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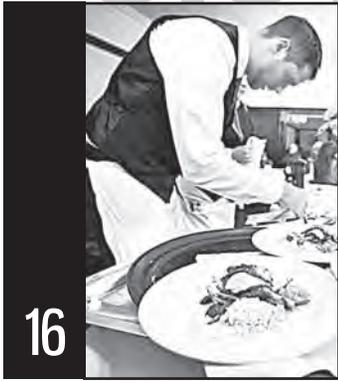
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BTI Speak Out

BY ERIC RADER

Snyder soon to be tested Will the governor stick to his moderate ideology?

Last week, Republicans in the Michigan House failed to secure enough votes to repeal domestic partner benefits for state employees. These benefits were secured last year in a collective bargaining agreement between state employees and the Granholm Administration, and approved by the Michigan Civil Service Commission earlier this year. Right-wing ideologues sought to quash the new protections for state workers even before they took effect. Thankfully, Democrats were able to prevent the Republicans from securing the two-thirds majority they needed to pass the repeal legislation. Though House Democrats were able to successfully stop the Republicans this time, there will certainly be further battles. Unfortunately, the Republicans used a procedural mechanism that keeps the repeal issue alive and may pave the way for a second vote on these benefits later this year.

When he ran for office last year, Governor Rick Snyder campaigned as a political moderate. Indeed, he very rarely mentioned social issues in his highly successful campaign, and focused almost exclusively on the economy and jobs. The governor's landslide win had nothing to do with social issues such as LGBT rights. However, the Republican majorities in the Michigan House and Senate are far from moderate. They have pursued a strongly conservative agenda during their brief time in power. Many people on the majority side of the legislature are determined to push an activist social agenda that would further marginalize LGBTs. The Republicans' efforts to reverse domestic partner benefits for state employees was couched in fiscal terms, with leaders claiming that the state could not afford to provide these benefits to employees during tough budgetary times. Governor Snyder announced his opposition to the civil service commission's decision by focusing on the fiscal impact of the benefits. Our leaders should be reminded that this is not an issue of finances, but one of basic fairness and equality. If benefits are provided to one group (legally married spouses of straight employees), then those same benefits should be granted to LGBT employees and their partners. Certainly the state can find a way to pay for these benefits, even within budgetary constraints.

Governor Snyder may well be a moderate, just as he says. However, he will be under a great deal of pressure to support the radical social agenda of his colleagues in the legislature. The coming months will be a test of his integrity about his ideology. If the governor is truly concerned about economic development, he should welcome the talents of all workers, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. He should already be able to see the value of diversity, given his former role as head of a major technology company. The tech industry has long recognized the importance of a diverse workforce, and many companies have extended important benefits to LGBT employees. Experts in the economic development field have observed that in a knowledge-based economy, people go to states where open-mindedness and inclusion are

important. When voters in the state of Michigan approved an anti-gay marriage amendment in 2004, they sent exactly the opposite message to the rest of the country. A self-styled moderate governor like Snyder could go a long way to improving the state's image by pushing back against the right-wing

Snyder's willingness to buck his own party on some issues should include fighting the conservative social plans of Republicans in the legislature.

agenda and by supporting equal rights for LGBTs.

The new governor of our state has already announced proposals that are opposed by members of his caucus in the Michigan House and Michigan Senate. One example is Snyder's support for the Detroit River International Crossing Bridge, a much-needed public project that is opposed by many legislative Republicans. It remains to be seen whether the governor can get this project approved. His willingness to buck his own party on some issues should include fighting the conservative social plans of Republicans in the legislature.

Recent polls show increasing support for LGBT rights in this country, most notably on the issue of same-sex marriage. However, governors cannot repeal state constitutional amendments, no matter how obnoxious those measures are. But, executive leaders can use their bully pulpit and legislative initiatives to promote inclusivity. Governor Snyder's statewide popularity has declined recently, but he has a lot of political support within his own party. Many Republican legislators owe their jobs to Snyder, given his long coattails in last year's elections. The Michigan House is on the ballot again in 2012, and the voters are paying attention to what our new leaders are doing. If right-wing Republicans in the legislature are allowed to set the agenda, Michigan's problems will only get worse. The governor has an opportunity to prove that he truly wants to solve our state's problems and unite Michigan – that will be the true measure of his moderation as a leader.



SPEAK OUT

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- share your personal experiences and issues you feel are ignored by mainstream eldercare;
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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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Discrimination rampant in transgender life

Largest-ever survey shows difficulties in meeting basic needs

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

When Mara Keisling, the director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, once told a doctor she was transgender, she got a terrified reply:

“He said, ‘Oh! Oh! Oh! I’m Indian!’ And then he fled the room,” Keisling told a room packed full of college students at the University of Michigan last month.

After the laughter in the room died down, Keisling’s face became serious. “That happened to me as a 50-year-old,” she said. “What if that had happened to a 17-year-old who’s been kicked out of home?”

Keisling, who was speaking to students who attended the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference, shared many somber statistics from the NCTE’s survey on transgender discrimination, which was released in February and was also created with the help of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The survey is the largest ever conducted of transgender individuals, and it takes a frightening snapshot of the difficulties faced by nearly 6500 transgender people in the U.S. “We tried to find bigger studies,” Keisling said. “This *is* the biggest study.”

The survey results show that transgender individuals face serious barriers to meeting their basic needs, starting with employment. Ninety percent of survey respondents reported being harassed, mistreated or discriminated against on the job. Another 47 percent reported being fired, not hired or denied a promotion. These workplace struggles mean that transgender individuals are four times more likely to live in poverty (less than \$10,000 a year) than the general population.

They’re also twice as likely to be homeless as the general population. And of the survey respondents who had experienced homelessness, more than half had been turned away from a shelter.

Housing discrimination is another pressing problem, Keisling said, and the issue has been recognized by Housing and Urban Development, which created rules this year saying that transgender individuals cannot be denied federal housing. Transgender individuals are only half as likely as the general population to own their own homes, and 19 percent of survey respondents said they had been denied a home or apartment.

Keisling, who regaled the audience with more humorous – and depressing – stories about the state of medical care for transgender individuals, isn’t alone in her experience. Half of survey respondents reported having to educate their doctors and medical providers about transgender care. Another 19 percent were denied care when seeking medical attention. Proper health care is particularly important for transgender individuals, especially because they

Snapshots of transgender life

The National Transgender Center for Equality surveyed 6,450 transgender individuals in the U.S. Full results are available at transequality.org.



BTL graphic: Tara Cavanaugh

“My life is so happy. I have a wife I love, a job I love, I have a calling that I love, so it really is possible in our community.”

– Rachel Crandall

have rates of HIV that are four times higher than the general population.

Overall, 63 percent of respondents experienced a “serious act of discrimination,” an event that the NCTE says “would have a major impact on a person’s quality of life and ability to sustain themselves financially or emotionally.” Such events include: loss of job, eviction, dropping out due to bullying/harassment, teacher bullying, physical and sexual assault, homelessness, loss of relationship with partner or children, denial of medical care and incarceration. Another 23 percent said they had experienced three or more events on that list. “These compounding acts of discrimination – due to the prejudice of others or lack of protective laws – exponentially increase the difficulty of bouncing back and

establishing a stable economic and home life,” the NCTE writes in its executive summary of the survey.

Rachel Crandall, the director of Transgender Michigan, experienced many of the events listed above. “When I came out I lost everything,” she said. “I lost my job, I lost my house, I lost my career, I lost all my money, I lost my marriage. I had to go through a number of years when I had absolutely nothing.” But Crandall, who founded Transgender Michigan in 1997, insists “things really are getting better. But I think it’s happening slowly.” So when people tell her of their struggles, she lends a supportive ear – and she encourages them to get involved, to volunteer at places like Transgender Michigan (which is currently seeking board members). “What I tell people

is to go out and fight for what you want.”

Crandall is also happy to say that she’s bounced back. “My life is so happy,” she said. “I have a wife I love, a job I love, I have a calling that I love, so it really is possible in our community.”

Even though much of the survey shows a generally grim outlook for transgender life, the NCTE does point out in its summary some results that indicate resilience. Those who maintained most of their family bonds – 43 percent of respondents – reported significantly less homelessness, jail time, suicide attempts, drug/alcohol abuse and work in sex or other underground industries. Of the 26 percent who reported losing a job to bias, 58 percent were able to find another job. And even though transgender students are much more likely to drop out, transgender adults go back to school later in life: 22 percent of respondents aged 25-44 were in school, compared to 7 percent of those in the same age group in the general population.

Keisling, like Crandall, encourages people to get involved. “Now we actually have some really good data,” she said. “It’s important to us that anyone who wants to, uses it. We want you to use it to fix things.”

International Transgender Day of Visibility celebrated locally

METRO DETROIT – International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31 will be commemorated during a few days of events that are jointly planned by Transgender Michigan and Transgender Detroit.

On March 31, the organizations are sponsoring a Metro Detroit Day of Visibility in which people can volunteer for service projects at Greening of Detroit from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and Forgotten Harvest from 3-5 p.m.

On April 2, the organizations will host a conference, “Metro Detroit Day of Empowerment,” at Affirmations, located at 290 W. Nine Mile from 1:30-4:30 p.m. The conference will feature guest speakers, including the Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service Diane Mitchum and Grand Rapids activist Adam Taylor.

For more information and to RSVP, search on Facebook for “Metro Detroit Day of Visibility” and “Metro Detroit Day of Empowerment.”



Mara Keisling, director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, spoke to students at the University of Michigan last month.

ACLU: LGBT websites blocked on Rochester school computers

ROCHESTER – The ACLU of Michigan has teamed up with the national ACLU and the ACLU of Kansas and Western Missouri to combat unfair filtering of web content on school computers. The organizations sent letters to several public high schools on March 28 demanding that they stop viewpoint-based censorship of web content geared toward the LGBT communities.

The ACLU was notified that the schools were censoring material after teaming with the Yale Law School to launch the “Don’t Filter Me” campaign, which asked students to check to see if their school was blocking content.

“We’re pleased that students around the country are responding to the initiative by asserting their rights and letting their schools know that censorship is unacceptable,” said

Joshua Block, staff attorney with the ACLU LGBT Project. “Blocking these sites not only discriminates against LGBT viewpoints, but can deny LGBT students in crisis a much-needed lifeline for support.”

“I couldn’t believe my school would block access to perfectly legitimate websites just because they were about LGBT issues,” said Nick Rinehart, a Rochester High School student who was blocked from looking up information on gay-straight alliances with a message that said his search violated Rochester High School’s “acceptable use” policy. “It’s not fair for the school to try to keep students in the dark about LGBT resources.”

Some schools have configured their web filters to block access to websites for LGBT rights organizations such as the Gay-Straight

Alliance Network, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and websites pertaining to the National Day of Silence to protest anti-LGBT bullying. However, some filters also allow access to sites that condemn homosexuality or urge LGBT people to try to change their sexual orientation, such as People Can Change.

The ACLU has given the schools until April 4 to respond.

A video showing students how to test whether or not their school is illegally filtering content, and provides instructions for reporting censorship can be seen at: www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights/dont-filter-me. Students who want to report unconstitutional web filtering at their schools can fill out a form at: action.aclu.org/dontfilterme

‘Haters, sinners and the rest of us’ at Oakland University Monday

ROCHESTER – Dr. John Corvino will give a speech at Oakland University on Monday, April 4 from 7-9 p.m. in Banquet Room B at the Oakland Center. The event, titled “Haters, sinners and the rest of us” is sponsored by the Oakland University Student Congress, the school’s GSA and several other

student organizations. Corvino draws on two decades of speaking experience as “The Gay Moralizer” to help promote a better dialogue on the issues between those who support LGBT equality and those who don’t.

A reception before the speech and Q&A session afterwards will include hors d’oeuvres

and time to talk with Dr. Corvino. The event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Corvino teaches philosophy at Wayne State University and is a nationally renowned writer whose columns are featured on 365gay.com and in BTL.

State Senator, Howell teacher speak about bullying

ANN ARBOR – Stonewall Democrats, the LGBT issues branch of the University of Michigan’s College Democrats, is holding a discussion called “Challenging bullying” on April 3 from 2:30-4 p.m. in the Michigan Union Pond Room.

Guest speakers include Michigan State Senator Glenn Anderson, D-6; John Austin, president of the Michigan State Board of Education; Jay McDowell, a teacher at Howell High School; Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project; and Hanna Zipes, therapist at U-M Counseling and Psychological Services.

The discussion will center on how to get Sen. Anderson’s anti-bullying law passed in Michigan. The law, called Matt’s Law, was introduced in 2006 and both non-enumerated and enumerated (which includes LGBT-specific protections) versions have not passed through the state legislature. The event is free and open to the public.

Michigan Pride Brunch April 10

LANSING – The third annual Michigan Pride Brunch will raise money for this year’s Michigan Pride, which takes place from June 10-12 in downtown Lansing.

The brunch is on April 10 at 11 a.m. at the Radisson, located at 111 N. Grand Ave. Tickets cost \$25 and are available at www.michiganpride.org.

Obituary: Karen Hartwig

March 4, 1963- March 18, 2011

Karen Jeanne Hartwig, a past board member of Suits And The City and Michigan Pride, passed away on March 18.

Stephanie McLean, a friend who called Hartwig “Twig,” said she “worked tirelessly in the early years of Michigan Pride to make sure that that day wasn’t just a good idea in someone’s head, but an extraordinary event for thousands of people. Later, when some of us got old and tired, Twig went back.

“She did the same thing for Suits in the City,” McLean continued. “She recruited women to join and made the event a fun, safe place for LGBT people to network ... She helped bring the ‘L’ to an LGBT event.”

Karen, who worked at Sparrow Hospital and Lansing Community College, enjoyed many outdoor activities, such as downhill skiing, water skiing, kayaking, biking, playing with her dogs and sailing on Little Traverse Bay.

Hartwig is mourned by her partner, Sarah Hinton; her parents Joan and William; her sister, Susan Hartwig; her niece and goddaughter, Emma Senner; her godmother, Kathy Buchweitz; her beloved dogs, Huck and Dockett; and many other dear aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Services were held on March 23 and 24. Contributions in her name may be given to the Ingham County Animal Control Shelter or the Capital Area Humane Society.

Has-been 'SNL' star, Victoria Jackson, comes out against 'Glee' kiss. What do you think of her argument?

She's a nitwit and always has been.

—Joseph Waldman

I think Victoria Jackson is sickening, as are her Fox News talking points. Is it just me, or does she seem heavily medicated and unbalanced?

—David Paul Rudzinski

Interesting that they always say "It's not me...it's in the Bible!" How many would support equality if not for that book? (It's not the book...it's you!)

—Alex Hardesty

I like how she says that television is making kids gay and that Muslims hate God, then she goes on to say that liberal TV is scaring people away from Jesus. No, it's whiny, ignorant people like you that scare people away from Jesus.

—Jay Topham

In a nutshell, there are a lot of people who share Victoria Jackson's opinion of the existence of a liberal agenda that includes making kids gay. There isn't a lot we can do about someone who believes this until they put down the Bible and start thinking. What we can do is show an equal representation of sexuality on shows like "Glee."

—Verlaine Wheelock

She's as bad as Palin and others (who) say anything to stay in the news.

—George Borg

Victoria who?

—Martha Meek

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



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

— *First Amendment, U.S. Constitution*

Families and bias



Archbishop Silvano Tomasi

"People are being attacked for taking positions that do not support sexual behavior between people of the same sex. When they express their moral beliefs or beliefs about human nature ... they are stigmatized, and worse — they are vilified, and prosecuted. These attacks are violations of fundamental human rights and cannot be justified under any circumstances."

— Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Vatican representative, in a speech to United Nations Human Rights Council, describing a "disturbing trend" of vilifying those who, for religious or moral reasons, criticize sexual relations between two people of the same sex, catholicnewsagency.com, March 22.



Rekha Shah with daughter and daughter-in-law

"We have a big extended family here in the US and in India. We were so worried how they would react. We were torn between our love for Amy and a society that was not open minded enough to accept her. To (my) surprise, when (I) announced that (Amy) is a lesbian, (my) extended family and friends came out in support, including the relatives from India. They were all complimentary about how courageous and compassionate my husband and I were. Yes, there were few negative reactions, but we were firm and focused only on Amy and her future. Eventually the people who were against the idea also came around."

— Rekha Shah, Indian-born, living in the U.S. since the 1970s, in her column titled "My Daughter and Daughter-in-law," coming out as a proud parents and mother-in-law, gaysifamily.com, March 24. This web site is for "Desi," people from India and neighboring countries, who identify as LGBT, known as "Gaysi."



Brent Hartinger

"The idea is that a gay man can't cover gay issues because he'll be 'biased.' But we all have a sexuality: if a gay journalist is biased on gay issues, wouldn't a straight journalist be biased too, just in a different direction? This strikes me as a classic example of 'heterosexual privilege:' the idea that when a member of the majority thinks something, that opinion is rational and 'objective,' but when a minority member thinks something, it's somehow suspect — biased unless proven otherwise."

— Brent Hartinger, in his "Ask the Flying Monkey" entertainment column, responding to a question about television journalist Anderson Cooper, "Can a Gay Journalist Be Out and Objective?," afterelton.com, March 23.



Leonard Pitts, Jr.

"For those who believe gay men and lesbians ought to be free to solemnize and formalize their relationships, that is very good news. It means they are — we are — winning the argument. That is cause for celebration. But lurking at the edge of celebration there is, for me, at least, a nagging, impatient vexation. That vexation is based in what is arguably an esoteric question: In extolling the fact that the majority now approves same sex marriage, do we not also tacitly accept the notion that the majority has the right to judge?"

— Leonard Pitts, Jr., in his column titled "Human rights shouldn't need opinion surveys," about recent polls showing a slim majority of the American people now favor allowing gay men and lesbians to wed, freep.com, March 25.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Presto! Change-Oh!

Shortly before retiring from the now digitally enhanced combat called public school teaching I came across a bound volume of news about students, teachers, education, circa mid-50s.

Browsing after hours one TGIF I was pleasantly surprised to find a poem I wrote at Harry Burns Hutchins, the intermediate school at Woodrow Wilson & Blaine, to and from which I took a 13-cent, city bus ride weekly for three happy, reasonably carefree years.

I still judge Hutchins one of the best learning experiences of my life. Located in a Jewish neighborhood, we goyim kids, during the holy holidays, were a classroom minority. (I was scheduled to go Jefferson Intermediate, but my mom deemed it "too rough.")

My poem was originally included in a student-illustrated, hand-stapled, mimeographed booklet, "The Coach and Four." I did the cover illustration as well.

Though I wrote "The Clock" at post-pubescent 14, I'll be the first to admit – modestly, of course – that there's about it a touch of Emily Dickinsonian, Americana genius. (Sure, Mary!) Said youthful opus contains insights not normally accessible to straight teens, shall we say, less intuitively "sensitive." Or, gaily jocund?

Having now provided introductory PG palaver, here's the poem in its pristine simplicity. (I'll be delighted to read same in person for any festive occasion warranting the inclusion of a spiritually uplifting, LGBT-inspired, rhymed composition. Gratis.) And so . . . The Clock . . .

"Our dusty old clock sits on the shelf./ Ticking softly there by itself./ Slowly counting the hours away./ As night turns to another day./ Winter. Summer. The whole year through:/ Tick tock, I hear it. Do you?/ We grow old and pass away./ But the clock goes on from day to day."

I was also Hutchin's Star contest editor when I yielded to the above, inspired, if premature, calling of the poetic muse. (Shared in passing: when I went to DPS Burton Elementary part of my learning experience was memorization. If asked – again gratis – I can recite – with appropriate gesticulation, stance, costumes – "Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," "Casey at the Bat," or, "Daffodils".)

Come to think of it, as a kid I was Mr. Starlit Stairway – with an enthusiasm I find refreshing looking back; and a tad curious, given my present penchant for being strategically reticent in public, non-macho places.

At Hutchins I also did a ventriloquism act, with a dummy, Hermann, purchased at Hall's Magic Shop in downtown Detroit. I haven't a clue about scripting. I think it had something to do with the terrors of jay walking. I got enthusiastic applause for my schizoid efforts.

That same year I put on a magic show at the Cass Methodist Church. As owner of a \$12.50 Gilbert's Magic Set – linking rings, prepared cards, magic wands, vanishing handkerchiefs, fake mustache – I was young Harry Houdini incarnate. (Handcuffs came much later.)

Girlfriend Carolyn Clark was my assistant. Her father George Murray was understudy to magician great Harry Blackstone. My slight-of-hand left a lot to be desired. But Carolyn and I had a grand, giggling time. The free-dinner social made stars of us if only for a half-hour.

Looking back on "me" I smile at the refreshing, unsullied chutzpah of the likable, towheaded kid I was. Life had a wow! pow! quality about it. Get out on stage. Take charge! Pull rabbits out of hats! Link rings. Change silken hankies: rainbow purple, blue, green, red, yellow, orange . . . Take bows. Tweak mustaches. Hocus pocus. Diamond yokus! Shazam!

That world has vanished. Poof! The magic streets I grew up on with glorious, backyard Victory Gardens are no more. Presto! Treeless. The kids that once yelled, First to see the street lights go on! are shadows. Zap! Gone! Still, my clock ticks on. (Mostly, these days, I can barely wind it.)

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BTL Editorial

Knowledge is power

Our feature story this week on transgender discrimination might seem more than a little depressing. The largest and most comprehensive study ever done of transgender individuals in the U.S. heaps scary statistic upon scary statistic, showing that overall, the transgender people among us have serious difficulties in meeting their basic needs. They face blatant discrimination in housing, employment and medical care. They're much more likely to live in serious poverty and be homeless. It's no wonder that many (47 percent of the survey respondents) have attempted suicide.

Mara Kiesling, the director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, the center that helped create and distribute the survey, said the center has received hate mail from people who are angry at how awful this makes the transgender community look.

But here at BTL, we don't think that this survey makes the transgender community look terrible. In fact, we think the survey is great.

Why? Because knowledge is power. It's a cheesy catchphrase, but it's true. Now, for the first time ever, our transgender community can point to this thorough, quantitative and qualitative study and say, THIS is why we need our rights. THIS is why we need protections and fair treatment in housing, employment and medicine. THIS is why things need to change: Because, in truth, they're not so great, and there is plenty of evidence to prove it.

This is also a good time to point out that there is plenty of help. Transgender Michigan,

which has existed since 1997, offers resources and activities for the transgender folk among us. Affirmations and Equality Michigan are just SOME of the LGBT (emphasis on the T) friendly organizations around.

March 31 is the International Day

The NCTE's survey doesn't make our transgender community look terrible. It makes our transgender community look capable. Because the first step to resolving problems is figuring out what they are.

of Transgender Visibility, and it will be celebrated with a few days of events organized by Transgender Michigan and Transgender Detroit. More information about those events can be found in this issue's Michigan news section or also by searching Facebook.

The NCTE's survey doesn't make our transgender community look terrible. It makes our transgender community look capable. Because the first step to resolving problems is figuring out what they are.



BTL General Gayety

BY LESLIE ROBINSON

The fabric of our lives

We Americans like to express ourselves with our chests.

I'm not speaking of Jane Russell, or even Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I'm talking about our proclivity for wearing T-shirts with slogans on them. Americans have been human billboards for decades.

The slogans on T-shirts celebrate, advocate, advertise, unify, decry and polarize. Americans have lots to say – on shirts made in Honduras.

So it makes sense that one part of the gay story in this country is being played out in cotton/polyester blends. Over the past years high school students and younger, kids on both sides of the gay issue, have been wearing

Ill., could wear T-shirts saying "Be Happy, Not Gay."

The court maintained a "school that permits advocacy of the rights of homosexual students cannot be allowed to stifle criticism of homosexuality."

May the judges' T-shirts ride up with wear.

On Nov. 2 last year, Election Day, senior Kate Cohn made a pro-gay statement at Falcon High School in Peyton, Colo., by wearing a shirt reading "Marriage is so gay." She said Principal Mark Carara told her the shirt was offensive and violated the dress code forbidding clothing potentially disruptive to the academic environment.

I'm guessing that means fishnets are out. At least for guys.

Cohn's mom said Carara later likened the T-shirt to apparel promoting alcohol or drug use.

That increasingly well-known arbiter of fashion, the ACLU, sent a letter to school administrators demanding Cohn and others be allowed to wear the shirt, and the two-week ban was lifted.

Perfect. Two weeks gave her enough time to wash her shirt and make it all pretty for its re-debut.

I can say with certainty that T-shirt tizzies haven't been limited to the younger set or the recent past. Back in the mid-'90s I covered a protest by adults in Hampton Beach, N.H., outside a T-shirt store that peddled a couple of anti-gay shirts. One read "Silly faggot, dicks are for chicks," and the other said "AIDS Kills Fags" or something of that ilk.

What I remember best is a teenager pointedly buying one of those shirts during the protest, then sheepishly returning it afterwards because he needed the money to get home.

The other day I spotted a different T-shirt twist to the American LGBT story. Openly gay veteran political consultant Fred Karger, in Washington, D.C., to file for the Republican presidential nomination, met with the Republican National Committee chairman.

Karger – completely unknown to the public and, to repeat, openly gay – told Roll Call, "We had a great meeting. I gave him one of my T-shirts."

I'd like to know what slogan is on that shirt. Maybe "Karger 2012: No, Really."

Any kid aiming to get out of a test at school doesn't need to fake the flu – just don a controversial T-shirt and in minutes you'll be back home watching Judge Judy.

their hearts on their sleeves. And getting sent home for it.

The latest shirt-skirmish is still unfolding at a middle school in DeSoto Parish in Louisiana. Student Dawn Henderson wore a shirt reading "Some Kids are Gay. That's OK." Principal Keith Simmons ordered her to change her shirt or go home.

It occurs to me that any kid aiming to get out of a test at school doesn't need to fake the flu – just don a controversial T-shirt and in minutes you'll be back home watching Judge Judy.

According to the ACLU of Louisiana, DeSoto school officials claimed the shirt was "distracting." The ACLU sent Simmons a letter arguing that Henderson has a First Amendment right to express her opinion across her chest, as long as the school allows clothing with slogans.

If the school decides to forbid clothing with slogans, it might be hearing from Nike.

In another T-shirt to-do, which actually began back in 2006, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled a month ago that students at Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville,

Leslie Robinson still has a pro-ERA T-shirt that her mother gave her. Email Leslie at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and check out her blog at www.generalgayety.com.



The roof at Full Truth Church is leaking and needs to be replaced. Photo supplied by Ronchelle Andres.

Historic church needs help

Collapsed roof needs to be replaced

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

DETROIT – A historic church that has provided a welcoming roof for LGBT Detroiters for more than 20 years now finds itself in desperate need of a new roof – which in some parts of the church has already collapsed.

Dee Davis, a board trustee at Full Truth Church, located at 4458 Joy Road, said the church provided funerals for those who died from HIV/AIDS when the church first opened in 1989. “Nobody wanted to deal with the gay community or bury the bodies,” she said. “They didn’t even want to preach over them, to eulogize them. It was just terrible.”

Its welcoming message attracted vandals over the years. People threw stones in the windows and kicked out the front door of the small church. “It has gone through a lot to stay on that corner,” Davis said.

The leaking roof has fallen in over a coatroom and the fellowship hall, exposing the outer roof of the church.

“This is not a patch job,” Davis

said. “A patch is temporary. This is the result of patch jobs over the years. Now we have a serious problem.”

“I know for a fact that roof is going to be fixed. There are too many lives that have been touched.”

–Paul “Miz Teeny” Beamer

Pastor Ronchelle Andres and other congregation members have been putting down buckets to catch leaking rain and snow water. They’re also trying to wash away fresh mildew.

“There’s all kinds of people who have been through those doors,” Andres said, including renowned activist Ruth Ellis. “It is a historical building. I hope

and pray we can get the help we need.”

The church has received estimates saying replacing the roof could cost as much as \$14,000. Church members have begun to organize fundraisers and raffles, but they need space for their efforts.

“If we could just get that fellowship hall roof fixed, we could do fundraisers there, but there’s a big hole there so we can’t even cook in there,” Andres said.

Full Truth tells people “it’s OK to be who you are,” Paul “Miz Teeny” Beamer, board member and choir director, said. “Especially in black based churches, that’s something that’s really frowned upon.”

Despite the troubles the church is facing, Beamer isn’t worried:

“It’s going to work itself out. I really believe that because there are so many people whose lives have been affected coming in those doors. I know for a fact that roof is going to be fixed. There are too many lives that have been touched.”

To contribute to the fundraiser, contact Andres at 313-459-3033.

BTL Letters

Why was Elizabeth Taylor so important to the HIV/AIDS community?

Elizabeth Taylor passed away last week. Most people have heard this news and have reacted to it in the same way millions reacted to Princess Diana’s death: with genuine sorrow for an icon they have never actually met.

When we ask ourselves why we feel such sorrow and little jealousy for a woman who had great wealth, extraordinary physical beauty, many lovers, and a perfume line to boot – the answer appears to be because she was real. Elizabeth Taylor was human and flawed, while also open-minded, accepting and generous.

More specifically, we saw the purest part of herself in the way she embraced those who were infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Like Princess Diana, who touched “the untouchables” as she wandered among her people,

Elizabeth Taylor reached out to the throngs who were infected with AIDS.

Remarkably, she did this when the majority of the world was so afraid of the virus that small children like Ryan White were ostracized from their classrooms. She was proud to openly embrace Rock Hudson, another supposed victim of the virus, and stood by his side when others turned their backs.

She showed no fear while others cowered; she spearheaded elaborate dinners and fundraisers to raise research dollars for that mission when others devoted their wealth to the “popular” or “sexy” causes; and she always, for more than 30 years, stayed on course – never veering from her devotion to the GLBT population and their allies, who shouted prevention, education and acceptance.

Once we all saw the compassion

and the courage, we forgave her for broken romances. When we watched her demonstrate that the heart is the most important organ, we overlooked the addictions that plagued her life.

She was broken but whole, and we identified with her and loved her. Elizabeth Taylor was our candle in the wind. Hollywood created a star, that’s for certain, but the people whom so many choose to hate and ostracize helped to create a super star. All over the world, and certainly here in the Detroit Metropolitan community, we will remember.

Helen Hicks

Helen Hicks is the Chief Executive Officer of the Michigan AIDS Coalition. She can be reached at hhicks@michiganaidcoalition.org

BTL Creep of the Week

Matt Barber

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

Have you punched a gay middle-schooler for Christ today? Well, you’d better do it fast, because Barack Obama is trying to take this God-given duty and religious right away from you.

It’s no secret that LGBT students get bullied at school. In fact, it’s no secret that kids who get bullied at school are often accused of being LGBT, even if they aren’t. And while a lot of folks think that all of this bullying is really not conducive to learning, others, like the Liberty Council’s Matt Barber, apparently thinks it’s just a trial by fire to determine who is righteous.

As you may know, the White House recently held an anti-bullying summit which provoked outrage amongst the anti-gay right. On his Faith and Freedom radio program, Barber likened anti-bullying programs to a “Trojan horse,” saying that all of this talk about “safe schools” was really code for a “homosexual activist political indoctrination agenda and a curriculum of pro-homosexual propaganda.”

That’s right, folks. Anti-bullying = pro-gay. And not just supporting gay students, but mandating homosexuality. You’ve got two choices: a school where kids are total violent assholes to each other or a peaceful school where everyone’s gay.

The fact is, anti-bullying problems are unfair to Christians. Forcing Christians to not bully their gay and lesbian classmates is unChristitutional, or whatever.

“We have a situation that this creates where those who they accuse of being the bullies become the bullied,” Barber laments. “People with traditional values, Christians, kids who happen to believe what every major world religion, thousands of years of history and uncompromising human biology hold to be true, that sexual behavior is appropriate within the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman.”

Barber is, I think, confused about what it means to be bullied. No one is saying that kids can’t believe what they want about gays. But it shouldn’t be acceptable to make a gay kid’s life a living hell just because your pastor says gays are evil.

Shawn Akers, Barber’s co-host, points out that if you really wanted to stop bullying you’d work to “grow Judeo-Christian ethic.”

“Even if you disagreed with someone’s lifestyle, the Judeo-Christian ethic would be the first to tell you you’re not going to bully, you’re not going to beat up, you’re not going to abuse anybody,” Akers says.

Ah, so the problem is that kids aren’t Christian enough. It couldn’t have anything to do with so-called Christian groups like, say, the Liberty Council, portraying LGBT people as sick and damaged that contributes to the bullying against them. So when a Christian kid gets the urge to beat up one of these disgusting queers, Judeo-Christian ethic steps in and says, “You leave that goddess piece of trash alone,” and everything’s fine.

Most enlightening was Barber’s suicide prevention strategy. He says that sexually active teens, gay and straight, are more likely to commit suicide than their chaste peers.

“We’ve had this spate of kids who have committed suicide and some of them it has been apparently because they have been bullied. A handful have actually also been kids who self identified as gay or lesbian,” Barber says. “Kids who are engaging in homosexual behavior, I think often look inward and know that what they are doing is unnatural, is wrong, is immoral, and so they become depressed and the instances of suicide can rise there as well.”

So Barber, spinning some of that Judeo-Christian ethic magic, is essentially arguing that since gay kids are twisted and wrong, it’s no wonder they want to off themselves. If anything, bullies are really just doing gay kids a favor.

“What Obama should be teaching rather than promoting the LGBT agenda that pushes pre-marital sexual activity, be it homosexual or heterosexual,” Barber continues, “is advocating on behalf of abstinence education and encouraging kids to remain pure until marriage. That is the best way to prevent kids who are engaged in sexual behavior from committing suicide.”

Abstinence education as suicide prevention tool. Very novel. Very sure-to-work. What could go wrong? Keep in mind that gay people, for the most part, can’t get married. Which means there’s no room in Barber’s equation for them. And that’s exactly how he wants it.

Anti-bullying programs are a problem precisely because they acknowledge that gay kids exist. And if gay kids no longer have to hide in the shadows, it’ll be a lot harder to convince them that they’re horrible and damaged. And the more gay kids who feel like they actually matter, the harder it’s going to be for Barber and his ilk to lie about who and what they are, which is, of course, the “(anti-gay) activist political indoctrination agenda.”

9th Circuit refuses to lift stay of Prop 8 strikedown

BY REX WOCKNER

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on March 23 refused a request from the American Foundation for Equal Rights and lawyers Ted Olson and David Boies that it lift its block on the August 2010 federal district court ruling that struck down Proposition 8.

U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker had issued an injunction barring further enforcement of Prop 8 after finding that it violates the U.S. Constitution. The 9th Circuit, however, quickly “stayed” Walker’s injunction, and his ruling has been tied up on appeal since.

Prop 8, passed by voters in November 2008, amended the California Constitution to halt same-sex marriage, which was legal in the state at the time.

Olson and Boies say the appeal process is taking too long, especially given a lengthy delay introduced into the case in February when the 9th Circuit punted to the California Supreme Court the question of whether the people who are appealing Walker’s ruling – the folks who put Prop 8 on the ballot – actually have any right, under California law, to appeal.

None of the people who are defendants in the case – including Gov. Jerry Brown and Attorney General Kamala Harris – have an interest in appealing Walker’s ruling or defending Prop 8. As a result, if the Prop 8 supporters are found to have no standing to appeal, then the 9th Circuit won’t hear the case, Walker’s ruling would take

effect, and same-sex couples could marry again in California – although the question of standing also could be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

“The stay was originally ordered with the understanding that the 9th Circuit would rule swiftly on the case before it,” said Olson. “Now that the issue of the (Prop 8) proponents’ standing

The 9th Circuit apparently was unswayed by that line of reasoning, though it did not explain why.

On March 23, the judges ordered: “Having considered all of the factors set forth in *Nken v. Holder* ... and all of the facts and circumstances surrounding Plaintiffs’ motion to vacate the

the California Supreme Court’s answer to the 9th Circuit’s question, which will be taken into consideration by the 9th Circuit judges when they decide whether to give the Prop 8 supporters federal standing to appeal and serve as defendants. The California Supreme Court has said it won’t hear oral arguments on the matter until September at the earliest.

Equality California said it was “profoundly disappointed” by the 9th Circuit’s refusal to let gays marry while the appeal moseys along.

“Today’s ruling is a major setback for same-sex couples and their families who must continue living every day in legal limbo without the basic freedoms and protections guaranteed to them by our nation’s Constitution,” said Executive Director Geoff Kors. “Every day same-sex couples are denied the freedom to marry, their families suffer significant harm.”

National Center for Lesbian Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter also was distressed by the development.

“We are deeply disappointed by the court’s failure to lift the stay,” Minter said. “A federal court held that Prop 8 is unconstitutional and that its continued enforcement causes serious harm to same-sex couples and their children. Without explanation, the 9th Circuit’s ruling today allows that harm to continue. Every day that Prop 8 remains in effect, the state of California is harming families, sending a devastating message to LGBT youth, and perpetuating violence and discrimination against LGBT people.”



It’s unreasonable and decidedly unjust to expect California’s gay and lesbian couples to put their lives on hold and suffer daily discrimination as second-class citizens while their U.S. District Court victory is debated further.”

– Ted Olson

to appeal has been referred for analysis by the California Supreme Court, substantial additional, indefinite and unanticipated delays lie ahead. It’s unreasonable and decidedly unjust to expect California’s gay and lesbian couples to put their lives on hold and suffer daily discrimination as second-class citizens while their U.S. District Court victory is debated further.”

stay pending appeal, as well as the standard for vacatur set forth in *Southeast Alaska Conservation Council v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* ... we deny Plaintiffs’ motion at this time.”

It was unclear if the phrase “at this time” was an indication that the court might see the matter differently at some future time.

For now, LGB Californians will wait for

85 nations sign UN statement defending LGBT people

BY REX WOCKNER

In what LGBT advocates described as “a stunning development for the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” 85 nations signed a pro-gay statement that was read out by Colombia’s representative at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 22.

The statement “express(es) concern at continued evidence in every region of acts of violence and related human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity” and “call(s) on states to take steps to end acts of violence, criminal sanctions and related human rights violations committed against individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

“Today’s statement enjoyed the support of the largest group of countries to date on the topic of sexual orientation, gender identity and human rights,” said several LGBT organizations and other “civil society” groups in a joint media release. “It builds on a similar statement delivered by Norway at the Human Rights Council in 2006 (on behalf of 54 states) and a joint statement delivered by Argentina at the General Assembly in 2008 (on behalf of 66 states). It is clear that every time these issues are addressed there is measurable increase in state support.”

The nations that signed the statement are Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia,

Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Nigeria’s representative spoke against the statement, purportedly on behalf of the council’s Africa Group. The representative said the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are undefined, talked about God, and said it takes a man and a woman to make a baby. At the end, however, he said that laws that criminalize sexual orientation should be expunged.

Pakistan also spoke against the statement on behalf of an official bloc of 57 majority-Muslim nations. Russia opposed the statement, as well, saying it rejects discrimination and violence against LGBT people but should be allowed to limit rights for reasons of public morality. The representative reportedly said that “these people” should not be granted special rights.

The media release heralding the UNHRC statement was issued by ARC International,

the International Commission of Jurists, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, COC Netherlands, the Coalition of African Lesbians, Global Action for Trans Equality, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, and Thailand’s Sexual Diversity Network.

In a separate U.S. statement, Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese said: “The (Obama) administration has laudably reaffirmed its commitment to the philosophy that LGBT rights are human rights by joining today’s statement before the U.N. Human Rights Council ... the message is clear that hate violence against LGBT people should not be tolerated by any government.”

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association called the statement “a very significant step forward towards international consensus on LGBTI people’s rights.”

“The strength of this statement makes the defense of discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexual, trans and intersex people on the basis of a mistaken sense of ‘tradition’ or ‘natural order’ more untenable than ever,” said the group’s co-secretary general, Renato Sabbadini. “Homophobia and transphobia are more and more acknowledged for what they truly are: the last crumbling pillars of a patriarchal order which belong with other dark pages of our past, like slavery and the Inquisition.”

ILGA noted that more nations of the

Southern Hemisphere signed this year’s statement, and it highlighted the signatures of Dominica, Honduras, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Seychelles.

A statement from the White House said, in part: “Over the past months our diplomats have been engaged in frank, and at times difficult, conversations about the human rights of LGBT persons with governments from around the world. This morning, at the United Nations Human Rights Council, some 85 countries joined the United States in reaffirming our joint commitment to end acts of violence and human rights abuses on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The president is proud of the work we have done to build international consensus on this critical issue and is committed to continuing our determined efforts to advance the human rights of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

The U.S. State Department said, “This statement adds new references not seen in previous LGBT statements at the U.N., including: welcoming attention to LGBT issues as a part of the Universal Periodic Review process, noting the increased attention to LGBT issues in regional human rights fora, encouraging the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue addressing LGBT issues, and calls for states to end criminal sanctions based on LGBT status.”

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 states that aims to strengthen and protect human rights worldwide.

Obama, Brazil champion LGBT rapporteur

BY REX WOCKNER

During a visit to Brazil on March 19, President Barack Obama joined with Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff to call for establishment of an LGBT rights "special rapporteur" at the Organization of American States.

In a statement issued three days later, the White House added: "President Obama believes that advancing the human rights of minorities and the marginalized is a fundamental American value. The president was pleased to announce during his trip to Brazil that he and President Rousseff agreed to promote respect for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals through the establishment of a special rapporteur on LGBT issues at the (OAS). This special rapporteur will be the first of its kind in the international system."

The OAS, which dates to 1948, comprises the 35 independent states of the Americas and is the principal political, juridical and social governmental forum in the hemisphere, according to its website. The OAS charter says the organization promotes peace, justice, solidarity and collaboration as well as members' sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

Stats: 42 percent of Americans live in states that recognize gay couples

BY REX WOCKNER

Equality Matters reports that 42 percent of Americans now live in states that recognize same-sex couples' relationships, and that 30 percent live in states where marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships give same-sex couples the same state-level rights as married people.

All gay couples, however, still are denied the more than 1,100 federal rights and benefits of marriage, because of the Defense of Marriage Act.

"(D)espite the best efforts of anti-gay groups and politicians, the LGBT community has made rapid progress across the United States," Equality Matters said. "As public support for marriage equality continues to rise, it's only a matter of time before every American has the right to have their loving commitments recognized and respected by their state and federal governments."

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Barcelona unveils gay monument

Barcelona Mayor Jordi Hereu unveiled a monument March 20 to gay and transgender people persecuted throughout history. The large marble triangle is located in Ciudadela Park, next to the Catalanian Parliament.

“This is a necessary monument to remember the discrimination, repression, humiliation, persecution, attacks and assassinations that the LGTB community suffered for centuries and very especially during the Franco dictatorship,” said Antonio Guirado, secretary general of the Catalanian LGBT umbrella group Gay Lesbian Coordinator. “We are honored as citizens to see recognized the persecution suffered, and above all the still-unmet challenge for social normalization.”

Gay Lesbian Coordinator Honorary President Jordi Petit added: “This is the fourth monument erected in Europe in memory of homophobic and transphobic barbarism – following in the footsteps of Amsterdam, Berlin and the Nazi extermination camp Mauthausen in Austria. It is the only one in the south of the continent and is very suitable for the city that is the seat of the Mediterranean Union.”



Barcelona Mayor Jordi Hereu unveiled a monument March 20 to gay and transgender people persecuted throughout history.

Nations pledge movement on LGBT issues at UN Human Rights Council

As the United Nations Human Rights Council continued its periodic review sessions on various nations, several developments took place this month.

Mongolia’s representatives accepted recommendations that the nation address issues of violence against LGBT people.

Panama accepted a recommendation to synchronize its national laws with the norms of “The Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity,” which were drawn up at a 2006 meeting in Indonesia by human-rights experts from around the world.

Honduras agreed to review its national laws to ensure that LGBT human rights are not abridged.

And Jamaica agreed to provide enforcement officials with

sensitivity training on matters of sexual orientation, gender identity and HIV.

At the same time, representatives of four nations – Lebanon, Malawi, Maldives and Mauritania – rejected recommendations that they decriminalize gay sex.

In January at the Human Rights Council, Sao Tome and Principe said it will legalize gay sex by June, and Nauru said it also plans to decriminalize homosexuality.

The Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review officially analyzes the human-rights record of each of the 192 U.N. member nations on a rotating basis once every four years, and urges reviewed nations to protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Spanish students arrested over chapel protest

Four students at Spain’s Madrid Complutense University were arrested March 18 by National Police on charges of desecrating a place of worship.

Displaying slogans on their bare torsos, the four students and others entered the university’s Somosaguas Chapel and read out a manifesto against recent homophobic and macho statements made by Roman Catholic bishops and the pope.

Local reports said at least one female couple allegedly made

out near the altar. The church reportedly was empty at the time but for two girls, one woman and the chaplain.

If convicted, the protesters could spend up to a year in jail.

Sixty professors at the university have signed a manifesto supporting the protesters and secularism at the university but not “the manner in which (the protest) developed.”

Madrid’s archbishop later staged a “healing mass” at the chapel that was attended by about 1,000 people.

Austrian Constitutional Court rejects gay case

Austria’s Constitutional Court has rejected a case aimed at including gays and lesbians under laws that protect against incitement to hatred and against discrimination in non-workplace settings.

The court was asked to strike down Criminal Code Article 283, “Incitement to Hatred,” and sections of the Federal Equal Treatment Act because they exclude gays and lesbians.

According to the group Rechtskomitee Lambda, Austria’s government defended the status quo, arguing that incitement to hatred against gays and lesbians differs from incitement targeting religious or racial groups because the former lacks “dangerous close-range and long-range effects.”

The court determined that because homosexuals are

purportedly not directly affected by the lack of protection, the application for legal relief was inadmissible, the group said.

Kurt Krickler, secretary general of Homosexual Initiative Vienna, said he wasn’t surprised at the outcome because “these are political and not so much legal issues.”

He said measures to address the two problems had been introduced in Parliament, where one measure failed and the other may still see a vote.

Rechtskomitee Lambda said it hopes to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

“Hatemongers are still allowed to incite to hatred against lesbians and gays, and now even with the consent of the Constitutional Court,” said the group’s president, Helmut Graupner.

Here's Johnny

Figure skater talks memoir, being 'born this way' and how the closet cost him a magazine cover

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

At only 26, Johnny Weir's done more than most people do in a lifetime. But the skater-turned-everything-else is known for being flamboyantly gay, which he publicly announced before the release of his memoir last year, just as much as he is for tearing up the ice, starring in a reality series, and even releasing a pop song, "Dirty Love."

Weir, a three-time U.S. national champion, spoke to us recently about the media's reaction to his not-so-shocking reveal, how "being gay isn't a cause," and the gay magazine that bumped him from the cover for being closeted.

So that book cover, Johnny – how heavy was the disco ball?

(Laughs) The disco ball was hanging off the ceiling so I didn't actually have to lift it. There had to be a flatbed truck to bring the disco ball in, and so there was an issue getting the disco ball through the street because it was so big.

Oh, so it wasn't Photoshopped?

Oh, no. I laid on my back under the disco ball for hours that day.

How was your first book tour?

People came out in droves to support me and the book. We did New York and then my hometown in Amish country Pennsylvania; then I started to hit some of the places where my book probably wouldn't sell as well as it would in other places of the U.S. I was exhausted and very cranky by the end of the tour, but I was very excited that I actually had time to get the word out that I had a book.

What was it like stopping in some of the less gay-friendly cities?

Wherever I go, the only anti-anything that I ever get is anti-fur. (Laughs) Since I've become quote-unquote Johnny Weir, people don't really get upset with me about the gay thing because I live in a way that's very unaggressive. I don't make an issue about being gay and I don't make an issue about the people I'm with being straight. It just is what it is.

I've performed all over the place – in China, in Russia – and I've never had a problem. So here in my own country I'm never that worried, because I have experience of going to places that are pretty unfriendly to the gays.

That Johnny Weir can go just about anywhere and not put up with any BS, that's progress.

Yes – that I can go somewhere and sell a book with me lying on my back with high heels holding up a disco ball and bright pink all around me and nobody bats an eyelash, that's definitely some kind of progress.

What did you learn about yourself while writing "Welcome to My World"?

It wasn't so much what I learned about myself, because I never forget where I come from. But I realized a lot about my childhood as I was writing this book. That was kind of the wildest thing; I could remember stuff from my life that I hadn't really thought about. When you're young, certain things stick with you – like when you fall off your bicycle, or meeting a boy or girl for the first time. But you don't necessarily remember that time that you were feeding the dogs and you got locked in the cage. (Laughs)

Are you surprised by all the attention you being gay has received?

I am, actually. I mean, honestly, it shouldn't be a shock to anyone. I was in Russia, and then about a week after the New Year I was performing there and, on one of my last days of the trip, the People magazine article came out. My phone was blowing up and my email was going insane – my manager's as well – and it really shocked me how hung up people were on the gay thing. Yes, I'd never been explicit about it, but I'd never hidden it, either. To me, that's one of the best things I can do as a gay man – not call attention to it.

See Johnny Weir, page 19



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Foodies, rejoice!

Detroit Restaurant Week kicks off April 1

BY ANDREA POTEET

Everyone loves a good deal. And for one week, Detroit's best fine-dining restaurants are offering up some of their signature menu items at bargain prices.

During Detroit Restaurant Week, which runs from April 1-10, 18 Detroit eateries will offer three-course meals for \$28.

The event began in the fall of 2009, when the Detroit Downtown Partnership, inspired by similar events in Boston, New York and Los Angeles, approached Paxahau Event Promotions, which primarily promotes musical events, to develop an event that would showcase Detroit's restaurants and bring diners downtown.

Organizers weren't sure what to expect, but the first event, held in September of 2009, drew more than 25,000 diners. A spring event was added the next year.

"If we would have done 10,000 we would have been happy," Detroit Restaurant Week director Jason Huvaere said, "because that's 10,000 people that are coming down to experience Detroit dining."

Huvaere said the event has continued to drive traffic – and hungry foodies – to the Motor City ever since.

"Our work is always about exposing Detroit's assets," he said. "Whether it's a musical concert or a Restaurant Week campaign, it's always about the same goal, which is driving people into the city to expose the city's assets."

And the numbers don't lie. Since its debut, the event's 85,000 diners have shelled out nearly \$1.5 million at Detroit restaurants in Downtown, Midtown, Corktown, Eastern Market and New Center.

Janet Sossi Belcoure, a third-generation owner of Eastern Market's Roma Café, said her business increases by 15 percent during Restaurant Week. She said the lower prices tend to draw in customers who may not otherwise patronize the restaurant, and many of them come back when the promotion is over.

"Everybody's always looking for a bargain," she said. "It's a great opportunity to come in and try something new and get it at a better pocket price. Everyone is watching their pennies."



Photos: Ara Howrani

Belcoure said her restaurant offers some of its signature dishes, like homemade lasagna and chicken parmigiana, at tantalizing prices during the week to lure customers into the door and keep them coming back.

"We're a restaurant that's been around for 125 years, but the only way we're going to continue to stay around is if we continue to bring new business in," she said.

Though they took inspiration from other major cities, Huvaere said organizers made several changes, like excluding suburban locations and whittling down the list from upwards of 40 restaurants in other cities to just under 20 for Detroit's version. With fewer restaurants, participants also can aim to attend every one, he said.

"We have a select group of restaurants," Huvaere said. "We have 18, which means you can really wrap your arms around the entire list. In other cities, you can get lost in 50 or 60 restaurants and it sort of eliminates the ability to bond with your selection. You're just picking things off a list."

For this year's event, Angelina Italian Bistro in Downtown has joined the 17 other participating restaurants. Other participating restaurants are: 24Grille, Andiamo Detroit Riverfront, Atlas Global Bistro, Caucus Club, Coach Insignia, Cuisine, Da Edoardo Foxtown Grille, Detroit Seafood Market, Iridescence, Mosaic Restaurant, Opus One, Rattlesnake Club, Roast, Roma Café, Saltwater, The Whitney and Wolfgang Puck Grille.

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Local thespian plays by her own rules

Lesbian brings life experiences to 'Cider House Rules' at Hilberry

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

For Samantha Rosentrater, playing "the perfect role" is more than just a theater world cliché.

As the actor playing Melony in "The Cider House Rules, Parts 1 and 2" at the Hilberry Theatre through May 14, Rosentrater brings a lifetime of experiences to a character whom she describes as being vulnerable, violent and having a heart of gold.

The actor and character share much in common, starting with a childhood filled with remarkable similarities. John Irving's Melony is a resident of the St. Cloud orphanage where she meets and connects with Homer, one of her only friends. Rosentrater was raised in a series of foster homes in Alabama as "property of the state." Also, both Melony and Rosentrater are openly lesbian.

"A good actor is a good actor," Rosentrater said, pointing out that while it isn't necessary to share life experiences with a character being portrayed, it doesn't hurt either. "I was the one cast in this role. I have things that are unique to me. I know what it is like to fall in love with a woman for the first time. There is a moment when Lorna flirts with (Melony) for the first time. She recognizes that this person is interested in her, and they make the decision to be in a relationship together. I can recall all of that and I know what that is like."

Peter Parnell adapted the two plays from John Irving's novel of the same name. Combined, the two plays are six hours long and traverse 40 years. Homer and Melony grow up at the St. Cloud orphanage where Dr. Larch presides and provides one of the few places where women can get safe abortions. Homer eventually leaves in large part because of his beliefs about abortions and ends up working in apple orchards with migrant workers. Melony spends 25 years trying to find him as he had promised her he would never leave her.

For Rosentrater, three of the play's major themes resonate with her and, she says, speak to any member of any oppressed group. The first is a line by Dr. Larch which he delivers to Homer when Homer says he won't perform abortions. He says, "You may disapprove, but you may not be ignorant or look away."

"Larch is speaking of abortion, but it is universal to any oppressed group of people," Rosentrater said. "We're not here to try and change your mind about whether you like gay people or whether you think we should get married or what rights we should have. We can't change your mind about it, but you can't ignore us. You can disapprove all you want, but you can't ignore us any longer or just look away."

The other themes are that of "waiting and seeing" and the rules referenced in the title — ludicrous rules that try to dictate to others how they should live their lives.

"The way you choose to live your life comes through the experiences that you've had and the things that have happened to you," said Rosentrater. "It isn't anyone else's dogma or philosophy that



The Cider House Rules, Parts I & II

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makes you live your life a certain way. Melony comes to fall in love with a woman and ... came to these points in her life being happy with another woman in the '30s and the '40s. She came to this on her own by those experiences she had."

The role of Melony is filled with both physical and emotional challenges, according to Rosentrater, and ones that vary in the two different plays.

"It's been quite a feat to play," Rosentrater said. "She gets so mad that she tears an empty building down with her bare hands. She has a volcanic rage, but like any good, well-written character, she is beautifully vulnerable and insecure. At the heart of it, she is a beautiful person."

As the character matures, she develops a filter between her rage and its expression. While she lacks the book smarts of other characters in the play, Rosentrater portrays her as world smart, a person who sees everything and knows everything.

"She isn't as dumb as she looks, especially at the end of the play where she can instantly recognize Homer's situations," Rosentrater said. "She's like an oracle. She sees all, knows all and isn't afraid to say it."

It's also a role that has often left Rosentrater bruised and covered in Epson salts as she works her way through fights and extreme physicality. Despite that, it's a part that she describes as being rewarding and compelling in a play that she is grateful to be able to do.

"It is the beauty of the Hilberry: We have the resources to do something like this," Rosentrater said.

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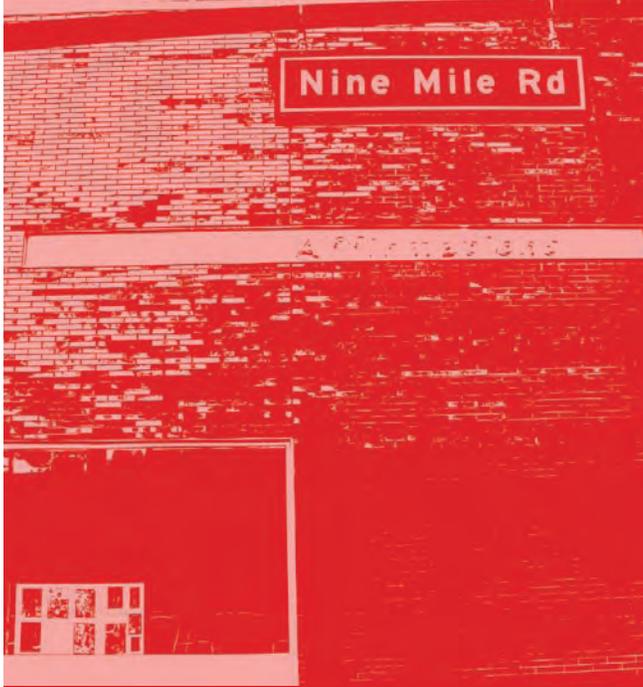


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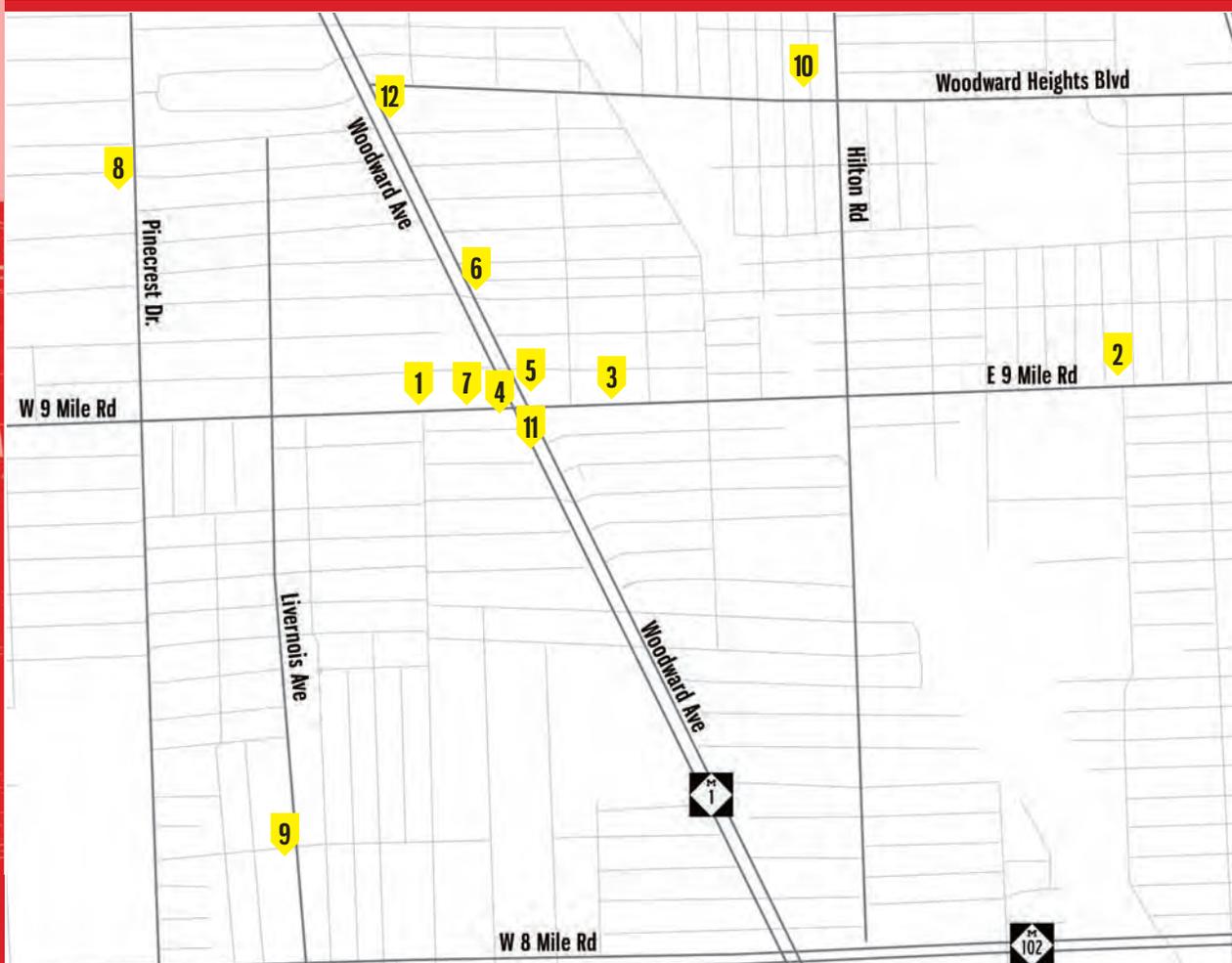
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► Johnny Weir

Continued from p. 15

So you were trying to make a statement without making a statement.

Yes, and I worried that people would think that I only talk about gay things in my book. My biggest concern was that people would think I was selling out just to make a quick buck, but that's definitely not how I felt about it. I needed to talk about that part of my life, simply because you can't write a memoir without doing so.

If I'm going to talk about falling in love and losing my virginity, there has to be a face attached to it – you can't just say "they" or "them" or "that." (Laughs) And that's who I am: a very truthful person. I couldn't not write about it. But my biggest fear was that people would think I was finally talking about it just to make headlines and make a spectacle of myself, and that's never been my objective.

Did you ever feel pressure from the gay community to come out?

Absolutely. I've lived in a spotlight more than really any figure skater has for a long time. Michelle Kwan is quite famous, but from a pop culture standpoint, people have latched onto everything that I stand for and they support me and everything that I do, which is an incredible thing.

When you have that advantage people want you to use it for whatever cause. To me, being gay isn't a cause. It's just something that I'm born into. I always constantly felt pressure, especially after my first Olympics in 2006. After my first Olympics I was offered to do a cover for one of the big gay magazines, and it would only be if I came out in it. And my whole point to them was: I am only 21 years old and the least interesting thing about me is that I'm gay, so I don't want to call attention to it. So of course I lost the cover because I didn't want to talk about it.

Was that Out magazine?

No, it was not Out, but it was one of the leading gay magazines. (Coily laughs) Then somebody of the older generation in the gay community was on my back about it because they're from a completely different generation. They really had to fight to live their life freely and openly, and they had so many more obstacles than I've had in my life. They were the warriors that whole generation – from the '50s, '60s and '70s. Those are the gay warriors, and now that I've lived my 20s in the new millennium, I've always just felt like I don't have to fight for anything. Thank you for the people who've done it before me, but I don't have to fight for anything.

Part of the reason you made the decision to publicly come out was because of the recent gay youth suicides. How did that affect your decision?

I never really was afraid of anyone. Of course I was bullied, but I personally internalized it and it made me stronger. That's how I used bullying to my advantage. It made me a stronger competitor and a stronger man.

When I heard about all of these kids across the country having so many issues with bullies and committing suicide and having such a rough time with it, that was hard for me to fathom – because I never got to the point where I thought of offing myself or crumbling just because there's some loudmouth or someone scared of who they are as a person. When I was writing the book, it was important for me to not make being gay a point of making me different or special in any way. No matter what you're

born this way, as the Gaga says.

I imagine lots of youth look up to you because you're able to be yourself. What kind of feedback do you get from kids?

It hasn't been kids as much as it's been the gay community who's around my age or middle-aged. While I was in Russia, so many people who felt different said "thank you" for constantly living in whatever image you see yourself in – it gives us strength and hope and power to do the same. And while that warms the cockles of my heart, and it feels good, I don't do anything for an ego trip. But if people can find power just from me living my crazy life, then I'm proud and happy that I'm able to live the way that I live.

With the second season of "Be Good Johnny Weir" on Logo at the end of this year, what did you learn from the first season that you might be more aware of when you shoot season two?

You know, I'm an open book, really, so there's nothing that I don't let them film. Last year I was very keen on not letting them film me eat, because I feel eating is one of the ugliest things that you can show on camera. I was always terrified to be filmed eating. This season, it's all about my journey to creating this huge variety show that I'm trying to put on.

Since it's on Logo instead of the Sundance Channel, does that mean you can act even gayer?

I definitely don't gay myself up for any reason. When I judged an episode of "RuPaul's Drag Race" I got a little campy and I went there and did a lot of those "you go, girl!" situations, but for my show I just... live. Even though my life isn't normal and I'm certainly not what people would call a normal person, I try to show what it actually means to be Johnny Weir.

Do you feel like you've missed out on opportunities because of who you are?

Not only am I gay, but I also curse and I wear crazy outfits and I have a penchant for carrying purses. I'm very theatrical and dramatic all the time. There are a lot of things besides my sexuality that will turn people off. But there are lots of opportunities that I could've, and should've, had. I think in my competitive career as a figure skater, it definitely hurt me to have a very loud personality and to be very eccentric and wild. There were several occasions, especially in the Vancouver Olympics, where my personality and my persona overshadowed the actual sport.

But for every door that closes, a window opens, they say. I've had so many people that have reached out to me simply because of who I am and the way that I live. The Human Rights Campaign, which I consider pretty conservative and which does things in a very political way – and I wouldn't necessarily put myself in that category – honored me with an award. That's amazing for me, because it shows that I can be acceptable to a conservative crowd.

After all you've done – a reality show, skating, a song and a book – what's left to do, really?

I'm hoping more skating. It really is who I am, no matter what people think of all these other projects. I'm trying to put my Spectacular together, which would be a dream come true – to have my own variety show and include amazing acts like Lady Gaga, Christina Aguilera and Elton John. I'm working on a jewelry line and my fashion line. And I need people to love the second season of "Be Good Johnny Weir." And I need to stay in shape and keep skating. I also need to learn Japanese. (Laughs)

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Life HEAR ME OUT

by Chris Azzopardi

With 'Fatale,' Britney Spears hits us, baby, one more time



Britney Spears, 'Femme Fatale'

Razors stowed and sanity in check, pop's queen of comebacks is ready to forget about her tabloid-making troubles – and have sex. Lots and lots of sex. She's hooking up with an ex even though she knows she shouldn't on "Inside Out," admiring a man's massive package on "(Drop Dead) Beautiful" and, on the insanely catchy "I Wanna Go," letting go of her inhibitions. "Shame on me," she sings – without any shame at all. Indeed, Britney's a bad girl, but who's gonna fault her? "Femme Fatale," her seventh studio album, is near-perfect pop – hooky, horny and heavy on the bangin' beats, but how much of that's because of Britney is still, a decade into her career, unclear. (Let's be real: She can't sing. She can't write – remember that song about her baby? Uh yeah.) Spears is the finger puppet played by a team responsible for putting on the show – producers, songwriters, even the photographer who took that fittingly flirty cover pic. Sometimes they do her right ("Blackout"). Sometimes they do her wrong ("Circus"). Here, they're right on – so right, actually, that "Femme Fatale" is Britney's masterwork, boosted by one of those career best-ofs: "Criminal," a flute-flecked song about falling for a bad boy that echoes early Madonna. Next to "Hold It Against Me," "Till the World Ends," a dreamy dance-floor concoction co-written by Ke\$ha, is obviously the better of the two singles. It's only a matter of time, fingers crossed anyway, before "How I Roll" becomes one – it's dirtied-up bubblegum pop with f-bombs and irresistible clickety-clacks. On it, she sings one of the album's truest lines: "I got nine lives like a kitty cat." Hear her purr. *Grade: B+*



Jennifer Hudson, 'I Remember Me'

According to Jennifer Hudson's new album, she hasn't forgotten who she is. But anyone who heard her generic, mishandled debut – from a music perspective anyway – probably did. Seems, however, that the super-lunged singer has a better handle on her own self after tragedy struck her family, she had her first kid, she got married, she lost a lot of weight – "some things," as she refers to them on the disc opener. Her second CD feels more like the star-making moment expected from her debut, and if ever an album said "and I am telling you I'm not going," it's this one. It escapes the trendy tinkering of her first disc for something more Jenny from the block, helping Hudson to channel her old-soul on songs like Elton-esque "No One Gonna Love You" and the easy-going "Why Is It So Hard." That it's hard to separate J. Hud "The Singer" from J. Hud "The Human" only works in her favor – Diane Warren's

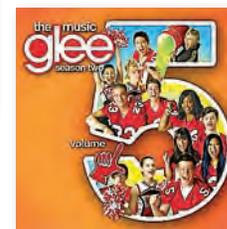
from-the-recycling-bin ballad "Still Here" is given far more weight because of a vocal driven by personal pain and passion. But for all of Hudson's hardships, "I Remember Me" doesn't wallow; in fact, it does quite the opposite – it's a journey of healing that even Oprah could get behind. She's "Feeling Good" on the covered-to-death cut and reveling in her man on disco-rewind "Don't Look Down," one of three solid Alicia Keys contributions. When Hudson's not on cloud nine, she's peeved (decent first single "Where You At") and, on the title track, finding herself again. She remembers, and now so can we. *Grade: B*

Also Out



The Sounds, 'Something to Die For'

For nearly a decade, the Swedish retro-rock band's been an anthem-making machine. These 10 songs come off that assembly line – but someone forgot the hooks. Still, The Sounds sell their more-pop-than-ever pieces with as much moxie as a girl manning a lemonade stand, and a lot of that has to do with the addictive wail of Maja Ivarsson, who still sounds like she belongs in Blondie. They triumph when she's a melancholic mess, as she is on "Wish You Were Here" and "The Best of Me." Their best? Not even close.



'Glee': The Music, Vol. 5

By now, you know what to expect from "Glee": cheesy takes on pop songs. That's exactly what the fifth, and worst, mishmash of music from our favorite choir kids offers. Uh, where's the theatrical magic, though? Sure, Lea Michele out-sings Katy Perry on "Firework" (not hard), but this is essentially professional karaoke. Even the two originals, outcast anthem "Loser Like Me" and Michele's "Get It Right," fail to impress. And when the best thing about "Glee" songs is Gwyneth Paltrow – her "Landslide" is especially poignant – maybe it's time for New Directions to take, well, a new direction.

Reach Chris Azzopardi at chris@pridesource.com.

Vive la revolution! 'Les Miz' is back!

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

The couple next to me was seeing "Les Miserables" for the first time; the couple in front of me was seeing it for the 10th time. Like someone who was really paying attention in Girl Scouts, "Les Miz" makes new friends and keeps the old.

The new 25th anniversary production at the Fisher Theatre should be doing plenty of both. It isn't *all* that new. Most of the changes are visual: a bit of re-staging (keep your eye on the birdcage during "Master of the House"); updated scenery inspired by the paintings of author Victor Hugo, who turns out to be an impressive pre-impressionist; and the iconic turntable is gone, but the music and the story of Jean Valjean and company haven't been messed with.

And how clever of producers to revive this grand musical melodrama set

R E V I E W

'Les Miserables'

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



The company of the new 25th anniversary production of "Les Miserables" at Detroit's Fisher Theatre. Photo: Deen van Meer

amid poverty, repression, revolution and the bullying of working people just when these issues are front-page news all over. I can't wait for the "Les Miz" tour to get to Madison, Wis., (May 10-15) or Benghazi, Libya (never).

Meanwhile, it's here, so count your blessings.

Among blessings to count here are Betsy Morgan, who plays poor Fantine, not as a fragile and broken flower but as resolute, determined and fiercely clinging to life, at least until her final gasps. In a

production that (in a good way) seems more skewed than usual towards strong women, we also have Chasten Harmon's fine performance as Eponine, played here not as pathetically lovesick but as a brave and independent woman who happens to be hopelessly in love.

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

A near perfect game rolls in Williamston

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Back in my early teens, my family and my sister's soon-to-be in-laws did what legions of working class families enjoyed on a Friday night: We went bowling. Although I haven't picked up a bowling ball since, what I fondly recall of those long-ago days was the camaraderie we shared as we laughed and struggled each week to see which team ended the night with the highest score. But unlike the McGlaughlin family in Williamston Theatre's "While We Were Bowling," the Calamias were lousy bowlers, and we never had dreams of winning a championship title.

Nor were we haunted by the specter of a much-beloved, yet equally despised family elder whose legendary bowling score terrorized every moment of our lives.

The McGlaughlin family's story unfolds mostly in the late 1950s, a period

R E V I E W

'While We Were Bowling'

Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St.,
Williamston. Thursday-Sunday through April
17. \$18-\$24. 517-655-7469.
www.williamstontheatre.org



Williamston Theatre presents the warm and touching "While We Were Bowling" through April 17. Photo: Chris Purchis

when the TV show "Leave It To Beaver" helped define the "typical" American family. But the Cleavers they're not. Sure, Frances (Suzi Regan) is a stay-at-home mom and irons the laundry in a dress just like June Cleaver used to do. But unlike her counterpart, Frances has a drinking problem. And yes, siblings Lydia (Kelly Studnicki) and Brent (Tyler VanCamp) fight like cats and dogs, but unlike Beaver and Wally, these two share their secrets by speaking fluent Russian – a language their father, Melvin

(Joseph Albright), urged them to learn in the (unlikely) event the commies invade the McGlaughlin household.

Plus, there's one more significant difference: The Cleavers never had a 12-year-old black kid living with them.

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

UDM's storm enchants the tempest-tossed

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

The joy of performing "The Tempest" is its otherworldly panorama of sprites, spirits, monsters and wild island environment. The University of Detroit Mercy Theatre Company clearly delighted in the special effect fun of creating a fantastical world in the closing production of their 40th season.

It was a show that celebrated anniversaries. This year marks the 400th anniversary since "The Tempest" was first performed. It was also the first show that the Theatre Company performed 40 years ago.

Directed by Andrew Huff, "The Tempest" mixed modern and traditional costuming and effects to create a place that was out of time. His mix of professional and student actors were all committed to the theme and the highly expressive physicality of the story in which Prospero (Dr. Arthur J. Beer) revenges the wrongs done to him and

R E V I E W

'The Tempest'

UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove
Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit.
Friday-Sunday through April 10. \$18. 313-
993-3270.
<http://theatre.udmercy.edu>



Dr. Arthur J. Beer stars as Prospero in "The Tempest." Photo: UDM Theatre Company

his daughter Miranda (Michelle Renaud) by his brother with the help of his spirit servant Ariel (Autumn Thiellesen) and slave monster Caliban (Joel Mitchell).

How do you perform a scene where no one can understand the words because of the overpowering sound effects? The Theatre Company borrowed a trick from the Michigan Shakespeare Festival. They made the opening scene a read-through with actors in street clothes, delivering lines around a table with the "director" reading the stage directions and giving certain

instructions. Then the actors transformed the stage before the audience's eyes as they replayed the scene over the howling wind and crashing waves.

Renaud and Greg Grobis, as Prince Ferdinand, were delightfully innocent and precocious in their roles as two lovers free of the taint of the world's evils.

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

Pageant Play

Oakland University's Department of Music, Theatre and Dance presents a medieval mystery play with a contemporary twist dramatizing stories from the Old and New Testaments

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BY AUGUST WILSON

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings

In light of the many publicized bullying-related tragedies of the past year, The University of Michigan Dearborn presents their first Anti-Bullying Community Training at the campus' University Center.

With 10 campus organizations involved, the event is comprised of student-run, informative and reflective booths which empower attendants to fight bullying. Afterwards, local and state politicians, alongside community members, speak out against bullying.

ACT begins 1 p.m. March 31 in the Kocchhoff Hall of the UC. The event includes free food and music supplied by Channel 955 DJs Nick Craig and Ace. This event is entirely open to the public.



Music & More



Few artists could ever manage to genre hop so gracefully as Iron & Wine's Sam Beam. During his 10-year career, the American singer-songwriter has released folk, rock, country and African-styled tracks. With each album Beam's music has become more rich and full, synchronizing the influences of his past works with the inspiring elements of his newest.

Iron & Wine's latest album, "Kiss Each Other Clean," is no exception. Beam turns his focus to the pop stars and Motown classics of the '60s and '70s, with tracks inspired by Fleetwood Mac, Elton John and Stevie Wonder.

Iron & Wine performs 7 p.m. April 14 with special guest The Low Anthem. Tickets are available on ironandwine.com.

Theater

Relive the grade school spell-down experience in Stagecrafters' offbeat musical comedy, "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." The show runs through April 10 at the Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette in downtown Royal Oak.

The entire play takes place in the geographically ambiguous Putnam Valley Middle School Gymnasium. Six awkward adolescents in the throes of puberty are competing in a spelling bee with the intention of winning, and a securing a place at the national finals.

Each contestant has lovable and somewhat quirky antics that either moves them forward in the bee or they leave the stage with a consolation prize – a juice box.

Advance tickets for performances are \$18 and \$20. This show contains adult humor. For tickets or information, call 248-541-6430.



OUTINGS

Wednesday, March 30

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

Thursday, March 31

Anti-Bullying Community Training, 1 p.m. Designed to further enhance the message that bullying is not okay. University of Michigan Dearborn Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Kocchhoff Hall, Evergreen Rd, Dearborn. 734-776-8104. awagner@umd.umich.edu

Friday, April 1

Music Education Lecture: "Gender and Sexual Orientation in Music", 3 p.m. Guest lecturers Louis Bergonzi and Urbana-Champaign moderate an open discussion centered on issues of gender and sexual orientation as related to music and music learning. Michigan State University College of Music, East Lansing. 517-355-7555. music.msu.edu

S.P.I.C.E. 6:30 p.m. Food and beverages served, pot luck style. Topic: Communicating lovingly with your partner. Sistahs Providing Intelligence, Creativity and Empowerment, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Bisexual Peer Group, 7 p.m. 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. 248 S. River St., Holland. 616-990-5669. rev.jenadams@yahoo.com

Saturday, April 2

Queer & Career Conference, 8 a.m. A half-day conference focusing employment issues for LGBT people. Advance conference registration is required at no cost. 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. lbgtcr.msu.edu

The Jim Toy Community Center, 7p.m. "Spring Dinner" Featuring keynote speaker Judy Shepard. The Jim Toy Community Center, 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

Monday, April 4

Haters Sinners and the Rest of Us, 7 p.m. A speaking engagement by Dr. John Corvino about the diverging opinions on same-sex marriage and other LGBTIQ issues. Free. Refreshments served. Banquet Room B, Oakland Center, Oakland University. 248-894-8970.

Wednesday, April 6

LGBT Summit for Older Adults, 1 p.m. Coalition of Michigan LGBT and eldercare service providers present assistance programs. Including organizations such as ACLU of Michigan, Adult Well Being Services, Affirmations, Citizens for Better Care, Equality Michigan, Jewish Gay Network, the Jim Toy Community Center, MediLodge of Southfield, and S.P.I.C.E. Registration online. 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-812-9202. goaffirmations.org

Thursday, April 7

The 8th Annual Oakland University Drag Show, 6 p.m. Free. DeAngela Show Shannon and her infamous crew working the stage 1920's Burlesque style. Free food and beverages. Oakland University Gay Straight Alliance, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. oakland.edu/csa

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

Friday, April 8

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Watching You. Some of the best lesbian-themed short films from around the world in this fascinating collection: 4PM, Watching You and Dear Emily. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

MUSIC & MORE

BENEFITS/SOCIAL EVENTS

Copper Colored Mountain Arts "One Pause Poetry: Celebrate National Poetry Month" Reading and slide presentation with national book award winner Clayton Eshleman. Reception and book signing to follow. 7101 W. Liberty Road, Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 8, 10:30 a.m. April 9. 734-904-7487. cmarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Wine: An American Revolution" Features the wines of America, along with live jazz, food from area restaurants/bakeries and open galleries. Free "how to" discussion on wine tasting basics will be offered just before the event starts. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. 7 a.m. April 9. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

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 AiMs culinary program. Design and Media Arts students also display original artwork for purchase. Tickets: \$30 in advance or at the door. The Art Institute of Michigan, 28175 Cabot Drive, Novi. 5 p.m. April 1. 248-675-3837. artinstitutes.edu/detroit

Spirit of Hope: Detroit "Worship" Seeking to empower people of all races, genders and gender expressions, sexual orientations, physical abilities, denominational or religious backgrounds. Welcome from all over Metro Detroit to enjoy upbeat worship, preaching, community outreach, and fellowship. Spirit of Hope Church, 1519 Martin Luther King Dr., Detroit. March 6-Aug. 28. 313-964-3113. spiritofhopedetroit.org

CLASSICAL

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

Kerrytown Concert House "Mad About Chamber Music" A free series of informal chamber music performances to benefit a designated charity. Donations accepted at the door. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor, 48104. April 6-April 20. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

University Musical Society "Takacs Quartet" With pianist Jeffrey Kahane, performing works by Schubert. Tickets start at \$24. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 8. ums.org

University Music Society "Tetzlaff Quartet" Performing Hayden, Mendelssohn, and Sibelius. Tickets:\$20. Rackham Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 9. 734-764-2538. ums.org

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.

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art "Just Gorgeous: Sacred Art and Music in a Secular Milieu" TUM 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. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 3. 734-763-4186. umma.museum/programs-and-tours/events

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art "No Impact Man" Follows the Manhattan-based Beavan family as they abandon their high consumption Fifth-Avenue lifestyle and try to live a year while making no environmental impact. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 12. 734-763-4186. umma.museum/programs-and-tours/events

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. purchase.tickets.com

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 ext.14. whartoncenter.com

CONCERTS

Cabaret Detroit "Caren Kapson and Roy Sexton" Stories told in song, featuring selections from the American songbook, musical theater and contemporary song writers. Cocktails served during the show. Dine at Bastone before or after. For dinner reservations, call 248-544-6250. Bastone, 419 S. Main St., Royal Oak. April 7-May 8. 248-383-5460. cabaretdetroit.com

Caesars Windsor "Smokey Robinson" The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee will be entertaining audiences with popular tunes such as "Cruisin'", "Shop Around", "The Tears of a Clown" and many other of the 'King of Motown's' smash hits. Tickets:\$25+ 377 E. Riverside Drive, Windsor. 9 p.m. April 9. 800-991-7777. caesarswindsor.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 "William Bolcom and Joan Morris" A performance by the internationally renowned husband and wife pianist-soprano duo. Tickets: \$10-35. 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Oct. 9-April 2. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Olympia Entertainment "Celtic Woman: Songs from the Heart" Awe-inspiring vocalists and Celtic violinist perform what critics are calling an "uplifting" and "beyond captivating" concert experience. Tickets: \$34.50-\$70.50. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. April 7. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "Rod Stewart and Stevie Nicks" Joining together for The Heart and Soul Tour. Features all rock and roll sets from their catalogs of hits. Tickets: \$49.50-\$125. Joe Louis Arena, 19 Steve Yzerman Drive, Detroit. 7:30 a.m. April 10. 313-396-7000. olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "Scott Stapp" Acoustic performance by lead singer of Creed. Tickets: \$34-\$37 Motor City Casino Soundboard, 2901 Grand River Ave, Detroit. 8 p.m. April 8. 313-471-3200. motorcitycasino.com

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

University Musical Society "Septeto Nacional Ignacio Pineiro de Cuba" Hailed as the inventors of salsa by New York Times and national treasures by The Boston Globe. Tickets: \$10+. Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 7. 734-763-3333. ums.org

Rottun Recordings "Datsik" Tickets: \$20. Available online. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. April 8. 248-399-2980. purchase.tickets.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 ext.14. whartoncenter.com

Wharton Center "Jesse Winchester" Tickets: \$20. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. April 7. 517-353-1982 ext.14. whartoncenter.com

FESTIVALS

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

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour" Features the world's best footage on mountain subjects and extreme sports. The films range from productions created by first-time filmmakers to professional crews working with companies such as the BBC and National Geographic. Tickets available at Moosejaw stores in Birmingham and Rochester only. The Uptown Palladium 12, 250 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham. 7 p.m. April 7. cranbrookbanff.com

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

Detroit Institute of Arts "Idiots and Angels" The latest animated feature from Bill Plympton. Story of Angel, a selfish, morally bankrupt man who spends his time at the local bar, berating other patrons. Tickets: \$7.50. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 1-April 10. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "DFT 101: The Children of Paradise" Poetic realism reaches sublime heights with Children of Paradise, the ineffably witty tale of a woman loved by four different men. Tickets: \$5 or free for DIA members Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 3 p.m. April 2. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Disco and Atomic War" Provocative documentary recounts the nation of Estonia in the mid 1980's, firmly in the grip of the Soviet Union. Tickets: \$7.50 Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 4 p.m. April 9. 313-833-7900. dia.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Distracted \$15. Peppermint Creek Theatre Company at Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing. Through 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 Rd., Farmington. April 2-3. 248-477-0099.

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

Miscast 3-The Final Episode Center Stage Jackson at The Bon Ton Room, 3017 Wildwood Avenue, Jackson. April 8-16. centerstagejackson.org

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

Once Upon A Mattress \$16-\$18. Spotlight Players at The Village Theatre at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Rd., Canton. April 8-17. 734-394-5300. spotlightplayersmi.org

Our Town \$18-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. April 1-16. 269-343-1313. kazooocivic.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 Comedy of Errors and Titus Andronicus \$10-\$15. Korda Artistic Productions at Kordazone Theatre, 2520 Seminole St., Windsor. April 8-16. 519-562-3394. kordazone.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

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

Intimate Apparel \$9-\$15. Eastern Michigan University Theatre at Sponberg Theatre, E. Circle Dr. and Best Hall, Ypsilanti. April 1-9. 734-487-2282. emutix.com

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

Sidewalk Fairytales \$10 suggested donation. Lansing Community College Performing Arts at Dart Auditorium, 500 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. April 8-10. 517-483-1488. lcc.edu/hpa/events

The Crucible \$10-\$24. The University of Michigan Department of Theatre & Drama at Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. March 31-April 10. 734-764-2538. music.umich.edu

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

PROFESSIONAL THEATER

A Catered Affair \$29-\$33. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through April 17. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

April Foolery \$10-\$15. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley St., Detroit. April 8-May 1. 313-967-0599. matrixtheatre.org

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

Ding Dong \$24-\$39. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., 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

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. Through April 9. 248-348-4448. andiamonovitheatre.com

In The Mood \$33. Wayne County Community College District at Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center, 21000 Northline Rd., Taylor. 8 p.m. April 7. 734-374-3200.

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

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. Through April 3. 1-800-982-2787. broadwayindetroit.com

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

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

National Theater of London: Frankenstein A high-definition broadcast from the National Theatre, London. \$12-22. University Music Society at Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 6. 734-764-2538. ums.org

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

Richard III Presented by Propeller, an all-male British theater company. \$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 Will My Bunny Go To Heaven?:\$19.50-\$34.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Through April 17. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

Some Couples May... \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through May 28. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

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 \$26-\$30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through April 30. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

The Color Purple \$30-\$60. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. April 8-9. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

The Color Purple \$23-\$67. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. April 10. 810-237-7333. thewhiting.com

The Comedy of Errors Presented by Propeller, an all-male British theater company. \$20 and above. University Musical Society at Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. March 31-April 3. 734-764-2538. ums.org

The Gizmo Guys \$8. Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Pasant Theatre, Bogue St. & Wilson, East Lansing. April 3. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

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

The Improvised Shakespeare Company \$25. Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Pasant Theater, Bogue St. & Wilson, East Lansing. 8 p.m. April 2. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

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 Magic Flute \$29-\$121. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. April 9-17. 313-237-7464. michiganopera.org

The Piano Lesson \$27-\$41. Performance audiences only. \$15. Blackbird Theatre, 325 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 2. blackbirdtheatre.org

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

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

While We Were Bowling \$18-\$24. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through April 17. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

THEATER FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Dora the Explorer Live! Dora's Pirate Adventure \$6-\$12. The Crowell, 129 E. Maumee St., Adrian. April 8-17. 517-264-7469. crowell.org/

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

The Berenstain Bears in Family Matters \$10. Flint Youth Theatre at The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. April 5. 810-237-1530. flintyouththeatre.org

The Crane Maiden \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetART, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Saturdays through April 30. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

ARTS 'N' AROUND

Detroit Artist's Market "Annual Scholarship Awards and Exhibition" Turning the spotlight on the best new artists emerging from the area's stellar arts programs. This year students will be selected from the Cranbrook Art Academy. Detroit Artist's Market, 4719 Woodward Ave., 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. 7 a.m. April 6, 7 a.m. April 7. 313-664-1497. RustBeltToArtistBelt.com

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

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

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

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

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

Kerrytown Concert House "Denise Rohde Exhibit" Uses 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. Corner of Auditorium & Physics Road, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 1-April 17. 517-353-9834. artmuseum.msu.edu

Kresge Art Museum "Department of Art & Art History Master of Fine Arts

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

Riverside Arts Center Gallery "Docent Exhibition" Featuring the work of local artists, including drawings, woodwork, prints, glass work and more. Artist reception will be held 5-7 p.m. April 2. 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti. March 1-April 30. riversideartscenter.org

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

Swords into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery "Street Smart" Born and raised in the city, Detroit's 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.

The Scarab Club "The Politics of Portraiture: Stuarts Incomparable Washington" Dinner & Lecture Series. Member's Admission: \$50 per lecture, Non-Members: \$65 per lecture. The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. 6 p.m. April 13. 313-831-1250. scarabclub.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Photoformance: An Empathic Environment" This new multimedia installation brings together the work of Ernestine Ruben, Monica Ponce de Leon and Peter Sparling with music by Erik Santos. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. March 1-May 15. 734-647-0524. umma.umich.edu

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art "Richard Ford" Writer Series: Author of The Lay of the Land, New York Times' Best Book of the Year. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 5:10 p.m. April 7. 734-763-4186. umma.museum/programs-and-tours/events

Wyandotte Arts Center "Painting & Pottery" Exhibition featuring Rose Lewandowski and Doni Moxlow Harris. Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. March 19-April 8. 734-720-0671. downriverarts.org

Between THE Lines™

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An Evening with Judy Shepard Saturday, April 2, 2011



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

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

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

WHERE: University of Michigan Ross School of Business

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

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



BTL Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Drunk, pregnant – and lesbian?

Q: You are not going to believe my problem. I've never read anything like it in your paper before...or any other paper for that matter.

What happened, to make it short, is that I got drunk, had sex with a guy and am now pregnant. I had sex with a man once. As my mother said, "that's all it takes." My problem is that I know, absolutely know, that I am lesbian, and to complicate it further, I'm in a relationship with a wonderful person, "Michelle." Michelle and I have been together for three years. She and I have had a great relationship. Michelle is 28 and I'm 27.

As you might suspect, the problem is that Michelle is mad at me for having sex with a man – or having sex with another person for that matter. I've tried to tell her that I was drunk, and it just happened. I didn't set out to do it. I was at a party and I just don't exactly remember how it all came about. I don't much remember it. It's strange because I don't think I drank that much. I'm not a big drinker and I'm not a small woman who can't hold alcohol. (I really think it was my second glass of wine in two hours and I had just eaten food, and the wine glass was small.) I actually learned more about that night – and how much I drank – from others, not from my memory. One person said that one minute I was sitting talking to this guy, and the next minute I went into the bedroom with him. I'm not excusing myself, I'm just saying that I made a big mistake, but it doesn't take away any of my feelings for Michelle.

It is really weird for me because I hardly remember any of it, yet I now have to explain it and I really can't. As I said, I am lesbian – not bi – and I love Michelle, and I'm not promiscuous or a cheater. I can understand why Michelle is mad at me, and I don't have any good excuse or explanation for it all. Now, Michelle is not sure she will stay with me. She says that she still loves me, but doesn't know if she can stay in the relationship because now she doesn't trust me and wonders about my sexuality.

And of course, I have the problem of me being pregnant. I have always wanted to have children, but not this way and not at this time. But, on the other hand, I'm not someone who, in good conscience, could do an abortion. But, I don't know if Michelle

would consider staying with me if I were to have a baby; it would just be a reminder to her of my infidelity. And I'm not sure she'll stay now, let alone if I go through with the baby.

I don't even know the "father" of this pregnancy. Apparently, he was a friend of a friend who showed up. I suppose I could track him down, but I have no desire to do that.

I feel so humiliated and confused. I just don't know what to do next. Michelle hasn't left me, but she's barely talking to me, and sleeping in another room. I'm nauseated from the pregnancy and pretty tired all the time. I don't know what to do.

Paralyzed

A: The first thing I recommend is for you to find a counselor to help you sort through your feelings and aid you with any decisions you need to make. Hopefully, Michelle will join you in some couple's counseling as well. Let her know that whether or not she chooses to stay in the relationship, you both will make better decisions if you talk through things. If you haven't seen a doctor yet, that's something else you need to do. It's important to see a doctor early in a pregnancy, no matter what decision you make.

As I read your letter a red flag appears to me: I wonder if you were drugged, like perhaps the drug ecstasy. When I say this, I'm assuming that you are being honest. It's really hard for me to believe that two glasses of wine with food over two hours (and you are not a tiny person) would reduce your inhibitions so dramatically. I'm certainly suspicious. I don't know at this point that you could prove that one way or another, but it's something to consider and talk to your doctor about. If you are having problems with finding a counselor in your area, email me back and I will help. Let me know how it goes. I care.

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 reach Jody, send an email to DearJodyValley@hotmail.com. Letters may be edited.

Find the Fake Ad Contest



BTL is Changing it Up!

1. Search this issue of *Between The Lines* for the one ad that is the fake ad. Here's a clue: the fake ad will include the words: "The Full Truth" (find out why by reading the article on page 11)
2. Go to www.Pridesource.com and click on "Click Here to Win!"
3. Scroll down to the entry form for the fake ad contest and enter your name, etc.
4. In the notes field, put the date of the BTL issue, page number where you found the fake ad and the name of the fake advertiser.

Search this issue for the Fake Ad

Between THE Lines

BTT Horoscopes

Give it a try, Virgo!

BY JACK FERTIG

With Mercury turning retrograde in Aries, be careful of spontaneous speeches and actions. Mars conjunct Uranus makes it way too easy to leap before you look – metaphorically and literally. The good news is that mistakes and missteps will show up immediately. Be very ready to make corrections and apologies.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): You're certain to make a fool of yourself one way or another, so just lighten up and let yourself be in on the joke. While taking yourself too seriously is surely disastrous, do be serious about safety.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): It's not that you worry too much, but you need to worry better. Get clear on what's provoking your anxieties so you can resolve them once and for all. Resolution won't come instantly, but insights now will prove helpful later.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Arguments with friends are easily blamed on miscommunications. If you can't patch things up now a little time apart could be helpful. New friends offer new ideas, but those could cause more confusion than they solve.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Anything you do, and especially your mistakes, will be much observed. Consulting with your boss or experts will at least help disperse any blame and make those mistakes more interesting. A good sense of humor and broad perspective will get you through.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Only get into arguments if you want to be proven wrong and struggle with some new ideas. You could learn a great deal, but don't jump on any bandwagons yet! Those novel notions will soon require closer examination and corrections.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Experimental sexual techniques will probably teach you more about what you don't like than what you do. It doesn't hurt to give it a try and scratch things off the list. Avoid anything risky for now. These are accident-prone times!

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Arguments and misunderstandings with your partner are to be expected. Every relationship has its challenges. Breaking up now could be a big mistake. Committing to a new

relationship now is a bigger one!

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Moderation is the key to fitness. Pushing too hard is sure to do you harm. Take disruptions at work in a calm, even stride. Are you being fair to colleagues or employees? Really? Consider those problems now. Decide later.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Daring gestures will blow up in your face; you can't win for losing, and any creative efforts now will backfire. Stay in good humor and treat it all as a grand experiment. Learning what doesn't work will serve you well in the future.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Household accidents are likelier than ever. Especially with anything involving fire or electricity this is "not" the time for clever innovations. Write down and design any bright ideas you have, but review them next month before fiddling with wires.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Your mouth is getting way ahead of your brain. Be very careful to converse only with people who aren't easily offended; still be ready to apologize. Writing is safer than talking – unless you're worried about evidence.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Reconsider your life's priorities. You could surprise yourself. If you don't you haven't been thinking that hard about it. Rude financial shocks should stimulate brilliant new ideas, although any new ideas now will need revision later.

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.

massage4@aol.com http://groups.yahoo.com/group/michigan_mens_clothing_optional_yoga'."/>

Solution to puzzle from page 26

S	T	A	L	L	A	S	K	G	A	I	L	L	Y	
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The show closed WHEN?

I should have gone to

ENCORE MICHIGAN .com

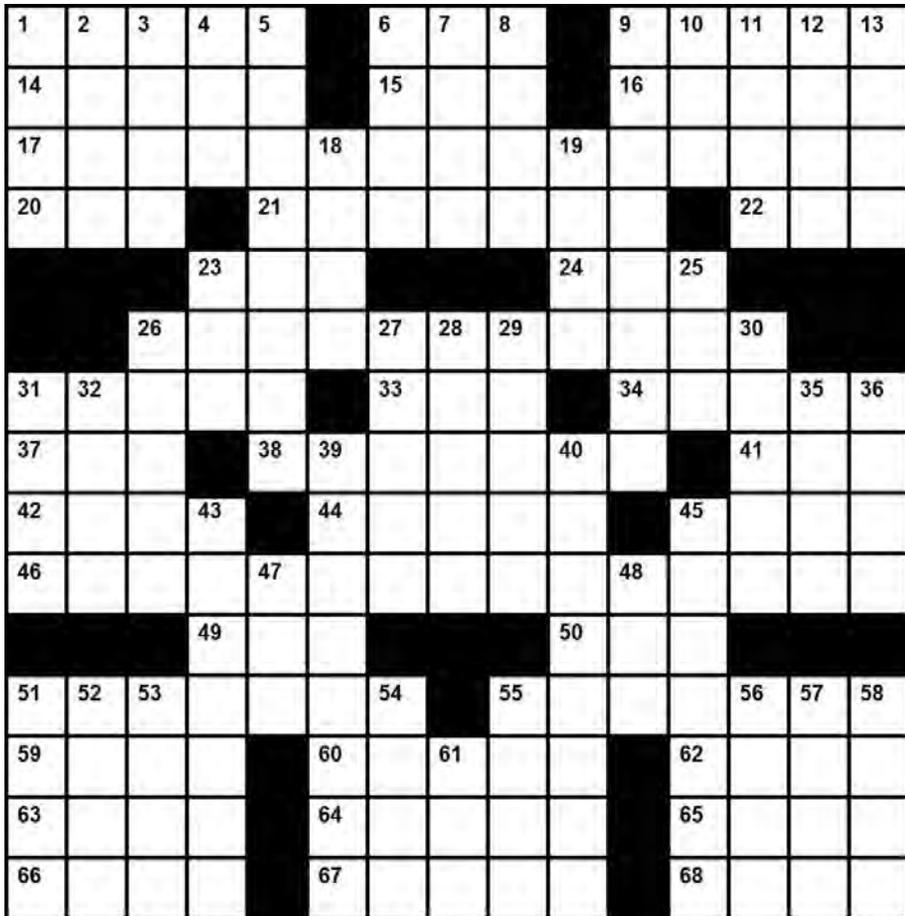
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Not a Plain Jane

Across

- 1 Stonewall
- 6 Part of DADT
- 9 In a fey way?
- 14 Sweet heat source
- 15 Good in Grenoble
- 16 First indications of orientation
- 17 With 26-Across, song sung by Jane
- 20 66, e.g.
- 21 Diamond swingers
- 22 Seaman
- 23 Augsburg article
- 24 Docs' org.
- 26 See 17-Across
- 31 Screw-up
- 33 Reveal, in verse
- 34 Pitched for Brittin
- 37 Tyler of "Jersey Girl"
- 38 Closest point for Uranus, e.g.
- 41 Sorbonne summer
- 42 Stein fillers

- 44 Pale-green moths
- 45 "Myra Breckinridge" author Vidal
- 46 With 51-Across, movie with 17/26-Across
- 49 Off-rd. ride
- 50 Granola lesbian's bit
- 51 See 46-Across
- 55 Late screen icon Jane
- 59 Tear apart
- 60 Failure to accept others, and others
- 62 Chocolate sandwich
- 63 Italian wine city
- 64 Gertrude's partner
- 65 Where boxers are visible
- 66 Brightly colored
- 67 Abbey residents
- 68 Targets of men who make passes

- 3 Troubling spots
- 4 Sodomite of the Bible
- 5 Get slick in the shower
- 6 Aid's partner
- 7 Put in order
- 8 Trick joint, maybe
- 9 It leaks out after you shoot off
- 10 Suffix with honor
- 11 "___ Rhythm"
- 12 Sultry Horne
- 13 River near Dunkirk
- 18 Put in a position
- 19 Asian inland sea
- 23 Phone button trio
- 25 Greeting to Maria
- 26 Place of refuge
- 27 "Julius Caesar" setting
- 28 Give a piece of one's mind
- 29 _King Lear_ daughter
- 30 "___ the Tiger"
- 31 Loose woman, in the land of Auden
- 32 Queen Cleo's river

- 35 To be, in Toulon
- 36 Many bucks
- 39 Checkout time, often, at no-tell motel
- 40 Online husbands and wives?
- 43 Broadway understudy, e.g.
- 45 Forget to use the KY?
- 47 Ford of old
- 48 Dorm VIPs
- 51 Part of a healthy stud muffin?
- 52 Add-on for Congo
- 53 Not taken in by
- 54 Like autoeroticism
- 55 Hudson of "Giant"
- 56 Emma Donoghue's country
- 57 What libraries do
- 58 Woody pile
- 61 Anais who went both ways

Down

- 1 S&M souvenir
- 2 "Are you up ___?"

Solution on 25

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BTI Cocktail Chatter

The Marlene Dietrich

BY ED SIKOV

It was 2:40 a.m., and I was alone. Dan had flown off again – this time to Tucson and Albuquerque – on a zip-trip for some clinical trials his company was running on an Alzheimer's drug in which Dan had no confidence. It was a useless trip for a useless drug, and he was miserable about going. I said, "Forget about it." I ought to know better; of course he didn't laugh. No, he gave me yet another stern lecture about how Alzheimer's jokes aren't funny. "Oh, but they are!" I replied. "As long as you don't forget them."

Anyway, I should be used to sleeping alone, given all of Dan's work travel, but I'm not. I hate it. I don't sleep well without him.

Mostly I toss and turn and then lurch zombie-like into the kitchen and eat what's available. I once scarfed down a whole can of Spam during one endless, hungry night. Hey, I always keep it on hand in case of nuclear attack or dirty bomb. I'm patriotically paranoid, so shut up about Spam.

But that night I wasn't hungry. What I craved was music – one particular song. My iPod was on the nightstand, so I was right on time when I got the earbuds in, found the song and pushed "play":

"It's a quateh ta thwee/
 Theh's no one in the pwace/
 But you and me.
 So set 'em up, Joe/
 I gotta wittw stowy/
 That you oughta know..."

Yes, it's the great Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer song, "One for My Baby," as sung in 1959 by the still-a-knockout-at-58 Marlene Dietrich.

Dietrich may be unique in that she appears to be the only Hollywood star to have a classic cocktail named for her. (There are other star-themed cocktails, including the Hi-Ho, named for

the Lone Ranger's rallying cry to his horse – but they're scarcely classics.) The Marlene has but three ingredients – lots of rye (or Canadian if you must), a touch of orange curacao and a couple dashes of bitters. But like Dietrich and the allure she created by way of lenses and celluloid, her cocktail is much more entrancing than the sum of its parts. The mini-splash of curacao and the even tinier dash of bitters bring out the rye's gingery quality – a spicy essence rye doesn't have on its own.

And like Marlene herself, the cocktail is easy to make. Billy Wilder ("Sunset Blvd.," "Some Like It Hot") used to get Dietrich going at dinner parties by asking her to talk about her sexual exploits. Well, she'd begin, I did this guy and that gal and this gal and that guy.... Wilder would coax her into revealing extremely intimate details, Marlene was happy to oblige, and the other guests would fall stone silent, too stunned to speak. At which point Wilder, who always had a punchline ready to roll, would ask the table faux-innocently, "Are we boring you?"

So there I was, wistening – er, listening – to Marlene, over and over again, in darkness. Since there was no one in the place but she and me, I made myself a Dietrich and drifted off to sleep as soon as I downed the last spicy drop.

The Marlene Dietrich

3 oz rye (or Canadian)
 1/2 tsp of orange curacao
 2 dashes of Angostura bitters or to taste

Pour ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice; shake; serve. After midnight, or any time, you can also make it on the rocks, but don't tell anybody.

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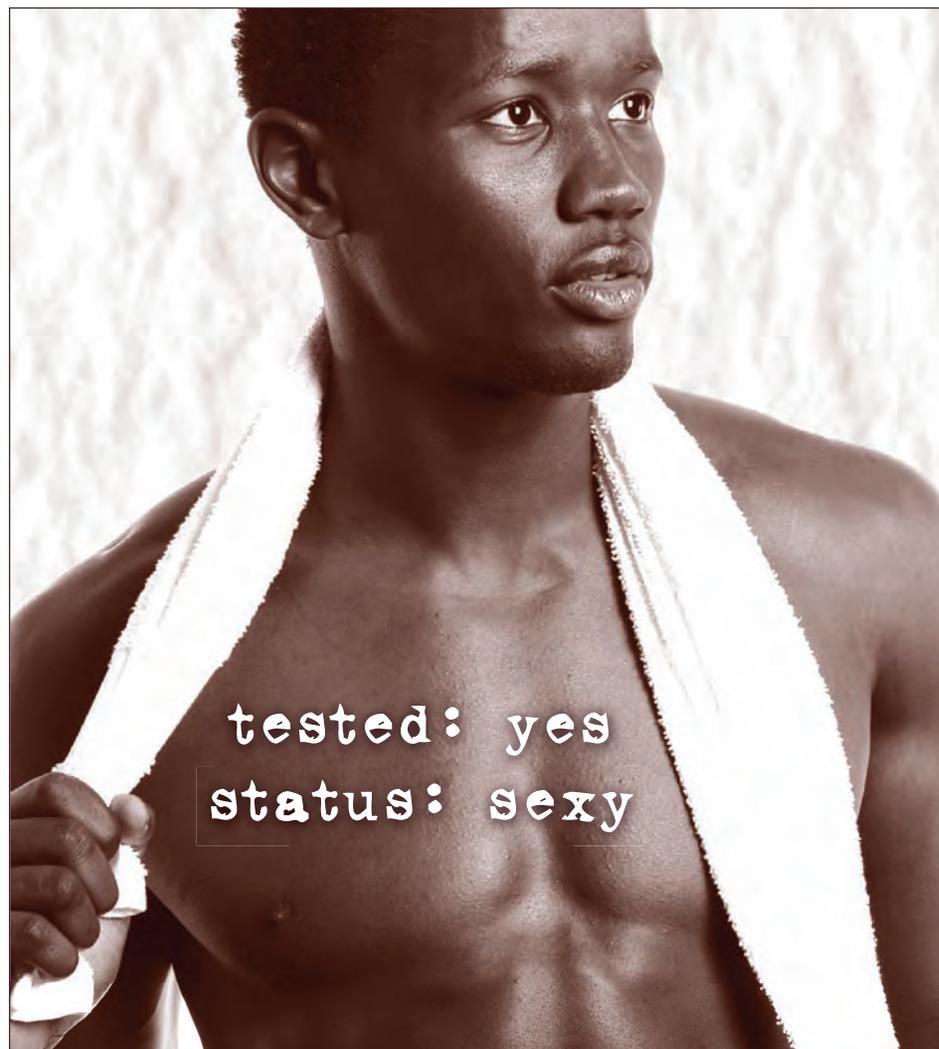
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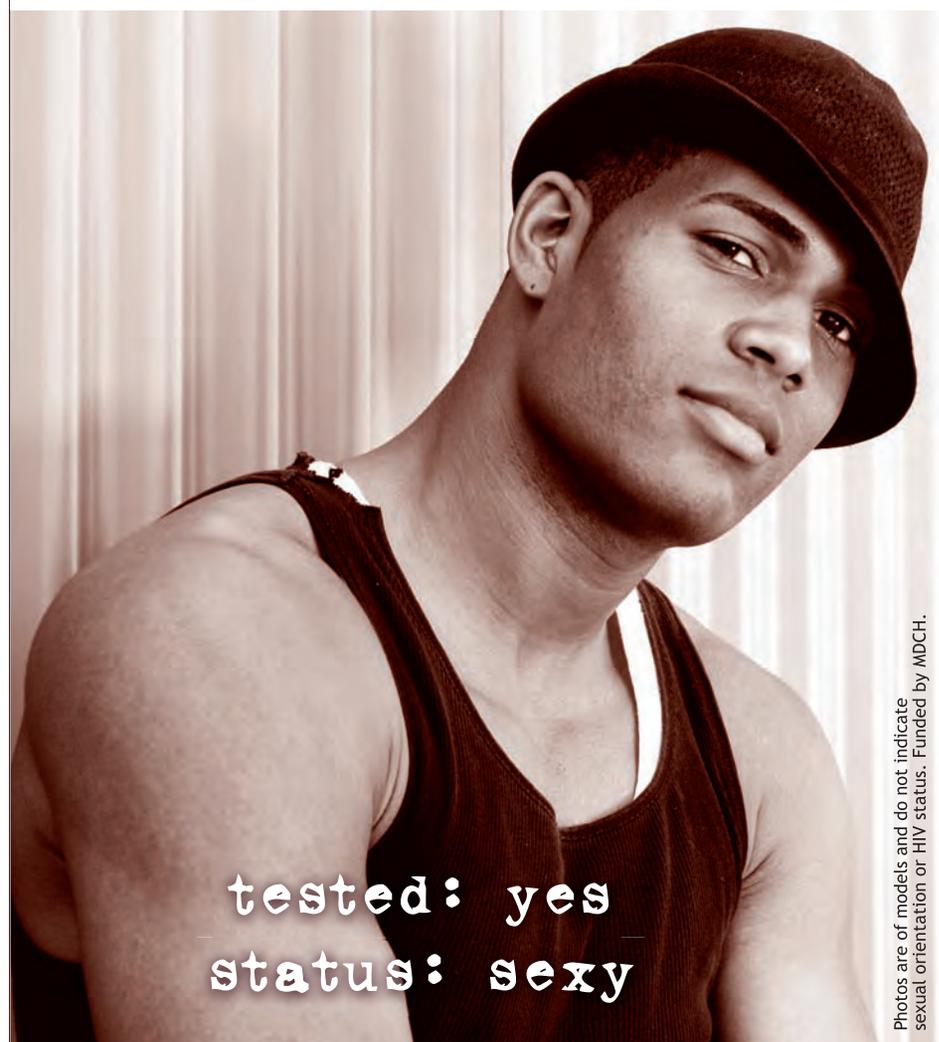
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From Stork to Finish

RTT Deep Inside Hollywood



Michelle Rodriguez. Photo: Columbia Pictures

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

What is unlesbian Michelle Rodriguez doing next?

It feels like a kind of civic duty to report on the career path of Michelle Rodriguez. It especially feels right to do so every single time she tells the press that she's absolutely not a lesbian, like she recently did on the red carpet of the "Battle: Los Angeles" premiere. So here's what the unabashed tough-gal who used to be besties with Kristanna Loken has on the horizon: "Blacktino," from first-time filmmaker Aaron Burns, is already in the can and co-stars her "Machete" pal Danny Trejo. In it, MR plays someone named Charlotte Foster Jane (which sounds quite a bit like an intentional goof on "Charles Foster Kane," but who knows why) and that's about all we know. She's also currently filming something called "Underground Comedy" that reportedly co-stars Rodriguez's other "Machete" comrade and situational lesbian Lindsay Lohan as herself. But highest profile of all will be the new Paul Schrader ("Taxi Driver") film, "The Jesuit," a murder/kidnapping/revenge drama co-starring Paz Vega ("Enter the Void"). So our favorite badass non-lesbian action star is keeping busy and, if she has any non-film-related announcements to make, you'll hear them here first.

Emily Deschanel joins 'The Perfect Family'

Striking while the iron is still warm — thanks to the loving reception "The Kids Are All Right" received from critics, audiences and the Oscars — is "The Perfect Family," a new indie from lesbian filmmaker Anne Renton set to debut soon at the Tribeca Film Festival. And while the title may imply the same warm bath of acceptance that "The Kids" swam around in, this drama will indulge in a little more turmoil. It stars Emily Deschanel as the lesbian daughter of a devoutly Catholic mother, played by Kathleen Turner. And when that daughter's upcoming marriage to a woman threatens to unbalance Turner's heteronormative family life ideal, all heck breaks loose. The movie co-stars Jason Ritter, Elizabeth Peña and Richard Chamberlain as the family's parish priest. And no, it doesn't really matter that this story's been told a few times before in one form or another, because up until now the awesome Kathleen Turner hasn't taken part. She probably won't go epic-crazy like she did in "Serial Mom," but we can always hope.

Will it be impossible to release 'The Impossible'?

Clint Eastwood's recent flop, "Hereafter" used the devastating 2004 Christmas-time tsunami to exploitive effect in the service of a dopey story about the afterlife. So it was welcome news to learn that a film based on a true story involving that terrible event might redeem it as a plot point. The film is called "The Impossible," and it's from gay Spanish director Juan Antonio Bayona, the man who gave us the creepy thriller "The Orphanage" a few years back. Set during that same natural disaster, it stars Naomi Watts and Ewan McGregor as people whose lives are changed forever in a moment. Summit, the people who bring you "Twilight" and more "Twilight," had originally planned an unspecified 2011 release date. But given the recent deadly earthquake and tsunami in Japan, how soon will be too soon for that sort of thing? Keep watch on how this one finds its way to multiplexes for a lesson in sensitivity and respectful timing.

Thomas Dekker enters 'The Secret Circle'

To be young and hot in Hollywood right now means to hope for a role in something sexy, supernatural and sustainable. In other words, if you're not a vampire, werewolf, witch or zombie-killer on TV, you're probably just doing walk-on roles on basic cable sitcoms. So newbie Thomas Dekker is getting a prime shot at stardom (he's already been on the series "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles" and co-starred in the dull "Nightmare on Elm Street" reboot) as the star of Kevin Williamson's ("Scream," "The Vampire Diaries") new drama pilot "The Secret Circle." He'll share screen time with Britt Robertson from "Life Unexpected"; she's a teen witch just discovering her powers and joining a secret coven that already includes Dekker. The project comes with a pedigree too: it's based on a book series by L.J. Smith, who also penned "The Vampire Diaries." And if it's true that nothing succeeds like success, this one's money is in the blood bank.

Romeo San Vicente is often mistaken for a tough lesbian himself. Okay, not really. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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