-up, leading to paralyzed state, where I haven't been capable of going on one date in a year. And now I find myself miserable without him. Why? Why? Why? It seems I hadn't been prepared for the worst after all.

A phone call later, my ex tells me, "What happened? I gave you what you wanted — a family — because you said you didn't have one."

Yes, except for a brother who won't friend me on Facebook because people may think he's gay, and a dad who has trouble talking about anything "gay" at all. But for now, dad tries, sensing my distress. Still, he's most uncomfortable, refusing eye contact when he brings me orange juice.

"So, uh, what are you going to do?" dad asks.

"I don't know...I just want to go on a date."

"Then ask him out."

"Who? My ex? We were together for eight years. Are you even allowed to do that? I left him. Shit. It's a mess. I'm a mess."

"You think relationships are easy, that they always go smooth?" he asks. "So you left him. So what? So you're sad, you're lonely, you miss him. That's the bed you made. Yes, it's a mess," he says. "But that doesn't mean you can't change the sheets and get back in it."

So thinking about it, I call him with a change of sheets and a change of heart.

And I ask him, "Next week, would you consider going on a date...with me?"

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Rachel Weisz. Photo: Paramount Pictures

## Rachel Weisz dives into 'Deep Blue Sea'

Win that first Oscar and the opportunity to work with more prestigious directors turns into a commonplace occurrence. Not squandering her moment is Rachel Weisz, whose increasingly interesting career finds her shooting a new film with acclaimed gay Brit director Terence Davies. "The Deep Blue Sea," adapted from the play by Terence Rattigan, tells the story of a rich woman

in 1950s London who leaves her high court judge husband to go live with a hot, young pilot. Davis often directs autobiographical stories like the critic's favorites "Distant Voices, Still Lives" and "The Long Day Closes." A notable exception to this was his adaptation of "The House of Mirth" starring Gillian Anderson. Now, thanks to A-lister Weisz, the filmmaker may wind up with his most high-profile success to date. Production is underway now in London; look for it in arthouse theaters sometime in 2011.

## The second - or is it third? - coming of 'Ab Fab'

Edina and Patsy would like another drink; care to join them? "Absolutely Fabulous," the British sitcom that made Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley household names in the U.S., is returning for another go-round. The first incarnation aired from 1992 to 1996 and was then reprised from 2001 to 2004. Six years later, the champagne-guzzling fashionistas are back and ready for more. Recently, Saunders began long-term treatment for breast cancer, so the comic actor's readiness to step back into Eddi's outrageous shoes is a very good news for the show and its millions of fans around the world. Lumley, meanwhile, has been starring on Broadway in "La Bete." And at 52 (Saunders) and 64 (Lumley), both women are still in prime shape to be devilish in Prada. Ideally, it won't stop until they're in their 90s.

## From porn to real estate to reality TV?

As "Tag Eriksson," he starred in "The Hole," a gay porn parody of "The Ring," not to mention several other high-profile adult films. But since leaving that industry several years ago, Frederik Eklund hasn't quietly gone back into private life. Instead, the young, good-looking man from a wealthy Swedish family wrote a book about his experiences (titled "Lord of the Fruit Flies") and then became a real estate mogul

in New York City, one recently profiled in "The New York Times" and whose multi-million dollar portfolio and celebrity clients like Cameron Diaz make him something of a rising star all over again. Obviously, with a history like that, it was only a matter of time before Bravo TV came calling. And that's what's happening to Eklund, who's in talks to be cast as part of a reality series about real estate brokers. Not bad for a guy who used to bare it all, and proof that there really is life after a porn career.

## Richard Hatch hatches a comeback plan

He defined the concept of the reality show villain, the ultimate "not here to make friends" player. And he won "Survivor's" landmark first season. And then he lost in a big way when he was convicted of tax evasion and sentenced to prison (a charge he still refutes). But Richard Hatch is back and ready to play again. This time around the naked bear will keep his clothes on - a suit to be precise - on the upcoming season of "Celebrity Apprentice." He was supposed to have been on "Survivor: Heroes and Villains" but his passport is on lockdown thanks to that prison time. "Celebrity Apprentice" is a cooler show to win anyway and given his reputation, he's going to be tough competition. Watch out, Carrot Top!

Romeo San Vicente loves a man in a suit. Not just Hazmat either. He can be reached care of this publication or at [DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com](mailto:DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com).

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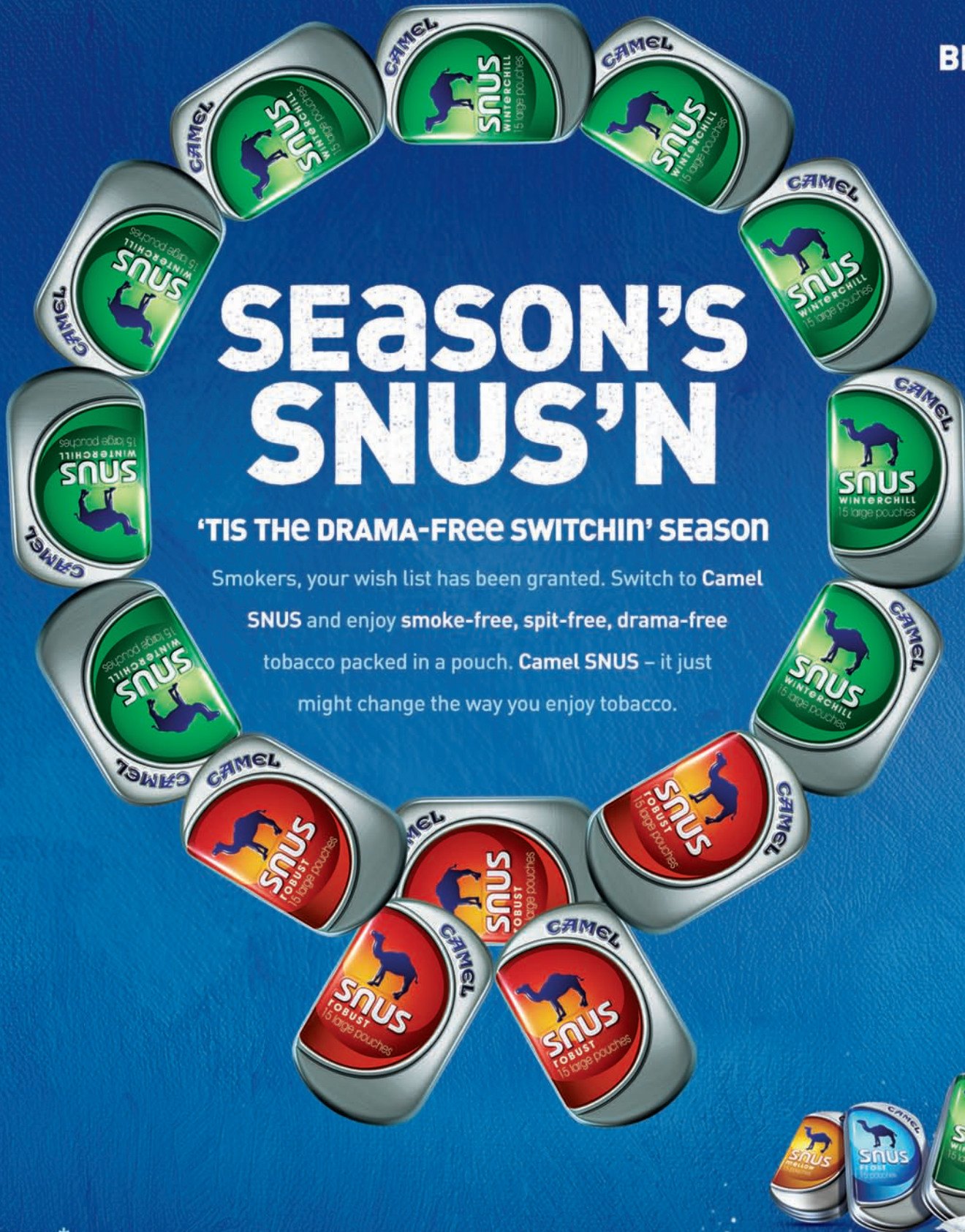
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