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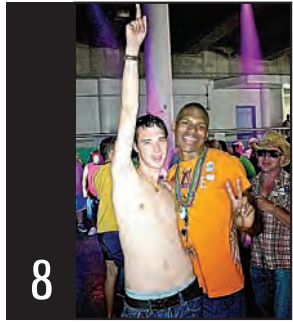
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More than 44,000 people flooded Detroit's Hart Plaza for Motor City Pride on June 4-5.
BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

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BTI Speak Out

BY ERIC RADER

Pride 2011: Looking forward, looking back

In this month of LGBT Pride, we have much to celebrate, yet still face many challenges. Since the Stonewall uprising in June 1969, our community has made great strides toward overcoming a long history of legal discrimination and societal prejudice. Many members of our community were not yet born in 1969 and have benefited enormously from the heroic actions of early LGBT pioneers. After Stonewall, the main focus of the Gay Liberation movement, as it was known at the time, was simply to fight for basic dignity for gays and lesbians. Over time, as with all other civil rights movements, LGBTs began to seek genuine legal equality. Because of the efforts of these courageous fighters, cities began to pass human rights ordinances that were inclusive of sexual orientation, and later, gender identity. We in Michigan should be particularly proud that Ann Arbor was the first municipality in the U.S. to pass a gay rights ordinance. Indeed, several Michigan cities continue to be on the forefront of LGBT equality, and this is certainly a point of real pride in our state.

As the AIDS epidemic claimed the lives of thousands of young gay men in the 1980s, the focus of the LGBT movement shifted to the fight against this deadly plague. During the first six years of the epidemic, when a diagnosis was a near-certain death sentence, President Ronald Reagan could not even bring himself to utter the name of the disease in public. Political activists took action, with groups like Act-Up pushing the public to pay attention to the devastation occurring in the LGBT community and prodding the government to direct financial resources toward fighting AIDS. Some homophobic politicians continued to spew venom about us, but society began to move toward greater acceptance and understanding of our community.

Today, the political struggle for our community has reached a crossroads. As recently as seven years ago, President George W. Bush used same-sex marriage as a wedge issue in his reelection campaign. In 2004, a majority of the public still opposed the right of same-sex couples to marry, and Bush won a second term. Now, polls show that a majority of the public support equal marriage rights, and five states and the District of Columbia grant same-sex couples the legal right to wed. The experiences of these states over the past few years have demonstrated to the rest of the country that straight married couples have nothing to fear when their gay neighbors get married. Unfortunately, many political leaders, even those who support LGBT equality in principle, are still reluctant to push for full marriage equality. The public is definitely ahead of the politicians on this issue.

President Barack Obama has issued LGBT Pride proclamations each year since he took office, and has signed several pro-equality bills and orders, including the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Thanks to the efforts of LGBT civil rights activists, many

Pride should be a time for celebration of our achievements, but also a time of resolve.

companies and public entities now include sexual orientation as a protected category in their employment non-discrimination policies, though a comprehensive federal Employment Nondiscrimination Act will not move as long as right-wing Republicans continue to lead the U.S. House of Representatives.

Regrettably, transphobia is still alive and well in our country, as witnessed by recent actions of brutality against trans-women and men. Even though many employers include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies, not enough of them protect against discrimination based on gender identity. Further, there is still much misunderstanding, even within parts of the LGB community, about the important and unique challenges facing transgender Americans. One piece of good news was the U.S. State Department's decision in 2010 allowing people to change the gender designation on their passports if they are going through a clinically-certified gender transition process. But, so much more must be done to achieve greater equality for transgender people in this country, and it's important that we all continue to educate ourselves and our political leaders on these challenges.

Our community must carry forward the civil rights struggle that began more than 40 years ago in New York City. We should look to the founding mothers and fathers of our movement for inspiration. These pioneers paved a path that has made our lives as LGBT Americans in 2011 better than they would have been if the status quo had prevailed after 1969. Pride should be a time for celebration of our achievements, but also a time of resolve. Let's use the spirit of this month, and the energy we gain from the Pride events taking place around our state, to fight for true equality for everyone. Someday in the future, our children and grandchildren will look back on what we did for equality. Let's make them proud.

Michigan Pride: June 11 in Lansing

www.michiganpride.org

"Winning the Future: President Obama and the LGBT Community" – White House website:

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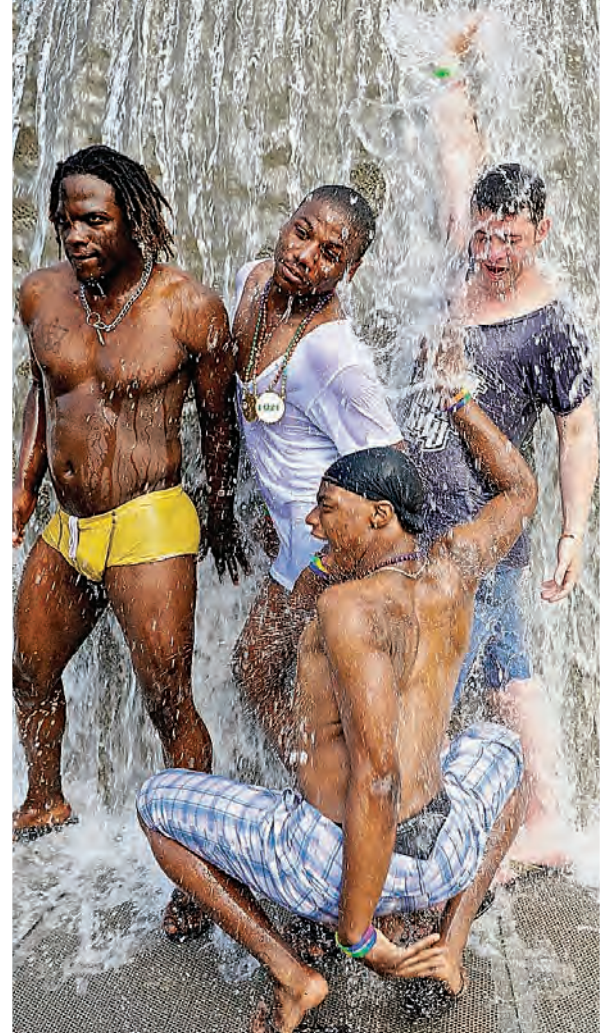
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BTL photos: Andrew Potter.





Thousands flooded Detroit's Hart Plaza on June 4 and 5 for Motor City Pride. BTL photos: Andrew Potter.

Motor City Pride draws more than 44,000

Festival's first appearance in Detroit's Hart Plaza hailed as success

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

DETROIT— With its move from a suburb to a city, more days and a bigger space, everyone wondered: Would Motor City Pride be a success? You bet.

"People were showing up before the gates opened," said Michael Gregor, communications director at Equality Michigan, the nonprofit that organized the festival.

More than 44,000 people attended the June 4-5 festival. Attendees traveled from as far as Pittsburg to take in the performances, dance parties, family activities, booths and exhibitors in Detroit's Hart Plaza.

"This was really an immense opportunity for gay and transgender people to come together with friends and family to celebrate who they are," said Festival Chair Dave Wait.

The festival also helped raise money for Equality Michigan, a statewide organization working to achieve full equality for Michigan's LGBT community. A \$5 donation was requested at the two gates, and even though the nonprofit doesn't have a final count yet, "it's safe to say we're happy with the donations and we're happy with the sponsorships we received," Gregor said.

This money will go toward the nonprofit's work, said Denise Brogan-Kator, its interim executive director, who reminded attendees that the festival was more than just a party.

"Michiganders can still be fired, evicted or denied services because someone thinks they're gay," she said. "Gay and lesbian couples cannot marry who they fall in love with and enjoy the

legal benefits of marriage. It's time for Lansing to wake up and say that Michigan will treat its citizens fairly."

This message was not lost on the many booths who work on behalf of Michigan's LGBTs, such as Affirmations Community Center from Ferndale, Unity Michigan and even President Obama's 2012 campaign, which was registering voters for next year's presidential election and passing out information about Obama's work for the LGBT community.

"Pride festivals affirm that we are not alone — which is especially important when gay and transgender people face so many challenges in Michigan," Wait said. "This is the weekend when we can come out, be who we are and work together to make our region more welcoming."

Home sweet home?

So does Motor City Pride feel at home in Detroit?

"As a Detroiter I'm excited the events are in the center of the metropolitan area," said Julianna Rivera, a first-time festivalgoer. "It brings together people from all these different regions."

"I like the way it's spread out," said London Bell, Affirmation's health and human services coordinator as she was manning the center's booth. "I would definitely come next year."

Rachel Crandall, the director of Transgender Michigan, said even though the festival turned out wonderfully, it would take a while for Motor City Pride to truly feel at home in Detroit and for the transgender community to fully embrace it.

"Unfortunately for this year I think we lost a lot of people. Honestly. It's not to say we don't love this," she said, gesturing to the sunny Hart Plaza. "I think it's going to take a few years of no incidents for me to relax."

"Pride festivals affirm that we are not alone. This is the weekend when we can come out, be who we are and work together to make our region more welcoming."

—Motor City Pride
Festival Chair Dave Wait

There were no security problems in Hart Plaza over the weekend, Gregor said. "I was very impressed by the city and the police department and our private security team. Everything went really smoothly.

"Hart Plaza and downtown are definitely destinations for a lot of big crowds. So the

authorities know how to deal with crowds and how to keep people safe."

Gregor was also surprised and pleased by the amount of first-time festivalgoers. "We drew in a lot of people who had never come to a Pride event before. And that was really exciting. A lot of families, a lot of young people who had not gone to Motor City Pride in the past or had not gone to something like this in years."

For 16-year-old Kayla Ferill, her first Motor City Pride experience was worth repeating, despite her worries about parking downtown. "Once you get here, it's fun," she said, relaxing with a friend in the shade. She said this weekend was bigger and more exciting than last year's Michigan Pride in Lansing, but she wished Motor City Pride's parade lasted longer.

Gregor agreed that the parade was small, but a good start: "We'll be able to make that bigger next year," he said, and that goes for the entire festival, too: "I expect that it will just get bigger next year, in terms of more sponsors participating, and in terms of more artists," Gregor said.

One person who wouldn't change a thing about the festival was Melissa Spears, who showed up in knee-high fuzzy blue boots (despite temperatures in the 80s) and glittery eye shadow. Well, she does have one suggestion: "If we could get RuPaul here next year, that would be amazing."

For more information on Motor City Pride, go to <http://motorcitypride.org>.

Michigan Democrats celebrate Pride month

LANSING— Michigan Democrats embrace the month of June as a celebration of LGBT Pride Month, which recognizes the efforts of all Americans to fight for equal rights and acceptance for the LGBT community.

“Michigan Democrats have long been fighting for equal rights for all and during that fight, we have shared a strong relationship with the LGBT community – a relationship that will continue to strengthen into the future,” Michigan Democratic Party Chair Mark Brewer said. “Pride Month is the perfect opportunity for us all to embrace diversity and acceptance of others.”

President Bill Clinton declared June to be Pride Month in 2000. The month was chosen to commemorate the 1969 protest at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, which is regarded as the beginning of the gay liberation movement in the United States.

Pride Banquet announces 2011 Pride Awards

FERNDALE— The Annual Pride Banquet and Awards Ceremony is proud to announce the winners to be honored at the Ukrainian Cultural Center on June 23. This event is co-sponsored this year by Affirmations, Al GAMEA, Black Pride Society, Detroit Latin@z, Dignity Detroit, Equality Michigan, Forum Foundation, GLEAM, Just4Us, Motor City Bears and Renaissance Unity.

On its 25th anniversary, the banquet will honor people who have made outstanding contributions of time and talent to the LGBT community. Nominations were solicited from all over Michigan, but only a select few have been chosen to receive awards.

Community Spirit Award: Dennis and Ren Matveyev

Business Award: Ties Like Me

Diversity and Inclusion Award: Olga Summers

Media Award: Christopher Azzopardi

Political Award: Sarah Layton

Rising Star Award: Angel Carrion

Sports Award: Chris Harris

Unity Award: Bill Jefferson

Volunteer Award: Jane Kelly

Lifetime Achievement Award: John DiDonato

Tickets to the banquet are \$42, and include a family style dinner and open bar. The Ukrainian Cultural Center is located at 26601 Ryan Road in Warren. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., dinner is served at 7:30 and the awards program is at 8:30. The official after party is hosted by Menjo's. Tables of ten seats are available for early reservation; to reserve a table, email pridebanquet@yahoo.com or purchase your tickets at Just4Us or Five15.



Ferndale hosted its own pride celebrations after Motor City Pride moved to Detroit this year. BTL photo: Crystal A. Proxmire.

Marches speak volumes at Ferndale Pride

Businesses, organizations ring in the city's own pride celebration

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE— Zack Marsack walked all the way from Affirmations to City Hall in shiny black high-heeled boots at Ferndale Pride last weekend.

“It killed my feet. But it was worth it,” the 14-year-old Ferndale resident said. Marsack and his friend Desiree Winslow of Oak Park danced on the corner of 9 Mile and Woodward after the We Are Family March, which kicked off the first Ferndale Pride festival on June 3.

Marsack and Winslow were among more than 1,000 people who joined in marches as part of Pride weekend in Ferndale. Even more flooded the city shops and bars, either in support of Ferndale Pride or simply because they didn't realize that the Motor City Pride event moved to Detroit this year.

Ferndale hosted Motor City Pride, an event organized by Equality Michigan, from 2001 to 2010. Marsack remembers this annual celebration from his early childhood. “My mom and her girlfriend took me when I was six,” he said. “My brother, who was a year older, told me that gay meant happy. So I went around saying I'm in a happy parade, I'm in a happy parade.”

Eight years later he and his friends created new memories by taking their place in a movement that seeks acceptance and equality for all people.

On Friday the We Are Family March brought 200 marchers out. That evening's Illuminating Our Diversity Night March saw another sizable crowd, and on Saturday the second annual Dyke March packed a lane of 9 Mile with 500 activists demanding equal rights and respect.

Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter has been taking part in pride demonstrations for more than two decades. He and other community leaders spoke at the rally in front of City Hall about why

Pride is important to them. “Times are different now,” Coulter said. “I've been thinking about why we still march. We do this because it's the most damned enlightened response to bigotry that I can think of, that in the face of bigotry we've decided to celebrate who we are and love ourselves.”

Oakland County Commissioner Craig Covey, an activist since 1982, was one of the organizers of the weekend's events. He gave the crowd a history lesson, explaining how the gay rights movement rose up from the 1969 raids of a gay bar in New York called The Stonewall Inn. The clash between police and gay members of the public is a defining moment in LGBT history, and one that Covey hopes the new generation of activists will not forget as they enjoy the ability to feel safe and free in Ferndale.

“I'm here because I actually feel safe here,” said Transgender Michigan member Ami Nicole. “I've gone to other cities and had people harass me and threaten me, but that's never happened

of their homes to clap or join in. “I love the girls,” he said. “Look at this. This is great for Ferndale and I'm happy to come out and support.”

The Dyke March ended in Geary Park, where marchers enjoyed live music, picnics, and time to sit with hundreds of like-minded activists in the shade. Beth Singer and Kim Blair of Ferndale brought their friend Amy Ehlert of Oak Park, who hadn't been to the Dyke March before. As they watched the happy crowd, they reflected on their fourteen years in Ferndale together. “It hasn't changed much. In terms of acceptance for gay people I guess it's grown, but everyone is used to us being around. It's comfortable,” Singer said.

Pockets of partying filled the city through the weekend as Rosie O'Grady's held a Studio 54 Night. Soho turned into Stone House for the night. Danny's hosted a baseball-themed party for the Metro Detroit Softball League.

The wettest fun was had by the Motor City Bears, who held their annual fundraising car wash Saturday afternoon. Large hairy men in speedos and covered in suds washed cars in the Level One Bank parking lot to raise money for the Ruth Ellis Center and Affirmations. They also raised more than \$1,300 at a dinner and silent auction held at Zion Lutheran in Ferndale on Friday night.

Covey and other event organizers consider the weekend a success. The events were pulled together quickly after learning this winter that Motor City Pride would move to Detroit. The Ferndale Pride Committee gathered 40 volunteers and raised \$14,000 in just 90 days to make it happen. “No matter where there is a Pride, there will always be a Pride in Ferndale,” Covey said.

For more information on Ferndale Pride go to www.ferndalepride.org.

“No matter where there is a Pride, there will always be a Pride in Ferndale.”

—Oakland County Commissioner

Craig Covey

in Ferndale. I can be myself and nobody gives me a hard time,” she said.

On Saturday as hundreds of lesbians and supporters turned the corner from 9 Mile to Pinecrest, residents like David Elledge came out

Small towns, deep closets

BY JIM LARKIN

"Straight married man looking for discreet male relationship."

"73-year-old married man who isn't getting what he needs at home looking for man for discreet relationship."

I kid you not. The above two personal ads from Holland, Mich. residents are real. There are many married men here who classify themselves as straight even though they are trying to get some on the side with men. Go figure.

Now you know some of the difficulties we face over here as we continue on the long journey toward convincing city leaders to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in anti-discrimination ordinances.

One of the biggest: Holland is deeply closeted, perhaps because there are no protections for LGBTQ folks here. Very few gay people have publicly supported the changes, with the charge being primarily led by church members who feel strongly that it's the right and moral thing to do and parents of LGBTQ children who are tired of their loved ones moving away or having to hide.

Some opposing the change make the ridiculous claim that gay people here don't experience discrimination so such protections aren't needed; apparently believing Holland is somehow the only city in the world where discrimination against gay people doesn't exist. It circles all around us but some magical, invisible barrier keeps it from entering city boundaries.

Yet the difficulty we have in fighting such preposterous notions is that very few if any gay people are coming forward and citing examples of how they've been discriminated against. Heck, very few are coming forward at all.

And, equally to the point, many of those who have the most to gain by such ordinance changes are bound by their own closeted lifestyles to stay silent. We don't even know, if the issue should come to a public vote, whether they would come to the polls and – if they did – whether they would support us. That's how deep and dark their closets run.

They are the bogeymen who defy their own sexuality and scare the bejesus out of us, threatening to create nightmares for the greatly outnumbered gay, lesbian, transgendered, and yes – bisexual and questioning residents – that are willing to take a stand.

I was told two years ago when I moved here that LGBTQ folk here were very closeted, but never had anything outside of anecdotal references to prove it. So I tried recently to produce some statistics. I went to several gay personal websites that ask their clients to reveal their sexuality and marital status. The sampling included 366 people who said they lived in Holland. The results are by no means scientific, but I think it gives you a pretty good idea of the makeup of the town.

A whopping 46 percent of the Holland residents seeking relationships with other men indicated they were bisexual and 13 percent said they were straight (yes, I know, it's pretty difficult to say you're straight when you want to have sex with other men; but that's what they said. One married man who claimed to be straight even said he didn't want "any games," as if he himself wasn't playing one.). Only 22 percent classified themselves as gay.

And only 41 percent of the men-seekers were single. They remainder were married (14 percent), divorced, attached, widowed, separated or preferred not to say (29 percent). I leave it to you to figure out why they probably prefer not to say.

If you think all towns aren't like that, think again. I compared Holland to a town on a Great Lake coast on the other side of the state, Port Huron, which has a similar population. In Port Huron, of those seeking relationships with other men (and the comparison with Holland in parenthesis) 32 percent classified themselves as bisexual (46), 27 percent gay (22) and 46 percent single (41).

So you're getting kind of a creepy picture aren't you? You're picturing a very confused populace who think that having sex with other men doesn't make them gay. You're picturing a lot of residents who don't want to admit they're

gay. And you're seeing the absurdities that permeate a town when the majority clearly wants to keep those not sharing their sexual persuasion under their thumb, neither seen nor heard, and without the same rights as they enjoy.

I don't want you to get the wrong picture of my hometown. People here care greatly about one another and are charitable to a fault. There are many, many good people here who are fighting for LGBTQ people and the town has a strong PFLAG chapter, while the much larger Grand Rapids just to the north doesn't have one. And I expect the City Council vote on the issue to be a close one.

But I sense it wouldn't be close at all if there were more people who had the guts to come out, more who were more honest with who they are, and the majority could see who, exactly, composes the local LGBTQ population.

I expect the City Council vote on the issue to be a close one. But I sense it wouldn't be close at all if there were more people who had the guts to come out.

It's not just the thin boy with the swish, the guys who go grocery shopping together or the two females in their fifties who have been living together for a long time. It's also very likely the rugged husband of a female friend, the widowed senior citizen who you always thought was too heart-broken to marry again, and that married co-worker who joins in when the gay jokes start then goes home and tries to hook up with another man on the Internet. Pitiful but true.

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OutCenter charity event June 17

BENTON HARBOR— The OutCenter of Benton Harbor will host a golf and dinner event at Harbor Shores on June 17. Proceeds from the event will support the OutCenter in its vision of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all Southwest Michigan residents, including the LGBT and allied communities.

Tickets are still available to the landmark OutOuting event, featuring an 18-hole golf outing followed by a tent event with live entertainment, local cuisine and a silent auction. Visit www.outouting.com for more information.

The OutCenter plans to use funds raised from the event to continue services such as its adult support group and diversity trainings, to provide cultural events such as OutFilm and Lake Effect Pride and to increase youth support initiatives for high school-age students who identify as LGBT or ally.

“When we provide a safe and nurturing environment for our younger generations, we are one step closer to achieving real change,” said Jen Hsu, executive director of the OutCenter.

The mission of the OutCenter is to provide support to LGBT and allied persons and families, and to advocate for greater understanding and respect throughout Berrien County. Located at 132 Water St. in Benton Harbor, the OutCenter is open Wednesday to Friday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information or to become a volunteer, please visit www.outcenter.org, call 269-925-8330 or email inquiries to info@outcenter.org.

Saginaw Pride Banquet to honor local activists

SAGINAW— The third annual Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet is on June 28 at Saginaw’s Andersen Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Dr. across from Ojibway Island. BTL co-publisher Jan Stevenson will deliver the keynote address.

The cost is \$25 per person or \$15 for students and people with limited funds. The evening starts with a Rose Garden reception at 6 p.m., followed by dinner catered by The Savoy Grill. The awards ceremony starts at 8 p.m. The event is produced by Perceptions, the LGBT organization for residents of the Tri-Cities area (Midland, Saginaw and Bay City). Go to <http://perceptionssv.org/pride/> for tickets and more information.



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West Michigan Pride ‘a day of celebration’

LGBTs enjoy upcoming festival – even on the conservative side of state

BY JEREMY MARTIN

GRAND RAPIDS— From the Medical Mile to Art Prize, Grand Rapids certainly has a lot to be proud of. But on Saturday, June 18, it will be West Michigan’s LGBT community who will take center stage during the 2011 West Michigan Pride Festival.

The festival will bring messages of tolerance, caring and acceptance to Grand Rapids’ River Side Park. Despite the notion of West Michigan as a conservative enclave, West Michigan Pride President Linda Stuba sees the festival as a day of celebration and joy as opposed to activism and education.

“I think it’s more of a day of celebrating for us. We don’t get very many protesters. We had none last year and the year before that we only had one. It’s really positive, a lot of fun energy,” Stuba said.

Part of this fun energy stems from the festival grounds itself. Located on the banks of the Grand River, the festival exudes a more laid back, casual vibe than many of its younger counterparts.

“Hayworth’s (a local furniture store) comes in they pick this area off the beaten path a little bit, and people can come sit in their chairs and just kind of hang out,” Stuba said. “It’s an atmosphere where people bring blankets and watch the show. It’s really kind of cool there.”

This year’s festival includes plenty to watch. A wide range of musical styles will be represented, including folk band Nervous But Excited, vocal performances by the West Michigan Gay Men’s Chorus, rock music by The Potatoe Babies and more.

“One of the things that I really like (is that) The Potatoe Babies draw a very straight crowd and they come to our festival and it’s just really nice how we all work together. We have a lot of allies and it’s getting much, much better,” Stuba said.

Besides enjoying music on the lawn, festival goers can shop for food and goods from a number of local vendors and artisans. And of course it wouldn’t be the West Michigan Pride Festival without a drag show or two.

But just because the majority of attendees

“My wife and I feel very comfortable walking hand and hand down the Grand Rapids streets without harassment, along with many of our gay friends.”

—West Michigan Pride President
 Linda Stuba



Performers at last year’s West Michigan Pride. Photo courtesy of Linda Stuba.

are looking for fun doesn’t mean there isn’t some serious work to do in the area, and that’s why West Michigan Pride exists.

“It’s still a little struggle,” Stuba said. “We don’t have out and out aggression towards us, tolerance is the word. They (the straight community) tolerate us. But a full embrace? No, we still have issues.”

West Michigan Pride is working hard to achieve that full embrace, partially through celebrations like its pride festival, and partially through year round activities and activism. Events like the Diesel fashion show, the gay movie, and the alternative prom all gradually raise awareness of LGBT issues in the mainstream media and in the minds of community members.

Stuba and company aren’t alone. West Michigan Pride will be joined by Equality Michigan, The Center for Inquiry, Bridge Evidence Group, GR Red Project, PFLAG of Holland and several other local and regional advocacy groups who are banding together to raise LGBT awareness in the West Michigan area.

“Has there been any progression in Grand Rapids towards the LGBT community?” Stuba asks. “My partner of twelve years and now wife of nine months and I feel very comfortable walking hand and hand down the Grand Rapids streets without harassment, along with many of our gay friends.”

In fact, Stuba and her wife Amy were recently featured in The Grand Rapids Press wearing their West Michigan Pride t-shirts, a photo that was taken the couple attended a downtown event.

“This is big because even as of last year that would have never happened. I am excited about this and hopefully this is a sign of the times,” Stuba said.

Every victory, big and small, is a reason to celebrate, which is why Stuba hopes for a record turnout at this year’s festival, an event that is entirely volunteer driven, and created through donations both private and corporate.

Fifth Third Bank, Barefoot Winery, Steelcase, Herman Miller and many others local and national sponsors make the event possible.

The 23rd annual West Michigan Pride Festival June 18

Where: Riverside Park, Monroe Ave. NE, Grand Rapids
 When: Saturday, June 18
 Cost: Free to enter
 More: www.westmipride.org

Entertainment schedule

- 1 p.m. Opening & Ace Award
- 1 p.m. Equality Band of Michigan
- 2 p.m. Drag Show
- 3 p.m. Nervous but Excited
- 4 p.m. West Michigan Gay Men’s Chorus
- 4:30 p.m. Ben Walter
- 5 p.m. LVNMUZIQ
- 6 p.m. Drag Show
- 7 p.m. Alexis
- 8 p.m. Potatoe Babies

Becoming visible on the job

MI-GOAL works to change the homophobia often found in police culture

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Back in the early 1990s, when R. Cole Bouck was working in the Michigan Department of Corrections, he found himself suddenly forced out of the closet.

For a couple of months, it made his life hell. “I wasn’t hiding, I hadn’t necessarily led a secret life, but it wasn’t something that was out there,” he says. He survived the harassment, but “after that, I made a commitment to myself to do what I could to make sure that nobody else would go through that.”

Bouck is the founder and president of MI-GOAL, the Michigan Gay Officers Action League. Just over a year old, its 13 members are working to make LGBTs more accepted in the traditional, macho culture of the public safety professions.

A top-down approach

“The attitudes filter down from the top in law enforcement,” says Erin Linn, an officer in Meridian Township and MI-GOAL’s treasurer. “It’s a paramilitary organization. We have a chain of command.”

Bouck, who now works as an administrative assistant in MDOC’s central office, has spent the past year talking about MI-GOAL to any leader who will listen: “Chiefs, directors, state police – you name it,” he says.

When he calls to set up meetings with those leaders, he’s been met with a variety of reactions. Some are enthusiastic about MI-GOAL, some are hesitant and some don’t call him back.

He’s taken this approach, instead of just seeking out other public safety workers who may be LGBT, because, well, they’re hard to find.

“In our profession, being a very conservative, traditional culture, people are very reluctant to be obvious or to be out, more so than other professions,” he says. “So it’s hard to know who the (LGBTs) are.”

To the hesitant leaders, Bouck tries to explain that public safety professionals, who trust coworkers with their life and safety, shouldn’t have to worry that their sexuality will affect how they’re supported or treated – especially in dangerous situations. “Macho environment or not, it’s about them being able to be relaxed and do the best they can do and be the best they can be, every day, being who they really are,” he says.

At the very least, Bouck encourages them to distribute MI-GOAL’s pamphlet, either via email or on paper. Many have agreed, which Linn says is a positive development: “So that every single employee in our agency can at least know we exist. Whether that applies to themselves or they can recommend it to a friend or coworker, right now that’s our main effort.”

Healing the relationship with LGBT citizens

“The LGBT community historically has not had a positive perception of law enforcement, and rightfully so,” Linn says.



MI-GOAL was the second-highest fundraising team at the 2010 Lansing/East Lansing AIDS Walk. Photo supplied by R. Cole Bouck.

“I think MI-GOAL can work very hard to change that perception. And build a bridge between the LGBT community and law enforcement to try and repair some damage.”

One way MI-GOAL is doing that is by getting police officers to march in the Michigan Pride parade this weekend.

Michelle Bryant, a detective and LGBT liaison for the Lansing Police Department, says she’s been asking supportive coworkers to walk alongside the MI-GOAL float. As far as Bryant knows, this is the first year the parade will have police marching in support.

As of press time, she knew of six officers who pledged to walk in the parade, but she hopes for more. “I’m confident that we’ll have a good

show of support there,” she says.

Bouck also wants to partner with other agencies to offer trainings for public safety workers, with the goal of getting them more comfortable with LGBT coworkers and the LGBT citizens they protect. He says MI-GOAL could create its own trainings, or it could step in and contribute to diversity trainings offered by organizations such as Equality Michigan.

No matter how great a diversity training session may be, ultimately “cops want to hear from cops,” Bouck says.

Linn agrees: “Law enforcement is a very closed community. It makes a difference coming from one of their own.”



“Macho environment or not, it’s about them being able to be relaxed and do the best they can do and be the best they can be, every day, being who they really are.”

—R. Cole Bouck, founder and president of MI-GOAL

Change takes time

Changing the police culture won’t happen overnight, just like creating MI-GOAL didn’t happen overnight. The organization, which is a chapter of a national organization called LEGAL, Law Enforcement Gays and Lesbians, was a wish of Bouck’s for ten years.

Bouck now calls his unexpected on-the-job outing “the best thing that ever happened to me.”

Since his outing, Bouck fought for – and won – the right to attend LEGAL conferences on company time. Initially, his request to attend the LEGAL conferences was denied, although other professional conferences for other minorities were approved. Bouck also slowly gathered support and established MI-GOAL, and now he’s slowly and steadily gathering support for MI-GOAL in precincts across the state.

This means that when he says he’ll follow up with a police chief who is hesitant about distributing MI-GOAL pamphlets, he means it.

How does he keep up his energy, especially when change seems to happen so slowly?

“I can’t afford to give up,” he says. “I can’t imagine not doing this work. I can’t imagine nobody doing it.”

Learn more about MI-GOAL at <http://www.mi-goal.com>.



NEWS ITEM: FOX NEWS CEO ROGER AILES HAD BOMB-PROOF GLASS INSTALLED IN HIS OFFICE TO PROTECT HIM FROM "THE GAYS."

RTM Editorial

Without a doubt, Motor City Pride was a wonderful success

Those who planned, organized and ultimately pulled off Motor City Pride's debut in Hart Plaza this past weekend deserve our heartfelt thanks and praise.

We must congratulate Equality Michigan, the Motor City Pride Planning Committee, Motor City Pride Chair Dave Wait, the slew of corporate sponsors, the vendors, the exhibitors and the hundreds of volunteers who made last weekend's festival a true success.

Before the festival took place, there was plenty of negative energy surrounding the changes. People hate change. We're creatures of habit. And the move to Hart Plaza offered plenty of change for anyone to dislike: A change of scenery, from a safe suburb to a big city; a bigger space; two days of events instead of one. Even those of us who were excited were also nervous – kind of like the way you feel when you move into a new house and try to make it feel like home.

But our community has to get used to change. We can get stuck in a rut, in our safe places, where we curl up and refuse to grow. Last weekend in Detroit was all about growth. If we want society at large, and the laws that rule us, to be more accepting and protective of our community, well, the fact is we're just going to have to put ourselves out there more. And sometimes, that means being a little uncomfortable.

Last weekend, many were worried about safety, violence, harassment and protesters. But none of those fears came true. Instead, police officers and security guards sauntered lazily

Our community has to get used to change. We can get stuck in a rut, in our safe places, where we curl up and refuse to grow. Last weekend in Detroit was all about growth.

around as the crowd – more than 44,000 people over the two days – met, mixed and mingled with each other, exhibitors and vendors. For many festivalgoers, it was their very first pride festival, and they enthusiastically planned to come back.

We sincerely hope that you attended Motor City Pride last weekend. We hope that you put yourself out there and enjoyed the events and the new space that so many people worked so hard to prepare. We hope you made yourself at home.

Because Hart Plaza is now our space too. Because Detroit now has our mark. We are a community, and we're only getting stronger, louder and prouder. It only gets better from here.



RTM The Gay Moralist

BY JOHN CORVINO

When gender matters

Many years ago I was invited to present a paper at a philosophy conference. As usual, a respondent was assigned: a Professor Robin Somebody (I don't recall the last name). I found out about the assignment by mail, and I remember wondering immediately, "Is Robin a man or a woman?"

This was in the pre-Internet days, so I couldn't do a Google image search. But I told myself that it didn't matter, and let it go.

Then Professor Robin's comments arrived, and I had to write a rejoinder. What pronouns should I use?

And it wasn't just about pronouns. For some strange reason, it became important to me to mentally categorize Professor Robin correctly. Even though our papers had nothing to do with sex or gender, I wanted to imagine the author in the correct "voice."

Mind you, we often supply authors with "voices" that are way off-base even apart from gender: for example, we give "old" voices to young authors, or deep calm voices to exuberant ones. But of all the details we require of, or provide for, others, gender seems fundamental. We treat it as being necessary even in contexts – like philosophy colloquia – where it clearly shouldn't matter.

Professor Robin and I were trading arguments; we weren't shopping for clothes or visiting the restroom. Nevertheless, until the day Professor Robin called me and left an answering-machine message in a distinctively male voice (Pheh!), I stressed out about his gender.

I recalled this experience when reflecting on the case of Kathy Witterick and David Stocker, the Canadian couple who are aiming to raise their baby Storm in a gender-neutral way.

Witterick and Stocker have decided that Storm's biological sex is not something that strangers need to know right now, and that Storm's gender identity will emerge when the child is old enough to assert it. Witterick's explanation and defense of their decision, in the face of some truly nasty attacks, is a must read.

I admit: when I first heard about this story, I thought "That's just weird."

Sure, gender identity sometimes diverges from biological sex, and it's great that Storm's parents are sensitive to that fact. But I worried that, in a well-intentioned attempt to avoid imposing gender expectations on the child, they were instead imposing social confusion.

Having studied Witterick's explanation, I no longer have that worry. (Before you pass judgment, you should read it too.) On the contrary, I think Storm is very lucky to have such parents, even if as a parent I would likely make different choices.

To be clear: Witterick and Stocker are not insisting that Storm's gender be kept private

indefinitely. Rather, their decision is "a tribute to authentically trying to get to know a person, listening carefully and responding to meaningful cues given by the person themselves." Storm will assert a gender when Storm is ready.

To the extent that I worry about Storm – and all children – it's because the ensuing backlash has reminded me of how far our society has to go in terms of gender acceptance.

The fact is that I no more need to know Storm's sex or gender than I needed to know Professor Robin's. Neither do you, unless

perhaps you're Storm's pediatrician.

And while some find it inconvenient to learn gender-neutral pronouns like "ze" and "hir," that inconvenience is a minor price to pay for breaking free of some ugly gender-rigidity.

Make no mistake: gender-rigidity can get quite ugly. Witness some of the responses to Storm's case.

Take Mitch Albom, whose inspirational confections like "Tuesdays with Morrie" suggest an author with some human sensitivity. Apparently that sensitivity evaporates where gender nonconformity is involved. In his syndicated column, Albom responds with a transgender-phobic, intersex-ignorant screed, reducing the complexity of gender to what's "evident in the first pee pee" and describing gender-reassignment surgery as asking a doctor to "mangle" one's private parts.

What's more, he ridicules Witterick and Stocker for allowing their older son Jazz to dress in pink, paint his nails, and wear an earring. Albom compares such harmless self-expression to letting a child play with a chainsaw or sit in its own excrement.

The more this case prompts such stupid reactions, the more I think Storm's parents have a point.

There are obviously boundaries that are important to a child's safety. ("Don't touch the stove.") But the package of assumptions we impose with gender expectations says far more about our own prejudices than about children's needs.

Although Storm's parents may be taking the "no assumptions" approach to an extreme, they invite us to question why gender matters to us so much in cases where there's no clear reason that it should. Is our rigid pink and blue approach really best for children?

It's a good question. If only we could muster the sanity and sensitivity to formulate a thoughtful answer.

John Corvino, Ph.D. is a writer, speaker, and philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His column "The Gay Moralist" appears Fridays at 365gay.com. Read more at www.johncorvino.com.



The elected Prom Court at Affirmation's Youth Prom, an annual celebration which gives LGBT teens the ability to celebrate the rite of passage in an accepting environment. Photo supplied by Affirmations.

Prom on the beach

Affirmations annual Youth Prom gives LGBT teens an accepting environment to be themselves

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE— It was a beach blazin' good time for the more than 75 teenagers who attended the Youth Prom at Affirmations on May 29. Dancing with friends in their flip flops and swimwear, the youngsters were able to celebrate prom comfortably among friends and allies.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer youth came out for the annual celebration that marks the beginning of summer. "We had dancing, food and other yummy treats in our Tiki Hut, a.k.a. the Cyber Center,

ShutterBooth for photos, volleyball and other beach games in our Sand Box, a.k.a. the Community Room," said Kim Phillips-Knope, Affirmations' program director. There was also a luau and "survivor night" theme to the party. A king, queen and ace were crowned without regard to gender labels, and a sporty red convertible was on loan from General Motors for the night so attendees could have their picture taken in style.

The youth program is supported by a grant from the United Way and by the support of community members who donate to the center.

A sporty red convertible was on loan from General Motors for the night so attendees could have their picture taken in style.

Jewish Gay Network series continues

Senior issues in focus

WEST BLOOMFIELD— The Jewish Gay Network of Michigan is offering a series for older LGBT adults, Twice Blessed: Modern Family – You and Your Loved Ones, that addresses the unique issues facing LGBT families as they age.

The Twice Blessed Modern Family program continues with part two, Securing Your Finances, on June 9 at 7 p.m. in the Atrium of Henry Ford Hospital in West Bloomfield. Twice Blessed co-chair Marjory Miller believes older LGBT adults, along with those who haven't yet reached senior status, can "use this event to become aware of the possibility of financial exploitation and how to avoid it." Guest speakers will be Laura Champagne, executive director of Citizens for Better Care; Stacey Cassis, assistant vice president and senior financial advisor of The Spickler Group at Merrill Lunch; and Beth Correa, senior vice president of retail banking at Comerica Bank.

Part three of the program addresses what you need to know about inpatient hospital care for LGBT patients, partners and caregivers before the need arises. Health Care: Choosing Options and Communicating with Professionals will take place in the Henry Ford West Bloomfield Atrium on June 16 at 7 p.m. This event features a discussion of examples of sensitivity and care that should be routine with regard to patient care and families of choice, but often are not. Topics will include the latest rules concerning DNR orders, what LGBT patients need to know to ensure their wishes are met in a hospital setting and helpful communication guidelines for professionals.

The final event is Celebrating Our Diverse Community through Story and Song, which takes place on Monday, June 20 at 7 p.m. at the Kahn JCC in West Bloomfield. "This session will focus on creating a caring and accepting community for older adults, whether they are gay or straight," said Judy Lewis, JGN executive director. Tickets for this series are \$10 each or \$35 for the entire series. Pre-registration is encouraged. Information can be found on the JGN website, www.jgnmi.org/events but walk-ins are welcome. Continuing Education Credits are offered for this series. See website for details.

Older adult summit June 12

FERNDALE— Affirmations Community Center will host another Older Adult Summit on June 12.

The event is the second part of a series designed to bring together older LGBT adults to discuss ways that the community can best support and provide services.

The meeting is hosted by a coalition of community members and organizations who are interested in better serving the needs of our LGBT older adults, including: the ACLU of Michigan, Adult Well Being Services, Affirmations, Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Citizens for Better Care, Equality Michigan, Jewish Gay Network, the Jim Toy Community Center and MediLodge of Southfield.

The event takes place from 1-4 p.m. at Affirmations, located at 290 West 9 Mile Road. To register, call 248-812-9202 or go online to www.goaffirmations.org.

APM's Solstice to raise funds for HIV/AIDS

TROY— Summer Solstice III, hosted by Baker, is AIDS Partnership Michigan's major fundraiser on June 11 at the Michigan Design Center in Troy. The soiree includes a strolling dinner and wine provided by some of the area's trendiest restaurants, live jazz by the amazing Ben Sharkey Trio and a live and silent auction. Tickets are \$95 and include dinner and wine. Order tickets at 313-446-9809 or online at www.aidspartnership.org.

APM is Michigan's largest agency serving people with HIV/AIDS. Programs include the Michigan AIDS hotline, case management, youth services, education and advocacy.

Churches welcomes partners at Michigan Pride

LANSING— Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ of Lansing is partnering with First Congregational UCC of Grand Ledge and Edgewood United Church of East Lansing to host a group of booths at the 2011 Michigan Pride Festival at Lansing's Burchard Park.

The UCC denomination has a long history of inclusion, and was the first mainline Protestant denomination in the U.S. to ordain an openly gay person as a minister in 1972.

Pilgrim, First Congregational-Grand Ledge and Edgewood are joining together at Pride to stand up for the LGBT community and provide a welcoming and affirming faith presence. The churches will provide a space for people to sit and relax, as well as an area where people may receive the Christian sacrament of Communion. The Communion table will be open to all who seek to know the presence of Christ, regardless of faith background or church affiliation.

For more information, visit www.pilgrimUCC.com, www.fcgl.org, and www.edgewoodUCC.org.

What did you think of Motor City Pride at Hart Plaza this year?

A million times better than Pride last year. Not jammed in the streets like cattle. A big, beautiful fountain to cool off in (and watch the eye candy cool off in). I visited some of the local sponsors as a thank you before the festival each day, too. It felt like an actual festival, and not a small-town street fair. Best... Pride... EVER!
-Steven P. Schonfeld

I didn't go because it was in Detroit.
-Robert Garchow

Pride was wonderful! Just because it's Detroit shouldn't be a reason not to go. It was peaceful! Your loss.
-Diana LaSalle Dunbar-Martinez

I have to say that it was more festive and it was more of a bigger vibe this time around. It felt like there was more of a diverse crowd. I like that there was more room for people to dance. I think having it in Downtown Detroit was better than having it in Ferndale. I'm already looking ahead to coming back next year.
-Jerome Brown

Very nice venue. I missed Ferndale a lot but this was a great replacement. I felt safe and very welcome the entire day.
-Randy Hasso

I love Ferndale and participated in Friday night's activities, but I really enjoyed how spaced out it was in Hart plaza, especially with a stroller in tow.
-Julie McKeeman

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

 **Join the conversation ...**
 Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

30th anniversary of HIV/AIDS



Pat Quinn

"We are showing the world that the people of Illinois believe in equality for all. We look forward to individuals and businesses from across the country choosing to move to Illinois where we believe that everyone is entitled to the same rights."

—Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, after signing the legislation legalizing civil unions in Illinois that took effect on June 1, articles.cnn.com. Civil unions or their equivalent are now legal in Illinois, California, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington and the District of Columbia.



Kai Wright

"It began as the gay disease, then it became the poor disease or the drug addict's disease; it is time we recognize that as black people, this is our disease. When we talk about the state of the epidemic, first, you have to accept it for the fact that it is a black problem and it has been for the past decade. In whatever way you chop it up at this point ... black people seem to rise to the top of those numbers. We cannot talk about 'who is on the down low'. What we need to do is have conversations about how to get black women and men to take charge of their health so they are safe no matter who they are having sex with."

—Kai Wright, writer and activist, quoted in a column titled "AIDS Turns 30 Years Old Today, Blacks Still Afraid To Talk About It," theloop21.com, May 17.



Jeff Krehely

"The Center for American Progress survey found that 9 of out 10 voters erroneously think that a federal law is already in place protecting gay and transgender people from workplace discrimination. A similar number of voters also did not know whether their state had a gay and transgender workplace discrimination law. These numbers show the huge disconnect between voter perceptions about workplace protections and the realities that gay and transgender people face on the job."

—Jeff Krehely, in a column titled "Polls Show Huge Public Support for Gay and Transgender Workplace Protections," about a new poll from the Center for American Progress of likely 2012 voters in the first and second weeks of April 2011, americanprogress.org, June 2.

"Despite our longstanding knowledge of how HIV is transmitted and prevented, a total of 1,074,364 people have been diagnosed with AIDS nationwide and by the end of 2008 more than half had lost their lives to the disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates about 50,000 people are infected each year, more than half are MSM, and almost half are black/African American, and today more than one million people are living with HIV in the U.S.; roughly 20% of whom are undiagnosed."

—Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, in a report titled "Thirty Years of HIV in the United States," lapublichealth.org, June issue.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

The Great Bumpkin Recounts!

You're not going to believe this, but – no pun intended – do bare with me. Truth is stranger than biblical fiction. Right on the dot, May 21, at 6 p.m., I had the biggest orgasm I've ever had in my whole life. It wasn't total rapture (with a capitol R), but it was damnably close. It was, however, heavenly. Yes, heavenly. Probably as near proximity to that eternal venue reserved for true believers as I'll ever get. About 30 seconds worth.

If it – the long-lasting, loquacious, erotic luxury in my loins – was by way of compensation for not being one of the elect (but a loving, caring, fun-loving human being nonetheless), all I can say is the intensity, duration, wave after wave of mind-blowing pleasure – O God! don't stop! – well, it snapped my garters!

I suppose there's poetic justice that occasioned my unmasked for release of tension, worry, fear of eternal damnation, retribution, unmitigated revenge at the hands of an angry deity (with a surprisingly loving son), but I just happened to have my Good Book opened to the story of Onan who spilled his seed on the ground. Well, one good gardening tip just led to another!

My disappointment – if indeed I was disappointed when actually I was bewitched, bothered, bewildered – all of the above, none of the below – was that there was hardly a tremor on the Richter Scale. The much touted, promised 8.5 logarithmic shocker, worldwide crash down, rip open, tectonic, plate warper, "vengeance is mine" earthquake just didn't happen. (God as spoilsport, the Weather Channel might say.)

What's this world coming to when we can't trust those who have a pipeline to the Big Trio Upstairs? I, for one, don't mind a little white lie now and then, but, for Gee-Whiz sake, when May 21, "That's All There Is Folks!" turns out to be a Jonah-and-the-Whale whopper, it's enough to make one lose faith in the fundygelical experts.

If they can't be trusted who on earth can?

Thankfully, Rev. Camping – who lovingly announced to all and Sunday, er, sundry, that the world as we know it was going to be no more – did give us ample time to get our affairs in order (not that I for one have had one affair lately let alone several). That was decent of him. And, one supposes, very Christian too.

It speaks well of the rev that he was willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of generous tithe and 300 Ks donation money – the Lord loves a cheerful giver! – to warn everybody to "shape up, so you can ship out" on the Good Ship Lollypop, headed for the Big Pie in the Sky, in the twinkling of an eye: to be eternally bored in one grand, never ending singspiration.

O, if only I could carry a tune, other than "Hello, Dolly." Probably the next best thing to do is just militantly hum along "Onward Christian Soldiers" until Oct. 31 rolls around. That's Rev. Camping's fine tuned revised standard version Doom's Day date.

Cynic that I am by nature and trade I suspect that the Halloween extension deadline's just a ploy to get gays to stay home and pray and not get in frills and go out and party. It's no secret that God Hates Gays and will do anything to spoil an internationally sanctioned holiday outing for them. Drag or no drag.

All joshing aside. Truth of the matter is that in some polymorphous perverse way we owe a debt of gratitude to the likes of Rev. Camping, Rev. Fred Phelps, the faith-for-profit TV faith healers, their mentally retarded right-wing ilk. As role models their actions speak just as loud as their watchwords. TOTAL IGNORANCE IS BLISS!

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Creep of the Week

American Family Association

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Well, it's June, which means it's officially Gay Pride Month. And I do mean official. President Obama declared it himself, which I think is a pretty important endorsement.

Not only is June time to come out of the closet, it's time to haul out all of your rainbow paraphernalia. Hang that flag from your porch. Slap that colorful cowboy decal on your window. Bust out the "I'm not gay but my boyfriend is" t-shirt or the one that says, "Chapstick lesbian." Put that rainbow dog collar on your beagle and walk him on his rainbow leash. If you're really serious, pin a pink triangle to your lapel.

The goal is to make yourself as conspicuous as possible so that you can lure children and young adults over to the gay dark side. All under the guise of showing your pride.

Needless to say, anti-gay groups like the American Family Association are none too pleased with June being pride month, and they're especially pissed about Obama's official declaration (though he's not the first president to have done so).

Because to the AFA, LGBT Americans are nothing more than orgy-seeking sex addicts and are therefore not deserving of any civil rights, let alone Obama's Pride Proclamation.

And no wonder they're pissed. Just look at how the Proclamation begins: "The story of America's (LGBT) community is the story of our fathers and sons, our mothers and daughters, and our friends and neighbors who continue the task of making our country a more perfect Union."

My gosh, the way Obama talks about it, it's as if he'd been talking about real people who actually contribute something to the country. Imagine that.

Obama continues, "It is a story about the struggle to realize the great American promise that all people can live with dignity and fairness under the law. Each June, we commemorate the courageous individuals who have fought to achieve this promise for LGBT Americans, and we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation

or gender identity."

This, of course, is not something the AFA will let stand.

Enter the AFA's Ed Vitagliano and Buster Wilson to set the record straight.

Instead of "normalizing" homosexuality, something they claim Obama is doing, they believe it's important to keep marginalizing it as much as possible. Keeps gay people self-hating and meek.

Vitagliano explained what's at stake in a world where gay people are treated like fellow citizens deserving of rights: "We're talking about a return to pagan sexuality, a pagan view of sexuality that says that it doesn't matter with whom you have sex and that God's laws do not apply to us and there are no absolutes

when it comes to sex."

Wow.

Does this guy know every gay person here or what? With how sex-crazed they are, it was only a matter of time before someone figured out the Big Gay Pagans plan. Coming soon to a neighborhood near you.

Wilson

then mentions

the 30th anniversary of the AIDS epidemic, which Obama also mentions in his proclamation, and says he doesn't want to be criticized for saying that AIDS is a gay disease right before saying essentially that.

Vitagliano concurs and says that AIDS is a result of "the abuse of the body and the flouting of God's laws about human sexuality."

They also piss on marriage equality and the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and say that America's decreasing discrimination against and oppression of homosexuals is evidence that the country is turning its back on God.

But don't get them wrong. "We don't support discrimination against anyone. We don't want anyone harmed or bullied," Wilson says. "God loves everyone."

That's right. The AFA, which calls itself "The Culture War Machine," means gays no harm. They just think gays are AIDS infected sex addicts out to destroy the military, marriage and God. And it's not discrimination if God is telling them to do it.

Fed study: LGBT youth more at risk

Youth more likely than straight peers to use drugs, experience violence, commit suicide

BY DANA RUDOLPH

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to be at increased risk for unhealthy behaviors, according to a new study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those unhealthy behaviors include tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use, sexual behaviors that could lead to infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, attempting suicide, and violence.

The study, titled "Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12 in Selected Sites – Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2001-2009," was released on June 6. It represents the first time the federal government has conducted such a far-reaching analysis of LGBT youth.

Researchers analyzed data from "Youth Risk Behavior Surveys" of seven states – Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin – and six large urban school districts – Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee, New York City, San Diego and San Francisco. The CDC funds these surveys of high school students every two years at the national, state and local levels.

States and school districts may choose to collect data on the students' sexual identity (heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or unsure), the gender of their sexual contacts (both genders, opposite gender only, or same gender only) or both. The states and districts studied by the CDC had collected data on sexual identity and gender of sexual contacts for at least two survey cycles.

The CDC found that gay and lesbian students (and those who have sex only with a person of the same gender, regardless of how they identify themselves) had higher risks than heterosexual students in seven of 10 major health risk categories: behaviors related to violence (which could include not going to school because of safety concerns), attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management.

Bisexual students (and those who have sex with both genders, regardless of how they identify themselves) had higher risks than heterosexual students in eight of the 10 categories: behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries (such as not wearing a seatbelt), violence, attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management.

LGBT students showed no significant differences from their heterosexual peers in nutrition or amount of physical activity.

Dr. Laura Kann, chief of the Surveillance and Evaluation Research Branch within the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, said that she attributes the "disproportionate" risks of LGBT youth to the social difficulties they face, such as stigma, discrimination, and rejection by their families. This creates an environment that contributes to their "disproportionate"

"If youth are going to thrive in their communities and in their schools, they need to feel safe socially, emotionally, and physically."

–Dr. Laura Kann

health risk behaviors.

"If these kids had physically, emotionally acceptable environments – home, school, community, it's unlikely that they would be practicing health risk behaviors at these rates," she said.

She noted that their increased risk of being involved in violent behaviors is "not because of who they are, but because of what they're pushed into." She said it's a response to the social disapproval, rejection and bullying they may face.

The CDC findings confirm previous studies conducted by other researchers, including the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's 2009 National School Climate Survey, which found that nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the previous year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation.

A study in the May 2011 issue of the Journal of School Health found that anti-LGBT bullying at school is strongly linked to negative mental health for its victims. Among those risks are an increased frequency of suicide attempts and increased risk for engaging in behaviors that can lead to infection with STDs and HIV. The

increased risks exist not only while the victim is in adolescence, but also in young adulthood.

Based on its report, the CDC recommends:

–Improving public health and school health policies and practices to create "safe and supportive environments for sexual minority students." These policies might include ones to address stigma, discrimination, family disapproval, social rejection and violence.

–Providing professional development programs for school staff and others who work with sexual minority youth.

–Adding questions about sexual identity and the sex of sexual contacts to youth risk behavior surveys in other states and districts. The CDC itself encourages states and districts to include such questions in their surveys, but does not require them to do so. In 2009, 10 states and 7 large urban school districts added questions to their YRBS questionnaire about sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, or both.

"If youth are going to thrive in their communities and in their schools," Kann said, "they need to feel safe socially, emotionally, and physically. The schools and communities need to take concrete steps to establish these safe and supportive environments."

She added, "I think this is a multifaceted problem that can be addressed at multiple levels."

Congress is now considering eight bills that would help protect LGBT youth and reduce bullying and harassment of students because they are or are perceived to be LGBT. They include the Student Nondiscrimination Act, Safe Schools Improvement Act, the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act (in both chambers) and the Successful, Safe and Healthy Students Act and Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act in the Senate. But the success of the bills with a Republican-controlled House remains unlikely.

The CDC released its report in conjunction with the federal government's first-ever summit devoted to LGBT youth, "Creating and Maintaining Safe and Supportive Environments for LGBT Youth" in Washington, D.C.

The event was hosted by the Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services.

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Illinois civil-union law takes effect



Thirty-five same-sex couples got hitched in Chicago's Millennium Park on June 2 as Illinois' comprehensive civil-union law came into force. Front row, from left: Arthur Johnston, José (Pepe) Peña, Pat Ewert and Vernita Gray. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald/Windy City Times

Illinois' civil-union law came into force June 1. Couples lined up early in the morning at the county clerk's office in Chicago to pick up paperwork. Then, by law, they had to wait one day before tying the knot.

The following morning, 35 couples got hitched at ceremonies in Millennium Park in The Loop. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Gov. Pat Quinn attended the celebration.

"To be here not protesting, here in the sunlight in Millennium Park in front of the mayor and governor, it really is remarkable," veteran Chicago activist Arthur Johnston told *Windy City Times*.

Johnston co-founded Equality Illinois, which lobbied for the civil-union bill in the state Legislature in Springfield. He tied the knot with his partner of 38 years, José Peña. The couple are owners of the popular Boystown bar Sidetrack.

"This is one of the most important bills that has been passed in anyone's memory," Gov. Quinn told the couples and several hundred spectators.

The Illinois law grants civil-union couples all the state-level rights and obligations that married people have. It also recognizes same-sex marriages and civil unions from anywhere else in the world as an Illinois civil union.

Interestingly, such recognition could have a downside for some people.

Jill Metz, board president at the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, warned in an online posting: "If you married or civil unioned a person with whom you are now no longer in a relationship and you have not legally dissolved the relationship, please be aware that, as of June 1, 2011, you are civilly unioned in Illinois and our domestic-relation laws apply to you. In other words, as of June 1, you may have marital property and obligations for maintenance with this other person. You need to file for a divorce!"

Some anti-gay activists said they hope to repeal the civil-union law. Longtime activist Peter LaBarbera said "homosexual behavior is always wrong" and "homosexuality-based 'rights' and religious freedom cannot co-exist."

Same-sex marriage is legal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Washington, D.C. Same-sex marriages from elsewhere are recognized as marriages in Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island and California (if the marriage took place before Proposition 8 passed).

and Mexico (where same-sex marriages are allowed only in the capital city but are recognized nationwide).

U.S. states with civil-union laws that grant all state-level marriage rights are California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington. Four other states have gay-union laws that extend some rights of marriage: Colorado, Maine, Maryland and Wisconsin.

The situation in California is noteworthy. Same-sex marriage was legal from June to November 2008, when voters amended the state constitution via Proposition 8 to put a stop to it. The couples who married then are still legally married, as are other same-sex couples who live in California and got married anywhere in the world before Prop 8 passed. Gay couples who married somewhere else after Prop 8 passed, or who marry elsewhere in the future, receive every state-level right and obligation of marriage in California except for the legal right to call their marriage a "marriage" when they are in California. They are not recognized under the state's domestic-partnership law, but rather are married couples who are denied use of the word "marriage."

The Illinois law grants civil-union couples all the state-level rights and obligations that married people have. It also recognizes same-sex marriages and civil unions from anywhere else in the world as an Illinois civil union.

Eleven other nations allow same-sex couples to marry – Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden

Officials denounce ban, crackdown on Moscow Pride

European and U.S. officials have denounced the Moscow government for banning gay pride for the sixth year in a row and violently arresting people who defied the ban.

France's Foreign Ministry said Russia has an obligation to protect freedom of speech and assembly and is violating a European Court of Human Rights ruling.

Council of Europe Secretary-General Thorbjørn Jagland said, "The right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as enshrined in Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, belongs to all people without any discrimination."

The U.S. State Department said: "We note with concern that in Moscow on Saturday, May 28, a peaceable demonstration of Russians advocating for

the rights of gays and lesbians, joined by international supporters, was forcefully disrupted by counter-protesters, and that Russian security forces then detained people from both groups, including American citizens. Some protestors were seriously injured according to media reports. Freedom of assembly is a fundamental right all members of the OSCE committed to, including in the Moscow declaration and as recently as the Astana summit. As nationwide legislative elections approach, constraints on the ability of Russian citizens peacefully to gather and express their views will be closely watched in evaluating the integrity of the electoral process. We call on Russian authorities to work with municipal officials to find better ways to safeguard these fundamental freedoms."

Undeterred by the April ruling from

the European Court of Human Rights that banning Moscow Pride is illegal in multiple ways, the city blocked the May 28 gay pride parade for the sixth time. Activists responded by trying to rally near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and City Hall. They were violently arrested.

Activists said the Council of Europe, of which the court is a part, must respond by terminating Russia's voting rights within the association.

In ruling against the Moscow government, the Euro Court said that previous years' gay-pride bans by then-Mayor Yuri Luzhkov violated the European Convention on Human Rights in the areas of freedom of assembly and association, the right to an effective remedy and prohibition of discrimination.

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Madonna: UNCENSORED AND UNREAL

Lucky star talks impersonating gay icon and Michigan Pride performance

BY ANDREA POTEET

“There’s nobody like Madonna,” Melissa Totten says. “I may be able to capture a moment, but no one can touch her.”

Totten does not look like Madonna. She used to, she says, but not anymore. But despite her professed lack of likeness to the pop queen, the Virginia native has been striking a pose in Madge’s image all over the world for nearly 20 years.

“I think I used to, quite naturally,” she says of the resemblance, punched up for shows with makeup, costumes and a painted-on gap in her teeth. “But we have both changed.”

As a marketing student in Chicago in the early ’90s, Totten was one class shy of graduating from Columbia College, when one of her professors suggested an unorthodox project to help complete her degree – marketing herself as

‘Madonna’

6 p.m. June 11
Michigan Pride
Burchard Park in Old Town, Lansing
www.michiganpride.org

a Madonna impersonator. When she saw a news clip about a celebrity impersonator show that was in town, she called for an audition and found out it was taking place in her apartment building.

“I hopped on the elevator with some Russian Red on my lips, went to the top floor, and faked it,” Totten says. “Sometimes you just have to follow the signs.”

The impromptu audition landed her a six-month spot performing as Madonna on a Royal Caribbean cruise ship and launched her career,

which has included stints in the Las Vegas production “Legends in Concert” and Germany’s “Stars in Concert.”

“Being in huge shows is great, but that is generally Elvis territory when I’m in a show with a variety of acts,” Totten says. “He’s like the meat on the sandwich, and I’m sort of like the lettuce. Or a pickle. I work hard there, and painstakingly design my costumes to a tee, but it was more or less just the handful of gay boys who would notice.”

Now, she performs in mostly gay venues, promoting her two CDs, 2008’s dance-heavy “Forever Madonna” and her latest, “Madonnacious,” chronicling some of the star’s biggest hits and hidden gems.

“The response has been really incredible,” she says of the gay clubs. “At first it was daunting, because gay folks are fiercely protective of their

icons. But I think in the end, Madonna isn’t gonna walk in and perform for you up close and personal, so people just take it for a bit of fun and entertainment when I walk into a club and perform.”

Totten is particularly excited to perform in Madonna’s home state, when she returns at 6 p.m. June 11 to perform at Michigan Pride (other performers include Dawn Robinson of En Vogue and native Detroitier Sista Otis). She last visited the area years ago as part of Detroit Madonnafest but hopes this performance goes better.

“A producer slapped an absolutely ghastly wig on my head, and I was pretty crappy. No, I was absolutely horrible. It was a joke,” Totten says. “Hopefully there is no expiration date on redemption. Performing at Pride events can be the most energizing experience, even with jet lag. I hope everybody is up for it. I know I will be.”

See Madonna, page 28

Fun with Fred



B-52s frontman on being out in the '80s and new live album

BY VINCE FARIN

For just over 34 years, the B-52s have been crashing parties with their infectious brand of dance music. Their most recent studio release, "Funplex," hit stores in 2008. We caught up with founding member Fred Schneider in the wake of the B-52s' Michigan show on June 16 at DTE Energy Music Theatre.

Schneider, the man with the wacky sprechgesang, spoke candidly about bathroom music, table-dancing with the Go-Go's and "idiots like Sarah Palin."

How many records do you have?

Way too many. Thousands. I need to start donating them.

Where do you store your collection?

Shelves, my mother's house, the basement...

You worked at a record store in Athens in the '70s, right?

Yeah, I worked at the first record store in Athens called Ort's Oldies. Ort would always come in and go, "Fred, I can't stay here. I've got to get out." So, he'd go out all day and I'd be there pricing records at 60 cents or a dollar for records that were worth \$100! (Laughs)

Is it much easier being gay now than when you first came out?

Oh yeah, because nobody was out and you didn't want to lie. It was different. I mean, that's basically all you can say. You had to be there. What most people

would do was get rich and then come out, but nowadays people are being braver and coming out earlier. There's still the bashing and the hatred, especially with all of these Republicans. They're all just a bunch of haters.

When did you come out?

The '80s. In the early '90s I would say it in interviews, but it wasn't like I wore a badge or anything.

If you would have been straight, what band would you have been in?

I can't imagine any band but the B-52s. I mean, I used to write with Keith (Strickland). We have basement tapes which formed the nucleus. Later on, the B-52s used some of the songs to a degree. My way of writing is so quirky. If I try to write something commercial it's usually a failure.

What's an example of a song you wrote that didn't have the commercial success you expected?

Well, I wrote a bunch of songs for Sophie Ellis-Bextor. Most of them she never used, so I'm going to take all of those back

and use them for somebody else. I don't understand what is commercial anymore, so I am the worst one to ask. (Laughs)

I thought a lot of the songs on "Funplex" were really, really good, but I don't think "Funplex" should have been the single to be honest. I thought the single would be "Eyes Wide Open," or something else. There are so many good songs and then the record label tanked and just screwed us.

Are there plans for a follow up to "Funplex"?

No plans yet, but you never know.


There's a rumor going around that you have been working on a live B-52s CD/DVD of the 34th anniversary show. Is this true?


Yes. We are actually putting on a lot of the finishing touches, and we will hopefully finish it by July. We recorded 23 songs – 22 worked out – in Athens and filmed it. I don't know when it is going to come out, but it's going to be on Sony.

For those who don't know, would you mind talking about the Superions?

In addition to the B-52s, which is my main focus, I have another band called the Superions. We just like to do whatever. It's more free form and then we pull it in, but we'll do serious songs, humorous songs... whatever happens happens. Our Christmas album got rave reviews around the country and even made it into The New York Times list. We're working on a new album now, as we speak.


See B-52s, page 26

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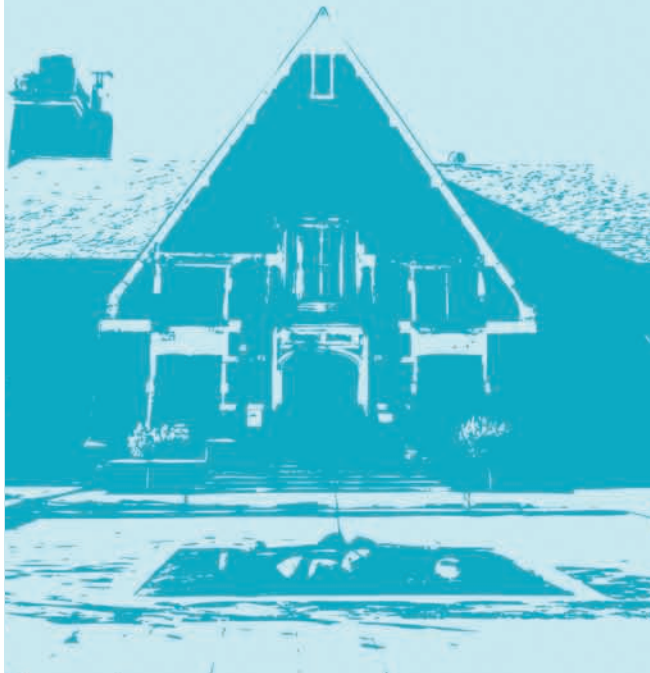
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► **B-52s**

Continued from p. 24

I heard somewhere that the Superions are the most exciting group to hit the music scene since Lady Gaga. How do you guys handle the fame?

Yeah, that's what I said! (Laughs) I wrote our press release. It is true.

The Superions just had a gig DJing at the Atlanta Zoo. How did that go?

It was their biggest attendance ever, so we were very excited about that and very happy for them. It's a great little zoo.

How do you go about getting a gig at a zoo?

They approached us, because I DJ. I've been DJing for charities for a couple of years and they like the music I pick, so somebody asked if the Superions could do it and we said yes. More than 2,000 people showed up, and it's a good cause.

Any plans for a more "formal" tour with the Superions?

We first have to get enough songs for a set and then we have to figure out how we'd do it, because it is Dan, Noah and me. Dan works the keyboards and the computer, Noah plays everything electronically and I write all of the lyrics and work on arrangements and coming up with some beats. I guess it would be more like Pet Shop Boys, because you know, you don't have the band. It's just two of us with computers, so you have to figure out a way to make it more interesting than just me standing there and them

doing the drums and keyboards electronically.

How would you make it more interesting? A light show?

Friends of mine had a band in Chicago and their light show was hysterical and really fascinating to watch. So, I think I'd model it on that. You know, take the focus off me. (Laughs)

Will the next Superions album be recorded in the bathroom, like your first single, "Totally Nude Island?"

No, we've graduated to the hall.

What's it like in the hallway?

Not as claustrophobic as the bathroom. (Laughs) Hopefully the sound is even better. I mean, I actually really like the sound we got from the bathroom.

You'll be in Michigan soon. Do you plan on doing anything while you're in town?

You know what, I don't know how long I'm going to be there, but I have a lot of friends in Michigan.

Do you have any Michigan memories?

Hanging out with my friends Greg and Leon who had a store called Penny Pinchers. Also, hanging out with Martha Reeves of Martha and the Vandellas – my favorite band of all time. I still see her.

You will be at DTE on June 16 with the Go-Go's. I remember the B-52s toured with the Go-Go's in 2000. Any crazy stories about the Go-Go's?

Back in 1985 when they were wilder – that

would have been when we played Rock in Rio – dancing on tables and stuff like that.

You have written poetry books in the past. Any plans for future books?

I put all my lines in my songs now. If I think of a line – now that we have notes on our cell phones – I just type in a note, but I used to handwrite everything and carry a notebook. I do pretty much everything by phone and my mind has changed a little bit. (Laughs) I wish I could write more poetry like I did.

What do you mean, your mind has changed?

I don't know. I just... now that I'm so busy and have so many stresses and so much work and whatever, the only time I really just let go is if I am creating with a band – especially now with the Superions – it's sort of free form. I let things flow and listen back to see what I did. I work that way.

So, technology has changed your writing?

Yeah, I mean, I'll still write things down, because unless you backup everything, or print it out, you can lose it on your stupid cellphone. Oh, there's a really popular musician Aleks Syntek and the B-52s have a song with him that will be coming out in Spanish. I like the Spanish version better than the English.

Well, you speak Spanish, right?

Yeah, it's gotten rusty, but I can totally get by. I can read it better than I can speak it. Language is a good thing and Americans don't bother to learn other languages and now we have idiots like Sarah Palin taking people's intelligence

away from them.

What does the future hold for Fred Schneider?

The Superions and the B-52s. Everybody enjoys their private lives and the B-52s will keep things going.



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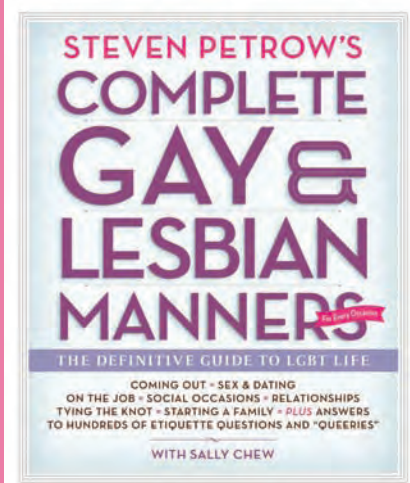
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► **Madonna**

Continued from p. 23

Totten never dreamed her life would include a uniform of cone bras and baggy suit pants; she just aimed to have an interesting life. So far, that’s included more than a few cases of mistaken identity, like during a late ’90s layover in Tahiti when a photo shoot on a beach led to a press battle to get photos of “Madonna” before she left the island. Unaware of the media maelstrom, Totten headed to the airport the next morning to continue onto the French island of New Caledonia.

“All I know is that when I arrived at the airport at around 6 a.m. the following morning it was an absolute mob scene,” Totten says. “I asked the driver what was going on, and he said that they were all there for me. People from every direction were putting flower leis on me until I had no neck left. I was swatting bees away from my head. And camera flashes. When I showed my passport to security, he just laughed and shook his head.”

On that same flight, Totten’s resemblance to the superstar earned her upgrades from economy class to business class, and eventually to first class, before she was offered the ultimate plane seat.

“And then, ladies and gentlemen, they let me sit in the cockpit as we landed,” she says. “They let me take pictures, and kept looking back at me, smiling and gesturing.”

For her stage shows, Totten, who moved to England in 2008, said she doesn’t keep up with every fashion move the icon makes, but tries to incorporate some of her favorite styles. Her current tour borrows some looks from Madonna’s



Who’s that girl? It’s Melissa Totten – Madonna’s look-alike.

“Confessions Tour.”

“Most Madonna drag queens get every single look together as it comes out to keep current,” she says. “I don’t keep a huge closet full of gear anymore, and I don’t keep up with every look. I wait until something sticks. I live in England. Walk-in closets are just a blur of my American past.”

Next, she hopes to condense a Las Vegas-style production into theater-style venues and record some more Madonna remixes with American and European DJs. A month-long tour based on Madonna’s “Confessions” and “Sticky and Sweet” tours is also planned for Spain and Portugal in August. Her Lansing date is one of her few U.S. stops these days.

She said she doesn’t want to tour as Madonna forever, but plans to keep up with her career until she wears out her welcome.

“After 20 years of doing this for a living, I can definitely imagine doing something else,” Totten says. “I didn’t think I’d be at this for very long, but the phone keeps ringing. I’ll know when it’s time.”

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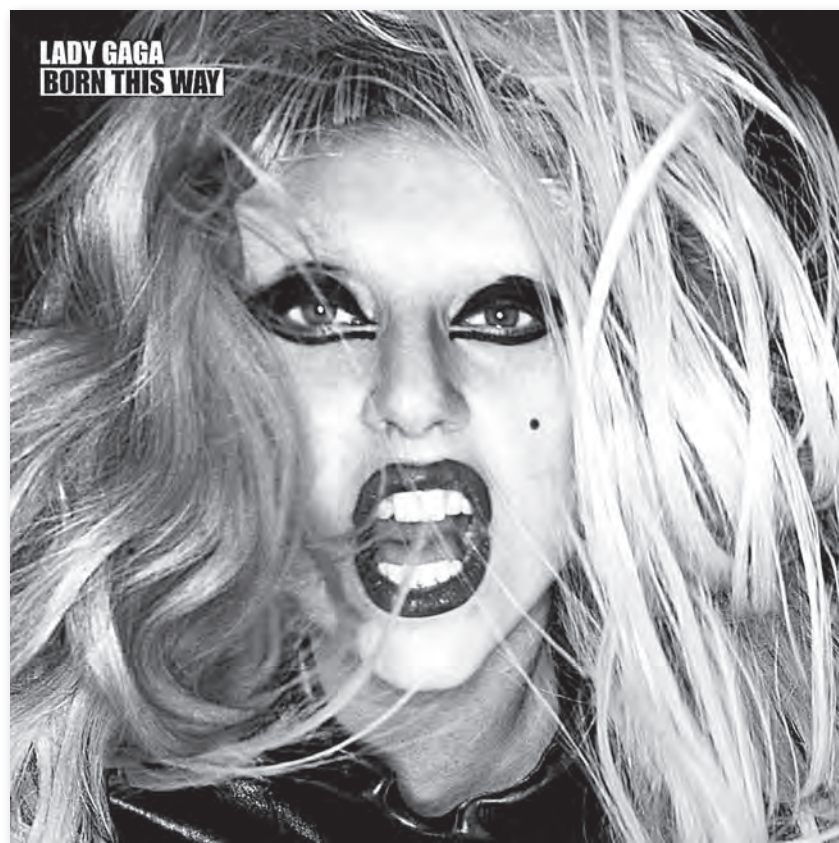
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Lady Gaga's gay gospel, 'Born This Way.' Plus: Matraca Berg's must-hear comeback CD



Lady Gaga, 'Born This Way'

The third album from pop's poker-faced ingénue isn't quite album-of-the-decade deserving, as the star herself claimed it would be, but dear Gaga, it's gotta be the gayest. Gaga's message of self-love in the face of adversity isn't just part of the "Born This Way" emancipation proclamation, on which she celebrates all kinds of queers with kitschy ridiculousness that only Mother Monster could pull off. She does it again on the surging "Hair," her mane weirdly a metaphor for freedom from oppression. Those songs, and almost every other club anthem on this very gay gospel of Gaga, come at you like a wrecking ball: big beats, bigger vocals and concert-made credos of liberation, religious or otherwise, that never let up. The vagueness of "The Edge of Glory" does it a favor, reflecting some of the cheesy best of '80s pop with its totally ambiguous narrative and second coming of the sax. "Scheiße," with mock-German jargon and techno sheen, could be the theme song for a "Brüno" sequel (couldn't you just see him doing the catwalk to it?); the aggressive "Bad Kids" is dirtied up in a hard-edged melody that's also sweetly endearing for all you naughty rebels. But all's not tip-top: "Americano" is a second-rate "Alejandro," and "Marry the Night" probably works better live. More moments like "Bloody Mary," an easy-going song about a bad romance, would be a welcome

reprieve from the exhausting anthems. Ultimately, "Born This Way" is strong enough for the everyman but made for the monsters. Two paws up. *Grade: B*



Matraca Berg, 'The Dreaming Fields'

Blessed with a sterling voice, it's a wonder we haven't heard more from Matraca Berg in the last 14 years. That's how long it's been since the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee, who typically works behind-the-scenes and has written hits for such country heavyweights as Martina McBride and Reba McEntire, released any new material of her own. Thankfully, the wait is over. One of the best albums of the year, Berg's "Dreaming Fields" is mellow singer-songwriter music for the soul, mirroring legends like Emmylou Harris and Carole King with stellar writing and Berg's voice – a mellifluous sound that knows how to get lost in a song. When she poignantly recalls pre-suburban pastures on "The Dreaming Fields," you wanna go back in time; when she mourns the death of a loved one on "Racing the Angels," you wish you could bring that person back. Given her songwriting credits, none of

it's that country – even with a song title as Southern-cooked as "Your Husband's Cheating on Us," a saucy number about a two-timer, the breather in the set. The rest of "Dreaming Fields" is built on intense emotions of nostalgia and heartbreak, mourning a relationship's imminent end on "Clouds" and escaping an abusive one on "If I Had Wings." "A Cold, Rainy Morning in London in June" closes this marvelously moving album on just piano and strings – and if there were any doubts that Berg should be a bigger deal, this is the song to change that. *Grade: A-*

Also Out



Brad Paisley, 'This Is Country Music'

For as big of a country superstar as Brad Paisley is, he sure doesn't act like it. More than ever his latest LP casts him as the dude next door, where his sign-of-the-times songs – about unemployment ("A Man Don't Have to Die") and sweating the small stuff ("One of Those Lives") – are right in line with his image. The title track is awkwardly self-congratulatory, but one of the better songs on the album. All in all, though, this one's no "American Saturday Night," his last LP. But it's not a bad way to spend the rest of the week.



Brad & Lopatin, 'Channel Pressure'

It's back to the future for this Brooklyn electro duo, formerly of Games. Glitchy synths and spastic drum machines – both which fold into greatness on "Too Much Midi (Please Forgive Me)" – take center stage during the production team's space-rock opera, a conceptual story about their teenage years. It's a long one, dragging out the musical ADD just a few songs too much, but some of the '80s-drenched throwbacks – especially "World of Regret," a stuttery whomp rhythm with electro squiggles and fluttery vocals – are as fantastically old-fashioned as cut-off shorts.

Reach Chris Azzopardi at chris@pridesource.com

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Dating Diet

BY ANTHONY PAULL

Till the World Ends

I don't get it. Allen Ginsberg writes poems about assholes and is declared one of America's most influential poets, and when I do the same thing, I get kicked out of newspapers. Is my asshole that appalling? Well, it was appealing in college. And according to some bathroom scrawls, it still is.

But I'm not allowed to brag. At my age, I should know better. I should also know not to wear panties when I run low on boxer briefs. But that hasn't stopped me. I keep doing it. I find it sexy, even if the guys at the gym disagree. I don't know what their problem is. My panties contain the same cotton found in good, old-fashioned boy briefs. What's the big deal if I model them in public?

"Um, it's a BIG deal, because they're not meant to hold penises," my assistant Skip tells me. "How do you keep it from flopping out?"

"Please. It's not that big. I just wear a woman's large instead of a medium."

"You're working too much," Skip surmises. "That's why you're acting like this. You can't bust out in panties at the gym. Most people would consider that a biohazard."

"Well, I'm not most people."

Skip agrees, stating I've become far too removed from the public, that I don't know how to interact with normal people. I'm too busy making films and conducting flashy interviews, chatting with celebrities who are too fabulous to pump their own gas.

"Please. I'm nothing like them," I state. "I can't even afford gas."

"True, but you're always on that computer. You need to get out more. Are you going to the Harvey Milk Festival?" he asks.

I think, yes. Of course! What a great way to support equality, spend time with my boyfriend, and hang with normal people.

Too bad, at the event, I don't quite know how to interact. In the midst of indie rock stars, I find myself talking about the upcoming Rapture, how it would be a great opportunity for a photo op. Those of us left behind, we can star in a glossy magazine spread with A-list locusts and the ghost of Britney Spears. "Do you think God would find that offensive?" I ask the band MeteorEYES. "You know, trying to capitalize on the end of the world? Isn't that what Britney did with her last single?"

In return, I get a few awkward glances in the VIP tent, where the "who's who" drink champagne while snacking from an imported cheese tray that costs more than I make in a week. But hey, I'm just so fabulous. At least that's what Skip says. I'm so amazing I don't know how to interact with people. Yet somehow, I interacted with enough of them to help him land a gig at the festival. You see, Skip's a musician, and he's really talented. But today, he's also really mad because his band mates forgot to show up. Well, at least in human form. Skip did get a text from one of them.

"You looking?" the text said.

"Looking for what?" Skip replied. "Where are you? We have a gig!"

Apparently, his band mate had forgotten

about it even though they scheduled a month ago, practicing weekly. But hey, at least he remembered to cruise Skip right before the performance.

"He's not cruising me," Skip insists.

I don't quite know how to interact. In the midst of indie rock stars, I find myself talking about the upcoming Rapture, how it would be a great opportunity for a photo op. Those of us left behind, we can star in a glossy magazine spread with A-list locusts and the ghost of Britney Spears.

"And you say I'm the one with communication problems? What do you think he's doing? He's trying to SCREW you."

"But we're friends. We've been in a band for six months," he says. Blink, blink, my eyes go, as I stare at him with a neutral expression. "You're wrong. That's gross!" Skip says. Leaving my side, he gears up to perform alone.

During his set, I listen to Skip strum his guitar, but I'm not thinking of chords. Rather, I'm tuned into my very own discord. Maybe I don't know how to relate to the world. At times, I feel left behind even without the Rapture. I just can't comprehend the actions of others. How is it that we can ask for sex over a phone but we can't ask for a date in person? What's more embarrassing? I have all of these friends who are waiting, wishing someone would ask them to dinner, but it never comes. It's zero to sex. If this guy is interested in Skip, why didn't he make a move after practice? I mean, it's not hard. You linger. You initiate small talk. You introduce alcohol, and voila, you kiss. If you're smart, you might even get laid. You see, there are building blocks to a relationship. Have we all been hiding behind our computers for so long that we can't navigate in the real world of sex on anything less than the rate of hi-speed Internet? Without a pod or a pad attached, I fear we're losing touch.

Still, after the set, Skip assures me there's hope.

"I got another text," he says. "You're right. He spelled out what he wants this time."

"And did you reply?"

"Not in a text," Skip smirks. "If he wants sex, he needs to ask for it in person. Until then, forgetting to reply is the best way to remind him he needs practice."

March To The Capitol

Sat. June 11th @ 11am

March Lineup at 10am
March Steps off at 11am
(See Map for Route)

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Rally at The Capitol Steps

Sat. June 11th

Following the March 12pm-1pm

- Mayor Virg Benero (invited)
- Kathie Dunbar
- Judith Kovoch (confirmed)
- Gov. Rick Snyder (invited)



Commitment Ceremony
Following the Rally
(Register online)



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Sat June 11th / 11am-8pm

Festival in Burchard Park in Lansing's Old Town



Pop Goes the Gio Show
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Kim Sorter
3pm

Baby Gaga
4:30pm

Sean Ensign
5pm

Mellisa Totten
as Madonna 6pm

Sista Otis
7pm



3:30pm
Main stage

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Mister ‘Manners’

Steven Petrow talks new book, crazy questions and importance of LGBT etiquette for straight people

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

For years, Steven Petrow’s been answering your questions about gay and lesbian life – everything from social-media etiquette to surviving the holidays. Now, he’s answering ours. The nationally syndicated writer, known for his “Queeries” column (which runs monthly in *Between The Lines*), recently released his latest book, “Steven Petrow’s Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners,” an ultimate go-to guide for LGBT living. In it, you’ll find real-world advice on coming out, dating, starting a family and entertaining with flair.

We caught up with Petrow, who talked about the most popular questions (sex ones, of course) and the best advice he’s ever received.

Why did you start giving advice?

In the past five years, there’s been this explosion of change both in our community and in the world. And because of my first manners book, folks tracked me down and started emailing me all kinds of questions – like, how do two grooms dress for their wedding? how does the child of two moms refer to his sperm donor? and lots of questions about coming out, dating and, yes, sex. I was answering them personally when I decided to start my monthly column. That was three years and thousands of questions ago.

I have to say I really enjoy trying to help LGBT people navigate through these new and uncharted waters – and especially young ones. Two-thirds of the people who visit my site – gaymanners.com – are 13 to 19 and just coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity. I take this advice-giving business pretty seriously.

Have people always come to you for advice?

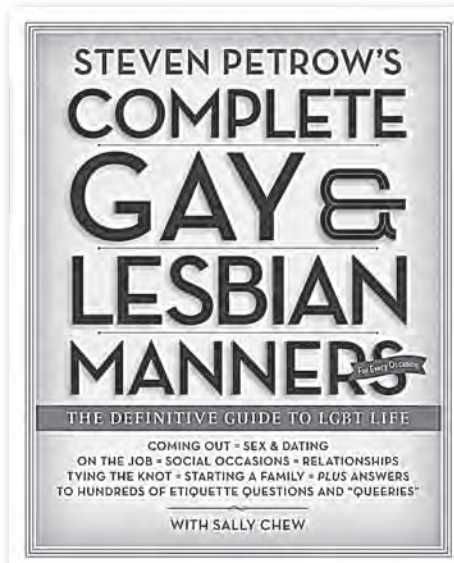
(Laughs) Yes, friends have long said that I was wise beyond my years – but I also thought they were just trying to kid me that I was old. More seriously, I’d say yes, but with close friends I try to ask them questions that will help them figure out stuff for themselves. I don’t pretend to be – and I’m not – a know-it-all.

What was it like putting this book together? How long did it take?

You should ask my partner. Actually not! From soup to nuts this was nearly a three-year process and it took center stage in my life. It was hard – and yet the second most rewarding professional project I’ve ever done; top on that list is “Dancing Against the Darkness,” my first publication, one of the earliest books about the impact of the AIDS epidemic.

How much of your advice comes from personal experience?

That’s a curious question. I did tons of interviews with various experts. I also relied



Steven Petrow

7 p.m. June 21
Schuler Books & Music
2820 Towne Center Blvd., Lansing
TBA, June 22
Common Language Bookstore
317 Braun Court, Ann Arbor
www.gaymanners.com

heavily on my Facebook fans and friends so that I had a lot of input into my thinking. But sure, some of the advice came from my personal experiences – but often it wasn’t what I did, it was more along the lines of what I wish I had done. In case others haven’t told you, I’m far from perfect.

What are the hardest questions to answer?

I’d say these fall into two categories. The most challenging – and wrenching – to me are those from young gay people who feel alone, are being ostracized, even bullied. From my own life experience, I have such empathy for them and do my best to connect and suggest local resources that might be helpful right now.

The other “hard” questions are those from people who don’t want to take responsibility for their actions and write hoping I’ll lay all the blame on their boyfriend or girlfriend, even their parents. For these people, it’s always someone else’s fault. Guess what, it’s not.

What are some of the craziest “queeries” you’ve received?

I’m not sure if you mean the question this way, but I get a lot of queeries from straight people and I’m sometimes just amazed about the things



Steven Petrow’s newest book, “Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners,” was released this month. Photo: Bryan Regan

they ask. Questions like: “Who’s the man in the relationship?” Please, that’s no one’s business – and, by the way, not everyone is a pitcher or a catcher.

I get a lot of sex queeries, too, like an early one about “the etiquette of fellatio.” I’ll spare you the answer here, but believe me, I’ve learned a lot about the human experience. And I wasn’t especially naïve!

How is this book different than “The Essential Book of Gay Manners and Etiquette”?

That little book, “Gay Manners,” came out in 1995. Sixteen years ago, it reads like it’s a century old. This was before online dating and personals, chat rooms, instant messaging and even widespread cell phone use. I wrote it before “Ellen,” “Will & Grace,” “Queer Eye” and “Boy Meets Boy”; before *The New York Times* and the 200 major dailies began publishing gay and lesbian wedding announcements; before Massachusetts and California voted thumbs up on same-sex marriage. In other words, a lot has changed!

What are you most commonly asked about?

The big three: Coming out. Relationship issues. And weddings. Hands-down.

Why are gay manners important for people who aren’t gay?

It’s not as though they inhabit different universes and it’s not as though we set the table differently or treat our houseguests better, or worse. But when you read the traditional etiquette books, LGBT people are practically invisible. That’s why we need a book like this to help with our modern-day dilemmas. And the same is true for straight people. I’ve gotten questions like, “What do I say when someone comes out to me?” “*Thank you for telling me. That’s wonderful to know.*” “Is going to a same-sex commitment ceremony different than a straight one?” “*Not so much overall, but definitely in the details – and in most states gay can’t legally marry.*” Straight folks want a guiding hand because they don’t want to say or do the wrong thing.

What’s the best advice you’ve been given?

You may find this incongruous for someone who’s just written a book about manners, but a beloved professor of mine in graduate school always reminded us: “Break a rule every day!” At least I know now what rules I’m breaking.



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From Stork to Finish



Marius Iliescu and Stefan Mantyk in "Glengarry Glen Ross." Photo: MBMorgan Photography

Gutsy choice serves as opening of Epicenter Theatre Group

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

A week ago I had never heard of the Epicenter Theatre Group. Yet there I was last night at the opening performance of its first-ever production. Although new additions to Metro Detroit's ever-exploding professional theater scene are popping up on a regular basis these days, what surprised me most about this particular group was the gutsy choice the founders made for its debut offering, "Glengarry Glen Ross."

Written by powerful wordsmith David Mamet, the 1982 script is a testosterone-fueled, character-driven drama that many longtime, established producers would never add to their schedules – thanks not only to the difficulty of the material (or its strength, depending on your point of view), but also the countless f-bombs planted therein. But there's no denying Mamet is a master when it comes to writing sharp, insightful dialogue; "Glengarry Glen Ross" is among his most significant work, earning him the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Welcome to the rough-and-tumble world of shady real estate salesmen – where lying and cheating are nothing more than typical tools of the trade. These are not your friendly neighborhood Century 21 agents, but rather a hard-charging company of unscrupulous predators who will say anything and do anything to turn a lead into a sale – and who will gladly get in your face to register their displeasure. There are no boundaries they won't cross to strike a deal and earn their commission; that's what they live and die for.

The first act is set inside a Chinese restaurant frequented by the salesmen. Three separate scenes introduce us to the main characters. In the first, one-time top dog Shelley Levene (Michael Gillespie) tries to convince office manager John Williamson (Matthew Forbes) to pass along the hottest leads so he can get his groove back on. Levene, it seems, is not producing, and an office contest dictates the loser will be fired. Next, hothead Dave Moss (Marius Iliescu) and nervous Nellie George Aaronow (Stefan Mantyk) don't like the pressure they're working under, so Dave announces he has a plan: If George will break into the office later

REVIEW

Glengarry Glen Ross

Epicenter Theatre Group at The Varner Hall Studio Theatre, Oakland University, Rochester. Friday-Sunday through June 12. \$20.

www.epicentertheatregroup.org

that night and steal the batch of premium leads, Dave will sell them to a competitor – and they'll split a \$5,000 fee he has arranged. George doesn't like the plan, but blackmail often works wonders. Finally, smarmy Ricky Roma (Marco Zaccagnini), the reigning office champ, works his charm on an unsuspecting dupe, James Lingk (Paul Jagoda).

Act II opens the following day. The office has been ransacked, Detective Baylen (Tonino Zaccagnini) is interrogating the suspects, and the day pretty much goes to hell from that point on!

What makes "Glengarry Glen Ross" such an attractive project is the beauty of Mamet's rhythmic dialogue. It moves at the pace of a speeding freight train, abruptly stops, changes tracks and direction, and then picks up speed once again. That's also its greatest danger, however. Directors and actors who tackle the script must carefully parse the playwright's words, determine their obvious and not-so-obvious meanings and then deliver them in a way that sounds natural to the listeners' ears. What might appear easy is anything but.

And although I was riveted to my seat throughout Steven O'Brien's production, that certainly became obvious as the night progressed.

What struck me at various times throughout the performance was how unnatural the dialogue sounded. In a few cases, the actors worked too hard to enunciate clearly and hit certain consonants too hard, or the lines hadn't been assimilated enough to become conversations rather than rote line delivery. And one actor's affectation – unnaturally elongating certain words, especially those that ended a sentence – drove me nuts.

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

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Augusta Barn celebrates 65 years of hits

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

The Augusta Barn Theatre celebrated its 65-year history and the re-opening after a dark summer with a revue designed to raise the roof. Performed in the bar/rehearsal hall, "The Great Big Bar Show" was an intimate affair that surrounded the patrons with non-stop musical favorites performed by amazingly well-trained voices that made nearly every number a show-stopper.

Throughout the night, the performers and hosts maintained an easy rapport with the audience, sharing with them bits of history and treating each person as a long-term supporter of the Barn. The pre-show period had the apprentice company in full costume moving through the audience and serving drinks and snacks from the full bar. They exhibited tremendous teamwork that many actual foodservice establishments would do well to learn

REVIEW

The Great Big Bar Show

Barn Theatre, 13351 W. M-96, Augusta.
Tuesday-Sunday through June 12. \$20.
269-731-4121.

www.barntheatre.com

from. Even as bartenders, the company was performing and completely committed to the entertainment.

Indeed, "fully committed" would be an excellent way to describe both the apprentice company and the Equity performers. Whether bartending, singing, acting or talking to the audience, there was never any hesitation or anything less than complete commitment to whatever the moment called for.

The show's hosts, Eric Parker, Emily May Smith and Roy Brown, opened the show



Katrina Chizek and Apprentice Company in the number "All that Jazz" from "Chicago." Photo: Barn Theatre

with a number designed to win everyone's hearts and to exult in the successful return of the company. The number was "As if We Never Said Goodbye" with the apprentice company singing "Another Openin' Another Show" as a medley within it.

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

Clean, simple, powerful: 'Pony' at the Rep

BY JOHN QUINN

Have you heard the one about the kid faced with a room full of manure and is found digging through the pile with gusto? "There's gotta be a pony here somewhere," he says. "Looking for the Pony," now at the Detroit Repertory Theatre, is the title of Andrea Lepcio's play concerning breast cancer, but it is a mistake to think that there's any bright side to a killing disease. "Looking for the Pony" is, rather, the story of a woman with indomitable will who will not give up her passion for life. It's the story of family who is there when you need them, regardless of the inconvenience. It's also, sadly, the story of the hurdles and pitfalls, the inefficiency and indifference that the gravely ill encounter when at the mercy of "the system."

Lauren and Eloisa ("Oisie") are step sisters, about five years apart.

REVIEW

Looking for the Pony

Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Thursday-Sunday through June 26. \$17 in advance; \$20 at the door.
313-868-1347.

www.detroitreptheatre.com

Oisie, dreaming of a career as a writer, contemplates returning to grad school. Then Lauren is diagnosed with a malignant breast tumor. Rather than roll over and die, Lauren fights for her life, staying on top of the loves that defines her existence – her husband, her two boys, her career, her faithful sister. The rest of the characters are played by Lulu Dahl ("Woman") and Hank Bennett ("Man"). What a motley bunch of characters they are! Agitated co-workers,



"Looking for the Pony" closes the 53rd season of the Detroit Repertory Theatre. Photo: Bruce Millan

peripatetic clients, incompetent doctors, egotistical teachers, shifty lawyers, shifter insurance adjusters – one might hope they'd all get shut up together for the ultimate season of "Big Brother."

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

'Endangered' issues a timely warning

BY JOHN QUINN

In preparing the nominations for the Wilde Awards I was struck by the number of "dark comedies" presented this season. One of the darkest – as in "bear's-belly-at-midnight-in-the-dark-of-the-moon" dark – is "Endangered," premiering at Planet Ant Theatre. It's also a wicked piece of satire.

Local (resident of the "pseudo-suburb" of Redford) playwright Sean Paraventi and I probably find ourselves in the same predicament. We're paying for some 150-odd channels of cable TV and there's not a damn thing worth watching. In lieu of acceptable entertainment, he writes plays and I criticize them. You didn't think we're in it for the money, did you? Others, though, might take more aggressive measures to improve the landscape of the "vast wasteland."

Hapless tree-hugger turned eco-terrorist Joe (Josh Campos) arrives

REVIEW

Endangered

A Late Night Show at Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck.
Friday-Saturday through June 18. \$10.
313-365-4948.

www.planetant.com

at the headquarters of The American Educational Channel. Driven by ratings, what was once a citadel of quality wildlife and ecological documentaries has turned to the dark side. It's now a trash bin of "reality" shows; Joe wants "nature" back. As fate would have it, in the office of the vice president for programming he meets Leigh (Kristen Wagner), mother of 20 and the star of the channel's top-rated show. When VP Arnold Swenson (Dan Jaroslaw) and his executive assistant Brad (Eric Niece) arrive, Joe draws a gun and



Kristen Wagner and Josh Campos in "Endangered." Photo: Gerrick Reidenbach

takes the trio hostage. Unfortunately, the increasingly manic Joe is not a man with a plan. He begins to rely on suggestions from his captives for his next step – how to get his message heard.

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

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings



The Forum Foundation, a 501c(3) organization dedicated to the funding of an established endowment used to grant education scholarships to qualified LGBT students of Michigan, hosts their annual Diamond Jack's Cruise Fundraiser on June 17.

The Detroit River tour provides a variety of hors d'oeuvres, a DJ, cash bar and raffle tickets all raising funds for LGBT college students. The cruise runs 8-10 p.m. Tickets cost \$40 and are available via P.O. Box 3073, Centerline and at Just 4 Us and Five15. Boat location is provided with ticket. For more information, call 586-573-9932 or visit theforumfoundation.org.

Music & More



Glee! Live! In Concert! is touring across North America this spring, bringing 13 cast members of Fox's hit television show to perform, sing and dance for the show's millions of fans.

"Glee" co-creator Ryan Murphy promises the concert will include live performances of some of the show's most memorable musical numbers from seasons one and two, including "Empire State of Mind," "Toxic," "My Life Would Suck Without You" and "Don't Stop Believin'."

Glee! Live! hits metro Detroit at 7:30 p.m. June 13 at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Tickets, from \$52.50-\$92.50, are available at ticketmaster.com. For more information, visit gleetour.com.

Theater

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre will present the hauntingly beautiful musical "Miss Saigon," directed by Wendy Sielaff, June 9-12 at UM's Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor.

"Miss Saigon" takes place in Vietnam near the end of the war. A Vietnamese showgirl and an American GI fall desperately in love. As Saigon falls around them, the two lovers struggle to find a way to stay together as their world collapses. Inspired by Puccini's "Madame Butterfly," the music and story weave a tapestry of beauty amid chaos, and hope amid the travesties of war.

Performances are 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Friday, Saturday and Sunday tickets are \$22, with tickets at \$20 for seniors and \$12 for students. On Thursday only, all seats are \$17.

Tickets and information are available through the A2CT office at 734-971-2228.



OUTINGS

Wednesday, June 8

LGBT in the Park, 5:15 p.m. Social network for southeastern LGBT and allies to socialize through discussions and events. Meet every 2nd Wednesday of the month. June's meeting topic: Celebrating pride all year. LGBT in the Park, W. Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 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 St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. kgllrc.org

Equality Action Tour, 7 p.m. A discussion of discrimination against gay and transgender Michiganders. A coalition of advocacy organizations is launching its Equality Action Tour, a series of town hall events to promote equality for all in Michigan. A town hall meeting featuring: Buzz Thomas, Denise Brogan-Kator and Shelli Weisberg. Unity Michigan, Food Dance, 401 E. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. 586-360-7854. august@unitymichigan.org

Thursday, June 9

Meet 'n Greet, 7 p.m. Meet new people, socialize and discuss age-relevant issues. Dinner at local restaurant afterwards. Ages 18-33. Metro Detroit LGBT 20Somethings, 222 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. the20somethings.org

Friday, June 10

"Why Cant I Tell Them I Have HIV?" 5 p.m. Gain valuable skills in managing some of the life issues that come from living with HIV. AIDS Partnership Michigan, 2751 East Jefferson, Suite 301, Detroit. 313-446-9820. Cpeeples@aidspartnership.org

Older Lesbians Organizing, 7 p.m. Provides older Lesbians with the chance to meet like minded women in their common struggles, to share mutual interests and to play and work together. Meets the 2nd Friday of every month. Older Lesbians Organizing, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. jasmithers@sbcglobal.net

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Funny Ladies part 1. Thirty-two of the world's funniest comediennes provide laughs in this ultimate collection of women in comedy. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

The White Party, 9 p.m. One wristband purchase for access to four venues. Participating Bars: Party in the Park, Burchard Park; Esquire, 1250 Turner St.; Grand Cafe, 201 East Grand River Ave.; Sprial, 1247 Center St. Michigan Pride, Lansing. Michiganpride.org

Saturday, June 11

Michigan Pride-March to the Capitol, 11 a.m. Registration for floats & Vehicles are \$25 each register online at michiganpride.org. Walkers are free. Michigan Pride, Grand Ave. between Schoolcraft and Shiawee St., Lansing. michiganpride.org

Michigan Pride Festival, 11 a.m. Live entertainment such as Pop Goes the Gio Show, Kim Sorter, Sean Ensign, Baby Gaga, Melissa Totten and Sista Otis. Youth area with carnival games, a bounce house, playground & face painting. Open air bar, and a diverse array of for-profit as well as non-profit vendors offering rainbow merchandise, and information about resources for LGBTQ advocacy. Admission: \$5. Free for members of Michigan Pride. Michigan Pride, Burchard Park, Old Town, Lansing. michiganpride.org

LGBT Older Adult Coalition, 12 p.m. Discussing solutions, such as advocating for non-discrimination policies and staff training at care facilities, creating affordable LGBT retirement communities, and mentoring young people to help support and learn from our elders. ACLU of Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. aclumich.org

Michigan Pride-Rally at the Capitol, 1 p.m. Statewide leaders delivering powerful and inspirational speeches to help us all focus our efforts in the next year. Michigan Pride, Capitol Ave., Lansing. Michiganpride.org

Michigan Pride-Commitment Ceremony, 1:45 p.m. Group Commitment Ceremony on the Capitol steps. Pre-registration available online, and during the Rally. Participants can expect to receive a certificate. No fee, but donations to the minister and church are appreciated. Michigan Pride, Capitol Ave., Lansing. Michiganpride.org

Kalamazoo Pride, 2 p.m. Co-hosts Adam F. Carter, and drag king G.Q. Joe. Performances from Le Souk Dance Company, folk duo Nervous but Excited and Dunyua Drummers. Keynote Speaker: Ignacio Rivera. Kalamazoo Pride, 145 E. Water St., Kalamazoo. kgllrc.org/pride

Drag Queen Bingo, 8 p.m. "This ain't your grandma's bingo." Hosts Sabin, Trixie Deluxe or September Murphy. Open to all 18+. Refreshments and bingo food fare. Reservations available by phone. Five15, 515 S. Washington, Royal Oak. 248-515-2551. five15.net

Sunday, June 12

Metro Detroit LGBT Softball League Game, 10:30 a.m. Free parking and entry. Leashed pets are welcome, as well as refreshments, however no alcohol is permitted. MDSL, 1000 E. Hamlin Road, Rochester Hills. 586-945-4029. cchwarren@aol.com

PFLAG Detroit Meeting, 2 p.m. Support groups, social gathering, community announcements, program presentations, guest speakers, and dinner. Every 2nd Sunday of the month. PFLAG, 3333 Coolidge Hwy, Troy. 248-656-2875. pflagdetroit.org

Rainbow Book Club, 4:30 p.m. Book club dedicated to reading and discussing classic and contemporary lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer literature. Meeting since before 1998, every second Sunday of the month. Rainbow Book Club, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. catherine.herne@gmail.com

HARC provided HIV/AIDS Testing, 5 p.m. HARC provides anonymous and free HIV counseling, testing and referral services through its outreach at the Jim Toy Community Center. HARC, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. hivaidresource.org/hiv-testing

Monday, June 13

LGBT Adoptive Parent Support Group, 7 p.m. Meet with other LGBT families and be supported in your adoption process or adoptive parenting. Hands Across The Water Adoption and Social Services Agency, 2890 Carpenter Road, Suite 600, Ann Arbor. 734-477-0135. natw.org

Tuesday, June 14

Yoga in the Apse, 5 p.m. Based in the Hatha style, this one-hour class encourages relaxation, strength, flexibility and balance with an emphasis on integrated breathing techniques in standing, sitting and supine yoga postures. All levels welcome. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-7888. umma.umich.edu

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

Wednesday, June 15

Ties Like Me Professional Networking, 4:30 p.m. 4th annual party on the patio at Como's. More information online. Ties Like Me Professional Networking, Address, Ferndale. 248-379-9527. tieslikeme.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, June 16

Twice Blessed: Modern Family-You and Your Loved Ones, 7 p.m. Effort to bring the issues of social justice and human rights to the public. Series will be of importance to people from the gay and straight community who are interested in medical, financial and legal issues. It is presented in four informative sessions. Event Tickets: \$10. Series Passes: \$35. The Jewish Gay Network, Kahn Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield and at the Henry Ford Hospital, West Bloomfield. 248-432-5661. jgnmi.org

Polyamory Network, 7:30 p.m. Open and inclusive community of people living polyamorously, people interested in polyamory and people of, friendly to and curious about polyamory. Welcomes diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. Polyamory Network, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. jimtoycenter.org

Friday, June 17

Cruise for a Fundraiser, 7 p.m. Cruise fundraising for the Forum Foundations LGBT youth scholarships. Tickets, cash bar and raffle tickets support the scholarship fund. Cruise location included with purchased ticket. Tickets available via P.O. Box and sold at Just 4 Us and Five 15. Tickets: \$40. The Forum Foundation, P.O. Box 3073, Centerline. 586-573-9932. theforumfoundation.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Intentions. When female drama student Eve falls for married-with-children professor Renee Higgins, the two awaken repressed creative and emotional passions in each other and soon become romantically involved. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Saturday, June 18

Ann Arbor Antiques Market, 8 a.m. Admission: \$6. Ann Arbor Antiques Market, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor. 734-662-0496 207. annborantiquesmarket.com

Southfield Community Wellness Walk, 8 a.m. Two pronged community effort to showcase diversity within Southfield residents and businesses and to focus on the need for the population to exercise more. Walking fee: \$15 per adult, \$35 for a family, and children 12 and under are free. Proceeds benefit the Miracle League, a charitable organization providing children with mental/physical challenges an opportunity to play baseball in a team. City of Southfield, Evergreen and Civic Center Road, Southfield. 248-769-4620. awalk4kids.com

West Michigan Pride Festival, 12 p.m. 23rd annual West Michigan Pride Festival. Over 6,200 in attendance for 2010. Over 150 vendors, food on site, beer tent and entertainment. West Michigan Pride, Inc., Grand Rapids. 616-328-0202. westmipride.org

GLSEN Southeast Michigan Lifesaver Fundraiser, 5:30 p.m. Tickets: \$50 purchased online. GLSEN Southeast Michigan, One Riverside Road, Detroit. 248-716-0106. glsensemilifesaver.weebly.com

Sunday, June 19

PFLAG Ann Arbor Meeting, 1 a.m. 3rd Sunday of every month. Support group and monthly speaker at each meeting. PFLAG Ann Arbor, 306 N. Division St., Ann Arbor. pflagaa.org

PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting, 2 p.m. Every 3rd Sunday of the month. Support groups including monthly speakers. PFLAG Tri-Cities, 2525 Hemmeter, Saginaw. 989-941-1458. pflag@pflag-mbs.org

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Arbor Opera Theater "Bizets Carmen" Tells the tale of a gypsy girl whose fate and desire for freedom leads to the tragic ending. Tickets: \$22-\$40 general, \$15 students/seniors. Tickets available through Ticketmaster or by calling The Michigan Union Ticket Office at 734-763-TKTS. Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. June 16-June 19. 734-332-9063. arboropera.com

COMEDY

Olympia Entertainment "Jay Mohr's 'Comedy Night Out'" Tickets: \$35-38. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 9. 866-752-9622. olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "The Ohio Players" Tickets: \$30-33. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 10. 866-752-9622. olympiaentertainment.com

CONCERTS

Black Iris "Earth" American musical group based in Seattle, WA, formed in 1989 and led by guitarist Dylan Carlson. Tickets: \$10-12. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 9. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Farmington Downtown Development Authority "Rhythmic in Riley Park" Friday night concerts in downtown Farmington. Walter E. Sundquist Pavilion, 33113 Grand River Ave., Farmington. June 10-Aug. 26. 248-473-7276. downtownfarmington.org

Ford Field "Taylor Swift" Speak Now World Tour. Ford Field, 2000 Brush St., Detroit. 7 p.m. June 11. detroitlions.com

Magic Stick "The Antlers" Tickets: \$13-15. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 12. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Daniel Lanois' Black Dub" Canadian guitarist, vocalist and songwriter. Tickets: \$25. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 9. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Del the Funky Homosapien" American MC. Tickets: \$15-18. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 8. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "R. Stevie Moore" American singer, songwriter and musician. Tickets: \$10. Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 9 p.m. June 19. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Joey Cape and the Bad Loud" Kill Rock Stars era influence of Elliott Smith and upbringing steeped in acoustic acts of Simon & Garfunkel. Tickets: \$10-12. Magic Stick Lounge, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 13. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Detroit Cobras" Tickets: \$12. Magic Stick Lounge, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 9 p.m. June 18. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Kids Like Us" Started in 2002, after massive touring and four records, ever present in the North Florida scene. Tickets: \$8-10. Magic Stick Lounge, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 16. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Magic Stick "Kevin Seconds" Of the hardcore punk band 7 Seconds. Tickets: \$8-10. Magic Stick Lounge, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. June 20. 313-833-9700. majesticdetroit.com

Royal Oak Music Theater "Warren Haynes Band" Tickets: \$29.50. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. June 14. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com

Royal Oak Music Theater "Borgore" With special guests Serax, Lady Reign and Item 9. Tickets: \$20. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. June 16. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com

Royal Oak Music Theater "Elvis Costello and the Imposters" Tickets: \$45. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St, Royal Oak. 8 p.m. June 20. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Deanna Bogart" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 1 a.m. June 19. 734-761-1800. theark.org

The Ark "Tom Rush" Tickets: \$30. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. June 10. 734-761-1800. theark.org

The Palace "Glee Live in Concert" Tickets: \$52-95.50. Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 7:30 p.m. June 13. 248-377-0100. palacenet.com

The Palace "NKOTBSB with Jordin Sparks" With Jordin Sparks. Tickets: \$32.50-92.50. Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 7:30 p.m. June 16. 248-377-0100. palacenet.com

Wharton Center "Verdehr Trio" Featuring trio members Walter Verdehr, violin, Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, clarinet, who are both longtime faculty members at the College of Music, along with Silvia Roederer, piano, the Verdehr Trio performs concerts worldwide. Tickets: \$10 general, \$8 seniors, free for students. Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. June 8. 517-353-1982 ext. 14.

FESTIVALS

Kirk in the Hills, St. Hugo of the Hills, Temple Beth El, and Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival" Music of the Spheres: Songs of the Earth and Sky, the 18th annual Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival will feature music both earthly and heavenly. Global themes will play a central role with the work of 2011 Stone Composers-in-Residence Chen Yi and Zhou Long. The Festival will close with a chamber transcription of Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde. Takes place June 11-26 in venues around Metro Detroit. Listed online. Various Metro Detroit Venues, Detroit. June 11-June 26. 248-559-2097. greatlakeschambermusic.org

Wharton Center and City of Lansing "Summer Solstice Jazz Festival" The 15th festival, featuring a high-caliber bevy of local and national jazz performers. Free. Parking Lot 1, Albert Ave. and Abbot Road, East Lansing. 4:30 p.m. June 17, 4:30 p.m. June 18. 517-319-6927. eljazzfest.com

OTHER

Planterra "Summer Workshop Series" A series of informative workshops to inspire the green thumb in everyone. Advance registration is required. Planterra Conservatory, 7315 Drake Road, West Bloomfield Township. June 5-June 28. 248-661-1515. planterra.com

Warren/Conner Development Coalition "Eastside Farmers Market" Fresh produce, healthy foods, and unique artisan items. Everything locally made and sold directly by the growers and producers. Accepts cash, Bridge Card, Double Up Food Bucks, WIC, Project Fresh, credit, and debit. Weekly music and entertainment. Mack Alter Square, 14820 Mack Ave., Detroit. June 11-Oct. 1. 313-571-8200. facebook.com/eastsidefarmersmarket

THEATER

FESTIVALS

Gay Play Series The second annual one-act festival includes nine new plays and will be performed in two blocks over four days, with one additional day being reserved for all nine plays to be presented marathon-style. Additional events are also scheduled. \$10 per event; \$30 pass. Who Wants Cake, The Ringwald, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. June 17-27. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

The Second Ever Fancy Pants Gay-la! The most powerfully flamboyant expression of artistic excellence with social relevance that Kalamazoo has ever seen, again: a festival of LGBT-themed short plays. \$10. Fancy Pants Theater at Studio 246, 246 N. Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo. June 8-12. 269-381-2591. fancypantstheater.webs.com

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Hairspray \$18-\$20. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through June 12. 248-541-6430. stagecrafters.org

Miss Saigon \$17-\$22. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. June 9-12. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org

Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 \$14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Through June 12. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com

Soccer Moms & Reapers \$18. PTD Productions at Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. June 16-25. 734-483-7345. ptdproductions.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee \$15. Eastern Michigan University Theatre at Sponberg Theatre in the Quirk Dramatic Arts Bldg., East Circle Dr. & Best Hall, Ypsilanti. Through June 11. 734-487-2282. emich.edu/emutheatre

The Ballade of Robyn Hood Free. LCC Performing Arts at Dart Auditorium, 500 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. June 15-19. 517-483-1488. lcc.edu/hpa/events

PROFESSIONAL

Blood Brothers \$25-\$29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. June 3-19. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

Boom An adult comedy. Come early and picnic; performed outdoors rain or shine. Free. Summer Circle Theatre, Behind the MSU Auditorium on the lawn by the Red Cedar, Michigan State University, East Lansing. June 15-June 18. summercircle.org

Cats \$25-\$50. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. June 10-11. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

Children of Eden Plays in rotating repertory. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at DeWitt Theatre, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. June 17-Aug. 12. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Consider the Oyster Contains strong language and adult themes. A world premiere. Previews June 16-19 & 23-24 (\$20-\$30) \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. June 16-Sep. 3. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

Crimes of the Heart \$28-\$30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through June 25. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

Eleemosynary \$18-\$24. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through June 12. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

Endangered A Late Night Show. \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. June 3-June 18. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Ernie \$20-\$25. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through July 31. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Escanaba in Love \$34. Barn Theatre, 13351 W. M-96, Augusta. June 14-26. 269-731-4121. barntheatre.com

Gemini Come early and picnic! Free. Summer Circle Theatre behind the MSU Auditorium on the lawn by the Red Cedar, Michigan State University, East Lansing. June 8-11. summercircle.org

Glengarry Glen Ross \$20. Epicenter Theatre Group at The Varner Hall Studio Theatre, Oakland University, Rochester. Through June 12. epicentertheatregroup.org

Hot Dog Mondays \$5. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. Every Monday. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Looking for the Pony \$17 in advance; \$20 at the door. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through June 26. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Next Fall Previews June 9. \$22-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through July 3. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

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

The Great Big Bar Show \$20. Barn Theatre, 13351 W. M-96, Augusta. Through June 12. 269-731-4121. barntheatre.com

The Last Five Years \$15-\$20; \$49.95-\$59.95 dinner show tickets per couple. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Through June 25. 248-348-4448. andiamonovitheatre.com

The Tempest \$15-\$25. Blackbird Theatre, West Park, Seventh Ave. & Miller Road, Ann Arbor. June 10-25. 734-332-3848. blackbirdtheatre.org

YOUNG/FAMILY AUDIENCES

Commedia Project Free. Performed outdoors rain or shine. Summer Circle Theatre behind the MSU Auditorium on the lawn by the Red Cedar, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Friday-Saturday at 6 p.m. June 10-25. summercircle.org

Sleeping Beauty \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Saturdays through June. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Art Center "The PRINT " This exhibition aims to educate the community about the different techniques and styles of printmaking by displaying the works of a variety of talented artists. Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor. May 9-June 26. 734-994-8004. annarborartcenter.org

Berkley Chamber of Commerce "Berkley Art Bash" Party in downtown Berkley for amazing art, fabulous food, live music & fun activities for kids. More information online. Downtown Berkley on Twelve Mile, 3117 W. 12 Mile Road, Berkley. 9 a.m. June 11. 248-414-7222. BerkleyArtBash.com

Cass Cafe "5w-30" Three-artist exhibit within the Cass Cafe thought of as a synonym for a sort of psychological endurance typified by living in Detroit and Michigan. Cass Cafe, 4620 Cass Ave., Detroit. April 16-June 11. 313-831-1400. casscafe.com

Craig Mitchell Smith Glass Gallery "Glass in the Garden" Display of larger than life glass art in the garden. Admission: \$5. Dow Gardens, Midland MI, 1809 Eastman Ave., Midland. May 22-July 31. 800-362-4874. dowgardens.org

Cranbrook Art Museum "Saarinen House and Garden" rare integration of art, architecture, design and nature's total work of art. Designed in the late 1920's, Saarinen House served as the home and studio of the Finnish-American designer Eiel Saarinen and Loja Saarinen from 1930 through 1950. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. May 2-Sep. 30. 877-462-7262. cranbrookart.edu

Detroit Institute of Arts "It's A Zoo In Here" Countless creatures of many species fill the galleries in this exhibition of more than 150 prints and drawings drawn entirely from the museum's holdings and designed with fun in mind for everyone. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. April 1-July 24. 313-833-7900. dia.org/calendar/exhibition.aspx?id=2681&iid=

Downriver Council for the Arts "Jured Photography Exhibit" The DCA is accepting entries for a jured photography exhibit at the Wyandotte Arts Center. Professional and amateur photographers can submit up to four entries. A non-refundable \$15 entry fee is required for all entries. Exhibit begins Sept. 8. Wyandotte Arts Center, 2306 4th St., Wyandotte. May 1-Aug. 31. 734-324-7278.

Farmington Downtown Development Authority "Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market" Each Saturday. Fresh Michigan produce, baked goods, locally-produced honey, hand-crafted soaps and emollients, fine art and jewelry, photography and a variety of unique, artisan-made products. Walter E. Sundquist Pavilion, 33113 Grand River Ave., Farmington. May 28-Oct. 29. 248-473-7276. downtownfarmington.org

Henry Ford Museum "Discovering the Civil War" Tickets: \$15 adults, \$11 youth. Henry Ford Museum, 20900 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. May 21-Sep. 5. 313-982-6001. thehenryford.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Portrait and Presence" Contemporary portraiture pursues a complex and personal approach to the genre's traditional representation of the subject's visage and social identity. Admission: Free. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. May 1-July 20. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "2011 West Michigan Area Show" The WMAS celebrates contemporary work in all media, by artists working in a 14-county area. The 2011 exhibition will be shaped by this year's juror, Michigan ceramicist John Glick. Working from his Farmington Hills studio since 1965, established just 3 years after graduating from Cranbrook Art Academy, Glick's constant has been experimentation. Admission: Free. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. May 7-June 26. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "The Chinese Scholar's Brush" Works from the Albert and Betty Chang Collection. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. May 7-Aug. 27. 269-349-7775. kiarts.org

Kresge Art Museum "Visualizing Sound" Harry Bertoia's sound-producing, beryllium copper sculpture, Sound Piece, 1978, will interact with a digital visualizer in this performative sculpture experience. MSU, Auditorium & Physics Road, East Lansing. April 30-July 21. artmuseum.msu.edu. 517-884-0659

MOCAD "Barely There" Group exhibition featuring James Lee Byars, Luis Camnitzer, Jason Dodge, Pable Helguera, Christoph Keller, Lee Loazno, Rivane and Sergio, Neuenschwander, Wilfredo Prieto, Pascale Marthine Tayou and Adolf Wolfli. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. May 27-July 31. 313-832-6622. mocadetroit.org

Riverside Arts Center "Ypsi Style" The gallery will display this year's designs by the Y Collective, a group of EMU students. And also host a runway show called "Ypsi Style." Riverside Art Center, 931 Sherman Ct, Ypsilanti. 6 p.m. June 10. riversidearts.org

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "PIE: A Slice of Pure Michigan" Exhibit examines how West Michigan's unique micro-climate created a fruit growing industry worth millions of dollars. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. May 16-June 20. 269-857-2399. sc4a.org

The Scarab Club "Benedictions, Blessing, Bombast" Charles Alexander has been a fixture on the Detroit art scene for decades. In honor of Charles' 75th birthday, the Scarab Club hosts a solo exhibition of his work in the second floor lounge gallery. Scarab Gallery, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. May 18-June 25. 313-831-1250. scarabclub.org


The Scarab Club "Transatlantic Chic: European Influences on American Decorative Arts" This lecture will examine the influence on the decorative arts of prevailing ideas about avant-garde painting and sculpture in the early decades of the twentieth century. Tickets:\$50 members, \$65 non-members. The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. 6 p.m. June 8. 313-831-1250. scarabclub.org

University of Michigan "Amalia Pica" London-based Argentinian artist's investigations into perception, time, and memory, as well as a desire to explore how particular gestures read in different cultural contexts, pursued across a diverse body of work in sculpture, photography, film, and installation, as well as temporary interventions on buildings, monuments, and objects. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 South State St., Ann Arbor. May 28-Sep. 18. 734-763-4186.


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

Between THE Lines™


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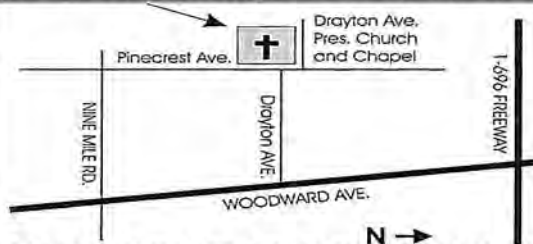
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Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Family matters

Q. My partner, "Nina," and I had a difficult Memorial Day weekend. It wasn't just hard for us; it affected our daughter as well. Nina and I have been living together for nine months. My daughter "Isabella" is 8 years old; she lives with us. Before Nina and I got together, I was with my husband for 10 years (my daughter is his child). I left him, and one year later I met Nina. I didn't leave my husband because I came to the conclusion that I was lesbian. I left him because we were a bad fit, not meant for each other as life partners. I became very depressed being with him, and finally I understood that I needed to leave him.

A year after I left him, he was killed in an auto accident.

As you can imagine, my daughter has been through hell, and she's only 8. First, she had to deal with her mom and dad splitting up, then she has had to deal with her dad being killed. Just for the record, even though I felt like her dad and I were not a good match, I did respect him, and our divorce wasn't contentious.

On Memorial Day, I wanted to take Isabella out to her father's grave. Isabella still talks about her dad and asks questions about him. I feel it's important for me to keep his memory alive for her. I tell her about him. She has pictures of him in her room.

This year, my daughter told me that she wanted to visit her father's grave. I told her that I would take her there. When Nina heard that, she got upset. She tried to make it sound like Isabella was too young for that, but she also said things that made me realize that she is jealous of my dead, ex-husband. (I ended up taking Isabella, anyway.)

The real problem, I suspect, is that Nina knows that I am bisexual. When we got together, she said that it didn't matter. However, I think it does. It's not always what she says, it's her body language. Like, when a good-looking guy goes by, she watches me to see if I'm paying attention. Or if I make a positive comment about a guy, she goes real quiet on me. (I don't act inappropriately, and I sure don't make sexual comments.)

Because she doesn't seem to get her nose out of joint when I'm around lesbians, I've got to believe that her problem is that I might leave her for a guy. (If I left her, it wouldn't be for a guy; it would be because we weren't a good match – like in the case

of my ex husband.)

How do I get Nina to see that I'm not lusting after men, and her jealousy in this area is driving me nuts?

Trouble from the Grave

A. You said that you told Nina about your bisexuality before you got together, but it sounds like you need to discuss, in more depth, what your sexuality means to you. She may be concerned that you need to have sex with both genders in order to feel sexually fulfilled.

Have you had a discussion about what commitment means to both of you? If not, it's time. All relationships should have this discussion, and agreement.

In regards to Nina being jealous of your deceased ex husband: I wonder if that has more to do with her needing to feel that she has a place in your family and is not in competition with the memory of your ex husband, especially when it comes to Isabella's love. In order for her to feel that she fits, she has to understand that Isabella can love her father as well as her; on the other hand, Isabella may not – no matter how hard Nina tries – be ready to accept Nina as a step-parent. (It takes time with kids.) Isabella may think that Nina is trying to take her dad's place. This is tricky ground to tread. So, given all that Isabella has gone through, and the problems she's undoubtedly dealing with having lost her dad, as well as acquiring a new stepmom – and to add to that, a gay family – I recommend family counseling with a gay-positive therapist.

Need a guide to step-parenting and blending families? 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. Reach Jody at DearJodyValley@hotmail.com. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly.

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RTI Horoscopes

Relax, Taurus!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mars in Taurus aspecting Eris in Aries cranks up competitive urges. Be open and flexible. Goals may need adjusting as conditions change.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): You could make a lot or spend a lot. The competitive urge could drag you either way and even making money could be more strain than it's worth. What do you have to prove? To whom? Work as hard as you "reasonably" can.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Sometimes it's not easy being the strong, reliable one. People are counting on you, so all the more reason why you need to take care of yourself. Take a break. Relax. You'll hold up better and accomplish more in the long run.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): As much as you love your friends, they can wear you down. Maybe you're trying too hard to be the star of the party? Enjoy being on the sidelines now and then, or just take some time out. Your real friends will understand.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Friends and colleagues are as eager as you are to see you succeed, but they may be pushing you a little too hard. Keep an eye open to your larger goal, but the trick is still to stay focused on the job at hand.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Remember when to use your indoor voice, darling! The smart actor knows that whispers can get attention where screaming gets ignored. You will be noticed no matter what, but what do they see?

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Long, hard and deep is also how you should think about sex. How does it serve in your life? Are you out to prove something? To pursue satisfaction? To forge a deeper bond? The real question: How does it bring you home?

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): You don't win or keep a lover by being the best in bed. Open communication keeps love alive. Focus on the small details; be attentive, sexually and otherwise. Being

the best mate you can be is not a competitive sport.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): At work, remember that you're part of a team. That means pacing yourself with your colleagues, not dragging so far ahead that you pull the efforts out of whack. Pushing too hard can also be bad for your health.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Pushing too hard at sports or exercise is asking to get hurt. The trick in pushing for a personal best is to expand your limits, not to ignore them. Yes, Saj, even you have limits!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Getting involved with a community arts or sports program can help you clarify where you really belong in the world, what you've learned from elders to pass on to future generations, and what you could be doing for the kids.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Arguments with your family can actually help you to plan better for your future. Don't be shy about speaking up. The trick is in keeping perspective. Sibling rivalry can spur you to better work, but don't let it affect you too deeply.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): It's too easy for spending and arguments to get out of control. Old habits and family traditions can mire you down, interfering with your success. Keep a clear focus on your goals and act as if your next boss is watching you.

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 email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.



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Solution to puzzle from page 42

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N	O	U	N	E	S	A	I	L	E	C	H	E	
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B	E	T	T	E	A	N	A	L	D	E	E	R	
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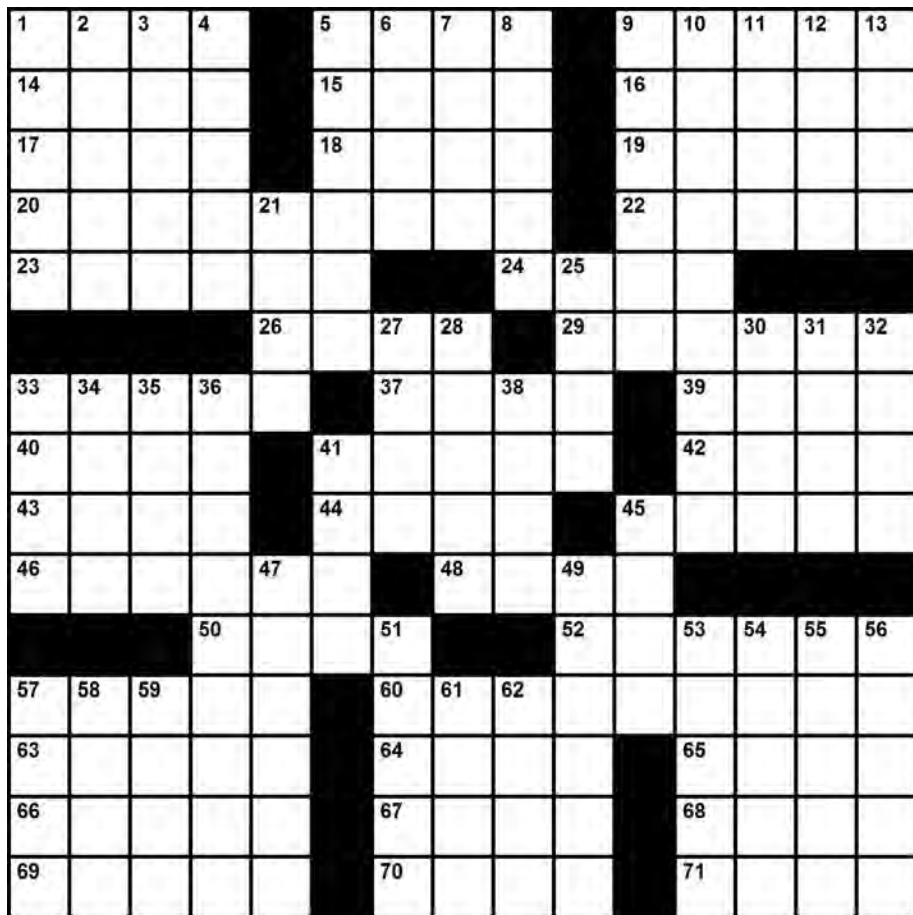
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Remembering Arthur Laurents

Across

- 1 Two foursomes, to Lorca
- 5 Exclusion of gays from the military, and more
- 9 Denmark coastal feature
- 14 One may be proper
- 15 Morales in movies
- 16 "Milk," when it plays in Mexico?
- 17 Top
- 18 Teutonic turndown
- 19 Anesthesia of old
- 20 Gang member of interest?
- 22 City in the Ruhr valley
- 23 Martin of "Ed Wood"
- 24 Religious splinter group
- 26 Mardi ____
- 29 For skin
- 33 Instrument strummed in "Mame"
- 37 Comfy and cozy
- 39 Jane of fiction
- 40 Place for Proust
- 41 "West Side ____" (Laurents musical about gangs)

Down

- 42 Field of expertise
- 43 Cukor's rib donor
- 44 Crew tools
- 45 Overhand stroke, for Mauresmo
- 46 Menotti's man
- 48 "Forbidden" perfume brand
- 50 Alternative to butter
- 52 Arousing sounds
- 57 Cinema canine
- 60 Sexy underage gang member?
- 63 Covered with climbers
- 64 Fruit center
- 65 La Douce role of Shirley
- 66 Davis of "The Virgin Queen"
- 67 Like a thermometer that tastes funny
- 68 Bucks, for example
- 69 Billie Holiday's "God ____ the Child"
- 70 Trust (with "on")
- 71 Tongue of Wilde's land

Down

- 1 ____ fours (doggy-style)
- 2 Brown beverage
- 3 Homo sapiens
- 4 Erect
- 5 Charlton Heston classic
- 6 "... against ____ of troubles" (Shakespeare)
- 7 "Neet" rival
- 8 Goes to the bottom
- 9 Rip off
- 10 Sign of a gang member doing golden showers?
- 11 Singer Phil
- 12 South Korea's Syngman
- 13 Laura of "Recount"
- 21 Food thickener
- 25 Like Cho's comedy
- 27 Nick and Nora's dog
- 28 Stallion's sound
- 30 Vidal's Breckinridge
- 31 "Xena" deity
- 32 Remini of "The King of Queens"
- 33 Let out a secret

- 34 Elton John Broadway musical
- 35 At hand
- 36 Huge gang members?
- 38 Bear up there
- 41 In need of a massage
- 45 Mope around
- 47 Passes over in pronouncing
- 49 How a male stripper makes a living?
- 51 Kidman's award for "The Hours"
- 53 Bear
- 54 Like pinker meat
- 55 They don't use their mouths for talking
- 56 Gawk like a chicken hawk
- 57 Type of leaf found on a head
- 58 Big name in stunt riding
- 59 Dark time, in ads
- 61 Cutting edge creator
- 62 Asian inland sea

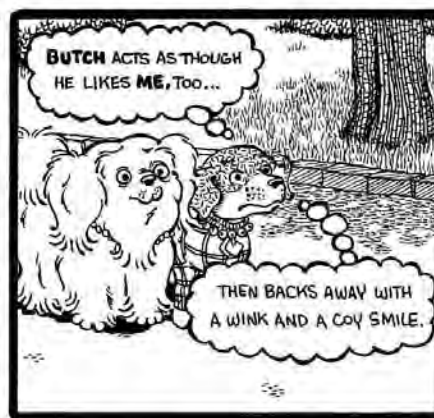
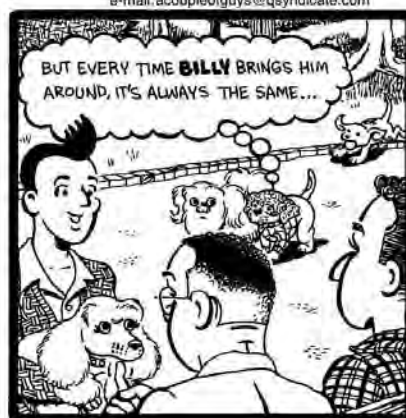
Solution on 41

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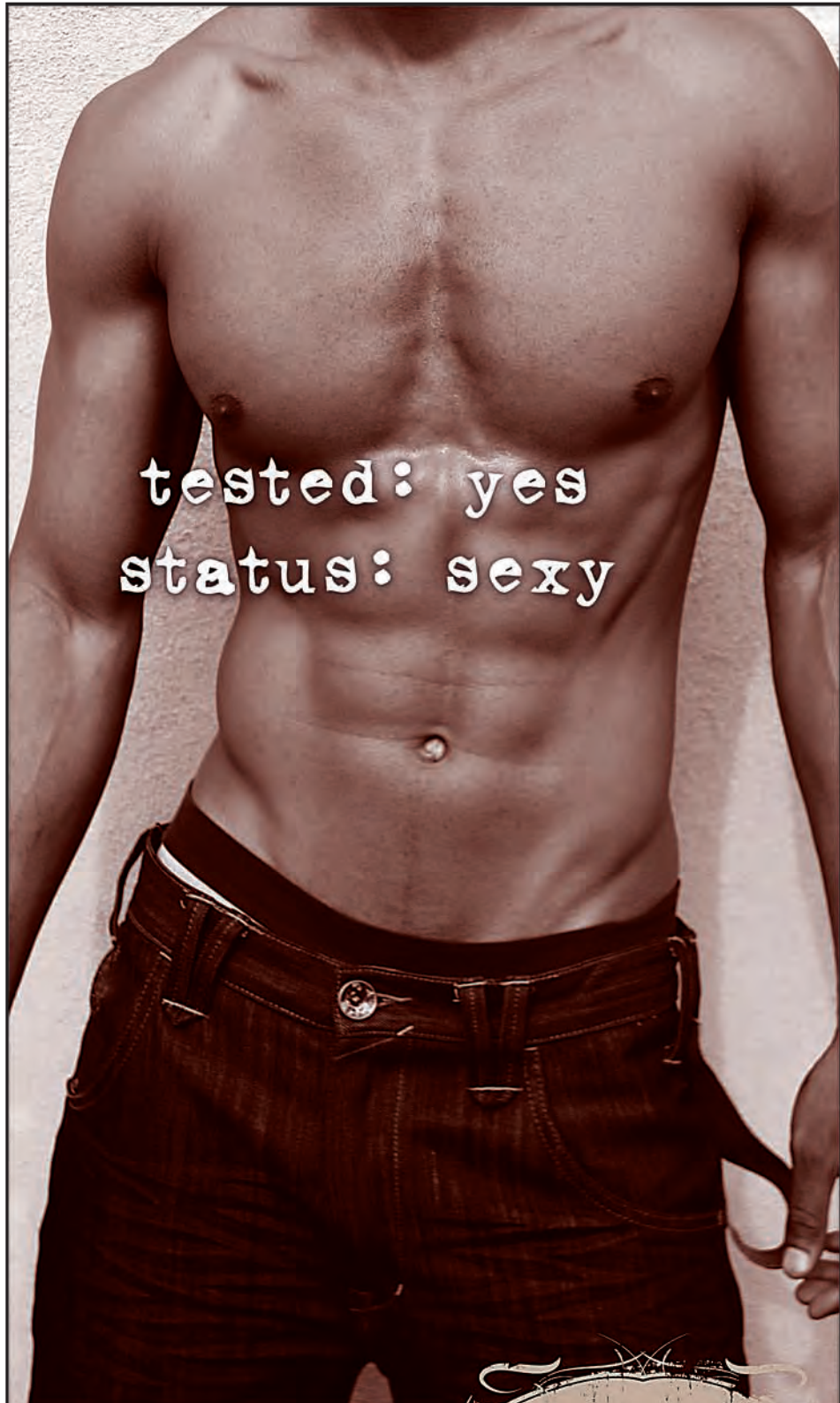
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RTT Deep Inside Hollywood



Adam Pally. Photo: ABC

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'Carrie' ruins prom for everybody. Again.

"Once Is Not Enough" is more than just the name of a best-selling Jacqueline Susann novel, it's how Hollywood does business all the time, cranking out remake after remake as fast as they can. The latest: another version of "Carrie." The classic '70s horror film from Brian DePalma has already been remade once as a TV movie, but now that 2010's back-to-the-book "True Grit" has proven that adaptations can hew more closely to the source material and shine with new life, another pass at adapting Stephen King's original novel is in the works. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, who's already re-written "Spiderman: Turn Off The Dark" in the hopes of saving its Broadway run, will pen the screenplay. And if there's any worry that "Carrie"'s cultural legacy as a metaphor for tormented gay teen life is in jeopardy, consider Aguirre-Sacasa's other new gig: co-producer and writer on "Glee." So you can rest assured and get your pig-blood-proof tuxedo ready.

'Lost Girl' found by SyFy

Good news for fans of sexy Canadian lesbian science-fiction thrillers, aka people who like "Lost Girl." The series from our northern neighbors is coming to the SyFy network for its second season. They've picked up 26 episodes and, if they're smart, will start advertising it heavily everywhere women-who-love-women go, if for no other reason than the plot line that involves actress Zoie Palmer ("Devil") as a doctor who gets involved with the series' protagonist, Anna Silk (who was, before now, best known for her role in the gay-themed family comedy "Breakfast With Scot"). Silk plays Bo, a bisexual succubus with an unfortunate habit: she feeds off sexual energy and sometimes – oops – kills the ones she loves. Season two is shooting now so you've got a little time to catch up on all the accidental murder-sex.

'Happy Endings' not ending just yet

The way ABC is burning off summer episodes of its fledgling sitcom "Happy Endings" (two at a time: good; aired out of chronological order: bad) would make you think they were just going to cancel the thing due to lack of interest. But the surprisingly funny show about a group of young Chicagoans (think "Friends" but less all-white and all-hetero) has just been given a second season pickup from the network, and that's good news for anyone who's wondered why there aren't more racially mixed sitcoms that also happen to include non-stereotypical gay characters out there. For the record, the slovenly, unemployed homosexual is played by comic Adam Pally in a way that suggests the creators watched "Sex and the City 2" and decided to create a man who embodied the exact opposite of that insane Mario Cantone/Willy Garson wedding scene. Next season maybe they'll give him a boyfriend to ignore in favor of beer and video games.

'Work It' Looks Like a Drag

In new fall season trainwreck-in-the-making news comes something called "Work It." It's the story of two married straight men who find that the job market is somehow – all regard for reality aside – a woman's world these days. Their answer to this cosmic upset in the balance of power is to put on ugly "Tootsie"/"Bosom Buddies" lady-outfits and magically trick all women into believing that they're part of the sisterhood. According to pilot clips available online they still swagger around, speak in weirdly breathy non-female voices and generally forget to act the part. So, you know, HILARIOUS. Who wants to be the first transgender activist to protest this dumb thing's existence before it gets cancelled after three episodes?

Romeo San Vicente works it all the time. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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