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GOV. SNYDER MAD ABOUT STATE'S DP BENEFITS

UGANDA: ACTIVIST DAVID KATO MURDERED

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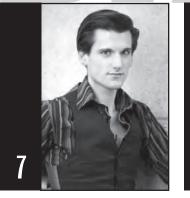
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Between Lines









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Director Denise Brogan-Kato testifies at bullying hearings last week. BTL photo: Crysta Proxmire







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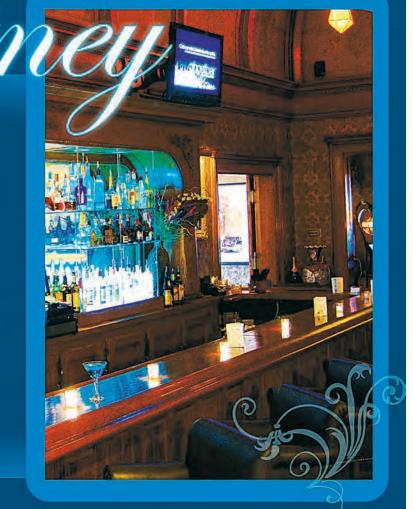
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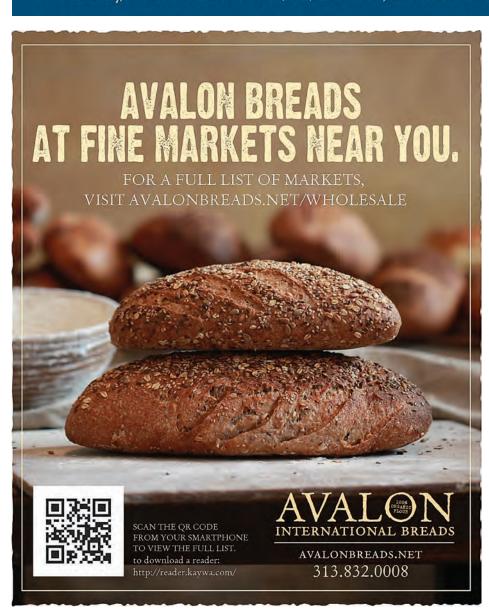
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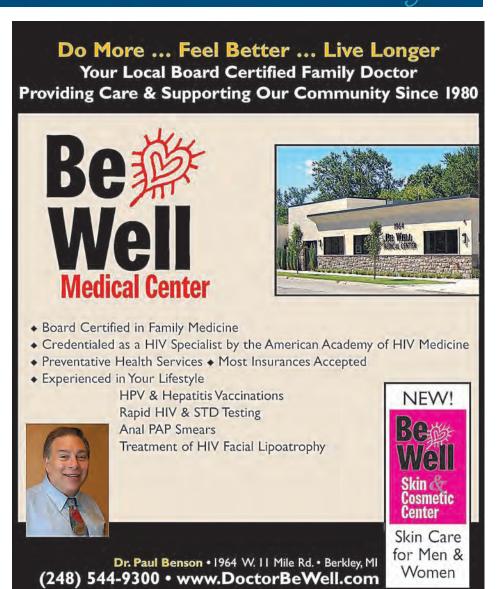
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The state of the **LGBT union in 2011**

In Michigan, though

the political terrain

for LGBT equality is

is not impossible.

treacherous, progress

n his State of the Union Address last week, President Obama celebrated Congress's recent repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy: "Starting this year, no American will be forbidden from serving the country they love because of who they love." It should be obvious to all of us that elections matter and can have significant consequences for issues that are important to our community. Now, it's time for us to consider the state of the LGBT union in 2011.

Surveying the political landscape in January 2010, few observers could have predicted that a Republican tidal wave would soon wash over the nation and our state. The November elections,

of course, resulted in GOP control of the U.S. House and Republican gains in the Senate, while here in Michigan, Republicans won every statewide office and majorities in both houses of the legislature. This year begins with a very challenging political reality when it comes to issues of LGBT equality.

At the federal level, any efforts to move forward on passage of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act or repeal of the "Defense of Marriage Act" are stalled now that the Republicans control the U.S. House. This new legislative reality puts pressure on the president to take executive action on behalf of LGBT Americans. The Obama Administration has begun to use executive power more assertively to protect LGBT citizens. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed a new rule that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in HUD-sponsored housing or Federal Housing Administration -insured mortgages. The U.S. State Department recently announced that it would use a more gender-neutral form for passports in recognition that many children are raised by same-sex couples. Additionally, it is now easier for transgender citizens to change the gender identity on their U.S. passports.

The federal courts are currently considering several cases dealing with equal marriage rights for lesbian and gay couples. President Obama, who has long supported civil unions for gay couples, has recently softened his opposition to legal same-sex marriage. This year will present important opportunities for the Obama Administration to demonstrate its commitment to LGBT equality as it deals with challenges to DOMA. As the leader of the executive branch. the president is legally required to defend the law in court. However, the administration has the ability to follow a legal defense that minimizes its support for DOMA and maximizes the possibility that federal courts will overturn the law.

In Michigan, though the political terrain for LGBT equality is treacherous, progress is not impossible. Last week, the Michigan Civil Service Commission voted to grant domestic partner benefits to same-sex (and opposite-sex) partners of state employees. Unfortunately,

Governor Snyder, who has styled himself a political moderate, spoke out in opposition to the commission's action. Thankfully, Snyder does not have constitutional authority to veto this decision

Meanwhile, anti-bullying legislation is still in limbo in the legislature. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights, whose director is officially part of the governor's cabinet, recently held hearings on the topic of bullying in schools. While the governor doesn't directly appoint the head of this department, Snyder should carefully consider the results of its anti-bullying hearings. Anti-bullying should not be a partisan political issue; it affects students of all backgrounds in Michigan.

Unfortunately, one of the governor's early political appointments does not fit with his "moderate" credentials. Snyder selected Michigan Supreme Court justice Maura Corrigan to be the new director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, the agency that implements

family and child welfare services and programs in our state. Over the years, Corrigan has been a strong opponent of adoptions by LGBT couples. Her appointment to this new position is a cause for concern to Michiganders who care about equal rights for all our families.

As we move into this year, it is important to keep up the pressure on the Obama Administration to continue moving forward on LGBT equality, including full implementation of the DADT repeal. In Michigan, we should work hard to lobby our new governor to do the right thing on issues of equal rights, and not kowtow to the right-wing of his party. The coming year will require persistent vigilance by all people who genuinely care about protecting the rights of all citizens. Ultimately, while 2011 will likely be challenging for our community, it can also be a time of progress.



SPEAK OUT

Urge President Obama to pursue a minimalist legal strategy in defending the

"Defense of Marriage Act," consistent with his own opposition to the law:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

White House switchboard: 202-456-1414

Michigan Department of Civil Rights link on **bullying forums:**

http://tinyurl.com/4mc6fwl

Urge Governor Snyder to support Senate Bill 45, comprehensive anti-bullying legislation:

Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov

Constituent services: 517-335-7858







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WEEKLY NEWS FOR LESBIANS, GAYS, BISEXUALS, TRANSGENDERS AND FRIENDS













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In focus: Eastern Michigan University



Mary Larkin. Courtesy of EMU website.

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

When it comes to providing resources and a safe environment on campus for students, Michigan universities vary – some give full support for LGBTQ's while others give no support for the "LGBT...Who?"

But with events such as OUTober (a series of events in celebration of Coming Out Day,) Transgender Day of Remembrance, World AIDS Day, Pride Prom and the Lavender Spring Celebration, as well as a very visible and supportive LGBT and allied staff, there is no doubt that Eastern Michigan University is a great university for queer students.

The highly traversed Student Center is home to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center, which is one of four centers that make up the Department of Diversity and Community Involvement. The center receives funding to cover programming expenses, resources such as books and DVD's and the attendance fees for LGBT-related conferences. The center is well-staffed with eight undergraduate student employees, one graduate assistant and program coordinator Mary Larkin.

Larkin's efforts have earned her a great deal of respect and authority at EMU in terms of LGBTQ affairs. She trains and communicates with just about any person in the administration that you could think of: the ombudsman's office, public safety, health services and housing. Larkin also serves on the advisory board for the president of Student Affairs.

Incidents of LGBTQ harassment are "absolutely isolated," said Larkin. "Those who are active and engaged in student life on campus, Greek life, or student leadership are more than supportive. It's difficult to account for students not as active or present on campus, but I would definitely say that campus life is absolutely an accepting environment."

Jess Mulcahy, undergraduate student representative on the advisory board to the president of Student Affairs and student program coordinator for the resource center, spends much of her time working on a five-part initiative to create a "gender-inclusive campus." Her latest project is an LGBTQ and allied theme option

"Those who are active and engaged in student life on campus, Greek life, or student leadership are more than supportive. It's difficult to account for students not as active or present on campus, but I would definitely say that campus life is absolutely an accepting environment."

- Mary Larkin, EMU LGBTRC Program Coordinator

for housing, which would place queer or allied students with like-minded students.

"Currently students can choose to identify as transgender (when filling out the housing application,) and you would be placed in a single room dormitory," said Mulcahy. "Now the conversation has moved to beginning an LGBT-themed floor or dormitory." Mulcahy is working in a team to distribute a survey to learn if students would use LGBT-themed housing. If so, she said the housing department is ready to make changes.

But the resource center has not been the only driving force at EMU. Two student organizations also work towards a more inclusive campus:

Queer Unity for Eastern Students and the newly formed Student Alliance for Gay Athletes and Allies

SAGA, formed in the fall of 2010, is run by student athletes Maggie Manville and Austin Hendrix. The organization's main purpose is to combat anti-gay sentiments and slurs throughout EMU athletics. SAGA consists of eight active and consistent members, with a much larger following on Facebook. So far, much of the organization's focus is on startup, but Manville said it's starting to work with other athletic-focused organizations. "They've been really supportive so far," she said.

But the queer students at EMU do have their

Analyzing Michigan Universities'
Resources and Environment
for the Queer Student

share of obstacles

In 2008, the resource center and some other groups were chastised by an organization that visited campus. Known as the Soul Winners, it staged a loud protest against sinners, especially LGBTQ's. After the harassment subsided, center employees found a letter from another Christian student organization, His House, on the door. They were initially apprehensive, but the letter expressed support for the resource center. "We still have that letter today," Mulcahy said. "They make a point to come to our events as often as they can. It's really fantastic."

Not every obstacle has been resolved, though.

The University chose to include "sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression" in their employment/affirmative action policies in 2007, but revisions in 2009 include some suspicious language that might imply that entire protection is not provided. Chapter 3.1.3 of their employment/affirmative action policy reads:

"...(E)xcept where approved by separate action of the Board of Regents the sexual orientation provision of this policy shall not apply to employment benefits, family housing, financial aid packets and student residency status."

John Palladino, who chairs the advisory board of the president of Student Affairs, said the board is looking into changing the policy language. BTL is also investigating the story.

Policy language aside, the majority of EMU and its administration is supportive of LGBTQ students, providing a variety of resources and programming to build a fully welcoming community.



EASTERN AT A GLANCE

- Active LGBT Resource Center, student organizations, and supportive student body.
- Strong support from student organization "His House Christian Fellowship"
- No LGBT studies department; four LGBT themed courses through the WGST Dept.
- Student initiative to create an LGBT/Ally themed alternative to current housing options for future students.
- nsatisfactory non-discrimination policy.



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Domestic partner benefits approved

State employees will be able to cover one 'other eligible adult'

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

In a 3-1 vote, the Michigan Civil Service Comission decided Jan. 26 to offer health care benefits to the domestic partners of state employees.

But the language doesn't exactly say "domestic partners." Instead, it offers one "other eligible adult" – who has lived with the state employee for at least a year, will continue living with that employee, and is not a tenant or hire – access to state health benefits. The OEA's dependents may also access those benefits, said Matt Fedorchuk from the MCSC.

State employees negotiated domestic partner benefits in 2004. But that same year, Michigan voted to define marriage as only between a man and a woman. That vote caused the Michigan Supreme Court to decide in 2008 that domestic partner benefits should not be allowed

The court made clear in its ruling that language that offered benefits to "domestic partners" sounded too much like marriage, said Denise-Brogan Kator, a lawyer and executive director of Equality Michigan. But the court also made clear that its ruling does not prohibit employers from offering coverage to another unrelated person – that person just couldn't be called a "domestic partner," she said.

After that ruling, some state universities



"It is always the right time to invest in your employees and to send a message to the rest of the country that Michigan is an affirming, inclusive state."

- Denise Brogan-Kator

promptly changed their language to keep offering domestic partner benefits, Brogan-Kator said, and the MCSC change is similar.

Fedorchuk said the change will go into effect in October. Now, Snyder has to accomodate the costs in his budget proposal to the state legislature in February. Fedorchuk did not have any estimates for the cost of the extended health coverage, but the Detroit News reported Jan. 27 that it could cost as much as \$ 5.7 million, an additional cost which "dissappointed and frustrated" Snyder. Michigan faces an estimated \$1.8 billion budget deficit

The state House and Senate may vote to change or get rid of the language that will allow the OEA benefits, but each would have to do so by a two-thirds majority, Fedorchuk said.

The extended benefits are not just a victory for the LGBT community, Brogan-Kator said, "but also for the people of Michigan ... for the people that now can protect their families and protect their children."

She understands the state is suffering from lack of revenue, but "it is always the right time to invest in your employees and to send a message to the rest of the country that Michigan is an affirming, inclusive state."

Hearing reveals range of bullying concerns

Michigan Civil Rights Commission hears from experts, victims

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT –The Michigan Civil Rights Commission heard public testimony from experts on bullying and victims of bullying on Tuesday, Jan. 25.

People addressing the commission were given three minutes to speak, leaving little time for details about personal experiences. However, the range of testimonials showed that bullying affects many different groups, including adults, children, racial and religious minorities, teachers, persons with disabilities and people in the LGBT spectrum.

State Sen. Glenn Anderson of Westland told the commission he introduced Matt's Law into the House when he was a state representative. The bill, named after Matt Epling, who took his own life after being harassed by other students, would require school districts to adopt official policies against bullying. Anderson explained that a watereddown version of the bill passed the House in 2006, but the Senate has failed to put it to the floor for a vote. "Hardly a week goes by that we don't get phone calls from families wanting help," Anderson said.

Bob Hitchenson of the Michigan Department of Education said his office is

flooded with calls from desperate parents. "My biggest frustrations are the parents who call me," he said. "They are scared. They are frustrated, and they want me to do something, but because we live in a home-rule state, I can't do anything. They want me to investigate, but I can't lift a finger because I am not allowed. That is the biggest frustration."

Hitchenson testified that the number one reason kids are bullied is based on physical appearance, and the number two reason is they are perceived to be gay or transgender. He also said that he advocates for counseling-based solutions. "Some of our districts over-rely on suspensions for disciplining, but for bullying that just does not work."

One factor that makes bullying more pervasive is the increasing use of technology to harass others. Betsy Kellman of the Anti-Defamation League said "Bullying has become more sinister because of the Internet ...These smart phones are so amazing it is a computer in (students') pockets. So the bullying doesn't stop when they get home from school. They are always accessible." Kellman said that recent ADL research has shown that 43 percent of Internet users have been bullied online, and 60 percent of students sleep with their phones.

In addition to cyber-bullying, verbal and



The Jan. 25 hearings were well attended. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire.

physical acts are a fact of life for many students and adults. Dr. Elizabeth Barton, a research associate at Wayne State University, has studied the phenomena of "bystanders," individuals who allow, or even encourage, bullying behavior. "If someone started attacking me right now, in this room, 30 percent of you would walk away and ignore it," Barton said. She said that 40 percent in the room would support the bully by laughing, cheering, watching or

See Hearing, page 11

Producer, playwright loses life in car accident

The founder of art4artillery was just 23 years old

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Among the obituaries found on Desmond Funeral Home's website, one bright young face looks out place: Kyle Holton, a 23-year-old



Kyle Holton

who was beloved in the theater and LGBT communities, died Jan. 28, 2011 after a car accident.

BTL profiled Holton in 2009, when he founded art4artillery Theatre Company with two friends from Wayne State University, where he earned his B.F.A.

"I wanted to start something that was a

real artists' community – a place that was open for experiments and for exploring different types of theater," Holton told BTL theater editor Don Calamia. "Especially in a community like Detroit, (theater) is not thriving like it should. So something like art and the arts community could really bring people to the city – and bring people together. And as a gay male, I'm very interested in re-examining pieces of theater with a new perspective – something that hasn't been explored in that way before."

One new way to look at theater was to view it as a response to all of the wars society fights – against terror, drugs, family values, Holton said. "It's guerilla theater."

Holton started writing plays in early childhood. He also enjoyed singing, dancing, snow and water skiing, and playing many different musical instruments.

David Butera, a friend of Holton, wrote to BTL that Kyle was "unique in every way from his insatiable laugh to his random model poses" and was "the most charismatic individual that I have ever known.

"He was a young man afraid of very little who enjoyed taking risks and reaping the rewards of success. A best friend to many and a true warrior for what he believed in, Kyle helped many find comfort in themselves and accept their sexuality as a part of who they are, free from judgment.

in Detroit and what the city could become. His productions were mature – beyond his years – and true to form art that had a way of touching all who attended his performances. Too soon taken but never forgotten, we love you, Kyle."

Holton was born Oct. 1, 1987 in Southfield, and resided in Beverly Hills, Mich. at the time of his death. He is survived by parents Christopher and Madlyn, brother Timothy, grandparents Rex and Carol Holton and Dominic Soave, and many cousins, aunts, uncles and friends.

Holton's family suggests memorials to Wayne State University Theater Department, 4841 Cass Ave., Suite 3225, Detroit, MI 48202.



What do you make of Gov. Snyder, who's "frustrated and disappointed" about Michigan offering domestic partner benefits to state employees?

It's about damn time. He'll get over it.

- Sue Eisman

Typical straight privileged white guy. The new way to run for office is to have said so little about so many things, that everyone can imagine you're "not so bad," until of course we find out (too late) that you don't know anything at all about most things. Not that I voted for him anyway, but I think this lack of compassion was obvious.

- Steve Duerksen

It's being taken out of context – he went onto say he was frustrated and disappointed because it was a setback in the budgeting process.

- Anthony Martinez Beven

Snyder's slant leans on fiscal rather than social opposition. However, I neither understand his opposition nor accept since this is a benefit that should have been already extended to all! - Ray Magdaleno

Offering domestic partnership benefits is the right thing to do! You will retain top talent, and you will able to attract to talent. Most U.S. companies offer these benefits, and states should as well.

- Daniel Eckenrode

I call BS on the "financial concerns;" if all of the affected people married opposite sex persons there would be twice as many on the books and nobody would say boo. Hey, maybe that's an idea...

- Cindi Brody

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

- First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

Heard on Facebook S/he said LGBT rights, culture, murder

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Abdul Milazi

"Homosexuality is banned in Uganda, and chances of that country's police taking this case seriously are slim. This begs the question, are Ugandans really free or are their former white masters merely replaced by black faces? As Africans we don't have to copy the West, but we should accord our people the same rights and freedoms we sought from our former colonial masters. There can never be real freedom without free individuals.'

- Abdul Milazi, in an editorial titled "The killing of Ugandan gay activist is a return to dark ages," about the brutal murder of David Kato, timeslive.co.za, Jan. 27.



"I realized there was a girl I liked. I didn't want to be gay. I was raised to believe it was the worst thing ever. I had the idea that it didn't matter how good a person I was. Even if I cured cancer, there'd always be that one thing about me that can't be changed, and I'd always feel like a bad person...

- Staci, 19-year-old college student Staci at Macon University, telling her story online at "We Are the Youth," a photographic journalism project chronicling the individual stories of LGBT youth in the U.S., wearetheyouthproject.blogspot.com, Jan. 26.



John Waters

"Coming out! It's just so square to me. I mean, I always was gay. I knew I was gay the moment I saw Elvis Presley, when I was probably about 10 years old. I never just came out and made it a ceremony or an announcement... No one ever asked me if I was gay because they thought something was worse than that.'

- John Waters, filmmaker, in an interview titled "Coming Out Is So Square," within a series of interviews

"Coming Out: Stories of Gay Identity," bigthink.com, Sept. 17,



Bennie Tan

"I'm a Panda Cub. In the gay Bear community, I am considered a Panda – an Asian Bear. After I came out of the closet, I found myself having a hard time fitting in. Some Asians in the gay community did not accept me because I was too Westernized and tend to be outspoken... The Bears' acceptance of me is really not that unusual. After all, these are the guys who were ostracized for being different - for being too big and not manscaping. Bears are gay men who truly know what

it feels like to be an outsider but have come to accept and love themselves for who and what they are."

- Bennie Tan, in his introductory column titled "I Am Panda, Hear Me ROWWWRRR!," in his blog titled "Panda Say What?!," www.justout.com LGBT News Portland, OR, Jan. 07.



"LGBT rights are not special rights; they are human rights.

My Administration will continue to strongly support human rights and assistance work on behalf of LGBT persons abroad. We do this because we recognize the threat faced by leaders like David Kato, and we share their commitment to advancing freedom, fairness, and equality for all."

> - President Obama, in a statement from the White House, about David Kato, prominent LGBT rights activist in Uganda who was brutally murdered, whitehouse.gov, Jan. 27.





Moon us up, Ronnie!

"We are the real rainbow coalition," Roback whines.

"The gay lobby does not own the rainbow," boasts Jennifer Roback Morse, a harried looking, biblically myopic, one man/one woman marriage Cassandra and proselytizer.

(She could use a better bra. Or padding. Not that spiritual uplift's my area of expertise. Just a suggestion from a non-participant, YouTube viewing bystander.)

As spokesperson for the right-wing Ruthe Institute she features in a series of DVD lessons on how Adam and Eve types can wage the good fight against the "gay agenda," as opposed to the right wing, conservative, Tea Party, mind-everybody's-business for Sarah Palin AND Jesus mandate.

"We are the real rainbow coalition," Rollback, er, Roback, whines, citing two appearance of the rainbow symbol in the Bible. One in Genesis. One in Revelation. (She hasn't a clue that the ancient Israelites borrowed their Noah flood mythology from older Babylonian cuneiform sources.)

Actually, it might be a bit of fun, as in fundygelical, if those churches took out a patent on the rainbow as a symbol. (Or, the cross for that matter, a pagan phallic device.) Oh, well, it's a little late for badgering the Patent Office. The LGBT Rainbow banner has been displayed for 34 years as a symbol of solidarity and inclusivity.

Last year some gay groups circulated fake "petitions" and concocted rumors to get NASA's proposed, but now abandoned, 2010 moon flight off the ground and on to a campy memorable landing, by urging its astronauts to plant a rainbow flag. (Recall Bette Davis's line from the movie Now Voyager: "Oh, let's don't ask for the moon. We've already got the stars.")

A group calling itself the Westboro Baptist Church Performance Art Troupe, out of San Francisco, also staged a scary satire along the lines of, "Do we really want the gay flag on the dark side of the moon? (www.queerty.com/moon.)

Surprise of surprise, gay mooners! One of our cheeky community moonies, Ron Miotke, has actually been to the moon and back in just under three seconds. 238,857 miles there. 1.3 seconds. 238,857 back. 1.3 seconds. That's a long way to throw one's voice. But he very well may be the first gay (or straight) person to do so.

Ron, left-brain gifted in math (higher calculus, algebra, trig), Star Trekkie scientifically smart (fully certified HAM radio operator, computer nerd) – built a radio antenna at his partner Gordon's shared Detroit condo to receive and send signals, local, national, international, and galactic.

Over Sunday coffee I asked Ron about the possibility of bouncing off his, "Hi, I'm Ron. Over and proudly out!" radio message off the red planet Mars. He was intrigued. He e-mailed back with his expert calculations.

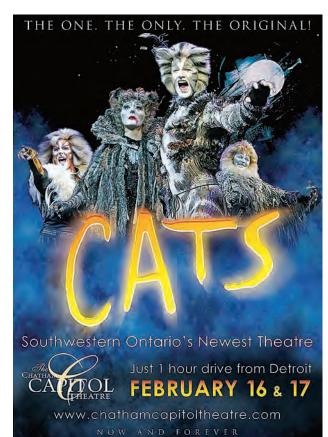
"The time it takes a radio signal to travel to and then from Mars when the two planets – Earth and Mars – are the closest and when they are the farthest apart are distant extremes.

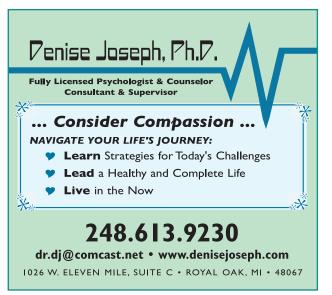
"At the closest distance, Earth is about 35 million miles away from Mars. At the extreme distance at which one of the planets is directly on the other side of the solar system, within their orbit, a line from Earth through the Sun and then onto Mars, is 250 million miles.

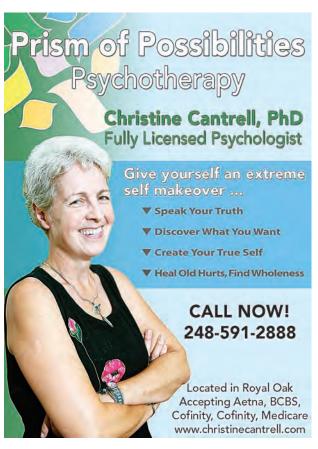
"Considering this distance a signal from my antenna to Mars will take about – a little more than 22 minutes – a full round trip of the signal will take 44 minutes. So, technically, I could talk (transmit) to myself for 22 minutes and then listen (receive) from the planet Mars to myself, hearing exactly the same content for another 22 minutes! Hmmm; there is a joke there somewhere!"

Question: Ron, what might you read out loud and send for 22, fast-as-the-speed-of-light joking minutes? Answer: "How about Sermon on the Mount. In Klingon?"

 $Charles @pride source.com.\ Facebook, too.$













Opinions



BTL EDITORIAL

Bullying: many solutions needed

Bullying is a big, complicated problem that's influenced by tradition and technology, students and lawmakers, parents and teachers, inaction and fear.

Our story in this issue about the bullying summit in Detroit helps illustrate the complexity of the problem, as the Michigan Civil Rights Commission heard from experts, legislators, parents and bullying victims for hours on Jan.

The commission held the public forum to help understand how to address the issue, and it may have left overwhelmed with more questions than answers: with so many cogs in the machine, where to begin?

It begins with you. No matter who you are, you can do something to stop bullying. Even if you don't have children, you can tell your state Senator to pass Matt's Law, an anti-bullying law that has languished for five years.

If you're a relative to a school-age student, you can teach your him or her about respecting others and sticking up for those who are mistreated. You can also be a model for those youngsters: let them see what a socially responsible citizen looks like.

If you're a teacher or a parent, your support of all students is incredibly influential: you have the power to help all kids get safely to graduation. You can make classrooms into safe zones. You can encourage students to recognize and stop bullies in their tracks. You can teach kids to be inclusive — and to make those who bully part of the minority, not the majority.

We know change takes time, and changing the fuzzy and hard-to-define culture that supports bullying isn't going to happen overnight. But we all can do something.

And as a teacher, parent, or just a citizen, you can encourage your local school boards to make effective anti-bullying policies and offer trainings to staff and students.

You can donate to local nonprofits that offer trainings to schools and safe places for LGBT adults and youth (many of them do offer such trainings, and if they don't already, we bet they will at your request).

There is no quick fix. No single law or school policy or classroom lesson plan will save the day. Change takes time, and changing the fuzzy and hard-to-define culture that supports bullying isn't going to happen overnight. But the enormity and the reach of the bullying problem also means that all of us have the power to help fix it. So ask yourself: What will you do?

GAY MORALIST



Told you so

It's OK to laugh, and it's OK to wince a little too

BY JOHN CORVINO

If first discovered the gay-themed Doritos ads when a friend sent me a link to one titled "Told You So" with the question: "Is it okay for me to laugh at this?"

Quick answer, for those who have been wondering the same thing: Yes, it's okay to laugh.

A longer answer, for those who nevertheless feel a bit uncomfortable while doing so, constitutes the remainder of the column

The "Told You So" ad opens with a man "Tom" trimming his hedges when he notices a bowl of Doritos in the distance, causing him to stop working and to start licking his lips. His wife/girlfriend "Barbara" suddenly appears, giving him a quizzical, faintly disgusted look. Then the camera pans out, revealing that the Doritos are being consumed by a stereotypically gay male couple as they lounge poolside in skimpy cutoff shorts. Jolted from his Doritos daydream, Tom realizes that Barbara mistakenly thinks he's drooling over the guys, not the snack.

The guys apparently think the same thing: the commercial ends with one telling the other, in an effeminate voice, "Told you so!"

The ad bothered me a bit when I first saw it, though not entirely for the reasons one would think.

First, Tom is using the wrong garden tool for the sort of trimming he's doing, and in any case he should be more careful when handling sharp pruners.

Second, how could the video editor not notice that Gay Guy #2 has his legs crossed in the close-up shots but spread in the distance shot? Careless.

Third, Doritos are nasty, and there's no way you can eat them regularly and still maintain abs like those guys in the commercial.

Fourth, and on a serious note: the ad's portrayal of gays as mincing queens makes me a bit uneasy when the intended audience is Super Bowl viewers.

(Note: the ad was a submission for Doritos' "Crash the Superbowl" contest. It was not chosen as a finalist, and according to Frito-Lay it has no chance of airing at the Super Bowl.)

Comedy often emerges from "mistaken identity" scenarios, and there's nothing wrong per se with deriving humor from someone's confusing a gay couple with a bag of Doritos as the object of another's lust.

Moreover, it's a 30-second ad, and short

of putting the neighbor guys in bed together, there's probably no quicker way to establish their gayness than by using stereotypes. Indeed, the ad comically exaggerates the stereotypes, from the guys' cutoff shorts to their limp-wristed mannerisms to the umbrellas in their cocktails. Even their Doritos bowl is bright pink.

So what's the problem?

The problem is that those stereotypes are still used to taunt gay kids, and it's not difficult to imagine a closeted gay teen seeing that commercial during the Super Bowl with his homophobic Dad, who, rather than laughing at the mix-up, laughs at the stereotypical gays: "Haha – silly faggots." The kid gets the message that gayness itself is worthy of ridicule.

Is that the ad-makers' fault? No. And I'm not – I repeat, NOT – saying that the ad itself is homophobic, or that it should be censored.

It's just that humor is contextual, and the context for an ad like this can vary wildly – which explains the mixed reaction to "Told You So."

A portrayal of gays that's funny on LOGO can be cringe-worthy at a Southern Baptist Convention. A stand-up routine that's hilarious in Los Angeles can fall flat in Dayton. A joke that inspires gentle self-deprecation in some can unwittingly fuel self-loathing in others.

The trouble here is that, with a (potential) Super Bowl ad, the audience is pretty much everyone. That's especially true in our Internet age, when such ads can go "viral" on YouTube (as this one seems to be doing, along with another gay-themed ad "The Sauna.")

As I said, "Told You So" won't be aired during the Super Bowl. Personally, I wouldn't object if it were. The guys are cute, the premise is funny, and the creators shouldn't be faulted for the reactions of homophobes — many of whom dislike us no matter how we're

So yes, it's OK to laugh, and it's OK to wince a little too. Just remember that the best way to combat stereotypes is not to censor the stereotypical. It's to strengthen the representation of LGBT people in all our diverse forms.

John Corvino, Ph.D. is a writer, speaker, and philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His column "The Gay Moralist" appears Fridays at 365gay.com. Read more about him at www.johncorvino.com, where his winter/spring speaking schedule is now posted.



Ideas, volunteers needed for spring transgender events

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Organizers for two transgenderthemed events are working together to give the trans community a "visible" ending to their March and an "empowering" way to begin April. They are looking for transpeople and allies to come to a planning meeting Feb. 8 to share ideas and get involved.

Transgender Day of Visibility takes place in cities across the country and abroad on March 31. It was started by Transgender Michigan cofounders Rachel Crandall and Susan Crocker, in response to the morewidely commemorated Transgender Day of Remembrance on Nov. 20, where the international community mourns the murders of transgender people. Day of Visibility gives an opportunity for transgender people to celebrate themselves and stand up to be recognized.

Transgender Day of Empowerment is led by Transgender Detroit and its founder Michelle Fox-Phillips. It typically takes place in mid-to-late April, with a day of events at Affirmations in Ferndale. Both days have involved panel discussions and social gatherings.

But this year the organizations have gotten together to bring the two days closer together and see if some cross-promotion might be possible. They also want to find out what kind of events might get more transpeople to come out and be both "visible" and "empowered."

"We need to find out what the trans community wants from its leaders," said Fox-Phillips. She spoke about the ways other LGBT groups did surveys and talked to people before making decisions. "Before Equality Michigan merged they went around the state and asked people what they wanted. So that's what we need to do. Reach out to the transgender people we know and find out what they want."

Julia Lyn Marsh of Clawson was on hand for the first planning meeting, which took place at Affirmations on Jan. 18. "When I think of empowerment, I want to think of ways the trans community can become more public, to counteract a lot of the bad media that trans community has been receiving. It would be good to do something that helps not just transgender people, but everyone," she said. "People who talk about it go back and forth. They say trans people are evil or wrong, and we

come back with 'No,' and 'We need rights.' But most people are in the middle and say 'eh, it doesn't matter to me.' We need to do things that connect us with people who have never met a transperson. ...That's how we get people to care, by being ourselves around them."

Participants tossed around the idea of organizing a volunteer outing, where transgender people can go to a soup kitchen or to do some other kind of service to help non-transgender people. They also discussed hosting a panel discussion, and contacting local media to try and get coverage of the events.

The initial planning group had five people, but they are hoping to find others in the transgender community who may have ideas about what to do for the spring events. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m. at Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile in Ferndale. Transgender people and allies are encouraged to come, share ideas and get involved with the planning of this year's events.

For more information, visit transgendermichigan.org or transgenderdetroit.org.

► Hearing

Continued from p. 7

helping. "Only 10 percent of you would stand by me and try to stop the bully." She said that learning more about how to encourage bystanders to stand up to bullies could be a key factor in reducing the amount of bullying that takes place.

Barton also noted there are two different types of bullies. Ineffectual bullies are the ones typically seen as "big and dumb," who lack social skills and act out because they don't know how to fit in. But there are also effectual bullies who are smart, manipulative and specifically target others. She suggested that responses to bullying should take into account the psychological motivations of the perpetrator.

Speakers addressed not only the methods of bullying, but the range of its victims. Melissa Pope of the Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes spoke about how her son stopped wearing a favorite choker to school because he said other students were afraid of him because he looked like a Native American when he wore it. She noted that five young people have taken their lives in Michigan since 2001 due to suicide, saying "Suicide is the ultimate price to pay for allowing prejudice to permeate our society."

Denise Brogan-Kator, executive director of Equality Michigan, testified about the importance of recognizing

"Hardly a week goes by that we don't get phone calls from families wanting help."

- State Sen. Glenn Anderson

protected classes in the bullying discussion. "Anti-bullying legislation should protect all students, but should list those who are most likely to be harassed, and most likely to be over-looked. Enumeration is essential in protecting our youth," she said.

That sentiment was expanded by the National Organization for Women's Genessee County Advocacy Team member Bobbie C. Walters, who said "If you have enumeration in policies that specifically identifies groups, then you can determine whether it is discriminatory or not, and if it is discrimination it can be addressed more harshly."

Bernie Ball, a counselor with Advanced Counseling Services in St. Clair Shores, said, "Kids need the validation of a law, so that they can know for sure what's being done to them is wrong."

National youth speaker Jim Tuman was adamant that the commission do more than just listen. "It's great to talk about statistics, but if you're not going

to take action than its pointless," he said. "You need to create a safe space and be real with the kids." Tuman talked about being bullied in his youth because he was a "high-achievement kid," who eventually was pushed to attempt suicide. He has worked with young people nationwide to turn them away from suicide or bad choices. "Parents don't know how to talk to their kids. They can't come at them with power issues, they need to really listen. A lot of gangs build up membership by looking for kids whose parents have pushed them out ... I've gone to Columbine, to other places ... what I hear over and over is that people saw this coming ... We need to listen and help before it is too late."

"Verbal bullying has prompted students to take their own lives," said Commissioner Bertram L. Marks, who led the two-hour open forum. "We want feedback from this forum to help us set our agendas. With the onslaught of technology bullying is growing. We know the bullying phenomenon starts early in life. How can we stop it?"

Chick-fil-A sponsors anti-gay marriage conference

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

Family-owned restaurant chain Chick-fil-A is knee-deep in controversy after a blogger and students and faculty at Indiana University South Bend discovered it gave money to anti-LGBT organizations.

In early January, a Pennsylvania Chick-fil-A franchise agreed to sponsor the hosting of a Familylife.com conference titled "The Art of Marriage: Getting To the Heart of God's Design" at the Pennsylvania Family Institute in February. The franchise was going to give free sandwiches and brownies for all conference attendees.

Both Familylife.com and the Pennsylvania Family Institute

The company has connections to anti-gay organizations besides sandwiches and brownies.

vehemently oppose same-sex marriage.

Dan Cathy, president of the Chick-fil-A and son of company founder Truett Cathy, issued a response on Facebook and the company's website:

"While my family and I believe in the Biblical definition of marriage," wrote Cathy, "We love and respect anyone who disagrees."

Cathy stated in a video message released on Facebook that Chick-fil-A, an organization whose own corporate purpose is to "glorify God," the decision to sponsor the event was not an "endorsement of the mission, political stance, or motives" of the Pennsylvania Family Institute.

The company has connections to anti-gay organizations besides sandwiches and brownies.

Self-described "activist and journalist" Jeremy Hooper, whose work was previously featured in HRC Equality Magazine, The Advocate and on PBS, discovered a direct connection between The National Organization for Marriage's Ruth Institute, a project whose sole purpose is to oppose gay marriage, and the WinShape Foundation, a charity organization founded and funded by the Cathy family and Chick-fil-A. He posted the information on his blog, www.goodasyou. org, and within days it went viral.

Hooper discovered the Ruth Institute and the WinShape Foundation were connected through a website known as LoveisHere. com, which was both a project of the WinShape Foundation and host to the Ruth Institute's Reel Love Challenge webspace. In other words, the Reel Love Challenge was a collaboration between an anti-gay marriage organization and the charity of Chick-fil-A.

Students and faculty of Indiana University South Bend petitioned the school to no longer allow Chick-fil-A to be served in the campus cafeteria. Though the university clarified in a press release that it is not entirely refusing the vendor's ability to do business with the campus, Chick-fil-A has been suspended from their weekly delivery while the campus takes "time to properly review the issue."

The controversy even spread to the restaurant's Facebook page, with comments varying from complete support to massive disappointment. One user wrote, "I love (their) chicken but I won't be eating there anymore. I cannot support hate."

E-campaign website Change.org created a petition within days of the university's decision to send a message to Chick-fil-A that support for anti-gay organizations is unacceptable. The petition already has more than 2,600 signatures.

Chick-fil-A has other controversies in its history. The New York Times reported that a Muslim franchise owner-in-training sued the company after being fired the day after abstaining from a Christian prayer at a training function. The suit was settled out of court. The Times also reported Chick-fil-A was accused of demanding recipients of their college scholarships to "pledge to follow Christian values." The company denied allegations of requiring prayer from franchise owners and college scholarship recipients.

Brent Bozell

As if two gay teenagers singing a corny holiday song to each other on TV is just a stepping-stone to mandatory viewings of "RuPaul's Drag Race" in kindergarten classrooms across the nation.



Brent Bozell

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

"Homosexual activists" are at it again. Just when you thought it was safe to watch $prime\ time\ TV, gay\ propagand ists\ have\ taken$ airwaves and are doing everything they can to make teenagers gay.

At least that's what Brent Bozell wants you to believe. This isn't surprising, of course, since Bozell is the president of the Media Research Center, an organization that purports to seek "balance" in the media, but

that really seeks dominance of Christian conservative views. Bozell blasted gay teen characters on TV in a recent column, writing, "If anyone doubts that our entertainment industry and our entertainment media are evangelists for a revolution of sexual immorality (or in their lingo, 'progress'), he needs only to read the latest cover story in Entertainment Weekly, a 'special report' on gay teen characters on TV."

The EW cover features "Glee" actors Chris Colfer and Darren Criss who play boyfriends on the show. Bozell is especially rankled by a scene that appeared in a "Glee" Christmas episode.

"Their most controversial scene was the two private-school boys singing 'Baby, It's Cold Outside' to each other on the Fox show," Bozell writes. "The magazine touted this was the hottestselling track on the "Glee" Christmas album, which gives you a flavor of Hollywood's reverence for that holy day.

Bozell also notes that Colfer told EW, "That was the gayest thing that has ever been on TV, period."

Full disclosure: I have never watched "Glee." I have no interest in it and I have a myriad of other ways to waste my time and life, thank you very much. But I obviously had a journalistic duty to watch the so-called "gayest thing that has ever been on TV." And so I watched the clip on YouTube. And I have to say, I can understand Bozell's concern. I mean, what on earth is Kurt (Colfer) doing with his tongue in this scene? Dude, you're singing, you're not eating an ice cream cone. Put your tongue back in your face. And all of the coy eye rolling. Yuck. I don't understand why Blaine (Darren Criss) wants him to stay. Colfer won a Golden Globe for this schmaltz?

Of course, Bozell's problem isn't with "Glee's" quality of acting or the cheesiness of sentiment, but with "Glee's" inclusion of gay characters, specifically gay teens. This is, of course, the opposite problem I have with the show. I'm all for positive portrayals of gay teens on TV. I have no doubt that there are kids out there who watch Kurt and Blaine and, as a result, feel like they aren't alone and that they're okay. And that's great.

Or terrible, if you're Bozell. The EW story was nothing but propaganda, he says, because EW didn't ask people like him - people who have had unfettered dissemination of their anti-gay rhetoric for far too long – to talk about how horrible gay people are

"If this magazine weren't so earnestly in the tank, the story could come with a disclaimer: 'This issue is an advertisement bought and paid for by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation," Bozell writes.

Of course, Bozell believes that teenagers are only a steppingstone to the real goal: babies.

"Parents should understand that their young children are the next propaganda targets," he warns.

Oh, please. As if two gay teenagers singing a corny holiday song to each other on TV is just a stepping-stone to mandatory viewings of "RuPaul's Drag Race" in kindergarten classrooms across the nation. And even if it did, that wouldn't make kids gay. It might, however, make them a little more sassy.

States launch marriage equality fights

Some state legislatures move toward equality, others go for repeal

BY DANA RUDOLPH

Two New Hampshire legislators have introduced bills to repeal the state's marriage equality law, even though Republican leaders said Jan. 13 that such a repeal is not a party priority in 2011. And several other states saw legislative moves toward or away from equality in the past week.

New Hampshire: State Rep. David Bates, R-Windham, and 11 co-sponsors filed a bill that would repeal marriage equality and prevent New Hampshire from recognizing the marriages of samesex couples contracted outside the state. New Hampshire same-sex couples who retain a bill for further study (in essence, tabling it), thus blocking consideration of it on the floor.

Gov. John Lynch, a Democrat who signed the original marriage equality bill into law, said he would veto a repeal bill. But Republicans hold a veto-proof majority in both houses.

Mo Baxley, executive director of New Hampshire Freedom to Marry, said in an interview that she thinks supporters of the law can sustain the governor's veto by finding supporters among older, more libertarian-leaning Republicans.

"It's going to be a horse race," said Baxley. She noted that the national gay marriage opposition group, D.C.-based National Organization for Marriage, introduced into both the Senate and House in the past week. Democrats have a majority in both chambers. Governor Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, said he would sign the bill if it reaches his desk.

Cosponsor Sen. Jamie Raskin, D-Montgomery, said in a press briefing Jan. 21 that he expects a fight on the Senate floor and will need 29 votes out of 47 to break a filibuster. An up-or-down vote on the bill, after the filibuster is broken, will require 24 votes. Democrats have a 35-12 majority in the Senate.

A public hearing on the Senate bill is scheduled Feb. 8.

Hawaii: The full Senate on Jan. 28 passed a bill to legalize civil unions for same- and opposite-sex couples. It now heads to the House, where it is expected to pass. Gov. Neil Abercrombie, a Democrat, said he

Illinois: Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn signed a civil union bill Jan. 31 giving same- and opposite-sex couples many of the same rights as married ones.

Iowa: The House Judiciary Committee passed a bill Jan. 24 that would allow voters to decide on a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex couples from marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships

In the Senate, however, Sen. Kent Sorenson, R-Indianola, attempted to bypass Senate rules and bring to the floor a vote on the Senate version of the bill. Democrats, who hold a 26-24 majority, voted down the attempt. Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, had said he would block a vote on the bill

New Mexico: Three bills were introduced in the House and one in the Senate that would variously put before voters a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and ban New Mexico from recognizing such marriages enacted

Wyoming: The House passed a measure Jan. 25 to prevent the state from recognizing same-sex marriages contracted elsewhere. The next day, the state Senate passed a bill that would allow voters to decide whether to amend the state constitution to ban same-sex

A civil union bill introduced by openly gay state Rep. Cathy Connolly, D-Laramie, failed by one vote to make it out of committee Jan. 28. A separate bill by Connolly, for full marriage equality, died without a motion to vote.

National Organization for Marriage, spent more than a million dollars trying to defeat (the N.H. governor) in the last election, "and they want what they paid for."

married in the state before the bill became effective would continue to be recognized as married. Same-sex couples who married in another state would no longer be recognized.

The bill's stated purpose is that, because most children "are conceived by acts of passion between men and women - sometimes unintentionally," New Hampshire has "a unique, distinct, and compelling interest" in promoting committed marriages between men and women "so as to increase the likelihood that children will be born to and raised by both of their natural parents.

That is the essentially the same argument used - unsuccessfully - by the defense in the federal district court trial that struck down California's Proposition 8 ban on same-sex marriage.

State Rep. Leo Pepino, R-Manchester, and five cosponsors filed a separate bill that would repeal marriage equality and prohibit civil unions or any other form of legal recognition for same-

The Associated Press reported Jan. 25, however, that Pepino will ask the committee hearing the bill "to retain it until next year when they have more

Bills cannot be killed in committee in New Hampshire, unlike in many other states. But a committee may choose to

spent more than a million dollars trying to defeat Lynch in the last election, "and they want what they paid for."

NOM is working in conjunction with in-state group Cornerstone Action. Kevin Nix, director of communications for NHFTM, said that both NOM and Cornerstone are trying to "appear more tolerant," and appeal to "people in the

"The public is solidly on our side," Baxley asserted, but cautioned, "We can't just presume that we've got the votes... We've got to be full throttle out there."

Baxley said that, with the state's 400 House districts containing only about 3,100 people each, her group's members are taking a "very grassroots" approach. They have been holding a series of town hall meetings with "a real mix" of attendees, gay and straight. They are also preparing for a public hearing on the bill.

She said state Republicans also plan to introduce a bill next year for a ballot measure that would amend the state constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage. With a spotlight on New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation presidential primary, she said, a ballot fight in 2012 could help motivate a stronger conservative turnout.

In other states

Maryland: Marriage equality bills were

Prominent Ugandan activist killed

Local newspaper and U.S. evangelicals blamed for encouraging violence

Prominent Ugandan gay activist David Kato was killed in his home Jan. 26, just 23 days after winning a lawsuit against a tabloid newspaper that published his picture and pictures of other gays along with the headline "Hang Them."

Police said a robber entered Kato's home near Kampala early in the afternoon, struck him in the head with a hammer, and left in a vehicle. Police later arrested Kato's driver and are looking for his handyman, who they said is an ex-con. Kato died en route to a hospital, according to Human Rights Watch.

"David Kato's death is a tragic loss to the human rights community," said HRW's senior Africa researcher, Maria Burnett. "David had faced the increased threats to Ugandan LGBT people bravely and will be sorely missed."

Kato was the advocacy officer for the organization Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG). He had been a leading voice in the fight against the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which has been before Uganda's parliament since October 2009.

The legislation would imprison for life anyone convicted of "the offense of homosexuality," punish "aggravated homosexuality" (repeat offenses, or having gay sex while being HIV-positive) with the death penalty, forbid "promotion of homosexuality" and incarcerate gay-rights defenders, and jail individuals in positions of authority for up to three years if they fail to report within 24 hours the existence of all LGBT people or sympathizers known to them.

Kato was one of three plaintiffs in the recent successful lawsuit against Uganda's Rolling Stone newspaper, which published photos, names and addresses of numerous gay people, including Kato, along with a headline that said, "Hang Them." Kato's photo was on the cover.

The Kampala High Court ruled that the plaintiffs suffered violations of their constitutional rights to life and to privacy of the person and the home, and ordered the newspaper, which has no relation to the U.S. Rolling Stone magazine, to pay each plaintiff \$643 plus court costs.

"(P)ublishing the identities of the applicants and exposing their homes coupled with the explicit call to hang them because 'they are after our kids,' the respondents extracted the applicants from the other members of the community who are regarded as worthy, in equal measure, of human dignity and who ought to be treated as worthy of dignity and respect," the court said. "Clearly the call to hang gays in dozens tends to tremendously threaten their right to human dignity.... (T)he exposure of the identities of the persons and homes of the applicants for the purposes of fighting gayism and the activities of gays, as can easily be seen from the general outlook of the impugned publication, threaten the rights of the applicants to privacy of the person and their homes.'

The newspaper article said, in part: "The mighty Rolling Stone is glad to reveal some of the most horrible secrets in gay community, which is bent on recruiting at least one million members by 2012. Dishearteningly, gays are after



young kids, who are easily brainwashed towards bisexual orientation ... The leaked pictures of Uganda's top homosexuals and lesbians have renewed calls for the strengthening of the war against the rampage that threatens the future of our generation by hanging gays. 'Unless government takes a bold step by hanging dozens of homosexuals, the vice will continue eating up the moral fibre (sic) and culture of our great nation,' ... said a radical church leader who preferred anonymity."

In a statement, SMUG said that Kato "has been receiving death threats since his face was put on the front page of Rolling Stone, which called for his death and the death of all homosexuals."

Val Kalenda, board chair of Freedom and Roam Uganda, blamed Kato's killing on "the hatred planted in Uganda by (visiting) U.S. evangelicals in 2009."

"The Ugandan government and the socalled U.S. evangelicals must take responsibility for David's blood!" she said.

Some U.S. news reports and gay activists have blamed the U.S. visitors for inspiring the Anti-Homosexuality Bill during their visits to the country.

"David was a true hero, a man who gave his energy and finally his life for others' freedoms," said Scott Long, who headed HRW's LGBT Rights Division for several years. "The foreign Christian leaders who have supported the spread of murderous homophobia in Uganda ... should search their consciences today and beg forgiveness."

According to Political Research Associates: "The targeting of Kato and other LGBT Ugandans follows an intense demonization campaign fostered by right-wing Christian activists from the United States. A March 2009 conference in Kampala ... featured notorious American anti-gay campaigners, who promoted the idea of a sinister global homosexual conspiracy to corrupt Uganda. Conference speakers advocated parliamentary action to thwart this 'international gay agenda' (and) met with Ugandan lawmakers and government officials, some of whom drafted Parliament's infamous Anti-Homosexuality Bill."

In a statement, SMUG Executive Director Frank Mugisha vowed to carry on Kato's

"David was a true hero, a man who gave his energy and finally his life for others' freedoms. The foreign Christian leaders who have supported the spread of murderous homophobia in Uganda ... should search their consciences today and beg forgiveness."

- Scott Long, who headed HRW's LGBT Rights Division for several years

"No form of intimidation will stop our cause," he said. "The death of David will only be honored when the struggle for justice and equality is won. David is gone and many of us will follow, but the struggle will be won. David wanted to see a Uganda where all people will be treated equally despite their sexual orientation."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a statement that said, in part: "David Kato tirelessly devoted himself to improving the lives of others ... His tragic death underscores how critical it is that both the government and the people of Uganda, along with the international community, speak out against the discrimination, harassment and intimidation of Uganda's LGBT community, and work together to ensure that all individuals are accorded the same rights and dignity to which each and every person is entitled."

President Barack Obama said: "I am deeply saddened to learn of the murder of David

Kato. In Uganda, David showed tremendous courage in speaking out against hate. He was a powerful advocate for fairness and freedom. The United States mourns his murder, and we recommit ourselves to David's work. At home and around the world, LGBT persons continue to be subjected to unconscionable bullying, discrimination and hate. In the weeks preceding David Kato's murder in Uganda, five members of the LGBT community in Honduras were also murdered. It is essential that the governments of Uganda and Honduras investigate these killings and hold the perpetrators accountable. LGBT rights are not special rights; they are human rights. My administration will continue to strongly support human rights and assistance work on behalf of LGBT persons abroad. We do this because we recognize the threat faced by leaders like David Kato, and we share their commitment to advancing freedom, fairness and equality for all."

UN secretary-general speaks up for gays

At a special session of the United Nations' Human Rights Council on Jan. 25 in Geneva, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an end to human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

It was believed to be the first time that a secretary-general directly addressed an official U.N. body specifically on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

"We must reject persecution of people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity – who may be arrested, detained or executed for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender," Ban said. "They may not have popular or political support, but they deserve our support in safeguarding their fundamental human rights."

"I understand that sexual orientation and gender identity raise sensitive cultural issues," he added. "But cultural practice cannot justify any violation of human rights. Women's treatment as second-class citizens has been justified, at times, as a 'cultural practice.' So has institutional racism and other forms of inhuman punishment. But that is merely an excuse. When our fellow humans are

persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, we must speak out. That is what I am doing here, that is my consistent position. Human rights are human rights everywhere, for everyone."

The council's representative from Nigeria, Ositadinma Anaedu, was surprised by Ban's statement.

"I must point out, Mr. Chair, that the (Africa) Group did not expect that the secretary-general would address these issues concerning lesbians, gays, bigender or indeed the issue of gender identity, as these issues have not been universally accepted," Anaedu said. "While we strongly support that no individual or group should be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation, (this) should not be used to impose on us or on the cultural ethos of everyone that have it, especially for us in Africa. It is also important to mention that we all equally accept the relationship inherent in that orientation and that it is unique and special, but it is not and will never be accepted as marriage, which is between a man and a







Sandra Valls





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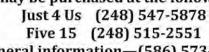
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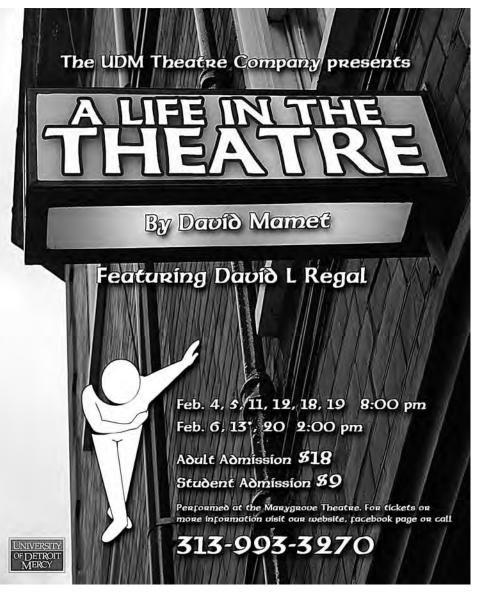
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Michigan author's latest memoir was 'like having a baby'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Tade Rouse is pregnant again – this time, with twins. He's working on birthing two new books in the midst of releasing the fourth addition to his literary family.

"I'll spend anywhere from probably a year to a year and a half on a book and obsess over every detail, and it's like having a baby in many ways," Rouse says, laughing. "It's kind of the way I feel, because you've owned it for so long."

Well, meet "It's All Relative: Two Families, Three Dogs, 34 Holidays and 50 Boxes of Wine," a riff on family that's full of Wade Rouse DNA: the touching anecdotes, the cheeky tone and the long title. In the memoir, the nationally known Saugatuck author recalls a memorable New Year's Eve night-in with his partner, Gary (his "stage mother"; think Dina Lohan, Rouse jokes), and Dad making his kids

work for their Easter eggs – by burying them.

"That was one of the first things I wrote about," says Rouse, who actually jotted down that Easter snapshot years before in a leather journal his mother gave him after he blew his big talent show moment during middle school. She also handed over a copy of Erma Bombeck's book "At Wit's End," and told him he needed both to make sense of his world.

Even if he hasn't made sense of the world, he tries to make sense of his family with "It's All Relative," which was conceived after he heard how much Americans spend around the holidays. It was so much that he was immediately sold on the idea of documenting the non-monetary milestones of family gettogethers.

David Sedaris and Augusten Burroughs did Christmas, but Rouse was feeling ambitious – he wanted to tackle all the holidays (to further distinguish one gay writer's holiday book from the other, the publisher changed

Wade Rouse

2 p.m. Feb. 5 Barnes & Noble Rochester Hills 2800 S. Rochester Road www.waderouse.com

Rouse's original title, "Why is Santa Taking Daddy's Lipitor?"). Rouse perused family memorabilia, and when he realized how many wonderful stories about his lovely, loony family were waiting to be told, the project came full-circle.

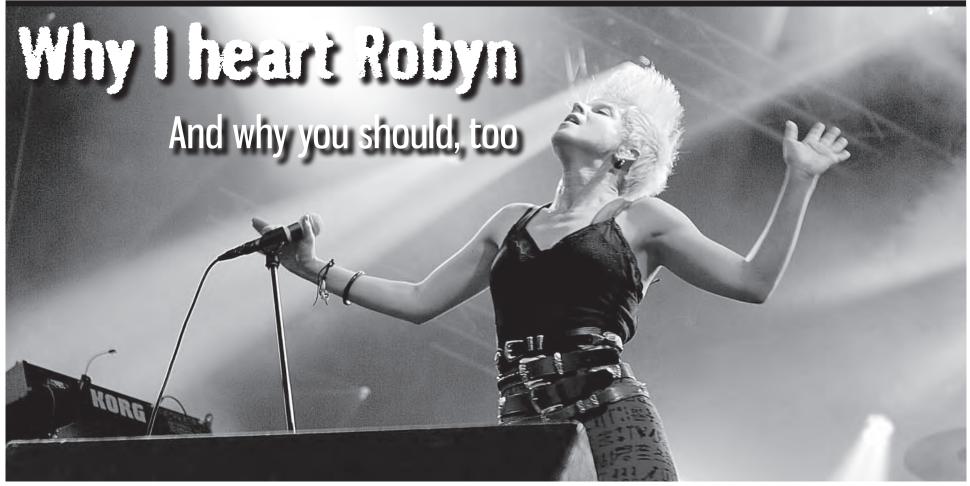
"One thing that I love about this book," he says, "is that it mixes really funny holiday stories with more poignant pieces that really show the evolution and love and dysfunction of the family – and that's really what I wanted to do."

It's done through stories about his in-

laws, his partner's past alcohol addiction and his mom, who "levitated" him one night in bed during his childhood. While writing "It's All Relative," Rouse laughed a lot, and he cried a lot, too – especially over one memory that made the book particularly hard to write: his mother's death two years ago.

"I detail that at the end of the book, which I think has that really huge emotional wallop for people who've been laughing all the way through, especially at her and my dad," he says. "It was very difficult going through these, but one of the things that I did in the last year and a half of her life was spend time with her. And she shared even more of these stories in greater detail and really encouraged me to share them, no matter how dysfunctional or embarrassing they were, because she loved the holidays so much."

See Rouse, page 23



Robyn returns to metro Detroit at 7 p.m. Feb. 9 at the Royal Oak Music Theatre.

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

f you know me, you know Robyn. My Facebook page has basically become the pop sensation's unofficial socialnetworking site; I've had listening sessions with friends (sometimes we just take it in, sometimes we sing like schoolgirls in total glee), and I've got

So yeah, I'm more than a little obsessed. But the darling Swede - you know "Show Me Love," that '90s pure bubblegum song you couldn't shake gives me every reason to be: Last year she dropped three CDs, all part of her brilliant "Body Talk" series (it wasn't my No. 1 album of 2010 for nothing), that were so dynamic you'd swear Robyn was a vending machine dispelling the treats

But she's not factory-made; she's a real person, and I know so because not only did I see her diminutive frame and cool pompadour up close last summer in Pontiac (she thankfully returns to the area on Feb. 9, playing the Royal Oak Music Theatre), but we had words. Talking about how gay club culture inspires her music and her tendency for geeky sci-fi stuff, she was adorably sweet and sincere and quiet (see the sidebar for some interview bits). For myself, other fans of her music and all my friends who have endured endless hours of Robyn songs and videos (and my ringtone), of course she is. The prog-pop trilogy she rolled out, swathed in dance hall, electro-cumhip-hop and dub-step, was plugged with clubby charmers that were like cherry popsicles melting in my eardrums, from the delightfully heartfelt songs "Hang With Me" and "Cry When You Get

Robyn

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Older," and emotional juggernauts like the scorching downer-turned-liberator "Dancing on My Own" and remarkably written "Call Your Girlfriend." Her tearstained anthems work just as well on the dancefloor as they do in the bedroom, when no one else is around but your lonely self.

She's not a total softie, though, and when not singing about sadness and picking her broken self back up, Robyn's letting her freak flag fly ("Fembot"), tagteaming with Snoop Dogg ("U Should Know Better") and complaining about everything that's killing her ("Don't Fucking Tell Me What to Do"). Just like her 2005 self-titled return, which fantastically cast her as a newfangled dance diva, so many of the songs on "Body Talk" – add Max Martin's "Time Machine" to the mix - sounded like hits. Like, on-par-with-Madonna hits. But they weren't. Robyn, though, isn't toting a meat purse or shooting dessert topping from her tits, and that's where all the attention goes – right to the ones who do more than let their body talk.

Robyn, however, doesn't seem to care. In a way, she asked for this: a career on her own terms, and with her own label, Konichiwa Records, she has just that. Good on her, too, that she's playing bigger venues on her second jaunt through the U.S. this year. But

So many of the songs on "Body Talk" – add Max Martin's "Time Machine" to the mix sounded like hits. Like. on-par-with-Madonna hits. But they weren't. Robyn, though, isn't toting a meat purse or shooting dessert topping from her tits, and that's where all the attention goes - right to the ones who do more than let their body talk.

even when she stopped here for a club gig at the Crofoot, she whipped around the stage with the high-powered intensity of someone performing for an arena-sized crowd, and not the only few hundred there. That's because, for Robyn, it's about the music. Hey, what a concept.

1:1 with Robyn

Pop star talks gay club culture

On why she writes sad songs

Because that's how life is. I mean, isn't that how we all feel? Those are the things that everybody – or a lot of people, at least – think about. That's what pop music is supposed to be doing - talking about those everlasting issues, like love, being on the outside and feeling like you want to dance

On connecting with her gay fans

Anyone who's different, anyone who feels like that - no matter who you are – it makes you question what society is and what it makes you feel, so I always connected with the gay audience. Ever since "Show Me Love" I was always aware of my gay audience and I always felt like I could connect back. I've consciously decided to show my appreciation as well because I always loved the music that was connected to gay culture.

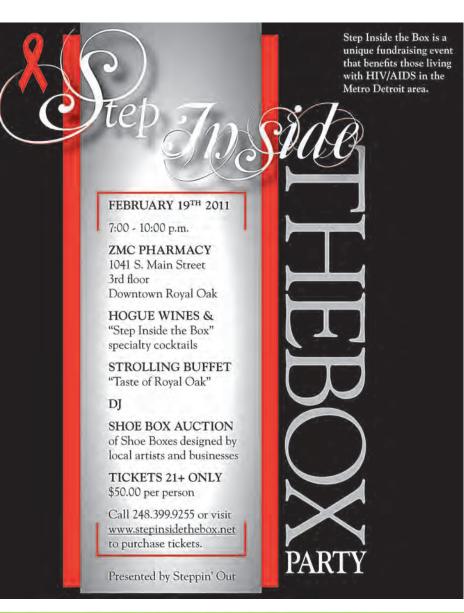
On her gay club culture influences

It's there all the time, not only with "Body Talk." But on this album I've consciously chosen to explore that world sound-wise, and I've listened to a lot of old house and techno – everything from Sylvester to Donna Summer. Even the dirtier stuff – things that are more raw - talks to me. ABBA and Erasure, the bittersweet kind of songwriting that's present in that world, have been important to me as well.

On using robot subjects in her songs

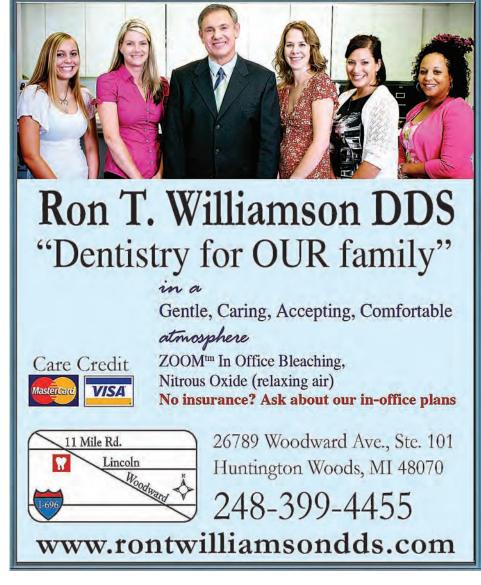
They're like more simple versions of humans. It just helps me to put my finger on what it is that I want to get through. I guess it's like a metaphor for the human condition

Read the full interview at www.pridesource.com.

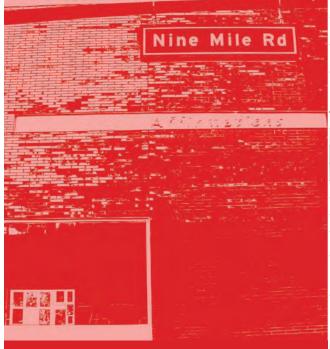








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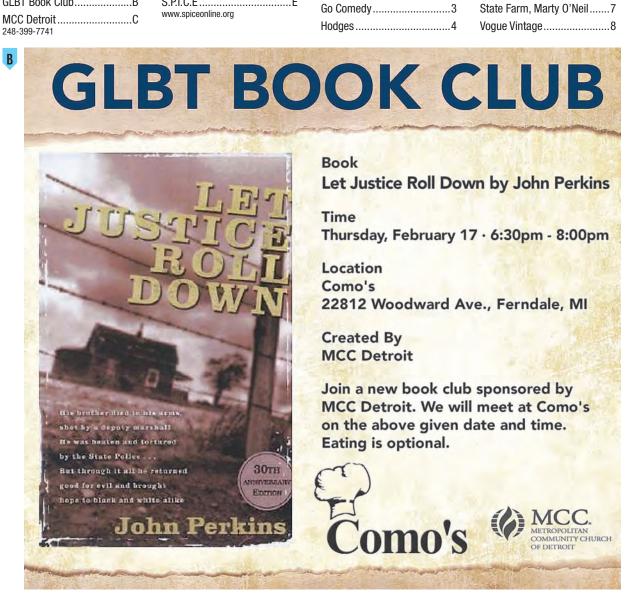
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Luther "Bad Man" Keith/10 p.m./Buffalo Wild Wings Even Exchange/10 p.m./Club Bart The Luddites/9:30 p.m./Dino's John Latini/9 p.m./Howe's Bayou Carl Henry/9 p.m./Sneakers Alley Cats/8:30 p.m./SOHO Albert Young & Straight 8's/9:30 p.m./Tony's Sports Bar

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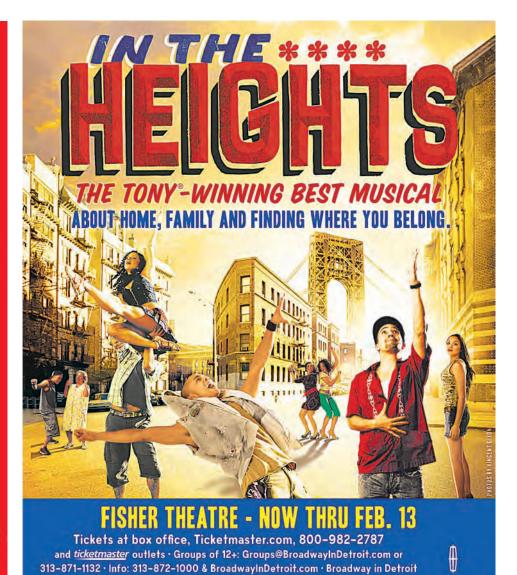
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The Decemberists ditch theatrics on breezy latest. Plus: Runner Runner... ug



The Decemberists, 'The King is Dead'

The Decemberists sure know how to turn their sound on its head. And spin it around a few times. They land in the rustic South with their sixth album, choking back their indie-rock canon to simply Americana after getting carried away on their last LP, 2009's ambitious rock opera "The Hazards of Love," where they piled on the flamboyant theatrics. The decision to downsize to organic accents and tangible narratives (no crazy forest creatures here) is not only an admirable exercise in music morphing, but one the quintet pulls off with expert panache. Opening charmer "Don't Carry It All" makes getting through the album tough, and that's because it's so good: with harmonica running over a drumlined woop and a catchy refrain, looping it is a hard lesson in discipline. Frontman Colin Meloy sweetly sings of lost love on "January Hymn," a nostalgic beauty that has a sibling: the similarly gentle "June Hymn." "This is Why We Fight," built perfectly for live performances, has a welcome rumble-tumble feel that's as modern as they get. Sharing the spotlight with Meloy is R.E.M.'s Peter Buck on guitar and mandolin ("Calamity Song"), and folkie Gillian Welch, who sings harmony on seven tracks with enough restraint to almost go unheard. That's how well their voices work together. But all of "The King is Dead" – even at a mere 10

tracks – works in a unison that feels more easy-going than anything they've ever done. Grade: B+



Runner Runner, 'Runner Runner'

How appropriate that the name of this California band's lead single is "So Obvious," because everything about their debut is. Clearly shooting for that punk-pop sound, even down to the redundant muses of chicks and partying, Runner Runner is one of the weakest descendants in a genre that's already crowded with wannabes. They write like the obnoxious kid that laughs at his own farts and sing with the gusto of a copy machine, making for one pathetic piece of tween-leaned Dollar Store pop. Even their catchiest cuts, like that first single, are instantly flushable - ear

candy whose fruity gum flavor fades faster than they will. Completely indigestible is "Papercuts," where lead singer Ryan Ogren compares love to slicing your finger on loose leaf (what a poet), and the miscast wedding ballad "I Can't Wait" that's all gushy about some girl (aww... he found his Band-Aid). But they obviously know how far sappy songs will take them; the rest of the album, from the anthemic "Unstoppable" (the requisite "whoa-whoas" are included for sing-along pleasure) to the boy-band-meets-Ke\$ha "Heart Attack," is rife with airplay fodder. And these songs might get some, if they weren't already on radio five years ago. (Out Feb. 15) Grade: D-

Also Out



James Blunt. Some Kind of Trouble'

Critics love to hate the British love lad, and no wonder: Even after "You're Beautiful," with

his third album, he's as edgy as a spoon. To be fair, some of these tracks pack a sweetness, like "Stay the Night," and others – with hit-making producers Ryan Tedder and Greg Kurstin – expand his safe adult-contemporary sound. There's even a song called "Dangerous." But it's still not enough to forgive lame lyrics about reality TV and broken hearts. "Some Kind of Trouble" is right.



Amos Lee, 'Mission Éell'

When Amos Lee is great, he's really great - like on "El Camino," an emotional parable that

bookends the album (Willie Nelson duets on the reprise). But even the most mediocre servings on his deeply personal fourth offering of acoustic soul, "Hello Again" and "Cup of Sorrow," aren't bad. That transcendent voice, an earthy Bill Withers croon, could sing a Facebook wall and win a Grammy. With songs like the should-besoul-classic "Flower" and honest call-forhelp "Violin," he just might.

Reach Chris Azzopardi at chris@pridesource.





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► Rouse

Continued from p. 15

Sometimes he'd be visibly upset, "broken down" and "bawling." "But then," he says, "there would be other days when I would be laughing so hard that it was almost like she here with me again."

There was also the close call with his dad, who was rushed to the hospital after having a heart attack but walked out just fine – except for the tick on his penis. That it's in the book doesn't bother Dad one bit: "Oh, I tell that story to everyone," Rouse remembers him saying.

"All of these stories that I tell, he kind of tells willingly and openly to everybody, so nothing is embarrassing to him. There's no shame to my dad, which makes it much easier. But I really made sure people were tuned into what I was doing.

For Rouse's next book, he won't have to. It's about dogs, the other great loves of his life. In fact, just as we called, Rouse was taking them outside to do their business in the snow.

"It wasn't happening," he informs. "They're like, 'What the hell is he trying to make me do? Would you pee out here?"

The book of comical canine stories, called "I'm Not the Biggest Bitch in This Relationship" and out in November (and also benefiting The Humane Society), should give Rouse's name an extra boost with Chelsea Handler writing the forward and gay literary legend Rita Mae Brown contributing a piece.

Of Handler, Rouse says, "I worked with her and her writers, and here's my new theory: Anybody who's kind of established and has had to work hard is great to work with, and anybody who kind of burst onto the scene is a pain in the ass.'

Handler, he says, writes in her dog's voice about what would've been best: being



(Top) Wade Rouse at a Halloween party. (Bottom) Rouse and his partner, Gary, with their dogs.

saved, or being put down. "It's the funniest damn story," Rouse says.

Brown was tapped after a relationship bloomed between the two authors during a writers' conference a couple years ago. "She really took me under her wing and said she'd read my first book, 'America's Boy,' and loved it," he says. "She said that I was one of the first of a wave of gay writers who she thought was really going to change literature because I was funny but also incredibly personal," he recalls. "It meant the world to me, because 'Rubyfruit Jungle' was one of the books that I read that really changed me."

After the conference wrapped, Brown invited him to her Virginia farm. Rouse didn't take her seriously. He says, "You always think, 'This bitch is crazy.

But she wasn't, and she made it official - not by Facebook, but by fax. "She lives by fax; she's very 1970s businessman," he says.

He and Gary, along with two friends, spent four days horseback riding and dining with Brown. Oh, and sharing sex stories. "I'm sure she wouldn't mind, since she tells them," he says, "but she's bedded every famous woman, I think, in America. I mean, she willingly talks about it. She's just a hoot, and a literary Madonna always reinventing herself."

Besides sex, the two are considering coauthoring a book after the release of his dog anthology, and presumably once he finishes his next memoir about hair, that examines gay relationships from different

"We disagree greatly on many things," he says, remarking that her disinterest in dating is just a front. "It's her defense mechanism. I'm not buying her crap at all."

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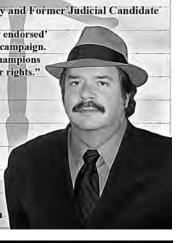
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Life OUT OF TOWN by Andrew Collins

Miami and South Beach

Long a magnet for gay tourists, especially in winter but increasingly year-round, Miami is the largest and most diverse of the three prongs that comprise South Florida's LGBT vacation trinity (Fort Lauderdale and Key West being the others). And it's really a few destinations in one: there's Miami proper, a city of about 440,000, and – across Biscayne Bay via a series of bridges – the separate city of Miami Beach (population 90,000), plus a slew of distinct neighboring communities that make up the nation's seventh-largest metro area.

Leisure travelers tend to focus on the beaches, and LGBT visitors have long been particular drawn to the southern end of Miami Beach, aptly known as South Beach, which bulges with trendier-than-thou luxe hotels, throbbing nightclubs, scene-y restaurants and gorgeous beachfronts (and sometimes appears utterly devoid of bulging tummies - indeed, the South Beach reputation for perfect bodies is both a hallmark and a criticism). What's terrific about Miami Beach as a vacation getaway is that it's a 10- to 15-minute drive from museums and growing cultural offerings of Miami proper. And once you're here, it's not much more than an hour's drive to reach the edge of Everglades National Park, the thriving gay scene in Fort Lauderdale, and the upper reaches of the scenic Florida Keys (Key Largo, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park). There's a lot more to see and do on a Miami vacation than merely sunning your buns by the ocean - although there's plenty of opportunity for that, too.

As you're planning a trip here, keep a couple of resources in mind: The city's Greater Miami Tourism has an excellent LGBT travel site (http://www.miamiandbeaches.com/visitors/gay. asp), which details recommended places to stay, eat, shop and play, along with relevant events. And right in the heart of South Beach, at 1130 Washington Ave., the official Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce operates an LGBT Visitor Center (http://www.gogaymiami.com), where you can pick up advice on what to see and do – and where to stay – throughout Miami.

Another point worth considering is that Miami is one of the world's leaders in gay and lesbian circuit parties and events, and many of these take place in late winter and early spring. One of the longest-running gay circuit events in the country, the Miami Winter Party Festival (http://www.winterparty.com), a fundraiser produced by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, takes places from March 2 through 7 and delights some 10,000 participants with some 20 parties, arts and cultural events, tours, and cocktail receptions – there's also a extensive roster of events geared just toward women, from a Latin dance party to a jazz brunch.

The following month, the third annual Miami Beach Gay Pride parade and festival (http://www.miamibeachgaypride.com) draws hundreds of spectators to Ocean Drive – this is one of the more community-oriented, laid-back parties in South Beach, an excellent opportunity to mingle and party with locals, and check out the dozens of bands, vendors and local organizations at the festival between Ocean Avenue and gaypopular 12th Street Beach. The organizers also run a Miami Beach Pride Cruise to the Bahamas, from April 18 through April 22 (http://www.pridecruise.com).

Just after Pride, the increasingly prestigious Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival (http://www.

mglff.com) comes to the area, presenting dozens of screenings and events from April 23 through May 2. Other noteworthy events of LGBT interest to keep in mind later in the year include Aqua Girl (http://www.aquagirl.org) women's weekend in mid-May, Sizzle Miami (http://www.sizzlemiami.com), which caters to gay men of color, and Sizzle Her Miami (http://www.sizzleher.com), a concurrent women's event, both of which are during Memorial Day weekend in late May; Miami Beach Bruthaz Black and Latino Gay Pride (http://miamibeachbruthaz.com) in mid-July; and the Miami White Party Week (http://www.whiteparty.org) in late November.

Part of the fun of South Beach, beyond Ocean Drive and the sunny sands that flank it, is sauntering along the main north-south drag, Washington Avenue, a sometimes slick, sometimes raffish stretch of shops, hotels and restaurants, plus the refreshingly sex-positive World Erotic Art Museum – the curious, extensive collection inside includes phallic fertility relics from 100 BC, exhibits on Lady Godiva and Catherine the Great, Tom of Finland figurines, and a magnificent four-poster bed, whose four "posts" are actually massive carved wooden penises.

Running perpendicular to Washington, the Lincoln Road also abounds with culinary and retail diversions - this pedestrian-only promenade is lined with palm-shaded sidewalk cafes and nightclubs. A full square mile of South Beach comprises the Art Deco District, a historic collection of some 800 prominently preserved buildings that showcase the sleek, distinctive style of 1910s to 1940s Miami. You can learn more about the city's art deco heritage at the Wolfsonian Museum.

South Beach is one of the country's bona fide hot spots for dining. Red Steakhouse (http:// redthesteakhouse.com) is one of the most impressive venues, serving deftly prepared Italian fare and tender steaks. For upscale creative Cuban fare, try D. Rodriguez Cuba (http://www.drodriguezcuba.com) inside the Astor Hotel - crab empanaditas and crispy-skin pork are among the specialties. And, of course, don't overlook favorite longtime standbys, like the stainless-steel 11th Street Diner (http:// www.eleventhstreetdiner.com), which serves tasty diner fare 24/7; Books & Books, with its sunny sidewalk cafe along Lincoln Road; and touristy but fun Joe's Stone Crab (http://www. joesstonecrab.com), which has been serving fresh seafood for nearly a century.

Lincoln Road is also home to a pair of the most popular gay nightspots in South Beach, MOVA Lounge (http://www.movalounge.com), a classy cocktail bar, and Score (http://www.scorebar.net), an expansive place with a trendy see-and-be-seen crowd. Other gay social spots of note include Twist (http://www.twistsobe.com), an expansive two-level video bar with a big patio out back that's been de rigueur with revelers since it opened in 1993; and the Palace Cafe (http://www.palacesouthbeach.com), which overlooks Ocean Drive and is a favorite spot for lunch, cocktails or dinner, especially after a visit to the gay beach at 12th Street.

If you've tended to focus your energy on South Beach in past visits, you really owe it to yourself to hop over to Miami proper for at least a day of exploration. It's here that you'll find one of Florida's most fascinating housemuseums, Vizcaya. A short drive north of downtown, the Wynwood Arts District, where



Beautifully restored art deco buildings line Ocean Drive in South Beach. Photo: Andrew Collins

you'll find the outstanding Rubell Family Collection (an amazing assemblage of cutting-edge contemporary pieces spanning several large gallery rooms) and a number of terrific galleries, including Calix Gustav, which made a particular strong mission of including GLBT works, and the Wynwood Walls, a series of large-scale murals. There's also a great restaurant around the corner, Joey's Caffe & Ristorante (http://www.joeyswynwood.com), serving tantalizing thincrust pizzas, antipasti platters and elegant salads.

Downtown itself is a neighborhood with a burgeoning restaurant scene - check out Cviche 105 (http://www.ceviche105.com) for stellar Peruvian cuisine, Tre Italian Bistro (http://www.tremiami. com), and Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill (http://www. sugarcanerawbargrill.com), plus such important arts venues as the historic Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (take a tour of the ornate interior) and the dazzling Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. Miami also has a few of the top gay bars in the region, downtown's Club Mekka (http://www.mekkamiami.com), on Saturdays, for Discotekka): the Latin-flavored Club Sugar (http://clubsugarmiami.com) in Coral Gables, and the multiracial Club Boi (http://www.clubboi.com) - which is more Latin on Fridays, and African-American on Saturdays - in North Miami.

Trying to keep up with Miami's, and especially South Beach's, constantly evolving lodging landscape requires a scorecard – glitzy new hotels and resorts continue to open at a remarkable pace (this has even been true during the rough economy of the past couple of years). One of the most talked-about openings has been that of the Lords South Beach Hotel (http://www.lordssouthbeach.com), which opened inside a vintage art deco stunner (formerly the Nash). Reviews thus far have been mostly positive - the Lords has 52 rooms with simple but stylish white, yellow, and turquoise colors schemes and plenty of cushy amenities, from iPod stations to DVD players.

The latest high-profile entry, opened in February 2011 behind the Versace Mansion in a pair of restored Collins Avenue deco gems, Dream South Beach (http://www.dreamsouthbeach.com) contains 108 chic rooms and suites, the full-service Chopra Spa and a superb restaurant – The Tudor – opened by vaunted chef Geoffrey Zakarian. Also near the beach and

shopping, the the Z Ocean Hotel (http://www.zoceanhotelsouthbeach.com) a relaxing low-rise that spans a block between Collins and Ocean avenues. Rooms in this contemporary, low-keyed property are richly appointed with large windows, expansive balconies, fine bathrooms, and cushy feather beds.

In downtown Miami, the gay-popular Kimpton brand operates the swanky and chic Epic Hotel (http://www.epichotel.com), a soaring 411-high rise on the Miami River with expansive views of Biscayne Bay and the downtown skyline. This is a great base for exploring downtown, and it's just 10 minutes by car to South Beach. Inside the hotel, you'll find the excellent Exhale Spa, and a pair of superb restaurants, Area 31 – which overlooks the pool – and the sleek modern Japanese eatery from London, ZUMA.

The area also has a few top-notch smaller properties catering significantly to gay and lesbian visitors. With a slightly quirky (but interesting) location just across the Miami River from downtown Miami's retail, dining and culture, the Miami River Inn (http://www.miamiriverinn.com) is a terrific, affordable option if you're a fan of historic residential architecture — it occupies several stunningly restored early-20th-century houses and cottages, with a total of 40 rooms.

Intimate options in South Beach include the beautifully kept, lesbian-owned SoBe You B&B (http://sobeyou.us), a 10-room stunner on a quiet street that's within an easy walk of local nightlife and shopping; and the super-affordable Tropics Hotel and Hostel (http://www.tropicshotel.com), which has both private and dorm-style accommodations with among the lowest rates in greater Miami – it's clean, friendly, and a short walk from the beach and Lincoln Road. For such a glamorous city, Miami offers a surprising value, even during the winter season – just book ahead, and expect higher rates, during some of the aforementioned festivals.

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.



A bloody-good time at The Purple Rose

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Everyone has a bad day at work every now and then. But what if you're a hit man for the Irish Mob, and someone killed by one of your fellow mobsters turns up alive - in a body bag - on your kitchen table? And, worse, what if you make a connection with the beautiful victim and fall in love with her - knowing full well your boss, who ordered the "hit" will not be pleased?

That pretty much summarizes the predicament facing a Detroit hit man in the world premiere of "Corktown" at The Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea. And not only is Michael Brian Ogden's secondever script razor sharp and thoroughly engaging, the production is also one of the bloody-best times I've had in a theater so far this season.

At 31, Joey is tired of the lifestyle and wants to get out of the business. But that's difficult to do - even when you don't have a chopped up, 400-pound dead guy in your bathtub. And even more so when your boss thinks highly of your work and is considering you for a major promotion.

So the likelihood of a successful transition into another line of work is doubtful, which is the point Laurence, his best friend and fellow hit man, tries to impress upon him. But Jenny's unexpected intrusion into Joey's life might be the inspiration he needs to make that fateful move. But to paraphrase a line from the show, he might not get the ending he deserves once boss Cobb learns of Jenny's survival and Joey's potential betrayal!

While Ogden's earlier effort, "Bleeding Red," received warm reviews and earned him a 2009 Wilde Awards nomination for best new script. "Corktown"



REVIEW

'Corktown'

The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Wednesday-Sunday through March 5. \$25-\$40. 734-433-7673.

www.purplerosetheatre.org

reveals significant growth as a playwright. The plot, with its numerous and unexpected twists and turns, smoothly unfolds like a "buddy flick" (which, if he's smart, he'll pursue), while every line of dialogue helps move the story forward. Also, despite their line of work, the close relationship and camaraderie between Joey and Laurence is well defined and totally believable. As such, references to the two characters as "Butch" and "Sundance" serve as an appropriate analogy - so much so, the ending Joey gets is in doubt until the

Romulus Linney's stage adaptation of "A Lesson Before Dying" is now playing at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. Photo: Bruce Millan

last few minutes of the play. (As Ogden humorously toys with, people still debate whether Butch and Sundance survived at the end of the movie.)

The script alone, however, is not responsible for the excellent production. A play is marriage of script and direction, and Guy Sanville's expert guiding hand is evident throughout. Sanville, who has staged more world premieres than probably any artistic director in the state, is at his best here. Every move is carefully planned, and the pacing keeps his audience glued to the action from start to finish. (The running time seems deceptively short, thanks to the show's intensity.)

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

GEMO. ©ENTURY ticketmaster* STEVEN M. GITTLEMAN Attorney and Counselor at Law

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A 'Misanthrope' for misanthropes

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

There must be something about Moliere's "The Misanthrope," the tale of a man with a very low opinion of everyone and who holds neither thought nor tongue in saying so, but is nearly undone by love.

The 350-year-old comedy is currently running off-Broadway and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival has it on tap this summer, but whatever appeal it holds is scarcely discernible in the Hilberry Theatre's new production.

It does look terrific, thanks to John D. Woodland's many-textured, multi-layered costumes and Michael Wilkki's lovely set, a white-and-gold riot of curlicues and decorative flourishes. Otherwise, though, there's blame aplenty to go around (even in the program).

A good part of it lands squarely on Timothy Mooney's wooden translation. Mooney is actually credited with an adaptation "based on the play by Moliere," which lets the original playwright off the hook. Mooney retains Moliere's iambic pentameter rhymed couplets but the rhymes generally fall into two categories, predictable or imperfect, and land with such a thud as to distract the audience and impede the actors'

REVIEW

'The Misanthrope'

Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Plays in rotating repertory through March 5. \$25 - \$30. 313-577-2972.

www.hilberry.com

attempts to speak with grace.

Well, if the lines aren't working, there is the possibility of physical comedy, but director Jesse Merz takes only intermittent advantage of such opportunities. The title character, Alceste (Andrew Papa looking like a younger Jon Hamm in a Louis XIV wig), is smitten by the flirtatious socialite Celimene (Vanessa Sawson). She has a trio of other suitors. There would seem to be ample potential for physical funny business, but there is very little touching or expression of fervor.

Similarly, Alceste is something of a babe magnet, but here, too, potential goes unfulfilled. Only one of the women who has eyes for him, Arsinoe (Lorelei Sturm), gets comically up close and personal.

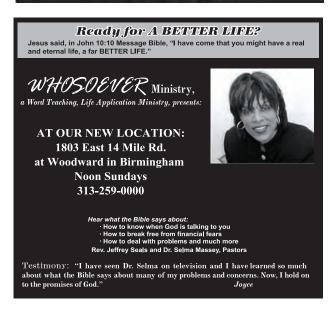
More successful is Alan Ball playing Oronte, a bad poet who asks Alceste to critique the sonnet Oronte has just written.



Vanessa Sawson as Celimene and Andrew Papa as Alceste in the Hilberry Theatre's production of "The Misanthrope." Photo: Nikki Allen

This is a plummy role – Brian Bedford is playing it at Stratford; he's also directing, so he had first choice - and Ball runs with it, literally. Effervescing with nervous energy while he awaits the critic's verdict, Ball trots around flapping his arms like a demented turkey. It may not be subtle, but it's what the production could use more of.

Finally, you're wondering what the program could have done wrong. The actors are listed alphabetically instead of in order of appearance. Good luck telling Alceste from Acaste, or Eliante from Philinte



Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings

It doesn't get more badass than a derby girl, and Detroit is lucky enough to be home to five allfemale roller derby teams: the D-Funk Allstars, Detroit Pistoffs, Devil's Night Dames, Grand Prix Madonnas, and Pistolwhippers.

"Whip It" star Ellen Page may be able to skate, but she has nothing on these girls. Check out the Derby Girls on Feb. 19 at Cobo Arena in Detroit, or go online and sign up for one of the teams' workshop sessions and start training to join the team yourself.

Season continues on through June. Tickets and more information available at detroitderbygirls.com





Theater

For nearly 50 years, the Studio Theatre, downstairs at the Hilberry, has presented great theater featuring Wayne State University undergraduate students. Now, with generous support from patrons and donors, the Studio Theatre is undergoing a massive renovation. The second show of the Studio Theatre season will be a production of "Rhinoceros" by Eugene Ionesco at The First Unitarian Universalist Church, located at 4605 Cass Ave., only one block away from the Hilberry. Performances will be at 8 p.m. Feb. 3-5 and 10-12.

"Rhinoceros" is an absurdist play in which every character makes the decision to "move with the times" and transform into a rhinoceros. The only character to resist conforming to the "rhinoceros movement" is Berenger, the "everyman" who is often criticized for his tardiness and his tendency to drink too much whiskey.

Ticket prices range from \$10-\$12. For information, call 313-577-2972.



Save the Date

It's official: Between The Lines is throwing its first Wedding Expo for same-sex couples, "To Have and To Hold," on Sunday, May 1. Presented with Detroit Marriott Livonia, the event will include complimentary hors d'oeuvres and drinks, swag bag giveaways, entertainment and plenty more.

Over 30 vendors will showcase everything you need for that special day. Keep your eyes peeled for more information in Between The Lines and online at pridesource.com.

OUTINGS

Wednesday, Feb. 2

LGBT in the Park, 5:15 p.m. New social group that meets in Hazel Park. For making social connections, discussions, game nights, pot lucks and dinner outings. LGBT in the Park, Hazel Park Library, Hazel Park 248-460-3251. jffryoliver@ yahoo.com

Thursday, Feb. 3

Euchre Tournament, 7 p.m. Euchre tournament fundraiser to benefit Out Loud Chorus, Washtenaw county's original GLBT chorus. \$10 entry, cash prizes. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 South Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-6084. olconline.org

Friday, Feb. 4

Bisexual Peer Group, 7 p.m. All are welcome. 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. groups.google.com/

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: We Have to Stop Now. Lesbian therapists and longtime couple Dyna and Kit put their own relationship up for scrutiny when a documentary camera crew shows up to film their daily interactions. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Holland is Ready-Film Series, 7:30 p.m. Film: Transamerica. Comedy-drama tells story of Bree, a trans woman who goes on a road trip with her long-lost son. 248 S. River St., Holland. 616-990-5669. rev. ienadams@yahoo.com

Sunday, Feb. 6

All Creatures ULC Service, 1 p.m. Sunday interfaith spiritual services held at an indoor dog park so all types of pets are welcome at all services. All Creatures ULC, 27911 Five Mile Road, Livonia. 313-563-0162 allcreaturesulc.com

Wednesday, Feb. 9

TransCend, 6:30 p.m. Open to persons 18 and older. Younger are welcome with parent or guardian permission. Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer Street, Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. kglrc.org

Thursday, Feb. 10

The Caregiver Support Group, 6 p.m. For more information please call or E-mail. Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer Street, Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. kolrc.org

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.

MUSIC & MORF

CLASSICAL

Flint Symphony Orchestra "From the Eternal City" Performing "Requiem" by Verdi. Tickets:\$8-55. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. Feb. 19. 810-238-1350. thefim.org

CONCERTS

Motor City Casino "Rick Springfield" A performance by the hit Grammy Award-winning singer of "Jessie's Girl." Tickets: \$44-49. Sound Board Theater, Detroit. 8 p.m. Feb. 18. motorcitycasino.com

The Whiting "An Evening of Romance with Jim Brickman." Tickets: \$23-\$531241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. Feb. 11. 810-237-7333. TheWhiting.com

The Whiting "Dee Dee Bridgewater: To Billie with Love" -A Celebration of "Lady Day." Tickets:\$45-\$53, 1241 E. Kearsley Flint. 8 p.m. Feb. 20. 810-237-7333.

Caesars Windsor "Melissa Etheridge With Special Guest Serena Ryder" Tickets:\$40 The Colosseum, 377 Riverside Drive East, Windsor. 8 p.m. Feb. 26. 1-800-991-7777. caesarswindsor.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Bartok and Beyond" Kalamazoo Symphony principle cellist David Peshlakai and Hungarian violist Csaba Erdelyi present an evening of Eastern European folk music. Tickets:\$10-25 general, \$5 students. 415 N. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 10. 734-769-2999.

Kerrytown Concert House "Oblivion Project" The sultry, darkly dance music of Argentinabrought to life by the Oblivion Project. Tickets:\$15-30 general, \$5 students. 415 N. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 11. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Available Jelly" A five-piece group featuring some of the Netherlands' top improvisers on the scene today. Ticket price to be posted online. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 18. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

FESTIVALS

City of Ferndale "Ferndale Blues Festival" 100% of proceeds go to charity. Various Locations in Ferndale, Ferndale. Jan. 28-Feb. 5. ferndalebluesfestival.org

FILM & VIDEO

Michigan Theater "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" Part of the Family-Friendly Film Series. Tickets: \$9 adults, free for kids 12 and under. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. 1:30 p.m. Feb. 13. michtheater.org

OTHER

Kerrytown Club Series "Mr. B's Birthday Bounce" Jazz, boogie woogie and blues pianist Mark Lincoln Braun returns to Kerrytown Concert House for his annual birthday performance. Tickets: \$15-30 general, \$10 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 North Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 12. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Campus Martius Park "Motown Winter Blast" Detroit's celebration of winter experiences, dining, music and family fun downtown. Campus Martius Park Detroit. Feb. 11-Feb. 13. 313-963-8418.

Detroit Derby Girls "Detroit Derby Girls' Tickets \$15-20 Cobo Arena, 301 Civic Center Drive, Detroit. Dec. 18-April 16. 313-471-6606. detroitderbygirls.com

Michigan Theater "Comedian Lewis Black" Lewis' live performances provide a cathartic release of anger and disillusionment for his audience. Tickets: \$37-\$57 Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 19. 800-745-3000. michtheater.org

SHOWS

Olympia Entertainment "Cirque du Soliel Dralion" Thrilling more than 8 million people worldwide since the show premiered in 1999, Dralion is the fusion of ancient Chinese circus traditions and the avant-garde style of Cirque du Soleil. Tickets:\$31-103. Joe Louis Arena, 600 Civic Center Drive, Detroit. Feb. 16-Feb. 20. 313-471-6606 olympiaentertainment.com

Wharton Center "42nd Annual Spartan Stampede Rodeo Show" Riders from the International Professional Rodeo Association will test skills against Lansing's best livestock the MSU Pavilion Tickets:\$15-\$20, MSU student discount offered. MSU Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane, East Lansing. 8 p.m. Feb. 18, 2 p.m. & 8 p.m. Feb. 19, 2 p.m. Feb. 20. 1-800-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

THEATER

BENEFITS AND FUNDRAISERS

Always Patsy Cline Twenty-seven of Patsy's greatest hits! You'll laugh, then cry, then laugh again. \$10. The Downriver Actors Guild at Out of The Box Theatre Complex, 1165 Ford Ave., Wyandotte. Feb. 11-20. 313-303-5269.

Void Where Prohibited A fast paced, family-friendly improv show in the style of "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" to raise funds to restore Gray's Opera House. \$10. Gray's Opera House, 231 N. Main St., Romeo. Through Feb. 18. 810-305-3221. piimprov.com

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

1940s Radio Hour \$17. The Village Players, 34660 Woodward Ave., Birmingham. Through Feb. 6. 248-644-2075. birminghamvillageplayers.com

Collage 2010 \$5-\$10. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. Feb. 11-20. 313-967-0599 . matrixtheatre.org

Leading Ladies \$18-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 South Park Street, Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 12. 269-343-1313. kazoocivic.con

Looking Over the President's Shoulder \$20. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. Feb. 4-6. 517-482-5700.

Marilyn & Marc \$10-\$15. Fancy Pants Theater at Studio 246, 246 N. Burdick St., Kalamazoo. Feb. 11-20. 269-598-4130. fancypantstheater.webs.com

Ordinary Days \$15. Peppermint Creek Theatre Company at Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner Street, Lansing. Through Feb. 5. 517-927-3016. peppermintcreek.org

Red, White, and Tuna \$13-\$15. The Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Feb. 11-March 5. 248-553-2955. farmingtonplayers.org

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Arabian Nights \$5-\$20. The University Theatre at Williams Theatre Complex, 1903 West Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Feb. 10-20. 269-387-6222. wmutheatre.com

Rhinoceros \$12. WSU Studio Theatre at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4605 Cass Ave., Detroit. Feb. 3-12. 313-577-2972. wsushows.com

So Far From God The University Theatre at York Arena, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 6. 269-387-3227. wmutheatre.com

The Rocky Horror Show \$15. EMU
Theatre at Quirk Theatre, East Circle Dr. &
Best Hall, Ypsilanti. Feb. 11-19. 734-4872282 emich edu/emutheatre

PROFESSIONAL

A Lesson Before Dying \$17-\$20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through March 20. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

A Life in the Theatre \$18. UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove College Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd, Detroit. Feb. 4-20. 313-993-3270. http://theatre.udmercy.edu

B-I-N-G-O Spells Murder \$30; price includes dinner, dessert, tax, tip & show. TNT Productions, The Biddle Hall at 3239 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte. Feb. 5-26. 734-626-8395.

Bard on the Run "A Midsummer Night's Dream" will play on Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. and "Twelfth Night" will perform on Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. \$10 for one show, \$15 for both. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company at Dog Story Theater, 7 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids. Feb. 11-12. dogstorytheater.com

Blast From the Past \$39.95 adult, \$30 ages 12 and under. The Williamsburg Showcase Dinner Theater & Conference Center, 4230 M-72 East, Williamsburg. Through March 26. 231-938-2181. cateringbykellys.com/dinner-theater

Corktown \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through March 5. 734-433-7673.

Drumline Live \$30-\$50. Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison St., Detroit. Feb. 10-11. 313-887-8500. musichall.org

purplerosetheatre.org

Escanaba In Da Moonlight \$21-\$25. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Feb. 4-20. 239-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre com

Grease \$23-\$67. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Feb. 3-4. 810-237-7333. thewhiting.com

In The Heights \$34-\$84. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Through Feb. 13. 1-800-982-2787. BroadwayinDetroit.com

Jersey Show-Season 1 (Abridged) \$10. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Every Thursday through Feb. 24. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

La Ronde Previews Feb. 3. Admission by donation; cash or check only. The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette Ave., #113, Detroit. Feb. 3-26. 313-285-0217. theabreact com

Late Nite Catechism 3: 'Til Death Do Us Part' \$29.50-\$34.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave., Detroit. Through March 6, 313-963-9800. GemTheatre.com

Lines ala Mode Includes a three-course dinner. \$40. Mixed Company Troupe at Portage Yacht Club, 8930 Dexter-Pinckney Rd., Pickney. 7 p.m. Feb. 12. 734-426-4155. mixedcompanytroupe.com

Little Women \$25-\$28. The Encore Musical Theater Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Feb. 3-20. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

Lord Of The Dance \$19.50-\$49.50. The Palace of Auburn Hills, 6 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 2 p.m. Feb. 6. 1-800-745-3000. Palacenet.com

Men Fake Foreplay \$30-\$35; dinner packages \$79.95-\$89.95. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Feb. 9-20. 248-348-4448. ticketmaster.

Menopause The Musical \$29.50-\$52. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Rd., Clinton Township. Feb 1-4. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

Modern Orthodox \$32-\$41. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre at Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Rd., West Bloomfield. Through Feb. 13. 248-788-2900. jettheatre.org

Oedipus Previews Feb. 3 (\$15). \$18-\$24 Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Rd., Williamston. Jan. 27-Feb. 20. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

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

On The Golden Pond Includes buffet-style menu served at 6:30 p.m.; reservations required. \$30; \$18 show only. AP Theatrical Productions at Baker Lofts, 533 Columbia Ave, Holland. Feb. 11-26. 616-772-5697. aptheatrical.com

Proof \$28-\$30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 Cady St., Northville. Feb. 3-March 5. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

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

Romeo and Juliet Presented by The Acting Company in association with the Guthrie Theater. \$15-\$35. Wharton Center's Pasant Theatre, Bogue St. and Wilson, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 10. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

Shrek the Musical \$32.50-\$67.50. Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall, Bogue St. & Wilson, East Lansing. Feb. 8-13. 1-800-942-7866. whartoncenter.com

The Agony & The Agony \$18.

Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at 1515 Broadway, 1515 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Feb. 5. 313-408-7269. magentagiraffe.org

The Bulldog Bar Liquidation Mystery Van Buren Street Theatre, 701 N. Van Buren St., Bay City. Feb. 11-March 5. 989-893-9399. vanburenstreettheatre.com

The Comedy of Errors Performed by The Acting Company in association with the Guthrie Theater. \$15-\$35. Wharton Center's Pasant Theatre, Bogue St. & Wilson, East Lansing. 8 p.m. Feb. 11. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

The Dance of the Seven Veils \$10-\$15. The New Theatre Project at Pot & Box, 220 Felch St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 11-28. 734-645-9776. thenewtheatreproject.org

The Last Five Years \$16-\$18. What's That Smell? at The Box Theater, 51 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens. Through Feb. 4 586-954-2311

The Misanthrope Plays in rotating repertory. \$25-\$30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through March 5. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

The Problem of Cell 13 \$16. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Rd., Eastpointe. Through Feb. 5. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

The Vagina Monologues \$10-\$20. Oakland Community College and UDM Theatre Company at The Smith Theatre, 27055 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington Hills. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 10. 313-993-3270. vday.org

The War Since Eve \$25-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Feb. 13. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

Welcome to the Mo on \$15. Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through Feb. 5. 877-636-3320. michigan actors studio com

You Say Tomato, I Say Shut Up: A Love Story \$30-\$35; dinner packages are from \$79.95-\$89.95. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Feb. 3-5. 248-348-4448. ticketmaster.com

THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

1-2-3 Imagine! with Elmo & Friends \$12-\$65. The Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 4-21. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn \$10. Center Stage Jackson at The Middle School at Parkside, 2400 Fourth St., Jackson. Feb. 11-20. 517-782-8473. centerstagejackson.org

Beanie and the Bamboozling Adventure Machine \$6 in advance, \$8 on day of show. Thebes Players at Lowell High School Performing Arts Center, 11700 Vergennes St. SE, Lowell. Through Feb. 6. 897-8545. lowellartscouncil.org

Junie B. Jones \$14. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 1:30 p.m. Feb. 6. 734-668-TIME. michtheater.org

AUDITIONS

SRO PRODUCTIONS – auditions for "Doubt," Feb. 13, 248-796-4645.

ART'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Art Center "Moving Ground" features the works of Lois Bryant and John Cynar. Parallels of man-made and naturally occurring patterns. 117 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. Jan. 14-Feb. 6. 734-994-8004. annarborartcenter.org

Detroit Institute of Arts An Intuitive Eye: Andre Kertesz Photographs, 1914-1969: a delicate balance between technical perfection and lyrical beauty. 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. Nov. 24-April 10. 313-833-7900. dia.org

For expanded listings, visit www.pridesource.com



HIV/AIDS fundraiser Feb. 19

ROYAL OAK – Steppin' Out is sponsoring its second annual "Step Inside the Box" fundraiser on Feb. 19 at ZMC Pharmacy in downtown Royal Oak. The event features a silent auction of original shoe box works of art and offerings from local businesses and artists. Signed jerseys from the Red Wings and Tigers will also be up for bid.

The mission of Steppin' Out is to provide financial support to agencies that provide direct care services, prevention and education programs to those living with HIV/AIDS.

Tickets are \$50 and include a strolling buffet highlighting Royal Oak restaurants and caterers, an open bar of Hogue wines, beer and a specialty Step Inside the Box cocktail, as well as music from DJ Jim Stone.

For more information or tickets visit www.stepinsidethebox. net, or call the Steppin' Out office at 248-399-9255. Tickets are also available at ZMC Pharmacy, located at 1041 S. Main in downtown Royal Oak.

Logo design contest launches

ANN ARBOR – The Jim Toy Community Center, formerly known as the Washtenaw Area Rainbow Project, is launching a logo contest.

The center will judge submissions based on effectiveness in both color and black/white, scalability, and communication of the center's mission and vision.

Artists should send their submissions in color and black/white versions without any signatures or identifying marks by midnight on Feb. 28 to logo@jimtoycenter.org. Artists can submit more than one design, but should not submit any previously published work.

The winner will be announced at the center's Spring Dinner on April 2, which will feature guest Judy Shepard.

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

Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ "Discussion-Liberty and Faith" 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing. 5 p.m. Feb. 2. 517-484-7434. PilgrimUCC.com

Sky Production "Concert/Open Jam with Sky Covington & Friends" Weekly concert with Sky Covington, Alina Morr, Ibrahim Jones & Djallo Djakate Harbor House. 440 Clinton, Detroit. Jan. 26-April 27.

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

Toledo Museum of Art "Voices That Taught Me How to Sing" Two- and three-dimensional works by Ohio artist Aminah Robinson. 2445 Monroe Street, Toledo. Nov. 19-Feb. 27. 419-255-8000. 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 painting, sculpture, literature, design, craft, film and performance to conjure an imaginary alternate history of twentieth-century art, design, and social activism. 525 S. State Street, Ann Arbor. Dec. 18-March 13. 734-763-UMMA. umma.umich.edu

Between Lines

Add your events to next week's issue!



At our website!

http://www.pridesource.com/calendar.html



Add our fan page!



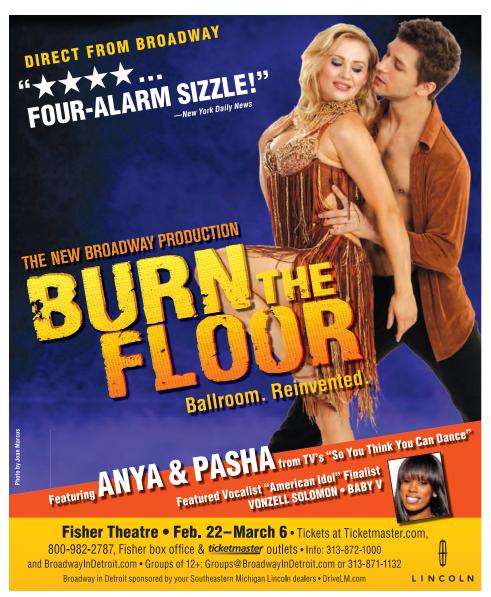


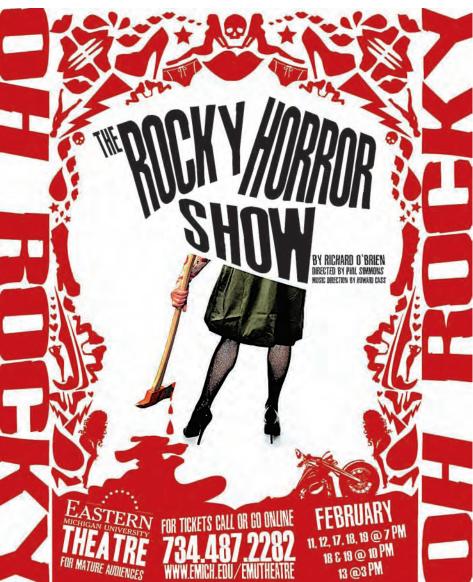
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K





Got problems? Send letters to: "Dear Jody," C/O Between The Lines, 11920 Farmington Road, Livonia, MI 48150. E-mail her at DearJodyValley@hotmail.com

Where's this going?

. I've been doing the online dating thing for • almost a year. I've had some strange and discouraging experiences doing this: Like, I had this one woman "Liz" that I went out with several times. then found out she was living with her "partner." It was bad enough that she had a partner, it was even worse when Liz's partner showed up for my date - without Liz. Somehow she found out when and where Liz was supposed to meet me.

There were several times, after chatting with women for quite a while and mutually coming to the conclusion that we should meet, that we'd schedule a meeting, but they didn't show.

There were other strange things, like, twice when I met someone, after connecting and thinking that the person was worth meeting, I find out – when we met - that their pics weren't current, so they were either much older or heavier than their online pics showed them to be. With one woman, no matter how I squinted or tried to imagine her as being the person I thought I was meeting, I couldn't see the resemblance! (I truly believe she had someone else's pics on her site.) It was bizarre.

Now, I've met this woman, "Anna," on the dating site. She lives in Mexico, but is a U.S. citizen. Since we are so far away, we do a lot of phone calls and texting. This all started in late October. Several weeks before Thanksgiving we starting texting and have been communicating constantly ever since, at least six to eight times a day, and now speak on the phone three to four nights a week. I feel that it is really good that we are getting to really know one another before the sex thing comes into play. Anna is self-employed, does her business by Internet, and has told me that she could move her business anywhere since it is Internet-based. She also makes a lot of money, unlike me.

I'm a professional person but work in social services. (Do I need to say more about my income?) I asked her if she would be willing to fly to Michigan for us to meet, as I can't afford a ticket to Mexico right now. Also, if our relationship is going to go anywhere beyond phone calls and texts, we really need to meet face-to-face; otherwise, this is really just a long-distance friendship, and feels a little unreal.

Anna seemed to agree and said that that would be no problem, and she'd get a ticket soon. That was

in mid-November. Still no ticket, and no really good reason why she hasn't gotten one. She doesn't seem to want to talk about it; every time I bring it up, she changes the subject.

Jody, I don't want to seem desperate – because I'm not – or make her feel like I'm pushing her. I'm interested in finding a life partner. Anna surely seems like someone that could fit the bill, but I want to move on in my search for a partner if she's not really interested. (Though, I would certainly dread jumping back in, given what I've already told you about my luck online.)

How do I get her to listen and not change the subject without appearing unreasonable, pushy or desperate?

Frustrated

 $_{\bullet}\text{It}$ is completely "reasonable" – and not A "pushy" or being "desperate" – for you to want to know where this relationship is heading, and if and when she's planning to come and visit you. It's time to find out if she can be a good listener; when you speak on the phone with her again, let her know that there is something you need to know, and it's important for her to address your concerns. Then, tell her what you have told me regarding wanting to find a life partner, and if she, too, is interested in pursuing that path.

If so, she needs to come so you can get to know each other face-to-face. If she is into pursuing a relationship with you, you both need to think about and be prepared for how difficult long-distance relationships are. For 10 rules for making a longdistance relationship work, go to my Facebook page.

P.S. If she just wants a friend, then you'll have to decide if you are open to that kind of relationship with her.

Jody's on Facebook! Search for "Dear Jody Valley."

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. Reach Jody at DearJody Valley@hotmail.com. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly.



RTL is Changing it Uni

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 words:

"National Organization for Marriage"

2. Go to www.Pridesource.com and click on "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.

Search this issue for the Fake Ad

Between Lines

Think twice, Aries!

BY JACK FERTIG

Venus in Sagittarius square Jupiter and Uranus in Pisces should be very sensual, imaginative and innovative, if perhaps a bit overindulgent. Mars and the Sun in Aquarius are bringing out the edgy innovative side, maybe a bit too hardcore. Pushing too hard can spoil the energy. To get where you want to go, relax and pay attention to subtle clues.

ARIES (March 20 - April 19): Friendly provocation, dares and seductions can lead you too easily into trouble. Meditation and calm help you hear that inner voice that guides you. Don't avoid your friends. Just think twice to avoid going along with something foolish.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): A simple effort at a friendly seduction is liable to blow up in your face and expose you to ridicule. Think ahead about your romantic/sexual needs and talk with a friend you know you can trust with your secrets - or a professional counselor.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): You can be too eager to get ahead and out to new vistas. Asking questions and working to understand the answers is better than assuming that you already know everything you need to take the next step.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): You're looking very sexy, but slippery. You may be as irresistible as those impulses. but be very careful about playing safe. Right now every accident and bug around is out to get you.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): You and your partner (whether for life or for fun) are both full of grand fantasies, not quite meeting on planet Earth. Try lying back and letting your honey take the lead. You could find it a very happy surprise.

VIRGO (August 23 -September 22): If you and your partner or roommate are arguing over housekeeping, your best strategy for now is to relax and be flexible. You probably don't like that, but the alternative just brings more trouble.

LIBRA (September 23 -October 22): Usually you could teach "sweet and charming," but now you seem to need a remedial course. Try to stay focused on tasks at hand and be creative on paper or on screen, not aloud. Let a friend confirm your brilliance before you send anything out.

SCORPIO (October 23 -November 21): Your creative crises can be resolved at home or by looking at family "wisdom" in new ways. Guard against extravagance. You can transform old junk into new treasures. Focusing your will is the hard part. The rest is easy!

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Revelatory letters to your family will lead to more drama than expected. That could be good in the long run for getting everything out in the clear, but the road to calm resolutions has a lot of loud and nasty on the way!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): The stars are opening you up for therapeutic release of secrets and problems. Choose the time, place and confidante very carefully or your worst secrets will be out all over the place.

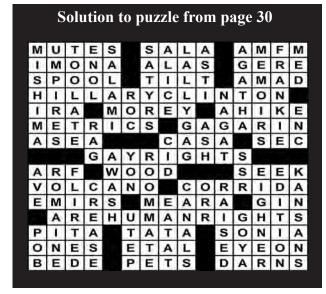
AQUARIUS (January 20 - February 18): Your social charisma is strong, but exercising it risks a greater price than you imagine. Be careful about any commitments of time and energy. You'll find you had less than you thought.

PISCES (February 19-March 19): Consider your ambitions carefully. A burst of energy now tempts you to overextend yourself. Some courage is good, but meditate and think ahead before you promise to deliver the moon

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

















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Solution on 29

From the Secretary of State

Across

- 6 Accessories for 76 trombones
- 6 Room in 32-Across
- 10 Radio switch
- 14 "___ roll!" (winner's cry) 15 "Uh-oh!" to Shelley
- 16 Richard of "And the Band Played On"
- 17 Sewing kit item
- 18 Pinball Wizard foul
- 19 Make ___ dash for
- 20 Secretary of State
- 23 SEP, e.g.
- 24 Comedian Amsterdam 25 What you tell pests to take
- 27 Study of Shakespeare's feet
- 29 Russian astronaut
- 31 Where to find Moby Dick
- 32 Lorca's house
- 33 Premature ejaculation meas.

- 34 Start of a statement by 20-Across
- 39 Sandy's sound in "Annie"
- 42 Depp's cross-dressing role
- 43 Sniff out
- 47 It shoots off hot stuff 49 Where you stick it in
- the bull
- 52 Islamic leaders
- 53 Ben Stiller's mother Anne
- 55 Alexander ingredient
- 56 End of the statement 59 Gyro bread
- 60 "Catch you later" 61 Rutstein of "Disappear
- 62 Dollar bills
- 63 Series terminal
- 64 GLAAD's "___ the Media" project
- 65 Adam, created by a
- woman named George 66 Teacher's faves
- 67 Sews the hose

Down

- 1 Writer Yukio
- 2 They yell "Yer out!"
- 3 "Just missed!"
- 4 Carbon compound
- 5 It's hung in a deli 6 Well-endowed old goats?
- 7 Gertrude's partner
- 8 Screw around
- 9 Italian wine city
- 10 First name in mysteries
- 11 Rita Mae Brown's "Rita Will," e.g.
- 12 He went to Hollywood
- 13 Dose of AZT, e.g.
- 21 Bird of myth
- 22 Pester, as Albert to Armand
- 26 SASE, for one
- 28 Scrap of cloth
- 30 Wood for Billy Bean's bat, perhaps
- 32 Spanish hero, with "El"

- 35 Up to one's butt (in) 36 Hither's partner
- 37 Rose to Dorothy, on "Golden Girls"
- 38 Old abbr. of Nureyev's land
- 39 Caesar's salutation
- 40 Painter Brooks
- 41 Played the coquette
- 44 "Bayou Boy and Other Stories" author Lars
- 45 Newspaper issue
- 46 Dorothy and Auntie Em,
- for example
- 48 Line of Todd Oldham clothina?
- 49 Gondola courses
- 50 Bruin Bobby
- 51 Made erect
- 54 Patronize, as a Rubicon
- restaurant
- 57 Lone Star sch.
- 58 "Naked Maja" painter
- 59 US Mail compartment

Pet of the Week



i, I'm Leroy! I'm a two-month-old Shepherd mix who loves to play and learn new things. With my fuzzy ears, blue eyes and happy-golucky personality, I'm sure that if we had the chance to meet, we'd be fast friends! The adoption fee includes sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations and much more. Please visit or call the Michigan Humane Society's Detroit Center for Animal Care at (313) 872-3400 and provide the pet ID number, 12090398.





ASH, PLEASE-YOU ONLY TRY TO HOOK US UP AGAIN her distract record IDID?I TOTALLY DON'T REMEMBER WHEN YOU'RE ON THE OUTS WITH SOME GIRL. YOU DID THIS SASHLEY, MY EX. AST FERRUAR COULD BE



JOAN HILTY . @2011











THEN WHY COULDN'T HE AT LEAS BE ONE OF THOSE GUYS?

CLASSIFIEDS

106 ANNOUNCEMENTS - GROUPS

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109 ANNOUNCEMENTS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Rear View THE OUTFIELD by Dan V

Kye Allums is trans; world does not end

The most newsworthy part of college basketball player Kye Allums' coming out story as the first openly transgender man to play on an NCCA Division I women's basketball team may be how little attention the news story drew.

Beyond brief, matter-of-fact articles in the New York Times, Washington Post and USA Today, and on websites like The Huffington Post, reaction seemed muted – if non-existent. Granted, Kye Allums is no Tiger Woods, Reggie Bush or Michael Vick. Still, you'd think the potent combination of sex and college hoops would send the sports world into a twitter.

Instead, Kye simply announced he was no longer Kay-Kay. He said that after 20 years – as a junior playing for George Washington University – he'd be the man he'd always felt he was. He had not begun hormone treatments or had reassignment surgery, however, so he could continue to play on the Colonials' women's team.

And he had the full support of his coach and teammates.

It had been a long journey for the Minnesota native. While growing up, his mother forced him to wear "girl clothes" – not the sweats and basketball shorts he felt much more comfortable in. So he changed into them at school.

For a long time he thought he was a lesbian. But, as Outsports.com reported, he realized he didn't share the feelings they felt. Not until freshman year in college – when his mother texted him, "Who do you think you are, young lady?" – did he realize he was not a young lady at all.

He began sharing his secret with teammates the next year. As he described the enormous disconnect between his body and his heart, they began to understand.

"Everybody's pretty much accepting of everyone on the team," he told Outsports. "Everybody is different. We're teammates, we're like family. It's a bunch of brothers and sisters. Everybody brings their life and issues to the family."

Allums was gratified by the players' response. But he feared telling head coach Mike Bozeman, a religious man. Last June, during a conversation that began on a different topic, Allums broached the subject. Bozeman asked Allums if God had made a mistake.

It was a difficult moment, but Bozeman soon offered support. He reminded Allums he'd always "had your back." He said he'd continue to love Allums, the same way he loved all his players.

Allums' next concern was for his scholarship. Researching his options, he realized he was protected by a Washington, D.C. law that prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. The NCAA seemed to clear the way for his continued participation on the women's team as well, noting that gender classification should be based on "state identification documents, such as driver's licenses and voter registration."

Still, when the news broke in early November that Kye – not Kay-Kay – Allums would begin playing as a man on the women's team two weeks later (ironically in Minneapolis,



half an hour south of where Allums grew up) – he was not sure what would happen.

He needn't have worried.

He told the "Washington Post" the next day, "I've had numerous Facebook messages, text messages, people calling me, people I don't even know, telling me how they're proud of me and how I'm a really brave person, and it's been really positive."

From as far away as Germany, men and women said "they wish more people were like me, or more people would be able to say something."

But that was that. There was no feeding frenzy in the media. The blogosphere did not erupt. Radio sports call-in shows scarcely mentioned the news.

Part of the reason may be Allums' personality, and his forthright discussion of what it means to be a transgender male. According to "USA Today," he spoke "openly and with disarming nonchalance to an array of local and national news media outlets."

Part of the reason may be that the NCAA did not turn this into a pitched battle. George Washington University administrators consulted with the governing body about Allums' competitive status. The NCAA affirmed that it follows conduct outlined in an October report by the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "On the Team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student Athletes" emphasizes the importance of playing sports free from discrimination. The report notes that an environment unfriendly to trans students can harm all members of a team.

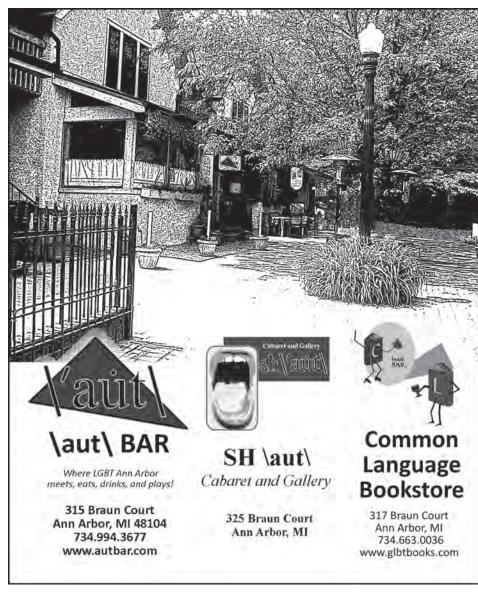
And part of the reason may be that - as Allums' teammates and coach demonstrate - coming out as a trans man is not as big a deal as it once might have seemed.

When "USA Today" asked whether winning games or inspiring others is most important, Allums sounded like any athlete, male or female: "Winning games."

Of course, he added, "by winning games I hope I do inspire people."

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. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.











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Sun Noon - 8pm

Rear View DEEP INSIDE HOLLYWOOD by Romeo San Vicente



Anne Hathaway. Photo: New Line Cinema

Anne Hathaway begs for, then gets, role on 'Glee'

Sometime an A-list actor still has to audition for a role. Sometimes the A-list actor just gets a call and an offer. And sometimes that A-list actor grovels and begs. That's what Anne Hathaway's been doing lately, in her ongoing campaign of pestering "Glee" creator Ryan Murphy for a part. And if you think that nothing goes down at the Golden Globes besides drunkenness, irrelevant award dispensing and everybody getting angry at Ricky Gervais, then you're wrong. Sometime during a commercial break at the most recent fete, Murphy handed Hathaway her part, one where she'll be playing Chris Colfer's singing lesbian aunt. How's that for a rarefied atmosphere? It definitely beats being discovered at the Wal-Mart or on YouTube. And for all we know right now, Hathaway could pop up on the air much sooner (season two) rather than later (season three). They move quickly over in the "Glee" universe.

George Takei is a gay ninja

Super-cool George Takei, best known as Sulu on the original "Star Trek" series and as the one guy still resisting the anti-charms of William Shatner, has a new job: he's going to be a dead holographic ninja. Takei is joining the cast of the Nickelodeon kid show, "Supah Ninja," where he'll play the spiritual guide to his ninja-in-training grandson and his friends. His character is deceased – and no, not gay like Takei at all – but will communicate as a hologram from the afterlife, providing elder statesman wisdom, ninja tips and the occasional comic one-liner. No word yet on when the show will debut, but keep checking those DVR listings. It's sure to be an easier find in the alphabetical queue than "\$#*! My Dad Says."

Chloe Sevigny's short visit to Sundance

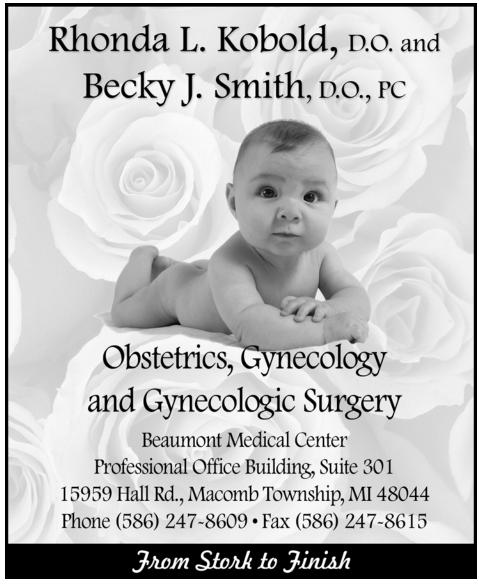
Jonathan Caouette is a man who takes his time. His Sundance Film Festival sensation, the intimate documentary "Tarnation," is now eight years old. And since that burst of indie fame he's made a documentary about the very hip All Tomorrow's Parties music festival, and that's kind of it in terms of real output. Now comes news that this month's Sundance Film Festival will feature new work from Caouette, a film called "All Flowers In Time," featuring "Big Love" star Chloe Sevigny. One little detail: it's 14 minutes long, which isn't much longer than those funny little Sevigny parody videos all over YouTube right now, and which also seems sort of short for a movie that IMDB.com claims is "a guided tour through the shattered remains of memory and identity." But at

this point, hopeful Caouette (and Chloe) fans will take what they can get.

More real young lesbians, less real old ones

Maybe you watched "The Real L Word" and found it... lacking. Maybe you were sort of - OK, "really" bored. Well, Showtime has what that they think is the answer to that blah feeling radiating from your TV. When season two of the reality series about a group of Los Angeles lesbians debuts this summer, there'll be more focus on dreadlocked Whitney and her crew of young, hip, twentysomething friends. And minimizing everyone else's camera time isn't even much of a tradeoff. It's not like the older cast members were spouting golden nuggets of lesbian life wisdom every time they opened their mouths. Why "shouldn't" the spotlight shine on the pretty young things and their ability to party all night on a Tuesday? It's a reality soap opera, after all; no one's mistaking it for "Masterpiece Theater." And because it's Showtime, they're all going to continue taking off their tops. Everybody wins.

Romeo San Vicente believes there should be a 24-hour all-lesbian channel. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.





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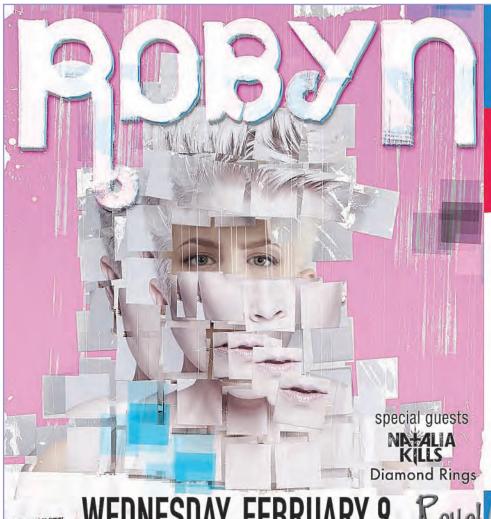
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