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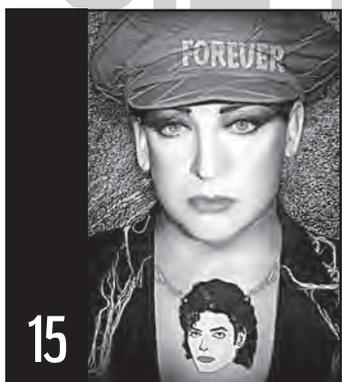
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BTL Between Ourselves

Alex Krasicky, 19, works as an intern at Transgender Michigan as a part her service on the AmeriCorps HIV/AIDS Team Detroit.

1 Tell us about Transgender Michigan. What does it do?

Our main mission is to improve the lives of transgender individuals in Michigan. Some of the things that we do most are speaking engagements and workshops to educate the general public and companies about transgender individuals and the challenges they face and about having a proper protocol for dealing with transgender employees. We also have an online resource called Trans Pages and those are an index of Michigan businesses that are trans-friendly. That includes places like doctors offices, clothing stores, restaurants, hair stylists. It's incredibly needed because I remember early in my transition I didn't know who to go to or what to do. It was invaluable.



The only way we're going to be able to effectively battle

discrimination is to put ourselves out there.

2 What do you do there now?

My title is Program Services Coordinator, but I do everything. I'm running their first office in the Michigan AIDS Coalition building. A lot of what I've been doing is setting up our filing system, setting up our computer system, stuff like that.

3 What do you like best about Transgender Michigan?

What I like best is the sheer number of people you can meet through the organization. Not just employees, but also contacts that I've made through being involved. In the past week I went to Washington, D.C. for the Transgender Lobby Day Conference. And that involved going and sitting down with Senator Debbie Stabenow and John Dingell's chief of staff and talking to them about employment discrimination, especially in the trans community. Because of this job, I am now friends with individuals from all over the country. It's so interesting to get a nationwide perspective on transgender issues.

Right now I'm the only employee in the office, but I mostly work with Rachel Crandall and Susan Crocker and they have been fantastic. They're happy just to have me there, not only as a helper but they

also love that I'm able to give a younger perspective on things because up until, say, 10 or 20 years ago, in the trans population the average age was a lot higher simply because of a lack of resources. With all of the resources available on the Internet, the age is getting younger and younger.

4 Do you plan to stay active in this kind of work in the future?

I definitely want to remain an activist in the trans community because it's going to be a long time before we don't need activism anymore. I think public health might be a consideration for me because the AmeriCorps team I'm on is HIV-specific, and I've learned so much about the prevalence of HIV and how we can prevent it from spreading.

5 Do you have any advice for the younger transgender population?

I would strongly encourage them to get involved, join your school's GSA, hook up with local trans-friendly organizations and just put yourself out there. It's a lot easier and a lot harder to be out in this day and age with the Internet, but the only way we're going to be able to effectively battle discrimination is to put ourselves out there.

Between Ourselves is a bi-weekly feature that highlights members of Michigan's LGBT and allied community. To recommend someone for Between Ourselves, e-mail our news editor Tara Cavanaugh at tara@pridesource.com.

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Pride

divided?

The community debates: Does Ferndale Pride compete with or complement Motor City Pride?

Ferndale hosted Motor City Pride for a decade; this year the festival moves to Hart Plaza in Detroit. BTL photo of last year's Motor City Pride: Andrew Potter

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Motor City Pride's move from Ferndale to Detroit's Hart Plaza this year has caused quite the controversy in the community. While some celebrated the move as a way to gain more space, attendees and attention, some Ferndale businesses lamented the loss and some past Pride attendees pledged not to go to the new location.

But Craig Covey has decided to make sure that Ferndale still has a pride celebration of its own. Covey, the former mayor of Ferndale and now Oakland County Commissioner, named himself the chair of Ferndale Pride and has started to organize several events that will take place June 3-5. Motor City Pride takes place June 4-5 this year, but Covey stressed that the Ferndale events are scheduled during times before or after Motor City Pride is operating.

"This town has a long tradition of putting on events, so even though Motor City Pride decided to move its big festival to Hart Plaza, there was an outpouring of interest in Ferndale," Covey said. "All of the things we are doing are happening

"We support Motor City Pride, and we encourage everyone to go to the festival. We're just providing additional choices to celebrate."

— Craig Covey

when Motor City Pride is not in Hart Plaza."

Many Ferndale businesses have signed on to support the pride celebration, including the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority, the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan AIDS Coalition, the Ferndale Community Foundation (which is helping fund the pride events), Affirmations, Al Gamea, Hazel Park Friends and others.

Covey, who has been in contact with Motor City Pride Chair Dave Wait while planning the events, said he "made a commitment to (Wait) that I would not personally organize any event that conflicted with the times of Motor City Pride."

Covey hopes the events in Ferndale attract 5,000 people. He expects Motor City Pride to attract 30,000 to 40,000 people.

"We support Motor City Pride, and we encourage everyone to go to the festival," Covey said. "We're just providing additional choices to celebrate."

Covey hopes to plan more events in the week leading up to Detroit and Ferndale's pride celebrations. "The plans are still evolving and we're interested in any kind of grassroots or additional events," he said.

And because he jokes that "I'm getting a little too old to do this all myself," Covey plans to hold a meeting at Affirmations in a couple of weeks for anyone who is interested in volunteering.

Will this divide the community?

"There's a lot of emotion tied to any type of change," Wait said. He's right: Community reactions to the announcement of Ferndale Pride have been mixed.

"I view this alternative as a scurrilous

"We don't need to be divided by the bruised ego of one town, or people with an axe to grind, or a few businesses who want queer money."

— Todd Erickson

attempt to try to deflate attendance at Hart Plaza in retribution for moving Motor City Pride out of Ferndale," said Steven Schonfeld of Detroit. "Regardless of what it's called, competition with Pride is divisive and snide."

Todd Erickson, who lives in Ferndale, agrees with Schonfeld about the divisiveness of having two events in the same weekend. He also thinks Ferndale Pride is mostly motivated by businesses who want to make money.

"It seems a little bit like sour grapes – not to mention unseemly – if there's a city-sanctioned effort to establish a separate Ferndale Pride identity that will no doubt take away and diminish Motor City Pride," he said. "The GLBTQ population has come so far in this past decade; we need to move forward as a unified cohesive group in these trying times. We don't need to be divided by the bruised ego of one town, or people with an axe to grind, or a few businesses who want queer money – but could hardly be considered supportive of GLBTQ causes."

Others say they would feel more safe celebrating Pride in Ferndale. "I think Pride

in Hart Plaza is inviting disaster for the gay community. It gives an open invitation to gay bashers who were unable to get a foothold in Ferndale," said Delores Dougan, who lives in Detroit. (Wait said Detroit police, a private security company and volunteers will provide security during the festival.)

And some other community members are unbothered by Ferndale Pride, such as Rosalea Brown, who works at Affirmations. Brown plans to attend both events. "I'm excited that Motor City Pride is actually going to be in the Motor City. But I also understand that it's been in Ferndale for a long time," she said. "I like the idea of it being in Ferndale on a Friday night and Hart Plaza on Saturday and Sunday. It spreads the wealth around."

What's planned in Ferndale?

So far, the following events are scheduled:

Friday, June 3:

- "We Are Family" Pride Parade, starting at 7 p.m. on the north side of West Nine Mile Road. Lineup in the alley behind businesses on West Nine Mile will begin at 6 p.m.

- **Night March, 9:30 p.m.**, for GLBT and allied community members. Lineup begins at 8:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the Kulick Community Center.

Saturday, June 4:

- Second annual Dyke March in early afternoon (which was still planned to take place in Ferndale before Covey organized the Ferndale events).

- All weekend in Ferndale: Bars and clubs are planning parties and special events all three nights, such as Como's, Dino's, Rosie O'Grady's, Soho, Danny's, Loving Touch and others.

Crystal A. Proxmire assisted with this report.

State house votes to keep benefits for domestic partners

House Dems still wary of Republican 'trickery'

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

LANSING – State Democrats tried out being the “Party of No” March 22 and it worked to their advantage.

State Republicans were working to overturn a decision to allow live-in partners of state employees to access benefits, but they were stopped by House Democrats.

The decision by the independent Michigan Civil Service Commission was made in January and will take effect in October this year. In order to overturn the decision, Republicans needed to muster a two-thirds majority vote in both houses of the state legislature.

Republicans succeeded in the Senate, which voted by party lines on March 10 to overturn the MCSC decision. But Republicans, who dominate the House 63 to 49, needed 11 Democrats to side with them in order to muster the necessary majority.

The vote in the House showed that Republicans didn't have the Democratic support they needed. According to Emily Divendorf, a lobbyist and director of policy at Equality Michigan, all but three Democrats voted not to overturn the decision (two voted with Republicans and one abstained from voting).

When a bill is defeated or passed, legislators have the option of letting the bill take effect immediately, letting it die or “passing it temporarily.” Republicans opted to pass the measure temporarily, which means the House may vote on the it again.

Rep. Jeff Irwin, D-Ann Arbor, is wary of “trickery” by Republicans if they choose

to bring it up to vote again. He said they may try to pass it through with a vocal vote instead of a recorded vote, and if that happens, the Democrats may have to make this measure a legal issue.

“I'm proud to be a Democrat today, when

colleagues will do the right thing, and side with Michigan voters and taxpayers to overturn this irresponsible action by the Civil Service Commission.”

The benefits will allow one “other eligible” adult to access health benefits of

“It's certainly not a final victory. We now have proof there's not two-thirds of the House to support this and later on when (Republicans) try to use some trickery to push it through we'll still have this record of it being beaten back.”

– Rep. Jeff Irwin, D-Ann Arbor

we all stood together to do the right thing,” he said, but “it's certainly not a final victory ... we now have proof there's not two-thirds of the House to support this and later on when they try to use some trickery to push it through we'll still have this record of it being beaten back, and that could be important down the line.”

“House Democrats are clearly out of touch with the economic realities of our state and the ongoing challenges of Michigan taxpayers,” said House Speaker Jase Bolger, R-Marshall, in a press release issued shortly after the vote. “Although the vote is extremely disappointing, we're hopeful our Democrat

state employees, provided that the OEA lives with the state employee and is not a tenant. The OEA's dependants are eligible for the coverage as well.

“The House Democrats did an admirable job fighting for the health and vitality of all Michigan families through their defense of the MCSC's extension of OEA benefits,” Divendorf said. “The defeat of SCR9 in the House was a clear demonstration of the appreciation that many Michigan lawmakers have for fundamental fairness, a well cared for and empowered workforce, the hard work of our unions, and strong families.”

BTL welcomes all to 'Fools Welcome'

Come celebrate “Fools Welcome,” the Mardi Gras event of the season, with friends and supporters of BTL on Friday, April 1 at The Roostertail in Detroit. The festivities kick off at 7 p.m. and include a cajun dinner, live music, silent auction, door prizes, dancing and special gifts for those donning the most flamboyant masks. The Detroit Fly House will also give a dazzling performance of acrobatics, juggling and fire eating at this year's event.

Get your tickets by calling 734-293-7200 ext. 10, visiting pridesource.com or by stopping by 515 in Royal Oak or Just 4 Us in Ferndale.



Last year saw party-goers in fabulous costumes. What will your mask look like? Come show off April 1 down at The Roostertail. BTL photo: Andrew Potter

Gay politician indicted in tea party ballot scandal

Michael McGuinness is accused of attempting to place candidates on ballot without their knowledge

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Michael McGuinness, the former chairman of the Oakland County Democratic Party and Jason Bauer, the party's former operations director, were indicted on March 16 for forgery and perjury, reported the Detroit Free Press.

McGuinness and Bauer are accused of attempting to place two county commission candidates and a state senate candidate on the ballot without the candidate's knowledge, and faking notarized statements to make the candidates show up on the ballot.

McGuinness, who was endorsed by BTL in its 2010 voters' guide, was awarded the Rising Star Award at the 2009 Pride Banquet.

“If LGBT youth want a better life experience than present and past LGBT generations, then that requires action. That means organizing, reaching beyond our own community, building coalitions, standing up, getting vocal, being counted ... and winning,” McGuinness told BTL after winning the award.

“McGuinness was seen as a rising star in the Democratic party,” said the Detroit Free Press. “After becoming politically active as a student at Oakland University, he ran Andy Meisner's successful 2008 campaign for Oakland County Treasurer and served as a consultant briefly on the Secretary of State candidacy of Jocelyn Benson. He became chairman of the Oakland County Democrats, replacing County Commissioner Dave Woodward, who was credited with engineering substantial inroads for Democrats in the historically Republican county.”

McGuinness is represented by lawyer John Allen from Detroit. The next court hearing is scheduled for April 13.

Shepard to speak in Ann Arbor

ANN ARBOR – The mother of Matthew Sheppard, the student who died in 1998 after being tortured in Laramie, Wyo., will speak at an April 2 fundraiser for the Jim Toy Community Center (formerly known as the Washtenaw Area Rainbow Project).

The event takes place from 6-10 p.m. at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, located at 701 Tappan in Ann Arbor. The Ross School's LGBT group, Out for Business, is also sponsoring the event.

Judy Shepherd will speak at 8 p.m. following a 6 p.m. banquet during which longtime activist Jim Toy is set to receive an award. Chris Armstrong, U-M's student body president, will also speak during the evening.

To purchase tickets, go to <http://jimtoycenter.org>.

What do you think of Ferndale planning its own pride events on the same weekend as Motor City Pride in Detroit?

I can understand wanting to hold on to fond experiences. The current planned events don't conflict with the events in Detroit. I am very fond of Ferndale's community, but I would still like to see them hold an event on a different weekend, so we can support both events.

– Sarah Gesch

I am all for this. Pride should have never left Ferndale. I don't think this was done out of spite. I think this was done because I know many people, like myself, do not feel safe having Pride in Detroit.

– Jaclyn Teno

This is clearly a swipe against Pride moving to Detroit. I am organizing a boycott against any business that supports this farce.

– Steven P. Schonfeld

I'm not for or against the move to Detroit. It is what it is and I'll support it. However, this additional set of events is just going to divide our community and split the support. Can't we all just work together?

– Diane Nohaft

I am glad Ferndale has planned to organize events, however I cannot help but feel that his action is not about supporting a unified and cohesive regional Pride, but instead is a stunt for Covey, and a move at further splintering an already divided community, region, and organization structure.

– Nick Piotrowski

I would be glad to go to Ferndale during any other weekend for another festival, but doing it that weekend, it's just sad! Pride is about bringing EVERYONE together to CELEBRATE, it shouldn't be torn into two festivals the SAME weekend! I for one won't be in Ferndale that weekend! Whoever's idea this was is not about what Pride really means!

– Jim Truszkowski

I agree wholeheartedly with Jim. Motor City Pride is doing a great thing in trying to grow. There is no way that it will become a destination Pride event by staying in Ferndale.

– Melinda Graczyk

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

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Discrimination and violence



John Joe Thomas

"He is a deeply religious man. Or so he says."

– Landsdowne, Pa. Police Chief Dan Kortan, about John Joe Thomas, a 28-year-old who confessed to the murder of 70-year-old Murray Seidman, who had befriended him and made him executor and sole beneficiary of his will, Associated Press, hosted.ap.org, March 18. Thomas is charged with beating Seidman to death by hitting him 10 times in the head with a sock filled with rocks and batteries, because he believes that homosexuals should be stoned to death.



Autumn Sandeen

"Ordinary equality for members of the LGBT community is going to take sacrifice. That sacrifice is going to include engaging in sit-ins, pickets and direct actions where participants are willing to be arrested and mistreated – as well as costing us something financially. We should all already know that it's going to take more effort than just lobbying alone to see the

Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act pass into law."

– Autumn Sandeen, board member of GetEQUAL, an LGBT rights organization, in her column titled "It Costs Something To Get Equal," about the 13 activists who handcuffed themselves to the White House fence to protest "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" before it was repealed, pamshouseblend.com, March 21.



Alvin McEwen

"No one ever talks about how this tug of war between the African-American and LGBT community over equality can negatively affect us LGBTs of color. For me personally, it's an awful psychological rending, a forced dividing of myself into two halves which have no business separating in the first place."

– Alvin McEwen, in his column titled "From One Black Man to the Black Community – Stop the Homophobia," blogs.alternet.org, March 14.



Julea Ward

"This case's precedent would put religious beliefs above the law and other First Amendment guarantees if (Julea)Ward wins. If a counselor can deny health services to a LGBT student for religious purposes, then would it not follow that academic and financial advisers could do the same thing? If an LGBT student does not have the right to counseling or advising at a public university, then would it not follow that other minority groups could face the same discrimination under the umbrella of religion?"

– Editorial in Central Michigan University's student newspaper, titled "EMU's dismissal of former counseling student does not violate First Amendment," about Bill Schuette, Michigan's Attorney General, who sided with Julea Ward, former EMU student who claims her dismissal from the university for refusing to counsel gay and lesbian patients violated her religious belief against homosexuality, cm-life.com, March 16.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Bell, book, scandal (Pt. 2)

For most Christian evangelicals – and probably all fundamentalists, such as Southern Baptists – if a sinner hasn't been born again (accepted Jesus as "personal savior"), he or she will spend an eternity roasting in hell. Well done. No AI sauce.

That's what the Christian Broadcast Network show biz 700 Club Gospel group thinks. Right-wing GOP Reiblican politics. Televangelist guilt-and-give, sin-and-salvation, shell-game, money-in-the-bank for Rev. Preach-One-Thing, Do-Another. (Just don't get caught like Teddy Haggarty.)

It's a bleak outlook for Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Shintoists, Hindus, Scientologists, Unitarians, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Metropolitan Community Churches, and, yes, "unsaved" Roman Catholics; but the Bible, God's infallible, error-free Word – especially the Scofield version – does not lie. Eternity. Forever! And ever! Etc. Etc . . .

So there, Non-Believing, Gay Belles of St. Mary. Be warned. Go down on your knees for God's salvation, not for untoward, Sodom & Gomorrah, Far East of Eden, sins of backroom, bare-naked, lift-your-fig-leaf, kiss the serpent in the garden, OT abomination.

Occasionally, there are down-to-the-wire exceptions. Last minute repentees who weep, wail, lament over a sinful, wicked life spent in evil deeds, darksome thoughts. Through the precious shed blood of the Lamb, "unmerited favor," and God's sometimes curious, wonder-working Grace, they are saved. Amen! Not a moment too soon.

One such success story is Jeffrey Dahmer, serial killer of 13 young men, several of whom he ritually cannibalized. Yea, verily! He got "saved!" Thanks to the love, the kindness, the weekly persistence, the soul-saving dedication of a fundygelical minister who visited woeful, wayward, naughty-boy Jeffrey in prison.

(Oh, the glory, glory of it all! Jeff finds Sainly Peter in heaven. His unsaved, under-age, victims roasting, you-know-where. Who says life – after death – is fair?)

Eternal damnation's a pernicious doctrine; one that Rob Bell, Michigan pastor of the 10,000 mega-member Grand Rapids Mars Hill Bible Church, says – according to last week's New York Times book reviewer commentary – is "misguided and toxic."

Bell's book, "Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Lived," (mind-bogglingly titled, Harper One published) is out this week. Its publication causes tidal waves of controversy. Cries of heresy from outraged fundygelicals. (250,000 Twitter hits in a 48-hour period). No hell? Oh, God, no way!

Bell – "a Christian celebrity and something of a hipster" – has a large youth following, those hip among the Christian rock-music set. His shocking thesis upsetting "true believers" is that a loving God would never, never condemn all non-born-again people "to spend eternity in torment and punishment in hell, with no chance for anything better." (No, not even Zug Island. For Michiganders, of course.)

One might think this obvious to persons of sane, rational, compassionate understanding. It's not. Born again believers like George W., Sarah Palin, Pat "Diamond Mine" Robertson, Freddy Phelps – now Newt Gingrich – are none of the above, all of the below (Lake of Fire & Brimstone for everybody else.)

As for Freddy, you've got to give him and militant Elm Streeters credit. They're out in the open about the fact God hates. Their God will damn anyone – above all, fags – who does not believe in an eye for an eye, but seeing the righteousness of picketing soldier funerals.

Oddly enough, ask any evangelical, any Southern Baptist – be he or she follower, minister, or missionary – What's your motivation for saving souls from Hell? and the answer will be: "Because we love the sinner, we just hate the sin. We want to share God's free gift of salvation. Reject it. Suffer the consequences. (Don't say we didn't warn you. But don't blame God.)"

Who knows? Maybe Pastor Rob Bell from his 10,000 mega-church, Grand Rapids pulpit will change things. There's safety in numbers. Count on God to be on the winning side. (For a change.)

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BTL
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BY LESLIE ROBINSON

The word is out

At Wayne State University in Detroit, the Word Warriors wave the banner on behalf of the English language's neglected words. Last year the Warriors released a list of words they hoped to rescue from disuse. As the obliging type, I wanted to assist the restoration effort. So I tested all 15 words to see if they fit snugly with my LGBT subject matter. They fit. Huzzah.

The Word Warriors' 2011 list has just been released, and I'm feeling the pressure. This batch looks potentially harder for me to use. If I can't blend these words with LGBT content, they have no future with me. I'll be helping consign them to oblivion.

I'll be a word-killer. The National Writers Union will hang me by my thumbs.

The Word Warriors' 2011 list has just been released, so I tested all 15 words to see if they fit snugly with my LGBT subject matter.

Okay then, I'm ready to start. Gingerly. I'll provide the word, the definition, and – God willing – a sentence using the word.

Concupiscence.

Time out. This word was on last year's list. Why have the Word Warriors repeated it? Either the pressure's getting to them, too, or they're exceptionally fond of the word concupiscence, which means lust. Just what's going on in Detroit, anyway?

To return to the business at hand, **Concupiscence.** Strong sexual desire. *When Bible-thumping, family-values preaching, anti-gay leaders succumb to sins of the flesh, the fallout from their concupiscence provides hours of entertainment.*

Draconian. Excessively severe. *Over the last couple of years, the murderous anti-gay legislation in Uganda has frequently been described as draconian, proving that word ain't dead yet.*

Evanescence. Quickly fading or disappearing. *At 15, Pete found his crushes on guys tended to be evanescent, hot and heavy in homeroom but over by lunch.*

Hornswoggle. To deceive. *After spending her last dime on ex-gay programs, Mary didn't know whether she'd been hornswoggled by her family, the group leaders, or God.*

Ossify. To harden like bone. *Frieda Frock knew she needed to look her best for the drag queen competition, but if she applied one more layer of foundation she believed she'd ossify on the spot.*

Paroxysm. A sudden, uncontrollable outburst. *Her grandmother's insistence that Liberace was straight sent Rebecca into paroxysms of laughter.*

Penurious. Miserly; cheap to a fault. *Looking back on her relationship history, Stacy could explain why she dated both men and women, but she couldn't explain why she always wound up with penurious dates who wouldn't pay for dinner.*

Schadenfreude. Pleasure derived from someone else's misfortune. *When Bible-thumping, family-values preaching, anti-gay leaders are caught succumbing to sins of the flesh, the gay community can be excused for experiencing Schadenfreude and paroxysms of laughter.*

Sibilance. Producing a hissing sound. *Tyler, a straight guy, believed he spoke with too much sibilance, so to prevent people from thinking he was gay, he didn't use any word that started with "s" from 2005 to 2010.*

Skullduggery. Underhanded or unscrupulous behavior. *Ralph planned to go to Thailand for sex-change surgery, but thanks to skullduggery by his travel agent, who pocketed most of the money, Ralph's journey ended in Des Moines.*

There. Whew. That's all of them. Each word has an LGBT application. I've consigned no words to extinction, and my thumbs are safe.

But this was a tough bunch, and I plan to chat with the Word Warriors about their choices for next year. I'll suggest some neglected, out-of-fashion words that will be an easier fit for me. Like homophile. And labrys. And Madonna.

If the Word Warriors don't go along with my suggestions, well, you know what that means: We're going to have words.

And if "concupiscence" turns up again on next year's list, I won't have a good word to say about them.

Leslie Robinson is as good as her word. E-mail her at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and read more of her words at www.generalgayety.com.



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Tweedle-dum, Tweedle-dee, Tweedle-doo, Tweedle-dah, Tweedle-duh...

Editorial

United we stand, divided we fall: Let's fully support Motor City Pride

When Motor City Pride announced the move to Hart Plaza in Detroit last month, we were heartened by the opportunity this now brings for all of us fighting for full inclusion in our communities across the state. The event is coming to a stage where it can actually grow in size, message and visibility. It can demonstrate our community's role in the region and amplify our message of what needs to change – anti-bullying protection, second parent adoption rights, the eradication of 2004's discriminatory Prop 2 (which banned same-sex partners from marrying) – and that is hardly the full list.

When the opportunity to seize the Hart Plaza location presented itself, organizers jumped at it. Watching some of the LGBT leadership in Ferndale react to this move – in particular Oakland County Commissioner Craig Covey – and stir the pot with such insularity and possessiveness is truly upsetting. We ask the newly-named "Ferndale Pride Co-Chair" how he would feel if Royal Oak had reacted the same way a decade ago when Pride moved from that neighborhood into Ferndale. If, as Covey's press release claimed, Ferndale Pride truly intends to "complement" the Motor City Pride efforts, then why not have the kick-off events the weekend before or the weekend after Motor City Pride?

Of course, no one "owns" pride; it has always belonged to the grassroots. The Ferndale community has the right to do what it wishes. We certainly can appreciate the sense of loss Ferndale is having, but we would have hoped for a true cooperative spirit and not one born out of small-mindedness. It is certainly not too late for this kind of cooperation and planning, and we hope that it will still happen.

Hart Plaza is a fantastic regional stage

where many festivals happen each year, including the Electronic Music Festival and the Detroit Jazz Festival, to name just two. Located

We are sorely in need of leadership in the state of Michigan to advance our full equality agenda, and stirring up this divisiveness is the last thing we can afford right now.

on a beautiful, redesigned waterway, it is a golden opportunity for our LGBT community to showcase our stuff!

We are sorely in need of leadership in the state of Michigan to advance our full equality agenda and stirring up this divisiveness is the last thing we can afford right now.

What we are heartened to see is an increasing number of comments on our website and on our Facebook page that offer overwhelming support of the move to Hart Plaza and understand the opportunity it presents.

We hope you show up June 4-5 at Hart Plaza, and we also hope if you have time and energy, you volunteer and help make this year's Motor City Pride the best one yet.



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The summit will be held with afternoon and evening sessions, along with a presentation on LGBT rights from the ACLU of Michigan and dinner sponsored by Medilodge of Southfield.

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Creep of the Week Victoria Jackson

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

I used to love Saturday Night Live when I was a kid. By far one of my favorite cast members was Victoria Jackson. I thought she was hilarious. Granted, she mostly played the same ditzy blonde character in every skit, but she did it well.



Victoria Jackson

When Jackson left the show in 1992 I remember feeling disappointed. I was positive SNL just wouldn't be the same without her. And, of course, it wasn't, but my allegiance was with the show, not with Jackson. And it wasn't long before I lost track of her.

Fast forward almost two decades later. I hadn't even thought of Victoria Jackson in years. In fact, if you would have asked me if she was even still alive I would have been unable to answer that question.

But she's alive all right. And, it turns out, completely insane.

On March 18, "The Muslims next door," a column by Tea Party Princess Jackson, appeared on World Net Daily, the Internet's go-to source for right-wing ranting and raving about homosexuality. Granted, Jackson's piece is, as the title indicates, about Muslims, but she manages to get some anti-gay jabs in there as well (I suspect that's editorial policy at WND).

"Why do liberals embrace Islam knowing it frowns on homosexuality?" Jackson writes. "Because they have the same goals. Progressives, communists, liberals, globalists and Muslims want to destroy America. When that goal is reached, they will fight for top billing. It will be bloody."

Ah, yes. the great race to destroy the country and then beat the shit out of each other. She's on to us. Granted, I don't know where we're going to live once our shared dream of destruction is realized. Probably Canada.

I should point out that Jackson's criteria for "embracing Islam" simply means the opposite of denouncing Islam. So basically if you don't hate something then that means you love it. And probably want to gay-marry it. Very logically sound.

And so her thinking goes throughout her column. It's rambling and full of sweeping generalizations and unsupported claims. At times she tries to be funny, but really she just comes across as a hateful person.

"Frankly, I'm afraid to say

anything about Muslims. Why? Because they kill people," she writes. "I try to stay away from violence, and I wouldn't even be thinking about Islam except that they keep jumping in front of my face. No one talked about Islam when I grew up. How did they all suddenly appear in America?"

Good question. How did they "all suddenly appear in America?" Surely there weren't Muslims here back in the 60s and 70s when Jackson was a kid. I mean, it's not like Islam is one of the largest religions in the world or anything. So there's really just no telling how they managed to get some of their people on U.S. soil right under Jackson's nose.

All Muslims are up to no good in Jackson's eyes. She writes, "Why can't the 'good, peaceful' Muslims denounce the actions of the 'bad, violent' Muslims? I'm Baptist, and I denounce the actions of the Westboro Baptist Church. They are not living the way Jesus taught – but the opposite. Maybe, just maybe the

Remember, when you kiss a homo you do it for Satan.

'good' Muslims approve of what the 'bad' Muslims are doing! Maybe they are celebrating it, funding it and cheering them on."

It's strange that Jackson seems to be completely unaware of the multitude of Muslims who condemn violence. The majority of them, even. Maybe, just maybe she needs to read something other than World Net Daily. And before we give her too much credit for denouncing the Westboro Baptist Church, don't forget that she doesn't like gays one bit. Especially, it seems, not the gleeful ones.

"Did you see 'Glee' this week?" she writes. "Sickening! And, besides shoving the gay thing down our throats, they made a mockery of Christians – again! I wonder what their agenda is? Hey, producers of 'Glee' – what's your agenda? One-way tolerance?"

Granted, I don't watch "Glee," but I know that there was a kiss between two boys on the show. Perhaps, for the sake of "balance," someone should have beaten the shit out of those two fags on the same episode. You know, a nod to all of the tender hearted Christians out there offended by a boy kissing another boy.

Remember, when you kiss a homo you do it for Satan. But when you sucker punch one, you're doing it for Jesus.



The 2011 Jan Stevenson Award was given to Paul Schiavi (left). PFLAG Downriver founders Mike and Janice Neubecker won the 2011 Lorna Utley Outstanding Ally Award. Opposite page: George Westerman, who is heading up the ongoing Campaign for the Future, won the Chuck Moyer philanthropy award. The winners are all pictured with Affirmations Chief Administrative Officer Kathleen LaTosch and Development Associate Jeannine Simpson. BTL photos: Andrew Potter

Affirmations Big Bash raises money for programs

Staff shares stories about meeting community needs

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

NOVI – When 21-year-old Angel Carrion left the stage at Affirmations' Big Bash last Saturday, the room was a swirl of cheers, hugs and handshakes from many of the 400 supporters who came to the eleventh annual fundraising event. Although the evening was filled with gay community dignitaries, sparkly Detroit Fly House aerial performances, and tables full of auction items, it was the stories shared by Carrion and fellow Affirmations staff member Kim Phillips Knope that reminded the donors in the room what the evening was all about.

Carrion grew up in southwest Detroit, a place he said has no resources for LGBT youth. "I knew from an early age that I was attracted to men," he said. "I didn't know that society viewed that as wrong until I was watching TV with my family and there was a gay scene. Just watching the reaction on my family's faces made me feel like I didn't belong. It was hard for me to hide myself."

To deal with the rejection from his family and the bullying at school, Carrion too became a bully. "I started to feel angry and bullied others who had the courage to be themselves. I didn't want everyone to look at me like I was gay," he said. A friend took Carrion to Affirmations and he fell in love with the community center, taking bus trips there often.

"Before I found out about Affirmations I didn't feel good about myself," Carrion told the audience. "(The center) helped me get my transcripts so I could go to school,

and now I'm a medical assistant." Carrion participated in the Youth Empowerment Program, and is now a member of the YEP staff. "I can help others who are gay going through the same thing I did. My dad used to call me faggot, but now he calls me his son," he said. "I would love for Affirmations to stay open for the next generation to come."

Knope, who is the director of programming at Affirmations, also shared her story with supporters. "I came out when I was 14," she said. "The year was 1989 ... The AIDS epidemic was exploding. We had no legal protections. There were no gay TV characters. If there were openly gay politicians, athletes, teachers or parents, I certainly didn't know about them. I remember feeling lonely, isolated and afraid. So, to try and find other people like me, I did what any 14-year-old would do: I went to the only gay bar in town, a place called Tramps. Nice affirming name, don't you think? I got in with a Red Cross donor ID card that I borrowed from a friend. With my mouth full of braces and a baby face, I didn't look old enough to vote, let alone drink. But for me that was the only place to go where other gay people might be.

"As I crossed the street, a car driving by yelled 'Dyke!' at me and I was terrified when I walked in. But it was the only place I knew where I could go and be me. Our youth program is that place. It gives young people the opportunity to be who they are in an environment that is age appropriate, is substance free and is safe."

Big Bash attendees help fund

Affirmations and programs like YEP, along with other resources such as counseling, a help line, a resource library, a computer center and space for activities and support groups.

The evening also featured updates on some of the changes happening at the community center. Former Executive Director Leslie Thompson was thanked by Affirmations' Board President Mary Rose MacMillan for her ten years of service and for helping steer Affirmations into its new building at 290 W. Nine Mile Road in downtown Ferndale. The center will hold a celebration for Thompson on April 3.

MacMillan also announced that the executive director search is still ongoing. The search committee interviewed candidates in March but did not find an ideal match, so the it plans to interview four more candidates in April.

Three awards were given out. The 2011 Jan Stevenson Award was given to Paul Schiavi, who is a pharmacist at Rite Aid, a professor at Wayne State University's School of Pharmacy and an active volunteer. Schiavi helps with Affirmation's health fairs, gives Hepatitis A and B vaccines through Access and he also trains Affirmations staff.

Parents and Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Downriver founders Mike and Janice Neubecker won the 2011 Lorna Utley Outstanding Ally Award. The parents of a gay son formed a support group for themselves and other families, and they actively support second parent adoption in

See Affirmations, page 13

Del. Supreme Court confirms lesbian mom is a parent

Delaware now one of four states that bases parents' rights upon relationship with the child

BY DANA RUDOLPH

A Delaware Supreme Court ruling on March 14 upheld a lower court decision stating that Carol Guest had the right to joint custody of the child she had been raising with her former partner, Lynn Smith, even though Smith was the only one who had adopted the child. (The names in the case are pseudonyms used by the court.)

Smith and Guest had adopted the child through a service in Kazakhstan, but that country does not permit two women to adopt a child jointly. Because of that, only Smith filed papers to legally adopt the child in March 2003, but both women raised the child together. According to court documents, a lawyer advised the couple in June 2003 that Guest could petition for adoption in the United States after she lived with the child for a year, but Guest did not do so and the couple split in May 2004. Smith cut off Guest's contact with their child shortly after that.

The case made two passes through the state courts.

When Guest initially sought custody and visitation through the Family Court in 2004, Smith countered that Guest had no standing to bring a custody action under the Delaware Uniform Parentage Act, which defines who may be considered a "parent" under state law. But the Family Court ruled for Guest in June 2006, saying she had standing as a "de facto" parent – someone who acted as a parent to the child – although she was not a legal parent.

In February 2009, the Supreme Court overturned the Family Court's ruling and denied Guest custody. The court said DUDA did not recognize de facto parents and noted that changing the law "is a public policy decision

for the General Assembly to make."

The legislature did so in July 2009, amending DUDA to define a "de facto" parent as someone who has the "support and consent" of the legal parent(s) and has acted as a parent to that child for long enough to have established "a bonded and dependent" parental relationship with the child.

After Guest went back to the Family Court and was granted custody under the new law, Smith challenged the decision and appealed to the state Supreme Court, which considered the women's situation for a second

the child.

The definition of "de facto" parent varies from state to state, and not all states give de facto parents full legal status, as does Delaware, explained LGBT family law expert Nancy Polikoff in an interview. Some states may recognize them as having a claim only to visitation or custody, but not as full parents for the purpose of government benefits and inheritance rights.

Only four other states – Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington – will, like Delaware, recognize non-biological, non-

A woman was recognized as a "de facto" parent of a child she had been raising with her former same-sex partner, even though she never formally adopted the child.

time.

This time, Smith claimed the Family Court ruling violated her right to raise her child, as maintained by the 2000 U.S. Supreme Court case of *Troxel v. Granville*. In that case, the high court struck down a Washington state law that allowed any third party – such as a grandparent – to petition for child visitation rights, even if the parents objected.

But the Delaware Supreme Court said that the cases differed because, in *Troxel*, the third party had no claim to a parent-child relationship.

"Guest is not 'any third party,'" the court explained, but a "de facto" parent. As such, under the newly amended law, she is also a legal parent of the child and has "a co-equal 'fundamental parental interest'" in raising

adoptive parents as having the full rights and responsibilities of parentage. They base their recognition on the person's relationship with the child, according to the National Center for Lesbian Rights (www.nclrights.org), in an October 2010 fact sheet, "Legal Recognition of LGBT Families."

States that recognize marriage or civil unions of same-sex couples may also recognize non-biological, non-adoptive parents as full parents under state law. But in Delaware and the other four states, the parents' rights are based upon their relationship to the child, not to the other adult. Their parental rights are thus not subject to challenge under the Defense of Marriage Act or other state laws banning the recognition of same-sex relationships.

document. Look at how far we've come," he said as he looked around at the sea of people openly celebrating their lives. He recalled how the organization moved around from small places and people's houses, before moving to the old office in Ferndale, just a block away from their current 16,000-square-foot community center where it serves more than 30,000 individuals each year.

The amount raised by the Big Bash is not yet known, but the organization gratefully met their sponsorship goals and sold almost all of the 400 tickets. MacMillan told the crowd, "We thank you for your generosity, for your belief in yourselves, and for your belief in each other."

For more information on Affirmations, check out www.goaffirmations.org. Find more Big Bash photos online at www.pridesource.com



DOMA repeal bills introduced in Congress

BY REX WOCKNER

Bills were introduced in both houses of the U.S. Congress on March 16 to repeal the Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act.

The act prohibits the federal government from recognizing states' same-sex marriages and gives states cover to refuse to recognize each other's same-sex marriages.

The federal-recognition part of the act recently was deemed unconstitutional by President Barack Obama and the Department of Justice, which has stopped defending that portion of the act in a series of ongoing federal lawsuits.

At the same time, the DOJ declared that any discrimination based on sexual orientation, like discrimination based on race or religion, is automatically unconstitutional absent some important governmental need for treating gay people differently.

The DOMA-repeal bill, called the Respect for Marriage Act, might not see a floor vote in either chamber this year, though it is likely to proceed further in the Senate, which is controlled by Democrats.

It was introduced in the House by Reps. Jerry Nadler, John Conyers, Barney Frank, Tammy Baldwin, Jared Polis and David Cicilline, the latter four of whom are openly gay. It was introduced in the Senate by Dianne Feinstein, Patrick Leahy and Kirsten Gillibrand. In the House, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer are among the measure's more than 100 sponsors.

"The debate over DOMA isn't about whether you favor marriage equality, it's about whether the government can pick and choose which marriages they like, and which they don't," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "With five states and D.C. granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples, it's time the federal government stops playing favorites and instead creates an equal playing field for all families."

"In 1996, DOMA was just hypothetical discrimination because every state excluded same-sex couples from marriage," Solmonese added. "Today we see it in much more concrete terms – as tangible, heart-wrenching, real-life discrimination."

DOMA deprives married same-sex couples of some 1,100 federal marriage rights and benefits – including Social Security survivor benefits, federal employee spousal health coverage, protections against spouses losing their homes during medical emergencies, the right to sponsor a foreign partner for immigration, and the ability to file a joint tax return.

National Center for Lesbian Rights Executive Director Kate Kendall said repealing DOMA "will correct a shameful low point in our nation's history."

"DOMA was passed in a moment of ugly anti-gay bigotry," she said. "Every day that it stays on the books, DOMA harms families, stigmatizes our relationships and perpetuates a climate of hostility for all LGBT people."

Lambda Legal's Marriage Project Director, Jennifer Pizer, said her group "has heard from countless married same-sex couples who, because of DOMA, must pay extra federal income taxes on health insurance, are denied essential family benefits through Social Security, endure wrenching separation if one spouse is not an American citizen, and face a host of other injustices large and small."

► Affirmations

Continued from p. 12

Michigan, which would grant gay and lesbian couples parental rights.

The final award of the evening went to George Westerman, the head of the past Capital Campaign, which afforded the center its new location. Westerman also leads the current Campaign for the Future, which seeks \$1.2 million to keep Affirmations open and operating. Westerman has also forged relationships with donors, including his own employer, IBM. Thanks to his help, the community center has attracted millions of dollars in funding.

"It's amazing," said Gary Roberts, one of the founding members of the Affirmations board in 1989. "Back then there were people who were afraid to sign the articles of incorporation because it was a public

Back in the closet again

Summit to address problems faced by older adults

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

FERNDALE – The Older Adult Summit on April 6 will address the specific issues faced by today's older LGBT adults. Those health, financial and legal issues, if not properly prepared for, sometimes force older adults back into the closet.

The summit is sponsored by a hodgepodge of organizations: The ACLU of Michigan, the Jewish Gay Network, SPICE, Affirmations, Equality Michigan, the Jim Toy Community Center and Medilodge.

"We're hoping people age 50 and over will show up," said Judy Lewis, director of the Jewish Gay Network. "That way they'll be able to find out what legal, medical and financial opportunities exist before it's too late."

Older LGBT adults face particular difficulties that their straight counterparts don't. They may not be entitled to their partner's social security or other medical benefits after death that widowed husbands and wives are allowed to access. Older LGBT adults may also be lonely and isolated in nursing homes because they don't feel comfortable telling staff about their relationships.

"One of the biggest problems is providers don't get any training about LGBT issues," said Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project. "There's the assumption that everyone is heterosexual."

Some older adults may not be aware of

percent of the population. By 2030 more than 20 percent of the population will be over age 65.

The summit will feature a panel of older adults who will discuss their experiences and advice. It takes place from 2-4 p.m. at Affirmations (located

"One of the biggest problems is providers don't get any training about LGBT issues. There's the assumption that everyone is heterosexual."

– Jay Kaplan

certain health problems they should check for. Older lesbians, Lewis said, may not be screened for certain cancers because they don't feel the need to see a gynecologist.

The problems faced by older adults are particularly important to address right now, Lewis said, because the large older adult population is only growing larger. Today more than 36.8 million people are 65 and older in the U.S., which is 12

at 290 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale), and the session will be repeated again at 6. Attendees can enjoy dinner and a presentation from Kaplan about legal issues between 4:30 and 5:30.

Advance registration is required to attend. Each session can hold up to 75 attendees. Registration can be completed at Affirmations website, goaffirmations.org or by calling 248-812-9202.

Speaking the unspeakable

Ministry creates dialogue on black LGBTs and faith

BY JACK VANHECKE

DETROIT – Sixty people met at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit to take part in a series of discussions about the experiences of black LGBTs in church on March 16. The series, titled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: The Unspoken Policy in the Black Church," is hosted by Agape Life Ministries and led by the Rev. Darlene Franklin. Among the speakers and facilitators were Assistant Pastor Glenda Wyatt-Franklin and Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh.

"We are not here to debate about what the Bible says or does not say about homosexuality," Pugh said to the audience, "but rather to discuss the reality and presence of LGBT people in the black church."

That presence is often ignored or discriminated against, Wyatt-Franklin explained. "LGBT people are excluded from singles ministry, couples retreats, relationship counseling, and not recognized at (funerals after) the death of a partner."

These unspoken policies lead LGBTs to feel "condemned or quietly tolerated," Wyatt-Franklin said. "LGBT people remain silent to avoid embarrassment."

At worst, she said, they can feel like they're "not allowed full access to the love of God."

The evening also featured group discussions on questions such as: What does it mean to be an open and affirming church? Are there any mainstream black churches that are open and affirming? Why do black LGBTs stay in their churches if they feel condemned?

After 30 minutes of discussion, each

"We should step out – come out – you may be surprised by the reaction you don't get."

Detroit City Council President
Charles Pugh

group reported out to the larger audience. Some groups said being an open church means letting LGBT people be "full" members and accepting LGBT families. Members of the audience pointed out that even mainstream black churches that may appear to be open and affirming do not have written policies on fully including

LGBT members.

Wyatt-Franklin, quoting United Church of Christ guidelines, said an open and affirming church is one that "has publicly declared that all orientations are welcome in its full life and ministry."

After leading a final discussion on the status quo and how to affect change, Charles Pugh remarked on the need for individual action. "I believe the power of one is real. We should step out – come out – you may be surprised by the reaction you don't get."

"How can LGBT people help change the church?" Wyatt-Franklin asked. "Embrace yourself, start a dialogue between LGBT and straight people in your own congregation, regularly associate with people and organizations that embrace you and learn what the Bible says and doesn't say about homosexuality."

"LGBT folks should stand up for your own spiritual inheritance that Christ died for," Rev. Franklin encouraged the audience. "Then there will be change."

The series will continue in April and May with discussions on domestic violence, coming out in the mainstream church, the exclusion of transgender people in church and attitudes toward gay marriage. More information on the discussion series can be found at agapespiritlifeministries.org.

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OH BOY!

'80s pop icon on getting clean, having a kid and why he's an 'alien'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

A lot has been written about Boy George in the last 10 years, but not much of it's pointed to what made the icon a pop phenomenon. Drugs, jail and an escort run-in are what kept the not-so-boyish star in the headlines, completely overshadowing his influence on music. That's changing, however, with his first album in a decade, "Ordinary Alien," and an upcoming Culture Club reunion in 2012.

But the 49-year-old doesn't ignore his past, and in our interview he chatted about having an "underlying desire to be sane," how the LGBT community is to blame for its image and why he won't be the next gay celebrity to adopt a baby.

How are you, Boy George?

Lovely, thank you.

Does the title "Ordinary Alien" have anything to do with being gay?

Maybe. It's based on the fact that there's so much written about me that's either untrue, partly untrue or not quite true. (Laughs) In a way, what I'm saying is I know that I'm odd – and yet there's a part of me that's kind of quite ordinary. It's important to have both. When it comes to practical things in life, being a bit ordinary is very useful.

Otherwise, you're an alien?

I'm definitely the alien. But I'm the kind of alien you can bring home to meet your mother.

Gay men everywhere are taking note right now.

Are aliens popular in the gay community? (Laughs)

How does it feel knowing you paved the way for other queer performers?

Everything is part of a kind of "daisy chain." When I was growing up, there were a lot of characters on TV who were obviously gay and camp and playing with the boundaries, and I think all of those people shaped who I am. So, I think everything comes from somewhere.

Even though David Bowie wasn't necessarily gay, I think that he had a huge influence on me as a kid. When you're a kid you don't really have many reference points. There are more now, but not back then in the '70s when I came out to my family. I was 15, so the process of coming out to the people that I love started a long time before it became something I had to do publicly, and people still have very wrong ideas of what it is to be a gay man or a gay woman.

See Boy George, page 22

Photo: The Musebox

Broadway Cares in Ferndale

Event supporting local HIV/AIDS charities on March 28 to feature cast of 'Les Miserables'

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

For the past several years, theatergoers throughout the state have been asked to donate to an organization called Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS – but I suspect many in the audience haven't a clue what the organization does and what happens to the money they gladly hand over to an appreciative volunteer. Nor do they know that periodic fundraisers are held locally featuring the cast and crew from national touring shows in town at Detroit's Fisher Theatre. Michigan-native Brad Harder produces many of these shows, and he talked recently with *Between The Lines* about Broadway Cares and the upcoming March 28 event featuring the cast of "Les Miserables."

For those who aren't familiar with the organization, what is Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS?

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS is the nation's leading industry-based nonprofit AIDS fundraising and grant-making organization. It was created to support efforts by the entertainment industry to promote awareness, education and understanding of HIV/AIDS and other critical health issues, to support organizations that provide treatment or services for people affected by HIV/AIDS, and support efforts by the entertainment industry in other charitable or educational endeavors.

How does the group raise money?

Rock The Barricade: 'Les Miserables' Benefit Concert

7 p.m. March 28
The Loving Touch
22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale.
Tickets: \$15 (door only)

Broadway Cares raises money through the talents, resources and generosity of the theater community. This includes shows on- and off-Broadway, tours and in professional and community theaters in cities throughout the United States by doing special events, fundraisers and audience appeals at the end of their performances.

There are also a couple of local efforts to raise funds each year for Broadway Cares, aren't there?

Most national tours, including Broadway and off-Broadway shows, collect donations after their shows during the six weeks leading up to the "Gypsy Of The Year Competition" (which takes place during Thanksgiving) and the "Easter Bonnet Competition," which are events in New York. Actors from the shows will usually stay in costume and hold buckets at the theater exits so audience members can contribute when they leave the show.

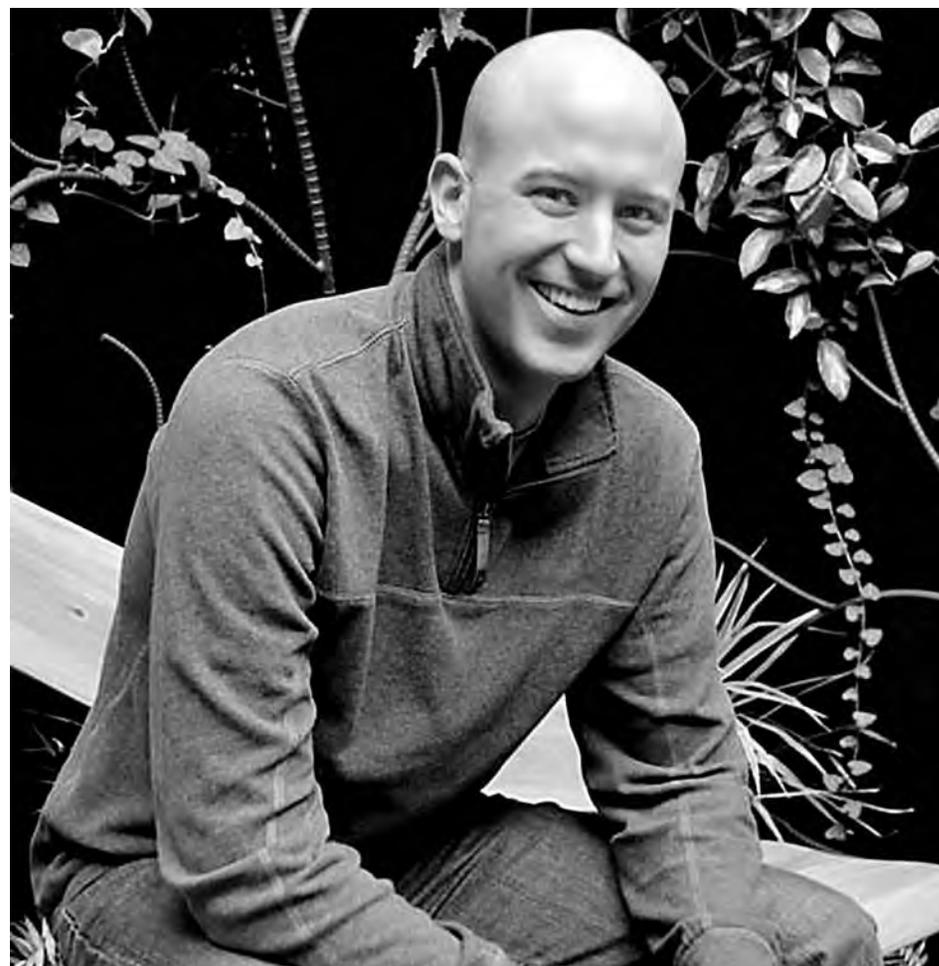
There are locally-produced events, too, correct?

Yes. I have produced two events in Detroit.

What organizations in Michigan have received funds from Broadway Cares in recent years?

Recent grants have been made to the following Michigan AIDS organizations: AIDS Partnership Michigan, Community Health Awareness Group, Lansing Area AIDS Network, Rainbow Alliance and the HIV/AIDS Resource Center.

This year's fundraiser is scheduled for Monday,



Producer and Metro Detroit resident Brad Harder is proud to represent Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS in Detroit's fifth remarkable "show of support" for those living with HIV/AIDS.

March 28 and features the cast of "Les Miserables" that's coming to the Fisher Theatre March 22 through April 3. What does the evening entail?

"Rock The Barricade" includes a cabaret-style performance by the touring cast of "Les Miserables" performing their favorite songs from rock to pop and even a few show tunes.

There is also a special appearance by Ferndale's own The Barrettes, along with a few other surprises throughout the evening. The silent auction features items generously donated by the Broadway community just for our show and gift packages from local leading businesses.

You also have a special guest to close out the evening, singer/songwriter Steven Mullan. For those unfamiliar with his work, what type of music does he perform?

Steven is a 24-year-old singer/songwriter from Toledo, Ohio. Steven will be playing his originals

along with a wide range of covers. Artists such as the Beatles, Stevie Wonder, James Morrison and Marc Broussard inspire his music.

Are there any juicy tidbits about the fundraiser you can tease us about now?

Simply said, this event will be a fun and affordable way to support the work of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and your local schools. You will be able to enjoy an intimate evening with the amazingly talented cast of the "Les Miserables" National Tour and even mingle with them after the show.

You could also leave with a signed Broadway poster or a gift package from one of our great local businesses. What a great way to spend a Monday evening and start off your week!

To read the complete interview, visit www.EncoreMichigan.com

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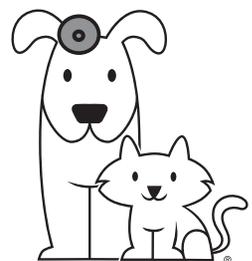



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WHO: Determined to prevent her son's fate from befalling others, Judy Shepard established The Matthew Shepard Foundation to help carry on his legacy.

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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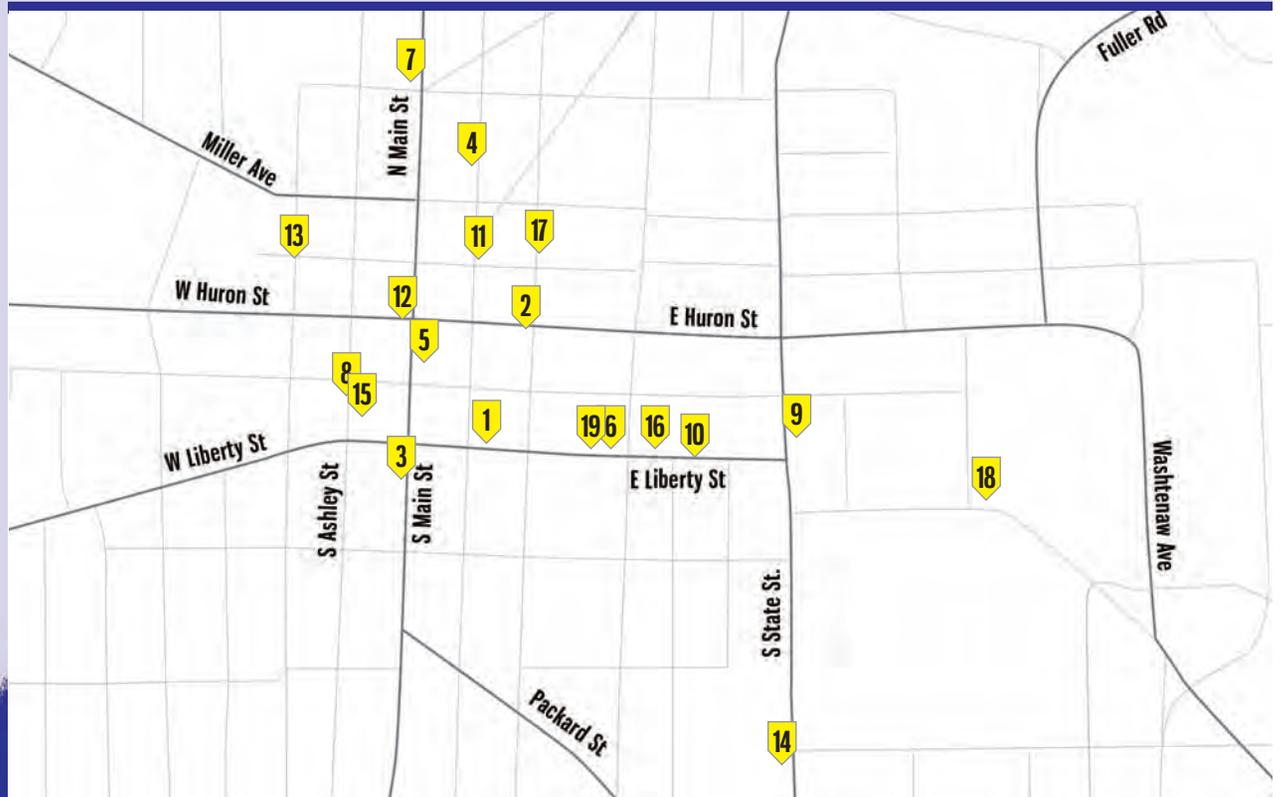
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Vegan street food hits local courtyard

Neighbors launch project in April

The Lunch Room, the vegan foods brainchild of Phillis Engelbert and Joel Panozzo, recently launched a Kickstarter campaign to finance a food cart opening in April. Kickstarter.com facilitates the raising of start-up funds for creative projects, and entrepreneurs communicate their ideas through videos and offer rewards for donations. The Lunch Room hopes to raise \$8,000 in a 30-day period. Over \$5,000 was raised in just the first 11 days of the campaign.

The Lunch Room, which will open in Mark's Carts courtyard, was founded by next-door neighbors and vegan foodies Engelbert and Panozzo in the summer of 2010. Panozzo is a gay activist, graphic designer and bicycle enthusiast; Engelbert is a community organizer, author and nonprofit administrator. The pair began by cooking elaborate vegan meals for large groups of friends.

In October the effort entered its "pop-up restaurant" phase. An underground undertaking, The Lunch Room operated on a reservations-only basis and served food at several different locations in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. It advertised its first event to an email list of 85 friends; as the word spread, that list grew to its current size of 375. The Lunch Room has held eleven dining events as of early March – including brunches, lunches, dinners – and has served over 450 meals.

The Lunch Room hopes to raise \$8,000 in a 30-day period. Over \$5,000 was raised in just the first 11 days of the campaign.

Reservations lists were capped at 35 to 50 people and sold out every time – sometimes within a day or two of being announced.

In early February, Engelbert and Panozzo learned of the initiative by Downtown Home & Garden owner Mark Hodesh to create a street food courtyard on W. Washington Street, just west of Ashley, in downtown Ann Arbor. The Lunch Room applied for a coveted cart space and was accepted. The Lunch Room is now preparing for a spring and summer of selling food from a concessions cart. It will serve fresh, healthy, delicious and economical breakfasts, lunches, dinners, sides and baked goods.

For more information about The Lunch Room, visit thelunchrooma2.com.



(Above) The "prototype" of The Lunch Room's food cart, the brainchild of Joel Panozzo and Phillis Engelbert.



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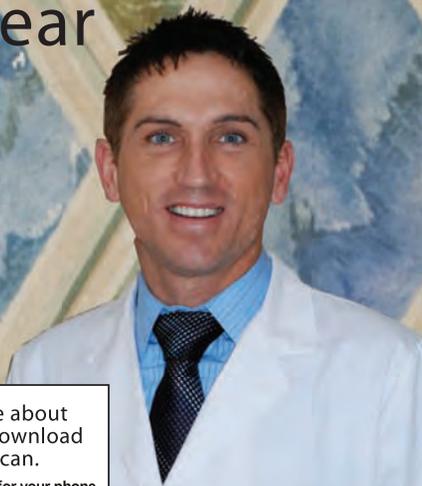
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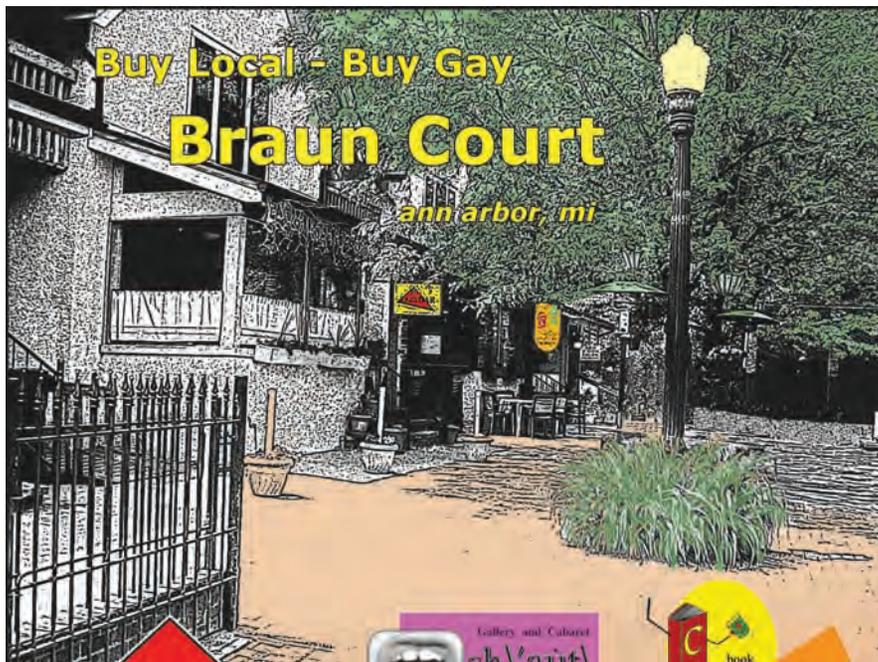
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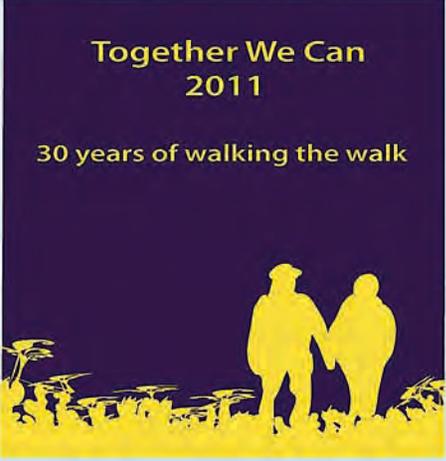
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► Boy George

Continued from p. 15

How so?

People just think of you as a sexual being; they don't realize that you have pets and bills and jobs and families. They just don't understand that. And I think we as gay people don't really do much to help ourselves in that department. If you look at any gay magazine, it's all nipple rings and butts. So I think people don't understand; they just look at everything you do as a kind of sexual thing and they don't see beyond that, and that's a shame.

Why do you think we're looked at as sexual deviants?

For a lot of us, the first time we have any sense of who we are is when we have sex with another man or another woman. That's when we're defined, and so it's no wonder that there's a kind of strong physical element tied to gay culture.

It's sad in a way, because even if you're a straight kid and you don't have demonstrative parents and you don't have a good family life, at least you have lots of social references. So you have an idea of how things work. But when you're gay, who tells you? There's

this attitude that if you talk about it you encourage it, so even if a parent knows their kid is gay they just don't really talk about it; they just hope it goes away, and of course it rarely does.

You're a living example that it doesn't just go away.

Absolutely! But you know, I'm very lucky. I've always had the support of my family. My dad is dead now, but my dad was amazing when I came out. I was really surprised by his reaction. I thought I was going to be killed, and my dad was great. So families can be so surprising, and people can be equally ignorant but they can be also amazing.

You were pushing all sorts of boundaries with style and gender in the '80s. Do you think newer artists are pushing far enough for social change with their art?

Anybody who brightens the horizon has my support. It's difficult for someone like Lady Gaga because she's a woman and she's straight, I think. I don't know her well enough, but I think it's wonderful that she's supportive of gay people and that's to be applauded. Sometimes I read about different people, like Justin Bieber, and think, "Oh my

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“Yes, I’ve been terribly self-destructive at points in my life, but there’s always been this underlying desire to be sane. At the moment I’d say that’s winning out, and that’s a good thing.”

– Boy George

god.” (Laughs) So I think people like Gaga are a blessing and they must be applauded for their support – because it’s not always the case.

Both Gaga and Adam have referenced you as one of their idols. If you were them, would you look up to yourself?

That’s a very difficult question. (Laughs) I think now I would, because at this point in my life I feel very positive and optimistic and I think I want to inspire people. That’s where I am right now, and that’s what I wanted to do when I started. There’s been distractions along the way, but I feel right now that I have a responsibility in a way to kind of be inspiring and, yes, maybe I would look up to myself now. Not always, but I think now is probably a good time. (Laughs)

When wouldn’t you have looked up to yourself?

(Laughs) They’ve all been pretty well-documented. I don’t think I need to point them out. But on my current record, a lot of people have said that the record’s really optimistic and quite joyful and has a certain kind of serenity, and I think that’s always been part of me. I’ve always had a strong sense of optimism. Yes, I’ve been terribly self-destructive at points in my life, but there’s always been this underlying desire to be sane. At the moment I’d say that’s winning out, and that’s a good thing.

How do you feel now that you’ve kicked your drug addiction?

The difference in me as a person, it’s phenomenal, and that’s reflected in the way people treat me and the way I communicate. People used to withdraw from me when I was an addict.

What are some of your healthier addictions?

I eat pretty well. I’m pretty healthy. I exercise a lot now. I’ve given up the smoking, which is really the last vice. Things are really positive at the moment, and that’s such a relief, really. I go to NA, and it’s had a very, very powerful effect on me. It’s renewed my faith in humanity, and I think having a spiritual program is really useful.

I pray every night and every morning, and even if I’m only speaking to myself, I think it’s a really healthy thing – to just have that moment in your day where you just say something positive about yourself and about the world.

All these gay men – Ricky Martin, Clay Aiken, Neil Patrick Harris and now Elton John – are raising kids. Do you feel the urge to have a boy George?

I don’t personally feel the urge, but I think if it’s something you really desire then that’s fine. I think it’s totally acceptable. My mother’s generation really raised their kids on their own. My father was like a lot of men: He was never around, and he really left the child-rearing to my mother.

It’s a life-changing thing, and I was really amazed, because I’m friends with Elton, and I didn’t know at all that he was doing that. (Laughs) But it’s something he’s always wanted.

So you’re not interested?

I’m not maternal, no. I have two dogs, and one of them is very needy. (Laughs) It’s not something you take lightly. I know that Elton will have a lot of help, but still, it’s a big emotional investment. And I’m not one of those people who think gay people shouldn’t have kids. I also think you don’t make a child gay by raising it. My parents were straight, my brothers are all straight, we all drank the same water, ate the same food. People need to realize that’s not how it works. (Laughs)

Tell me about the Culture Club reunion.

We’re going to do a big showcase in October to announce what we’re doing and hopefully around that time we’ll start recording or writing, and in 2012 we’re going to celebrate our 30th anniversary and do a huge tour and hopefully come to America... if they’ll let me in. At the moment I’m banned, so I’m hoping. I’ve got people working on that right now. It’s really important that we play America; it’s going to be amazing.

It’s been a long time since you have.

Speak to Obama for me. Have a word. I mean, he’s guesting on my album (on “Yes We Can”), so I’m sure he’ll be cool. (Laughs)

What inspired the 30th anniversary reunion?

We did something about 13 years ago, which was quite random but it was a lot of fun at the time. But we get along better now. We’re all a bit more grown up and quite focused. And a lot of it is me. If I’m in a good space it really affects everybody around me. I have a really good relationship with the guys in the band now. I’m really good friends with Jon (Moss) now. There was a long time

when everything about him used to drive me crazy, as it does with ex-partners. It’s all about growing up.

Your relationship with Jon caused a lot of tension in the group. Speaking from experience, do you have any advice for inter-office romances?

(Laughs) Oh my god! Well, no, I don’t actually. I don’t think I’m qualified to give relationship advice to anyone. Advice is very easy to give, but it’s not so easy to put into practice. A lot of my friends come to me and cry on my shoulder and I’m very good at telling them what they’re doing wrong, but then when you try to apply it to yourself, it’s a lot harder. I think relationships – whether they’re gay or straight – are very difficult and I hope that with age they become easier. I mean, I’m not in a relationship right now.

You’re not interested in one either, are you?

No, I’m not really looking. I’ve never really been someone who needs a partner. If somebody amazing comes along and blows me away, then great, I’m open to it. But I’m not going to put up with anything.

I’m not one of those people who needs to be involved; I need to be with someone that I – particularly at this stage in my life – kind of really respect and someone that’s not really overly concerned with what I do and someone who can really cope with the baggage that comes with being me, even though a lot of it is kind of imagined.

People who don’t know me read a lot of crap about me and they base their idea of me on what they’ve read, and sometimes that can be a good thing – because people are always saying to me, “You’re nothing like I thought you’d be.” I don’t know what people expect, but I guess that’s one of the ills of being in the public eye and having so many contradictory things written about yourself.

You’ve said you’re finally growing up, and I’m wondering if it’s enough to warrant a name change – Boy George to Man George?

(Laughs) I don’t think I’ll ever escape that moniker, and I’m not the up-my-own-ass-I’m-gonna-change-my-name-in-a-bid-to-be-taken-seriously type. Boy George is a stage name and it suits me, and I think it’s just gonna stick. (Laughs) Let’s not complicate things by changing my name.

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"After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory," edited by Janet Halley and Andrew Parker. Duke University Press, 336 pages, \$23.95 paper.

The perception of academia's queer theorists as obfuscatory sorts prone to producing jargon-dense pages of cultural, historical, literary and political commentary and analysis is belied by many of this collection's two dozen essays. How so? Perhaps because scholars were asked to ruminate about the potential connection between abstract queer theory and good old queer sex. Not every contribution opens with as sassy a sentence as Neville Hoald's "After sex? My first response is a simple and personal one: A cigarette." But there's a lightness to the book that suggests the authors had fun with an aspect of their assignment from editors Halley and Parker: "Does the very distinction between the sexual and the nonsexual matter to queer thinkers...can work be regarded as queer if it's not explicitly 'about' sexuality?" Contributors who rank among the titans of queer theory include Leo Bersani, who notes he's found that queer intellectuals are often reticent about the sexuality they claim to celebrate, and "grande dame" Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who is compellingly (and subversively) critical of unexamined queer orthodoxies.

"The Empty Family," by Colm Toibin. Scribner, 288 pages, \$24 hardcover.

Master Irish storyteller Toibin queers it up, after last year's essentially straight novel, "Brooklyn," in this collection of nine haunting, stunning stories set in different countries and different times, but linked by a pervasive sense of melancholy, longing and loss. It's tempting to read autobiographical elements into several of the stories – into, for example, "Barcelona, 1975," in which

Featured Excerpt

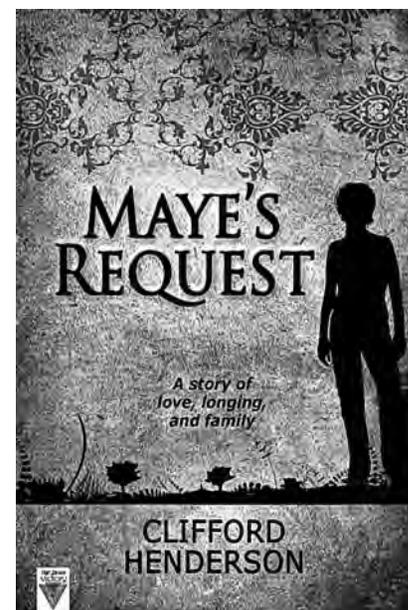
When Malik moved towards him Abdul held him. At first he thought this was Abdul's way of saying sorry, of recognizing that they would not be together again, but soon he realized that Abdul had an erection and that his intentions were unmistakable. He had to decide what to do. "Maybe we should talk?" he whispered. "Can we talk after?" Malik waited for a moment before he replied. "Just say one thing now." "You're not to imagine..." "What?" "I promise I'll talk to you". "But say one thing now." "Can I do something?" "What?" Abdul leaned towards Malik and kissed him.

– from "The Street," in "The Empty Family," by Colm Toibin.

a now-mature narrator recalls his sexual romps, as a "raw and unhappy" 20-year-old Irish lad, with sexy Spanish boys. There's nothing autobiographical, however, in the novella-length last story, "The Street," in which Toibin seamlessly enters the mind of a Pakistani lad, indentured to contemporary servitude as an immigrant in Barcelona, who dares to embark on a physical and emotional relationship with a fellow Muslim. Not every story in the collection is as queer, but there are whispers of gayness in most: in "One Minus One," the man who returns to Dublin from New York to care for his dying mother is the dutiful gay son. And there's not a single clunker in this no-word-wasted collection.

"Between Rock and a Hard Case: In Defense of Rock Hudson from the Ashes of Trial to the Light of Truth," by Robert Parker Mills. AuthorHouse, 492 pages, \$22.50 paper.

Despite the fact that it's 200 pages longer than it needs to be and is larded with long passages of dense legalese, attorney Mills' enthusiastic re-litigation of the Rock Hudson "fear of AIDS" trial of 25 years ago is occasionally compelling. A refresher course: after Hudson died of AIDS, lover Marc Christian sued the estate, alleging he had been sentenced to death by acquiescing to unprotected sex. Mills was engaged, on short notice, to defend the interests of the estate; he lost, leaving "a bitter taste in my mouth all these years." Large chunks of this self-published, repetitious and presumably unedited tome can easily be skimmed – but just as many chapters, with their insider's view of how the court system handled the matter of AIDS and sexual activity when little was known about the virus, are



fascinating. Mills never met Hudson, but this meticulous account concludes that the trial unfairly defined the actor's legacy: "It's time to take the head off this fallen idol and put it back on its pedestal," Mills writes, awkwardly, on the last page.

"Maye's Request," by Clifford Henderson. Bold Strokes, \$16.95, 292 pages.

Henderson has a way with oddball families. Her previous novel, "Spanking New," (narrated by a fetus) mixed gay and straight folks anticipating the arrival of a feisty, gender-curious newborn. In this well-wrought novel about a young woman's uncommon upbringing, narrator Brianna is called home from a vacation – and newfound lesbian love – when her mother falls ill. Also brought to mother Maye's bedside: Brianna's long-gone father, Jake, who has been estranged from his daughter ever since Maye fell in love with Jake's twin sister, Jen – who Jake hasn't spoken to in years – and "Aunt Jen," who was Brianna's second mom but who has since moved on. All in all, it's an uneasy reunion of an unorthodox family, further complicated by a shocking adolescent secret that Jake has been keeping from Jen for decades. The novel's serious subject matter – shattered families, religious fundamentalism, emotional instability – is balanced nicely by Henderson's flair for lighthearted prose that carries the narrative without undercutting the serious issues she explores.

Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about queer literature since the mid-'70s. He can be reached in care of this publication or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.

Footnotes

BOOKS TO WATCH OUT FOR: The travel essays of Paul Bowles are collected for the first time in "Travels: Collected Writings 1950-1993," with an introduction by Paul Theroux, coming from Ecco Press in August.... DENNIS COOPER'S FIRST novel since 1995's "God Jr." is scheduled for November from Harper Perennial; the publisher says "The Marbled Swarm" is about "a son's unflinching devotion to a possibly insane father" – and there is cannibalism... GREGORY MAGUIRE WRAPS up his series of novels, set in Frank L. Baum's world of Oz, with "Out of Oz," a William Morrow title hitting the shelves in November; the series started with "Wicked," followed by "Son of a Witch" and "A Lion Among Men"... CHELSEA STATION EDITIONS is publishing "For the Ferryman," a new memoir by Charles Silverstein, co-author of "The Joy of Gay Sex"; also coming later this year is publisher Jameson Currier's own novel, "The Third Buddha," set in Afghanistan after 9/11... IVAN E. COYOYE and Zena Sharman are the editors, butch and femme respectively, of "Persistence: All Ways Butch and Femme," a collection of stories expanding on the conversation launched almost 20 years ago by Joan Nestle, editor of "The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader"; among the contributors are Jewelle Gomez, Thea Hillman, S. Bear Bergman, Anna Camilleri, Zoe Whittall and Michael V. Smith, with a foreword by Nestle.

Groovin' and laughin' at Meadow Brook Theatre

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

It came as no surprise that after tallying the box office results for last season's "Boeing-Boeing" and basking in the glow of positive feedback from critics and customer alike, the powers-that-be at Meadow Brook Theatre scheduled another French farce by Marc Camoletti on the theater's 2010-11 schedule. And after attending the opening night performance, I suspect it won't be long before yet another of Camoletti's comedies storms the Meadow Brook stage.

And for good reason: "Ding Dong," now making its North American premiere at Meadow Brook, is pretty darn funny!

Technically not a sequel, "Ding Dong" is set in Paris in the 1970s and features three characters with the same first names as those in "Boeing-Boeing" – and in this particular production, played by the same actors – but given the job changes and the situation, they're apparently not

REVIEW

'Ding Dong'

Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. Wednesday-Sunday through April 10. \$24-\$39. 248-377-3300. www.mbtheatre.com

the same people. (Actually, they're stock characters in many of Camoletti's plays.) So first-time attendees don't need to know anything about these characters or what went on in "Boeing-Boeing" to enjoy the show. Instead, all they need to do is sit back, relax and get ready to laugh. A lot.

The always-faithful Bernard (Christopher Howe), it seems, has made a startling discovery: His gorgeous wife, Jacqueline (Julianne Somers), is having an affair with a man named Robert (Steve Blackwood). So he surreptitiously sets up a meeting with Robert at his apartment to issue him an ultimatum: End the affair



Christopher Howe and Janet Caine in "Ding Dong" at Meadow Brook Theatre. Photo: Rick Smith

or suffer the consequences – that being death or allowing Bernard to have sex with Juliette (MaryJo Cuppone), Robert's always-faithful wife. It's a tit-for-tat payback, Bernard explains, although not in those exact words.

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

'New Jerusalem' – thought-provoking, timely

BY JOHN QUINN

Baruch de Spinoza was a dangerous man. Thinkers usually are. Thinking may lead to questions about the fundamentals of religion and government that an entrenched establishment can't afford to answer. In the extreme cases you might preserve the youth of Athens from corruption with a simple cup of hemlock, but there are less drastic yet more painful ways to maintain order.

The Jewish Ensemble Theatre brings us David Ives' "courtroom drama" of Spinoza's defense against Church and State. Its complete title is "The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza at Talmud Torah Congregation: Amsterdam, July 27, 1656," which is why I'm glad I'm not tweeting this review. Briefly, the play is called "New Jerusalem."

Spinoza was Portuguese and Jewish by heritage, but part of the fortunate

REVIEW

'New Jerusalem'

The Jewish Ensemble Theatre at Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Rd., West Bloomfield. Thursday, Saturday & Sunday through April 10. \$32-\$41. 248-788-2900. www.jettheatre.org

community that found refuge in Holland from the persecutions in Iberia. His radical philosophy on the substance of God, Man and Nature is an early formulation of Rationalism in the manner of Rene de Carte ("I think, therefore I am."). He explored the unity of science and religion, a philosophical truth not yet fully grasped by some of the anointed. Since his work appeared to undermine the orthodoxy of both Judaism and Christianity, civil



Mitchell Koory as Baruch de Spinoza in "New Jerusalem." Photo: Jan Cartwright

authority appealed to religious authority to silence him. If he was found in violation of the tenets of Judaism, he was in violation of the pact that allowed his community to live safely in Amsterdam. He faced excommunication and banishment.

Ives's script is lovingly researched but not without flaws.

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

March madness indeed in downtown Ferndale

BY JOHN QUINN

Thursday was St. Patrick's Day. The taps of Ferndale flowed with green beer and the gutters flowed with more repulsive effluvia – if that's possible. Couple the holiday with the first warm day of the year, and the time was ripe to kick off the silly season. But few hijinks could be sillier than "The Play of Lost Things," which opened at Go Comedy! on Nine Mile.

In celebration of National Reading Month, the improv theater is mounting the production in cooperation with the Ferndale Public Library. It's based loosely (VERY loosely) on Irish novelist John Connolly's "The Book of Lost Things." Pretty much the only point of comparison is the common theme of "The Quest." The structure is an exercise in back-to-the-basics improvisational theater. A volunteer is requested from the audience.

REVIEW

'The Play of Lost Things'

Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 8 p.m. Thursdays through March 31. \$5. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

He or she answers some not-too-personal biographical questions. Our fearless narrator Pete Jacokes fields suggestions from the audience at large. Favorite films, TV shows and the like are all mashed together to form the direction of the plot. Jacokes spins the yarn, his cohorts act it out. That stalwart crew would be Steve Forbes, Jen Hansen, Chris Petersen, Michelle Giorlando and Travis Pelto.

Here's the bottom line on improv: Like the little girl with the curl, when it's



The original comedy "The Play of Lost Things" continues every Thursday at Go Comedy! through March 31. Photo: SMyers

good it's very, very good and when it's bad it's horrid. Director Chris DiAngelo has his ensemble on their toes exploring the comic possibilities of material when they have only seconds to respond.

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

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BTL Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings



The city of Detroit is host to some of the finest restaurants in the states. And this spring, from April 1-10, Detroit Restaurant Week is offering the opportunity to dine in the metro area's best establishments, each night at the cost of only \$28 per person.

Eighteen restaurants have teamed up with 25 sponsors and media partners to provide the quality of a five-star three-course meal at an unbeatable price.

And don't miss the BTL-sponsored happy hour at Atlas Global Bistro at 5-8 p.m. March 30 to celebrate the kickoff of the big week. More information at detroitrestaurantweek.com.

Music & More

Marsha Ambrosius, previously of the R&B duo Floetry, is flying solo on her new album "Late Nights & Early Mornings."

The English singer/songwriter's video for the lead single, "Far Away," was a heart-wrenching take on gay bullying and suicide based on Ambrosius' own experience with a friend.

"It was never my intention to cause a stir, but I wanted to get a reaction and I'm thankful that it's opened a line of communication to people who wouldn't speak to each other at one point," she told BTL in February (full interview at www.pridesource.com). "People are speaking and I'm changing minds."

Ambrosius performs with Melanie Fiona and Hal Linton at the Royal Oak Music Theatre at 8 p.m. April 1. Tickets: \$30 available online.



Theater

Peppermint Creek Theatre Company presents the fourth show of its 2010-11 season, Lisa Loomer's timely comedy, "Distracted," playing March 24-27 and March 31-April 2 at the Creole Gallery in historic Old Town Lansing.

"Distracted" asks what's wrong with 9-year-old Jesse? It's a hilarious, provocative and poignant look at a modern family and an epidemic dilemma: Are we so tuned into our 24/7 info-rich world that we've tuned out what really matters?

Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$15. The Creole Gallery is located at 1218 Turner St., Lansing. Tickets are on sale now at 517-927-3016.

OUTINGS

Wednesday, March 23

LGBT in the Park, 5:15 p.m. Social group for the whole LGBT community. Discussions on social events and more. 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 caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia. Open to family, friends, spouses and partners. 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 St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. kgllrc.org

Friday, March 25

LGBT AA/Al-Anon Roundup, 5 p.m. Three-day conference for LGBT people recovering from substance abuse issues. Open speaker meetings, workshops, banquets and dance. Admission: \$35 conference only, \$77 includes meals. Together We Can, 200 W. Big Beaver, **Troy**. twcdetroit.com

Spring Drag Show, 6 p.m. OUTspokens annual spring Drag Show. Ticket: \$5. 1903 W. Michigan Avenue, **Kalamazoo**. outspokenwmu.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 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, 8 a.m. Dr. Peter Mugenyi, one of the foremost HIV/AIDS specialists, and Sujal Parikh 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. 6015 E. 10 Mile Road, **Warren**. 248-987-2291. crossroadsmi.com

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

Monday, March 28

Mid-Michigan Transgender, 6 p.m. Offers an informal gathering, taking a more 'light-hearted' approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another

for socializing and support. Perceptions, 5789 State St., **Saginaw**. 989-598-6566. perceptionssv.org

Friday, April 1

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

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Loving Annabelle. An esteemed young poetry teacher at a Catholic boarding school risks everything when she engages in a feverish affair with a female student in this controversial story of forbidden love. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Holland is Ready Film Series, 7:30 p.m. Film: The Bird Cage. The highest grossing LGBT-related film in North America, starring Nathan Lane and Robin Williams as the parents of Val Goldman, who hopes to marry Barbara Keeley, the daughter of a right-wing conservative Senator caught in the middle of a scandal. Holland is Ready, 248 S. River St., **Holland**. 616-990-5669. rev.jenadams@yahoo.com

Saturday, April 2

Queer & Career Conference, 8 a.m. First half-day conference focusing employment issues for LGBT people. Advance conference registration is required and will be available after March 14. Free and open to the public with priority given to MSU students. Time and location TBA on website. MSU LGBT Resource Center, **East Lansing**. 517-353-9520. lgbtrc.msu.edu

The Jim Toy Community Center, "Spring Dinner" Featuring keynote speaker Judy Shepard. 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. jimtoycenter.org

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 South Saginaw St. 365 University Center, **Flint**. 810-766-6606. umflint.edu/lgbt

First Annual Natural Hair Ball, 8 p.m. "Celebrate The Kinks." Tickets: \$30 available online. Everettes Nature Beauty Salon School, 2140 Holbrook, **Hamtramck**. 313-527-2884. naturalhairball.com

MUSIC & MORE

BENEFITS/SOCIAL EVENTS

Michigan State University 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

The Art Institute of Michigan "Scholarship Spring Gala" Hosting students, staff, faculty and the public for first annual fundraiser for The Education Foundation scholarship fund, which awards tuition scholarships each quarter to students enrolled at the institute. Dinner prepared by students enrolled in AIM's culinary program. Design and Media Arts students also display original artwork for purchase. Tickets: \$30 in advance or at the door. 28175 Cabot Drive, Novi. 5 p.m. April 1. 248-675-3837. artinstitutes.edu/detroit

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

Forest Health Services and Donald Morelock "St. Petersburg Philharmonic" Russia's oldest symphonic ensemble to perform Rachmaninoff and Rimsky-Korsakov. Tickets: 10+. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 2. 734-763-3333. ums.org

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "MasterWorks 6: Passion & Fury" Welcoming Lansing's own Melissa White home for one of the most beloved concertos of all time-Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Tickets: \$12-45. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. March 26. 517-353-1982. whartoncenter.com

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

COMEDY

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Bob Saget" Tickets: \$40-50. Available online. 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. April 2. 248-399-2980. tickets.com

CONCERTS

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

Fox Theatre "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, 8 p.m. April 10. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Fox Theatre "Yanni" Returns to the USA and Canada with a concert tour. Tickets: \$28.50-\$68.50 Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 7 p.m. March 27. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Dave Sharp and the Secret Seven" World jazz for the jazz world. Tickets: \$5-\$25 Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 1. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House "All About the Trio" Jazz with the Ellen Rowe Trio. Tickets: \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 2 p.m. Nov. 14, 2 p.m. April 3. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.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

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Marsha Ambrosius & Melanie Fiona" Tickets: \$30. Available online. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. April 1. 248-399-2980. tickets.com

The Whiting "Johnny Winter" With special guest The Rusty Wright Band. March 25, 2011 at 8pm Ticket Prices: \$15-\$37 The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. March 25. 810-237-7333. TheWhiting.com

The Whiting "River North Chicago Dance Company" Tickets: \$27-39. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. April 2. 810-237-7333. TheWhiting.com

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art "6x8" Six eight-minute music dramas consisting of libretti by MFA graduate

students in creative writing and music by graduate students in composition, and performed by voice and instrumental students from the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 12 p.m. April 2. 734-763-4186. umma.museum

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art “Just Gorgeous: Sacred Art and Music in a Secular Milieu” Chamber Choir directed by Professor Jerry Blackstone performs works such as Samuel Barber’s Agnus Dei, Herbert Howells’s Requiem, and selected African American spirituals arranged by Moses Hogan. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 3. 734-763-4186. umma.museum

Wharton Center “An Evening with David Sedaris” With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America’s pre-eminent humor writers. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. April 4. 517-353-1982. whartoncenter.com

Wharton Center “Cyro Baptista” Since arriving in the United States in 1980 from Brazil, Baptista has emerged as one of the premiere percussionists in the country. Tickets: \$25. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 a.m. April 6. 517-353-1982. whartoncenter.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. 517-353-1982. whartoncenter.com

FESTIVALS

Ann Arbor Film Festival “Screenings” Tickets: \$9, \$95.00 for full festival pass. More information online. Michigan Theater and other venues, Ann Arbor. March 22-March 27. 734-995-5356. aafilmfest.org

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

START Project - University of Michigan “FestiFools” Wacky performance of oversized puppets entertaining thousands downtown. Hundreds of creative volunteers from the Ann Arbor area and students from the University of Michigan have joined forces. Free parking. More information online. Main St., Ann Arbor. 3 p.m. April 3. festifools.org

FILM & VIDEO

Detroit Institute of Arts “Journey to Algiers” True story of an independence fighter’s widow expelled from her house by a local city official. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 7:30 p.m. March 24. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts “World Premiere: Appleville” Donny and Frank try to rob a group of senior citizens on a bus outing to the new Appleville Mall. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 30. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts “The Concert” Uplifting comedy about a true band of misfits: a Russian orchestra reunited after 30 years by its conductor, now a lowly janitor, for a concert in Paris. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. March 25-March 27. flintarts.org

Redford Theater “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang” Dick Van Dyke, Sally Ann Howes, Lionel Jeffries. Tickets \$4 Redford Theater, 17360 Lahser Road, Detroit. 8 p.m. March 25-26. 313-537-2560. redfordtheatre.com

THEATER

BENEFITS & FUNDRAISERS

Rock The Barricade: ‘Les Miserables’ Benefit Concert Cast members of the

new 25th anniversary production of “Les Miserables” coming to Detroit at the Fisher Theatre will perform in a very special concert to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and the John F. Kennedy School PTA in Ferndale. With singer/songwriter Steven Mullan. \$15; available at the door only. The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 7 p.m. March 28.

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

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

Distraction \$15. Peppermint Creek Theatre Company at Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing. March 24-April 2. 517-927-3016. peppermintcreek.org

Funeral for a Gangster \$40, which includes dinner, dessert and one of the funniest funerals you will ever attend. Get A Clue Mystery Theatre of Farmington at Page’s Food and Spirits, 23621 Farmington Road, Farmington. April 2-3. 248-477-0099.

Hairspray \$14-\$28. The Park Players, Rosedale Park Community House, 18445 Scarsdale, Detroit. Through April 2. 313-835-1103. parkplayers.wordpress.com

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. Through April 2. 248-608-9077. avonplayers.org

Our Town \$18-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. April 1-16. 269-343-1313. kazooicivic.com

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

The Tropical Pickle \$16-\$18. St. Dunstan’s Theatre Guild, 400 Lone Pine Road, 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, Shaw Theatre, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Through March 27. 269-387-6222. wmtheatre.com

The Grapes of Wrath \$20. MSU College of Music at MSU Auditorium, 149 Auditorium, East Lansing. April 1-April 3. 1-800-Wharton. whartoncenter.com

PROFESSIONAL THEATER

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

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

Botanica \$37-\$42. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. April 1-2. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

Cloris: A One Woman Show \$25-\$50; \$100 for private reception. Tibbits Opera House, 15 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. 7 p.m. March 29. 517-289-6029. tibbits.org

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

Edges \$10. The AKT Theatre Project at The Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut St., Wyandotte. April 1-16. 734-258-8370. akttheatre.com

Fish Dinner A world premiere. \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. April 1-16. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Forgiving John Lennon \$17 in advance; \$20 at the door. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. March 31-May 22. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy! \$15. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

Godspell \$20. What’s That Smell? Productions at The Box Theatre, 51 N. Walnut, Mount Clemens. April 1-23. 586-954-2311.

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

Je Est Un Autre (I Is Another) For mature audiences only. \$15. Blackbird Theatre, 325 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 2. blackbirdtheatre.org

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. Through 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 Includes a dinner performance April 23 (\$36, which includes buffet beginning at 6:30 p.m.). \$17. Reservations required. Van Buren Street Theatre, 701 N. Van Buren St., Bay City. Through April 23. 989-893-9399. vanburenstreettheatre.com

Mercury Fur Previews April 1 (\$10). \$10-\$20. Who Wants Cake? at The Ringwald, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 1-25. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

New Jerusalem \$32-\$41. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre at Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Through April 10. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

Richard III \$20 and above. University Musical Society at Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. March 30-April 3. 734-764-2538. ums.org

Sister’s Easter Catechism \$19.50-\$34.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Through April 17. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

Some Couples May... A world premiere. Previews March 24-27, 30-31 (\$20-\$25). \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. March 24-May 28. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

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

The Cider House Rules, Part I: Here in St. Cloud’s \$25-\$30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. March 31-May 12. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

The Cider House Rules, Part II: In Other Parts of the World \$25-\$30. Hilberry

Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. April 1-May 14. 313-577-2972. hilberry.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 Comedy of Errors \$20 and above. University Musical Society at Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. March 31-April 3. 734-764-2538. ums.org

The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein \$15-\$20. The Comic Opera Guild at The Village Theater, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. April 2-3. 734-394-5460. canton-mi.org/villagetheater

The Living Stations of the Cross \$15. Living Faith-Fine Arts Apostolate at Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 2-17. livingstations.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 Piano Lesson \$27-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron, Ann Arbor. Through April 3. 734-663-0696. performancenetwork.org

The Secret Life of Bees \$25-\$30. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 7 p.m. March 25. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

The Tempest \$18. UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Road, 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 Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

Wednesdays at Go Comedy! \$5-\$10. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

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

THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Fable Galore and More \$10 adult, \$7 under 16. Children’s Theatre Network, Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. 1 p.m. March 26. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.com

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

Lyle the Crocodile \$7. Kalamazoo Civic Youth Theatre at Parish Theater, 426 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Through March 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, Tibbits Opera House, 14 S Hanchett St., Coldwater. March 24-27. 517-278-6029. tibbits.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 Crane Maiden \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetART, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Saturdays in April. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

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

ART ‘N’ AROUND

Detroit Artist’s Market “Annual Scholarship Awards and Exhibition” Turns the spotlight on the best new artists emerging from the area’s stellar arts programs. This year students are selected from the Cranbrook Art Academy. 4719 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. March 4-April 9. 313-832-8540. detroitartistsmarket.org

Detroit Creative Corridor Center “Rust Belt to Artist Belt III Conference” Chance for artists, creative business owners and practitioners, educators, and designers to explore how post-industrial Rust Belt cities are being shaped by creative individuals with regards to entrepreneurship, economic and community development, and land use. Admission: \$80. Detroit Creative Corridor Center, 460 W. Baltimore Ave., Detroit. April 6-7. 313-664-1497. RustBeltToArtistBelt.com

Detroit Institute of Arts “Fakes, Forgeries and Mysteries” Timed tickets required. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., 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. 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 at various system levels issues of possession, boundaries, privacy and encroachment. 215 S. Fourth Ave., 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” Works drawn from the permanent collection highlighting other American originals who ignored the dictates of modern art and developed personal styles rooted in their local environment. Includes works by John Marin, Martin Lewis, and Reginald Marsh. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 South Park Street, 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 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. March 1-April 23. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kerrytown Concert House “Denise Rohde Exhibit” Traditional training in photographic processes, while embracing digital editing to create unique style. By deconstructing and reconstructing familiar subjects, Rohde’s photographs have a dream-like quality. 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. April 5-May 1. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kresge Art Museum “American Roads” Assembled as a group in 1981, explores American’s 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, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 1-April 17. 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

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 offers breathtaking display of color, living foliage and light. Special 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. Swords into Plowshares Gallery, 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” 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 “Photoformation: An Empathic Environment” 525 S. State St, Ann Arbor. March 1-May 15. 734-647-0524. umma.umich.edu

Between THE Lines™

Add your events to next week’s issue!



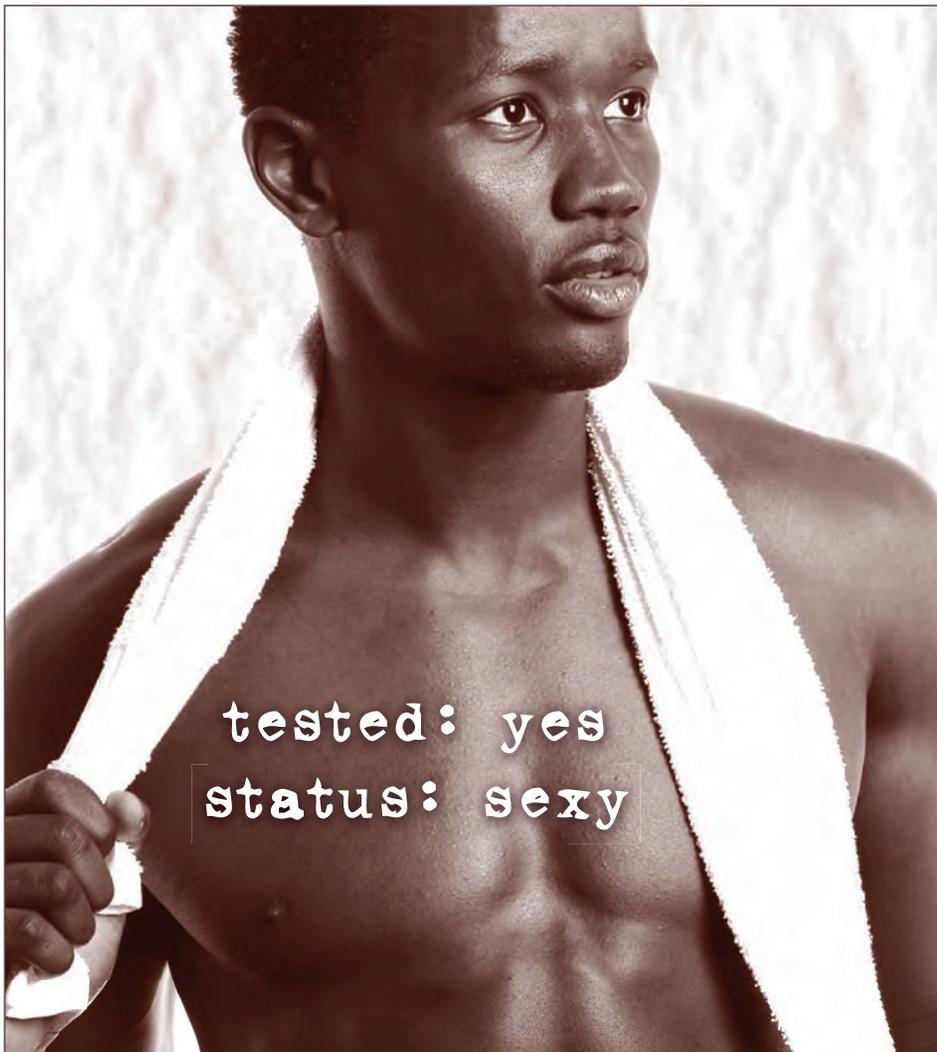
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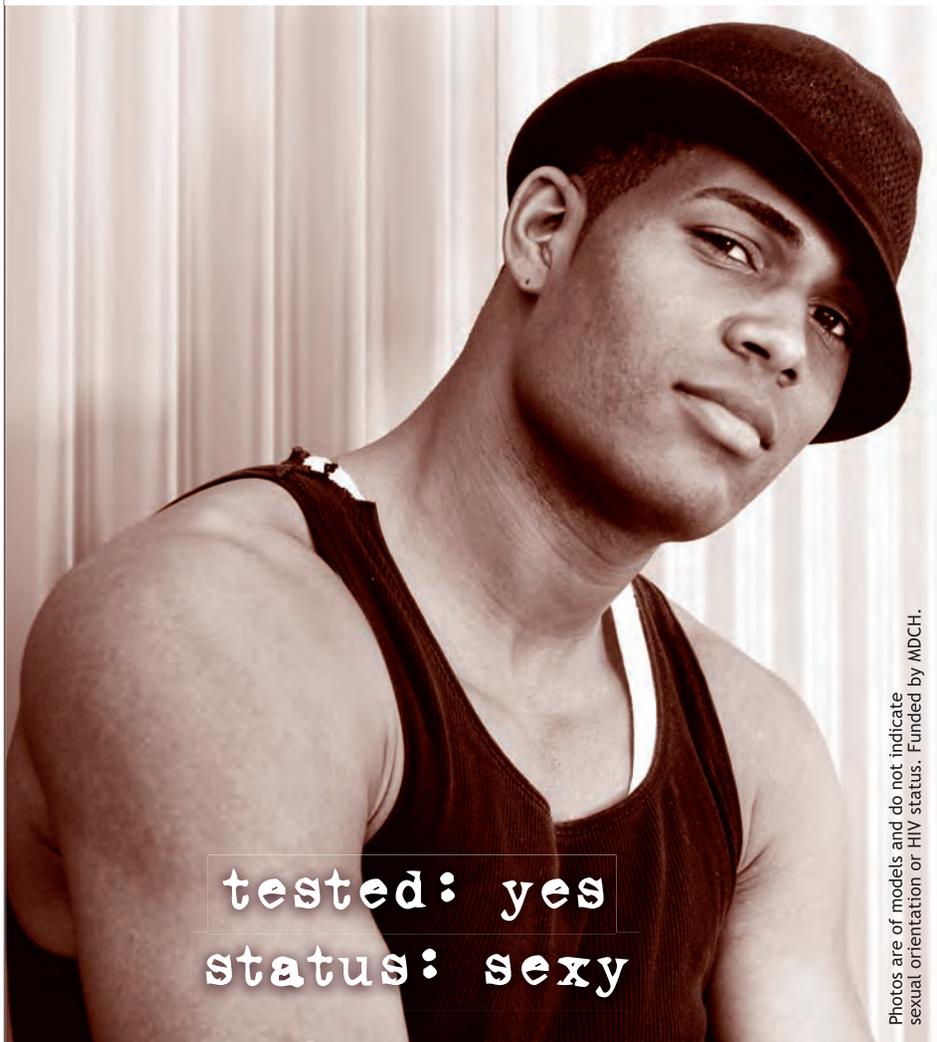


tested: yes
status: sexy

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tested: yes
status: sexy

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BTL Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

A baby wasn't enough for her

Q. My partner and I have been together for 15 years. We got together in our freshman year at college. We have been very happy – or so I thought. We have many interests in common and have so many reasons why we are good for each other. Two years ago, my partner, “Dannie,” and I had a baby girl. We were both so very happy, and I felt like my life was complete. I thought that Dannie thought so as well.

OK, so you are asking what is the problem. That was my question, too. But, two weeks ago, my Dannie said that she wanted to start dating. (We never had a commitment ceremony, but I sure thought that after 15 years we were committed.) Needless to say I was flooded! I still am. I don't understand how someone can say after 15 years and a child that they want to now “date.” What does she expect of me with that statement?

After I picked myself up, I told her that I didn't understand how she could say such a thing. Like, why did she have a baby with me when she feels this way. She said that when I had the baby she thought that that was going to help her because she had been feeling like she needed something else in her life. For her, it was like, “Is that all there is?” So, she thought that maybe a child is what was missing for her, not that it was our relationship. However, for her, it didn't make the difference when we had the baby.

So, that's where we are. Dannie is still living with the baby and me. She said that she won't date right now. But that's what she wants to do. She said that we met so early in life and she feels that dating is something she missed out on. (She didn't date in high school because she wasn't interested in boys, and girls were not an option.) What do you think I should do?

No Lesbian Bed Death

A. I am not sure what you should do, not knowing everything about your life situation. But given what you have said, if I were you, I think I would tell Dannie to do what she needs to do, but that she needs to move out if she decides to date. I think that if you were to insist that she not date, it would make it all the more attractive to her and she'd

eventually leave. In order to do this, you would have to buy into the idea that if this relationship is meant to be, she will stay. If it is not meant to be, she will eventually move on anyway. I would also ask her to see a counselor so she can deal with what's really going on. For the sake of you and your daughter, I hope she sees, or will see, the beauty of your family.

Fishy situation

Q. I want to run something by you that really bothers me, but my friends say I am just being uppity and arrogant. I want to see what you think. We have some friends, a couple actually, that have dinner parties where we are asked to bring our main course. One time it was lobster tail, this last week it was fish. They provide the rest of the meal and cook the main course. They are great cooks, but I think that if they can't afford to have lobster or fish for the dinner party they should stick with hamburgers. So far I have refused to attend any of these royal feasts, but my friends all go and seem to have no problem with the concept of BYO fish. They continue to say they have a great time at these events. How do I explain to my friends that this is not the way to have a dinner party?

Mr. Manners

A. So does a god write the book of rules on how to have a dinner party? For folks on a budget it seems to be a great way to have parties with great food without breaking a budget. You can continue to choose not to go, but it sounds like you are missing out on a lot of good food and fun due to your idea of what's right and what's wrong.

Search “Dear Jody Valley” and find Jody on Facebook.

Jody Valley spent 12 years as a clinical social worker. She worked with the LGBT community both as a counselor and a workshop leader in the areas of coming out, self-esteem and relationship issues. The “Dear Jody” column appears weekly. To write Jody, send an e-mail to dearjodyvalley@hotmail.com. Letters may be edited.

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1. Search this issue of Between The Lines for the one ad that is the fake ad. Here's a clue: the fake ad will include the words: **“Concupiscence”**
Find out why on page 10.
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.
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Search this issue for the Fake Ad

Between THE Lines

BTT Horoscopes

You can do it, Pisces!

BY JACK FERTIG

Neptune and Saturn remain in hard aspect, confusing boundaries of logic/science and religion/art/fantasy. Venus and Jupiter can usually be counted on to improve most situations, but they're also in hard aspects complicating negotiations while boosting self-righteousness and misguided optimism. Don't sugarcoat difficulties. Deal with them!

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Standing up for yourself can strain a partnership. Advice from friends should be taken very carefully. Listen at least, and be polite. There may be some nuggets of sense you can work with.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): People offering to promote you may be more well-meaning than effective. In the end you can only trust your own record of good work and your own instincts. For your health's sake be careful not to over-extend yourself.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Most arguments are a waste of time and energy, especially now. Imagine the world you would want future generations to live in and let that dream inspire your creative efforts. Learn what you can from the children in your life.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): To meet the great opportunities you face now, find strength in your roots, let go of fear and distractions. Charm and sexual charisma can work for you if you are very careful not to overplay them.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Misunderstandings with your partner are inevitable. Playing them into grossly exaggerated caricature may be the best way of getting to the root of them. WWLD: What Would Lucy Do? Unlike Lucy, talk with your "Ricky" and play out the farce cooperatively.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): If there's diabetes in your family, check your own risk factors. Flirtations at work or the gym can grow into something serious. Be careful, though. That new honey could incur some hard expenses!

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Creative efforts aimed at improving a relationship are likely to go awry. Your usual brilliance at anticipating others' desires is on strike now. That's OK. They'll love it when you ask.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Volunteer work in your community could be a disillusioning experience. So who need illusions? Growing up and getting real can be harsh, but it makes you more effective. You can still keep your ideals alive even with a clearer, more aware perspective.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): The fun and games don't seem to stop, but what purpose do they serve? Are they helping you toward your long-range goals? Some diversion and relaxation is necessary, but don't get carried away!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): You're at a career peak, but wondering what's the point? That's always a good question as long as you're really looking for an answer. Look deep and hard at where you came from to get a clearer sense of where you're going.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Trying to reconcile opposing viewpoints can cheat you of the perspective that you will get from understanding each on its own merits. Before you try to master overarching ideas, start with the basic details and work your way up.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Worrying about money is too easy. Meditate and focus on intuiting how and where to build your resources. Yes, it will take hard work, and some of those "intuitions" will have to be filtered through hard, cold reality. It may not be easy, but you can do it!

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 30

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ELAN	GNAW	TAPED			
CYNTHIAN	NIXON				
ECHOING	TENDRIL				
DOO	TEEN	DIABLO			
EWES	ERAS	ATILT			
	CHRISTINE				
CAIRO	EARN	MEDO			
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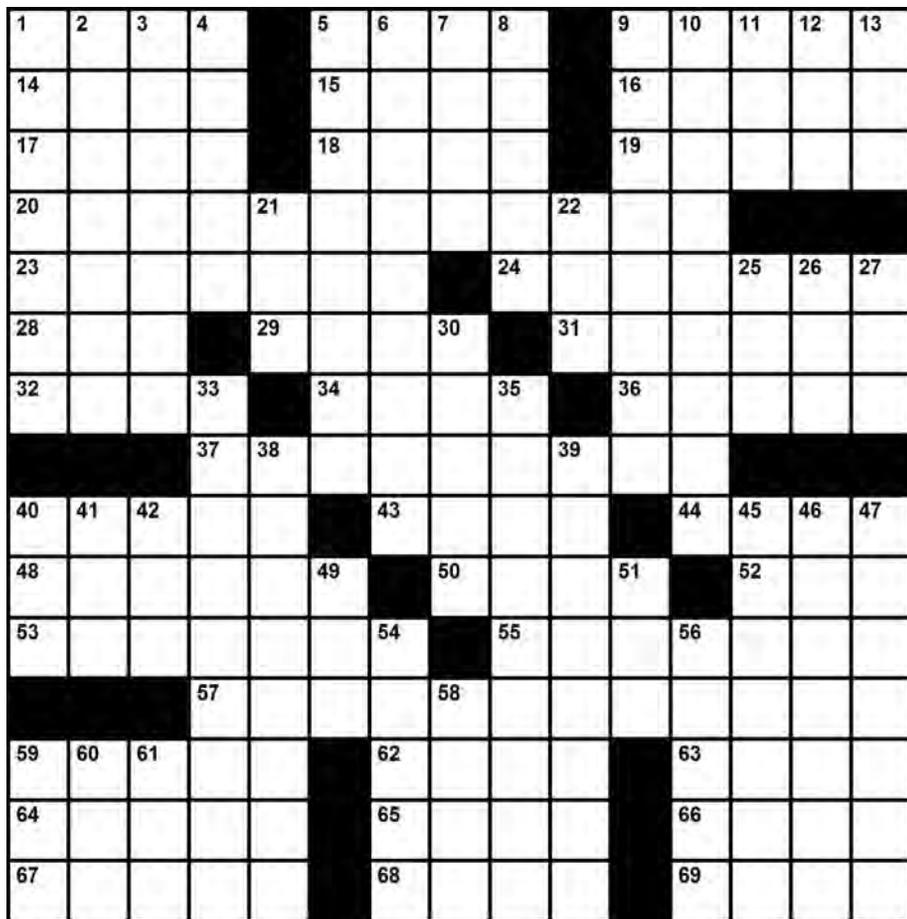
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Proud Parents

Across

- 1 Guy embraced by homophiles?
- 5 Put out
- 9 Continental coins
- 14 Go from one gay bar to another, e.g.
- 15 Ironically-named burning software
- 16 Dick's running mate
- 17 Vivacity
- 18 Eat beaver-style
- 19 Like a mouth, in B&D
- 20 "Sex and the City" star
- 23 Bouncing off the walls
- 24 Climbing plant's leafless organ
- 28 Beginning of a hickey?
- 29 Billy Douglas on "One Life to Live," for one
- 31 Kahlo's devil
- 32 Meadow moms
- 34 Time line divisions
- 36 Not erect
- 37 Marinoni (partner of 20-Across)

Down

- 40 Where "Aida" premiered
- 43 Bring home the pork?
- 44 "What would you have ___?"
- 48 ___ fours (tea cakes)
- 50 Enjoy with the tongue
- 52 A striking blow
- 53 Streetcar track
- 55 Like someone easily seduced
- 57 New-born son of 20- and 37-Across
- 59 Jack, who licked it clean
- 62 Kind of a drag
- 63 Setting for "At Swim, Two Boys"
- 64 Drag queen's facial application
- 65 Sea flier
- 66 Baltic Sea feeder
- 67 Gay rodeo target
- 68 Badgers or horses
- 69 Come clean, with "up"

Down

- 1 Come ahead of
- 2 Milk source at the Crystal Cathedral?
- 3 Great Scott romance
- 4 Slow, to Saint-Saens
- 5 Bring about with some effort
- 6 Williams' glass animals
- 7 Caspian Sea land
- 8 Namely
- 9 Language related to Finnish
- 10 Praise of an early morning erection?
- 11 Tombstone letters
- 12 Vein filler
- 13 "Get out!" to Orton, with "off"
- 21 Single, to Glenn Burke
- 22 Crossed through
- 25 Baseball card stat
- 26 Not in the pink
- 27 Worldly fate
- 30 Like a pair of orifices

- 33 Where Esera Tuaolo drew the line?
- 35 Pubescent person
- 38 It surrounds three men in a tub
- 39 Has a slant
- 40 Von Trapp's rank
- 41 ___ Lingus (Irish airline)
- 42 Suffix that changes senior's gender
- 45 One that comes out on the beach
- 46 Actress Del Rio
- 47 Tools in kitchen drawers
- 49 Clinton blows it
- 51 Family
- 54 Aden's land
- 56 "___ Aquarius"
- 58 Byron poem
- 59 MTF operation
- 60 Gold holder
- 61 Golden Girl McClanahan

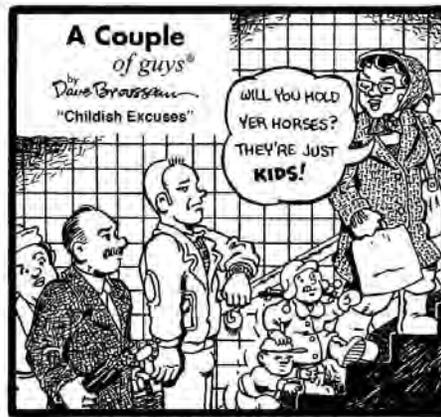
Solution on 29

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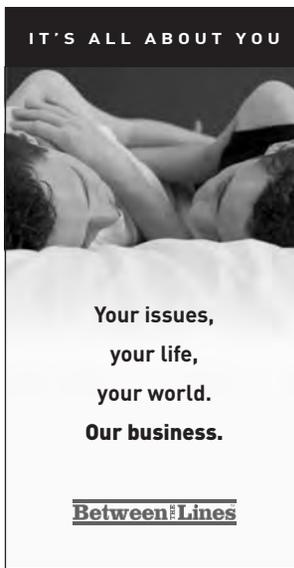
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BTL Queeries

BY STEVEN PETROW

To spy or not to spy on my girlfriend

Q. Last week I picked up my girlfriend's cell and read a very intimate text from someone who was no doubt a sexual partner. I completely flipped out and have been thinking about downloading some of the "spy" software that allows you "to find out everything THEY DO on the Internet and computer." Do you think that's a good idea?

A. No. I'd start by asking your girlfriend about the text message you saw and see both what she says and how she acts. But let's say, for arguments sake, you're not satisfied by her response or simply don't trust it. Now, you've got a problem. But it's not one that would be solved by signing up for one of those "I spy" services. Indeed, my understanding is that this spyware can alert you to keywords in her chats, instant messages, emails and can let you see everything she posts on Facebook, every site she visits or searches for, and every photo she's posted. You can also retrieve passwords and logins. Horrifying, I say. Whether or not you find more dirt, you're already proven yourself distrustful – so what's the point? A relationship dispute is not akin to a court inquisition. Whether by talking more or seeing a couple's counselor, you need to get to the root of the problem, which seems to be lack of trust and/or sexual indiscretion.

My mother opposes gay marriage, but loves my husband

Q. My husband and I have been together for over 20 years and were married last October. My mother has said she's very happy and loves my husband. This week at dinner my mother said she was thrilled that "gay marriage was not legal everywhere." Here's the problem: My mother, and especially my stepfather, are rabid Republicans. I know they will continue to follow the Republicans again on this issue. Do I make a big deal about it? Do I point out that they want to deny my husband and me a fundamental right?

A. Now, you understand that age-old adage cautioning people not to discuss politics (or religion) at dinner; it can give you indigestion! (or worse). Since you say your mother loves your husband, I think there's a strong disconnect for her between the personal and the political. What I suggest doing is sitting down with your mother (leave your stepdad out of this) the next time you're together and explain how same-sex couples are discriminated against because we can't marry. Use concrete examples and make comparisons to their marriage. For instance, if your partner dies, explain that you're not eligible for his Social Security benefits, but that your mother is when your stepfather passes. Sadly, you have about 1,100 federal benefits that are denied to gays and lesbians to choose from as your examples. A lot of straight folks have never thought of these inequities, but once pointed out, the inherent unfairness is often

quite persuasive. If this doesn't change your mom's mind, then either agree to disagree or ask her to put a lid on it (but nicely because it's your mother).

My main problem is my future mother-in-law – up to now I've always had a great relationship with her. Now she's suddenly become a Bridezilla.

This mother-in-law is a Bridezilla!

Q. My boyfriend and I will be holding a civil partnership ceremony at the end of this year and have decided it will be a simple affair. Neither of us wants a big "traditional" wedding and we are limited to a strict budget in any case. We have gotten the ball rolling and have started organizing everything that needs doing – registry office, hotel, suits, a photographer, etc. My main problem is my future mother-in-law – up to now I've always had a great relationship with her. Now she's suddenly become a Bridezilla. She insists on being kept up to date on every little detail and wants regular briefings on our progress. She finds fault in everything we do too. (The hotel isn't nice enough and the menu sounds awful for starters.) She keeps asking us to give her jobs to do. I have tried appeasing her by giving her small tasks, but I'm running out of jobs to invent. I have spoken to my boyfriend about her but he doesn't see it as a big deal. He thinks we should just ignore her. But I can't!

A. If this weren't so difficult for you, I'd have a big laugh about it, because Bridezilla mothers-in-law are such a classic by now – straight brides (and grooms) have had to tolerate them since the beginning of time. Gay couples tend to encounter less of the kind of interference you're describing if only because we usually cover the costs of our own nuptials (when our parents aren't paying, they don't get as much of vote) and we often partner later in life (when our folks have gotten used to us making our own decisions). But I now see that a mother-in-law is a mother-in-law is a mother-in-law! Hello equality.

You've done everything that you can do; the idea of small tasks is brilliant. It's now up to your boyfriend to take on his mother and set some limits – even if he doesn't see her meddling as a big deal. He needs to do it for you – both in terms of your wedding but also to establish the right boundaries with your MIL for the years to come. You can tell him I said so!

Steven Petrow is the author of the forthcoming book, "Steven Petrow's Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners" (www.gaymanners.com). To ask him your personal question: ask@gaymanners.com.

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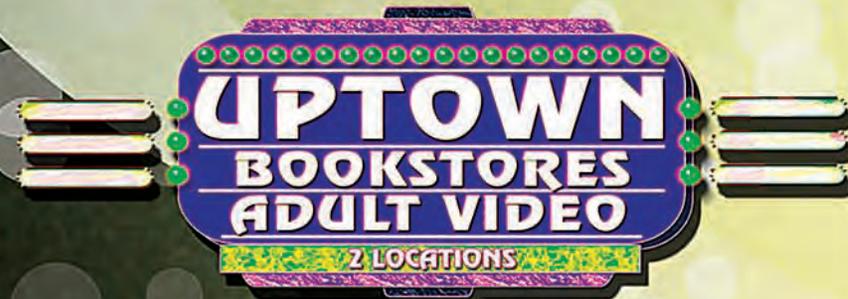
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Johnny Knoxville in "Jackass: Number Two." Photo: Paramount Pictures

The 'Jackass' machine keeps rolling

The men of "Jackass" need to keep working. And if those jobs could involve less chance of spinal cord injury then so much the better. And to that end, Johnny Knoxville has a couple of new projects lined up. The first one, called "First Man," is a script about a rowdy hellraiser whose wife is elected president. His response? Goofy post-adolescent (OK, more like creeping middle-age) rebellion. And after that Knoxville

is planning to re-team with "Jackass" colleagues Bam Margera and Ryan Dunn for a crime comedy called "Mustache Riders." It'll co-star Willie Nelson as a veteran outlaw who leads three small-time crooks on a buried treasure hunt and will, in keeping with the three "actors'" abilities, provide them with the opportunity to do their own stunts. Now, it's presumed that none of those stunts will involve two naked men being superglued to one another like in "Jackass 3D," but you never know. Don't underestimate these guys and their love of the gay-adjacent scenario.

Wonder Woman + Elizabeth Hurley = love?

If she comes from an already man-free, lesbian-leaning place called Paradise Island, are we surprised that the rebooted "Wonder Woman" TV project from David E. Kelly is going to feature an arch lady-nemesis who may have strong feelings for the crime fighter in red, white and blue? No? Good, because that villainess – an evil pharmaceutical corporation CEO – is going to be played by Elizabeth Hurley, who should be great at bringing some devilish sex to the role. In other cool casting news, "Rent" alum Tracie Thoms is on board as Etta, cheery personal assistant to "Friday Night Lights" star Adrianne Palicki's Diana Prince/Wonder Woman. More casting and go-to-series decision news as it comes in, but that sound you hear is a million lesbian TV viewers clearing space on their DVRs.

Romeo in the military, Audrey Hepburn in Japan

Alan Brown keeps busy. Don't know him? Well he's the man who just adapted Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" for the big screen, but set it in an all-male military academy and called it "Private Romeo." Up-and-comers Seth Numrich and Matt Doyle star (yes, it features original Shakespearean English as the boys engage in basketball court brawls and tender make-out scenes) and it'll start hitting film festivals this spring. And in even bigger news, Brown's new film project, "Audrey Hepburn's Neck," is in the early stages of production and

will star Krysten Ritter, Ari Graynor and Brian Geraghty. It's based on Brown's own 1996 novel and is a romantic comedy about a young Japanese man obsessed with American women. It's also the story of his American friend, a gay guy who has more than his share of adventures with his own obsession: Japanese men. So whatever you call Brown after these projects hit screens, don't call him timid or safe.

'New Year's Eve'? For gays too?

"Pretty Woman" director Garry Marshall knows when to strike while the iron is still hot. His last film, the huge ensemble comedy "Valentine's Day," was a big hit with audiences and, in spite of its timid – OK, stupid – portrayal of gay love (Gay characters Eric Dane and Bradley Cooper don't kiss. Instead, one of them brushes the other's check with an orchid. Yes, really.) it managed not to offend much of the queer audience. Well, now Marshall's back in action with a sequel of sorts: "New Year's Eve." It'll star, among "many" others, Robert DeNiro, Ashton Kutcher, Katherine Heigl, Lea Michele, Josh Duhamel, Sofia Vergara, Zac Efron, Hilary Swank, Jon Bon Jovi, Michele Pfeiffer, Sarah Jessica Parker, Ice Cube and Ryan Seacrest. So a franchise of holiday-themed rom-coms is born. But we demand that this time the gays and/or the lesbians be allowed to kiss at midnight. This isn't a polite request. Just do it.

Romeo San Vicente kisses and tells. Then kisses again. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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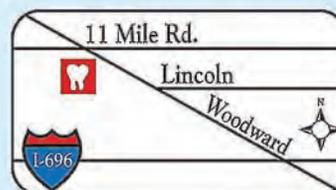


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