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BTM Between Ourselves

Tony Johnson volunteers at KICK, a nonprofit organization for LGBT African Americans in Detroit, twice a week. He also is an active volunteer at a local soup kitchen and a VA hospital.

1 How did you start volunteering at KICK? What do you do there?

I was volunteering at AIDS Consortium of Southeastern Michigan when it was open, but it dissolved. I met Curtis (Lipscomb, the new director of KICK) when he was working for AIDS Partnership Michigan, a sister organization. We were at an AIDS walk and he told me about KICK and that's how I started volunteering.

I've been here for 3 years, basically working as the office coordinator. I answer phones, do whatever other projects they need me to do, like keeping records, sending emails and stuff like that.

2 You volunteer at a soup kitchen and a VA hospital, too. Why do you volunteer so much?

I'm considered disabled. To give something back to the community keeps me from going crazy. If I stayed home I'd be crazy. My grandma always told me help the less fortunate than you so I try to do what I can do. I'm a pretty simple person. I get along with everybody.

3 You're also a veteran. Tell us about your service.

I was in the Army from 1984-1987. I wanted to mature and to go see what I could see but I didn't go anywhere, I stayed stateside. It gave me a chance to get out of Michigan for a bit. I did basic training in South Carolina, school in Fort Gordon, Ga., and the rest of my time was spent in Fort Knox, Ky.

4 What do you like about KICK's new space in Detroit's Tech Town?

I love it. We get visitors every day. It's more open. And there's more space. It opens up a whole new world to me. I can't really explain it. I see it really going up from here.

5 What should we know about KICK?

It does a lot of positive things for the black



KICK does a lot of positive things for the black community. It's an outstanding organization. We're here for the people. And if you need help, don't hesitate to call.

community. It's an outstanding organization. We're here for the people. And if you need help, don't hesitate to call.

Learn more about KICK at www.e-kick.org or call 313-285-9733.

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

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From Stork to Finish

Day of Empowerment features resources, allies, DOJ speaker

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE –The transgender community came out in force on April 2 for the third annual Transgender Day of Empowerment, held at Affirmations Community Center and organized by Transgender Detroit and Transgender Michigan.

The event featured presentations by representatives from the Department of Justice, a panel of transgender allies, and a transgender town hall meeting.

More than 75 people attended. Vanessa Emma Goldman of Ferndale said she was “amazed” at the number of transpeople in the room. “I’m so glad that we are able to come together like this. It makes me feel like I’m not alone.”

Transgender Michigan founder Rachel Crandall echoed Goldman. “I talk to a lot of transgender people who feel really lonely,” she said

“I’m so glad that we are able to come together like this. It makes me feel like I’m not alone.”

– Vanessa Emma Goldman

as she introduced the panel of allies to the audience. “They feel like they don’t have any allies, and I want you to know that I’ve been blessed to know many allies,” she said.

During a question and answer session, Don Sidelinker, a counselor who specializes in LGBT and couples counseling, asked representatives from the DOJ if more could be done to give transgender individuals more legal protection from discrimination and bullying. “I have a client now who cannot join choir because she is transgender,” he said. “Routinely she gets beat up and the school won’t do anything about it.”

Diane Mitchum, who works for the DOJ, explained that the federal government learned lessons from their attempt to force integration in the schools. “We find it’s better to guide them and let them make decisions for themselves. We encourage the unification of communities and to build out the allies,” she said. Mitchum also said that when the federal government imposes a mandate, it usurps the power of the states, and resistance – and lawsuits – are likely.

Sidelinker responded: “If we left it up to the states though, there would still be places that are segregated.”

The DOJ also gave a presentation explaining the 2009 Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which made gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation protected classes. The law also gives the federal government the right to step in when states or local jurisdictions refuse to prosecute a crime.

To find out more about Transgender Michigan, go to www.transgendermichigan.org. For more on Transgender Detroit, go to www.transgendertetroit.org.

Judy Shepard, Chris Armstrong earn achievement awards

Shepard speaks about son’s life, need for protective laws

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

ANN ARBOR – Judy Shepard and Chris Armstrong each graciously accepted awards at an annual fundraiser for the Jim Toy Community Center on April 2.

Shepard is the mother of Matthew Shepard, the college student who was beaten and left for dead on a fencepost in Laramie, Wyo. in 1998. Since then, Shepard and her husband created a nonprofit organization, the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which lobbies for gay rights and protective legislation. The foundation pushed for the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was passed in 2009.

Armstrong is the openly gay president of the student body at the University of Michigan, where the fundraiser was held. Last fall, he was harassed by Assistant Attorney General Andrew Shirvell, who was eventually fired – but not before Shirvell’s blog about Armstrong received national media attention.

Jim Toy told the audience that Armstrong “exhibited unparalleled leadership, humility, patience and grace under homophobic assault,

“We have years of vision ahead of us. We have a president who supports us. A Congress that is moveable, sometimes, and the movable part is now your job.”

– Judy Shepard

under the intrusive and intense scrutiny of newspapers and television.” Addressing Armstrong directly from the podium, Toy said, “This award must inadequately thank you for your witness to justice.”

The evening was also a celebration of the renamed Jim Toy Community Center, formerly known as the Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project.

Board President Linda Lombardini told the audience that the struggling community center was unsure if it should keep its doors open, but a survey of members showed full support for the center. She said they considered renaming the center after many famed activists: “We decided there is only one name that is synonymous with the TLGB movement in southeast Michigan, and with the battle to squash transphobia, homophobia, racism, sexism and bullying and an unfailing commitment to the justice that ultimately will lead to peace: Jim Toy.”



Chris Armstrong, Judy Shepard and Jim Toy spoke at the first annual Jim Toy Community Center Dinner April 2 in Ann Arbor. BTL photo: Tara Cavanaugh

The fundraiser was organized by the U-M Spectrum Center, which Toy originally founded, and OUT for Business, an LGBT group in the Ross School of Business. The evening was sponsored by MillerCoors, Keith Orr and Martin Contreras and local businesses.

A mother speaks

When her son, then 18, came out to her during a phone call, Shepard said she already knew.

“I firmly believe that anyone who has a loved one in the gay community knows, right here,” Shepard said, pointing to the back of her head. “We all know. The hard part is bringing it up here,” she said, pointing to her forehead. “Because that requires commitment and action. Back here, it’s still just a notion. Up here, it’s real.”

Shepard said Matthew was accepted by his family when he came out, but she doesn’t know what his life was like at school. “If he had been hassled, I’m not sure he would have shared that with us,” she said.

“He was always open to the debate, had

extreme feelings about what was right and what was wrong, and never felt the least bit hesitant in speaking those opinions. Actually, that trait scared me more than his being gay,” Shepard explained, which caused the audience to chuckle.

“But as parents our job is to worry about our kids, gay or straight,” she said. “Society and the environment that still exists is treacherous. We have a long way to go.”

“We have years of vision ahead of us. We have a president who supports us. A Congress that is moveable, sometimes, and the movable part is now your job,” Shepard said. “You need to elect proper people, you need to vet them, you need to support them, and you need to let them know when they don’t please you, and you also need to let them know when they do please you. They need to know that you have their backs so they can continue to support your decision. That’s your responsibility. You can’t just vote, and think your job is now over. It’s a great responsibility, as well as a privilege. Please don’t lose sight of that.”

Shepard closed her remarks with a quote from John F. Kennedy, Jr.: “Anyone can make a difference, and everyone should try.”

Anti-bullying march in Howell April 9

HOWELL – The Michigan Democratic LGBT Caucus and the Michigan School Tolerance Campaign are holding a march to end bullying in Michigan schools on Saturday, April 9 at 10 a.m.

Attendees can gather behind the court house at 200 E. Grand River in Howell. Speakers include Wayne State University Law Professor Jocelyn Benson; Michelle Brown of the National Black Justice Coalition; Phil Volk, Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party LGBT Caucus; and Christopher Armstrong and Brendan Campbell of the University of Michigan Student Assembly.

The caucus said in a press release that although the march is “about opposing bullying in schools in general,” it also seeks to bring attention to an anti-bullying bill in the state legislature. SB 0159, also known as Matt’s Law, was first introduced in the state House by now-Sen. Glenn Anderson in 2006. The bill has not been able to make it successfully through the legislature in either its enumerated version (which includes specific language that protects LGBT students) or in its non-enumerated version.

Ingham County has highest HIV rate outside of Detroit

Survey shows Genesee, Kent counties also worrisome

BY TODD HEYWOOD

For the second year in a row, Ingham county has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the state outside Detroit and Wayne county.

The 2010 statistical analysis released by the Michigan Department of Community Health shows Ingham has a prevalence rate of 159 cases per 100,000. The state average is 149 cases per 100,000 people.

Wayne County has a prevalence rate of 369 infections per 100,000 people. Other areas of concern include Genesee County at 122 cases per 100,000; Kent County at 133 cases per; Berrien County at 144 cases per; and Oakland County with 139 cases per 100,000 people.

The analysis also shows that the age group of 30-39-year-olds had the highest level of new diagnoses in 2010 at 163 cases, followed by the 20-24-year-old age group at 128 cases followed by the 40-49-year-old age group at 125 new cases.

Of those newly identified cases, men who have sex with men represented 45 percent of the new infections; men who have sex with men and also are intravenous drug users represented 1 percent more for a total of 46 percent of cases linked to men who have sex with men statewide. Heterosexuals represented 13 percent of the new cases, with nine percent of those in women. In 35 percent of the new infections, it is undetermined how the virus was transmitted.

In Ingham county, 53 percent of the cases were in men who have sex with men, and another five percent in men who have sex with men who are intravenous drug users for a combined total of men who have sex with men of 58 percent. Women represented 22 percent of the cases in the county.

The new numbers have some activists alarmed and indicating an HIV crisis continues in the state.

“Every quarterly analysis that the Michigan Department of Community Health releases

clearly shows that HIV/AIDS is still an epidemic of shattering proportions. Ingham County registers especially alarming trends,” said Emily Dievendorf, policy director at Equality Michigan. “Unfortunately, most Michigan citizens don’t read quarterly reports. This means that we all need to start acknowledging the fight we are up against, educating ourselves about prevention opportunities and how we can help each other, and talking about it – talking to anyone who will listen. Funding cuts to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs are just one major symptom of this lack of discourse that adds to the depth of the crisis.”

With pressing budget deficits a proposal to slash HIV funding by cutting the Michigan Health Fund Initiative to fund airport upkeep was proposed by Rep. Dave Agema, R-Grandville.

Story originally published on michiganmessenger.com

Administrator fired over anti-gay remarks hired as human services director

Crystal Dixon wrote in the Toledo Free Press that gay rights are not civil rights

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

JACKSON – An Ohio woman who was fired over her anti-gay editorial in a newspaper has been hired to fill the position of a joint human services director in Jackson.

The Jackson Citizen Patriot reports Crystal Dixon was fired in 2008 from her position as an administrator at the University of Toledo for anti-gay remarks she made in the Toledo Free Press.



Crystal Dixon

“I take great umbrage at the notion that those choosing the homosexual lifestyle are ‘civil rights victims,’” Dixon wrote in the Toledo Free Press. “Here’s why. I cannot wake up tomorrow and not be a Black woman. I am genetically and biologically a Black woman and very pleased to be so as my Creator intended. Daily, thousands of homosexuals make a life decision to leave the gay lifestyle evidenced by the growing population of PFOX (Parents and Friends of Ex Gays) and Exodus International just to name a few.”

According to the Patriot, “City and county officials said Dixon was up front about her termination from the university. They said her level of professional experience was more important than her political views.”

“The residents of Jackson County and the City of Jackson deserve more than just somebody with the appropriate skills to serve as their human resources director,” said Emily Dievendorf, director of policy at Equality Michigan. “The job in question places Crystal Dixon as lead negotiator for contract agreements and will make her an influential voice in searches for department heads. She needs to be capable of providing equal opportunity and advocating for the interests of all Jackson residents. Her job history, a component on a resume easily as important as required skills, does not support her being qualified to serve the entire Jackson community.”

Dixon will make \$87,030 per year. She starts April 24.

Report: LGBT health research needed

Some risks ‘just haven’t been examined at all’

BY BOB ROEHR

For a report that is being hailed as groundbreaking for the LGBT community, it opens with a rather unremarkable summary:

“Although the acronym LGBT is used as an umbrella term, and the health needs of this community are often grouped together, each of these letters represents a distinct population with its own health concerns.”

That statement is not news. But the fact that it was made in a report commissioned by the National Institutes of Health and written by the prestigious Institute of Medicine adds new meaning and credibility to shaping health policy.

“There has been so little fundamental, across the board research with the LGBT communities that we couldn’t just identify gaps, we really needed to base our findings upon a more broad and encompassing degree of needs,” chair Dr. Robert Graham said at the March 31 news

conference releasing the report.

Graham said much of the research that does exist focuses on gay male adults, particularly with regard to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. And it has been conducted largely in urban environments, not suburban or rural ones. There is little research focusing on bisexuals and transgender persons or on issues of childhood or aging. Information on racial and ethnic groups, and lower income populations is also scant.

Some of these factors may cause additional health risks, “and these sorts of crosswalks just have not been examined at all,” Graham said.

Recommendations

The report makes broad recommendations for closing the gaps in LGBT health research. It encourages NIH to develop standard definitions of sexual orientation and gender identity (that would be consistent and comparable across different studies) and also to offer trainings for those interested in such research.

The report also suggests that federal studies should offer more opportunities for people to self-identify as LGBT and that electronic health records should contain information on sexual orientation and gender identity.

“We don’t have a good understanding of the developmental processes that affect LGBT persons. I would love to see something that pulls together what we have attempted to piece together: the LGBT life cycle,” said Brian de Vries, a gerontologist at San Francisco State University.

Addressing health needs

A second year medical student in the audience noted the spotty nature of education on LGBT issues in medical schools – some offer little to no training while a few are doing “a fantastic job” – and asked how the report addresses that training.

Committee member Dr. Robert Garofalo, a pediatrician and professor at Northwestern University, said a similar first report on black and minority health disparities in the 1980s “worked its way into medical school curriculum as a sourcebook. We have some hope this report will do the same thing for the LGBT community.”

Another member of the committee, Judith Bradford, said many of these recommendations “are not a big deal” to implement, but she acknowledged that there are barriers – including political barriers – to doing so.

For Garofalo, “This is something we have done for other populations and we think we should be doing it now for this population. This document goes a long way in framing it from a very scientific perspective. It is entirely now a matter of political will.”

Garofalo said the report is not just groundbreaking for LGBT persons, but for physicians too, because “seeing those questions legitimates the fact that it’s okay to be that way ... It is a sensitizing experience.”

The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding is available at www.iom.edu/lgbthealth.

“We don’t have a good understanding of the developmental processes that affect LGBT persons.”

– Brian de Vries, a gerontologist at San Francisco State University

The city of Jackson's new HR director was also fired in 2008 for an anti-gay editorial she wrote, explaining that gay rights aren't civil rights because being gay is a choice. What do you think of the city's decision?

This lady has confused her race with her civility. True, her race physically doesn't change, but the context, political and social implications of her race constantly changes. Civil rights are not based on changeable or unchangeable physical traits. Civil rights are a set of circumstances a person can come to reasonably expect within the context of its government that shall not be infringed upon by said government.

– Billione Multimedia

They couldn't find a Michigan bigot – they had to import one from Ohio?

– Todd Te Adoro Erickson

Clearly we need to have the public discussion about what constitutes a "civil right." To paraphrase Billione Multimedia, civil rights are those rights to be expected as a member of a civil society without regard to personal characteristics.

– Alex Hardesty

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

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

– ***First Amendment, U.S. Constitution***

Sports and Republicans



Murray Richmond

"A parishioner asked me to do an exorcism for him because he was gay. He had tried everything else he could think of – therapy, prayer, will power, alcohol, support groups, marriage – and nothing worked. It was a heartbreaking situation. As a minister I may have questioned the sinfulness of his actions, but I absolutely knew he was not demon-possessed."

– Murray Richmond, a former Presbyterian minister and hospital chaplain, currently a legislative aide in the Alaska State Senate, in his column titled "I preached against homosexuality, but I was wrong," salon.com, March 27.



Mark Ferrandino

"This is not a radical concept. It's a mainstream concept. This does not end marriage. It's not a matter of if; it's a matter of when."

– Mark Ferrandino, democratic state representative in Colorado, about the House Judiciary Committee's vote to stop progress of the Colorado Civil Union Act, denverpost.com, April 1. The bill was killed along party lines with 6 Republicans opposed and 5 Democrats in favor.



Jeff Angelo

"Our constitution exists to protect the rights of individuals, and does so by limiting the government's power to control the lives and properties of citizens. A constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, instead of limiting government control, would limit the ability of a select group of citizens to enter into civil marriage, therefore violating the very purpose of our constitution. When we start allowing constitutional amendments that limit individual control, and give that control over to the government, we open ourselves up to more limitations on our individual freedom. It's easy to feel so passionately about an issue that you don't look at it objectively, but what happens when the individual freedom we're discussing is gun control or universal health care? We need to set aside the rhetoric and look at the slope on which we're starting to slide."

– Jeff Angelo, former Republican Iowa state senator, in a guest column titled "Why my view on same-sex marriage has changed," Iowa Register newspaper, desmoinesregister.com, March 31.



Pat Griffin

"It doesn't feel like a step forward for lesbians or women's sports to me when any woman athlete, regardless of her sexual orientation, has to pander to beer drinking heterosexual men's sex fantasies in order get attention."

– Pat Griffin, in her LGBT sport blog, titled "Lesbians and Lingerie Football: No Muffin Tops Need Apply," about the Lingerie Football League, where players are dressed in skimpy sexy underwear, and a LFL player, Amber Elizabeth, coming out as a lesbian, ittakesateam.blogspot.com, March 21.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

It's a no brainer

April is Brain Awareness Month. If you're reading this it's a sure sign you have one. (Whether you're fully using your amygdala for the good of humankind is another story. Mind your frontal lobes!)

Just out of high school way back when, I trained as an OR Tech at Harper Hospital. I had the extremely rare opportunity of witnessing a craniotomy. (Who do you know who's been there done that? LGBT and/or Q?)

Boasting about it – modestly, of course – gains me curiosity points at Planned Parenthood meetings and Tupperware parties; and it's probably the reason why I now shave my head. That and barber clipping fees. \$200 a year.

The Harper operation began with drilling four holes in the patient's shaved cranium. Next, the four holes – about three inches apart at four corners of a blue-marker drawn square – were connected by a small surgical band-ribbon saw, creating a flap.

The flap was lifted (without a creak) revealing a grayish-white brain matter that pulsated as rhythmically fed blood by the heart. It was awe inspiring contraction. Oh, yes: the patient was awake, answering questions following pinpointed electrical stimulation to brain areas.

If reading this description makes you queasy, it's only because your own brain has given you the imaginative ability to "see" your private version of the surgery. And to imagine the wide-awake patient. (By the way: cranial drilling – trepanning – goes back to early human cultures.)

The unhinged brain I peeked at in the OR had, I thought at the time, a rainbow aura about it that resonated with me. "I'll bet you anything that guy's gay," I said to myself. "Just a hunch."

Turns out my hunch was right (or, wishful thinking: he was cute). Research now shows that gay brains differ in many respects from straight brains. The gay male brain is closer in its neurological organization to the female straight brain.

Recently scientists at Sweden's famed Karolinska Institute studied brain scans of 90 gay men, and an equal number of straight men and women. They discovered that the size of the two symmetrical brain halves of gay men more closely resembled those of straight women than straight men.

In straight women, the two brain halves are more or less the same size. In straight men, the right hemisphere is slightly larger. Scans of the brains of gay men show that their hemispheres are relatively symmetrical, like those of straight women. The number of nerves connecting the two sides of the brains of gay men are also more like the number in straight women than in straight men.

Scientists also found that lesbian brains are asymmetrical like those of straight men. The number of nerves connecting the two sides of the brains of gay men are also more like the number in heterosexual women than in straight men.

The Swedish study is the first to find differences in parts of the brain not normally involved in sex (the denser network of nerve connections, for example, is found in the amygdala, known as the emotional center of the brain.)

Says Dr. Eric Vilain, University of California Los Angeles human genetics professor, "The big question has always been, if the brains of gay men are different, or feminized, as earlier research suggests, then is it just limited to sexual preference or are there other regions that are gender atypical in gay males?"

"For the first time, in this study it looks like there are regions of the brain not directly involved in sexuality that seem to be feminized in gay males."

Unfortunately, no reasearch is being conducted on that unflappable specie of straight women: the Fag Hag. Sweden get with it.

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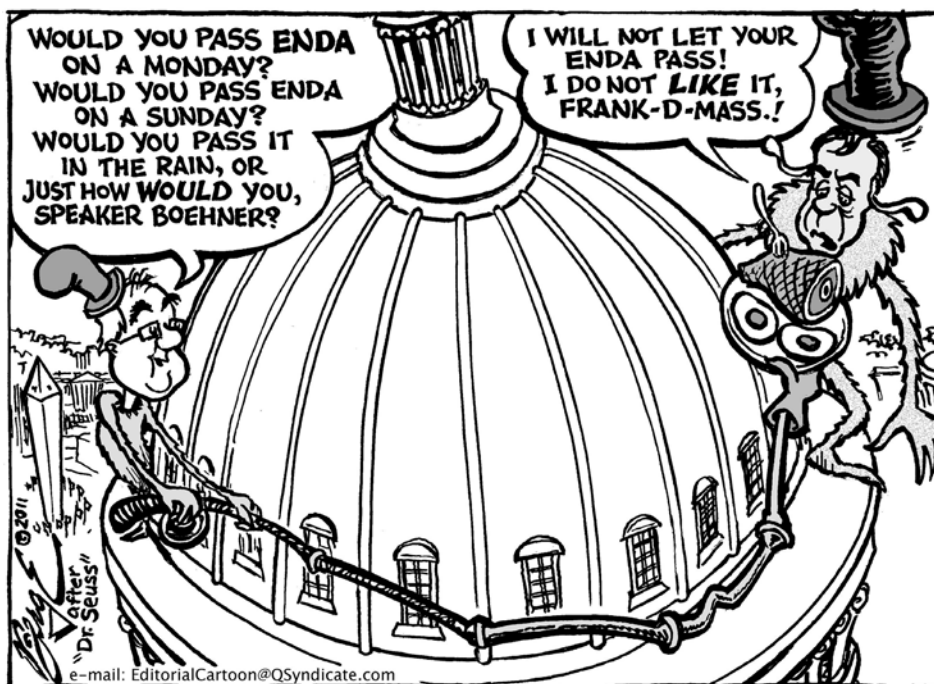
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RTI Editorial

Hey, Obama. Evolve already!

President Obama, who is still “evolving” on his view of gay marriage, recently announced his reelection bid. Obama, a liberal constitutional scholar who only mentions religion or morals if pressed, has selected several openly gay nominees to fill judicial positions. He also appointed an openly gay social secretary this winter. We have no doubt that his “continuing evolution” on gay marriage is mere political pandering, making sure that this social issue doesn’t overshadow his other pressing goals. Many critics have harped on this, most recently Bill Maher, who said: “Now that a Cheney, a McCain and a Bush have come out to support gay marriage, it’s your turn, Obama. What are you waiting for? The state of Alabama?”

Maher was referring to Cindy McCain, John McCain’s wife; Barbara Bush, our last president’s daughter; and good god, Dick Cheney.

Maybe Obama just doesn’t want to deal with ENDA, which would make sure that LGBTs aren’t fired just because they’re L,G,B, or T. The bill, formally known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, has been introduced in every Congress save one since 1994, but has never passed.

Obama has started to chip away at the Defense of Marriage Act, proclaiming that he’ll stop sending lawyers to defend certain parts of it. But DOMA still exists, still allows states to not recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, and still makes it OK for our country to not give same-sex married couples the same benefits as heterosexual married couples when trying to get citizenship.

Yes, we know, untangling the legal idiocies that are stuck on our legislation like cheap pantyhose on barbed wire is difficult. It’s not going to be undone with a snap of the fingers. But the first step is making our issues mainstream.

We’re not sure whose support we need to

get before we’re officially mainstream, but the official support of our liberal president would surely help.

A lot of us don’t even know that we can lose our jobs without warning, and we don’t have any state or federal laws to protect us. A lot of us don’t even know that in the vast majority of states, we can’t adopt children with our partners – that the child is only allowed the protection of one legal

We’re not sure whose support we need to get before we’re officially mainstream, but the official support of our liberal president would surely help.

parent just because the parents are the same sex.

These are mainstream problems that interfere with our rights to liberty – yes, liberals can want liberty, too – and happiness. So it’s not only up to Obama to wake up and evolve already. It’s up to us to demand mainstream recognition. We are not radical or extremists asking for special recognition. We’re asking for our basic rights and needs to be covered.

This next election cycle is just starting to rev up. This time, let’s make sure that our voices are heard – not just as a cry from the corner but as a unified front, bellowing front and center. It starts with you, and it starts now.



RTI Viewpoint

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Keep your frigging tolerance!

I love words. They can inspire, excite, and express the human emotions in so many ways yet take on a life of their own once they come out of your mouth.

Something as benign as the word mother can go from a term of endearment to a slap in the face, all depending on the context and tone of the speaker.

Case in point: when I was trying to get on my mother’s good side I might call her “Mother Dear” in hopes of a positive response, but call her “Mommy Dearest” in the wrong tone of voice and the results were more than likely just the opposite.

Lately I’ve been having mixed feelings about the words tolerant/tolerance. It seems to get bandied about quite a bit lately following

Tolerance is not equality.
Tolerance is just a
bandage society has
put over one “problem
population/group” until
another takes it place.

horrific events like a bullying attack and harsh political rhetoric.

By most definitions, tolerance/tolerant/toleration are terms used to describe moderately respectful attitudes of groups and/or practices disapproved by those in the majority. Up until recently I have used the word tolerance although something deep inside me bristled each time I said it.

I tolerate my out of control, hyper nieces once a year during the holidays, although the rest of the year I avoid them like the plague. I tolerate high airline fares, but will not be nickel and dimed for every piece of luggage or amenity just to save a buck. I tolerate our messed up political system while working for change.

Bottom line is I put up with a lot of crap that, if I could have my druthers, would never have existed or vanish from the earth completely (well not the nieces). So you see when I hear someone talking about tolerating gay folk I bristle.

I had my AHA moment on this whole LGBTQ “tolerance” thing while sitting at a meeting planning an anti-bullying march. Now the irony was we were meeting outside the city where the rally was planned because some felt

more comfortable, safe even at an undisclosed location. So we met somewhat covertly to discuss a march for anti-bullying legislation.

The final straw was when it was suggested the event be called “A Rally for Tolerance.” Something just snapped.

That same day I heard of a planned protest of a high school production of the “Laramie Project” by the Westboro Baptist Church. They never showed up to protest the play, but you know the group has protested outside of military funerals, thanking God for 9/11, calling soldiers “Fag Troops” and claiming the deaths as retribution for America’s sin. Of course we must tolerate the Phelps clan because they are just exercising their first amendment rights.

The evening before, I had spent time talking with a gay youth who had been brutally beaten while standing in line at a convenience store. His attacker could not tolerate having someone gay standing too close to him. This violation of his personal space apparently gave this gay-basher license to attack this young man, beating him senseless while others watched on.

It seems we have had to tolerate too much hatred, bigotry and intolerance to be asking for or accepting tolerance. Isn’t it time we get up off our knees and quit begging for tolerance and demand respect? I mean seriously.

Enough is enough. Our society has tolerated Irish, Italian, Catholic, Latino, Asian and other immigrants yet anti-immigrant biases and xenophobia still abound.

Our society tolerated women coming out of the kitchen, demanding equal rights, opportunities and wages, yet women still earn less than men in the workplace and our reproductive rights remain under attack.

Our society tolerated integration of the African American community, saying separate was not equal, yet still African Americans make up a disproportionate number of the impoverished living in urban wastelands and/or incarcerated in the nation’s prisons.

Tolerance is not equality. Tolerance is just a bandage society has put over one “problem population/group” until another takes it place.

Bias, bigotry and hatred just float to the next site and we forget all the pain and evil done to the past victims and start the cycle all over again. Enough!

So I’m putting everyone on notice. You can keep your frigging tolerance. Give me respect.

Michelle E. Brown is a community activist, an authentic speaker, a dynamic leader, and a true voice for the African-American LGBT community,

ENDA soon to be re-introduced

But is it likely to get through the GOP-controlled House?

BY LISA KEEN

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank announced this week that he would soon re-introduce the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, characterizing it as “winnable.”

But the bill, which seeks to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity by employers, is unlikely to move during the current Congressional session – primarily because the Republican Party controls the House.

The bill is typically assigned to the House Committee on Education and Labor, now chaired by Rep. John Kline, R-Minn. In 2009, during a committee hearing on the bill, Kline said his many concerns about the bill in previous years had “not been alleviated” by its recent rewrite.

Between 2007 and 2009, the bill added “gender identity” and also provided exemptions for religious organizations.

Diego Sanchez, a spokesman for Frank, said the language in this year’s bill is “exactly” as the one from last Congressional session.

The bill reads, “This Act shall not apply to a corporation, association, educational institution, or society that is exempt from the religious discrimination provisions of title VII of the Civil 23 Rights Acts of 1964....”

Kline said in 2009 that ENDA “creates an entirely new protected class that is vaguely defined and often subjective.”

“Passing ENDA is a key element of making sure all Americans can get back to work and get our country moving again.”

- Joe Solmonese, HRC

Specifically, he objected to the language of the bill prohibiting discrimination based on “perceived sexual orientation.”

“Attempting to legislate individual perceptions is truly uncharted territory,” said Kline, “and it does not take a legal scholar to recognize that such vaguely defined protections will lead to an explosion in litigation and inconsistent judicial decisions.”

Kline also said he thought legislators should consider the “consequences” ENDA might have on “religious and family-based organizations.”

A press person for Kline’s committee office did not return a call by deadline.

Supporters of the measure say it’s important to have the bill in the Congressional hopper, as it provides a tool around which supporters can lobby legislators to support the measure in a future session.

Julie Edwards, a spokeswoman for Senator Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., said that Merkley is working with his fellow co-sponsors to prepare ENDA for re-introduction there “in the next few weeks.”

The Senate is still controlled by Democrats and the bill received a hearing in the last session. But it did not get a vote in committee.

The last time ENDA got a vote in the Senate was 1996, when it came within one vote of passage. The Senate was controlled then by Republicans.

A version of ENDA passed the House in 2007.

But in both the House and Senate votes, the version of ENDA on the floor was one that included only sexual orientation, not gender identity.

By 2009, the LGBT community of organizations stood firm to insist that ENDA also include a prohibition on discrimination based on gender identity. And in 2009 as well as this year, ENDA does include both.

The Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund issued a press release, saying that 47 percent of transgender people surveyed reported being fired or denied a job because they are transgender.

The “gender identity” language would protect not just people who are transitioning



U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.)

from one sex to another, but also those whose outward appearance does not conform with common expectations for their gender. The language of the bill defines gender identity as: “gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual’s designated sex at birth.”

A press release from Frank’s office noted that there are no laws in 29 states to prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in employment and none in 38 states to prohibit gender identity discrimination.

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese issued a statement, pitching ENDA as a jobs bill, an appeal that would presumably attract more Republican support.

“Passing ENDA is a key element of making sure all Americans can get back to work and get our country moving again,” said Solmonese.

Republicans have said publicly they want to focus on jobs.

But Republicans have also indicated they want broad exemptions for religious organizations, and that is something that does not set well for many supporters of ENDA.

DADT policy may be done this summer

Republicans on Military Personnel Subcommittee still oppose repeal

BY LISA KEEN

Pentagon officials told a House subcommittee Friday that training for implementation of repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” has gone “extremely well so far” and that certification to Congress might come by mid-summer.

Both Houses of Congress in December passed, and President Obama signed, a bill to repeal the 1996 law prohibiting openly gay people from serving in the military.

The measure stipulated that, before actual repeal of the law takes place, the Defense Department would conduct training to prepare its forces for the change.

Republicans on the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee used the hearing on Friday to reiterate concerns from previous Congressional debates that the military might rush to jump through the hoops necessary to actually implement repeal of the law.

Rep. Allen West, R-Fla., for instance,

said he was concerned that military leaders might be pressuring service members to respond with “political correctness” during the repeal process, calling it “social engineering.”

Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Col., said he has “no confidence” in the process because “this is a political decision made by the executive branch and the military will follow it.”

Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Mo., said

See DADT, page 12

Same-sex foreign couples still stuck

No change in how U.S. handles green cards

BY LISA KEEN

Same-sex foreign couples, who are not treated the same as straight foreign married couples when it comes to being allowed to enter the U.S., looked like they might have an easier time entering the country for about a day this week – but it didn’t happen.

The U.S. Citizens and Immigration Service said they were reviewing their policy because of President Obama’s recent decision to stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act. But they decided to stick with business as usual.

“The last few days have been extremely frustrating and disappointing,” said Lavi Soloway, an attorney specializing in binational same-sex married couples seeking immigration. “USCIS raised hopes that they had created a desperately needed interim remedy that would protect married gay and lesbian binational couples. But within days, the administration reversed the abeyance policy that had been in place in two USCIS offices, and briefly, nationwide. In the process, they created tremendous confusion.”

Christopher Bentley, press secretary for USCIS, said March 30 that the agency received the legal guidance it sought from the DOJ concerning DOMA and green card applications by same-sex married couples. The “USCIS has not implemented any change in policy and intends to continue enforcing the law,” Bentley said. In other words, DOMA still applies.

DOMA prohibits any agency of the federal government from recognizing a marriage license granted to a same-sex couple. For binational same-sex married couples seeking a green card to enable the foreign spouse to establish permanent residence in the U.S., the law closes a door open to other married couples. Spouses and other “immediate family members” can obtain green cards without waiting for a visa number to become available.

USCIS sought clarification from DOJ after U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced February 23 that DOJ would no longer defend DOMA in court as meeting heightened constitutional scrutiny. DOJ had also indicated it would continue to enforce DOMA until or unless the courts determined the law was unconstitutional. But some attorneys in the immigration field questioned whether the Holder announcement might apply to immigration courts.

USCIS issued a one-sentence statement March 30, saying, “USCIS has not implemented any change in policy and intends to continue enforcing the law.”

Soloway characterized that “explanation” as “unacceptable.”

“While DOMA is the law of the land, green card applications cannot be approved by USCIS,” said Soloway, “but there is no imperative that they be denied. Adjudications can be put on hold with final decisions on these cases deferred, giving binational couples lawful status and protection from deportation until DOMA is either repealed by Congress or struck down by the Supreme Court.”

“This unconstitutional law,” said Soloway, “should not be used as an excuse to do nothing while gay and lesbian families are being torn apart.”

Creep of the Week

Joe Wilson

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Oh, Joe Wilson, shut up. I'm sorry. That was childish. Then again, that's apparently the level of discourse Wilson operates on. He is, after all, the guy who shouted, "You lie!" during the president's address to Congress two years ago and became an asshole folk hero to anti-Obama nuts everywhere.

And now he's whining and stomping his feet over the repeal of the anti-gay military policy "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Letting gay people serve in the military without having to lie about and hide who they are is too much for folks like Wilson and his fellow House Republicans who are supporting a bill to stop the repeal.

The House Arms Services personnel subcommittee held a hearing about repealing the repeal on April 1, which is fitting since the whole thing's a joke.

Unfortunately Wilson and his ilk aren't kidding. They are super worked up about this. It's all too much, too soon, too hot, and too fast.

Wilson said in a statement of his opening remarks at the hearing, "I was troubled by the process employed to repeal the law known as 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' this past fall. I feel the repeal was rushed through the Congress without adequate review and consideration of the full extent of the implications of repeal."

Also, the only people who feel this process was rushed are people who weren't impacted by DADT and haven't been paying attention for the last, oh, decades. The military has a long and undistinguished history of discharging gays and lesbians, ruining their careers and, in numerous cases, their lives. If anything, the United States took far too long to address this injustice.

And just what are those implications Wilson feels have not been adequately reviewed and considered? The fact is, the implications are hardly as dire as those in favor of DADT would like you to believe. You see, the implications are only dire if you think that homos are sex-crazed lunatics with depraved morals and no social skills who can't help themselves around people of the same sex. Gays don't join the military to hook up with guys. There are websites for that.

I doubt any gay person has ever enlisted with fantasies of showering with groups of naked muscle men and traveling "Pricilla, Queen of the Desert" style through exotic Middle East locations. In reality, it's more like being packed into Humvees with sweaty guys who haven't showered or changed their socks in a week and watching fellow soldiers take dumps in irrigation ditches alongside roads in the desert. You know, the sexy stuff.

To Wilson, letting gays serve is a tragic result of political maneuvering. "I believe the lame duck session was undemocratic in that dozens of defeated Congressmembers adopted a law with significant consequence," he said. "It was an insult to the principles of representative democracy."

Last time I checked, it was still within the rights of Congressmembers to pass legislation while still in office. And if, as polls showed, 67 percent of Americans favored a repeal, that sounds like democracy at work to me. Of course, maybe Wilson is of the belief that majority rule should only apply when voting to deny rights to gays and lesbians.

"We must get the process for considering the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' back on track and ensure that our military is truly prepared to allow the open service of gays and lesbians," Wilson continued. "We must ensure that we do not make a mistake by allowing the repeal to move ahead when there is any possibility that it will put the combat readiness of our force at risk at a time our nation is in three wars with worldwide instability."

And by "back on track" he means kicking homos out, not letting them in. Because training people and then deciding to give them the boot just because they're gay doesn't undermine combat readiness at all.

Gays don't join the military to hook up with guys. There are websites for that.

10 years of same-sex marriage in the Netherlands

It was 10 years ago April 1 that the Netherlands became the first nation in the world to let same-sex couples marry.

Now same-sex marriage is legal in 12 nations, including in five U.S. states and the District of Columbia, and the Netherlands has seen nearly 15,000 same-sex marriages.

This reporter was present for the first Dutch gay weddings on April 1, 2001, and wrote: "Amid an international media frenzy, the weddings took place at City Hall as the law became effective at the stroke of midnight. Mayor Job Cohen officiated.

"As Cohen finished his opening remarks at 11:58 p.m., the audience in the

City Council chambers began syncopated clapping as they waited for the room's clock to click over to 12:00. When it clicked, cheers erupted.

"The ceremonies themselves took about half an hour. Cohen stood where individuals stand to address the City Council. The four couples sat in the front row of the seats where the councilors sit.

"Cohen read the marriage vows once for each couple and they individually responded, 'Yes.' Each couple shook hands, kissed and signed documents which were then signed by the mayor.

"A reception followed in the City Council foyer and the couples departed in four brightly colored Volkswagen Beetles

for a party at a gay club."

In the intervening 10 years, 14,813 of the Netherlands' 55,000 gay couples have gotten married, according to Statistics Netherlands.

Of those couples, 7,522 were female and 7,291 were male. There have been 1,078 same-sex divorces, 734 of them by female couples.

Same-sex marriage is legal in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Mexico (where same-sex marriages are allowed only in the capital city but are recognized nationwide).

ILGA-Europe launches major documentation project

ILGA-Europe – the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – has launched a large-scale project to document the advance of LGBT rights and related social changes across the continent.

"Rainbow Europe: ILGA-Europe Annual Report on the Situation for LGBTI People in Europe" will appear on the group's website at the beginning of next year.

"Already for a couple of years, ILGA-Europe produced the Rainbow Europe Map identifying the legal situation for LGB people in Europe, and in 2010 we started comparing and indexing them," said Communications Manager

Juris Lavrikovs. "We want to cover LGB and TI issues, we want to monitor and document developments in many more areas. ... More importantly, we want to start a proper indexing and comparison so it will be easy to identify and follow the changes and developments."

The project will track legislation and policy, statements by politicians and other prominent or influential individuals, law-enforcement activity, court activity, research and polls, LGBTI-movement developments and other areas.

It also will follow all LGBTI-related developments at the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"For European decision makers, politicians, media, researchers and students this will be an 'all in one' annual document providing them with an overview of the situation across Europe," Lavrikovs said. "We believe this will be a valuable tool to advocacy work on the national level as the advocates at the national level will be able to compare their countries, to measure their national situation and developments to established European standards and consequently build stronger claims and arguments."

The project will rely, in part, on information provided by activists on the ground. Information can be submitted to rainboweurope@ilga-europe.org.

► DADT

Continued from p. 11

she is "very concerned ...we're making such a radical major shift in our policy, jeopardizing missions and putting people in harm's way."

"How does this increase our mission of being able to win wars in doing this?" asked Hartzler.

Vice Admiral William Gortney said it was the judgment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen and that repeal "won't have an impact."

"And I happen to believe that as well," Gortney added.

Rep. Austin Scott, R-Texas, asked how much money had been spent on implementation of repeal that could have been spent on the war effort. He later expressed surprise when Admiral Gortney told him that a servicemember was dismissed just for saying he was gay.

"Not because of a violation of the standard conduct?" asked Scott.

"No," said Gortney.

"That's not the answer I was expecting," said Scott.

"Do you think in most cases there's a violation of the standard of conduct," pressed Scott.

"I think in very few instances," said Gortney.

Undersecretary Clifford Stanley said about \$10,000 had been spent for training

materials and that no calculation had yet been made for how much staff time had been used.

Undersecretary Stanley and Vice Admiral Gortney said they expect the Pentagon will be ready to submit in mid-summer its required written certification to Congress that the military is prepared to drop implementation of the federal law banning openly gay people from the service.

President Obama, too, must submit written certification to Congress, saying he is confident the military is ready to implement repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Then, 60 days after his certification, and that of Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, is submitted, the law will be repealed in practice.

"We don't want to rush...and we don't want to take forever," said Stanley, adding that, "if something we didn't anticipate" comes up prior to then, the military would take the time necessary to address it.

Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., repeatedly expressed his concern that military chaplains might lose their First Amendment right to freedom of expression and religion. He also asked whether gay servicemembers were made aware of when they were in a country that considers same-sex sexual relations illegal. Military officials responded that all service members are given information about the cultural norms and laws of countries into which they are going.

Rep. Coffman suggested that, because separate housing for gay and straight servicemembers is not being mandated, perhaps the military should end its practice of providing separate housing for men and women.

Stanley said that sexual orientation is a "private and personal" matter, different from gender, and that commanders do have the authority to assign servicemembers to separate billeting if they believe it's necessary.

"It's the commander's call," said Stanley.

Hartzler asked why men and women were provided with different shower facilities.

"What's the difference? Seems you have a double-standard here," said Hartzler.

"Gender is very public and sexual orientation is very private," said Gortney, echoing Stanley's response earlier.

She also asked whether the children of servicemembers were being provided with training concerning the repeal.

Stanley said such training is available for parents who want to access it for their children.

Hartzler asked whether children attending military schools would have any alternatives where pro-LGBT curricula would not be mandated.

"The question is pretty heavy," said Stanley, saying he wanted more time to look into what the curriculum provides for.

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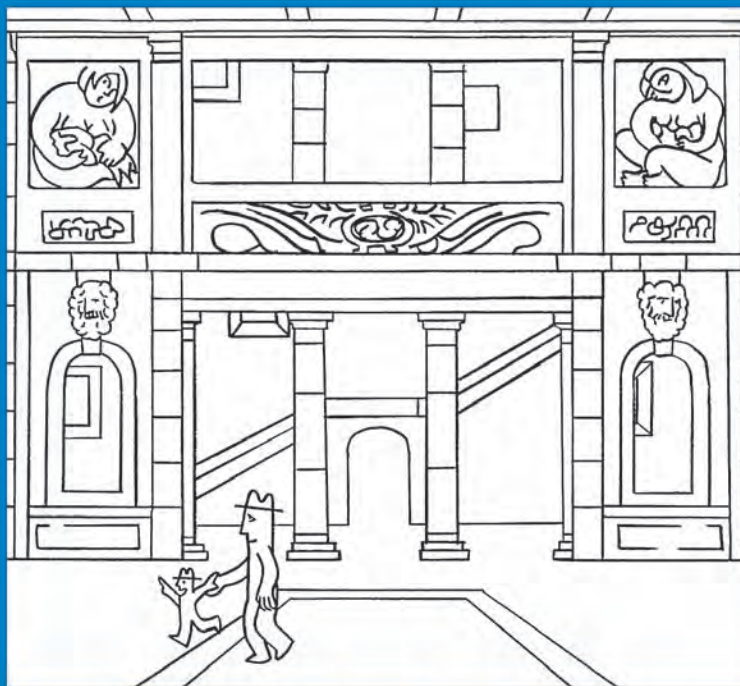
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Hairspray

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Rocking it out

He went to school in Ann Arbor, and now actor/musician/cutie Gavin Creel returns with his solo show – and newfound liberation

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

“I’m so many more things than just a homo,” says Gavin Creel – an accomplished actor, recording artist, activist, sci-fi dork, and yeah, even a looker. He played Claude in “Hair” on Broadway and nabbed a Tony nod for his role in “Thoroughly Modern Millie.” Creel even launched a theater-led grassroots movement called Broadway Impact that promotes marriage equality, landing him a spot in the Out 100.

The list goes on: He has two pop-vocal albums, one released in 2006 and an EP that followed last year. Earlier this month he wrapped “Prometheus Bound” in Boston. And he just finished auditioning for a TV show that he won’t tell you about.

“I don’t even tell my parents about anything that I’m about to do,” says the University of Michigan graduate. “I only tell them when I get something, because I know they worry. I’m also superstitious.”

Superstitious – that’s not very gay, either. And neither is his sex life.

“I think, baby, if you knew how little sex I’m getting, you’d be like, ‘This is boring,’” he says, laughing. “People think gay men just want to have sex all the time – I’m like, ‘Are you high?’ What I want to do more than anything is eat.”

That Creel’s officially out, which he

Gavin Creel

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publicly announced to The Advocate two years ago, also compels people to thank him after shows – two of which he’ll play at 8 and 10 p.m. April 13 at the Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor. The gratitude is overwhelming.

“I feel almost guilty,” he says, “because all I did was drop my shoulders and go, this is who I am. That’s all I did. If me just relaxing a little changes somebody’s life, my gosh, why didn’t I do this sooner?”

For good reason. Creel was scared that he’d flush his career if he came out – especially since he wanted to shift from theater into film and TV. Has anything changed post-closet? “I don’t know, because they’re not telling me, ‘Hey, there were 19 auditions, but we didn’t get you an appointment because you’re gay.’ They don’t tell me those things.

“The bigger deal the press or I make of it,” Creel continues, “the harder it will be for anyone to see me as anything other than that.”

And he’s so much more than, you know, that.

Creel doesn’t get to the Midwest – let alone Michigan – very often. But he fondly recalls his “first grown-up decision” – attending U-M, where he majored in musical theater after leaving his hometown of Findlay, Ohio. He graduated in 1998, and the last time he returned to Ann Arbor was, maybe, a couple of years ago.

“The saddest thing for me,” Creel says, “is whenever I go back and I’m like, ‘That shop is a Starbucks and it used to be a vintage clothing store – shoot!’ But I do have such a deep love for Ann Arbor and all things Michigan.”

He’s been working professionally for 15 years, but he’s not sure how.

“It doesn’t seem right. How could I be doing this for that long? But... I’m older,” he says, laughing. “It’s kind of awesome, but it’s weird. I feel a little bit older, but I don’t feel as old as my number says that I am. So I just choose not to believe it.”

It’s also hard to believe how much time has escaped him. Now, his four years of college are barely a blip, but necessary he says in preparing him for his professional career. Seeing teenagers hit the ground running, no school at all, just doesn’t make sense.

“I was allowed to be a 19-year-old, a 20-year-old and a 21-year-old,” Creel says. “And I do shows with 17-year-olds who are just growing up in New York City with a cast and I do

not think that’s the ideal – being forced to become a professional at such a young age. Go to school, rock it out – and go to Michigan if you can.”

There, at school, he received his best bit of advice: “Other people’s successes are not your failures,” he recalls Bruce Kiesling, then a graduate of the conducting program, saying. “It’s OK that people can succeed and be great and act just like you and they can get cast and you can’t. It doesn’t mean that you failed; it just means that they succeeded and there’s still room for you to succeed.”

And succeed he did. Besides “Hair” and “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” Creel picked up a part in “Mary Poppins” – in London, where he lived for 10 months. He also starred in the Broadway revival of “La Cage aux Folles” and, most recently, as the lead in the experimental theater piece “Prometheus Bound.” In which he’s shirtless. The whole time.

If success is measured in Perez Hilton posts, then Creel’s more than made it. The infamous blogger likes to flirt with the actor on his website, recently linking to the shirtless pics of Creel in “Prometheus.” The actor finds it flattering. And traumatic.

“I read the comments,” he says, after Perez first posted about Creel, “and it was the most horrifying thing I’ve ever seen in my life. Just

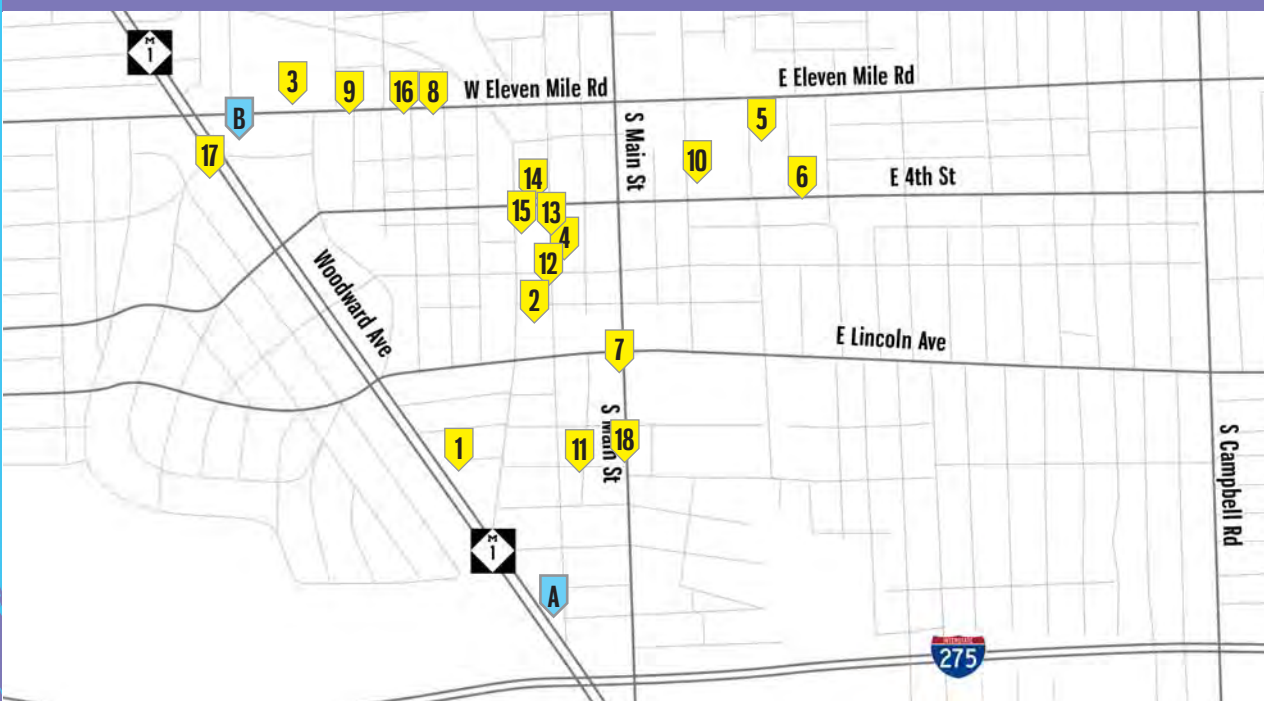
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Cabaret dances into Detroit area



New troupe performs The Great American Songbook at Royal Oak's Bastone

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Fans of cabaret will be thrilled to learn about Cabaret Detroit, an exciting new endeavor that will return this popular form of entertainment to Metro Detroit beginning April 7.

Set initially to perform every Thursday and Sunday in Royal Oak through May 8 (except for Easter Sunday), Cabaret Detroit will feature local talent performing a wide variety of songs – including, of course, show tunes! Creator and producer Sharlan Douglas spoke recently about the project, explaining the concept of cabaret, why she chose to locate it in Royal Oak, and what patrons can expect when Cabaret Detroit opens its doors.

Who tends to be the audience for cabaret?

I see this appealing to the kind of people who go to the theater. They are willing to immerse themselves in other people's stories. They're looking for grown-up entertainment. Baby boomers will be looking for ways to occupy their free time and there are a lot of them. Us.

I also think it has a retro quality that will appeal to younger people who are rediscovering things from the 1940s and '50s, like classic cocktails and vintage apparel.

So why create Cabaret Detroit?

You mean why did I wait until the middle of the biggest recession in 30 years to start a new entertainment business in Metro Detroit? (Laughs) I've wanted to do this for years. In fact, I produced and directed a cabaret series at Stagecrafters five or six years ago. The Blue Room Cabaret performed in the theater's lobby whenever there wasn't a show on stage. We drew an audience – and that was without cocktails,

'Cabaret Detroit'

Opens April 7 at Bastone, 419 S. Main Street, Royal Oak, and runs Thursdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m. through May 8 (excluding April 24). \$15. 248-383-5460 or www.cabaretdetroit.com

just coffee and dessert.

One day last fall a friend nudged me about it, asking when I was going to get off my hands and do it again. This time it took.

How did your interest in cabaret develop? And what's in your background that will help make this venture a success?

Hearing Barbara Cook in a club in New York in the early 1990s set the wheels in motion. I then discovered Andrea Marcovicci, the doyenne of contemporary cabaret. She engages you instantly and uses her skill as an actress to tell a story.

I've directed plays and musicals in community and professional theater for 25 years. A good song is a three-minute play.

What's the concept behind Cabaret Detroit?

Detroit has a reputation as a great music town – not so much because of the recording industry, but because it had a lot of venues for live performance. We should own that reputation in every genre, cabaret included.

I want to grow our local talent pool, so – to start – I've recruited some of the best singers I know from the theaters where I'm active. I'm looking for more local talent. Down the road I'd love to find a larger venue and bring in regional and national acts.

What will set Cabaret Detroit apart from

any other cabarets that may be in the area?

We are presenting concerts, not background music. And I don't know of any other sustained venue in the region which features this category of music. Some jazz artists do pop standards, but, in jazz, the focus is more on the music than on the words.

You'll open April 7 in the lower level lounge of Bastone in downtown Royal Oak. Why was this particular location chosen? What advantages does it offer for what you're hoping to achieve?

We need a space that is separate from a main dining room or bar and that seats about 40 people and serves adult beverages. Voila! This does the job.

I really wanted to start in Royal Oak, because, well, I live and work here and it's a hub for entertainment in Metro Detroit.

Why were these particular performers chosen to debut Cabaret Detroit? Are they indicative of the types of performers you'll offer on a regular basis?

I want our audiences to experience the familiar and also discover something new, and these two sets really articulate the range of music Cabaret Detroit will offer.

George Gershwin's career started in the early days of Tin Pan Alley, the mother ship of American popular music. Future Cabaret Detroit singers will draw from that tradition with songs by icons like Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Harry Warren and Fats Waller. Others are finding inspiration in the works of contemporary songwriters like John Bucchino, Adam Guettel, Jason Robert Brown, Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk and... Lady Gaga!




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'Twilight' goes gay in Michael Griffo's new novel

"Unnatural," by Michael Griffo. Kensington Books, 498 pages, \$9.95 paper.

Pallid boys, beautiful boys, jealous boys, closeted boys, boys who suck every which way: volume one of this young-adult trilogy tacks vampire lust onto the hoary theme of hormones running wild at a private boy's school – and, as a vampire's bite is wont to do, brings the sexy-school concept back from the dead. Nebraskan boy-next-door Michael, now the ward of his estranged British father after his American mother's death, lands at Britain's somewhat spooky Archangel Academy. He quickly befriends his dorky new dorm mate, Ciaron, but then falls hard for Ciaron's big-man-on-campus older brother, Ronan, whose secret is not just that he's a vampire, but that he's born of a hybrid minority hated by your average, sun-wary vampire – a clever reinvention of the genre that invigorates the author's take on a queer "Twilight" world. Griffo's plot unfolds at a leisurely pace, as a large cast of characters is revealed, so readers ought to be patient – this book foreshadows epic battles (and anguished romance) in the sequels, "Unafraid" in September and "Unwelcome" in March 2012.

"Parties in Congress," by Colette Moody. Bold Strokes Books, 264 pages, \$16.95 paper.

What's loyal Republican lesbian Bijal Rao to do? She's both a sexual and a racial minority when she signs on to work for a middle-of-the-road GOP woman, is dismayed but goes along with it for far too long when her candidate lurches to the homophobic right, and meanwhile is falling in love with the fiercely Democratic and defiantly dyke incumbent. That's the essence of Moody's sometimes giddy (in a romance-unfolding way), sometimes insightful (in a politically instructive way), and somewhat implausible – what is it with Republican-identified queers who see no evil, hear no evil, and take forever to speak out about the evil at the heart of


► **Gavin Creel**
Continued from p. 15

evil. People saying I was so ugly. I have a new appreciation of poor Britney Spears and how screwed up her life is."

Creel was intimidated when he met Hilton this past summer at a Pink concert. "In person," Creel says of Perez, "he was quite nice. He's a gentleman. I think he's just playful. I think he just wants to get a coffee with me, but he wants to screw someone else."

Maybe he's right. Not everyone wants a piece, and Creel found that out when the role of Mr. Schuester on "Glee" went to his good friend Matthew Morrison instead of himself – even though the role was a perfect match for the U-M graduate: Creel and the character graduated high school only a year apart, they're both obsessed with show choir, they teach and the musical-dramedy is set in Ohio.

Creel's connections to the show don't stop there. He dated one of the cast



Featured Excerpt

The floor-show began – at last – and I found a place up front amidst the crowd of men naked but for towels. Jerry must have pointed me out to Bette (Midler) because in the middle of one number, she came over to me, pulled me to my feet, leaned me against the piano and used me as a prop for a love song, pretending to feel me up, until I was too obviously excited, at which point she stopped and said, "You're disgusting! Sit down!" to great hilarity before she went on with her number. Her attention, however, got me sex directly after the show..."

– from "True Stories," by Felice Picano

contemporary right-wing Republicanism? – way. As the book's subtitle says, politics do make for strange bedfellows, and it's a testament to Moody's buoyant style that she's able to render Rao's irritating sense of campaign-staffer subservience tolerable while the real fun of the novel – her covert lust affair with Congresswoman Colleen O'Bannon – unfolds.

"True Stories: Portraits from My Past," by Felice Picano. Chelsea Station Editions, 228 pages, \$16 paper.

If you've read all of Picano's nonfiction, and there's a lot, portions of these "portraits from my past" will seem familiar – some essays are expanded from shorter versions that appeared in previous books, restoring text excised, most likely, by page-count restrictions or editorial decisions. No matter. Picano is such a vibrant memoirist that every extra word is welcome. As a lithe youth he charmed "British auntie" W.H. Auden and an intimidating Diana Freeland, was physically aroused at the Continental Baths by Bette Midler

crooning for near-naked boys at the dawn of her career, and later crossed paths with Tennessee Williams and revived the literary career of Charles Henri Ford – appealing anecdotes all. But the best essays reveal a less celebrity-centered side: Picano besting a boyhood bully; Picano reconnecting with his curmudgeonly father; Picano explicating with wrenching honesty his complex relationship with publishing partner Terry Helbing; and, most poignantly, Picano remembering men he played with, partied with and forged friendships with, men who died in the early days of AIDS, when it was a death sentence, and whose shortened lives Picano honors.

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

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members, Jonathan Groff – even though he won't say too much ("I don't talk about my private life," Creel tells us). And Darren Criss, who currently stars as Kurt's boyfriend, also attended U-M.

But Creel doesn't get bitter. He has Kiesling's words-to-live-by in the back of his head, though it's still hard not to feel a little envious – a little like, "this person's making \$500,000 an episode on a TV show and we went to college together and I'm like, 'Ugh, I can't pay my bills.'"

"Then, the next year, I can be making great money on a TV show and they could, too. It's just a crapshoot. If I wanted to make money – which who doesn't? – I would've gone into something else."

After all, he says, "there are more important things than show business and being famous and making tons of money and even being a great artist – like love, friendship and fighting disease."

But Creel isn't giving up on performing just yet. Over the last five or so years, he's been focused on touring and, when he returns Michigan for his back-to-

back gigs, he'll play lots of new and old material, pop covers and some Broadway show tunes. More than anything, he's thrilled to perform again at the Kerrytown Concert House – a place he calls "a unique space" and "a real true acoustic experience where people are just quiet and listening." He adds, "I just feel like that doesn't happen anymore."

The shows are a perfect way for him to try out the new songs, which he plans on rolling out one by one as he records them this year. "I'm just going to start sending songs out into the ether," he says, "because I think, sadly, that albums are going by the wayside and people are single addicts."

Those singles will connect to a bigger project, something "cool" that dovetails all his knacks – music, acting and activism. "I got things to do," Creel says. "I got songs to write. I got a puppy to raise and hopefully, someday, a husband and kids and a legal marriage."

But boy, would it be easier just being gay.



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Lansing launches first Capital City Film Festival

Live concerts, local showcase among April 14-17 event

The first Capital City Film Festival will take place April 14-17 throughout Lansing. On tap for the festival is a Made-in-Michigan Showcase, a Student Film Series and a retrospective honoring John Hughes, a Lansing native.

Live concerts will cap off each evening in venues stretching from Michigan Avenue to Old Town Lansing. "The festival is providing a diverse line-up of entertainment at the end of each day," said CCFE entertainment coordinator Jake Pechtel. "We're bringing in some amazing national, regional and local musicians to make this festival truly one of a kind in Michigan."

The four-day lineup for the Capital City Film Festival, presented by Lake Trust Credit Union, is now available online and tickets are on sale. Lansing's first film festival is offering affordable full-festival passes and individual event tickets through the CCFE website.


"Thanks to our generous sponsors, we're able to keep ticket


prices low; comparable to commercial theater prices. We're also offering a discounted rate for students in order to keep the event accessible to everyone," said festival coordinator Nicole Sclafani.

Festival passes are \$65 for students, \$75 for adults and \$100 for VIP. Individual screening tickets start at \$6. To check out the CCFE lineup, purchase passes or individual event tickets, or to become a volunteer, visit the website at www.capitalcityfilmfest.com

The Capital City Film Festival is a film industry showcase for independent artists created by Lansing filmmakers and cinephiles. CCFE promotes and celebrates student and independent filmmakers with an emphasis on homegrown talent and Michigan made films. CCFE 2011 exposes mid-Michigan movie lovers to engaging seminars, films, documentaries and musical performances in a four day festival taking place in several venues across Lansing.

For more information, visit capitalcityfilmfest.com.

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An enlightening world premiere at the Rep

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

The absurdity of political correctness in 21st century America comes under the microscope in the world premiere of William Missouri Downs' "Forgiving John Lennon" at the Detroit Repertory Theatre, a very insightful script that will likely have tongues wagging on all sides of the political spectrum. And rightfully so.

Joseph (Benjamin J. Williams) and Katie (Leah Smith), two "progressive" professors at a liberal arts college, have their smug and comfortable world views shaken when a visiting Somali poet defies their expectations. A Muslim, Asma (Yolanda Jack) was brought to the school to help create a more "Islam-friendly" campus after a student disc jockey's lame and immature attempt at humor offended Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Deciding the school needed to embrace diversity – and in particular, Muslims – Joseph and Katie

REVIEW

'Forgiving John Lennon'

Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Thursday-Sunday through May 22; no performance Easter Sunday. \$17-\$20. 313-868-1347.
www.detroitreptheatre.com

arranged to have Asma come to the campus to share her poetry and give a major address. But in between the two events, an eye-opening discussion at the professors' home reveals the TRUE purpose of Asma's visit – and the stunning incident that unfolds will likely change all their lives forever.

Downs' script, quite frankly, is a refreshing examination of the rampant political correctness that infects America today – and in particular, its college and university campuses. A professor himself



"Forgiving John Lennon" continues at the Detroit Repertory Theatre through May 22. Photo: Bruce Millan

at the University of Wyoming, Downs addresses many of the problems found on campuses today that stifle free speech over fear of offending special interest groups. But he does so without anger or malice; instead, he challenges the current orthodoxy through the curious and almost-always-smiling Asma, whose bluntness unnerves her hosts.

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

Hilberry's 'Cider House' rules the stage

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

The cider house doesn't even show up until Part Two, but rules are present from the beginning of the play "The Cider House Rules" and the John Irving novel it's based on.

Whether in mind or posted on the cider house wall there are always rules: rules to live by, rules to ignore, rules to joyfully defy, rules to grudgingly obey, rules we impose on others, rules we compel ourselves to follow.

You've got to know when to make 'em, know when to break 'em. But the most important rule of all is to be "of use."

In bringing to life John Irving's 550-page tale of orphan Homer Wells and his mentor, the obstetrician-abortionist Dr. Wilbur Larch, Blair Anderson and Lavinia Hart's beautifully realized two-part Hilberry Theatre production emphasizes the significance of principles. More importantly, it brings John Irving's tale to life.

REVIEW

The Cider House Rules, Parts I & II

Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., \$25-\$30. 313-577-2972. **Part I: Here in St. Cloud's:** April 2, 6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30, May 5, 7, 12. **Part II: In Other Parts of the World:** April 2, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, May 6, 7, 13, 14.
www.hilberry.com



The two-part "Cider House Rules" concludes the 2010-11 season at Detroit's Hilberry Theatre.

Give credit to New York playwright Peter Parnell who turned the book into a six-hour play. Sticking to the novel in story and spirit, judiciously eliminating tangential scenes, excising a few characters of middling significance and adding a ghost or two, Parnell does better by Irving than Irving himself did writing the 1999 movie. Of course, Irving had to fit it all into a two-hour commercially viable film. He still managed

to win an Academy Award for his efforts. Proceeding at a pace a little closer to the novel's, the play is more satisfying. Part One begins with Homer's birth in the 1920s at St. Cloud's Orphanage in Maine and ends with his leave-taking at about age 19 for the Maine apple orchard that gives "The Cider House Rules" its name.

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

'Fish Dinner' is a tasty dish indeed

BY JOHN QUINN

The late lamented resident company of The Second City left Detroit with a wealth of talented improvisational performers. Not satisfied with occasional gigs at comedy club, some are exploring less traditional experiments in the genre. Latest to hit the boards is Quintin Hicks in his one-man show "Fish Dinner" at Planet Ant Theatre in Hamtramck.

Improvisational theater is usually a group experience. Del Close, longtime beloved performer and director at The Second City Chicago and guru to a couple of generations of improv experts, had deeply held philosophical beliefs in the power of the ensemble – some communal, some actually tribal, some downright arcane. It takes a grounded performer to take the stage solo with his own material, and we're grateful Quintin Hicks took the

REVIEW

'Fish Dinner'

Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. Friday-Saturday through April 16. \$10. 313-365-4948.
www.planetant.com

leap of faith. "Fish Dinner" is testament to his talents as writer and performer, and is damned funny to boot.

The title is only tangential to the play. "Fish Dinner" is a series of monologues by oddball characters sprung from Hicks's fertile imagination. But don't be surprised if you run across someone you know. The characters may be over the top, but they're firmly anchored in reality. The individuality Hicks brings to his "cast" is deeper than just changing a costume or donning a wig. The characters take on a life of their own

as the actor disappears – one of the best of experiences for audience and performer alike. It's one of the hallmarks of the genre.

Hicks has a few partners in crime who should be noted. Improv extraordinaire Dave Davies is the director, here probably a reliable sounding board of what works and what doesn't. Geff Philips, on keyboard and sound effects, ably weaves the scenes together. While Joe Becker is noted as stage manager, he's running the light board in the notably less than ideal conditions of Planet Ant's facility. The lighting is warm, even and well designed for the pace of this show.

So while Hicks has besmirched my family name by creating a bombastic, egotistical pro wrestler who goes by the moniker "The Mighty Quinn," I can forgive him this one time. Wrestlers and theater critics – we're always throwing our weight around.

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

The Ark
316 S. Main, Ann Arbor
www.theark.org

CATIE CURTIS
w/sg Amy Speace
Wednesday, April 13, 8 p.m.
'A folk-rock goddess'
- The New Yorker



BREATHE OWL BREATHE
Thursday, April 14, 8 p.m.
'A lively stroll through the enchanted forest'
- eMusic.com

ANAS MITCHELL
Saturday, April 16, 8 p.m.
Fearlessly emotive yet cohesive songs



CANDYE KANE
Tuesday, April 19, 8 p.m.
A legendary underground diva of the blues

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings

Michigan weather is taking the hint and finally climbing toward warm weather – just in time for softball season! The Metro Detroit Softball League, having been a constant in the Detroit LGBT community for over 25 years, consists of over 450 players of all experience levels. Beginning their season May 13, enrollment in the league is still open.

The MDSL has been involved in various aspects of the LGBT community, sponsoring Pride events throughout the year and organizing monthly parties, open to all, in night clubs throughout the Metro Detroit area.

At 8 p.m. April 16, the MDSL will host their monthly party at the Menjo's Complex located at 928 W. McNichols in Detroit.



Music & More



Acoustic genius Catie Curtis has garnered quite the following in the folk-rock genre during her 20-year career as a musician.

Curtis performs across the U.S. and Europe to packed clubs and theaters. Alongside musicians such as Cyndi Lauper and Rufus Wainwright, she also performed at the HRC Equality Ball of President Obama's inauguration. Her sensational lyricism and melodic talent also won her the Best Album Award from the Gay and Lesbian American Awards in 1997.

Catie Curtis, with special guest Amy Space, performs at 8 p.m. April 13 at The Ark in Ann Arbor. Expect sneak peeks of her newest album, set for release in the summer.

Theater



The U-M Department of Theatre & Drama closes its 2010-2011 season with one of Arthur Miller's best-known works, "The Crucible."

Initially written in response to the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities held in the 1950s, The Crucible succeeds in Miller's mission to create theater with social relevance – theater about ethics, morals, religion, political issues and the consequences of history.

This gripping tale, warning against the dangers of extremism, runs 7:30 p.m. April 7, 8 p.m. April 2 and 8, and 2 p.m. April 3 and 10 at the Arthur Miller Theatre in Ann Arbor.

Tickets are \$24 for general admission and \$10 for students with ID. Order by phone at 734-764-2538.

OUTINGS

Wednesday, April 6

LGBT Summit for Older Adults, 1 p.m. Coalition of Michigan LGBT and eldercare service providers present assistance programs. Discussion of how LGBT services can better help older adults. The meeting is hosted by a coalition of community members and 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. Organization Name, 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. No alcohol may be brought into the event. Oakland University Gay Straight Alliance, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, **Rochester**. oakland.edu/csa

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

Friday, April 8

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Watching You. 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

Sunday, April 10

3rd Annual Michigan Pride Brunch and Silent Auction, 11 a.m. Helps raise money for the 2011 Michigan Pride festival. Features buffet style brunch at the downtown Radisson, Mimosa & Bloody Mary specials, silent auction and raffle items from local sponsors. All ages welcome. Tickets: \$25. Michigan Pride, 111 N. Grand Ave., **Lansing**. michiganpride.org

Tuesday, April 12

Transgender Partner Support Group, 6 p.m. A support group for partners. Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer Street, **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. kgllrc.org

Wednesday, April 13

Discussion About Pride, 5 p.m. LGBT in the Park sponsored discussion and Q&A with Craig Covey on the Ferndale Pride. LGBT in the Park, Nine Mile Road and John R Road, **Hazel Park**. 248-460-3251. jffryoliver@yahoo.com

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

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

Thursday, April 14

Re-envisioning the Revolutionary Body, 1 p.m. This program discusses ableism and disability impact on organizing and organizations. Explores the connections between disability, reproductive justice, race, queerness and social justice movements. Grand Valley State University LGBT Resource Center, 1 Campus Drive, **Allendale**. 616-331-2530. gvsu.edu/lgbtrc

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

Friday, April 15

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Mango Kiss. Performance artists Lou and Sassafras relocate to San Francisco, where Lou confesses her love for her roommate. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Saturday, April 16

DTMC Annual Pasta Fest, 5 p.m. Fundraiser for the DTMC. Pasta, salad, garlic bread, and dessert buffet. Tickets: \$15. Chorus performances at 6, 7 & 8 p.m. Detroit Together Men's Chorus, 143 Albany, **Ferndale**. dtmc.org

Detroit Derby Girls, 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$15-20. One Washington Blvd., **Detroit**. 313-877-8777. olympiaentertainment.com

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

Metro Detroit LGBT Softball League Party, 8 p.m. MDSL's monthly party. Metro Detroit LGBT Softball League Party, Menjo's, 928 McNichols, **Detroit**. 248-546-7678. mdsll.org

MUSIC & MORE

BENEFITS/SOCIAL EVENTS

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. 1120 E. Kearsley, **Flint**. 7 a.m. April 9. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

Table Tops "Variety the Childrens Charity 4th Annual Luncheon" Table Tops 2011 is the fourth in a series of learning luncheons that features exquisite tables decorated by 30 of the areas finest interior designers. Tickets: \$75 per person available by phone. Pine Lake Country Club, 3300 Pine Lake Road, Orchard Lake. 9:30 a.m. April 13. 248-258-5511. variety-detroit.com

CLASSICAL

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "MasterWorks 6: Exploring Gershwin & Ravel" The Lansing Symphony's 2010/2011 season concludes with a look at jazz from both sides of the Atlantic. Tickets: \$12-45. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. April 16. 517-353-1982 ext. 14. whartoncenter.com

Kalamazoo Bach Festival "W.A. Mozart's Mass in C Minor" The Great Mass. Tickets: \$25. Students: \$5. Tickets ordered via phone. First Presbyterian Church, 321 W. South St., Kalamazoo. 7:30 p.m. April 9. 269-337-7407. kalamazoobachfestival.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

Michigan Opera Theater "The Magic Flute" Performing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's final masterpiece. Tickets: \$25-78. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 a.m. April 21. 517-353-1982 ext. 14. whartoncenter.com

Olympia Entertainment "Celtic Woman: Songs from the Heart" Tickets: \$34.50-\$70.50 Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 7:30 p.m. April 7. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.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

CONCERTS

ArtXDetroit "Music & The Cosmos" A. Spencer Barefield's Super String Symphonica. Free. Historic First Congregational Church, 33 E. Forest, Detroit. 8:30 p.m. April 7. artxdetroit.com

The Ark "Catie Curtis" With special guest Amy Space. Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 13. theark.org

Cabaret Detroit "Caren Kapson and Roy Sexton" Cabaret Detroit presents stories told in song, featuring selections from the American songbook, musical theater and contemporary song writers. Cocktails served during the show. Bastone, 419 S. Main Street, 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+ Caesars Windsor, 377 Riverside Drive East, Windsor. 9 p.m. April 9. 800-991-7777. caesarswindsor.com

Collingwood Arts Center "George Winston" Grammy Award winning pianist George Winston returns to Collingwood to present a solo piano concert. Collingwood Arts Center, 2413 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo. 8 p.m. April 13. 419-244-ARTS. collingwoodartscenter.org

Kerrytown Concert House "An Evening with Susan Chastain" Celebrated jazz vocalist and owner/impressaria of the Firefly Club. Tickets: \$10-30. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 9, 9 p.m. April 9. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Gavin Creel" Vocalist/pianist/songwriter combines pop and theater music. Tickets: \$10-30. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 North Fourth Ave, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 13. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "Masterworks 6: Exploring Gershwin and Ravel" Tickets: \$15 adult, \$10 student. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. April 16. 517-353-1982 ext. 14. lansingsymphony.org

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts "Simply Sinatra" Evening with Steve Lippia. Tickets \$37-52 Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44757 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 8 p.m. April 9. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

Motor City Casino "Diddy's 'Dirty Money'" Tickets: \$68-\$83. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave, Detroit. 8 p.m. April 15. 866-752-9622. motorcitycasino.com

Olympia Entertainment "KEM's 2011 U.S. 'Intimacy' tour" Special guests El DeBarge and Ledisi. Tickets: \$39.50-\$88 Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 8 p.m. March 25, 8 p.m. April 10. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "Rod Stewart and Stevie Nicks" Joined forces 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.

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

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Iron & Wine" With special guest The Low Anthem. Tickets: \$25. Available online. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. April 14. 248-399-2980. purchase.tickets.com

The Majestic "The Black Lips" Tickets: \$13 advanced, \$15 day of. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 13, 7 p.m. April 17. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

The Michigan Theater "Jackson Browne" Singer-songwriter Jackson Browne's second leg of his 2011 Solo Acoustic Tour. Tickets: \$50-\$76. The Michigan Theater, 603 East Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 20. 800-745-3000. michtheater.org

University Musicial 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

University Music Society "Tony Allen's Afrobeat Tour" Nigerian-born drummer, composer, and songwriter who pioneered Afrobeat music: a synthesis of jazz, funk, and traditional African highlife. Tickets: \$10. Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 16. 734-764-2538. 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 "Adam Unsworth Quartet" Jazz Series: Associate Professor of Horn at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, is joined by Ann Arbor jazz favorites for a mix of original compositions and jazz standards. 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 20. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

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

DANCE

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "American Fusion" Part of the "Culture of India" festival at the Art Center, Sanjukta Banerjee performs two of India's most important dance forms: the Bharata Natyam and the Mohiniyattam. Tickets: \$15 adult, \$10 youth/student. 400 Culvers St., Saugatuck. 7:30 p.m. April 9. 269-857-2399. sc4a.org/performances

FILM & VIDEO

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "2011 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 "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 "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

Detroit Institute of Arts "DFT 101: Wings of Desire" Bruno Ganz as Damiel, an angel perched atop buildings high over Berlin who can hear the thoughts of all the people living below. Tickets: \$5, free for DIA members. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 4 p.m. April 16. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Penn Theatre "It Came From Outer Space" Of Sci-fi Month series. Tickets: \$3. Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman Ave., Plymouth. 7 p.m. April 7. 734-453-0870. penntheatre.org

Penn Theatre "Soylent Green" Of Sci-fi Month series. Tickets: \$3. Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman Ave., Plymouth. 7 p.m. April 14. 734-453-0870. penntheatre.org

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. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 12. 734-763-4186. umma.museum

OTHER

Copper Colored Mountain Arts "One Pause Poetry: National Poetry Month" Reading and Conversation with Jerome Rothenberg: "The Practice of Othering as Translation and Composition: A set of Readings and Performance with Commentaries on the Process." Reception and book signing to follow. Copper Colored Mountain Arts, 7101 W. Liberty Road, Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. April 15. 734-904-7487. cmarts.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Distacted \$10-\$22. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Parish Theatre, 426 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. April 15-May 1. 269-343-1313. kazooocivic.com

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

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

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

Pancakes! The Musical \$10. Fancy Pants Theater at Theater 246, 246 N. Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo. April 15-23.

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, Kordazone Theatre, 2520 Seminole St., Windsor. April 8-16. 519-562-3394. kordazone.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Brigadoon \$10-\$24. University of Michigan Department of Musical Theatre at Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 N. Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. April 14-17. 734-764-2538. music.umich.edu

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

Pageant Play General admission tickets for the Saturday full-cycle performances and a medieval buffet are \$32 adults, \$24 students, and \$28 seniors and Oakland University employees. Tickets for the weekday evening excerpt productions are \$13 general admission, \$7 students. Music, Theatre and Dance Department of Oakland University at Varner Hall, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. April 9-16. 248-370-3013. starticketsplus.com

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

The Grapes of Wrath \$15. Michigan State University Department of Theatre at Concert Auditorium, 113 Auditorium, East Lansing. April 6-10. 517-355-6690. artsandculture.msu.edu

The Real Inspector Hound and Black Comedy \$5-\$20. Western Michigan University Department of Theatre at Williams Theatre, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. April 14-23. 269-387-6222. wmtheatre.com

PROFESSIONAL THEATER

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

A Musical Salute to Vaudeville and Burlesque \$14 opening night; \$16 all other performances. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. April 15-May 14. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

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

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

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

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

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

Godspell \$20. What's That Smell? Productions at The Box Theatre, 51 N. Walnut, Mount Clemens. Through April 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 Road, Taylor. 8 p.m. April 7. 734-374-3200.

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

Mamma Mia! \$29-\$85. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. April 13-17. 1-800-982-2787. broadwayindetroit.com

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

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

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. Through 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. Through 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 Street, Flint. April 10. (810) 237-7333. TheWhiting.com

The Full Monty \$15-20. Bonstelle Theatre, 3434 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 15-23. 313-577-2960. bonstelle.com

The Living Stations of the Cross \$15. Living Faith-Fine Arts Apostolate, Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through April 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 Male Intellect: An Oxymoron? \$30-\$35; or \$70.95-\$89.95 per couple Dinner and Show Packages. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Avenue, Novi. April 13-24. 248-348-4448. andiamonovitheatre.com

The Merchant of Venice \$12. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company at Dog Story Theater, 7 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids. April 14-24. pcshakespeare.com

The Piano Lesson \$27-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron, Ann Arbor. Through April 10. 734-663-0696. performancenetwork.org

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

To Kill a Mockingbird \$16-\$18. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. April 8-23. 810-237-1530. flintyouththeatre.org

Waiting for Godot Admission by donation. The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette Ave. #113, Detroit. April 15-May 7. 313-485-0217. theabreact.com

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

ART 'N' AROUND

College for Creative Studies "Eight Continents in Collaboration" A workspace for dialogue and interaction. Using material from the first eight weeks of the 2011 Economist magazines, collaborators Mira Burack and Narine Kchikian engage the community in conversation about contemporary global/political issues, gestures and iconography. Center Galleries, Alumni & Faculty Hall, 301 Frederick Douglass St., Detroit. April 1-April 30. 313-664-7800. theeconomistseries.com

Costick Center "Art After Dark" Wine tasting, live Jazz and art. Tickets: \$20 advance, \$25 at door. Available online. Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. 7 p.m. April 15. 248-473-1848. recreg.fhgov.com

Detroit Artist's Market "Annual Scholarship Awards and Exhibition" DAM has a nearly 80 year history of supporting emerging artists; we turn 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 Avenue, Detroit. March 4-April 9. 313-832-8540. detroitartistsmarket.org

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

Downriver Council for the Arts "Cheryl Phillips and Betty Prudden" Exhibitions are free and open to the public. Downriver Council for the Arts, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. April 15-May 27. 734-720-0671. downriverarts.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

Friendship Village "Senior Day at KIA" Guided tour of The Wyeths: America's Artists and artist Michael Northrup demonstrated traditional egg tempura technique favored by Andrew Wyeth. Admission: \$8 for seniors. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. 1 p.m. April 7. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Gallery Project "Unhooked From Time" Multimedia exhibit in which 28 local, regional and national artists examine how society has lost its sense of the cycles of nature, and how it has artificially hooked itself to linear digital time. Gallery Project, 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. April 3-May 5. 734-997-7012. thegalleryproject.com

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

Kerrytown Concert House "Denise Rohde Exhibit" Denise Rohde 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. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 North Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor. April 5-May 1. 734-769-2999. kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lawrence Street Gallery "Exposures: Photography 2011" Fifteenth annual photography exhibit, a juried show expected to draw submissions from

approximately 100 area photographers. Dunes Resort, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 1-April 29. 248-544-0394. lawrencestreetgallery.com

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/AboutUs/ArtGallery

Mardigian Library at UM-Dearborn "Toledo Studio Art Glass: New Generations" Participating in the 2011 Michigan Glass Month with an exhibition celebrating new generations of contemporary studio glass artists from Toledo. Alfred Berkowitz Gallery, 4901 Evergreen Road, Dearborn. April 1-May 12. 313-593-3592. umd.umich.edu

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. Riverside Arts Center Gallery, 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti. March 1-April 30. riversideartscenter.org

Scarab Club Gallery "Working Class Heroes" An all-media juried exhibition honoring the working class, inspired by ML Liebler's book Working Words: Punching the Timeclock and Kicking Out the Jams, a compilation of writing from local, national and international poets and writers. Scarab Club Gallery, 217 Farnsworth St., Detroit. April 1-May 15. 313-831-1250. scarabclub.org


U of M Museum of Art "Lecture: Male Worlds-Female Worlds" Gender specific aspects of Early Joseon Painting. Dr. Burglind Jungmann gives a public talk analyzing Korean paintings of the 15th and 16th centuries and unwraps layers of social significance and cultural background. Tappan Hall, 855 S. University Ave., #180, Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. April 5. 734-763-8662. umma.umich.edu

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


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

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BTL Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Come back, brother

Q. I'm writing to you because I know that my gay brother "Jon" used to read your column, and I'm hoping that he still does, wherever he is. Jon has been gone for three years; he's 24 now. He doesn't communicate with any of us in the family – my parents or my two brothers or me, his sister.

I know the reason he stopped communicating. He was angry with my parents for not accepting him when he came out to them. At the time, Jon was in his last year of college when my parents pulled the strings on his financial situation – right before registration for classes – making it so he couldn't afford school. That was his senior year. That's when he dropped out of sight, and we have no idea where he is.

To be honest, my brothers and I weren't that supportive, either – especially my oldest brother, who was downright threatening to Jon. My other brother refused to talk to Jon when he found out that Jon was gay.

As far as I was concerned, it didn't bother me that he was gay; in fact, I knew he was gay. I had seen his magazines, books and Between The Lines newspapers. One day I walked in on him when he was reading your column. (He showed it to me.) I told him then that it wasn't a problem for me. My sin in all this was when he came out to the family, I failed to be a support to him. I used the fact that I was away at college in another state as an excuse, but the reality is I didn't want to deal with my family around this issue. So, when Jon called or sent me emails, I pretty much ignored him or made him feel like he was making too much of the whole thing. I wish I could relive that whole time, but as they say, life is not a dress rehearsal. So, I'm stuck with what I did, or didn't do.

We believe that Jon is OK and alive because flowers have been sent to my parents – every year that he's been gone – on his birthday. We think he's doing that because who else would? However, there is no address attached, and the online florists does not – and will not – give out names, numbers and addresses of the sender. I guess this is Jon's way of telling us that he's alive and reminding us what we did to him.

The rest of my family has grown as well and wish they had done differently, but they just think that Jon will come home when he's ready.

They're not into tracking him down, but I am. I don't have money to hire a detective, so I've decided to do an online search for him. I'm just getting started, and I found a friend who knows how to do this and will be helping me.

I'm writing to you hoping that you will print this letter and let Jon know how sorry I am that I wasn't there for him when he needed me. I was too into myself at the time and failed him terribly. Not a day goes by that I don't think of Jon and hope that he is OK and doing well. I love my brother and want him back in my life to tell him how sorry I am for my actions – or more like inactions. I hope he will one day want me back in his life.

Four months ago, I had a son and named him after Jon. I want my son to grow up and know his uncle.

Needing My Brother's Forgiveness

A. For both you and Jon, I hope he is still reading this column, wherever he is. I appreciate your ability to understand and take responsibility for what you did. I know you want your brother's forgiveness, but you also need to be able to forgive yourself. We can't undo what we have done, but we can grow from our mistakes and be a better person in the future, as you have done. Good luck; I hope he gets this message and realizes what a great sister you have become.

P.S. I have given your brother the name "Jon." From the info you gave me in your email, I'm sure he'll recognize this pseudo name, as well as his story.

Want to know more about forgiveness, what it is, what it's not, and how to achieve it? Go to Dear Jody Valley on Facebook.

Jody Valley spent 12 years as a clinical social worker. She worked with the LGBT community both as a counselor and a workshop leader in the areas of coming out, self-esteem and relationship issues. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly. Have a problem? Send your letters to: "Dear Jody Valley," C/O Between the Lines, 20793 Farmington Road, Suite 25, Farmington, MI 48336. Or, e-mail: DearJodyValley@hotmail.com Letters may be edited for clarity and/or length.

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: "Lifetime Achievement" (find out why by reading the article on page 6)
2. Go to www.Pridesource.com and click on "Click Here to Win!"
3. Scroll down to the entry form for the fake ad contest and enter your name, etc.
4. In the notes field, put the date of the BTL issue, page number where you found the fake ad and the name of the fake advertiser.

Search this issue for the Fake Ad

Between the Lines

BTL Horoscopes

One step at a time, Scorpio!

BY JACK FERTIG

After three weeks retrograde, Mercury is turning direct while conjunct Mars. New ideas to fix recent problems are coming too fast and furious. Think carefully to pick the truly effective ones. Both planets are opposing Saturn, so be careful not to blame but to work on better cooperation.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Faith in yourself may come a little too easy. Find someone you trust for confirmation and constructive criticism. No, dear. You need that from them! Solving the challenges in a relationship is the test of true commitment.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Knowing that you worry too much about your health doesn't mean there aren't problems. Focus on real pains and risks and get them checked out. Find the sensible middle ground between worry and neglect.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Dreams for the future may be vastly excessive of the talents and materials you actually have to invest for them now. Ideals should be beyond reach; goals just within. Don't build castles in the air, but on strong, solid foundations.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Your brilliant ideas at work may feel unappreciated at home. Perhaps the lack of enthusiasm is because your talents are no surprise and they expect great things of you. Their support matters, but you may have to explain specifics to get it.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Your brain's afire with grand ideas, but they need grounding in practical principles and experience. Find an Aquarius who knows the field. If he or she says, "That won't work," ask how to make it work!

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Sex without guilt is fine, but sex without responsibility is dangerous. Be clear on safety, but also on your life's priorities. Cultivate a Puritan work ethic without getting hung up on their prudery; a simple matter of "first things first!"

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Trying to hold down your partnership could be a big mistake. It needs room to breathe and grow. That can mean allowing room to let your

love do things you don't like. Mutually agreeable limits may require compromise.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): You'll reach your goals one step at a time. An obsessive rush to push ahead can make you miss important details, cause foolish mistakes and make simple things more long and complicated. Breathe, focus and relax!

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Those powerful creative impulses are sure to hit a wall, but so what? Take the challenge to improve upon your original idea, to make it more practical and effective. If it was that good an idea to start with, it's worth the effort.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Domestic drama seems a distraction from work you need to be doing. Find a way to harness that energy and get the folks at home to support you. That won't be easy, but the effort can pay off big time!

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Examine new subjects from the ground up and review the basics on familiar topics. If you want higher purpose and inspiration find a Leo to help you develop your basic ideas into a grand vision.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): A sexual dry spell can be a gift encouraging you to focus on practical matters. Keeping your priorities clear is challenging, not impossible. Money can come and go very easily now. Work hard to keep it coming and not going!

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 26

S	P	A	S	M		S	E	C		G	A	R	B	O	
K	A	R	M	A		O	L	A		I	B	E	A	M	
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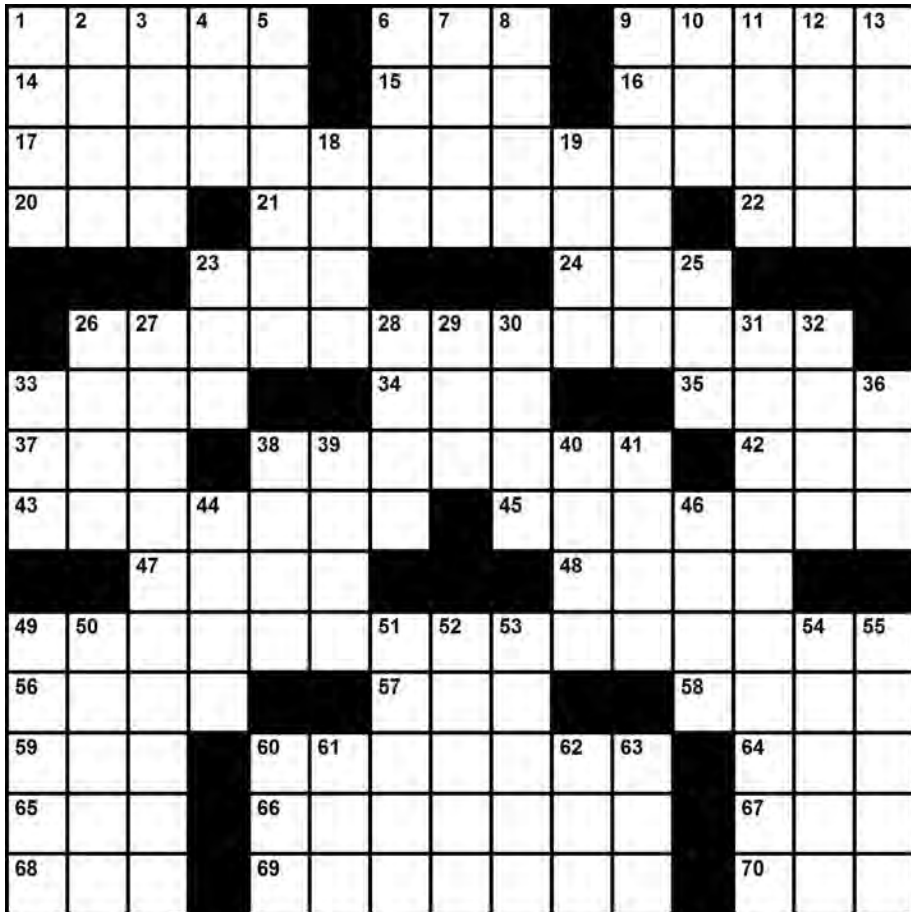
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Family Ties

Across

- 1 Climax, e.g.
- 6 Brief instant
- 9 "I want to be alone" actress
- 14 Vibes not from a vibrator
- 15 Pay or Cray ending
- 16 Erection supporter
- 17 Start of a quote from Meredith Baxter
- 20 Audre Lorde's tool
- 21 They have pressing work
- 22 Site of iniquity
- 23 Aladdin's monkey
- 24 Shorten leaves of grass
- 26 More of the quote
- 33 Gad about
- 34 Home of T. Bankhead
- 35 From the top
- 37 Sorbonne summer
- 38 More of the quote
- 42 Low grade

- 43 Where colonists shot off their muskets in 1775
- 45 Needing to be set straight
- 47 Part of an espionage name
- 48 "Firebird" composer Stravinsky
- 49 More of the quote
- 56 Eugene O'Neill's daughter
- 57 Game with "Reverse" cards
- 58 "Beat it!"
- 59 Cole Porter's "Well, ___ You Evah"
- 60 End of the quote
- 64 Lance in a robe
- 65 Wall St. group
- 66 He danced in "Silk Stockings"
- 67 Dorm VIPs
- 68 From Jan. 1 to now
- 69 Kneel before, e.g.
- 70 Prufrock poet's monogram

Down

- 1 Bound gaily
- 2 Walk the waiting room
- 3 "Viva Las Vegas" middle name
- 4 Mustang's sch.
- 5 Chevy model
- 6 Gay nightlife district of London
- 7 Joie de vivre
- 8 Spelunker's opening
- 9 "Apocalypto" director Mel
- 10 James Buchanan follower, familiarly
- 11 Clarinet part
- 12 Ruination
- 13 Male mating call?
- 18 Beat soundly
- 19 Witty Bombeck
- 23 Very hairy swinger
- 25 Org. of guys who can knock you out
- 26 Magazine section
- 27 Like ambidextrous masturbation?
- 28 "Tearoom Trade" author Humphries

- 29 Variety
- 30 "___ Get a Witness" (Marvin Gaye)
- 31 It gets next to you
- 32 Patty Sheehan supporters
- 33 YMCA activity
- 36 Director Craven
- 38 Dick of "Bewitched"
- 39 Not a dup.
- 40 Way to come
- 41 Hourly pay
- 44 Water-to-wine town
- 46 It grows on trees
- 49 TV show of this puzzle's quote
- 50 Get up
- 51 Gives a pink slip to
- 52 Coming soon
- 53 Stray from the herd
- 54 The I's of Sappho
- 55 Horny lodge member?
- 60 Unsettle
- 61 Milk, so to speak
- 62 Cross-dresser Joan of ___
- 63 To this point

Solution on 25

Pet of the Week



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Dating Diet

BY ANTHONY PAULL

The Sluuuuuurp

Hi, I'm Anthony Paull. I'm punk rock, and I'm with the press, but dear God, I'm not supposed to take a picture of Jake Gyllenhaal's crotch at the SXSW press conference for "Source Code." Well... actually, I'm given two minutes to take Jake's pic, but I need to keep the camera at eye level. After all, that's most professional, and I wouldn't want to blur any boundaries. Not like that brave, yet tacky, press member who followed Jake into the bathroom to photograph his penis. Why, that foul man, he ended up a TMZ "star," rolling in gold. And I ended up... here.

Hi, I have no money. Last year, I broke up with my boyfriend, the love of my life, because I wanted to make it on my own, but I never could figure out the right method, at least financially. So a year later, through a series of twists and turns, we ended up back together, and I'm still broke. But hey, at least I have my ethics. However, my crew - let's just say they're lacking in that department, particularly when it comes to meeting Jake. For instance, take my camera girl, Jessica. For some reason, she wants to snap a picture of Jake with some paper doll called Flat Stanley. And my assistant, Skip... well, I'd rather not know what he wants because he keeps making strange sucking sounds, particularly when eyeballing Jake at the conference.

"Can I ask Jake a question? Please?" Skip asks me.

"That depends. What's the question?"

"Sluuuuuurp."

"That's not a question."

"It could be."

Such statements are why I no longer allow my crew to drink before a work obligation. You see, it's never good to mix celebrities and cheap vodka. But I suppose, these are things one can only learn through trial and error, after suffering the fate of having an assistant simulate oral sex during a press conference.

"Skip, I need you to listen to me. We're working," I explain. "I'm serious. You can't proposition the celebrities."

Overhearing, Jessica begins tee-heeing. "I think it's funny." Taking the Flat Stanley doll from her purse, she dances him on her knee. "Do you think I should ask Jake if he likes to play with dolls?"

"Not if you like your job."

"Why? Celebrities love Flat Stanley. He's an A-Lister," she sings. And sadly, she's right. Whether at SXSW or Sundance, that stupid doll has been in more pics than me. But that's ok because I'm supposed to be 'working'.

So I'm off, interviewing celebrities, musicians and directors while Jessica returns to the hotel, held up by a hangover. A Starbucks trip later, she phones to tell me she accidentally gave Flat Stanley to a homeless man, who was asking for money. "He was folded in my pocket with my cash," she cries. "I let him go!"

"Um, I'm trying to interview the drummer of HOLE," I mumble.

"Oh, get over yourself. THIS is more important!"

Hence, an hour later, we join together, along

with Skip, to scour the streets for the man who has Flat Stanley. Of course, he's nowhere to be found, resulting in a meltdown for Jessica, who can only be aided by, well... more vodka.

I don't learn from my mistakes. I'm supposed to be working, figuring out a way to make a living as a full-time writer, and here I am, drinking in a bar.

Yes, I know; I don't learn from my mistakes. I'm supposed to be working, figuring out a way to make a living as a full-time writer, and here I am, drinking in a bar with Jessica and Skip until 2 a.m., when we hitch a cab to the hotel with some drunken stranger, who squeezes in the back seat between Skip and me. Soon, I hear whispers as the strange man reaches for Skip's hand. Offended, Skip groans loudly.

"What's going on back there?" Jessica asks, seated up front.

"Skip's a fucking queer! Skip's a fucking queen!" the drunken guy yells.

"Now, that's not very nice," Jessica replies.

"Well, Skip wasn't very nice to me. I offered him many things!"

"Sorry, but I don't think my boyfriend Jake would appreciate such things," Skip states.

"Oh yeah? Well, my boyfriend wouldn't appreciate them either!" the drunken guy exclaims.

To which, I start groaning, because none of this is making sense - my life, my career, this "cab ride" conversation, steering out of control.

Dear God, where am I heading? With my writing, I'm beginning to feel like I'm typing in circles, forever on the verge of making it, but never quite making it enough. I have one novel on the shelf, and one that I have to completely rewrite. When will I be taken seriously? When will I take myself seriously? I'm running out of time. My fellow writers, they're racing around the festival, discovering the latest film, the latest star, and I'm blacking out at the hotel. Why did this happen?

"Well, there's no question about it. Flat Stanley is gone," Jessica says. Back at the hotel, she turns out the light and flips on her stomach to sleep. "I lost him."

"Yeah, and I lost half my chances to work the red carpet," I sigh.

"Hey, at least you found a story," she says. "Who cares about the red carpet? Your readers don't give a crap. They want to hear about you."

"Yeah, you and Jake's penis," Skip adds.

And falling asleep, I can't help but laugh, thinking it might be a blessing to feel "sucky" about where I am in life, because sometimes, the best of times happen when you're drowning in it. You just have to learn how to enjoy the sluuuuuurp.

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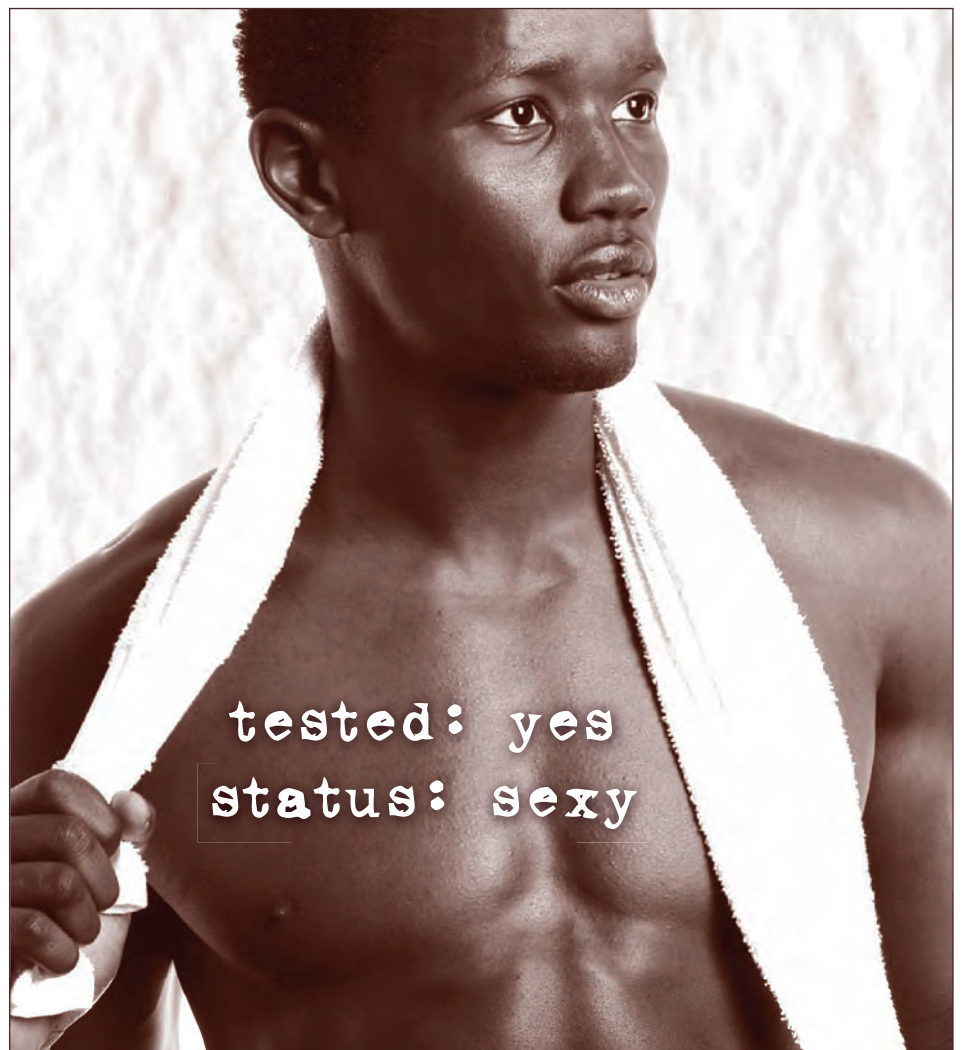
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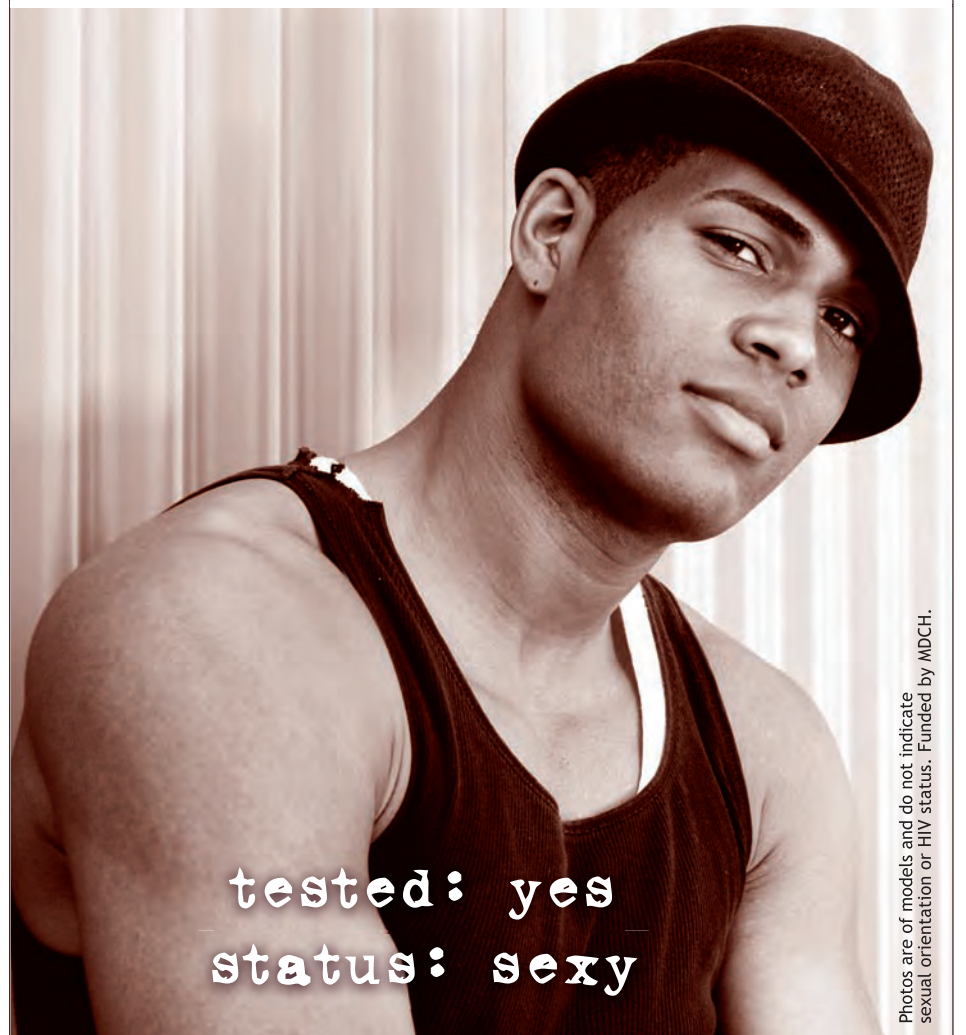
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RTT Deep Inside Hollywood



Matt Bomer. Photo: New Line Cinema

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Matt Bomer's 'White Collar' moonlighting

The Internet makes gay actors' personal lives much more complicated. Old ideas about "the closet" almost make no sense anymore when a gay actor doesn't necessarily hide his sexual orientation but also doesn't speak to the press about it. Is he out? Not out? Does it matter? Whatever your opinion on the subject, here's what maybe-gay-maybe-not-gay-because-he-won't-say "White Collar" star Matt Bomer is doing next: a futuristic sci-fi thriller called "Now." And the ensemble cast is nothing to sneeze at either — a gang of young ones that includes Olivia Wilde, Alex Pettyfer, Amanda Seyfried, Justin Timberlake, Cillian Murphy, Johnny Galecki, Vincent Kartheiser and former "America's Next Top Model" contestant (and "The Kids Are All Right" co-star) Yaya DaCosta. Why so youth-obsessed? Well, the plot is a riff on "Logan's Run," set in a future where the aging gene has been shut off by science and only money buys you extra life. Sounds like the daydreams of a lot of gay guys, actually. Still in production, expect this one for Halloween.

Hanks adds Julia Roberts and George Takei to his 'Crowne'

Arguably the coolest and among the most beloved of all former original "Star Trek" cast members, George Takei can add Tom Hanks to his list of admirers. The 73-year-old actor will appear next in Hanks' latest directorial effort, "Larry Crowne." (Talk about taking your time, it's only Hanks' second directing job after 1996's "That Thing You Do.") Reports are that the movie is about a man reaching middle age and realizing that he has to go to college and start over. In other words, it's about practically everybody these days. Nia Vardalos co-wrote the script with Hanks, and Julia Roberts will co-star. Takei will join a roster of featured players including Oscar nominee Taraji P. Henson, Bryan Cranston, Pam Grier, Wilmer Valderrama, Cedric The Entertainer and Vardalos. And here's welcome news — it's planned as a summer release, a welcome grown-up alternative for the July 4th weekend.

This week in Amber Heard news

What was that you heard about coming out harming an actor's career? Sure, every performer deals with different circumstances, but take the case of up-and-comer Amber Heard, who recently butt-kicked her way across the screen with Nicolas Cage in the goofy, underappreciated "Drive Angry." After coming out with the equivalent of a shrugged, "Oh, hey, yeah, I'm a lesbian and who cares," the "Maxim" magazine model-like "Zombieland" actor has only seen her star rise. She's just completed "The Rum Diary," based on a novel by Hunter S. Thompson and starring Johnny Depp, Aaron Eckhart, Giovanni Ribisi, Richard Jenkins. And she's about to star in the certain-to-be-trashy thriller "The Applicant," about a prep school senior obsessed with getting into Yale who seduces and ruins the lives of an admissions director and professor. Moral: in fiction and in Hollywood, talent is great (and Heard has it) but hotness doesn't hurt.

Connie Britton, unlike Foo Fighters, says yes to Ryan Murphy

So maybe Slash and Kings of Leon and Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters aren't interested in licensing their hit songs to Ryan Murphy for Kurt or Finn to sing on "Glee." (Murphy is notoriously and publicly peeved when he can't get his way with music for the show, going so far as to insult the artists who won't play along, prompting Grohl to announce: "F***** that guy.") But Murphy's other new project, the FX drama pilot "An American Horror Story" has tapped "Friday Night Lights" star Connie Britton to lead its cast.

According to FX boss John Landgraf, the show will be a "complicated, interesting psychological horror show... incredibly ambitious." Given Murphy's rep for creative genre-bending and boundary pushing, the final product should be fascinating to look at. And maybe Dave Grohl will like "Horror" more than the 10 minutes of "Glee" he reportedly watched and consent to write a really kick-ass theme song? The possibility of a kiss-and-make-up scenario should never be discounted.

Romeo San Vicente believes in aging attractively. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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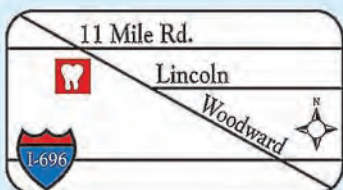
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