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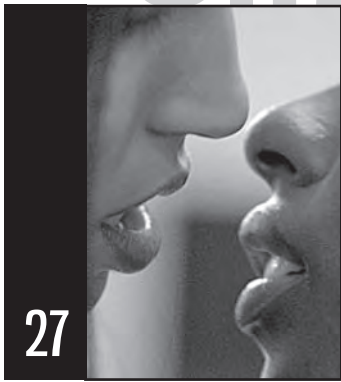
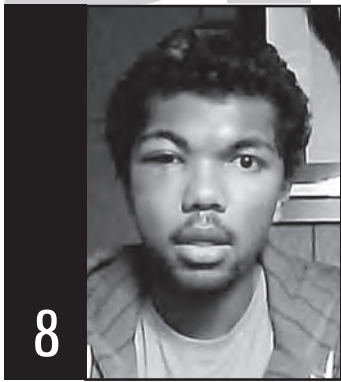
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News

5 | Speak Out

We must support public employee unions

6 | When you're 'strange'

The twisted history of the word queer

7 | Senate overturns state employee domestic partner benefits

Now the measure needs to pass House

8 | Hate crime victim makes YouTube video

'Hate crimes still happen' has more than 12,000 views

9 | Attorney General supports ousted EMU student

Counseling student was dismissed after refusing to counsel gays

13 | President and First Lady lead anti-bullying conference

White House launches website, highlights commitments from MTV, other organizations

14 | Italian PM: Gay unions will be kept at lower level

14 | Euro Court rules against Russia in HIV case

Opinions

10 | S/he said

Conservatives and activism

10 | Heard on Facebook

Is the word 'queer' a label you embrace, or a reminder of hate? Is it becoming more popular?

11 | Parting Glances

Bell, book, scandal (Pt. 1)

12 | Viewpoints

Significant progress made for equality but much work remains

12 | BTL Editorial

We need to stick up for bullied teachers, too

14 | Creep of the Week

Peter Sprigg

Health

18 | Lesbian, gay parents likely to be anxious, depressed

Studi shows anti-gay laws, environments, families to blame

19 | Cigarette companies target LGBTs

LGBTs more likely to smoke, attract marketing campaigns

20 | LGBTs find affordable, supportive counseling at Affirmations

Students provide services, gain on-the-job experience

23 | LGBT Health Week says 'Come out for health!'

25 | The Outfield: Puck buddies

25 | How to come out to your doctor

Life

27 | Out Night: 'Astonishing'

Ann Arbor Film Festival's LGBT event keeps growing

28 | DVD Lowdown

"Burlesque" and "Love & Other Drugs": One sucks. One sucks less.

29 | Dance: Not just for gay men

Company manager says you'd be surprised who's really behind the curtain

31 | Hear Me Out

R.E.M. goes back in time on "Collapse Into Now." Plus: Avril Lavigne, adult in training

32 | Out of Town

Road-tripping across Spain

33 | Curtain Calls

Reviews of "The Piano Lesson" and "Last of the Boys"

34 | Happenings

Featured: OUTSpoken Spring Drag Show at Western Michigan University

Rear View

36 | Dear Jody

37 | Horoscopes

38 | Puzzle

39 | Classifieds

40 | Cocktail Chatter


42 | Deep Inside Hollywood


Cover
Cover design by John Fornoff


The twisted history of the word

Queer

17

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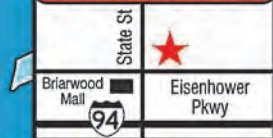
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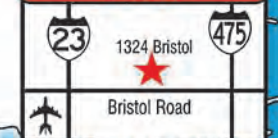
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We must support public employee unions

Collective bargaining often supports LGBT rights

Public employees are under attack in Michigan and around the nation. Several new Republican governors argue that in order to balance their budgets, state employees, teachers, firefighters and police officers must make significant economic concessions. Though public workers were not the cause of the fiscal challenges facing the states, these employees have been willing to agree to some wage and benefit reductions to help bring state budgets into balance. But the governors are going even further – they want to end the fundamental right of public workers to collectively bargain with their employers over basic working conditions.

It is clear that the goal of these new Republican chief executives is not to balance budgets, but to kill off political opposition. Organized labor has consistently supported Democratic candidates for office, because the Democratic Party has long advocated for the interests of working people, while Republicans have often sided with the concerns of the wealthy and corporations. The billionaire Koch brothers,

right-wing ideologues who espouse a vile political agenda, have spent millions of dollars to elect union-bashing, homophobic Republicans in a number of states, most notably Wisconsin. The recent attacks on collective bargaining represent an effort to dismantle the last bastion of political hope for those who believe in genuine democracy, in a system that is dominated by wealthy elites.

All of this is significant to the LGBT community. In the last few years, many of the collective bargaining agreements that unions have reached with management have included provisions that protect LGBT workers. The state of Michigan, led by former Governor Jennifer Granholm, agreed last year to provide health insurance coverage to domestic partners of government employees. This agreement was reached through the collective bargaining process, and affirmed by the Michigan Civil Service Commission. Governor Rick Snyder has said that he opposes this new benefit because of its supposed expense, though he does not have the legal authority to veto the decision to grant it. Unfortunately, if Republicans can muster 2/3 majorities in both houses of the Michigan Legislature, they can overturn this collectively negotiated benefit. Last week, the Michigan Senate approved a repeal of domestic partner benefits by the necessary supermajority, and now the Michigan House is considering the issue. The real reason Republicans want to reverse this decision is not fiscal, but social: they want to deny any measure of equality to LGBT state workers.

Just as unions were at the forefront of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, they have actively sought to advance LGBT equality through more inclusive labor agreements in the 21st century. Public sector unions in Michigan have been stalwart supporters of our community,

recognizing that labor equity demands that all workers be treated equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Solidarity is the very hallmark of the labor movement, and it certainly represents the spirit of the LGBT community, too. Because of the regressive anti-gay marriage amendment passed by voters in Michigan in 2004, there are limits to what the state can do to protect the rights of LGBT couples. Thanks to the collective bargaining process and progressive unions, many public employees in our state can now enjoy a little more equality.

In the coming months, the Michigan Legislature will be focused on balancing the state budget. Many people are upset by various

Thanks to the collective bargaining process, many public employees in our state can now enjoy a little more equality.

aspects of the governor's recent budget proposal. While Governor Snyder has not called for the elimination of collective bargaining in our state, he does support the effort to install emergency financial managers in fiscally-challenged communities, with the authority to rip up collective bargaining agreements in cities around the state. It is important to remind our state's governor

that Michigan has a proud tradition of collective bargaining, and that budgets can be balanced without busting public employee unions.

Unions have been strong advocates for LGBT equality. Collectively bargained labor contracts have extended legal protections to many people who would otherwise be denied these rights because of discriminatory state laws. Many non-union employers have adopted equal employment practices based on what they've seen modeled in unionized settings. Until the leaders of Michigan recognize that legal discrimination against LGBTs is wrong and should be prohibited statewide, we will have to negotiate our legal rights with our employers. If the right to collectively bargain labor contracts is curtailed or eliminated, then the few legal protections that people in our community enjoy in the workplace will also go away. Michigan has a proud labor tradition, and it is something that all of us should embrace in this time of economic uncertainty.



SPEAK OUT

Contact your Representative - urge him or her to support the MCSC's decision to grant domestic partner benefits to state employees:

Find your Michigan Representative:

http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp

Contact Governor Snyder and let him know you support the collective bargaining process for all public employees in Michigan:

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When you're 'strange'

The twisted history
of the word

Queer

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Sara Spurgeon loves using the word queer. In fact, she thinks she's always been a queer girl. "As a pre-teen, I dreamed that the princes in my fairy tales were butch girls," the 33-year-old said. "As a teen activist, I was a hard-hitting, outspoken, purple-haired dyke in high school. My best friend was a pretty boy who secretly dressed for class at my house.

"It was our defiant queerness that helped us survive a very traumatic educational experience, fraught with bullying and harassment."

But Spurgeon, who works for Equality Michigan, is aware that other people might not feel the same about queer.

"Queer is a powerful word – it stirs up emotions," she said. "I use the word carefully."

Spurgeon knows that queer, a simple single-syllable word, carries a lot of baggage.

Depending on the mouth it comes out of or the ears that are around to hear it, queer can signify power, pride, inclusiveness, victimization, oddity or antiestablishment – and any combination thereof.

So what's behind the controversy and baggage of one little word? A long and twisted history.

From strange to sexual difference

Queer, which generally means "strange or odd," was first used in regards to sexual deviance in the 1920s, said Tim Retzliff, who's working on a doctorate from Yale in gay and lesbian history. Retzliff cited "The Well of Loneliness," a lesbian novel from 1928, as one of the first places queer was used.

Even though the book was one of the first lesbian novels, Hall never actually uses the word lesbian. But she does use queer 59 times, Retzliff

said. "Queer was generally related to this sense of sexual difference."

According to Retzliff, queer became a popular pejorative sometime after WWII. In the thousands of Detroit police reports from the 1960s he's researched for his dissertation, Retzliff found countless examples of police officers using the word queer to describe the men they arrested in gay bar raids. "So it really was this nasty term," Retzliff said. "You see why anyone from that generation would cringe at its use."

Sue Eisman, a 64-year-old retiree who splits her time between Florida and Michigan, was a young woman in the 1960s. The word queer makes her think of danger and violence. To her, it's the kind of word that LGBTs can now use

Depending on the mouth it comes out of or the ears that are around to hear it, queer can signify power, pride, inclusiveness, victimization, oddity or antiestablishment – and any combination thereof.

between themselves, but not a word that anyone outside of that community can use without being offensive.

"I don't feel that I, as a non-gay ally, have the right to use any word like that. Doesn't make sense to me," said the former Triangle Foundation volunteer.

Meesha Michelle, a 40-year-old biracial woman from Southfield, said queer also reminds her of the difficulties she faced when coming out in the 1980s.

"It was rough," Michelle said. "It was really rough. Coming out now is a little easier."

Even though coming out may be easier now for some people, hearing a word like queer still "takes me back to that place," Michelle said, and

she doesn't like it. "I don't think I've ever heard queer used in a positive connotation."

Eisman said different groups have tried to reclaim pejorative terms in her lifetime – words like fag, dyke, lesbo and queer – but she doesn't think any of those attempts were successful.

Those attempts happened in the early 1990s, when queer was used by a group called Queer Nation. "In terms of AIDS activism, gay and lesbian activists wanted to reclaim the word queer, as both a more inclusive term and a more in-your-face term too," Retzliff said.

And it wasn't only the independent groups that made up Queer Nation that wanted to reclaim queer. The University of Michigan was home to Queer Action and the Queer Unity Project in the early 1990s, and many other schools around

the country were home to similarly-named groups. "There was this active effort to reclaim the word, to include bisexuals, and the trans community was coming forward too," Retzliff said, adding that queer was considered shorthand and inclusive, and still often is today as well.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, "queer" was also indoctrinated into academia, as it became the label of classes, studies and certificates. "Queer theory is a vein of scholarship which is critical and challenging of the status quo. It's this disruptive vein, rooted in feminism, that looks at where power comes from," Retzliff said. "It's also part of this divide in people in the ivory tower and people outside of it."

So what side are you on?

In 1993, Retzliff noted that BTL used the word queer often, and a letter to the editor that year decried the usage. "There was this tension," he said. "An older generation that didn't think that the younger generation understood the pain that went with the word."

That tension is still around today.

Cookie Woolner, a 37-year-old graduate student in history at U-M, prefers to use queer even though she is well aware of how negative it may seem to people like Eisman or Michelle.

The word has never put her in danger, and she knows how "very, very easy" it is for her to claim. "It's completely from the work of those generations that I'm able to call myself that," Woolner said.

The tension about the word queer is not just between the older generation and the younger generation, but it's also present in another kind of battle of ideals: Are you a part of the commonly accepted vision of what it means to be LGBT? Or is that vision too limiting?

The debate's roots come from "the anxiety" of deciding whether being sexually different "should be emphasized, or if it's just an incidental part of everybody," Retzliff said.

Some, like Michelle, don't want those differences to be the cause for division anymore.

"We get so much oppression from the outside and I'm seeing a lot of oppression within our own community," she said. "We have boy bars and girl bars. Black bars and white bars. Black pride and white pride. I'd like to see a positive representation of our community as a whole."

She likes that gays and lesbians are showing up more often in TV shows such as "Glee" and "Modern Family" in a positive way. "We're not the freak neighbors," she said. "We're integrated. I would like to see more of that."

See 'Strange', page 7

Senate overturns state employee domestic partner benefits

Now the measure needs to pass House

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

The Michigan Senate voted along party lines to overturn the decision to offer domestic partner benefits to state employees on March 10. The entire state legislature must vote to overturn the Michigan Civil Service Commission decision, so the state House will have the opportunity to vote on the measure as well.

The MCSC voted to allow the benefits in January, and it is set to take effect in October. The decision allowed one "other eligible adult" to access benefits of the state employee on the condition that the employee and OEA live together. The OEA's dependents are also eligible for the benefits.

The move was celebrated by the LGBT community in January, and decried by state

Republicans and Gov. Rick Snyder. A Snyder spokesperson told the Detroit News in January that Snyder was "frustrated and dissatisfied" at the additional cost.

Senator Rebekah Warren, D-18, told BTL that there is no way to know exactly how much the benefits will cost. Warren is also concerned about the legislature moving to overturn an MCSC decision because, as far as she can tell, the legislature has never done so before. The MCSC is an independent, state constitution-created entity of four officials who administer civil and human resource services. It has existed since 1908.

The House, bogged down with debates on Snyder's controversial budget, may not vote on the MCSC decision until next week. To contact your representative, go to http://www.house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp.

► 'Strange'

Continued from p. 6

Nick Piotrowski, on the other hand, doesn't like how the word gay has "moved toward a more homogenized existence." The 23-year-old architecture student from Detroit stopped using gay to describe himself and now uses queer.

"I think gay culture has in some ways moved away from accepting people who are different," he said, and more toward heteronormative activities like marriage and adoption.

For Piotrowski, "Identifying as queer is a way to identify as someone who is interested in members of the same sex, but not necessarily with the baggage of having to fit into a set identity that's portrayed by the media and larger cultural forces."

He also likes that queer "doesn't force you to identify as X label ... It's vague and amorphous."

One important thing to remember in these conversations is that people can "look back into

LGBT history, and at different terms that have been used over the last 100 years, and can see what they relate to and they don't," Retzliff said. "They can self-identify as what they want, not confined to those parameters."

Woolner agrees: "I think sexuality is a really wide spectrum. Some find their identities more complex or fluid than (the typical labels)."

Woolner, who identifies as a "queer femme who mostly dates people who identify as trans or gender queer," said queer is about "deconstructing binaries, whether it's the binary of heterosexual and homosexual or masculine and feminine."

The long and winding road

The journey of the word queer doesn't stop here. Just like any other word changes over time, queer will keep bending to the will of whoever chooses to use it.


"It's certainly not as shocking a word as it was in the early 1990s," Retzliff said.

"While queer may become this comfortable term that's not going to raise people's ire, who's to say what it might mean 50 years from now?"

"We get so much oppression from the outside, and I'm seeing a lot of oppression within our own community. We have boy bars and girl bars. Black bars and white bars. Black pride and white pride. I'd like to see a positive representation of our community as a whole."


— Meesha Michelle

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Detroit hate crime victim makes YouTube video

'Hate crimes still happen' has more than 12,000 views

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

DETROIT – “Hi, my name is Justin Alesna, I’m 23 years old and a resident of Detroit, Michigan. On the evening of March 7, 2011, I was attacked in a convenience store of a BP gas station.”

So begins a YouTube video created by Alesna that chronicles how he was called anti-gay slurs and punched in the face by another patron in the gas station that evening. The video has been viewed more than 12,000 times. The Detroit Police have not made any arrests and are still investigating the case.

In the video, Alesna wears a striped blue hooded sweatshirt. His right eye is swollen.

Alesna said a man asked him to not stand too close to him while Alesna was standing in line and waiting to purchase cigarettes. Alesna said the man then started asking Alesna if he was “a fucking homo.” Alesna ignored the man, purchased his cigarettes and went to leave when the man stopped him and showed him a gun. Alesna said the man then punched him in the face. Alesna fought back and asked the cashier to call the police. The cashier did not call the police, but told the men to stop fighting.

“The amount of cruelty that was shown to me throughout this whole situation is beyond appalling,” Alesna said. “The fact that I was assaulted and asked to leave the crime scene. The fact that there were two other individuals besides myself and the clerk who did nothing but gawk and laugh the whole time this was going on. What happened to decency?”

“This revolting crime is a sad reminder that we have much progress to make when it comes to respect and acceptance for



Video still of Alesna speaking on YouTube. His video has more than 12,000 views.

all people in Michigan, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientation,” Equality Michigan said in a statement. “The incident as described is a crime motivated by hatred of those perceived to be gay. However, unlike the federal hate crime law, our state law does not include sexual orientation, gender identity or expression bias.”

Equality Michigan has been in contact with the FBI and the U.S. Attorney’s Office regarding the case. The organization and its partners are planning community events to respond to the attack, such as self-defense training.

Alesna’s YouTube video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB7pQGE7XEA>.

“There were two other individuals besides myself and the clerk who did nothing but gawk and laugh the whole time this was going on. What happened to decency?”

– Justin Alesna

Agape Spirit Ministries hosts series on faith in black LGBTQ communities

DETROIT – Agape Spirit Ministries launches a series of discussions called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell: Exploring the impact of silence on the African American LGBTQ community” on March 16.

“It is time for black people in the LGBT community and in our spiritual community to stand up in our churches,” said Darlene Franklin, Agape’s founding minister.

“We’re not trying to tell people to leave their church,” Franklin said. “What we want to do is empower our people to be able to remain in the place where they choose to worship without condemnation.”

LGBTs may find that they’re unable to take part in couples’ ministries or to grieve a partner’s death at funerals because their church does not welcome them, Franklin said. “We’re focusing on the elephant in the middle of the room.”

The church will be giving out continuing education credits to clergy who attend.

The first dialogue, “Is ‘Gay’ church ‘real’ church?” takes place at Ecumenical Theological Seminary at 2930 Woodward Ave on March 16 at 7 p.m. The discussion will be led by Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh.

Another discussion, “Breaking the Silence: LGBTQ Domestic Violence” is on April 20, and “The Unthinkable: Coming out in the mainstream church” will take place May 18.

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Attorney General supports ousted EMU student

Counseling student was dismissed after refusing to counsel gays

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette said in a March 11 statement that he supports the rights of an Eastern Michigan University graduate counseling student, Julea Ward, who was dismissed after she refused to counsel gays.

In 2009, EMU dismissed Ward and she filed suit against EMU in U.S. District Court, asking to be reinstated in the graduate program. Last month, the ACLU announced its support of EMU's decision. Schuette's office filed an amicus brief in support of Ward last week.

"The religious freedoms enshrined in our Constitution do not evaporate when you step on campus," Schuette said in the statement. "Unless these freedoms are vigorously defended, it sets a dangerous precedent that threatens education for all students of faith. We must strongly defend and protect the rights of any citizen to ensure the rights of all citizens."

The statement on Schuette's website says that Ward "requested guidance about referring a client to a different counselor" and that "Ward was expelled even though the university had previously allowed students to make referrals without being subject to disciplinary action."

EMU's counseling program requires its graduate students to adhere to the

American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, which prohibits counselors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or imposing their personal beliefs on clients.

Ward maintains that her 1st and 14th Amendment rights were violated. Oral arguments for the case will be set later this year.



"The religious freedoms enshrined in our Constitution do not evaporate when you step on campus."

— Attorney General Bill Schuette

More opinions on Motor City Pride's move to Detroit

Response to Kimberly Jones' op-ed, printed in BTL on Mar. 3

Who has to ask for your permission? How arrogant of you! There is no confusion. Pride is coming to Detroit proper! That's a good thing! They can plan Pride wherever they want. Pride in Ferndale is too big to remain there! You decided to separate yourselves and do your own thing, now you want to bitch and moan when they want to bring Motor City Pride to the actual Motor City. Why don't LGBT people of color get involved with Motor City Pride and help be part of the solutions to make things better and more inclusive? Instead, you're complaining about being excluded while planning something that in and of itself

is not inclusive. I myself want to be part of the solution of making Pride more inclusive to all communities of color. To that end I am willing to put forth my time, effort, and energy in helping to plan this event. I think it is wrong to question the motives of Pride organizers with no clear-cut reason to do so. It's not as if they are moving Pride to Palmer Park! Your response is more divisive than it is helpful. Maybe next time you can try to reach out to help organize with Motor City Pride instead of being prideful and assuming that someone needs to bow at your feet and seek permission to move their event to Detroit! Put your money where your mouth is and get to work!

Ellyn N. Gray
Detroit

BTL ongoing online coverage of Motor City move to Detroit

Feel free to contribute your thoughts about the Motor City Pride move to Detroit on our website www.pridesource.com or through our Facebook page; just search for "Between The Lines Newspaper" to find us.

Adodi Detroit Hosts Retreat for SGL Men of African Descent

On March 26, the men of Adodi Detroit will host a one-day retreat for same-gender-loving men of African descent in the Metro Detroit area. The theme of the retreat is "The Fierce Embrace: Exploring the Intersections of Sexuality, Spirituality, and Community." The intensive retreat will feature a full day of interactive workshops, African-inspired spiritual affirmations, clan work, talent sharing, and great food. Lunch and dinner are included in the \$40 registration (\$50 after March 12). The event is open to all SGL men of African descent 18 years of age or older and will be hosted at the Ann Arbor Friends Center in Ann Arbor, Mich. Registration materials are available on the Adodi Detroit web site: <https://sites.google.com/site/adodidetroit>, as well as Facebook (search for "Adodi Detroit"). For more information, e-mail AdodiDetroit01@gmail.com or call 734-846-6545.

Affirmations continues search for executive director

FERNDALE – Affirmations Community Center is still searching for an executive director. Last month, the search committee hosted a first round of potential candidates for the job onsite at

Affirmations, but the board has decided to continue looking.

The search committee will still use the services of Evergreen Executive Search, an independent national firm hired to support the work of the committee.

"Both the board and the search committee have made a commitment to invest the time and energy necessary

in finding the right candidate to lead Affirmations forward," said Mary Rose MacMillan, the board president.

"We spent a great deal of time establishing our criteria for a capable executive director and are seeking a person who meets or exceeds those standards," she said. "We have a responsibility to our community to obtain a strong, capable and dynamic leader. Given that we have a capable interim executive director in Kevin Howley, and a dedicated search committee, we are confident that with continued effort we will find the right person to lead Affirmations to a successful future."

Affirmations is Metro Detroit's community center for LGBTs and their allies. Open since 1989, Affirmations provides a welcoming space where people of all sexual orientations, gender identities/expressions and cultures can find support and unconditional acceptance, and where they can learn, grow, socialize, and have fun. For more information, visit www.GoAffirmations.org.

Michigan AIDS Coalition hosts auction

FERNDALE – The Michigan AIDS Coalition is hosting a silent auction at Via Nove on Saturday, March 26 from 7:30 p.m. to midnight. Via Nove is located at 344 W. Nine Mile.

The money raised will contribute to MAC, the Community Health Awareness Group in Detroit, the HIV/AIDS Resource Center in Ypsilanti, and the Grand Rapids Red Project. The remainder of the funds raised will be given to MAC's AmeriCorps Program.

Items to be auctioned include: A summertime Grand Hotel giveaway package, dinner for four at Coach Isignia, two cruise packages, two graffiti paintings by artist Kobie Solomon, a daytrip for two at the Dana Hotel and Spa in Chicago and jewelry from Rizzo Jewelers in Rochester Hills.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Shanthi at 248-545-1435 ext. 105.



Mary Rose MacMillan

 **Heard on Facebook**

Is the word 'queer' a label you embrace, or a reminder of hate? Is it becoming more popular?

I hate that word. Queer is something that doesn't fit in or isn't quite normal. I'm gay and I do fit in and I'm quite normal. So no matter if you are gay or straight, please don't call me queer.

– John N. Gibbs III

I see queer as a broad category. I hear queer and I think ALL LGBT persons and then, if one wants to be, someone can be labeled more specific. For instance, I'm in the queer category but, more specifically, I'm a lesbian. I completely embrace it because the word did not arise from negativity. Just like gay didn't either. Homophobic people have just used it to degrade our community. Hatred has been employed in many ways but only we can make it successful ... We should accept the labels people use to identify themselves and keep them positive.

– Michelle Fernandez

I was called queer as a teenager and it hurt. However, as I have gotten older I have jumped on the wagon of reclaiming the word! I may self-identify as gay, however, queer really is a great word that includes all of the LGBTQ community. Who said the only folks in the LGBT community identify as one of these 4 identities? If bringing the Q for queer helps unite the community, I say "I'm queer, too."

– Jon Fitzgerald

It's getting old. I never hear younger people using that word as much as, well, watch an episode of "Skins" or "The Real L Word" for the whole smorgasbord of gay-word hybrids!

– Jonathan Lund

I'm straight, and I now use queer in the original meaning: odd or unusual. But I LOVE odd, so I CERTAINLY don't intend negative judgment ... I generally don't use it that way around GLBTs I don't know well.

– Steve Duerksen

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

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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*

S/he said

Conservatives and activism

BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Jonathan Lovitz

"I can't possibly be an impartial judge of a citizen when I am considered a second-class one in the eyes of this justice system."

– Jonathan Lovitz, 26-year-old actor, during the jury duty process, telling a Manhattan judge why he couldn't be an impartial juror, in a column titled "Why I came out in the jury box," 365gay.com, March 12. Lovitz was excused from jury duty, but will remain in the pool of future jury duty candidates.



Troy Ard

"The belief that Republicans are homophobic is something that's portrayed more in the media than in reality. In fact, gay rights (is) a conservative cause. The Republican Party was founded on the principle of individual liberty. Our party opposed government recognition of the ownership of human beings as slaves ... Our party has always held the concept of equality and liberty as a means of unity, not division."

– Troy Ard, 22, psychology student at Colorado State University, is openly gay and is the state chairman of the Colorado Federation of College Republicans, in an article titled "Gay and conservative: Some young Republicans advocating for gay rights," dailycamera.com, March 12.



David Badash

"Words matter. They shape how people think, especially about matters with which they are unfamiliar. And just as it's not 'gay lunch' or 'gay baseball,' calling it 'gay marriage' means it is different from 'straight marriage.' It's not. Gay and straight, marriage is 'marriage.'"

– David Badash, in his blog titled "Let's Finally Say No To 'Gay Marriage'," thenewcivilrights movement.com, Feb. 2.



"Part of my deal with Target is that they have to start affiliating themselves with LGBT charity groups and begin to reform and make amends for the mistakes they've made in the past ... our relationship is hinged upon their reform in the company to support the gay community and to redeem the mistakes they've made supporting those groups."

– Lady Gaga, in an article titled "Gaga Dissolves Deal With Target," citing Target's continued political activity, contributing money to anti-gay politicians and organizations, as the main stumbling block, advocate.com, March 8.



Parting Glances

Then & Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Bell, book, scandal (Pt. 1)

Before I came out in my senior year at Cass Technical High School, I had devoted 13 years of my life to both liberal and evangelical Christian theologies.

My mother felt I could profit by a religious up bringing, so at age five I was enrolled in First Baptist Church primary. (Now People's Community Church of Detroit.) I still have my Sunday School promotion certificate.

As is the American Baptist Association tradition, I was baptized at 13, the age of accountability. (Among Jewish faiths, time signaled for a bar mitzvah.) I was baptized by dunking in the large baptismal tank underneath the pulpit.

I was also given a Bible inscribed by Rev. Ernest L. Honts. "To Charles Robert: May you always be a good monk." I wasn't then – nor now – quite sure what is meant by pastor's odd admonition, but if celibacy was intended I failed grandly, gloriously, egregiously over the years.

I spent a week at Baptist summer camp. I left with enthusiastic poems, collected rocks, and a heart-felt, weeks-long crush on my counselor.

For whatever reason (perhaps because our neighbors who took us to church moved away), my mother stopped attending First Baptist, and I stopped thinking about God until I turned 15.

I started dropping in on a church two blocks from home: The Missionary Worker's Tabernacle. The interdenominational ministry was founded in 1923 by Anna Curry Spellman, a cousin of New York City's politically powerful Cardinal Francis Spellman. (A friend of the Kennedys, "Franny" was also, shall we say, ecumenically fond of Broadway chorus boys.)

The Tabernacle was pastored by women, and given the time frame that fact was highly controversial among fundamentalists. ("Suffer not a woman to speak in church.") Even so, the Workers held evangelical meetings in Detroit's Campus Martius, as one of its elderly friends was sister of Wayne County sheriff Andrew C. Baird.

Looking back, the years I spent attending the Tabernacle, two, sometimes three times a week, probably saved me – pun intended – from getting into serious teenager trouble. (Although secretly, I became "let's fool around" active, which troubled me somewhat, but not enough to make me fully, sincerely repent for more than a week.)

I do recall that one of the Missionary Workers, a sweet, attractive blonde in mid-twenties, Miss Sanders, was very upset. She was despondent. Crying. Bereaved on two counts. Her brother had been accidentally killed, and had died "unsaved." Never having accepted Jesus as personal savior, he was lost for all eternity in Hell.

At Cass Technical High School I made friends with students affiliated with the Voice of Christian Youth, one of whom, an outgoing automotive repair senior named Jerry, invited me to attend Gilead Baptist. (Jerry, somewhat concerned, chided me for sampling a Jewish friend's gefilte fish sandwich during lunch, because doing so "compromised my born-again testimony.")

Gilead was Southern Baptist. (Belief in the Trinity. Deity of Jesus. His resurrection. Salvation by faith in His vicarious atonement. His second coming – after the Battle of Armageddon, initiated by Soviet Russia.) To be sure I was truly among the elect, I was baptized for a second time. I loved the fellowshiping, hoping my folks too would be saved.

I made friends at Gilead with the church pianist, Bryan. (I last saw him 30 years ago at a Ford Auditorium. He said his affiliation was now Unitarian/Universalist. I smiled, winked goodbye.)

Jerry, Bryan and I formed an evangelistic team during my CT junior year. Bryan provided Gospel music. Jerry led singspiration. I preached. I also became increasingly concerned that I was damnably different. A queer. I was 18. Thin. Youthfully handsome. Well . . .

A halo on my horizon. The hounds of heaven nipping at my high heels.



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In the news: Maryland marriage equality bill shelved after several Democratic representatives withdraw their support.



BTL EDITORIAL

We need to speak up for bullied teachers, too

There's been a lot of attention given to bullying lately, especially the bullying of LGBT students. That, of course, is fantastic news. Right now, groups across the country are figuring out ways to address bullying on all levels. They're changing administrative policies, creating teacher and student trainings, increasing safe spaces for students and doing all sorts of other wonderful things.

But an important group that's left out of this conversation is teachers. LGBT teachers are often stuck in the closet. There are no federal or state-level protections for Michigan LGBT employees, and there are rarely policies on the local level that give protections specifically to them either. There is, instead, an archaic fear that LGBTs are pedophiles who couldn't possibly provide a safe learning environment.

This fear means that no one talks about LGBT teachers, and the myth prevails that they just don't exist.

We expect a lot of our teachers. Often grossly underpaid, they deal with a whole slew of social issues when their students suffer from poverty, hunger and neglect. They're the ones who are blamed for poor test scores, despite the fact that they often have insufficient educational supplies due to districts suffering from budget cuts. And some teachers are now being forced to lose their union rights in very public debates. Republicans, dead-set on gouging out the middle class while giving the wealthy and corporations tax breaks, have decried teacher salaries and tenure. As if working 70 hours a week and controlling a classroom of 30-plus students isn't a noble job that deserves a barely-middle class lifestyle.

In addition to all of this, our LGBT teachers are forced to deny an integral part of who they are for fear of losing their jobs.

It's not as if teachers have never protested for the right to be out and employed. But so far, those attempts have not resulted in widespread change, acceptance or protection of our LGBT

educators.

As we make changes and improvements to the school systems so that they're less conducive to bullying, and as we implement strategies to protect LGBT students, we can't forget teachers' rights too. When we make policies that say that students should not be harassed or denied privileges due to their gender or sexual identity or orientation, we should be weaving in language

As we implement strategies to protect LGBT students, we can't forget teachers' rights too.

that also protects teachers. When we proclaim that no student should fear for their physical and emotional safety, we should proclaim the same about teachers too.

We must not forget that as LGBT teens are organizing and lobbying for their rights, they are often aided or guided by a concerned teacher who is selflessly giving his or her time outside of school to help these students. Many of those teachers are straight allies, but some of them may also be LGBT, and are thus fighting to give students rights that they as employees don't yet have.

Just as unfairly treated LGBT students lose their right to an education, LGBT teachers who are stuck hiding in the closet fear the loss of their right to support themselves.

Teachers should have a right to keep their private lives private, and to not worry that their relationships will interfere with their ability to feed and shelter themselves and contribute to the development of society by educating today's youth.

VIEWPOINT



BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE GARY PETERS, D-MI 9

Significant progress made for equality but much work remains

Our Constitution guarantees equal protection under law, and as a Member of Congress, I firmly believe it is my duty to defend the rights of all Americans. In the past two years, I have had the honor to work with my colleagues to enact legislation extending hate crimes protections to LGBT Americans and repeal the misguided "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law which prevented LGBT soldiers from serving openly in our military. President Obama's administration has expanded benefits for the partners of foreign service officers and implemented new federal regulations allowing hospital patients to decide who has visitation rights and who can make medical decisions on their behalf, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or family makeup.

The repeal of DADT was of deep, personal significance to me. As a former Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy Reserve, I served with many brave, patriotic and dedicated men and women. I was never concerned about their sexual orientation, just their ability to serve the United States honorably.

We must allow our military to recruit and retain any qualified, patriotic, and courageous American who wants to serve

our nation. The military has already started implementing repeal, with programs including formal classes, discussion groups and extensive training to make sure each individual understands the new rules. The process should be complete by August.

Despite these significant advancements, many of us are frustrated that more was not accomplished, and so much work remains in the fight for equality. In addition to completing the implementation of DADT repeal, two of my top priorities for advancing LGBT equality are repealing the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act and combating bullying of LGBT students.

I am encouraged that President Obama and Attorney General Holder have formally recognized that DOMA is unconstitutional and it will not be defended in court by the Department of Justice. This is an important step forward, but while the Administration will stop defending DOMA, the federal government will continue enforcement by denying benefits to the spouses of federal employees with valid same-sex marriages. DOMA is one of the few laws remaining

in the United States today that exists to restrict and deny basic rights to American citizens – and it is time for us to repeal this law once and for all. This is why I am an original cosponsor of the recently introduced Respect for Marriage Act. This bill repeals DOMA in its entirety and, for purposes of federal law, requires respect for marriages valid under the law of the state where they were performed.

Repealing DOMA and achieving true marriage equality will be an uphill battle. The Republican majority in the House of Representatives will oppose legislative repeal, and they are appointing a legal team to defend DOMA in court in place of the Department of Justice. This will waste hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars in legal bills at a time when Congress should be focused on creating jobs and putting our country on a sustainable fiscal path.

I believe there

Congress, the LGBT community, and LGBT allies cannot rest in the wake of our recent advancements in equality. We must continue working to repeal DOMA, and achieve true equality.

are opportunities for bipartisan cooperation on equality, such as addressing school bullying of LGBT students. All students deserve to feel safe at school. Unfortunately, students who are, or are perceived to be LGBT are subjected to higher rates of discrimination, including harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence. Surveys indicate as many as nine out of every ten LGBT students have been bullied. This is harmful to both students and our educational system.

I strongly support the Student Non-Discrimination Act, which establishes a comprehensive federal prohibition of discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, and provides victims with effective remedies modeled after Title IX. This legislation would also protect the friends and allies of LGBT students, who are often targeted for bullying and harassment themselves. Hate has no place in our schools. LGBT students should be able to attend school and get a quality education while being free from fear of harassment and intimidation.

Congress, the LGBT community, and LGBT allies cannot rest in the wake of our recent advancements in equality. We must continue working to enact SNDA, repeal DOMA, and achieve true equality. Throughout our history, Americans have come together to stand up for our own rights and those of our friends and neighbors. Much like those efforts, the work ahead of us will be difficult – but it is a necessary fight and it is a fight I know we will win.

President and First Lady lead anti-bullying conference

White House launches website, highlights commitments from MTV, other organizations

BY BTL STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama called for a united effort to address bullying at the March 10 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. Approximately 150 students, parents, teachers, non-profit leaders, advocates, and policymakers came together to discuss how they can work together to make our schools and communities safe for all students.

“If there’s one goal of this conference, it’s to dispel the myth that bullying is just a harmless rite of passage or an inevitable part of growing up. It’s not,” said President Obama. “Bullying can have destructive consequences for our young people. And it’s not something we have to accept. As parents and students, teachers and communities, we can take steps that will help prevent bullying and create a climate in our schools in which all of our children can feel safe.”

“As parents, this issue really hits home for us. It breaks our hearts to think that any child feels afraid every day in the classroom, on the playground, or even online,” Mrs. Obama said. “I hope that all of you – and everyone watching online – will walk away from this conference with new ideas and solutions that you can take back to your own schools and communities.”

Estimates show that nearly one-third of all school-aged children are bullied each year – upwards of 13 million students. Students involved in bullying are more likely to have challenges in school, to abuse drugs and alcohol, and to have physical and mental health issues.

The White House also highlighted private, non-profit, and federal commitments to bullying prevention, and distributed a list of resources a few of which we list below:

Public-Private Partnerships, Commitments and Activities

StopBullying.gov

This website launched at the conference to provide information from various government agencies on how children, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying. The website provides information on what bullying is, its risk factors, its warning signs and its effects. It will also provide details on how to get help for those who have been victimized by bullying.

Enforcing Civil Rights Laws

Last October, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights issued

guidance as a “Dear Colleague” letter to clarify issues of bullying and violation of federal education anti-discrimination laws. The guidance explains educators’ legal obligations to protect students from student-on-student racial and national origin harassment, sexual and gender-based harassment, and disability harassment.

Shaping state laws and policies

In December 2010, Secretary Duncan issued a memo to governors and chief state school officers in each state providing technical assistance and outlining key components of comprehensive and effective state anti-bullying laws and policies.

In addition to the Steering Committee’s work, the Health Resources and Services Administration has also created the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign to raise awareness about bullying; prevent and reduce bullying behaviors; identify interventions and strategies; and encourage and strengthen partnerships. SBN was developed by a steering committee and implementation work group that included more than seventy organizations from in and out of government. The campaign covers ages five to eighteen years old, and includes tool kits to encourage and empower youth to mentor younger children to take action against bullying.

The Department of Education’s Safe and Supportive Schools competitive grant program requires recipient states to measure school safety, which includes issues of bullying and harassment, at the building level by surveying students. Federal funds are available for interventions in those schools identified as having the greatest need. The Department of Education has awarded grants to 11 states for activities under this program.

MTV Networks: “A THIN LINE”

As part of MTV’s multi-year, award-winning A THIN LINE campaign, the network will launch a new anti-digital discrimination coalition, which will work with MTV to fight bullying and intolerance online (in partnership with the National Council of La Raza, Anti-Defamation League, Council on American-Islamic Relations, and GLAAD). The network plans six new cyberbullying and digital discrimination public service announcements.

National Education Association: “Bully-Free: It Starts with Me.”

The association is launching a nationwide anti-bullying campaign entitled “Bully-Free: It Starts with Me.” Through this new online campaign, the NEA will identify and support caring adults in each

school who will listen and act on behalf of bullied students in schools across America. The NEA will invite its members to join the campaign and will work to extend the campaign to the broader community. The NEA will also release a new study on bullying in schools – based on a survey of more than 5,000 educators.

American Federation of Teachers: “See a Bully, Stop a Bully, Make a Difference”

The American Federation of Teachers is launching a national bullying campaign, “See a Bully, Stop a Bully. Make a Difference,” focused on raising bullying awareness and providing resources, training, and technical assistance for leaders and members.

National PTA: “Connect for Respect”

National PTA is launching a campaign called “Connect for Respect,” asking PTAs nationwide to host a Connect for Respect event in their communities and to share resources with parents about bullying in the schools they serve. Check out PTA.org/bullying, which will house all of the PTA resources.

National Association of Student Councils: “Raising Student Voice and Participation Bullying Challenge”

The National Association of Student Councils declares its commitment to foster a national student-led conversation and call to action utilizing its Raising Student Voice & Participation process. NASC will also involve its sister organizations, the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society, expanding its outreach to some 33,000 student groups in middle level and high schools around the nation.

The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention

Early in the Obama Administration, six federal agencies (Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, Defense, Agriculture, and Interior) joined together to establish the Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention Steering Committee to explore ways to provide guidance for individuals and organizations in combating bullying. This interagency group was recently joined by the National Council on Disability and the Federal Trade Commission. In August 2010, the Steering Committee brought together non-profit leaders, researchers, parents, and youth to begin the national discussion and identify issues requiring additional guidance and clarification.

No same-sex marriage for Maryland

Maryland was widely expected to become the next U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriage but the plan crashed and burned March 11.

The bill to legalize gay marriage had passed the Senate and had the governor’s support, but, at the last minute, after almost three hours of debate in the House of Delegates, supporters realized they did not have the votes there.

The bill then was returned to committee by a voice vote.

According to one report, key House opponents included African American legislators from Prince George’s County and conservative Democrats from the Baltimore area and the southern part of the state.

“While we are disappointed the House did not vote to pass marriage equality today, we are confident we will win in the future,” Equality Maryland said in a statement. “It is best to delay this historic vote until we are absolutely sure we have the votes to win.”

Meanwhile, in the run-up to the House of Delegates debate, Delegate Peter Murphy told the Washington Blade on March 9 that he’s gay. “I have never denied (being gay). I just presumed people knew,” he said. There are six other openly gay members of the Maryland House, and one openly gay senator.

NY governor to push for same-sex marriage this year

The new national group Equality Matters met with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on March 10 and reported that he’s eager to legalize same-sex marriage this year.

“While our specific discussion today is private, what’s clear from our meeting with Gov. Cuomo is that he wants to get this done this year, as soon as possible, and that he is prepared to use his considerable power and influence to make it happen,” said EM President Richard Socarides.

“What’s not clear,” Socarides added, “is how we get to the magic number of 32 in the Senate.”

Equality Matters describes itself as a new campaign for full LGBT equality that utilizes strategic communications, research, training and media monitoring to strengthen efforts for full LGBT rights and to correct anti-gay misinformation.

Texas school to let gay students meet

The board of trustees of Flour Bluff Independent School District in Corpus Christi, Tex., granted permission March 8 for students to form a campus gay-straight alliance after the American Civil Liberties Union intervened on behalf of Nikki Peet, a student who had been denied permission to start the club.

According to the ACLU, the school had threatened to prevent all extracurricular groups from meeting rather than allow the GSA to form.

“It shouldn’t have taken this long and this much struggle to start a club whose purpose is to make our school a safer space for all students,” said Peet. “We can’t wait for the first meeting.”

Briefs by Rex Wockner

Peter Sprigg

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

We've all heard the argument that letting gays and lesbians marry will "hurt" heterosexual marriages. Or our country. Or children. Actual support for these claims is less readily available. Often those making the argument will resort to argumentative fallacies to back up their claims. The problem is, there are so many fallacious arguments to choose from, it's hard to keep it all straight. Pardon the pun.



Peter Sprigg

Well, the Family Research Council's Peter Sprigg has just the thing for you. "The Top Ten Harms for Same-Sex 'Marriage'" is hot off the presses and it's filled with all of the half-truths, cherry-picked statistics, manipulated data, distortion, and outright lies a person needs to argue that God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.

Sprigg separates the harms by "Immediate effects" (1-4) and "Long term effects" (5-10). Immediate effects include the trashing of religious liberties (i.e. the freedom to discriminate against gays and lesbians because God tells you to) and teaching grade school kids to be gay. The number one immediate harm caused by gays getting married is the bilking of taxpayer dollars to "subsidize homosexual relationships." And just what are gays so shamelessly asking for? Social Security benefits for their partners and their kids if they die. That's right, same-sex couples want to help protect their families by receiving benefits from a system that they themselves have paid into all of their working lives. In other words, gays are today's Cadillac-driving welfare queens. Talk about piglets at the public teat.

It's a strange complaint considering that Sprigg also argues that gays don't stay together anyway and that they don't bother getting married even when it is legal. He seems to be claiming that legalized marriage really isn't something that gays want since all gay people aren't legally married in places where it's legal to do so. Sprigg points specifically to California, where same-sex marriage "was only legal for a few months, from the time that the California Supreme Court ruled in May of 2008 until the voters adopted Proposition 8 in November of the same year."

Got that? It was only legal for a few months. Now check out Sprigg's argument: "Press reports have indicated that about 18,000 same-sex couples got 'married' in California – less than 20% of the total identified by the Census. By contrast, 91% of opposite-sex couples who lived together in California were married. In other words, only 9% of heterosexual couples in California have rejected the institution of marriage, while over 80% of the homosexual couples rejected 'marriage' when it was offered to them in 2008."

In other words, those homos who didn't get scramble to get married in the few months it was legal prove that they don't really want it bad enough.

Number 10 on the list, and a long term effect, is polygamy. Gays getting married would mean that all bets are off as far as numerical combinations of husbands and wives.

Sprigg writes, "If it violates the equal protection of the laws to deny homosexuals their first choice of marital partner, why would it not do the same to deny pedophiles, polygamists, or the incestuous the right to marry the person (or persons) of their choice?"

Okay, wait. Did he just say that not letting gays get married denies them "their first choice of marital partner?" As if there's a perfectly acceptable partner of the opposite sex just waiting in the wings? That's not how it works. Nor is being gay the same thing as being incestuous or being a pedophile or a polygamist.

To sum up his additional "harms," Sprigg argues that if gays get married, then heterosexuals will stop getting married so they can screw around or get married and screw around anyway and then get divorced and die alone. Regardless, heterosexuals will stop having kids. Apparently only gays will get married and all children will be intentionally brought into this world without the love of a mom and a dad. Does that sound realistic to you? Probably not, but why let that stop us? Sprigg has raised the bar high for homosexual domination. It would be a shame to disappoint him.

Euro Court rules against Russia in HIV case

The European Court of Human Rights ruled March 10 that Russia violated the European Convention on Human Rights when it denied a residence permit to a man from Uzbekistan because he is HIV-positive.

The man is married to a Russian woman and they have a child together.

The ruling created European legal precedent in two ways: It recognized HIV-positive people as a distinct group whose fundamental rights are protected from discrimination, and it elevated HIV-positive people to the status of a "vulnerable group with a history of prejudice and stigmatization."

Restrictions on the rights of vulnerable groups face the highest level of court scrutiny and are presumed to be illegal from the get-go.

The court said, "The mere presence of a HIV-positive individual in a country is not in itself a threat to public health."

Russia was found to have violated Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which concerns right to family life, and Article 14, which bans discrimination.

Last October, the Euro Court ruled against Russia in the matter of Moscow's ongoing bans of gay pride events.

The court found that the nation violated guarantees of the European Convention in the areas of freedom of assembly and association, right to an effective remedy and prohibition of discrimination.

British gay magazine launches Thai edition

The well-known British gay magazine Attitude launched a Thai-language edition in Thailand on March 9. According to local correspondent Douglas Sanders, it was full of fancy ads, including from Jean Paul Gaultier, Diesel, Puma, Giorgio Armani, Davidoff and Playboy eyewear.

Sexual orientation statement to be delivered at UN

A joint statement recognizing human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity will be delivered at the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 21. The deadline for countries to sign onto it is March 18.

At present, 58 nations have endorsed the statement. Gay activists who are involved in U.N. affairs are urging colleagues around the world to lobby their national governments to sign up.

Among the nations being targeted are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine.

The statement will be read out by the U.N.'s ambassador from Colombia.

Euro Parliament warns Turkey, Montenegro on gay equality

Adopting resolutions on Turkey's and Montenegro's progress toward joining the European Union, the European Parliament on March 9 told both nations they will have to do better on LGBT equality if they want to be part of the EU.

Turkey must "ensure that equality, regardless of sex ... or sexual orientation, is guaranteed by the law and effectively enforced," the parliament said.

Ongoing problems include forced closures of LGBT organizations, the army's classification of homosexuality as

an illness, murders of transgender people, and the withdrawal of sexual orientation from a draft anti-discrimination law, the parliament said.

While Montenegro does ban anti-LGBT discrimination in employment and public services, the Euro Parliament said that discrimination persists "including on the part of state authorities."

The co-president of the parliament's LGBT Intergroup, Ulrike Lunacek, said: "We demand that Ferhat Dinos, minister for human minority rights, defend LGBT people's human rights instead of displaying intolerance and insensitivity to these issues. This is the only way forward for Montenegro's accession process."

Lithuanian MPs want to ban gender-reassignment surgery

Conservative members of Lithuania's Parliament have proposed banning gender-reassignment surgery via the Civil Code.

They said the move would protect the nation "from any preconditions which create grounds for the appearance of claims against Lithuania at the European Court of Human Rights."

Lithuania lost an ECHR case in 2007 concerning a transsexual's right to gender-reassignment surgery. The court said the nation violated the individual's right to respect of private life and ordered payment of damages in the amount of 40,000 euros, which Lithuania paid.

The Civil Code currently allows for gender-reassignment surgery but the nation lacks necessary laws setting forth the conditions and procedures for surgery.

The Lithuanian Gay League denounced the parliamentary proposal.

Euro Parliament blasts Iran on gays

The European Parliament on March 10 adopted a resolution urging Iran to "stop discriminating against people on the basis of their sexual orientation" and denouncing "the inhumane and medieval practice of sentencing people to death for alleged offences pertaining to choice of partners or sexual practices."

The parliament also welcomed "steps taken by several Member States to provide shelter to those Iranian human rights defenders, dissidents, journalists, students, women, children and artists who are persecuted for their religious beliefs, opinions, sexual orientation, or other aspects of the exercise of their human rights."

Iran has the death penalty for consensual homosexual sex. While no such executions have been documented in recent years, it is widely believed they may have occurred. Executions are known to have taken place in recent years following convictions in cases of alleged nonconsensual sex between males.

Italian PM: Gay unions will be kept at lower level

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said Feb. 26, "As long as we are in power, traditional marriage and gay unions will never be on the same level."

The national LGBT group Arcigay denounced the remark as "another ruthless use of homosexuals and transsexuals' lives and feelings with the sole objective of restoring the alliance with the Catholic electorate, disgusted by months of sexual scandals."

"The prime minister should look around and tell us which countries are treating LGBT people like he does," said the group's president, Paolo Patane. "Maybe he will find out that this does not happen anywhere in the civilized world."

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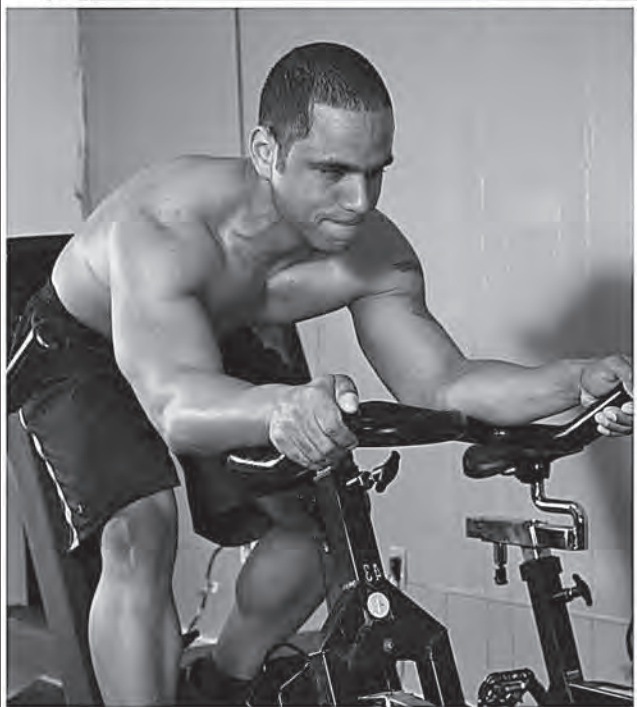
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LGBTs MORE LIKELY TO SMOKE



Lesbian, gay parents likely to be anxious, depressed

Study shows same-sex couples affected by anti-gay laws



BY DANA RUDOLPH

Same-sex couples with adopted children living in states with anti-gay adoption laws and attitudes had more mental health issues in their first year of parenthood than couples with adopted children living in more accepting states, a new study has found. The study also concludes that same-sex couples with adopted children who perceived higher support from their family and workplace and lived in more gay-friendly neighborhoods reported better mental health than those who did not.

While the results may seem like common sense, this is the first study to examine changes in depression and anxiety across the first year of adoptive parenthood in same-sex couples. It is also the first study to examine mental health among new gay male parents, either adoptive or biological.

Dr. Abbie Goldberg, assistant professor of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., co-authored the work with Julianna Smith at the Center for Research on Families of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Their report appears in the February 2011 issue of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, a

peer-reviewed publication of the American Psychological Association.

Goldberg profiled 180 individuals in 90 same-sex couples (52 lesbian couples and 38 gay male couples) at three separate times during their first year of parenting an adopted child.

Goldberg said in an interview that while the sample size is not huge, the data extends over time, which is an improvement over previous studies that have tried to make related observations by looking only at one point in time.

Gay and lesbian adoptive parents living in states with unfavorable laws regarding adoption by gay people showed greater increases in symptoms of depression and anxiety (as measured by standard clinical scales) during the period of study than did individuals living in states with more favorable legal climates.

The effect was most pronounced among those with high levels of internalized homophobia – which was assessed by a questionnaire asking participants how strongly they agreed with statements such as, “If someone offered me the chance to be completely heterosexual, I would accept the chance.”

In comparison, individuals with high levels of internalized homophobia, but who lived in

Many studies show a general correlation between states with anti-LGBT laws and negative mental health in LGBT people.

states with favorable legal climates, experienced decreases in symptoms of depression during the period of study.

Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Utah have laws or policies restricting same-sex couples (or unmarried couples, which in those states means all same-sex couples) from jointly adopting. A number of other states also restrict “second-parent adoptions” in which one partner adopts a child who is already the legal child of the other parent.

Goldberg said that the anti-gay attitudes reflected in anti-gay adoption policies are likely

See Parents, page 20

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Cigarette companies target LGBTs

LGBTs more likely to smoke, attract marketing campaigns

BY LUCY HOUGH

The presence of LGBT themes in cigarette ads surprised a crowd of people at a workshop during the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference at the University of Michigan last month. Because LGBT people are more likely to smoke cigarettes, the industry has responded accordingly.

According to the American Legacy Foundation, sexual minorities are 1.5 to 2.5 times more likely to smoke cigarettes. Bisexual women are up to 3.5 times more likely to be smokers.

Cigarette companies strive to associate with LGBT people – but not to come across as a pro-LGBT company, said Jaime Tam, who presented the “Big Tobacco and the LGBT Community” workshop. “They (want) to protect their image in the eyes of the general public.”

Tam said that tobacco ads are purposefully sexually ambiguous - featuring, for example, two men and a woman so that it's unclear who the primary male is attracted to.

Some companies have aligned themselves clearly in support of the LGBT

community as a way to sell cigarettes. Tam showed a Lucky Strike ad that ran in a 2001 GLAAD Media Awards program that stated, “Whenever someone yells, ‘Dude, that’s so gay,’ we’ll be there.” She also showed an American Spirit ad that ran in Newsweek



in 2004 and in The Advocate in 2005 that includes a list of freedoms, one of which is “to marry.” But ads like these, Tam stressed, are rare.

Laura Simmons, a smoker from Coe College in Iowa who attended the workshop, said that she never realized that cigarette

companies advertise to LGBT people.

“It makes me think a little bit more negatively about smoking because I think targeting a community is not very nice,” Simmons said. “Targeting such a marginalized community, that’s just low.”

Organizations such as The Last Drag, the American Legacy Foundation, and the National LGBT Tobacco Control Network work to provide LGBT people with resources and information about the negative effects of smoking and how and why LGBTs are targeted. The Tobacco Control Network states that it works “to eliminate tobacco health disparities for all LGBTs.”

Members of the workshop discussed ways to prevent LGBT people from being victim to such advertising. Suggestions included smoke-free club events, providing resources to quit smoking at pride events, and encouraging LGBT publications to resist accepting cigarette company advertising.

“What I hope we can take away from this, as individuals, is to work to pull tobacco out of the closet,” Tam said.

Learn more online: <http://www.lgbttobacco.org>

Tobacco dependency web training available for health professionals

Affirmations Community Center in Ferndale has collaborated to premiere a web-based seminar, created as part of the “Treating Tobacco Dependency in Michigan” project. The objective of the seminar is to train healthcare professionals on helping their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients quit smoking. The training titled “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Sensitivity Training for Tobacco Cessation Providers” is free and available at <http://breeze.mdch.train.org/lgbtcessation>.

Affirmations launched the Michigan Statewide LGBT Tobacco Coalition in 2009. You can find more information at www.goaffirmations.org.

The Michigan Tobacco Quit Line, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, is funded by the Michigan Department of Community Health as a free service to the public.

Volunteers needed for LGBT cigarette smoking survey

If you are LGBT and smoke cigarettes, you can participate in a national and anonymous survey study on reasons for adult LGBT tobacco use. The purpose of the study is to better understand ways of being, thinking and feeling that influence adult LGBT cigarette smoking. Your participation contributes to understanding the causes of cigarette use in the LGBT communities, and it helps counselors help LGBT smokers seeking help. Take the survey online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/LGBTCigaretteSmokingSurvey

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► **Parents**

to “trickle down into community attitudes.” These attitudes, her data suggests, can have a negative effect on the mental health of gay and lesbian parents.

While studies show that many parents, including straight ones, show an increase in depressive or anxious symptoms in early parenthood, Goldberg said, most recover later. But, she added, higher levels of depression or anxiety “could have negative effects beyond the individual,” including among their children, especially if the factors causing them – such as unsupportive workplaces, families, neighborhoods or laws – don’t change.

In addition to state legal climates, other factors in the study that predicted lower symptoms of depression and/or anxiety among new adoptive parents were workplace support, friend support, relationship quality, and family support.

“Families of origin appear to continue to occupy a socially meaningful role in many lesbians’ and gay men’s lives, even as they begin to form families of their own,” Goldberg wrote. “(A lack of support) may have particularly deleterious consequences on mental health during the transition to parenthood.”

Although this is the first study to look at lesbian and gay mental health among new adoptive parents, several previous studies have shown a general correlation between states with anti-LGBT

“Discriminatory laws and public policies have a profound negative impact on the mental health of gay adults.”

– American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

laws and negative mental health in LGBT people. Most recently, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention released a comprehensive report on the causes of suicidal behavior in LGBT adolescents and adults that concludes, “discriminatory laws and public policies have a profound negative impact on the mental health of gay adults.”

LGBTs find affordable, supportive counseling at Affirmations community center

Students provide services, gain on-the-job experience

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Oakland University master’s student Sean O’Tuathal has been working to help people through problems with anxiety, stress, gender identity issues and substance abuse while gaining the credit hours needed to earn her degree, thanks to Affirmation’s counseling program.

The program is simple and effective. Clients sign up for an evaluation session, which costs just \$25. They meet with a counselor, usually an intern from Oakland, Wayne or Michigan State Universities, and pay based on a sliding-scale system. The counselor meets with them in counseling rooms set up in the basement of the community center, and helps them work on whatever mental health problem they may have.

O’Tuathal is a 48-year-old Ferndale resident who spent more than ten years as a high school English teacher before returning to school to become a counselor. “I was teaching alternative education and I had seen every kind of broken in that system,” O’Tuathal said. “I felt like I



“With Affirmations, (LGBTs) know it’s a welcoming atmosphere.”

– Shelly McCalester

could make more change if I was helping at an individual level.” She is now seeking a master’s in counseling with a specialization in couples and families.

“I want to help all kinds of families,” she said. “Relationships are relationships and they all suffer the same kind of issues.”

Working with Affirmations gives her a chance to help people in the LGBT community, a group that is traditionally underserved for counseling services. The counseling program at Affirmations helps fill in the gap in the metro Detroit area. It held 343 counseling sessions last year.

Shelly McCalester, counseling program supervisor, said that there are between 10-12

interns working with the center at any given time, and that 43 have come through the program so far.

“In the LGBT community people often don’t feel accepted at other facilities,” she said. “With Affirmations they know it’s a welcoming atmosphere. And the interns that come through the program are able to go back out into the world and bring that acceptance and experience working with LGBT clients wherever their work takes them.”

Interns are required to work 600 hours in a clinical setting, 300 of which must be spent with clients. The program gives students a chance to earn those hours, while serving the Affirmations community. Though the interns are not paid, the program has administrative costs that are paid for by the community center.

“This is one of our essential services,” said Affirmations Interim Executive Director Kevin Howley. “We are working on grant writing right now to keep this program funded because it serves the community in so many ways. Knowing that 43 more counselors are out there with a better understanding of LGBT client needs makes it a worthwhile way to not only help people here who need it, but the community as a whole. It’s great to think of LGBT acceptance spreading this way.”

O’Tuathal is nearly finished with her internship, and says it will be hard moving on. “You’re not going to meet a group of people whose hearts are more into what they do than here at Affirmations,” she said. “It’s really important to me to be in an organization that is focused on a positive, progressive community change.” She hopes to find work in a clinic after she graduates.

More information about the counseling program and other services offered at Affirmations can be found at www.goaffirmations.org.

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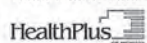
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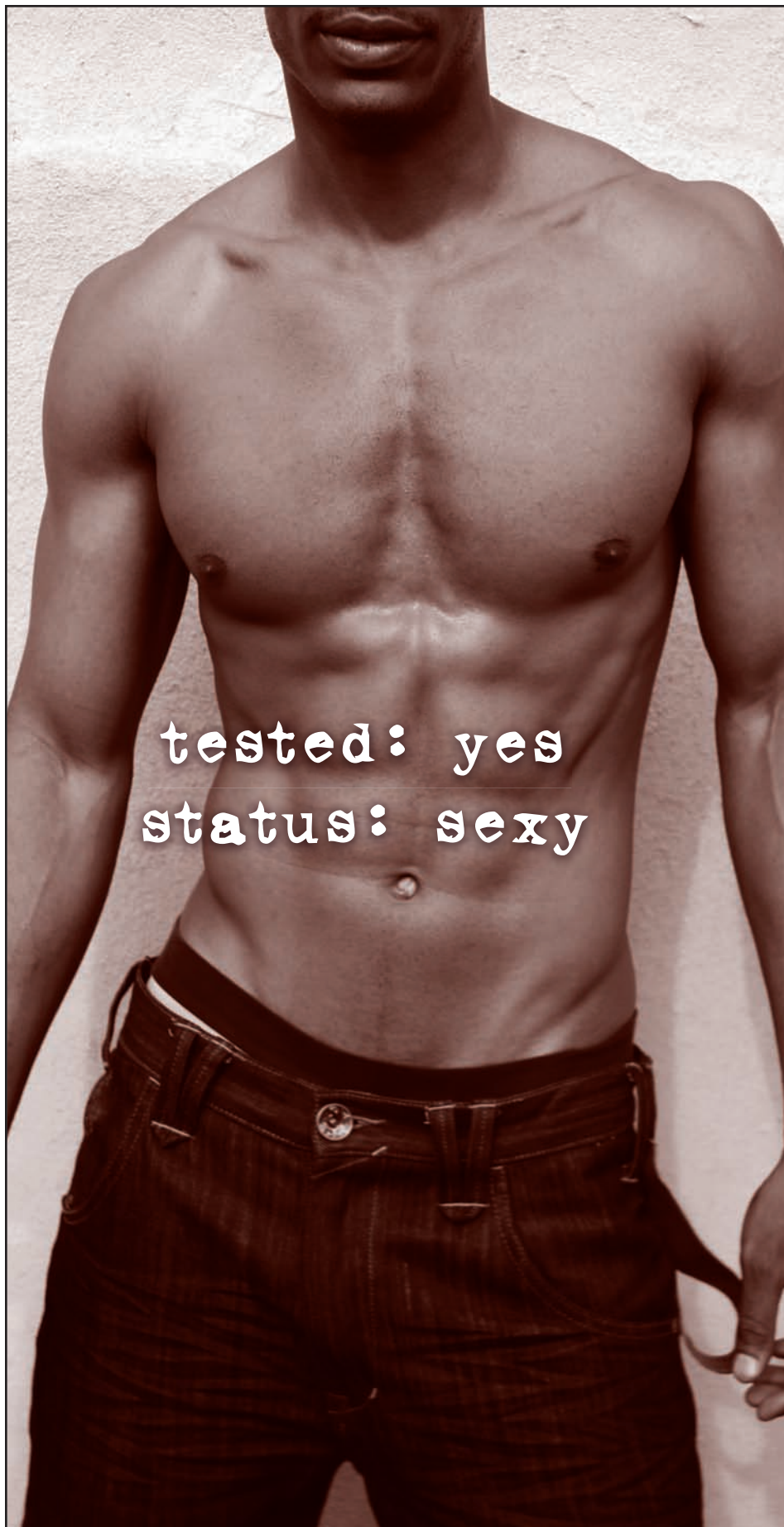


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LGBT Health Week says 'Come out for health!'

Q&A with Matthew Rose from the National Coalition for LGBT Health

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

LGBT Health Week, put on by the National Coalition for LGBT Health, shines a spotlight on the troubling health issues that the community faces across the nation. This year, the awareness week takes place March 28 - April 1. Matthew Rose, who works for the coalition, talked with BTL about this year's theme and how to get involved.

What is LGBT Health Week?

There's a very low level of knowledge of awareness around LGBT health issues and health disparities. And one of the ways that we want to address that is having a week that celebrates LGBT health but also brings attention to the kinds of permanent changes that need to be made in order to address those disparities.

What are some of the health issues that face this community?

Some of the most prevalent ones are increased STIs among gay and bisexual men and STDs. Some numbers show that generally, our community suffers from these problems up to 200 percent more than the general population. We have high rates of specific types of cancer, especially among lesbian women who are not encouraged to go see gynecologists. We also have higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse issues that go untreated.



What are some events and initiatives planned for this year's health week?

This year we're doing a drive to get stories about the difficulties LGBTs face when trying to access health care. We're also working on getting some of our big major national medical partners and other policy-related organizations to have statements that support LGBT health and show commitment to ending disparities in accessing care.

For example, one of our partners, the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, is trying to get the American Medical Association to sign this kind of statement. The AMA has signed a statement before, saying they're supportive of LGBT issues, so it's just a matter of trying to get them to have a more formalized, specific statement.

We also have a sticker campaign this year with the logo of "Come out for health." We're trying to brand the stickers for health providers to use. If providers had that sticker up, people would know that their office is LGBT-friendly.

We're mailing out stickers and post cards right now and we have order forms online so people can get them from us.

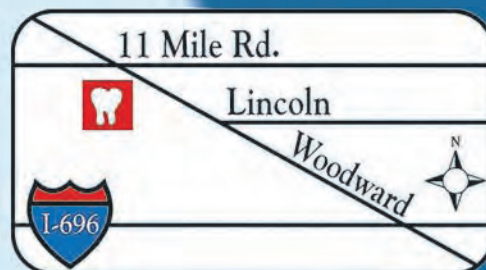
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Craig Brownstein a Washington Capitals fan and his partner, Doug Johnson started www.puckbuddies.com

The OutField: Puck buddies

BY DAN WOOG

One day a couple of months ago, Craig Brownstein was enjoying a Washington Capitals game. He turned to his partner, Doug Johnson, and said, “You’re my puck buddy.” The two hockey fanatics laughed at the pun – a sly reference to you-know-what.

A couple of weeks later, a gay hockey blog with the same name launched.

Puckbuddies.com (the more grammatically correct “puckbuddies” URL was already taken) may not be the only gay hockey site in the blogosphere. But it sure staked out great territory.

The tagline is “for boys who like boys who like hockey.” Brownstein and Johnson make no apologies: They like both the game, and the guys who play it.

The attraction of hockey is clear, they write: “the speed, the flash, the unpredictability of a bouncing puck.” They also like “the coaches, the fights, the crowds.”

But mostly, the pair write, “we like the players – their amazing athleticism and physical abilities. And let’s face it: an extraordinary number of hockey players are simply hot – and that includes every single Cap.”

Johnson calls himself “a journalist by day and a Brooks Laich fan in the off hours.” (Laich is a 6-foot-2, 210, very good-looking left wing.) Brownstein – who works in PR – says he “spends his free time building shrines to Sasha Semin and learning to speak Russian.” (Semin is a 6-foot-2, 205-pound right wing. He too is quite attractive.)

Puckbuddies is not your average hockey blog. A preview of a game against the Florida Panthers first mentioned injuries, then quickly noted: “let’s get to the meat of the post... As painful as this is to say, as a rule, the Panthers are an exceptionally good-looking lot. “Bienvenido a Miami” indeed.”

To prove their point, Brownstein and Johnson posted photos of several Panthers. Two wore hockey gear. One shot showed players clad only in Speedos. A fourth had one guy wearing – well, it could have been nothing at all. Google

Images is a wonderful tool.

Other posts include NHL news, player profiles and random items like a tongue-in-cheek photo of the Rev. Fred Phelps holding a sign “God Hates the Caps.” At least, I think it was a joke.

One thing Puckbuddies does not do is “granular level stuff – plus/minus ratings, minor league stats, all that,” Brownstein says. “We’re not puckheads. We couldn’t even fake it.”

In fact, Brownstein says, he never much cared for hockey as a kid. Growing up in Rochester, N.Y., he “wasn’t much of a jock.” By his early teen years, he knew he was gay. But he hid his sexuality, and joined – of all things – his high school football team.

“We were OK, but I sucked,” he says (referring to his skill level, nothing else). Still, that was an important part of his high school experience. “I was a crappy, directionless student,” Brownstein says. “I needed the discipline of football. It was my first immersion into a team – experiencing dizzying highs and horrible lows together with other guys.” He formed friendships that last 30 years later.

Neither he nor Johnson cared much for hockey. But – like many Washingtonians – they were drawn in by the Capitals’ playoff run a few years ago. Hi-def TV made the game come alive; the announcers were engaging and funny. A passion was born.

Then came Brownstein’s casual “puck buddy” comment to Johnson. The blog soon followed.

The gay perspective was natural. “A lot of players are ripping hot,” Brownstein observes. “Add athleticism to their natural beauty – and the fact that they kick the crap out of each other – and it’s perfect. Plus the traditional mainstream media never talk about how hot Alex Ovechkin is. He’s a vision.”

The blog has received boosts from mainstream sources, though. Yahoo Sports mentioned it, and Johnson and Brownstein

See Puck buddies, page 25

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How to come out to your doctor

LGBTs face difficulties when sharing their status

BY LUCY HOUGH

Coming out to one's doctor can be a daunting task for any LGBT person. But, as stressed by Michigan State University medical students Suzanne Borkowski and Emily Antoon, who presented during last month's Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference at the University of Michigan, a doctor must know the sexual identity of a patient in order to best serve the patient's needs.

Borkowski and Antoon shared the challenges in the health care system for LGBT people. Sometimes health care providers may be homophobic or transphobic, ignore patient confidentiality, or fail to recognize same-sex partners. Ideally, doctors would understand the issues that these people face – and one way patients can encourage understanding is by choosing to come out.

Sometimes the physical environment of the doctor's office can help LGBTs feel more comfortable. A posted anti-discrimination statement, a unisex bathroom, diverse magazines and brochures with LGBT-specific health issues are signs of a safe environment.

In order to find a doctor who is open and welcoming, Borkowski and Antoon suggested that people check LGBT publications and the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (online at glma.org). People should also ask for recommendations from friends or physicians.

The medical students also discussed the fact that a patient has a right to informed consent if doctors want to educate other doctors by using the patient as an example. Borkowski told a story about a transgender patient who was unwillingly put on display for other health care professionals.

"You have the right to say no at any time," Borkowski said. "Or you can change physicians."

Workshop participants brought up their own concerns about coming out to their doctors. One woman said that she struggles with coming out to her doctor as asexual because doctors often assume that a person is sexually active and have a hard time understanding that she is not interested in having sex. Antoon insisted that if it's not a problem for the patient, it's not a problem for the doctor.

"Doctors might not be taught about (asexuality)," Antoon said, "but they're taught to take everything with a grain of salt."

Borkowski and Antoon said that the most important thing that members of the workshop should take with them is that LGBTs can always change health care providers if they are not comfortable.

In order to find a doctor who is open and welcoming, check LGBT publications and the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, and ask for recommendations from friends or physicians.

► Puck buddies

Continued from p. 24

were interviewed by Washington's CBS radio affiliate. Local hockey blogs have thrown a bone to Puckbuddys too, although the Capitals' front office never responded to an e-mail from Brownstein.

A video produced by the pair caught some eyes. They took a ubiquitous YouTube clip and fashioned it into a hilarious "Hitler reacts to the Pittsburgh Penguins' loss to the Caps in the 2011 Winter Classic" video.

One thing the pair disagree on is: How gay is hockey? Johnson's gaydar constantly goes off in the Caps' arena. Brownstein, though, sometimes feels that he and his partner are the

only gay fans in the place.

Meanwhile, the NHL playoffs beckon. The pressure will build on players, fans – and bloggers. Brownstein and Johnson are ready to cover whatever lies ahead. But they promise not to lose their sense of humor. After all, their blog notes, "We're here, we're queer, we're red all over."

Yes, red – as in the Caps' colors. You don't need to be a puckhead – or a Puckbuddy follower – to get the pun.

But it helps.

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

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"Olivia," "Friday's Child" and "Figs in Motion" will screen at the Ann Arbor Film Festival's Out Night on March 24.

Out Night: 'Astonishing'

Ann Arbor Film Festival's LGBT event keeps growing

BY HANNAH SCHWAB

Ann Arbor is putting the finishing touches on its upcoming annual film festival, which runs March 22-27. In its 49th year, the Ann Arbor Film Festival will present 188 films, videos and live media performances from more than 20 countries.

One of the most anticipated nights of the festival is Out Night, beginning at 7:15 p.m. March 24 and showcasing independent and experimental short films that explore issues related to sexual identity, gender and queer politics.

The night, now in its 11th year, was initially the brainchild of then festival executive director Christina Hamilton.

"She had always been involved in community theater around Ann Arbor and wanted to develop a night that highlighted the LGBT community," says Martin Contreras, co-owner of \aut\BAR. "Before, filmmakers would show LGBT work, but Christina wanted an entire night dedicated to gay and lesbian films."

Since the film festival was already an established event, Contreras said it didn't take long for Out Night to draw a crowd and entice the LGBT community.

"The growth of Out Night has been astonishing," says Keith Orr, the other co-owner of \aut\BAR. "The festival has become one of the most prestigious stages to premiere experimental and independent films in the U.S. It was only natural to reach out to the gay community. The spark was created and lots of people have jumped on board. It is very exciting."

When Hamilton approached Orr and Contreras to help promote and sponsor Out Night, the bar owners reached out to their resources in the gay community and to other local businesses to raise money for the event.

\aut\BAR also began hosting after-parties where filmmakers and enthusiasts could mingle and enjoy entertainment, food and dancing. It quickly became, says Contreras, "one of the best parts of the film festival."

This year, for the fourth time, the features will compete for the \aut\FILM Award for Best LGBT Film, which "honors the film that best addresses and gives voice to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered issues. It promotes a diversity of voices that achieve excellence in filmmaking," according to film festival community development manager Becca Keating. Last year, Yun Suh won for the documentary "City of Borders."

In 2008, Google's Gayglers LGBT social awareness group and the Jim Toy LGBT Community Center in Ann Arbor came on board as sponsors and began publicizing the event, which made a big difference in getting the word out to the community.

"Having the Gayglers and \aut\BAR support Out Night has had a tremendous effect on growing the popularity of the program each year by furthering the gay community's involvement in the festival," Keating says.

"The festival has become one of the most prestigious stages to premiere experimental and independent films in the U.S. It was only natural to reach out to the gay community. It is very exciting."

– Keith Orr

Higher attendance also promoted a venue change, moving from the back screening room of the Michigan Theater to its main auditorium.

"The screening room could only seat about 300 people," Orr says. "The main room can hold about 1,700. We may not fill it to standing-room-only capacity, but every year the audience grows and grows."

Orr and Contreras promote Out Night by including it in \aut\BAR's newsletter and lending a hand with preparations for the festival.

"The people who screen and pick the movies start months in advance," Orr says. "They start in November and watch thousands of hours of movies. We help out as much as we can by donating meals to the screeners."

While Out Night has created quite a following, Orr and Contreras are not sure the directors plan to make it too much bigger.

"It (Out Night) has a pretty big presence in the festival now," Orr says. "While they want to continue promoting LGBT films, their main goal isn't to become an LGBT festival. I doubt it would expand into a second night."

"There was talk of hosting an ancillary screening of LGBT films at another time of the year, but nothing has been decided," Contreras adds.

The Ann Arbor Film Festival, which promotes independent and experimental films, is the longest running festival of its kind in North America according to Keating. It has a long tradition of screening the early work of controversial filmmakers such as Yoko Ono, Andy Warhol, Gus Van Sant and Agnes Varda.

"The films (shown throughout the festival) all have something rich to offer viewers – two- and three-minute humorous films, full-length films and documentaries," Contreras says. "That's why Out Night, and the event as a whole, draws such a crowd."

The festival's groundbreaking spirit is what inspired its inception in 1963 and what keeps it going today – to promote filmmaking as an art, both in and out of the LGBT community.

Out Night: The Films

7:15 p.m. March 24
Michigan Theater (Main Auditorium)
www.aafilmfest.org

For the Lucky and the Strong (Kim Sheppard, 2009): A private act of testimony – singing alone... to yourself... in your bedroom – becomes an anthem of community as performed by this YouTube-corralled choir.

Last Address (Ira Sachs, 2010): A haunting, meditative mapping of the last residences of an entire generation of New York's art community – lost to AIDS

Fish Fillet (Hae Ran Kim, 2010): Dani was born into an Evangelist family. Now she is questioning her sexuality in a dreamy battle against the key players of her life. This is her fantastic tale.

Olivia (Sarah Louise Wilson, 2009): Two girls, four strings and a bathroom...

Fredagsbarn (Friday's Child) (Tom Kietz, 2010): After having a fight with his dad, Rune leaves to explore the docks nearby. He meets Benjamin, an older boy, who is painting graffiti on an abandoned factory. Rune hazards a hello.

Figs in Motion (Aron Munson, Trevor Anderson, 2010): Two men become six ballerinas and several horses in a bestial, impromptu corps de ballet. A delightful riff on the imagery of Edgar Degas and Eadweard Muybridge, featuring original music by Bryce Kulak and the Wet Secrets. Originally commissioned by the Art Gallery of Alberta.

The Armoire (Jamie Travis, 2010): 11 year-old Aaron plays a game of hide-and-seek in which his friend Tony is never found.

Covered (John Greyson, 2009): A notably urgent news bulletin and a richly layered – even antic – reflective essay on the violence that met the 2008 Queer Sarajevo Festival.

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'Burlesque' and 'Love & Other Drugs'

One sucks. One sucks less.

'Burlesque': Turn back time. Please.

Christina Aguilera is a gay icon. Cher is a gayer icon. Without knowing anything else about "Burlesque" (and really, what else is there to know?), the beyond-campy bore would've been the gayest movie of 2010. But throw in the gay adjacent Stanley Tucci playing gay again, the gay-for-real Alan Cumming and, you know, the fact that the movie is a throwback musical and there's not a number high enough on the Kinsey Scale to rank "Burlesque." One thing, though, that can be gauged is how eye-rolling ridiculous out filmmaker Steven Antin's directorial debut (a.k.a. My Expensive Reason to Work With Cher) is. The almost-nonexistent plot is simpler than Aguilera's one-note acting (where was the alcohol then, people?) – small-town girl gets a shot at showing off her "mutant lungs" and helps Cher, as Cher



essentially, save her flopping nightclub. Some of the songs register, namely the icon's Oscar-nod-robbed "You Haven't Seen the Last of Me" and Aguilera's beautiful ballad "Bound," but since the film is mostly confined to the lounge, there's not much to look at besides Cam Gigandet, who's stuck in the I'm-only-

here-to-look-hot role. The Cher-Stanley scenes are the best, playing off each other like longtime BFFs. Obviously they had fun – something "Burlesque" needs more of. Some comes in the way of EXTRAS, where there's a goofy bloopers reel, a director's commentary and an alternate opening scene (one was enough).

'Love & Other Drugs': More like 'Sex & Other Things You Do With Your Privates'

It's about a pharmaceutical rep who, while shadowing a doctor, meets a closed-off, kinda crazy broad. She's got health issues; he's falling for her. So what. Let's get to what really matters – seeing Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway's bits hanging out. And for the record, they both have porn star bodies. But "Love & Other Drugs" has more going for it than some shagging, though there's lots of that too. Chemistry sparks between its hot leads, who cry, fight, laugh, have more sex (after they boinked in the backseat of a car in "Brokeback Mountain," this was like riding... a bike again) and as much as they fight it, love takes over. And then sex. And then love again. Add health-care industry commentary (it's evil!) and a silly, out-of-place subplot involving Gyllenhaal's brother (he's pervy!), and the identity-



plagued "Love & Other Drugs" sometimes feels like Thanksgiving dinner – it's just too much. And the stuffing (I said it) is like gorging yourself even after you're already full. Nice as they are to look at, and as much as boner jokes can be funny, it's too much of a good thing, getting in the way of the story's other fine assets – a tender tale with smarts, lots of fine acting

(Hathaway at her "Rachel Getting Married" best) and rom-com characters who are real enough to fall for. More softie than soft-core would've done "Love & Other Drugs" a huge favor. At least the decent EXTRAS don't over-dirty it. There are deleted scenes, in-character features and – oh, who cares. You're only picking this up for the sex.

Haunting musical opens new series at The Encore

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

There's one indisputable fact when it comes to Edgar Allan Poe: The 19th century American author was a literary genius whose works are still popular more than 170 years after his death. Ironically, however, it's his death that may be his most compelling mystery – and it serves as the springboard for a rather haunting musical that opens the new Encore on the Edge series at Dexter's Encore Musical Theatre.

Not content to stage only musicals that are safe entertainment for young and old alike, The Encore has branched out to include a handful of shows each season that push the

REVIEW

'Nevermore'

The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Thursday-Sunday through March 20.
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envelope, or may be aimed at theatergoers who like their musicals with less fluff and more adult content. Such a description certainly describes "Nevermore," which received a rousing standing ovation from an appreciative crowd on opening night. But in case you think adult content equates to

"f-bombs" tossed willy-nilly about the stage, you're wrong. Instead, "Nevermore" is an intriguing look at the psyche of a man whose inner demons he could never tame.

In the book by Grace Barnes, those demons take the physical form of five influential women who haunt Poe throughout his life: the mother who died when Poe was only 2 years old; the first love of his life whose father prevented them from pursuing a relationship; his 13-year-old cousin who became his wife and muse; her mother who was suspicious of Poe's intentions; and a hooker.

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



Dance: Not just for gay men

Eisenhower Ensemble company manager says you'd be surprised who's really behind the curtain

BY ANDREA POTEET

When the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble performs its "Motown in Motion" program, merging modern dance routines with some of the biggest hits to come out of Hitsville, audiences are always wowed.

But behind the well-rehearsed dance moves and beloved songs is an integral part of the company that won't be seen on stage.

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble company manager Kristi Faulkner has worked with the company since 2009, when she left Toledo in search of a job in dance after her longtime girlfriend landed a nursing position in Dearborn.

From the first interview, she said she knew the Southfield-based dance company was the place for her.

"I remember going in for my first interview and talking about my partner," Faulkner says. "I walked out going, 'Wow, I can't believe I was that candid about my personal life in this interview and it wasn't even a big deal.' They didn't even bat an eye."

Faulkner, 26, who has been an out lesbian her entire professional life, said she has never experienced any negative comments in the workplace. She has found the modern dance world is especially accepting of people from all backgrounds, but said people not associated with dance tend to view it as a field dominated by gay men.

"People almost have the stereotype that if a man is in dance, he's gay, and it's an accepted thing," Faulkner says. "But we don't really hear about females (in the field) being gay. There are people of all kinds in the dance world."

Faulkner began her love of dance when she enrolled in a tap class at age 3. From there, she went on to study a variety of other dances, from hip-hop to African and Korean styles, earning degrees from



'Motown in Motion'

2:30 p.m. March 20
Detroit Opera House
1526 Broadway St.
\$25-\$72

www.motopera.org

Bowling Green State University and a master's from the College at Brockport in New York along the way. Faulkner then worked as a videographer at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival before beginning as a special events manager with the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble.

Her current job has her handling bookings for the group and working closely with her favorite style of dance, she said.

"I love the individual style that can be put into it," Faulkner says. "With each dance form, you can insert your own flavor into it. You can create your own technique and your choreographic voice can be so unique."

The company will show off its unique choreography to music by some famous voices, including Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and the Supremes, when "Motown

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble company manager Kristi Faulkner has worked with the company since 2009 and says, "There are people of all kinds in the dance field."

in Motion" comes to the Detroit Opera House March 20.

Faulkner said the program, which has become one of the company's staples, is always a crowd pleaser.

"People just love it," she says. "The music itself is so fun, and the dancing is very entertaining. It's not what you would necessarily consider to be modern dance that sometimes people feel alienated from, it's just more of an entertaining program for people to enjoy."

Faulkner said what she most loves about her job is educating people about the company, which was founded in Detroit in 1991, and the high-quality dance performances that come from Michigan.

"I love being able to network with people all across the country and let them know that there's dance in Michigan, and it's alive and well," she says. "A lot of people think of really good dance only coming from New York or the West coast, but to see that Detroit has a voice of dance is really exciting to me."

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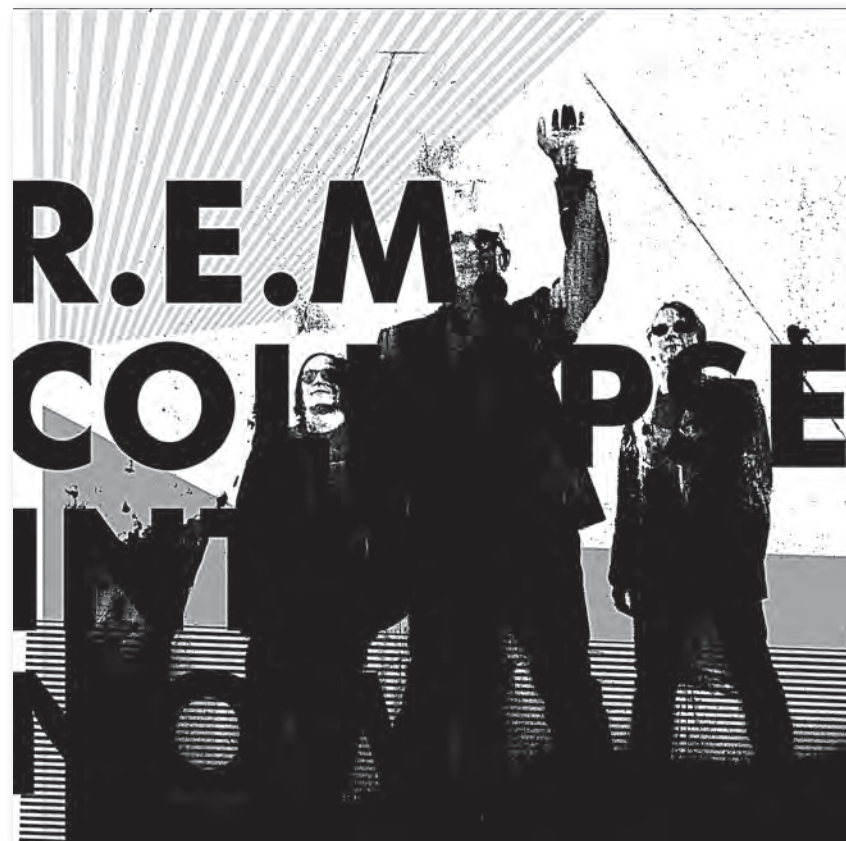
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R.E.M. goes back in time on 'Collapse Into Now.' Plus: Avril Lavigne, adult in training



R.E.M., 'Collapse Into Now'

R.E.M.'s first album since 2008's "Accelerate," a return to form for the misstepping rock icons, is as obvious as lead singer Michael Stipe's coming out – and that's fine. After adventurous detours into hard rock and hipster pop, the trio's 15th LP reaches back in time to their glory days with a lively post-punk revival and backtracking balladry. There's the pretty "Überlin," a free-spirited galvanizer that's every bit classic R.E.M.; even the one-two punch of "Discoverer" and "All the Best" bristle with '80s drive, though Jackknife Lee's pump-the-sound production doesn't equal energy... it equals headache. The album is basically split into two categories: loud and quiet, and the latter prevails. Stipe expresses a refreshing vulnerability on "Oh My Heart," but it's "Walk It Back" that really gets you with his almost-broken voice suggesting regret and that, well, everybody hurts. The most joyous moment is also one of their most embarrassing, as "It Happened Today" ridiculously works in "hip, hip, hooray" to rhyme with the song's name. It's no mistake, too, that it sounds like an Eddie Vedder track; he's on it. A wasted collaboration with Peaches on the head-rushy "Alligator Aviator Autopilot Antimatter" is almost just as lame. But tucked within these blunders is some of R.E.M.'s best work in years, a return to their prime that seems to say you can lose your religion, but you can also get it back. *Grade: B*



Avril Lavigne, 'Goodbye Lullaby'

We like our bratty babes – how else is Ke\$ha's clock still tick-tocking? But Avril Lavigne, who had it out for a rivaling "Girlfriend" on her last album, 2007's "The Best Damn Thing," was the resident whippersnapper before she got bumped. She's not exactly up for a throw-down with Ke\$ha on her fourth CD, moving in a no-nonsense direction that befits the life of a 26-year-old divorcee – meaning there are lots of pop-rock relationship rants, and bad words. Aww, our sk8r girl's all grown up. But that doesn't mean things aren't – like her big hit from 2002 – complicated. What could be deemed as notes-to-self songs, "Darlin'" and "Everybody Hurts" (not that one) might as well be the voices in her head, telling her everything's gonna be all right. But on "Goodbye Lullaby" everything's not, especially when Lavigne's left to the songwriting – and that's far too often, as her self-introspection comes off as serious... if you're Taylor Swift. A lack of depth, however, can't stop her savvy production team – including hit-maker Max Martin – from giving her word deficiency a workout. There's a cuteness to the feel-good groove of "Stop Standing There" and "Smile" that

can't be denied, and she puts her party-pooper aside for the catchy "What the Hell" – which would probably disgust Kelly "I Do Not Hook Up" Clarkson, another pop star who let growing up get in the way of good music. Lavigne just got luckier. *Grade: B-*

Also Out



Ellie Goulding, 'Lights'

That the best tracks are footnotes on the British import's debut album, the transcendent "Salt Skin" and an affecting cover of "Your Song," is both promising and disappointing. It leaves the folk-meets-pop formations (think dancier Dido) before it in the dark – though some of them, the disco-tinged "Animal" and anthemic "Starry Eyed," aren't half bad – but offers hope for a follow-up. Looking forward to it, Ellie.



Linda Eder, 'Now'

It's not hard to listen to Linda Eder's new album and hear Barbra Streisand. There's always been an elegance to Eder's tone, and the force of those high notes could pull down the stars – both do the Broadway powerhouse big favors while interpreting 12 Frank Wildhorn compositions. Even with same-y production throughout, Eder's voice ultimately sets the songs apart. It's "Glee" for grown-ups.



Sky Ferreira, 'As If!'

"Just don't be a closet freak," the 18-year-old pop tart dryly intones on the teaser's best track "Haters Anonymous," an Auto-Tune attack. The rest of her so-'90s-named five-song EP has her proclaiming that "Sex Rules" over an electro '80s charge, and trying on a ballad with "Traces" – and failing big time. But nothing sucks more than the silly "108," a song about dating a centenarian. As if!

Chris Azzopardi at chris@pridesource.com.

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As a road-tripping destination for LGBT travelers, there may not be a better place to go in Europe than Spain. It's relatively economical and easy to drive through this increasingly progressive country, that legalized gay marriage in 2005. It is dotted with cities and resorts popular with gay vacationers, and drives between key destinations often reveal stunning views of the Mediterranean, high desert mesas and snowcapped mountaintops.

I rented a car with a friend last summer and embarked on a two-week road-trip covering the eastern two-thirds of the country – I missed the regions near the Portuguese border and north along the Atlantic (including Bilbao, which I'm eager to visit). But with just 14 days, my friend and I knew we had to exercise. We still managed to visit about a dozen towns and cities, some for the afternoon and others for two or three nights. All told, we drove roughly the distance between San Diego and Vancouver. It was a great adventure - my first serious extended driving trip in Europe.

Here's a quick recap of our trip, which commenced in Barcelona in the northeast and ended in Malaga along the Costa del Sol, along with tips about planning a similar trip yourself to Spain or elsewhere in Europe.

We started in Barcelona, and I recommend beginning - and possibly ending – any European road trip with larger cities in which you plan to spend a few nights. Obviously, big cities have more international direct flights to choose from. They're also usually easy to get to explore without a car. In fact, as they tend to generate plenty of traffic and have expensive parking, they're better visited without a car. We spent our first three days in Barcelona without wheels (this included a day trip to the gay resort town of Sitges, which is extremely easy to reach by train), saving money and hassle.

From Barcelona our route across Spain looked a bit like a backwards "Z" – southwest to Madrid with a stop in Zaragoza (the heart of Aragonese Spain), then southeast to Valencia detouring for the afternoon to Cuenca, a stunning ancient city renowned for its 15th-century "hanging houses," one of which now contains a respected contemporary art museum.

Here you can see a big advantage to driving - it allowed us to make impromptu detours to a variety of places we'd never have considered visiting had we been traveling by plane or even by train or bus. Without having to adhere to timetables or figure out public transportation logistics, we were able to make the most of our time, and even choose some wonderfully scenic routes. It helps that I love both driving and navigating (for this I relied solely on GPS and Google Maps on my Verizon smart phone, which has global roaming - unlimited data plans cost about \$2 a day).

From Valencia we turned down the Costa Blanca to Alicante (spending that night in nearby Elche), then followed the sea through the only forgettable part of our trip - the bland, condo-infested resort of Torrevieja. But we soon cut inland and up through the spectacular Sierra Nevada mountains to reach Moorish grandeur of Granada, where we spent the better part of the following day exploring the fabled Alhambra Palace.

We then continued west through Spain's Andalusian countryside to the romantic city of Sevilla, and after two nights there cut southeast over the mountains to the Costa del Sol – stopping for a few hours in the picturesque cliff-top village of Ronda – before continuing to another of Spain's top gay vacation spots, Torremolinos. We spent two final nights in

Road-tripping across Spain



Granada's legendary Alhambra fortress clings to a hillside in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Photo: Andrew Collins

Malaga, a somewhat underrated coastal city of about 570,000 with a lively Old City rife with sidewalk cafes, shops, and a smattering of gay establishments.

Leading destination

Spain has become southern Europe's leading destination for LGBT vacationers, especially travelers from the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia and other northern European nations. Barcelona and Madrid are tops among the big cities for gay travel, with Seville equally popular, though less for its gay scene and more for its celebration of Andalusian culture and cuisine. Valencia and Malaga possess more modest gay scenes but are also well-worth visiting. Granada has a limited but fun gay scene for a city its size (240,000), and Alicante was probably the biggest surprise for me. This seaside resort city on the Costa Blanca supports an extremely vibrant gay following (especially with British visitors) and contains more LGBT nightlife options than much larger cities like Valencia or Seville.

Among resort communities, tiny Sitges and Torremolinos have gay bars, resorts, and vacation rentals galore, as do two other communities that you must reach by plane or boat: Gran Canaria, which is the second most populous of the Canary Islands, a 2.5-hour flight from Madrid, and the famed party haven of Ibiza, just an hour by plane from Barcelona.

As with Barcelona, a car is arguably more bother than benefit in big cities like Madrid, Seville and Valencia. If you're visiting these cities for more than two or three days, it's worth ditching your rental car at the airport, and renting a new one when you leave. In our case, we stuck the rental car in a garage when we arrived, and picked it up again upon departing.

The 25 to 30 euros per night we spent on parking was still a better deal to us than

constantly returning and renting new cars, which would have required taxi rides and wasting time getting to and from rental agencies. Also, it's cheaper to rent weekly than daily, so having the car for a full 11 days worked out more economically than had we rented different cars for two or three days at a time. Finally, having the one car with us the entire trip allowed us to leave some of our belongings in the trunk.

It's worth noting that car theft is a significant issue in Spain, but you're unlikely to be affected by it if you exercise prudence – park in secure garages, store nothing in a part of the car that's visible through the window, and keep no valuables in the car. We left only non-valuable belongings in our car when unattended, and we stored them in a concealed trunk.

Over the 11 days, we paid \$380 (including all taxes and a roughly \$70 surcharge for returning the car in a different city) for a mid-size car, which I booked on Expedia from Dollar Rent A Car a few weeks in advance. We saved money renting a manual-transmission car, not only because rates for these are far lower in Europe than for automatics, but because they get better gas mileage. It cost about \$50 to fill the tank. We did run into some steeply priced toll highways (about \$30 from Barcelona to Zaragoza, for example – they all take Visa and Mastercard), but many other major highways in Spain were toll-free.

We also paid extra for international auto insurance, which is a must. Most U.S. policies don't cover international car rentals, and credit card companies typically don't either, but it's important that you first contact these companies before you decide to rent a car to find out what sort of coverage you might already have. I purchased comprehensive auto insurance through Expedia for a very reasonable \$11 per day.

Including rental rates, insurance, gas, parking, and tolls, we spent a comparable amount

to what we would have for a similar road-trip in the United States

Again, road-tripping in foreign countries – especially those known for aggressive drivers, poor roads, or intense traffic – isn't for everybody. Spain is a relatively easy country to drive in. There's an extensive network of high-speed, limited-access highways, gas stations are prolific, and even in smaller town roads are usually in good shape. And if you're comfortable behind the wheel driving in new places, it's a great destination for road-tripping.

If driving is less your cup of tea, but you'd still like to tour multiple cities in Spain, consider flying among a few key destinations – such as Barcelona, Madrid, Seville and Malaga – and using buses or trains for side trips. Another option is to buy a Spain Eurail Pass (<http://www.eurail.com>), and rely on solely on trains to get around.

A final thought: we visited in July because it best suited our schedule, but summer is typically the most expensive time to fly to Spain from the U.S., and the weather can be stiflingly hot. In interior cities like Madrid and Seville, we routinely encountered daytime highs above 100 degrees, but with low humidity. Along the coast, daytime highs hovered around the 80s, but higher humidity made it feel hotter. Travel around Spain in fall or spring, and you'll likely enjoy milder weather, fewer crowds and better rates on flights, hotels and car rentals. Winter is a decent value in cities, but it's high season in coastal resort areas.

For more on visiting Spain, check out the official national tourism website (<http://www.spain.info>) along with the very helpful site on gay travel in Spain, <http://www.gayiberia.com>.

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.

'Sister' rises to the occasion yet again!

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

In hockey, three goals scored by an individual player during the course of a game is called a hat trick. I haven't a clue what you call a theater that produces three plays in a row based on the same character – except for maybe “brave.” But that's what the folks at Detroit's Gem Theatre scheduled this season, beginning last November with the Christmas-themed version of the popular “Late Night Catechism” series. Then came “Late Night Catechism 3: 'Til Death Do Us Part,” which closed March 6. And only days later the newest chapter in the “sister series” opened, “Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go To Heaven?,” which premiered simultaneously in theaters across the county.

So have we reached the saturation point, you might be asking yourself? Is too much of the good Sister too much of a heavenly thing?

Box office tallies will make the final determination, of course. But if the result

REVIEW

'Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go To Heaven?'

The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Wednesday-Sunday through April 17. \$19.50-\$34.50. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com



Nonie Breen is delightful in “Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go To Heaven?” at Detroit's Gem Theatre. Photo: The Gem Theatre

depends on quality alone, then the correct response is a resounding “no” – thanks to another sharp script by creator Maripat Donovan (with Marc Sylvia) and a fine and laugh-filled performance by Nonie Breen.

The formula remains pretty much the same. (Why break with success, right?) Sister is there to teach yet another adult catechism class, the subject of which is the Easter season. The first act is primarily a

stand-up comedy act, with some audience interaction to keep things lively. Then, after intermission, Sister leads a question-and-answer session about the Catholic faith, followed by a series of games to test your knowledge of Catholicism played by audience members chosen by Sister.

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

'The Piano Lesson' – heirloom or opportunity?

BY JOHN QUINN

A powerful voice in the American theater was silenced too soon when August Wilson, 60, died of liver cancer in 2005. But what a legacy he left us! His great achievement, the “Pittsburgh Cycle,” is a series of 10 plays, one for each decade of the 20th century. Through the struggles and triumphs of his unforgettable characters, he depicts the African-American experience within the broader culture. His political drive and gritty social realism puts him on the A-list of playwrights. The Performance Network is mounting his 1990 Pulitzer Prize winner, “The Piano Lesson,” a compelling drama of families, their heritage and legacies.

The plot is deceptively simple. It's Pittsburgh in 1936. An elaborately carved piano sits in the home Berniece Charles shares with her Uncle Doaker and daughter

REVIEW

'The Piano Lesson'

Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron, Ann Arbor. Thursday-Sunday through April 3. \$27-\$41. 734-663-0696. www.performancenetwork.org



Lisa Lauren Smith and Brian Marable in “The Piano Lesson” at Performance Network Theatre. Photo: Jude Walton

Maretha. Her ne'er-do-well brother, Boy Willie, arrives from Mississippi demanding she sell their family heirloom. A sharecropper, he wants his half of the proceeds to buy the land their family once worked as slaves. But this is no ordinary piano. The carvings are their great-grandfather's record of family history. It was the price of two ancestors sold in slavery. Its acquisition cost their father his life. Berniece plans to pass it along to Maretha and adamantly refuses to consider selling it. At its heart “The Piano

Lesson” is the story of a sister and brother, one looking back, one looking forward; one embracing her heritage, one rejecting it.

Both blessed and cursed are actors in a Wilson play. Every character has a story – deep, rich and complex.

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

1, 2, 3...what are we (still) fighting for?

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

It's only a passing reference, but the Civil War gets a mention in “Last of the Boys,” a play about the Vietnam War, and the implications are plain: Just because the fighting has ended doesn't mean the war is over.

“Last of the Boys” takes place in 1999, but Vietnam veterans Ben and Jeeter aren't done with it, nor is the war quite finished with them. Or with any of us, playwright Steven Dietz suggests.

I'm with him on that. Last year, crossing into the U.S at Port Huron, my American-born cousin who has lived in Toronto for decades, was grilled belligerently about whether he'd moved to Canada to dodge the draft. (He hadn't.)

It takes a while to figure out the relationship between Ben (Dave Davies) and Jeeter (Alan Madlane), perhaps as a

REVIEW

'Last of the Boys'

Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at 1515 Broadway, 1515 Broadway, Detroit. Thursday-Saturday through April 2. \$15-\$18, or pay-what-you-can. 313-408-7269. www.magentagiraffe.org



Dave Davies and Matt Lockwood in Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company's “Last of the Boys.” Photo: Charles Nowak

metaphor for how hard it is to understand a complicated situation like a war. Or perhaps the playwright could have done better. Those same possibilities apply to Frannie Shepherd-Bates who directed this Magenta Giraffe Theatre production.

The play opens with Jeeter chastising Ben for having missed his own father's funeral. Could Jeeter, who looks significantly older and more road-weary than Ben, be Ben's uncle or a close friend of Ben's father? No, the two men are supposed

to be contemporaries.

And clean-cut Ben is in as much distress as scruffy Jeeter, if not more, which is where both the play and the production take off.

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

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings

Western Michigan University's LGBTQA student organization OUTspoken is presenting their largest fundraising event, the annual OUTspoken Spring Drag Show. The organization has collected a number of queens and kings from the WMU area to give students a show they will not soon forget.

This year the student group aims for a darker show, using a medieval themed slogan "Out of the dungeon, get your DRAG-on." OUTspoken will also present a performance by Illinois-based hip-hop/dance group "Hip Hop Connxion" at the show's half-time.

OUTspoken's Spring Drag Show, at 7 p.m. March 25, is in the East Ballroom of the WMU Bernhard Center. Entry costs \$5. For more information, Facebook "OUTspoken Drag Show"



2010 OUTspoken Spring Drag Show. Photo courtesy of Robert Youngs Jr.



Music & More

Baroque art and music may have been solely European creations in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, but today the compositions of Pachelbel and Bach are recognized and enjoyed throughout the world. In 1990 for this reason, Japanese artistic director and conductor Masaaki Suzuki founded the Bach Collegium Japan, an orchestra which performs period pieces from the Baroque period.

The BCJ has acquired a superb reputation, performing in Amsterdam, London, Paris, Berlin as well as two concerts in New York's Carnegie Hall. This year, BCJ tours America, performing one of the most highly regarded classical pieces of all time: Bach's Mass in B minor.

BCJ performs at 8 p.m. March 24 in

the University Musical Society located at 825 N. University Ave. in Ann Arbor. Tickets are available at ums.org.

Theater

The University of Michigan Opera Theatre will present Mark Adamo's highly acclaimed opera "Little Women." Based on the beloved novel by Louisa May Alcott, Adamo's "Little Women" plays 7:30 p.m. March 24, 8 p.m. March 25 and 26, and 2 p.m. March 27 at Mendelssohn Theatre in Ann Arbor. Associate Professor of Music Robert Swedberg directs.

"'Little Women' is wonderfully modern because of the way it is set," said Swedberg. "It's a very theatrical piece, more so than other operas. It will remind you of a Broadway show in the way it flows....For those who have never had this experience, 'Little Women' is a great first opera."

Tickets are \$24 and \$18 reserved seating (students: \$10 with ID). Order by phone: 734-764-2538.



OUTINGS

Thursday, March 17

A Guide to Building an LGBT Friendly Practice, 12 p.m. Charisse Gencyuz, M.D. will discuss what health professionals can do to make their practice more welcoming and inclusive of LGBT patients. Spectrum Center & BGLAM, University of Michigan, **Ann Arbor**. 734-763-4186. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Flames on Ice, 8 p.m. Open LGBT Pride skate night. Commission has purchased the tickets for entering the facility. Skate rental under \$5. Spectrum Center & LGBT Commission, University of Michigan, **Ann Arbor**. 734-763-4186. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Friday, March 18

Caring for Transgender Patients, 12 p.m. Antonia Caretto, Ph.D., a Psychologist in Farmington Hills Michigan, will discuss various aspects of caring for transgender individuals. She has 25 years of clinical and research experience working with children, adolescents, and adults with gender variant identities. Spectrum Center & BGLAM, University of Michigan, **Ann Arbor**. 734-763-4186. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Is it Safe to Tell, 6 p.m. Workshop for getting a sense of knowing if it's safe to open up to someone about having HIV and if the time is right and other related topics. RSVP via phone or e-mail. Aids Partnership Michigan, 2751 E. Jefferson Suite 301, **Detroit**. 313-446-9820. Cpeeples@aidspartnership.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Girls' View. In this collection of poignant and amusing award-winning shorts, diverse views of lesbian life expose the angst and joy of teen love, mother-daughter relationships, being different, monogamy and unrequited love. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Saturday, March 19

LGBT Discussion Group, 7 p.m. Discussion topics vary from session to session, but all revolve around some aspect of being a sexual and/or gender minority or an ally to the LGBT communities. The Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center, 303 S. Saginaw St. 365 University Center, **Flint**. 810-766-6606. umflint.edu/lgbt

Peace Prom, 8 p.m. Jackson High School's LGBTQ Prom. Masquerade theme. Age: high school freshmen-20. Tickets:\$5 purchasable at the door. Photos:2 for \$5. All guests must have school ID or state ID/license. St. John United Church, 801 S. Mechanic St., **Jackson**. 517-962-3119. cylorsrainbow@hotmail.com

Sunday, March 20

Dream Girls: The Drag-Tastic Musical, 5 p.m. Drag Queens Gone Wild's encore performance of the Dream Girls show. Spirall Lansing, 1247 Center St., **Lansing**. 517-371-3221. spiraldancebar.com

Wednesday, March 23

LGBT in the Park, 5:15 p.m. Ongoing social group for the whole LGBT community. Discussions on social events and more. Hazel Park Library, Nine Mile Road and John R Road, **Hazel Park**. 248-460-3251. Jffryoliver@yahoo.com

Caring Caregiver, 6:30 p.m. A support group for anyone who is caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia. This group is open to family, friends, spouses and partners. Alzheimer's Association and Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

LGBTIQ Support Group, 7 p.m. An inclusive environment for all gender who are healing from domestic and/or sexual assault. YWCA of KGLRC, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234.

Thursday, March 24

A Time to Build Up, 12 p.m. This conversation will explore the role of faith and racial justice organizing in the LGBT movement. Grand Valley State University LGBT Resource Center, 1 Campus Drive, **Allendale**. 616-331-2530. gvsu.edu/lgbtrc

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. kglrc.org

Friday, March 25

Spring Drag Show, 6 p.m. OUTspoken's annual spring Drag Show. Ticket: \$5. OUTspoken-WMU, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., **Kalamazoo**. outspoknwmu.webs.com

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: The Kids Are All Right. Nic and Jules are in a long term, committed, loving but by no means perfect relationship. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Saturday, March 26

New Volunteer Meeting, 2 p.m. Requires an RSVP. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Black Gay Men Retreat, 8 a.m. Exploration of spirituality, sexuality and community among SGL men of African descent. Workshops, African-inspired spiritual affirmations, food and entertainment. 18+ to attend. Adodi Detroit, 1416 Hill Street, **Ann Arbor**. 734-846-6545. sites.google.com/site/adodidetroit

Sujal Parikh Memorial Symposium on Health and Social Justice, 8 a.m. Dr. Peter Mugenyi, one of the worlds foremost HIV/AIDS specialists, and Sujal Parikhs provide health training and educational curricula as agents of social change, health equity, and innovations in global engagement. UM Center for Global Health, 109 Zina Pitcher Place, **Ann Arbor**. sujalsymposium.org

Glamour Ball & Banquet, 7 p.m. Socializing, open bar, buffet and DJ Pamela. Celebrating the 33rd Anniversary of Crossroads. Crossroads, 6015 E. 10 Mile Road, **Warren**. 248-987-2291. crossroadsml.com

Metro Detroit LGBT Softball League Party, 8 p.m. MDL's monthly party. 928 W McNichols, **Detroit**. 313-863-3934. mdsl.org

MUSIC & MORE

BENEFITS/SOCIAL EVENTS

Affirmations, "The Big Bash 2011: Cirque du Soiree" Featuring aerial performers as a part of the evening's entertainment. Tickets: \$150-\$250. Diamond Center Ballroom, Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River, Novi. 6 p.m. March 19. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org



"Kawasaki's Rose"

Michigan State University Museum, "MSU Museum Wine Tasting Benefit" 16th annual Wine Tasting Benefit features more than 150 award-winning selections, independently owned wineries, Michigan vineries, importers and industry professionals on-site. Attendees will be able to place orders that evening at special event pricing thanks to Goodrich's Shoprite, Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, Harrison Road at Michigan Ave., East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. March 25. 517-355-2370. museum.msu.edu/Events/WineTasting

CLASSICAL

Bach Collegium Japan, "Bach's Mass in B Minor" Founded in 1990 by Masaaki Suzuki with the aim of introducing Japanese audiences to period instrument performance of great works of the Baroque period, the Bach Collegium Japan comprises both orchestra and chorus. Tickets:\$10-\$65. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 8 p.m. March 24. 734-763-3333. ums.org

MSU College of Music, "Cello Plus" Features the music of Schubert, Haydn, Shostakovich, and Bach performed by faculty artists, special guest artists, and student ensembles. Tickets: \$10. Music Building Auditorium, West Circle Drive, East Lansing. March 19-March 25. 517-353-5340. music.msu.edu/events/CelloPlus_2011.php

CONCERTS

Caesars Windsor, "Celtic Crossroads" Critically acclaimed show that incorporates seven world-class musicians who play over twenty instruments on stage, all the while exploding with rhythms of exciting Irish dance. Tickets: \$15. 377 Riverside Drive East, Windsor. 2 p.m. March 24, 8 p.m. March 24. 800-991-7777. caesarswindsor.com

Caesars Windsor, "Bob Newhart" With a 50-year career that spans the stage and screen, this decorated comedian, actor and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences hall of famer will amuse audiences with his signature comedic style. Tickets: \$25. Caesars Windsor, 377 Riverside Drive, Windsor. 9 p.m. March 26. 800-991-7777. caesarswindsor.com

MotorCity Casino, "Little Anthony & The Imperials" Tickets:\$35-38. Available online. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. March 25. 866-752-9622. olympiaentertainment.com

Wharton Center, "Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings" Instrumental ensemble primarily composed of musicians from the Detroit Symphony and Michigan Opera Theatre orchestras. Tickets:\$20. Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 3 p.m. March 27. 1-800-WHARTON. whartoncenter.com

DANCE

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, "Motown in Motion" Celebrating two decades of dance in Detroit with Motown in Motion, a production uniting music and dance in an evening of Motown hits. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, **Detroit**. 2:30 p.m. March 20. 313-237-7464. ede-dance.org

N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art Collective, "Giants of Jazz Avant Garde" Bassist Henry Grimes & guitarist A. Spencer Barefield, perform two shows. Tickets: \$25. Cash bar. N'Namdi Center exhibits one of the finest private collections of African American art in the world. The Black Box, 52 E. Forest & Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 19, 10 p.m. March 19. 313-891-2514. grimesbarefield.eventbrite.com

Olympia Entertainment, "KEM's 2011 U.S."Intimacy" tour" Special guests El DeBarge and Ledisi. Tickets:\$39.50-\$88 Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 25. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment, "Yanni" Return to the USA and Canada. Tickets:\$28.50-\$68.50 Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. March 27. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

The Majestic, "Jacuzzi Boys" This is raucous pop of the murkiest order-jangling guitars, caveman drums, and songs of sex and seashells, dead animals and birthday cakes. Cover:\$8. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 9 p.m. March 19. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

The Whiting, "Johnny Winter" Special guest The Rusty Wright Band. Tickets:\$15-\$37. 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. March 25. 8102377333. TheWhiting.com

FILM & VIDEO

Ann Arbor Film Festival, Screenings are \$9, \$95.00 Full Festival Pass, \$55.00 Weekend Pass. Michigan Theater and other Various Venues, Ann Arbor. March 22-March 27. 734-995-5356. aafilmfest.org

Detroit Film Theater, "Kawasaki's Rose" Considers the ways in which the past never stops informing the present. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. March 4-March 20. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, "Hydra Decapita and Last Angel of History" "Hydra Decapita:Series of recordings that imagines a fictional world system entitled Drexciya, populated by the subaquatic descendants of Africans drowned by slavers during the Middle Passage. Last Angel of History:Examines the relationships between Pan-African culture, science fiction, intergalactic travel, and rapidly progressing computer technology. MOCAD, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. March 19. 313-832-6622. mocadetroit.org

OTHER

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

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, "Ladies' Night Out and Fashion Show" New season with on-trend updates to its classic profile. Tickets: \$35 general, \$45 VIP. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 South Park Street, Kalamazoo. 6:30 p.m. March 23. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Murder is Announced \$15-show only, \$30 for dinner and show; Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m., with the doors opening at 6 p.m. Starlight Dinner Theatre at Waverly East Middle School, 3131 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing. Through March 19. 517-243-6040. starlightdinnertheatre.com

Deuce Free. Center Stage Jackson at The Bon Ton Room, 3017 Wildwood Ave., Jackson. 8 p.m. March 26. 517-787-6733. centerstagejackson.org

Inherit The Wind \$15. Players Guild of Dearborn, 21730 Madison St., Dearborn. Through March 27. 313-561-8587. playersguildofdearborn.org

On Golden Pond \$13-15. Avon Players, 1185 Washington, Rochester. March 18-April 2. 248-608-9077. avonplayers.org

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee \$18-\$20. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. March 18-April 10. 248-541-6430. stagecrafters.org

The Tropical Pickle \$16-\$18. St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild, 400 Lone Pine Rd., Bloomfield Hills. Through March 27. 248-737-3587. StDunstansTheatre.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Doubt \$10-\$12. WSU Studio Theatre at Hilberry Rehearsal Studio, 480 W. Hancock St., 4th Floor, Detroit. March 24-April 2. 313-577-2972. wsushows.com

Little Women \$10-24. University of Michigan University Opera Theatre at Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. March 24-27. 734-764-2538. music.umich.edu

Pentecost \$5-\$10. Lansing Community College Performing Arts at Dart Auditorium, 500 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. March 25-April 2. 517-483-1488. lcc.edu/hpa/events

Rent \$5-\$20. The University Theatre at Shaw Theatre, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. March 17-27. 269-387-6222. wmutheatre.com

PROFESSIONAL THEATER

3 Redneck Tenors-A New Musical Adventure \$15-\$40. Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. 8 p.m. March 26. 269-387-2300. millerauditorium.com

A Catered Affair \$29-\$33. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. March 25-April 10. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

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

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

Ding Dong \$24-\$39. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. March 16-April 10. 248-377-3300. ticketmaster.com

Equus \$25. The Blackbird Theatre, 325 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. Through March 19. 734-332-3848. blackbirdtheatre.org

Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomey.net

Hylomorph \$20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Through March 19. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change \$30-\$35 for show only; \$79.95-\$89.85 per couple for dinner & show packages. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. March 23-April 10. 248-348-4448. andiamonovitheatre.com

Kimberly Akimbo \$18-\$24. Stormfield Theatre, 201 Morgan Lane, Lansing. Through March 27. 517-372-0945. stormfieldtheatre.org

Last of the Boys \$15-\$18, and pay-what-you-can. Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at 1515 Broadway, 1515 Broadway, Detroit. March 11-April 2. 313-408-7269. magentagiraffe.org

Les Miserables \$39 and above. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. March 22-April 3. 1-800-982-2787. broadwayindetroit.com

Love and Cheap Wine \$17. Reservations required. Van Buren Street Theatre, 701 N. Van Buren St., Bay City. Through April 23. 989-893-9399. vanburenstreettheatre.com

Nevermore \$22. The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through March 20. 734-268-6200. theencoremusicaltheatre.org

Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go To Heaven? \$19.50-\$34.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Through April 17. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

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

The Broadway Onstage Murders \$16. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Rd., Eastpointe. Through March 19. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

The Cocktail Hour Previews March 24-25 (\$20). \$26-\$30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. March 24-April 30. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

The Godfadda Workout \$30-\$35 for show only, \$79.95-\$89.95 per couple for dinner & show. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Through March 20. 248-348-4448. andiamonovitheatre.com

The Piano Lesson \$27-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron, Ann Arbor. Through April 3. 734-663-0696. performancenetwork.org

The Tempest \$18. UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit. March 25-April 10. 313-993-3270. theatre.udmercy.edu

Thursdays at Go Comedy! \$5-\$10. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through March 31. 248-327-0575. gocomey.net

Wednesdays at Go Comedy! Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomey.net

While We Were Bowling Previews March 17-20 & 24 (\$15). Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. March 17-April 17. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Beauty and the Beast Jr. \$5-\$10. Warren Civic Theatre at Warren Community Center, 5460 Arden, Warren. March 18-20. 586-268-8400. warrencivic.org

James and the Giant Peach \$5. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre's Junior Theatre at Washtenaw County Community College Theater, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. March 24-27. 734-973-3300. a2ct.org

Jigsaw Jones: The Case of the Class Clown \$14. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 1:30 p.m. March 20. 734-668-TIME. michtheater.org

Lyle the Crocodile \$7. Kalamazoo Civic Youth Theatre at Parish Theater, 426 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. March 18-26. 269-343-1313. kazooicivic.com

Night of the Pterodactyls \$5-\$7. All-of-us Express Children's Theatre at Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. March 25-April 3. 517-482-5700. RiverwalkTheatre.com

Paintin' the Fence \$5. Tibbits Young Audiences at Tibbits Opera House, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. March 24 -27. 517-278-6029. tibbits.org

Peter Rabbit \$8-\$12. Wild Swan Theatre at Towsley Auditorium, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. March 23-26. 734-995-0530. wildswantheatre.org

Purim Shpiel \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetArt at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Saturdays through March 26. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

The Maker of Illusions \$15-\$30. Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 2:30 p.m. March 26. 313-237-7464. wmotcc.org

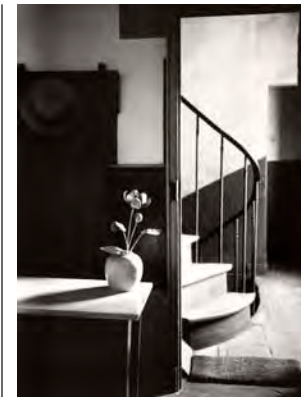
The Very Hungry Caterpillar \$20 adult, \$10 children. Music Hall, 350 madison St., Detroit. March 26. 313-887-8500. musichall.org

AUDITIONS

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE – auditions for "Miss Saigon," April 2-3, 734-971-2228; **KALAMAZOO CIVIC THEATRE** – auditions for its Senior Class Reader's Theatre production of "You Can't Take It With You," March 27-28, 269-343-2280; **KALAMAZOO CIVIC YOUTH THEATRE** – auditions for "The Hundred Dresses," March 27-28, 269-343-2280.

ART 'N' AROUND

Detroit Artist's Market, "Annual Scholarship Awards and Exhibition" DAM has a nearly 80 year history of supporting emerging artists turning turn the spotlight on the best new artists emerging from the area's arts programs. This year students will be selected from the Cranbrook Art



"Chez Montrian," 1926, by Andre Kertesz

Academy. Detroit Artist's Market, 4719 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. March 4-April 9. 313-832-8540. detroitartistsmarket.org

Detroit Institute of Arts, "An Intuitive Eye: Andre Kertesz Photographs, 1914-1969" This exhibition celebrates the photographic achievements of Andre Kertesz, whose groundbreaking work achieved a delicate balance between technical perfection and lyrical beauty. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. Nov. 24-April 10. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts, "Fakes, Forgeries and Mysteries" Timed tickets required. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. Feb. 25-April 10. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts, "Promises of Freedom" A comprehensive collection of African American art featuring more than 60 works by artists including Charles White, Jacob Lawrence, and Romare Bearden. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Feb. 25-April 17. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

Gallery Project, "Mine Yours" A multimedia exhibit in which 31 local, regional and national artists explore issues of possession, boundaries, privacy and encroachment. Gallery Project, 215 South Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. Feb. 25-April 3. 734-997-7012. thegalleryproject.com

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, "The Wyeths: America's Artists" Exhibition of works by three generations of artists in the Wyeth family. Tickets:\$4-\$8. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. March 1-April 17. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, "Familiar Surroundings" This exhibition of works drawn from the permanent collection highlights other American originals who ignored the dictates of modern art and developed personal styles rooted in their local environment. Included are works by John Marin, Martin Lewis, and Reginald Marsh. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. March 1-April 10. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, "Ukiyo-e Redux: Contemporary Japanese Prints" Inspired by the strong tradition of Ukiyo-e prints of the 18th and 19th centuries, but infused with a modern sensibility, contemporary Japanese prints have flourished as a vibrant art form throughout the 20th century. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 South Park Street, Kalamazoo. March 1-April 23. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kresge Art Museum, "American Roads" Assembled as a group in 1981, explores AmericanXXs mythological love affair with "the road." Twenty photographs featuring images of American highways, streets and roadside attractions continuing a tradition pioneered by Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange of documenting the American landscape and countryside with empathy and insight. Kresge Art Center, Corner of Auditorium & Physics Roads, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 1-April 17. 517-353-9834. artmuseum.msu.edu

Kresge Art Museum, "Department of Art & Art History Master of Fine Arts Exhibition" Eight Master of Fine Arts degree candidates exhibit installations in painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking and graphic design. The exhibition marks the culmination of a three-year MFA degree program that emphasizes extensive creative exploration under the supervision of a faculty guidance committee. As part of the MFA curriculum, the candidates work closely with curators and staff at Kresge Art Museum to plan, promote, and mount the show. Corner of Auditorium & Physics Road, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 19-April 3. 517-353-9834. artmuseum.msu.edu

Kresge Art Museum, "Opening Reception: 2011 Master of Fine Arts Exhibition" Meet and mingle for the eight MFA candidates from the Department of Art & Art History at MSU whose art work will be showcased in this annual exhibition. Kresge Art Center, Corner of Auditorium & Physics Roads, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7 p.m. March 18. 517-353-9834. artmuseum.msu.edu

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, "Puzzles of Expectation" The work of Deborah Orloff and Eric Troffkin. The Art Gallery, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. March 8-April 13. 586-286-2089. Macombcenter.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, "Soft Scapes with Annica Cuppetelli" Family Day: Cranbrook graduate Annica Cuppetelli hosts this workshop for children and their parents, creating a dimensional art experience with fabric. 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 12 p.m. March 20. 313-832-4665. mocadetroit.org

Planterra & Furnace Design Studio, "Botanical Glass Exhibition" Works of glass art mixed with collections of exotic and unusual botanicals to dazzle visitors of the new Planterra Conservatory. The exhibition, jointly produced by Planterra and Furnace Design Studio, offers breathtaking display of color, living foliage and light. Lectures, tours, and videos offered. Planterra Conservatory, 7315 Drake Road, West Bloomfield Township. 9 a.m. March 25. 248-661-1515. botanicalglass.org

Riverside Arts Center, "Memory' Exhibit" A community art show. More information online. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. March 13-March 26. 734-480-ARTS. riversidearts.org

Swords into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery, "Street Smart" Born and raised in the city, Detroitier Byron Reed's works depict daily life both current and in the hey day of Paradise Valley. 33 E. Adams St., Detroit. March 8-April 16. 313-963-7575.

University of Michigan Museum of Art, "Life in Ceramics: Five Contemporary Korean Artists" This exhibition focuses on five artists with well established reputations in Korea, whose visually stunning ceramic objects acknowledge and engage with Korean clay traditions yet embody innovative, unexpected art making and conceptual approaches. 525 S. State St, Ann Arbor. April 1-June 26. 734-647-0524. umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art, "Photoformance: An Empathic Environment" This new multimedia installation brings together the work of Ernestine Ruben, experimental photographer of the human form; Monica Ponce de Leon, architect of highly sensual, muscular, and poetic structures; and Peter Sparling, choreographer of new movement forms; with music by Erik Santos, composer of scores for a wide range of musical ensembles and Butoh performances. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St, Ann Arbor. March 1-May 15. 734-647-0524. umma.umich.edu

Between THE Lines™

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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

Splitting the costs

Q. My boyfriend and I are making vacation plans together. We are planning a road trip together, traveling down to the Florida Keys. We will be gone for four weeks. We did a road trip about three years ago and the problem was that I ended up paying far more than my share of expenses. It seemed that his credit card was never handy, so I would pay. I didn't share my anger with him at the time, but I don't want it to happen again.

Unlike before, we currently live together and share all the monthly expenses and we make about the same salary so it isn't like he doesn't have the money to pay his share. How do I make sure he pays his part without seeming like I'm cheap or nagging the whole trip by constantly telling him I paid the last time?

Shallow Pockets

A. If I were you, I would definitely come up with a "split-the-expenses vacation payment plan" before I would even pack one pair of khaki shorts. Since you seem to have worked out a plan for household expenses, it would seem a likely extension of your financial arrangement to figure out how this trip is going to be managed, monetarily. For instance, you could both put "X" amount of money in a pot for food, shelter and car expenses. For all other personal expenses, each of you pays for himself. That's just one idea. When you do have your financial planning for vacation, be sure to listen to your boyfriend's needs and ideas, working out what works for both of you.

P.S. Don't bring up your anger from last time; just make it work this time. Bringing up anger that happened three years ago could detour your Florida vacation before you even get in the car.

Looking for the right woman

Q. I am a 52-year-old woman who wants to know how to get into a long-term relationship with another woman. I was married for 16 years when my husband died. I have known since I was young

that I was attracted to women but I married and had children just because that seemed to be the right thing to do at the time. I guess that was just what I was raised to do and I wanted children so I just got married. I now have two grown children that are very accepting of me being a lesbian.

I've been told that I'm a good-looking woman. I have a healthy lifestyle and keep my body in pretty good shape. I love to try new things and have many interests of my own. I think I'm pretty intelligent, and people find me friendly and fairly outgoing. I'm loyal to my friends and value them. I know that I have something to offer to another person, along with accepting kids.

Anyway, I feel like I gave up a lot of my life and now I want to be true to myself. I want to be in a long-term, loving relationship. My problem is that even though I've done quite a lot of dating, I can't seem to find a person that wants the same. Does that exist? And where do I look?

Lots to Offer

A. Yes, I know there are women out there that want long-term relationships. I hear from women all the time who are looking for a relationship that is permanent. If I were looking for a relationship, whether it be long term or just dating, I would volunteer at places that interest me. That way when I found someone I wanted to date we would have a starting point. When you are meeting women, look for friends. If something long term develops, that's great; if not, you have a new friend. When dating, try to enjoy the dating experience and not worry about whether this is the woman that you want to spend the rest of your life with; otherwise, you may come off as "desperate" and scare people off.

Jody's on Facebook! Find her by searching "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 jodyvalley@hotmail.com. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly.

The Big Bash

March 19, 2011

Cirque du Soiree

Ticket info:



Big Bash 2011: Cirque du Soiree VIP Admission - \$250

Diamond Center Ballroom
Rock Financial Showplace
46100 Grand River | Novi, MI

Tickets available at
www.GoAffirmations.org

For more information, contact Jeannine Simpson at (248) 398-7105 or JSimpson@GoAffirmations.org

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Find the Fake Ad Contest



BTL is Changing it Up!

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: **"The Power of Words"** (find out why by reading the article on page 6)
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 The Lines

Think ahead, Gemini!

BY JACK FERTIG

A Mercury-Saturn opposition normally sharpens minds as well as tongues, but with Neptune in hard aspect to both planets, misguided bitchiness and ill-considered control games are a lot more likely. Examine your own anxieties. They are too easily projected onto others.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Where is your partnership going (or where would one come from?). Ideas from the top of your head are probably wrong. Take time to figure out why. Well-meaning friends stumble in their efforts to assure you; give them credit for trying.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Being a raging control queen will not relieve the stress; getting some professional help could. Relax. Meditate. Sometimes doing nothing is indeed the best answer. At least pause long enough to consider process and priorities.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Your friends are sure to lead you astray if you give them half a chance. It could make a terrific adventure if you're ready to pay the price. Think ahead, but remember: the biggest regrets are the things you didn't do.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): The best way to keep secrets is not to have any. Second best strategy is to keep your attention elsewhere. You're probably exaggerating threats from someone close to you. Staying focused on goals will help you keep perspective.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Let other people's crazy ideas be your intellectual and creative challenges. Resisting the urge to correct them can be the biggest challenge. A touch of surrealism can be fun. If practicality is necessary, ask how those wild ideas would work rather than insisting they can't.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Whatever you say is likely to come out sounding dirtier and more emphatic than you intend. That can be great for fantasy role-play, but can get awkward in real life. Listen between the lines for what's really important.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Enjoy some twisted fun now, but trying to make it last will get more twisted, less fun. Criticism to or from your partner may be more

projection than either of you wants to admit. Do not start or end a relationship now.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Worries about your home and family are exaggerated, but not entirely out of place. Meditation will help you keep perspective. Clean up what you can, admit where you were wrong, and let the rest take care of itself.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Your mouth seems determined to get you into trouble. Stick to the facts and be ready to accept lots of correction. Creative writing is safer than speaking. Just don't let anyone read it until you have a chance to edit and review – later!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Criticism at home can challenge you to re-evaluate your career goals. Are they consistent with your ideals? Some adjustments may be necessary, but do not doubt yourself! You need to stay especially sharp now.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Whatever you say is too easily misunderstood. Hone your arguments on screen or paper where you can review your own sympathies and see how they affect your logic, or vice versa.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Is sex more than a delicious distraction? How does it fit in your relationships, reflect your values, and connect you to your deeper self? Take time to meditate, to understand better whatever gaps you may be trying to fill.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 38

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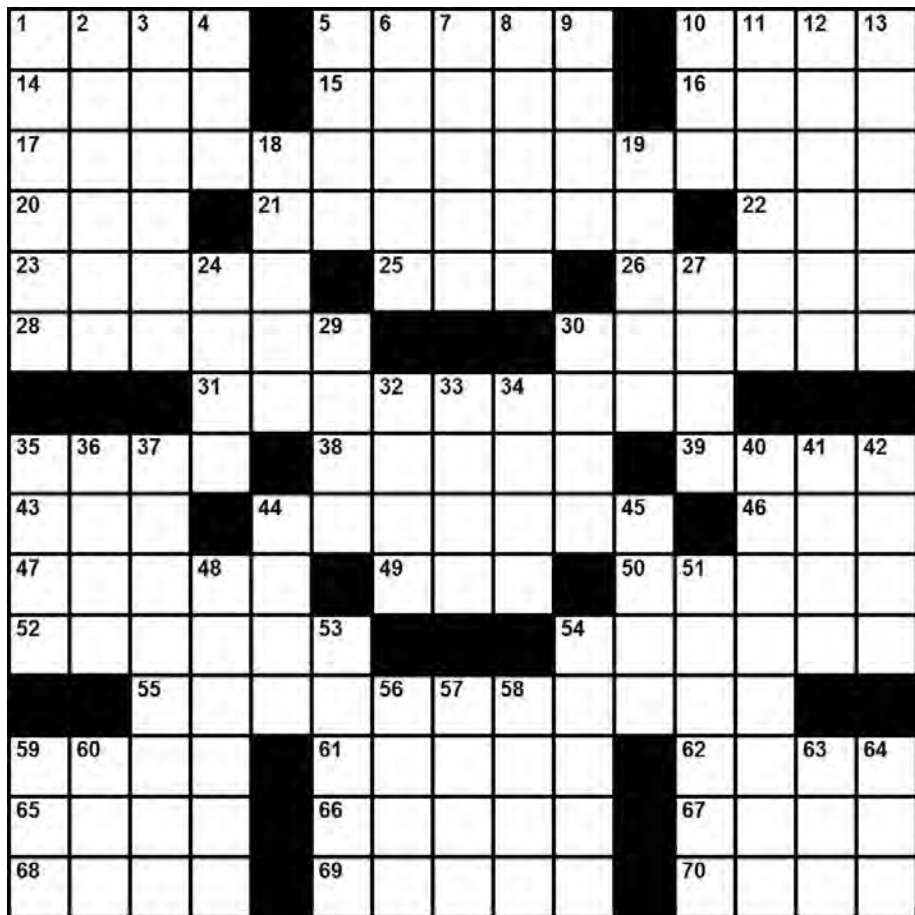
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Star-cross'd Garden Dwarfs

Across

- 1 Went down (on)
- 5 Sleek swimmer
- 10 Elizabeth of "Transamerica"
- 14 Burning software
- 15 Safari head
- 16 River of Ulrichs' country
- 17 Movie about garden dwarfs
- 20 Contemporary of Bela
- 21 Kind of reunion
- 22 Reagan prog.
- 23 John of "Gay Sex Quotes"
- 25 Wander (about)
- 26 Kelly Clarkson and Will Young, e.g.
- 28 Formal order
- 30 Dark red gem
- 31 His music is featured in 17-Across
- 35 Free verse "rhyme scheme"
- 38 News source of old
- 39 Garfield's whipping boy
- 43 Gamboling area

- 46 Gay neighborhood of New York
- 47 Off-rd. transport
- 48 Bette's "All About Eve" role
- 49 Atlantic crosser of old
- 50 Furnish food for festivities
- 52 Role played by a man named Julia
- 54 Queen of mysteries
- 55 What 31-Across called himself on "Today"
- 59 Slightly
- 61 Bear
- 62 Tool points
- 65 Jerry Herman musical
- 66 Joan of Arc keepsake
- 67 As to
- 68 Kind of pressure
- 69 Little bikers in a Gay Pride march
- 70 Top target

Down

- 1 Avoided going straight
- 2 Poe poem

- 3 Song by 51-Across
- 4 Member of an average threesome
- 5 It's in the winds
- 6 Sound from guitarist Townshend
- 7 Patty Hearst's SLA name
- 8 Rear follower
- 9 Indian chief
- 10 VIP of DC, e.g.
- 11 Light heavyweight
- 12 Tease
- 13 Keith Haring, for example
- 18 Waters of the blues
- 19 Heep of fiction
- 24 Rep in the 'hood
- 27 Bond's first foe
- 29 Emulate Paul Cadmus
- 30 "Myra Breckinridge" writer Vidal
- 32 Shaft output
- 33 Zips
- 34 Fool around
- 35 Coloratura Gluck
- 36 Bit of sweat

- 37 Competition with four queens
- 40 "You busy Friday night?" e.g.?
- 41 Caligula's way
- 42 "Climb ___ Mountain"
- 44 Lake of Lombardy
- 45 Sometime defender of gay rights
- 48 Mate of a heterosexual goose
- 51 Gay marriage advocate Morisette
- 53 On the ball
- 54 Boardroom VIPs
- 56 Heed a master
- 57 Liquid ___
- 58 Nurse Jackie, protrayer
- 59 Part of Etheridge's equipment
- 60 ___ kwon do
- 63 Cross-dresser's padding site
- 64 Group of games, for Mauresmo

Solution on 37

Pet of the Week

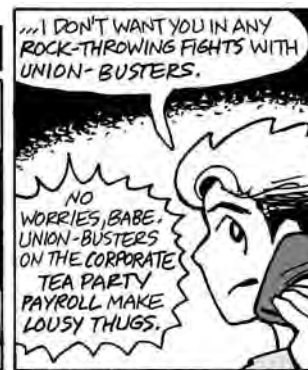


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The La-Z-Boy

Here's some advice: You need a restaurant manager as a close friend. Why? Because when you go to his restaurant, he'll tell the chef to send out all sorts of delightful little plates of things and an extra dessert or two, none of which you will pay for. You have 10 lawyer friends; they'll all charge you. Twenty doctors? Not one lousy discount. But one restaurant manager? Suddenly you're Auntie Mame – "Life's a banquet, and most poor suckers are starving to death!"

Our Fire Island housemates, Ian and Frankie, are both (as Ian put it) "lifers in food service." Ian's the quiet one, Frankie the Big Flaming Mary. Dan and I had dinner last week at Frankie's restaurant, Capryce. We ordered the pumpkin soup; out came peekytoe crab minitacos from the chef. Dan ordered the hanger steak, I the paella, but we also got a chef-sent plate of glazed duck, foie gras and Asian-spiced carrots.

Frankie kept coming over to our booth to chat. Capryce was jammed. Hoards jostled in the entryway, but Frankie found in us a rapt audience and casually handed the pesky crowd control problem to his panicking assistant. Frankie was busy telling us about a baroque wedding he and Ian had gone to in Brighton Beach. Once populated mainly by Jewish refugees from WWII, it's now Moscow on the Atlantic. (Yes, the southern boundary of Brooklyn is the Atlantic Ocean: a real beach, with white sand and surfers. If you're lucky, you'll see a hot surfer dude carrying his board on the subway.)

The wedding was an over-the-top spectacle as only Russians think up. The reception began with a dramatic caviar bar; multicolored spotlights hit the different iced bowls of roe while sexy little Russian-American kittens crisscrossed the room with trays of Veuve Cliquot. For the main course, tuxedoed waiters paraded flaming meats around the room on swords before carving and serving them. For dessert there were sharlotkas and zapekankas galore, all a mere prelude to a vast, gaudy wedding cake that featured – Frankie wasn't kidding and neither am I – a most realistic portrait in icing of Zac Efron. "High School Musical" was the 19-year-old bride's favorite film of forever. (Note to self:



when gay marriage is legal in N.Y. State, order cake with icing rendering of Janet Leigh being stabbed to death in the shower.)

"And the whole time... *What?*... I'll be back." Frankie flew off like a hyper parakeet. He returned minutes later. "Sister Rose Gertrude – that's what I call Carl, the sous chef – set the kitchen on fire. He's an ex-Marine. Anyway, there were bottles of frozen flavored vodka on each table, and the first table that finished one got some weird Russian prize. Everybody was snookered. *Huh?* Gotta go. Don't order the shortcake – it's poo-sniggles."

For once, my mind wasn't on dessert. I was contemplating frozen vodka. I work too hard mixing drinks, I concluded. Guests arrive, I'm making a three-course dinner, and suddenly I'm fielding cocktail orders and getting multiple shakers going. *What's wrong with me?* From now on we'll have Absolut Peppar in the freezer, and if somebody wants a drink, I'll say "We're having La-Z-Boys." "What's that?" "It's a classic Russian cocktail enjoyed by czars and Bolsheviks alike. There's a bottle of flavored Absolut in the freezer. Help yourself. *Budem zdorovy!*"

Lenivbli Malioik, or The La-Z-Boy

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Elton John and Leon Russell. Photo: Universal Music Group

'Saturday Night' is all right for Elton John

Elton John plans to host "Saturday Night Live" on April 2, it was announced at his post-Oscar party. And what's the occasion? He's Elton John, that's what's the occasion. The guy has a movie in theaters doing well ("Gnomeo & Juliet," which he produced), he's got a new family that made headlines as well as controversy for those very headlines – a Midwestern supermarket chain objected to and covered up his "People" magazine cover where he posed with partner

David Furnish and their baby – and he's the subject and content-provider of a new biopic about his life, currently in the works. In other words, he's busy being Elton John and that is a lot of work. If we're all lucky, he'll be a good sport and help the cast mock every single thing about himself. (Who knows, maybe Horation Sanz could come back and revive his formerly regularly appearing impersonation of John.) And if we're all really lucky, he'll find time to join musical guest Leon Russell for a song. And if we're all really, really lucky it won't be one from "The Lion King."

Don Johnson lives in 'Mann's World'

It's hard out here for an aging, heterosexual male hairdresser. So goes the log line for a new NBC pilot called "A. Mann's World." The project, from producer Michael Patrick King ("Sex and the City"), will star '80s "Miami Vice" heartthrob Don Johnson as Allan Mann, a straight Beverly Hills salon owner struggling to keep up with the times in youth-obsessed Los Angeles. Johnson, now in his early 60s, will play slightly younger – they're calling his character fiftysomething – which reflects the demographic shift slowly taking place as babyboomer audiences age and crave the familiar faces they've always known. As for the premise, think "Shampoo." And if you're old enough to think "Shampoo," then you're this show's target market. Now let's all sit back and wait to see what kind of stereotypically gay stylist characters pop up on this thing.

James Earl Jones meets Gore Vidal

Serious acting alert here. James Earl Jones, following his time on Broadway in "Driving Miss Daisy," will stick around the city for his next play, a revival of Gore Vidal's "The Best Man," set to stage in spring of 2012. You kids know who Gore Vidal is, yes? He's been one of our most fiercely intellectual, wickedly cool, zero-nonsense literary lions and a suffer-no-fools gay for about 70 years now. As for the play, it's about all the best stuff: power, political secrets and ruthless ambition as a powerful executive

decides which presidential nominee to throw his weight behind. In other words, if you're looking to see something serious and challenging on Broadway that doesn't involve Spider-Man singing U2 songs and cast members engaging in treacherous acrobatics (presuming that show has even opened by 2012), this is where you'll go get it. Added bonus: that Darth Vader voice. In person!

Get ready for 'The Bodyguard' 2.0

There are two ways to look at the news that the now nearly 20-year-old blockbuster "The Bodyguard" is headed for a tacky remake. The realistic, sober view is that this is further evidence of a cynical, creatively bankrupt system, one where original ideas are anomalies and money matters most of all. The other view is this one: WHOO HOOO! Rihanna and Channing Tatum! Sexy young people with music and shiny things onscreen! It's a safe bet which paradigm is going to rule the day. So you can bemoan that fact, or just hope that they keep Dolly Parton payday songs like "I Will Always Love You" in the mix. And for gays of the '90s, it's going to be like a nostalgia train pulling into Queen of The Night Station. So stay tuned. Casting is only speculative at this point. But it's definitely going to happen. So can there please please please be a Whitney Houston cameo? It would be only right and natural.

Romeo San Vicente won't go breakin' your heart. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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HIV/AIDS Resource Center (HARC).....21

ART GALLERIES

Robert Kidd Gallery.....29

ATHLETICS/RECREATION

Metro Detroit Softball League.....31

ATTORNEYS

Frego & Brodsky and Associates.....4
Gittleman, Steven.....11
Kaye, Arlene P.C.....21
McPhee, John.....11
Pierce, Robert.....37
Rasor Law Firm.....37

AUTO/DEALER

Dick Scott Nissan.....26
Hodges Imported Cars.....7

BAR/CLUBS/DISCOS

aut Bar.....36

BARTENDERS

Cocktails & Dreams.....29

CARPET CLEANERS

Hagopian Cleaning Services.....15

CHIROPRACTORS

Madison Heights Chiropractic.....16
O'Dell Family Chiropractic.....21
Triangle Chiropractic.....25

COUNSELING

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Cantrell, Ph.D.,LLC, Christine.....21
Joe Kort and Associates.....21
Joseph, Ph.D., Denise.....15
Jozwiak, MA, LPC, CCBT, DVCe, Rosemary.....20
The Center for Individual and Family Therapy.....16

DENTISTS

Williamson DDS, Ron T.....23

EROTICA

Blue Moon Video/DVD.....40
Hardline.....39
Just 4 Us.....42
Progressive Computing, LLC.....39
Uptown Bookstores.....41

EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

Affirmations Big Bash.....36
Detroit Restaurant Week.....15
Fool's Welcome!.....2
University Musical Society.....26

GROGERS

Hiller's.....4

HEALTH PRODUCTS

Fleet Naturals.....18 & 19

HEATING & COOLING

Flame Heating Cooling & Electrical...30

MASSAGE

Rosenberg, David.....39

MUSEUM

Flint Institute Of Arts.....4
The Detroit Institute of Arts.....15

OPERA COMPANY

Michigan Opera Theatre.....5

OPTICIANS/OPTOMETRISTS

Fenton Vision Center.....21
Optik.....19

PHARMACY

Crown Pharmacy.....22

PHYSICIANS

Dr. Paul Benson, D.O.....18
Kobold, D.O. and Smith, D.O., P.C.....16

MICHIGAN'S LGBT YELLOW PAGES



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RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL

Agape Spirit Life Ministries.....30
Divine Peace Metropolitan Community Church.....28
Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit.....29
Whosoever Ministry.....11

The Fisher Theatre.....8 & 26
The Gem & Century Theatres.....31

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

RJ Reynolds "SNUS".....44

TRANSGENDER SERVICES

UMHS-Comprehensive Gender Services Program.....25

VINTAGE HOME DECOR

Vogue Vintage Collection.....37

WATER

Fuller Life Water.....16

WOMEN'S GROUPS

S.P.I.C.E.....15

RESTAURANTS

Pete's Place Cafe.....37

SPAS

Ordained Beauty.....21

THEATERS

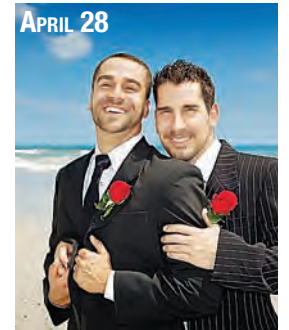
Detroit Repertory Theater.....7
Performance Network.....33
Royal Oak Music Theatre.....36
Stagecrafters.....33



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**An Evening with Judy Shepard
Saturday, April 2, 2011**



Judy Shepard lost her son Matthew to an anti-gay hate murder in 1998. Speaking from a mother's perspective, she urges her audiences to make their schools and communities safe for everyone, regardless of their race, sex, religion, or gender identity and/or expression.

WHO: Determined to prevent her son's fate from befalling others, Judy Shepard established The Matthew Shepard Foundation to help carry on his legacy.

WHEN: April 2. Dinner at 6 p.m., address at 8 p.m.

WHERE: University of Michigan Ross School of Business

WHAT: A fundraiser for the Jim Toy Center sponsored by the University of Michigan Spectrum Center in cooperation with the Ross School of Business LGBT student group, "Out for Business."

HOW: Reservations and additional information at <http://www.jimtoycenter.org>

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