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The tiny Crown Pharmacy serves thousands of HIV/AIDS patients with a smile. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

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Vol. 1928 • Issue 721
July 14, 2011

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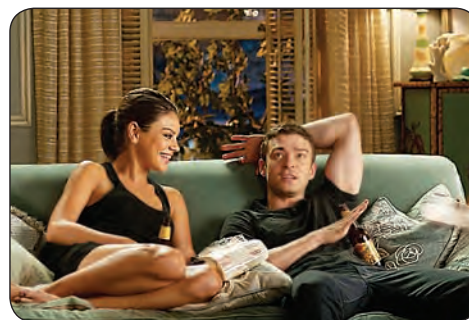
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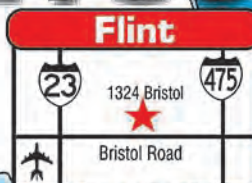
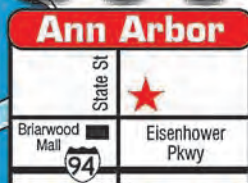
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Between Ourselves

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Erin Wilson is a Grand Rapids resident who formed Until Love Is = after Holland's City Council voted against housing and hiring protections for LGBT residents. The group has received an outpouring of support, and its Facebook page has more than 2,600 fans. The group has also started a boycott of Holland businesses that do not support the anti-discrimination ordinance.



It seems like a small-town issue, but it transcends that on every level and it really should be a concern.

1 Why did you found Until Love Is =, and what do you plan to do with all of the support it's gained?

After the June 15 vote, I felt a mix of distress and just anger that there was this effort to send us backward in West Michigan. It was an affront to people I care about deeply and are vital to the recovery of this region. I was trying to convert sadness into constructive action. Thankfully, thousands of people agreed with me.

It's inevitable that this vote will be harmful to the city of Holland and the region as a whole. And so a boycott in that sense was an accelerated example of that harm. Businesses do a lot for a city and can play an important role in the civic leadership and the shaping of a city. But it's gone beyond just that tactic. Now we're using the city council meetings as one process by which we can represent the contingency that supports a revote.

2 Your group, and a couple of other groups of concerned citizens, plan to attend every city council meeting until it votes again on the issue. How's that going so far?

Last night (the first meeting after the June 15 no vote) there was a consistent and sobering fear-based tone among all the people who were against doing this. They were mostly older and white, while the side that was pushing for a re-vote had students, young residents, disabled people, minorities, clergy, community leaders and more.

We don't want to monopolize the time at the meetings; we know city council members have a lot of things to get to. But as the opposition continued to come forward with really dark premonitions about what would happen if the council re-voted in favor, we continued to send people up to speak. Just so that it didn't misrepresent the overall feeling in the region. We didn't want to hold back and let those voices that were fear-based continue.

3 So do you think you'll get one council member to change his or her mind and vote again? The vote failed 5-4 last month.

I watched the faces of the council members last night. There was one longtime Christian Reformed Church clergy member who told a very moving story of having all the same views of the people who voted against the ordinance for many years until his own son came out. He talked about coming to grips with that and having to choose whether or not you're going to cast somebody out or embrace them. He had a major catharsis. He encouraged the council members to also consider changing their minds. People like that who live in Holland who have led their churches for decades – that's a big deal and I could see that resonating with the council members.

4 How's the boycott going? Have businesses voiced their support?

Really well. We've reached out to businesses to tell them how easy it is to be exempted from the boycott, and also how they can get promotion. We've seen people go to the supporting businesses by eating out on a night when they wouldn't have usually gone out to eat, and definitely wouldn't have gone to Holland, but they made the drive to support those businesses. By and large those businesses that have come out in support of Until Love Is = have benefitted, and they have expressed that to us.

Some people looked at the boycott as a heavy-handed measure. But all businesses have to do is email us and display a half-page sign that lets people know they support all customers from all communities. And that's it.

5 So what's next?

We're hoping to get more people to speak in favor, and to get some national attention too. It seems like a small-town issue, but it transcends that on every level and it really should be a concern.

Between Ourselves is a bi-weekly feature that highlights those who work on behalf of Michigan's LGBT and allied community. To recommend someone for Between Ourselves, email our news editor Tara Cavanaugh at tara@pridesource.com.

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From Stork to Finish



From left: Val Randall, Marcella Bassham, Paul Archer and Melinda Zaher in their 200-square-foot pharmacy. Randall and Zaher are co-owners and Archer and Bassham are pharmacy technicians. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

Crown Pharmacy makes thousands of HIV/AIDS patients feel like family

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

The generic liquor store along Plymouth Road in Redford looks like many others in the area. When you walk in, you see a wall of refrigerated alcohol beneath Bud Light plaques and banners. You see aisles of candy and nonperishable food. You might see a disheveled man sipping from a paper bag. You probably won't notice, in the back corner, past a stand of cell phone accessories and nudie magazines, a small window and three chairs.

The window is Crown Pharmacy, a 200-square-foot space that serves thousands of

clients each year. Its specialty is medications for HIV/AIDS and cancer, and its client base has grown almost entirely by word of mouth. The key to the pharmacy's success is in the small staff that makes each and every customer a member of their family.

'Part of her healing process is getting a hug from me'

Paul Archer is tall and piercingly handsome, with dark eyes and a deep voice. His face is kind and weathered. He wears a bandanna with skulls

and crossbones.

It's comfortable, he says, and helps cover the hair that hasn't grown back. A few months ago, he received stem-cell replacement therapy for cancer. And 16 years ago, he was diagnosed as HIV-positive.

Archer is a client of Crown Pharmacy, and he's also a pharmacy technician.

"Once you're diagnosed with a terminal disease and you have no reason to get up in the morning..." Archer trails off, hesitating. "Coming here really helped me get through it. Going on two years now."

"He's a very dear friend of me and the

pharmacy. He's one success story because of the love that he's given us," says Val Randall, Crown Pharmacy's co-owner.

Archer uses his experience to counsel clients. "A lot of people have questions, a lot of people are afraid when they first are diagnosed," he says.

"Positive thinking has a lot to do with recovery. It really does."

Positive thinking and hugs, which the staff gives out in spades.

"I have a customer who comes in and she thinks — she really does believe this — part of her healing process is getting a hug from me. Every

“It’s not a death sentence anymore. If you take your meds, you’re going to live. You have to want to live.”

–Val Randall, Crown Pharmacy co-owner

month,” Randall says in her husky voice. “I’m not kidding.”

The staff sends flowers to sick clients and even buys them gifts. On one rainy day last month, pharmacy technician Marcella Bassham brought in a baby outfit for a customer’s newborn. Customers give the staff photos of their families, even their pets, which the staff sticks on the limited wall space.

Not all customers feel like family right away, though.

“We’ve had many people like that who are afraid,” Randall says. “We have been known to go out there” – she points to the three chairs outside the window – “and we can sit and counsel. Marcella counseled a young man, who’s been with us for 15 years now. When he first walked in the door, he had already planned his suicide. She went out and sat and talked to him for at least an hour. And they cried together and they talked together.

“It’s not a death sentence anymore. If you take your meds, you’re going to live. You have to want to live.”

‘They could live way better than they do’

Sometimes in the liquor store, you might see a well-dressed man with shiny shoes hanging in the Crown Pharmacy window. He’ll look out of place with the liquor store clientele, but he’ll be engrossed in conversation with Randall.

He’s a drug salesman. Drug reps like him visit once or twice a month to talk about what drugs and new combinations are coming out next.

Relationships like these help Randall and co-owner Melinda Zaher keep their costs down, so they can charge customers less for medications.

Nearly 80 percent of Crown Pharmacy’s business comes from HIV/AIDS and cancer medications. Randall motions to a tall shelf, and says they’re all HIV/AIDS drugs. “Most pharmacies, you’ll see maybe one or two of these bottles on the shelves. We have to keep a big count in because we can blow these out today.”

How did the tiny pharmacy develop its specialty?

“It started when we got a forged prescription from a client,” Zaher says. “It was so obvious that it’d been erased and somebody else had put their name in. So he was committing a crime to get his medicine. It was for AZT. It was the only one available at the time.”

The problem was that Medicaid didn’t kick in with its drug coverage for two weeks, but clients needed their medication immediately. Not everyone was able to pay out-of-pocket for drugs.

So Randall and Zaher advanced those customers their medications. “Sometimes we wouldn’t get paid for those two weeks either,” Zaher says. “We put it out there, not knowing whether we’d get paid or not. But it started our reputation as being there for people.”

In 1989, when Zaher first purchased the space, the pharmacy was a neighborhood shop that filled maybe 24 prescriptions a day. Now, it fills up to 130 each day. And according to the drug reps who come by, Crown Pharmacy is one of the most patronized pharmacies in the state.

The pharmacy also fills pet prescriptions, too, often supplying drugs at cost. Many customers put their pets to sleep because they couldn’t afford their own medication and their pets’ as well, Bassham explains, tearing up.

“If it’s a human medication that a pet can have, we sell it for what we pay for it,” Randall says. “Some people give up their own food for their animals.” A few vet offices know this, so they send clients to Crown who couldn’t afford their pet’s medications at regular pharmacy prices.

How does the pharmacy stay in business if it offers so many drugs at cost, and sometimes just doesn’t get paid at all?

The sheer number of customers helps, along with the staff’s reputation. The staff works with patients and their doctors to find the medications they need at a price they can afford. The staff also makes sure clients don’t have more medication than they need – and therefore aren’t sitting on thousands of dollars of unnecessary pills that could expire before they’re used. This keeps costs down.

But there’s another big money-saver here, too.

“I’ll put it like this,” Bassham says, nodding to Zaher and Randall. “They could live way better than they do. And they live way beneath what they could, to help everybody else. And that’s the truth.”

‘Who’s going to love my people?’

Over the years, the pharmacy has not gone unrecognized. It’s received an award from KICK, an agency for African-American LGBTs, for its service to the HIV/AIDS community. It’s also received an award from the Southeast Michigan Chapter of Nurses in AIDS Care.

The awards recognize the pharmacy’s outstanding dedication to its clients – the staff who sometimes reopens the pharmacy after hours, who often drops off meds to homeless clients in a park.

Randall is 64 and Zaher is 59. They know they can’t run the pharmacy forever. Do they ever plan to retire?

Randall doesn’t like to think about it.

“Who’s going to take care of our people? Nobody’s going to love them like we do. Nobody’s going to care like we do.

“We’ve had offers recently, from different people to buy us out, as we have had throughout the years. And I just – we think about it, we talk about it, it’s too scary. I don’t want anybody to touch my people. How would they live? How would I live without them?”

Randall looks away, and can’t seem to



Marcella Basham and Paul Archer, pharmacy technicians, regularly counsel clients. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

“A lot of people have questions, a lot of people are afraid when they first are diagnosed.”

–Paul Archer, pharmacy technician

answer. “I don’t know. It’s a tough question.”

She would like a vacation, though. She hasn’t had one in 11 years. She says the pharmacy recently cut its hours to give staff some more “daylight time.” They used to be open six days a week, until 7 p.m. Now they’re open five days a week, until 6 p.m. every day except for Wednesday, when they close at 5.

“It’s not that we wouldn’t be there for them after hours,” Randall says. “We have an after-

hours number. And I live five minutes away. I come back and give them their meds. Or Melinda will come back. Or if someone calls and says, ‘I’ll be a half hour late,’ we wait for them.”

Randall looks around the small space, and the staff bustling around in it: Archer and Bassham fill prescriptions, and Zaher takes orders on the phone. And she smiles: “It’s just the way we work.”

What do you think about Michele Bachmann and her husband – who ‘rehabilitates’ gays in his clinic?

How about we put him in a room with a bunch of drags for an hour? I bet he will come out a new man ...so to speak.

–Gar Peterson

He’s a whacko. Cut his federal funding – you know separation of church and state!

–Jared William Boot

I think before NASA closes its doors they need to ship her and her husband back to whatever planet they’re from.

–Holly Weasel

WOW! I really hope people smarten up about that woman and what she really stands for!

–Wendy Meier

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

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Politics and rights



Tim Pawlenty

“While being lesbian or gay may not be a choice, being ignorant is. Pawlenty has either chosen to be ignorant of the reality or he has chosen to present himself in this manner in order to try and gain the votes of the ignorant. Either way, his behavior is a choice, just like what religion he follows, and what color clothes he wears. Being lesbian, gay or transsexual is not a choice.”

–Bridgette P. LaVictoire, in her blog titled “Tim Pawlenty Doubts Science On Genetic, Physical Cause Of Homosexuality,” about GOP presidential candidate Tim Pawlenty’s statement: “The science in that regard is in dispute. There’s no scientific conclusion that homosexuality is genetic. We don’t know that.” [lezgetreal.com](#), July 10. Pawlenty was interviewed on NBC’s “Meet The Press.”



Kerry Eleveld

“While the White House still thinks of marriage equality as a gay issue, the greater public now thinks of it as an American issue. This is something White House advisors have failed to comprehend thus far, otherwise they wouldn’t be holding so steadfastly to a federalist rationale for keeping the president out of it. A high-placed (LGBT) advisor could help them anticipate just how tone-deaf President Obama’s current stance will sound every time he’s forced to reiterate it on the campaign trail. He can talk about ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ repeal and DOMA all he wants, the voters still know a dodge when they see one.”

–Kerry Eleveld, in her column titled “Obama’s Second Chance At An LGBT Advisor,” about President Obama’s opportunity to appoint an LGBT advisor to a top White House post, [equalitymatters.org](#), July 8.



Sasha Lotrian

“The Fourth of July is Independence Day. A day when our nation celebrates its freedom from religious and political tyranny. When we as a country gained our freedom, so to speak. I can only hope that one day, the LGBT community will have a day like this. A day when we are all recognized as the first class citizens we are, deserving of all the rights given to any other American.”

–Sasha Lotrian, in her blog titled “Happy 4th all you 2nd class citizens,” [cardcarryinglesbian.com](#), July 3.



David Remnick

“The struggle for marriage equality is about more than the definition of marriage; it’s about the definition of justice.”

–David Remnick, in his commentary titled “It Gets Better,” about the same-sex marriage equality movement, [newyorker.com](#), July 11.

LETTER: Constructive criticism for BTL

I very much appreciate Between The Lines and its coverage of LGBT issues in Michigan. I think that the juxtaposition of the social, cultural and political is very important for our community, and I look forward to reading even more issues as they come out. However, I do have some constructive feedback that I would like to share with you.

I recently read “Sparks Fly Over Need for ‘Gayborhood,’” originally printed on June 30,

2011. I also attended the Gay Detroit Speaker Series this year on June 11 that the article discusses. I think that the gayborhood issue is both an interesting and important one, but I’m quite curious as to why this issue is the only one from the town hall that made it into the article.

From my perspective, this event raised other issues that were also worthy of media attention. For example, I think that there were some problems with the first panel’s unwillingness to

seriously acknowledge that there are some places and people in Detroit that are extraordinarily unwelcoming to LGBT folks who either live in Detroit or are just visiting.

Additionally, there is absolutely no mention of the second panel that focused on LGBT civil rights, which I find perplexing and disturbing. I know that Between The Lines reports on civil rights legislation quite frequently, but I searched your website with earnest and I cannot find

anything meaningful about the current advocacy efforts to include sexual orientation and gender identity into the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. I very much hope that these efforts will be given some attention in print and on the web in the near future.

Thank you very much for taking the time to review my feedback.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Lamoste

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RTM Editorial

Stop listening to Gary Glenn

Last week, Gary Glenn went on Linda Harvey's radio show and proclaimed that gays aren't the "best or the brightest" employees. He earned Glenn, the head of Michigan's chapter of the American Family Association, coverage by news and blogs such as the Daily Kos, the Muskegon Chronicle and mlive.com, Towleroad and others. This isn't the first time that Glenn has attracted gads of media attention for his conservative views, and it certainly won't be his last.

To which we ask: Why?

Think about it: Does Glenn represent all conservative views? No. Does he represent all Christian views? No. He represents the far right and extremist views. He is likely speaking for a tiny portion of citizens in our state and across the country. So why is Glenn, one person who makes sense to so few, easily able to steal the spotlight?

Because we listen. Because whenever he says something obnoxious and hateful, we all rush to hear exactly what he said and how he said it. Because news outlets like inflammatory stories, which often deliver lots of online hits. Because for some reason, we worry that the average conservative-leaning politician or citizen secretly thinks or believes the horrific things that Glenn has the temerity to say.

Well, what really is behind the conservative Michigan lawmakers who were happy to introduce lots of anti-gay bills this session? They said it was the economy or the state's anti-gay marriage amendment. But they didn't say anything as crazy or extremist as Glenn, because they have some semblance of reputation and professionalism to uphold. Glenn's job is to be as loud as possible, and he knows that shocking messages are easily amplified.

Glenn has offered to pay for the next campaigns of the Holland City Council members who voted against the anti-discrimination ordinance last month. That ordinance would have protected LGBTs from discrimination in housing and employment. These kinds of protections aren't offered at the state or federal level. But

there's something very important to note in this story: even though the vote failed, it failed by a surprisingly slim margin. Just one vote different, and the historically conservative city of Holland could have turned progressive.

He's one man with one voice and one bizarre, unchanging message.

Glenn must think that he has a lot of clout and power in order to openly back city council candidates. After all, when he talks, people listen, no matter how absurd or irrelevant he sounds. But he's probably getting louder because he feels threatened. There was a lot of support for the ordinance, and it's not going away. Groups of concerned citizens are attending every single city council meeting until it votes again on the measure, and in favor. These amazing citizens – many who are Christian and/or straight – are not letting the ordinance stay a failure. They're organizing through social media, roping in area businesses and are even selling bumper stickers and t-shirts. This is the power of people banding together for positive change.

Gary Glenn is just Gary Glenn. He's one man with one voice and one bizarre, unchanging message. Between Glenn and the concerned citizens of West Michigan, who do you think we should listen to? The thoughtful people who care for their community, or the screaming lunatic? The person who thinks he has power, or the group of people who actually has power?

We highly doubt that if we stopped listening, Glenn would stop talking. He'll never do that. But if we stop reading news stories and blog posts about him, perhaps writers and editors will fail to take him seriously enough to cover him in the future. And wouldn't that be much less of a bother to all of us?



RTM Viewpoint

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

A model pronoun

Newsweek magazine, in its June 12 issue, ran a profile on Brazilian model Lea T. Good in places and bad in others, the piece tells of her early years growing up with a Brazilian soccer star for a father, her early years as a model, and onto her current life as she prepares for male to female genital reassignment surgery. It's not that uncommon of a dialogue given the scores of transsexual narratives that have graced the printed page as far back as at least 1931, when Lili Elbe's transition story, "Man Into Woman," was published.

Yet like so many others, this one runs into trouble right in the subhead.

The piece, titled "Lea T.'s Runway Revolution," carries a subhead that reads as follows: "Brazil's hottest new model is tall, dark, and glamorous. She's also a he. Meet high fashion's newest gender-bending muse." Oh, where to begin.

The article tells you that she identifies as a woman, and has – and is – taking permanent physical steps to put her body in line with her gender identity. This is all one needs to fit the Associated Press Stylebook "sex change" policy, which instructs writers to "use the pronouns preferred by the individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex or present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth."

It further states, "If that preference is not expressed, use the pronouns consistent with the way the individuals live publicly." Someone writing about Lea T. would presumably not need to go so far, given she's made it clear she's a woman. Yet this was apparently not enough for the writer of this article.

"With a practiced pout and a hip-check salute to the camera pit at the end of the runway," states the Newsweek article, "the 29-year-old model with a dragon tattoo on her pelvis owns the crowd. As the bleachers erupt in wolf whistles, who'd have figured that the hottest new face from Brazil is not a she at all?"

Yet again, she is a she.

Not to bore you with too much more of this one particular article, which attempts to draw parallels between Lea T.'s success as a model with "heroin chic," blood-spattered Benetton clothing and Andrej Pejic's distinctly gender transgressive modeling.

Perhaps it is not so much Newsweek that is to blame, but the fashion world in general – and people like Thomaz Azulay, who signed Lea T. to work the runway at Fashion Rio, and is also quoted by Newsweek. "Our brand is about democracy," Azulay says. "The beach is for everyone, and Lea T. is a perfect symbol for that."

Regardless of who has opted to misgender Lea T. – even though the rest of the article does

refer to her by her preferred pronoun – the fact that she has been so labeled remains. No matter how much she has done, how much she has gone through, this newsmagazine has decided to brand her "he" from the first few words.

Now it may sound like I am outraged that Lea T. was treated so, and while I do find it frustrating to read of yet another transgender person being misgendered by the popular press, I find my own cynicism tempering my anger. I've seen this all before.

At the end of 1952, Christine Jorgensen's genital reassignment led to banner headlines like "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty: Operations Transform Bronx Youth." Yet 37 years later, when Jorgensen passed away, one obituary started, "When George Jorgensen decided to change his name – and his body – the nation wasn't quite ready."

And 22 years later, we still seem to see a lack of readiness to accept the proper pronouns for transgender individuals.

We see the very same sort of troubles in a Newsweek piece released in 2011 as in articles from more than a half-century ago.

Indeed, nearly any article you'll find on transgender people, from Chaz Bono down to this week's anti-transgender murder, reads about the same. The pronouns get reversed, at the least when we talk about the subject's pre-transition years. If

there is a biography – as with Lea T. – we get to hear about their disinterest in stereotypically masculine or feminine pursuits. We'll likely get their birth name, and in the worst cases the name they are known by will be relegated to a quotation mark laden "nickname" – or stripped away altogether.

Such is the narrative. To me, when the media uses discarded pronouns and names long since changed, it is attempting to remind people what a transgender person "really" is. Perhaps it is a warning to the straight folks – or more to the point, the straight men – to not be deceived. Or perhaps it is their sly way of informing their readership that they somehow know truths beyond what their interviewee is willing to disclose. Or it is merely sensationalism, a way to push more paper and sell advertising.

Regardless of the reason, it should be clear that this is wrong. Much like the Associated Press' method, pronouns come down to the person who wears them. It would seem foolish if were to deliberately misgender otherwise non-transgender identified people – say, if I called President Obama "she" or Paris Hilton "he." It should be just as foolish to do the same to Lea T., Chaz Bono, or other transgender individuals.

In short, Lea T. is not a she who is also a he. She is, quite simply, a she.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Mamacitas! Mujeronas!

I've returned after a heavenly week, all expenses paid, from Porta Bloomers, Texas, for the first international convention of Bilingual Drag Queens for Jesus. Hola-la-la!

I flew first class with 50 lovelies, including Senorita Sinsational, Farmington; Lola Latinate, Royal Oak; Carmencita Dilamente, Ferndale; and Evangelista Connie Maricon, Flat Rock.

BDQ4J is Rev. Connie's radiant dream come to fruition. "I was filled with the Holy Ghost while performing flamenco at a benefit for retired Catholic drag queens, when I just knew heaven had given me a special lip-synch calling.

"It blessed me like a whirling disco ball! There are Jews for Jesus. Muslims for Jesus. Plural Wives for Jesus. Tea Baggers. Lactovegetarians. Dykes for Jesus. Even psychiatrists. Why in hell shouldn't there be Drag Queens for Jesus? Bilingual ones at that. Don't we count?"

(She's got a point. If other minorities can take a JC stand, why can't cross dressers? The Big Guy rubbed elbows with tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners, and lately Rebublicans. Surely drag queens are several notches above those misfits. And bilingual to boot! But, forgive me, I digress.)

The 15-hour flight, non-Las Vegas casino stopover, was fantasy in motion. Time whizzed by watching old Carmen Miranda movies, clacking and clicking castanets, singing romantic flamenco cantantes, sharing huevos rancheros recipes, comparing platform high-heel inches, giving and getting glossolalia. And praying. Mostly when taking off and landing.

Time for una confesione, semi-sordidito, mama mia ...

Reluctantly I joined the mile high falling out in the spirit club. It was the thrill of a lifetime. Talk about turbulence! Truly, there's a first for everything. You haven't lived 'til you've been overcome by the spirit, going at it all tongues, getting a breathtaking rapture. A los pedos!

In spite of the fact it was devilishly hot - 120 in the shade, and my Spanish is limited to a basic gringo vocabulary of intransitive verbs - I had a fantastic time, thanks to the hospitality of Rainbow Airlines flight attendant Chance Las Alamos (who grew up with a gay third cousin, since turned Democrat, of Sarah P, as in pudenda).

Chance, it turns out, is into older gringos. (He said I'd look hot in Poncho Villa chaps and matching leather-trimmed sombrero.) When he found out I was planning to make my convention visit subject of a social work master's thesis, his long-neglected paternal guidance fixation kicked in.

He hugged often. I tipped generously. Carumba! I love his South of the Borderline hospitality. Muy caliente!

My diary entries are here for sharing. Lunes: Spent most of the day visiting cacti sculptures. Ouch! Martes: Came in second in Taco eating contest (240 tacos!). Miércoles: A bummer! Spent day in bed with the Gringo Gallop. Jueves: "Hotter Than Tequila" parade beads of sweaty fun. Marched with Proud Putos of El Paso.

Viernes: Hung out with cowpokes from Porta Bloomer Bronco Busters. Rode side saddle six times. Sabado: Visited El Aricoris Hotel massage therapist for spinal adjustment. Loved midnight campfire Drag Singsperation. Surprise guests: Los Fregonos S/M Gospel Quartet, and multitalented Mexican Border Crossers for Jesus Belle Ringers.

Domingo: Can say without fear of perdition: the closing Drag Queen Living Rosary (I was third Our Father from the right) and the Stations of the Crossdressers Pageant at John Wayne Football Stadium were a climatic first in the history of Ecumenical Christianity.

I'm humbled to relate BDQ4Js really do know how to lip synch "God Bless America" and that perennial "skirts up" gospel favorite, "Love Lifted Me." Hopefully, their recent appearance in Porta Bloomers will hasten the day when same-sex marriage will be legal there.

Chance Las Alamos and I - call me, Sr. Carne de Gallina - Mr. Goose bumps - just might have Rev. Connie perform our wedding. Que cajones!

Charles@pridesource.com Happy BDQ4J to you!

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Creep of the Week

Linda Harvey

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

If there's anything I love it's a good ol' Nazi allusion. It's the ultimate argument winner. All you have to do is link your opponent and Nazis in your audience's mind and you're golden. You don't even have to have facts or logic or any shred of human decency. Ain't no allusion like a Nazi allusion 'cause a Nazi allusion don't stop.



Linda Harvey

It's especially fitting when someone equates gays with Nazis. So perfect. Gays and Nazis are exactly alike. One group wants to have equal rights — things like legal marriage and anti-discrimination laws. And the other group threw Jewish babies into ovens. Okay, maybe they aren't exactly the same. But close enough, am I right?

Linda Harvey of Mission America, a group that is rabidly anti-gay, appears to think so. Earlier this month she had her undies in a twist over the National Education Association's supposed anti-Christian pro-gay agenda. Harvey sees the NEA's support of bullying policies that are LGBT-inclusive as a particularly dire threat. Why?

Because they apparently are targeting "hate language." And Harvey believes that Christians have a special right to use hate language.

Now, I'm no theologian, but last time I checked, "hate language" wasn't exactly Christian.

Of course, Harvey thinks that the NEA — or anyone targeting anti-LGBT hate — is really targeting Christians. She says about the "hate language" policy, "Will this result in even more 'gay' stapo efforts to silence Christians and conservatives? Or to position students and fellow staff who dare to express traditional moral beliefs as speaking 'hate language'?"

Ha. "Gay" stapo. Get it? Homosexuals who think that it's really uncool for kids to call each other "gay faggot" or "dyke bitch" with impunity are the same as the guys who busted in Anne Frank's door and took her away to her death in a concentration camp.

Look, the anti-gay right loves to position themselves as this persecuted group defending themselves from the big bad homos of the world. But the truth is that's bullshit. They've got a major TV network and an entire political party spewing their talking points and kissing their asses. So give me a break.

Harvey is also concerned with the idea that the NEA wants "contract language that secures safe work environments for all our members."

"In other words, parents, get ready," Harvey writes. "Teachers are going to transform the local school into an even more ideological monolith as they negotiate away your rights to not have your child propagandized, in order that they, the teachers, feel 'safe' from certain viewpoints. It's the control freak tendency of the tolerant left, once again."

Keep in mind that to Harvey telling kids anything other than "gays are bad and make Jesus puke" constitutes children being "propagandized." Harvey's point of view is so warped she thinks that keeping gay kids safe is some kind of sinister agenda. She even calls out for "anti-discrimination class action suits against the NEA." Because if a Christian isn't allowed to bully a fag, that's discrimination.

The phrase "contract language" particularly riles Harvey. "Perhaps taxpayers can 'contract' to have public sector unions become a relic of the past," she writes.

Ah, yes. The anti-union craze that's sweeping the nation. Unions are the worst! I once saw a guy wearing a t-shirt that read, "Like Your Weekends? Thank a Union." And I was all, "No I don't like my weekends, thank you very much. I want to work 12 hour days seven days a week for below minimum wage in a factory with no breaks and that's been my dream since I was six years old, you child labor discriminating bastard."

So I guess Jesus, or at least the caricature of Jesus people like Harvey believe in, hates unions, too. I mean, think about it. Unions raised the standard of living in America by fighting for fair wages and better working conditions, which unfairly impacts the entire country.

But it's no wonder that Harvey is anti-union when shortly before her "gay" stapo comments she said on her radio show that gays shouldn't be hired to begin with. According to Harvey and her guest, Michigan's own anti-gay hate monger Gary Glenn, gays are all mentally ill drug abusers with AIDS and/or cancer and/or hepatitis. "I would not think of a homosexual person as a good employment risk. I just wouldn't," she said.

Which is no doubt devastating news for all of the homosexuals who would just love having someone like Harvey as their boss.

Opinions LETTERS

Gay rodeo promotes animal abuse, not community

RodeoFest 2011 (presented by the Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association) is promising a fun-filled weekend of entertainment later this month. However, for the animals involved in these shows, rodeos are anything but fun. In fact, most animals in the rodeo experience lives full of pain and abuse.

Rodeos are nothing more than manipulative displays of human domination over animals, thinly disguised as entertainment. IGRA rodeos include roughstock and roping events such as bull riding, calf roping and chute dogging (cruelly twisting a steer's head by holding onto her/his horns and wrestling the struggling animal to the ground). The animals used in these events are captive performers. Many of these animals are not aggressive by nature; they are physically provoked into displaying "wild" behavior in order to make the cowboys look brave.

RodeoFest will also feature events like goat dressing and steer decorating. In goat dressing, participants yank

goats' hind legs off the ground and force underwear onto them. This is done as quickly as possible, making injuries more likely.

Endorsing the infliction of violence on other beings does nothing to combat the discrimination and oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression that we may face.

Rodeo cowboys voluntarily risk injury by participating in events, but the animals they use have no such

choice. Countless animals in rodeos have suffered broken ribs, backs, and legs; punctured lungs; deep internal organ bruising; hemorrhaging; ripped tendons; torn ligaments and muscles; snapped necks; and agonizing deaths.

Torturing animals is no way to create community. And endorsing the infliction of violence on other beings does nothing to combat the discrimination and oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression that we may face. Moreover, promoting rodeos sends a dangerous message that entertainment based on suffering and ridicule is not only allowed, it is encouraged. There are much more compassionate ways (that don't involve cruelty to animals) to strengthen our community and work to eradicate homophobia and transphobia. Please stand up to cruelty in all its forms, and boycott the rodeo.

Sincerely,
Kate Brindle
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Editor's note: Kate's op-ed originally appeared online at pridesoure.com July 7.

No harm in gay rodeo, animals treated fairly

Kate Brindle wrote about the Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association's upcoming RodeoFest 2011 and her concern about the animals involved. It's great to be in a free country that allows for questions and the freedom of expression so I have no problem with her not liking the rodeo. Everyone has their own standards as to how to take care of animals, or at least their own animal, and I think this is the basis of her concern. She didn't differentiate between the privately owned animals (horses) and the stock contractors animals but I believe she was taking about the roughstock. She has the right to not agree with how animals are used, but I did not see many facts that would apply to an amateur rodeo that is sanctioned by the IGRA.

It seems her letter is based on concerns that animal rights organizations have with professional rodeos, like those sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association or the International Professional Rodeo Association, which differ from the IGRA. Professional rodeos do use shock prods in the chute to rile up an animal, so they do come out bucking, because there is money to be won on the performance of an animal. IGRA rodeos have strict guidelines on the care and treatment of animals. I have been around IGRA rodeos for years and the only time I've ever seen the use of force is when an animal would refuse to move in the transfer chutes. I have seen a stock contractor tell a rodeo association to make a change immediately to prevent his animals from getting hurt.

Even I have a problem with the

professional rodeos like the Calgary Stampede doing calf roping with a tethered rope, which does flip a moving animal when they are jerked to a stop, and can cause injury or death. The IGRA rodeos use break-away roping, where the rope is not tied to anything, so when the calf runs out of rope, it just keeps running, right back to the holding chute. I and others in the IGRA would support animal welfare groups and the IGRA and associations to work together to change all rodeos to break-away roping.

IGRA rodeos have strict guidelines on the care and treatment of animals.

Yes, there will be chute dogging, or steer wrestling, at RodeoFest, and the contestants will be coming out of a chute and trying to control a steer with their hands/arms. More often than not, the steer gets away. If not, then the idea is to wrestle the steer down to the ground, not flip or trip it, which causes disqualification. These are grown steers and it's usually an uneven match, but it is like wrestling on TV: the animal is working for its feed.

The large animals used in IGRA rodeos are usually owned by the stock contractor and they have been through this before. The bulls, steers and broncos buck and run to get

the contestant off its back, and that usually happens. Yes, the animals are responding to the uncomfortable confinement of someone on their back so they react. The contestants are also reacting, usually from nerves and the sudden movement and strain of holding on, and usually the contestant loses.

Yes, they will be putting underwear on goats (usually not used again in rodeos and obtained from farms that sell milk or meat). I've never seen a goat hurt in this event, just contestants falling down.

Yes, they will be putting a ribbon on a steer's tail and the steer will be trying to get away, and half the time, it does. I've never seen a steer hurt in this event. I have seen contestants hurt or getting pooped on, but that's the risk. Again, the animal is working for food.

Now, for people who have no use for the livestock industry, which does have its own record of problems and documentation of abuse, I'm sure they could do without all of this. Funny thing is there are vegetarians that compete in IGRA rodeos. For people who think that animals should be left alone in their natural environment, I'm sure they would like to see this end, along with private ownership of all but companion animals who have excellent homes. I'm just not sure how that would work.

As for the list of concerns that were outlined in Kate's letter, I just don't see them applying to amateur gay rodeo. I would encourage all those who don't like the idea of RodeoFest 2011 to come up with another way to raise money for the charities that MIGRA has and is helping.

Red Hodeo
Dearborn, Mich.

Holland City Council feels the pressure of failed vote

Concerned citizens attend every city council meeting, hope for a re-vote

BY JEREMY MARTIN

HOLLAND— Last month, the Holland City Council turned down an anti-discrimination amendment that would have offered protections to LGBT citizens in housing and employment. But two groups of concerned citizens are refusing to accept the vote, and they're refusing to let the council forget about the issue.

The groups plan to show up at every single council meeting until they can persuade the council to vote again and pass the amendment.

Kimberly Payne-Naik, a group member of Until Love Is =, said this is the best way to go about getting one council member to change his or her vote. The council voted 5-4 against the amendment at the June 15 meeting.

The amendment would add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to other minority groups in the city's code that are protected from discrimination in housing and hiring. The amendment would offer protections that aren't offered by Michigan's civil rights law or by federal civil rights laws.

Until Love Is = has teamed up with another group of concerned citizens called Holland is Ready. The groups think that a two sided front of educating the public and speaking at council meetings is the most logical course of action

to take.

When the council voted against the measure last month, it encouraged concerned citizens to let the small city's residents vote on it. But both groups think putting minority rights in the hands of the majority would be a bad idea.

"It would be fatal to the cause to underestimate the opposition," Payne-Naik said. "A ballot initiative done too quickly without proper language, process and public education could result in having this voted down."

"A 'no' vote would give the council a reason to continue to reject the amendment for a very long time to come, playing the 'good people of Holland have spoken' card."

Council member David Hoekstra is not sure if confronting the city council directly will work.

"I was initially disappointed that the ballot initiative was not pursued and felt some momentum may have been lost, but there may be some hidden value in the extended dialogue," he said. "We're hearing personal stories and perspectives that are helping us understand each other. We're also talking with each other with amazing respect and grace, which will be a valuable element in how we ultimately resolve this." Hoekstra cast one of the four votes in favor of the amendment last month.

Council member Robert Vande Vusse agrees

with Hoekstra that it is important to continue discussing the amendment, but he noted that a re-vote by the council would still have to follow civil procedure and would not be as simple as one council member changing his or her mind.

Like Hoekstra, Vande Vusse originally voted in favor the amendment. He thinks change will come not by discussing the issue with the council, but by discussing it with the general public, face to face.

"My concern is that because, for many, this is an emotionally charged issue rather than being simply a rational one, some may respond in a way that generates more heat than light on the issue. That will only polarize people more than they are already," Vande Vusse said.

As for Payne-Naik, she will continue to attend council meetings and to educate the public on the benefits of the amendment, but she isn't entirely sure that the majority of Holland's citizens are indeed ready for change.

"My skepticism arises from the fact that I was born and raised in this area, and I do know how things work here and who is really in charge – and those who are have very deep pockets," she said.

To learn more about Until Love is = and Holland is Ready, check out their Facebook pages and the website <http://untilloveisequal.com>.



Dan Hurst proudly wears an "Until Love Is =" shirt in a Facebook profile photo project. The project, photographed by Seth Thompson, features dozens of people wearing the shirts. The shirts, as well as tank tops and bumper stickers, are available online at <http://untilloveisequal.com/category/shop/>.

AmeriCorps team celebrates year of service in Detroit

Young volunteers 'banded together from the beginning,' says team leader

CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT— Terry Ryan from the Michigan AIDS Coalition has organized the year-long AmeriCorps service programs for the past six years. At the July 6 end-of-service awards ceremony, he was full of gratitude and pride as he said goodbye to a group of young activists who worked hard during the past year.

"Every team takes on a collaborative personality," Ryan said. "This team, of all the teams I remember, has required the least training and direction. They banded together from the beginning, and I admire their long-term vision."

Working with area organizations such as the Michigan AIDS Coalition, Community Health Alternatives, Detroit Health Department, Transgender Michigan, Alternatives for Girls and Detroit Latinos, the seven team members created a remarkable list of accomplishments. They gave hundreds of HIV tests, worked at needle exchange programs and educated about AIDS prevention. The group volunteered at a Chicago animal rescue, transformed a run-down Detroit school storage space into a freshly-painted multipurpose room, sorted donations at a food bank and much more.

One project that particularly impressed Ryan was the 650-can sculpture of Faygo Red Pop containers into the shape of a larger-than-life-size AIDS ribbon. The sculpture was a conversation piece at Motor City Pride, and it's now a reminder of AIDS awareness for visitors

to Alternatives for Girls.

But the ribbon itself was not nearly as impressive as the way Team 14 pulled together to handle the obstacles that came its way. The team hoped to create a sculpture out of old car parts and to place it permanently at the Heidelberg Project in Detroit. But the plan came with a \$50,000 price tag that the team ultimately could not raise in donations.

"We put so much time into the idea that we didn't want to give it up completely," said team member Heather O'Neil. The group wanted to stick with a Motor City theme, and that Faygo seemed like a good fit that was more in its budget. But there were still problems even after the change. "It fell apart a couple of times," she said. "Finally we used a mix of wire, glue and clear tape and we finally got it right. But it took a lot of trial and error."

In addition to learning team-building and problem-solving skills, the youth were able grow as individuals too.

Emma Krasicky transitioned this year, finding the work with Transgender Michigan a supportive place to live her first year comfortably as Emma. Serving as the first office manager for Transgender Michigan, Krasicky helped group establish its first brick-and-mortar location at the Community Pride Building in Ferndale.

"This has been the best year of my life so far," she said. "I started my AmeriCorps year just after a month of beginning my physical transition. There were a lot of physical challenges and I've never volunteered in a group like this before." When



AIDS Team Detroit members show off their life size AIDS ribbon, made with cans of Faygo Red Pop. BTL photo: Crystal A. Proxmire.

Transgender Michigan founder Rachel Crandall first encouraged Krasicky to do the program, Krasicky wasn't so sure. Now she's glad she did it: "It has really changed my life," she said.

Michael Wallace shared his passion for online social media with his host organization AIDS United. He built the group's following on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube and Juno. Wallace even captured the attention of Channel 7 Action News, which read one of his tweets and invited members of the AmeriCorps team for an on-air interview. Wallace will return next year as team coordinator for Team 15.

As Sarah Detloff finished her final day as

"This has been the best year of my life so far."

—AIDS Team Detroit member
Alex Krasicky

team coordinator for Team 14, she wondered what the future would bring. "It will be strange not doing AmeriCorps next year since I've been doing it for two years now," she said. "I'll miss everyone so much."

Another member, Chardae Rowe, has been offered a paid staff position at her host organization, Alternatives for Girls.

Ryan forward to running the AmeriCorps program again next year through his office at MAC. "In 26 years of fighting HIV, this is the most rewarding thing I do," he said. "This group has renewed and revalidated for me why I am doing this."

To learn more about AmeriCorps AIDS United Team Detroit, check them out on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TeamDetroit?v=info>. To learn more about MAC go to <http://michiganaidcoalition.org/>.

Creep of the Week

Linda Harvey

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

If there's anything I love it's a good ol' Nazi allusion. It's the ultimate argument winner. All you have to do is link your opponent and Nazis in your audience's mind and you're golden. You don't even have to have facts or logic or any shred of human decency. Ain't no allusion like a Nazi allusion 'cause a Nazi allusion don't stop.



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Because they apparently are targeting "hate language." And Harvey believes that Christians have a special right to use hate language.

Now, I'm no theologian, but last time I checked, "hate language" wasn't exactly Christian.

Of course, Harvey thinks that the NEA — or anyone targeting anti-LGBT hate — is really targeting Christians. She says about the "hate language" policy, "Will this result in even more 'gay' stapo efforts to silence Christians and conservatives? Or to position students and fellow staff who dare to express traditional moral beliefs as speaking 'hate language'?"

Ha. "Gay" stapo. Get it? Homosexuals who think that it's really uncool for kids to call each other "gay faggot" or "dyke bitch" with impunity are the same as the guys who busted in Anne Frank's door and took her away to her death in a concentration camp.

Look, the anti-gay right loves to position themselves as this persecuted group defending themselves from the big bad homos of the world. But the truth is that's bullshit. They've got a major TV network and an entire political party spewing their talking points and kissing their asses. So give me a break.

Harvey is also concerned with the idea that the NEA wants "contract language that secures safe work environments for all our members."

"In other words, parents, get ready," Harvey writes. "Teachers are going to transform the local school into an even more ideological monolith as they negotiate away your rights to not have your child propagandized, in order that they, the teachers, feel 'safe' from certain viewpoints. It's the control freak tendency of the tolerant left, once again."

Keep in mind that to Harvey telling kids anything other than "gays are bad and make Jesus puke" constitutes children being "propagandized." Harvey's point of view is so warped she thinks that keeping gay kids safe is some kind of sinister agenda. She even calls out for "anti-discrimination class action suits against the NEA." Because if a Christian isn't allowed to bully a fag, that's discrimination.

The phrase "contract language" particularly riles Harvey. "Perhaps taxpayers can 'contract' to have public sector unions become a relic of the past," she writes.

Ah, yes. The anti-union craze that's sweeping the nation. Unions are the worst! I once saw a guy wearing a t-shirt that read, "Like Your Weekends? Thank a Union." And I was all, "No I don't like my weekends, thank you very much. I want to work 12 hour days seven days a week for below minimum wage in a factory with no breaks and that's been my dream since I was six years old, you child labor discriminating bastard."

So I guess Jesus, or at least the caricature of Jesus people like Harvey believe in, hates unions, too. I mean, think about it. Unions raised the standard of living in America by fighting for fair wages and better working conditions, which unfairly impacts the entire country.

But it's no wonder that Harvey is anti-union when shortly before her "gay" stapo comments she said on her radio show that gays shouldn't be hired to begin with. According to Harvey and her guest, Michigan's own anti-gay hate monger Gary Glenn, gays are all mentally ill drug abusers with AIDS and/or cancer and/or hepatitis. "I would not think of a homosexual person as a good employment risk. I just wouldn't," she said.

Which is no doubt devastating news for all of the homosexuals who would just love having someone like Harvey as their boss.

Opinions LETTERS

Gay rodeo promotes animal abuse, not community

RodeoFest 2011 (presented by the Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association) is promising a fun-filled weekend of entertainment later this month. However, for the animals involved in these shows, rodeos are anything but fun. In fact, most animals in the rodeo experience lives full of pain and abuse.

Rodeos are nothing more than manipulative displays of human domination over animals, thinly disguised as entertainment. IGRA rodeos include roughstock and roping events such as bull riding, calf roping and chute dogging (cruelly twisting a steer's head by holding onto her/his horns and wrestling the struggling animal to the ground). The animals used in these events are captive performers. Many of these animals are not aggressive by nature; they are physically provoked into displaying "wild" behavior in order to make the cowboys look brave.

RodeoFest will also feature events like goat dressing and steer decorating. In goat dressing, participants yank

goats' hind legs off the ground and force underwear onto them. This is done as quickly as possible, making injuries more likely.

Endorsing the infliction of violence on other beings does nothing to combat the discrimination and oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression that we may face.

Rodeo cowboys voluntarily risk injury by participating in events, but the animals they use have no such

choice. Countless animals in rodeos have suffered broken ribs, backs, and legs; punctured lungs; deep internal organ bruising; hemorrhaging; ripped tendons; torn ligaments and muscles; snapped necks; and agonizing deaths.

Torturing animals is no way to create community. And endorsing the infliction of violence on other beings does nothing to combat the discrimination and oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression that we may face. Moreover, promoting rodeos sends a dangerous message that entertainment based on suffering and ridicule is not only allowed, it is encouraged. There are much more compassionate ways (that don't involve cruelty to animals) to strengthen our community and work to eradicate homophobia and transphobia. Please stand up to cruelty in all its forms, and boycott the rodeo.

Sincerely,
Kate Brindle
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Editor's note: Kate's op-ed originally appeared online at pridesoure.com July 7.

No harm in gay rodeo, animals treated fairly

Kate Brindle wrote about the Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association's upcoming RodeoFest 2011 and her concern about the animals involved. It's great to be in a free country that allows for questions and the freedom of expression so I have no problem with her not liking the rodeo. Everyone has their own standards as to how to take care of animals, or at least their own animal, and I think this is the basis of her concern. She didn't differentiate between the privately owned animals (horses) and the stock contractors animals but I believe she was taking about the roughstock. She has the right to not agree with how animals are used, but I did not see many facts that would apply to an amateur rodeo that is sanctioned by the IGRA.

It seems her letter is based on concerns that animal rights organizations have with professional rodeos, like those sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association or the International Professional Rodeo Association, which differ from the IGRA. Professional rodeos do use shock prods in the chute to rile up an animal, so they do come out bucking, because there is money to be won on the performance of an animal. IGRA rodeos have strict guidelines on the care and treatment of animals. I have been around IGRA rodeos for years and the only time I've ever seen the use of force is when an animal would refuse to move in the transfer chutes. I have seen a stock contractor tell a rodeo association to make a change immediately to prevent his animals from getting hurt.

Even I have a problem with the

professional rodeos like the Calgary Stampede doing calf roping with a tethered rope, which does flip a moving animal when they are jerked to a stop, and can cause injury or death. The IGRA rodeos use break-away roping, where the rope is not tied to anything, so when the calf runs out of rope, it just keeps running, right back to the holding chute. I and others in the IGRA would support animal welfare groups and the IGRA and associations to work together to change all rodeos to break-away roping.

IGRA rodeos have strict guidelines on the care and treatment of animals.

Yes, there will be chute dogging, or steer wrestling, at RodeoFest, and the contestants will be coming out of a chute and trying to control a steer with their hands/arms. More often than not, the steer gets away. If not, then the idea is to wrestle the steer down to the ground, not flip or trip it, which causes disqualification. These are grown steers and it's usually an uneven match, but it is like wrestling on TV: the animal is working for its feed.

The large animals used in IGRA rodeos are usually owned by the stock contractor and they have been through this before. The bulls, steers and broncos buck and run to get

the contestant off its back, and that usually happens. Yes, the animals are responding to the uncomfortable confinement of someone on their back so they react. The contestants are also reacting, usually from nerves and the sudden movement and strain of holding on, and usually the contestant loses.


Yes, they will be putting underwear on goats (usually not used again in rodeos and obtained from farms that sell milk or meat). I've never seen a goat hurt in this event, just contestants falling down.

Yes, they will be putting a ribbon on a steer's tail and the steer will be trying to get away, and half the time, it does. I've never seen a steer hurt in this event. I have seen contestants hurt or getting pooped on, but that's the risk. Again, the animal is working for food.



Now, for people who have no use for the livestock industry, which does have its own record of problems and documentation of abuse, I'm sure they could do without all of this. Funny thing is there are vegetarians that compete in IGRA rodeos. For people who think that animals should be left alone in their natural environment, I'm sure they would like to see this end, along with private ownership of all but companion animals who have excellent homes. I'm just not sure how that would work.

As for the list of concerns that were outlined in Kate's letter, I just don't see them applying to amateur gay rodeo. I would encourage all those who don't like the idea of RodeoFest 2011 to come up with another way to raise money for the charities that MIGRA has and is helping.

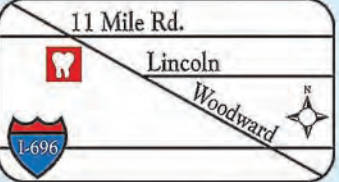
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WHAT THE FOLK?



The totally unexpected interview with a local singer-songwriter

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

It felt like I'd known Abigail Stauffer for years. She greeted me with her friendly good-to-see-you smile, and just mere minutes into our interview on the top-floor tearoom of Crazy Wisdom in Ann Arbor, she reached out her hand – as I walked away from the table to order our drinks – not for a handshake, but to take a nice, firm hold of my bottom. Shock came over me,

even if I kind of liked it. I knew this wasn't going to be any ordinary interview with any ordinary singer-songwriter.

While I'm away, Stauffer leaves me a message on the recorder set up on the table in front of her. "This is a secret message for Chris Ass-o-party," she teases, having already probed my adolescent nickname out of me with her own set of questions before

the ass attack. "I like your name and I'm excited to be interviewing with you."

But this isn't just an interview; this is an hour-long conversation, something the 22-year-old insists on early in our chat. And just as soon as we sit down to talk, drinks in hand, she recognizes a friend.

"Hi you," Stauffer calls, that smile rehashing. "He's gay, too," she adds, looking at me like she's about to hook us up.

They engage in small talk, and then she tells me, "I know a lot of people. I'm really, really friendly. So it's funny to add-on the music thing, because everyone's like, 'You know a lot of people because you're a musician.' But it has almost nothing to do with it."

Right. She's a musician. We're here to talk about music.

Stauffer released her debut album, "Alone

See Abigail Stauffer, page 24

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WEDNESDAY | JULY 27TH

HOT2011 VIP ARTIST EXHIBIT & RECEPTION

Join us and many special guests for an evening of art, music, networking and fun. Everyone is welcomed, no dress code required. Music and art provided by Detroit artist. Includes light refreshments. Featured Artist: Poor Man's Art Collective. Sponsored by Barefoot Wines & The Detroit Liberal Art Gallery, 3361 Gratiot Ave., Detroit, MI 48207 (Just North Of Mack Ave.)
7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

KICK Presents KICKIN' IT ON THE RIVER

An Official Hotter Than July! Pride Event. A 3 Hour Cruise on the Detroit River. Boarding Begins at 6:20 pm at Rivard Plaza. Music by DJ Cent I Strolling Buffet I Cash Bar. Tickets are \$55 and available at www.e-kick.org or call (313) 285-9733 for more details

THURSDAY | JULY 28TH

INTERFAITH CANDLELIGHT VIGIL @ PALMER PARK

7:30 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
Blue Spruce Memorial Tree, Palmer Park, Detroit, MI

KARIBU HOUSE INC. Presents Poetry & Comedy Open Mic Night

Hosted by Award Winning Writer, Producer & Educator Ifalade Ta'Shia Asanti of LA. 9 pm until 11 pm. Detroit CARES Multi-Center Complex, 8100 W. Davison in Detroit 48234. Admission is \$10 before 10pm and \$15 after 10pm. Light beverages will be served. All spoken word artists & comedians are encouraged to participate. For directions, sign up and details call (313) 865-2170 ext. 3 or email Kofi.Adoma@karibuhouse.org

HOTTER THAN JULY KICK OFF PARTY

Presented By Aw Entertainment & DJ Reggie Reg at Club Waterfalls, 673 Franklin St. With Live Performances and Special Guest Performer SISQO. Advance Tickets \$15; Advance VIP Platinum Pass w/Artist Meet & Greet \$50 9 PM til 2 AM Contact Leshone For Tickets (313) 574-1960

FRIDAY | JULY 29TH

GENESIS CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS XVI: Writing & Publishing 101

Friday July 29, 2011, 4 PM til 10 P.M. 4 P.M. until 6 P.M.
Join Hosted & Producer of Sipping On Ink; Anondra 'Kat' Williams and a panel of distinguished authors. Panelist Include Authors Stanley Bennet Clay, Ifalade Ta'Shia Asanti, Doug Cooper Spencer, Maxx Ms. ScorpioN, and Queen Sheba in a discussion on Writing & Publishing

Black Pride Society's Authors Cafe

'Books & Brandy', Sponsored by Equality Michigan. Hosted by Anondra 'Kat' Williams of Sipping On Ink. Meet Your Favorite LGBT authors up close and personal as they read and discuss their upcoming projects. Panelist Include Authors Stanley Bennet Clay, Ifalade Ta'Shia Asanti, Doug Cooper Spencer, Maxx Ms. ScorpioN, Queen Sheba, Detroit's Own Natasha 'T.' Miller and Raynell McConnal
7 P.M until 9 P.M.

AGAPE SPIRIT LIFE MINISTRIES Presents

For Men, By Men: Authentication, Validation and Empowerment
Featuring special guest Dr. D. Marcell, author of "Saved, Sanctified and Same-Gender Loving". Hosted by Agape Spirit Life Ministries
Detroit Marriott in the Renaissance Center, 100 Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI 48234. 7 P.M until 9 P.M.

SATURDAY | JULY 30TH

12TH ANNUAL RUTH ELLIS PRIDE MARCH

10:00 A.M. Pride March Registration
Lineup is on Woodward in front of the tennis courts
10:45 A.M. Pride March Procession Begins

16th ANNUAL PALMER PARK PRIDE FESTIVAL

The pinnacle event of Detroit's 16th annual pride celebration is like a family reunion and you're invited. Each year the Palmer Park Festival is host to over 20k guest taking a moment to celebrate culture, self-empowerment and identity. The day features music, entertainment, and everyone is encouraged to bring your own picnic basket, maybe even pitch a tent. NOON - 8:00 P.M.

KARIBU HOUSE Hosts the Annual Kid's Fair

During Detroit's Hotter Than July Pride Picnic Children, teens, and adults are welcome to engage in arts and crafts, music, drumming, and other fun activities. This is a FREE Event. For more information or to volunteer to help call (313) 865-2170 ext. 3 1pm to 4pm

ALL I WANNA SAY PRODUCTIONS Presents Rough Language Detroit Poetry Slam: The HIV Edition

Produced by T. Miller & Queen Sheba. Saturday July 30, 2011, 8:30 pm until 11:30 pm at AJ's Café, 240 West Nine Mile Road Ferndale, MI. Ticket Are \$15 In Advance Contact T. Miller For Details (313) 282-1196

SUNDAY | JULY 31TH

THE OFFICIAL PRIDE CLOSING PARTY

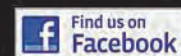
Our Sweet 16, Location: TBD. 10 P.M. - 2 A.M. Advance Tickets \$10

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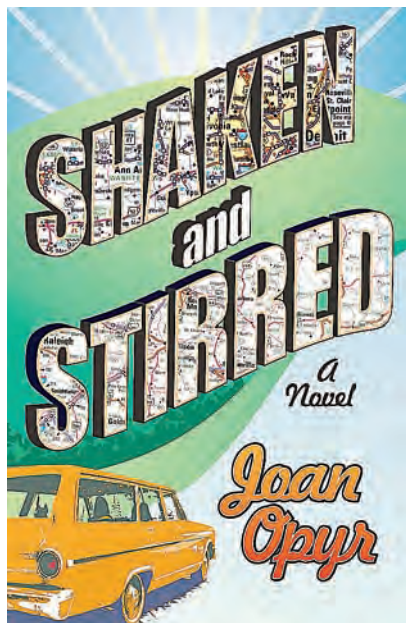
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Joan Opyr's 'Shaken and Stirred' mixes light and dark



"Shaken and Stirred," by Joan Opyr. Bywater Books, 398 pages, \$14.95 paper.

Opyr is a master (mistress?) of mixing light and dark – of telling a story about family dysfunction, alcoholic rage and life without a lover (but there's a stalker) with laugh-out loud panache. Poppy Koslowski is recovering from a physically painful hysterectomy when her mother calls with the news that her grandfather is dying. Before tomboy Poppy fled home for college, the old man's moods, which veered wildly from tyrannical to, well, grandfatherly, crazed her. So it's with mixed emotions that she returns home – accompanied by her best friend ever – to help her doddering grandmother and her dithering mother decide when it's time to pull the plug. In the face of death, though, Poppy is able to draw on the strengths her grandfather instilled in her. Sounds run-of-the-mill sappy. But Opyr's unforced comic style adds texture to the story's moral: you can go home again. Especially if it's with the best friend who turns out to be the lover you always wanted – an ending so obvious from the beginning that mentioning it is not a plot spoiler.

"Who Dat Whodunnit," by Greg Herren. Bold Strokes Books, 242 pages, \$16.95 paper.

Mystery writer Herren – who more recently has branched into young adult novels – revisits brawny, brainy and brash New Orleans sleuth Scotty Bradley in this fifth novel in the series. The New Orleans Saints (like the city itself, one of the author's passions) are heading for the

Featured Excerpt

My surgeon lied to me. A hysterectomy is not like an appendectomy. No one misses a vestigial organ, particularly one that's trying to explode insider guts and kill her. There is also no comparison between a hysterectomy and having you gallbladder removed, your tonsils out, or your bunions shaved, and as for the friend who told me it was no worse than having a root canal, well, that's just proof that friends lie, too.

– from "Shaken and Stirred," by Joan Opyr

Super Bowl, and the exuberant battle cry "Who Dat" (hence the clever title) is everywhere. The football connection continues when Scotty's homophobic cousin, a benchwarmer for the Saints, becomes prime suspect in the murder of his former-beauty queen girlfriend, who has ties to a creepy fundamentalist church. Scotty's pursuit of the killer, though, is almost beside the point. The fun of Herren's fast-paced mystery lies mainly in the eccentricities of the characters, recurring and otherwise, among them Scotty's dope-dealing parents, who figure prominently in the plot – the murder weapon belongs to Scotty's mother. Herren's brisk blend of atmospheric setting, queer activism, erotic interludes – his ménage-a-trois includes former FBI agent Frank, a wrestler on the side, and man-of-mystery Colin – and any number of red herrings makes for a breezy read.

"Dirty Poole: A Sensual Memoir," by Wakefield Poole. Lethe Press, 276 pages, \$20 paper.

Ethel Merman, Carol Burnett, Noel Coward, Cecil Beaton, Lena Horne, Bob Fosse, Marlene Dietrich, Michael Bennett – Poole's Broadway career through the '60s and '70s was studded with celebrity names. For years after, the author's life was all about studs – the stars, most notably Casey Donovan, of such legendary porn films (and they were still films then, shown in theatres) as the art-classic "Boys in the Sand," "Bijou," "Hot Shots" and, inevitably, "Boys in the Sand II," released between 1971 and 1984. Broadway acclaim and porn fame were followed by a descent into hard drugs, lawsuits launched by shady operators and the deaths of too many friends – sections about the decline of the filmmaker's partner are especially poignant – and Poole details the highs and the lows of his life with clear-eyed, unsentimental candor. After his porn-past notoriety derailed a Broadway comeback, Poole reinvented himself as a corporate chef for the Calvin Klein company, and now lives in quiet

retirement, a survivor. First published in 2000, this slightly revised edition comes in conjunction with a documentary about Poole, now in post-production.

"The Last Deployment: How a Gay, Hammer-Swinging Twentysomething Survived a Year in Iraq," by Bronson Lemer. University of Wisconsin Press, 236 pages, \$24.95 paper.

Lemer, a closeted gay man who enrolled in the North Dakota National Guard to butch



himself up in the eyes of family and friends, was six months short of ending his military commitment when he was deployed to Iraq in 2003. This memoir of that experience – with digressions

about a failed romance with another young man, and about an earlier deployment to Kosovo – is a literary testament to the spirit-crushing malevolence of the army's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Living in close quarters with bare-chested men, joking with them about pussy, boxing them in a makeshift ring, all the while guarding the secret of his sexual self: Lemer's account of a year in the desert, getting along as one of the boys while longing for a boy, is a masterful balance of straightforward wartime reporting (though he was never seriously under fire), anguished self-reflection and a wealth of absurd asides – accounts of a tent-mate setting farts alight, or of scoring bootleg whiskey from Iraqis in a passing truck while barreling along a highway.

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

the congregation for not being anti-gay enough... JOHN IRVING'S NEXT novel, "In One Person," written from the perspective of a bisexual man, is coming from Simon & Schuster in Summer 2012... A&M BOOKS IS orienting writer and publisher pioneer Sarah Aldridge's lesbian romances toward a new generation of readers with plans to release her novels in e-book format. Aldridge, a founder of venerable Naiad Press almost 40 years ago, died in 2006 at age 94, but A&M Books, founded in 1995 to release new editions of her 14 novels, is still in business.

Footnotes

BOOKS TO WATCH OUT FOR: Tony-nominated performer, performance artist ("Kiki and Herb Alive on Broadway") and songwriter Justin Vivien Bond takes talent in a different direction with "Tango: My Childhood, Backwards and in High Heels," a short memoir about trans childhood, sexual trysts with the bully next door, and sexual power and vulnerability, searing experiences recounted with unsurprisingly

hilarious honesty; the book is coming in September from The Feminist Press... KENSINGTON BOOKS ADDS another coming-of-age, coming-out young adult novel to its catalog with Timothy Woodward's debut, "The Purple Cow," about a 16-year-old boy finding first love – and support from entirely unexpected sources – in rural New Hampshire; publication is set for next year... GRAND CENTRAL will publish "Banished," an insider's look at the hateful Westboro Baptist Church ("God Hates FAGS!!") by former adherent Lauren Bain, who was expelled from

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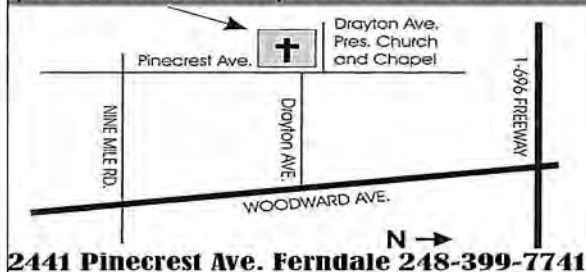
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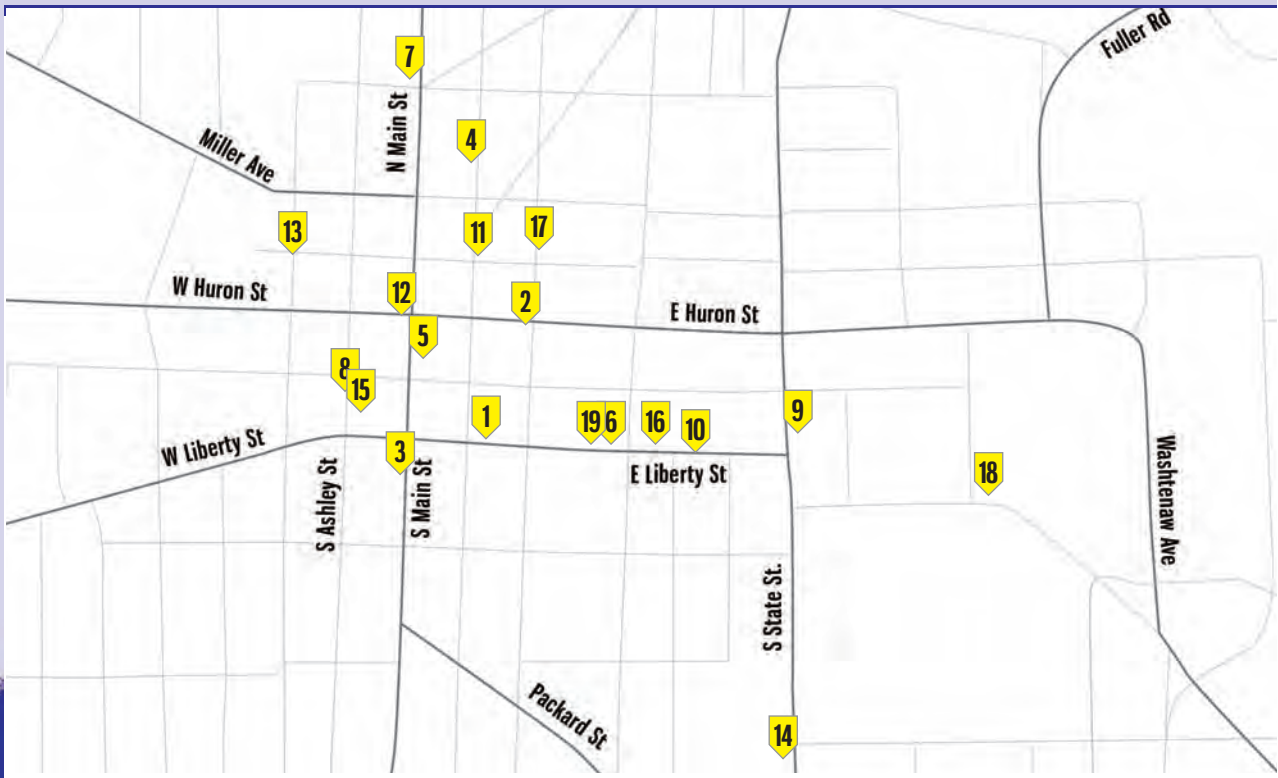


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| Equality, Inc. (CARE)..... | Humane Society of Huron Valley..... | Sh'aut\ Cabaret and Gallery..... | |
| Common Language..... | Men's Yoga | | |

* Not shown on map

Shelter Cats Have Turned Into Tigers!

The Humane Society of Huron Valley has teamed-up with the Detroit Tigers to promote the adoption of homeless cats in our community.

The adoption fee of all adult cats over 6 months old during the month of July, will equal the number of runs the Tigers scored in their previous game.

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► **Abigail Stauffer**
Continued from p. 17

**Abigail Stauffer
and Chris Bathgate**

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Then she finally gives me the rundown: “Alone to Dream” reflects thoughts on her relationships – with friends, with her mom, with God – over a couple of years, but some of the songs were written earlier.

“Beloved” was penned at the end of high school, to comfort a sad friend – and it was one of the first songs she wrote after her three older brothers went in on a guitar for her as a Christmas gift. “College, Love and Cheesecake,” a song open to interpretation (Stauffer says it’s about God), was written during her freshman year of college.

She also started “Take Me as I Am” early on, but took months to finish it. The song came from a single situation – a “friend” who was hurt by Stauffer’s coming out, something this “friend” thought was selfish – that mirrored many of her relationships at the time. Stauffer only came out a couple of years ago, and it happened fast – by the end of that school year she was posting about gay things on Facebook. I ask her if, currently, she likes both men and women.

“I appreciate you saying ‘currently,’ because it’s so fluid,” she says. “Maybe later I’ll only like one.”

And if she likes a man, she hopes that doesn’t change the fact that she genuinely has interest in both. “I could end up marrying a guy and people wouldn’t necessarily think of me as gay or queer or bi, and it’s a shame that identity is based upon – in other people’s mind – who I’m in a relationship with.

“When I’m with a girl, I must be really gay. And when I’m with a guy, I must be not very gay. I don’t feel like I’m less queer when I’m seeing a guy. I feel like it’s just who I am.”

Part of who she is – a big part – is where she comes from: Dexter, a quaint community that houses her childhood home, situated next to some horses and across the street from some cows. As a little girl, she played piano and cello, knowing all along she wanted to professionally pursue music. Her dad majored in music, but he never took that any further. And so Stauffer went the opposite route – she majored in linguistics at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she now lives. I ask what she’ll do with that degree. “Music,” she says, laughing.

But that’s not all. Stauffer, who’s also a nanny and works as a barista at Espresso Royale, has other to-dos. She wants a garden, most of all. And that’s no surprise, given how earthy she looks – her curls from four years ago are now dreadlocks supported by a headband, and oftentimes she bikes to get around town (this interview was her third ride to downtown Ann Arbor that day). So this garden seems like something she’d already have, and if she did, she’d have asparagus.

She recalls once wanting to make asparagus, “and I was going to go to the store and buy some. And my housemates, they’re older than me and more responsible, said, ‘Oh, we have asparagus in the backyard,’ and I’m like, ‘I need a garden.’ How cool that you can want asparagus and there it is – in the backyard.”

Not everything comes so easily, Stauffer knows. She’s mostly played locally, or at gay events. “When I get to travel, it’s new – and it’s always for gay things,” she says. “The LGBT community is so, ‘Hey, you’re part of us, you must be great.’” Because she’s already been embraced within the community, she’s played the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference when Ann Arbor hosted it earlier this year.

She also opened for pop-folk performer Ingrid Michaelson, who handpicked her from a group of online competitors to perform with her at The Ark. Stauffer’s a fan, but she admits her musical scope is limited. I tell her she sounds a lot like Dar Williams, one of the more recognizable performers in the singer-songwriter genre, but she’s not familiar. “I would really like to mix up

my style more,” she says. “So it’s cool to listen to people in different genres instead of people I already sound like.”

Some of her favorites are Sufjan Stevens, Corinne Bailey Rae, Feist and Regina Spektor. There’s another, but she can’t remember his name – so she breaks into song. “I feel good, I knew that I would,” she sings, coming up with the answer seconds later. “James Brown!”

She obviously sounds nothing like him, but that soulful side of her is clear in the bluesy bottom of her voice. There’s pain and hope buried deep in it, and it comes to the surface when Stauffer sings.

“When I first played the songs at a show, I didn’t realize how much I’d been compartmentalizing, and I was bringing out all these issues that weren’t resolved yet. I didn’t cry, but I was emotionally exhausted,” she recalls. “Now it tends to be more of like, ‘This is a recollection of something that was difficult and now it’s not a present issue or not as bad.’”

Stauffer’s music heals her, and she hopes it does the same for the people who listen. She likes to know she’s that person making someone’s life better. And she doesn’t just want to do that with music; she has plans to heal with her hands, too.

“I’ve always wanted to do massage therapy since second grade,” she says. “I do like touching asses, but it’s not just asses. I think it’s really cool you can help someone and improve their well-being and health by touching them. I’m a very affectionate person and therapy is great, like talking through someone’s problems, but I’d rather touch through their problems. I don’t know; that sounds a little weird.”

Weird, but somehow expected. She tells me at one point, “In my spare time I like to run, and kiss people.” “Who’s the last person you kissed?” I ask. “I’m not telling,” she says coyly.

Later, it’s clear why: “I always think about everything I’m saying and think, ‘What would my mom think?’”

And then I can’t help but think of our first few minutes together, and how I got my butt grabbed. Oops.

Orchard Lake Fine Art Show enters ninth year

Jewish Gay Network to promote organization at annual event on July 29-31

In its ninth year, the Orchard Lake Fine Art Show runs July 29-31 on Powers and Daly roads in downtown West Bloomfield. This award-winning art show consists of approximately 220 artists, using media such as sculpture, paintings, clay, glass, fiber, jewelry, photography and wood, juried by professionals of the art industry.

Judges Ann Kuffler, director/owner of Ariana Gallery in Royak Oak, and Joseph T. Marks, curator of Collections and Exhibitions of the Alfred Berkowitz Gallery at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, will award artists with one \$1,000 prize for best of show, two \$500 purchase awards and five \$100 awards of excellence.

While the show will present the artists’ work throughout the weekend, all exhibited art can be purchased during 6-9 p.m. Friday evening at the Artist Preview. Attendees receive first choice of purchase to all art.

Along with exhibited art, the Orchard Lake Fine Art Show will host live entertainment, such

as performances from French composer Michelet Innocent; Cherlene Berry teaching the solo hammered dulcimer; Zebula Avenue performing African rhythms with soulful harmonies; Jeffrey Michael and The Carrington Duet.

The show will also bring art education and demonstrations by the Institute for the Arts & Education, Inc., a non-profit 501c3 organization whose mission is to enhance artistry and community enrichment among all demographics. These demonstrations will teach attendees glass blowing, painting, wood and watercolor techniques. Local organizations, such as the Jewish Gay Network of Michigan, will also be attending.

The show will run 5-9 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on Saturday, and 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. on Sunday. Entrance to both the show and the Artist Preview require a \$5 donation, which will help support the Institute for the Arts & Education. For more information, visit hotworks.org or call 248-685-3748.



Ye gods! An entertaining night at The Encore

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

The first musical I remember attending was “The Music Man” at the local high school. I was in the fourth grade and auditioned for the role of Winthrop, but lost to a kid with red hair (much like Ron Howard from the 1962 movie adaptation) – and likely, a better singing voice. Still, I loved Meredith Willson’s affectionate tribute to Small Town America, and it still ranks today as one of my all-time favorite musicals.

So when Dexter’s The Encore Musical Theatre Company announced its summer schedule, none of my fellow critics had a shot at being there on opening night. And ye gods, what an entertaining night of theater director Jon Huffman has given us!

Set in the fictional town of River City, Iowa circa 1912, a train pulls into town carrying Professor Harold Hill, a traveling salesman who arrives unannounced to organize a boys’ band. Noting the town’s new pool table and its reputation for causing juvenile delinquency (or so he claims), Hill conquers the town’s initial hesitancy and organizes not only a band, but a barbershop quartet and a women’s dance committee as well – all while he wins the heart of the “old maid” librarian, Marian Paroo.

But what the community doesn’t know is this: Hill is a sweet-talking con man who knows nothing about music. And Charlie Cowell, a legitimate traveling salesman angry with Hill for giving his profession a bad name, wants to rectify that!

According to Willson’s view of the simpler life in small towns across Middle America, honest people are willing to pull together and forgive just about anything. Likewise, director Huffman has brought together what seems like a cast of thousands (OK, dozens) and beautifully recreates the atmosphere Willson paints so vividly through his memorable music and lyrics.

What’s more impressive, though, is this: Huffman and choreographer Barb Cullen sometimes move 27 to 30 kids and adults around The Encore’s rather tight stage without a single traffic jam. And on opening night, no one looked as if they

R E V I E W

The Music Man

The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Thursday-Sunday through July 31. \$28. 734-268-6200.
theencoretheatre.org

wandered into the wrong spot at the end of a dance number. With so many people of varying ages and performance experience to work with, that alone is noteworthy!

All of the show’s memorable scenes are handled well by Huffman and his cast, from the opening “Rock Island” (“whaddayataalk, whaddayataalk, whaddayataalk, whaddayataalk”) to the famous numbers “The Wells Fargo Wagon” and “Seventy-Six Trombones.” (Kudos, too, to Keith Allan Kalinowski and the Traveling Salesmen for handling a chair accident in the opening scene with much finesse.) And under the watchful ears of music director Brian E. Buckner, the ensemble’s singing voices blend together quite well at all times. That’s especially true of the Barbershop Quartet, whose smooth delivery could convince anyone they’d been performing together for many years.

The supporting cast is generally quite good, with Mary Rumman a standout as Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn, the mayor’s wife and leader of the women’s dance group. And all of the talented kids are as charming as you might expect – although Linus Babcock, who plays Winthrop Paroo, likely earned a stern “talking to” by the director for some mugging that occurred in the second act. (He’s cute, and he obviously knows it!)

The success of the show, though, hinges on the believability of Harold Hill and Marian Paroo. Although at first blush you might wonder about Huffman’s casting choices, together Zachary Barnes and Stephanie Souza make a winning combination.

Stephanie Souza’s strongest asset is her singing voice, and it’s beautifully showcased in all of Marian’s songs. A show highlight is “My White Knight” in which she effortlessly hits the high notes. And



Zachary Barnes is delightful as the charming con man Harold Hill in “The Music Man.” Photo: The Encore Musical Theatre Company

her second act “Till There Was You” with Barnes is quite heartwarming.

Barnes, though, is not your typical Hill. Generally played by a classically handsome, suave and athletically built scalawag whom every woman would want to sleep with, Barnes has an expressive character-actor face and lanky body that he impishly uses with great skill. His tools are his eyes, his arms, his brows and his voice, and all are used effectively to help create a multi-dimensional character that serves the show quite well.

Fine contributions are also made by Leo Babcock (set design), Daniel Fowler (lighting design) and Sharon Larkey Urick (costume design).

So while there’s certainly trouble in River City, summertime at The Encore is

www.EncoreMichigan.com or PrideSource.com

Planet Ant’s ‘Cop Block’ unarresting

BY JOHN QUINN

Perhaps that canny Scot, Robert Burns, put it best:

*The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men,
Gang aft agley,
An’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain,
For promis’d joy!*

While the Planet Ant current offering, “Cop Block,” offers no grief an’ pain, it’s gang a wee bit agley.

“Cop Block” is an original, one act script written by and starring Clint Lohman, Andrew Seiler and Andy Wotta, winners of Planet Ant’s 2011 Winter Comedy Fest. It’s the story of three hapless police officers, Rick, Nick and Johnny. They’re out to avenge the death of their Chief (who suspiciously shares a surname

with show director Matthias Schnieder), killed in a botched raid on notorious drug dealer Two Percent. It sounds pretty grim, doesn’t it? It’s a comedy, folks. We are quick to learn the trio are pretty inept whether in or out of uniform. “Hill Street Blues” it ain’t.

While the premise is sound and the talent is here, the production has failed to gel. The madcap three don wigs and balloon falsies to flesh out the multiple characters involved in the plot, but the delineation of character is not as crisp as I have come to expect in Planet Ant productions. Whole lines are thrown away and are unintelligible from even the second row. The frequent set changes came off well, even though done in the dark. I would have expected chaos there if the play had

R E V I E W

Cop Block

Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday through July 23. \$10. 313-365-4948.
www.planetant.com

actually been under rehearsed. Maybe the guys are too familiar with the material to get the proper hook to really sell it.

There’s no “cease and desist” order needed. “Cop Block” contains some quick quips and nifty riffs that kept the opening night audience howling. There are worse ways to spend “summer in the city.”

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings



Motor City Pride's return to Detroit brought many members of the local LGBT community downtown for the first time, arguing a case for the city's potential as a destination for LGBTs. In an effort to explore this potential, Metro Detroit's Twenty-Somethings, a social group for LGBT individuals in their 20s, will take a guided tour of downtown Detroit's vacant buildings to learn more about the city's history, via Detroit Tour Connections.

The tour begins at 12:45 p.m. July 17 in front of Westin Book Cadillac, 1114 Washington Blvd., in Detroit. The tour costs \$10 cash or check, and street parking is free on Sundays. No RSVP is necessary. More information is available at the20somethings.org.

Music & More



World-famous English musician, singer-songwriter and composer Paul McCartney, of the culturally and socially revolutionizing rock 'n' roll band The Beatles and leader of the '70s band Wings, returns to Detroit for his "On the Run Tour" this July. Between his various musical endeavors, McCartney has garnered himself the Guinness World Record title "most successful musician and composer in popular music history."

The tour consists of only eight shows, two of which are at Yankee Stadium in New York. McCartney will perform at 8 p.m. July 24 at Comerica Park, 2100 Woodward Ave., in Detroit. Tickets are \$19.50-\$250. For more information, call 866-668-4437 or visit OlympiaEntertainment.com.

Theater

With the 150th anniversary of the start of the American Civil War upon us, there is no better time for the Grand Rapids premiere of "Shoot Faster, Dear Brother, I'm Dying! (A Civil War Comedy)."

Renowned Chicago theater critic Lawrence Bommer calls the play, "A remarkable feat – worthy of Mark Twain," and "two hours of perfect parody."

Full of comedy, tragedy and all the other theatrical elements today's audiences demand, "Shoot Faster" follows the lives of two brothers at the end of the American Civil War, told through the letters they wrote one another.

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OUTINGS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13

Family Week Saugatuck, 8 a.m. Vacation week for LGBT families. Six days of family activities such as picnics, crafts, pool parties, etc. Families are responsible for meals and accommodations. Information about lodging and individual events provided at rfgl.org. Rainbow Families Great Lakes, Various Addresses, Saugatuck. Rfgl.org

LGBTQ Affirming Discussion, 5 p.m. Considering the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and show how it does not apply to sexual orientation as we understand it today. Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ - Welcoming And Affirming Church, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing. 517-484-7434. PilgrimUCC.com

Situation Discussions, 5:15 p.m. Discussing "What would you do if you were fired for being gay?" LGBT in the Park, 620 W. Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 248-460-3251. jffryoliver@yahoo.com

LGBTQ 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, JULY 14

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, JULY 15

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film-Room in Rome. Elena Anaya and Natasha Yarovenko star in this provocative drama about Alba and Natasha, two women who meet in Rome and end up in a hotel room where they bare their bodies and souls to each other. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

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

SATURDAY, JULY 16

2nd Annual Network Neighborhood Bash, 2 p.m. DJ Digimark, Carnivalette Dangers, fashion shows, drag shows, drag pageants, silent auctions and numerous vendors. After part to be held at Diversions nightclub. The LGBT Network of West Michigan Bash, 343 Atlas St., Grand Rapids. 616-458-3511. Grlgbt.org

Windover Women on Wheels, 11 p.m. 7th Annual Motorcycle Weekend. Bike show, "fun run" and raffle with prizes. Followed by poolside music and dancing throughout the evening. Windover Women's Resort, 3596 Blakely Road, Owendale. 989-375-2586. Windoverwomensresort.com

SUNDAY, JULY 17

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

Walking Tour of Vacant Downtown Detroit Buildings, 12:45 p.m. Join the 20Somethings for a guided tour presented by Detroit Tour Connections. Meets outside hotel. Admission: \$10. Ages 18-33. Metro Detroit LGBT 20 Somethings, 1114 Washington Blvd, Detroit. The20somethings.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

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

TUESDAY, JULY 19

Kalamazoo PFLAG, 6 p.m. Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is a non-profit, all-volunteer, local organization of parents, other relatives and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. PFLAG, 629 Pioneer St., Kalamazoo. 269-492-2083. info@pflag.org

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20

Meet the Mavens, 3 p.m. Free. Meet and greet with the Mitten Maven Roller Derby Girls. Mention the Mitten Mavens when you order and a portion of the bill will help the team raise money for practice space, and other expenses. Mitten Mavens Lansing Roller Derby, 8741 West Saginaw Hwy, Lansing. MittenMavens.net

Ties Like Me Professional Networking, 4:30 p.m. Complimentary appetizers, cash bar and a backstage tour of the theater. More information online. Comerica Bank, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 248-379-9527. Tieslikeme.org

LGBTQ Affirming Discussion, 5 p.m. Considering Leviticus in light of the idea of a Holiness code and discussing similar texts that are almost universally ignored by Christians and why. Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ - Welcoming And Affirming Church, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing. 517-484-7434. PilgrimUCC.com

THURSDAY, JULY 21

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 Court, Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. Jimtoycenter.org

FRIDAY, JULY 22

Motown International Gay Rodeo and Festival, 5 p.m. Amateur rodeo featuring horse, rough stock and entertainment events. Food and beverages available with vendors, all to raise money for local charities. Food drive to collect food for local food pantries. Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association, Quick Road and I-94, Belleville. Michiganrodeo.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film-Between Two Women. Barbara Marten gives a bravura performance as Ellen, a working-class mother in Northern England who struggles mightily with her feelings for another woman, who happens to be her 10-year-old son's exuberant teacher. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

SATURDAY, JULY 23

Motown International Gay Rodeo, 9 a.m. Two-day gay rodeo with horse events, rough stock events, gay camp events, food, beer, vendors, organizations and entertainment. Tickets: \$10 with if you bring non-perishable food donation for SE MI Gleaners. Rodeo benefits local food banks and The Ruth Ellis House. Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association, 10871 Quirk Road, Belleville. 616-735-4521. Michiganrodeo.org



Room in Rome (2010)

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Kerrytown Concert House Allison Cregg, Ashley Dyer and Michele Cooker. Area violinists performing solo violin sonatas and duets, including works by Beethoven and Debussy. Tickets: \$25-10, \$5 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 21. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House Nicolas Pellon, a Washington D.C. based pianist and educator presents a solo concert of Mozart, Schumann, Chopin and Liszt. Tickets: \$25-10, \$5 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. July 24. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

MSU College of Music Eddy Marien, Tom Lee, native to Belgium. Summer Carillon Series, established in 1996 through generosity of Dr. Milton Muelder. MSU Beaumont Tower, 102 Music Building, East Lansing. 6 p.m. July 13. 517-353-9958. Music.msu.edu

MSU College of Music Stefano Colletti, native to France. Summer Carillon Series, established in 1996 through generosity of Dr. Milton Muelder. MSU Beaumont Tower, 102 Music Building, East Lansing. 6 p.m. July 27. 517-353-9958. Music.msu.edu

MSU College of Music Ray McLellan, Michigan State University's Carillonneur. Summer Carillon Series, established in 1996 through generosity of Dr. Milton Muelder. MSU Beaumont Tower, 102 Music Building, East Lansing. 6 p.m. July 20. 5173539958. Music.msu.edu

COMEDY

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase Kevin Downey Jr., Comedian/Columnist chats about Martha Stewart, the Amish and everything in between. Tickets: \$10-12. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. July 15 - July 16. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

CONCERTS

Douglas J "Poolside Concert" Celebrate the 10th Annual Douglas J. Golf Outing benefiting the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Featuring the Sprague Brothers. Admission is free. Donations gladly accepted. All proceeds benefit the JDRF. Refreshments available. Walnut Hills Country Club Pool, 2874 E Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing. 5 p.m. July 25. 517-853-6995. Douglasj.com/jdrfgolf

Farmington Downtown Development Authority "Rhythms 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/Downtown-Events/Whats-Happening/Rhythms-in-Riley-Park

Gem Theatre Jess Godwin. Tickets: \$10. Gem Theatre, 2135 Bonnie View Dr., Royal Oak. 10 p.m. July 15. 3134184898. Gemtheatre.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Manner Effect" Young musicians performing Jazz of the New York music scene. Tickets: \$25-10, \$5 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann

Arbor. 8 p.m. July 15. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House “A Night in Brazil: Hot Jazz” Brazilian guitarist and composer Bruno Mangueira makes first appearance in Ann Arbor. Tickets: \$30-15, \$10 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 22. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Olympia Entertainment “Cheap Trick” Tickets: \$38-\$48 Motor City Casino’s Soundboard, 2901 Grand River Ave, Detroit. 8 p.m. July 15. 800-745-3000. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment Paul McCartney. Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, Paul McCartney, will make his first concert appearance in the City of Detroit in more than three decades for his “On the Run Tour.” Tickets: \$19.50-250. Comerica Park, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. 8 p.m. July 24. 866-668-4437. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment Steely Dan. Shuffle Diplomacy Twenty Eleven Tour. Tickets: \$45.50-85.50. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. July 16. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment “An Evening with Christette Michele” Tickets: \$35-38. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave, Detroit. 8 p.m. July 22. 866-752-9622. Olympiaentertainment.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre Gillian Welch. Tickets: \$30-35. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 8 p.m. July 23. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

Sky Production “3rd Annual Christmas in July Concert” 3rd Annual Christmas in July with Sky Covington and friends. Harbor House, 440 Clinton, Detroit. 7 p.m. July 13. 313-961-9900. facebook.com/wednesdaynightatharborhouse

The Ark Steve Forbert. Tickets: \$25. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 16. 313-761-1818. Theark.org

The Ark “The Tartan Terrors” Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 14. 313-761-1818. Theark.org

The Palace Josh Groban’s “Straight to You” Tour. With special guest ELEW. Tickets: \$99.50-79.50. Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 8 p.m. July 16. 248-377-0100. Palacenet.com

The Palace Keith Urban and Jake Owen’s “Get Closer” World Tour. Tickets: \$28-78. Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 7:30 p.m. July 23. 248-377-0100. Palacenet.com

University of Michigan Museum of Art “Jazz Series: Los Gatos” Assembled in 1997, this small group focused on traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms. Art Fair Concert in Forum Court, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 20. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

FESTIVALS

AEG Live “Global Dance Festival” Featuring Skrillex, Porter Robinson and Zedd. Tickets: \$30. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. July 16. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

Greenfield Village “Ragtime Street Fair” Fifth annual street fair, taking guests back in time to experience a 1900s festival featuring dance lessons, piano performances and a traditional cakewalk. Admission: \$22 adult, \$21 senior and \$16 youth. Greenfield Village, 20900 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. July 16 - July 17. 313-982-6126. facebook.com/thehenryford

OTHER

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 x.1117. Facebook.com/eastsidefarmersmarket

Yellow Door Art Market “Santa’s Summer Stop” Kids of all ages invited to meet and greet Santa on his summer vacation at Yellow Door Art Market. Award-winning author & bonified Santa Claus, Jeffrey Schatzer of Bellaire will be donning his Hawaiian shirt, flip flops and long white beard as he signs copies of his Christmas themed books starring him. Yellow Door Art Market, 3141 W. 12 Mile Road, Berkley. 9 a.m. July 16. 248-336-2038. Yellowdoorartmarket.com

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Come, Beauty \$12. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at A2CT Studio Theater, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. July 15 - 17. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org

Disney’s Camp Rock - The Musical A regional premiere. \$10 adult, \$6 youth. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. July 22 - 31. 248-541-6430. stagecrafters.org

Flaming Idiots \$14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. July 21 - 31. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com

PROFESSIONAL

A Mousetrap Cabaret \$10. Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. 10 p.m. July 22. parkbardetroit.com

And The Creek Don’t Rise \$18-\$24. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Rd., Williamston. Through Aug. 14. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

Chicago \$26-\$39.75. Mason Street Warehouse, 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. Through July 17. 269-857-4898. masonstreetwarehouse.org

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

Comedy Mondays \$5 for an all-night pass. Dog Story Theater, 7 Jefferson Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. Through July 25. 616-894-1252. dogstorytheater.com

Consider the Oyster \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Sep. 3. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

Cop Block \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. Through July 23. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Ernie \$20-\$25. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Aug. 21. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Five Guys Named Moe \$26-\$39.75. Mason Street Warehouse, 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. July 22 - Aug. 7. 269-857-4898. masonstreetwarehouse.org

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

I Remember Mama \$8-\$19. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at DeWitt Theatre, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. Plays in rotating repertory July 22 - Aug. 13. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Much Ado About Nothing \$25. Blackbird Theatre at West Park, 300 N. Seventh Ave., Ann Arbor. July 15 - 29. 734-332-3848. blackbirdtheatre.org

Much Ado About Nothing \$30-\$36. Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Baughman Theatre at Jackson Community College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd., Jackson. Plays in repertory through Aug. 5. 517-998-3673. michiganshakespearefestival.com

Othello Free. The American Shakespeare Collective at Schuler Books and Music, 280 Towne Center Blvd., Lansing. 7 p.m. July 18. 734-662-7448.

americanshakespearecollective.com

Out of Order Contains adult themes. \$20-\$26. Tibbits Summer Theatre, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. July 21 - 30. 517-278-6029. tibbits.org

Return to the Forbidden Planet \$10-\$26. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre, DeWitt Theatre, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. Plays in rotating repertory through Aug. 11. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Shoot Faster, Dear Brother, I’m Dying! A Civil War comedy. \$10. Dog Story Theatre, 7 Jefferson Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. July 14 - 16. 616-894-1252. dogstorytheater.com

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

Taking Steps \$8-\$19. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre, DeWitt Theatre, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. Through July 26. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Tartuffe \$30-\$36. Michigan Shakespeare Festival at Baughman Theatre at Jackson Community College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd., Jackson. Through Aug. 6. 517-998-3673. michiganshakespearefestival.com

Thank You for Being a Friend \$10-\$20. Who Wants Cake? at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Aug. 8. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

The Full Monty Adult themes, language. \$24-\$26. Tibbits Summer Theatre, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. Through July 16. 517-278-6029. tibbits.org

The Music Man \$28. The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through July 31. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

The Sex Maniac \$16. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. July 22 - Aug. 20. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

The Tempest \$20. Water Works Theatre Company at Starr Jaycee Park, 1101 W. 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak. July 21 - Aug. 7. 248-703-2645. waterworkstheatre.com

The Winter’s Tale \$36-30. Michigan Shakespeare Festival at Baughman Theatre, Jackson Community College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson. Previews July 21. Plays in rotating repertory July 21 - Aug. 7. 517-998-3673. michiganshakespearefestival.com

Thursdays at Go Comedy! \$15. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through Aug. 25. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

Twelve Angry Men \$15-20. What A Do Theatre at First United Methodist Church, 111 East Michigan Ave., Battle Creek. Through July 30. 773-744-8598. whatado.org

Urinetown \$29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through July 31. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

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

YOUNG AUDIENCES

Kolobok \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppertART, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Saturdays through July 30. 313-961-7777. puppertart.org

Sleeping Beauty \$7. Tibbits Summer Theatre, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. Through July 23. 517-278-6029. tibbits.org

The Borrowers \$10. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at Studio Theatre in the DeWitt Center, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. Plays in rotating repertory through Aug. 12. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

AUDITIONS

SPOTLIGHT PLAYERS – auditions for “The Music Man,” July 18-19, 734-480-4945.

ART ‘N’ AROUND

The Rust Belt Market “A Pinch of Spice and More” Rust Belt Market for vintage, design, and art. Woodward Ave. & 9 Mile Road, North West Corner, Ferndale. June 25 - Nov. 20. 246-622-1621. Apinchofspiceandmore.com

Ann Arbor Street Art Fair “Ann Arbor Street Art Fair” Established in 1960, attracts 500,000 attendees from across the nation. Named number one art fair by American Style in 2004. Downtown Ann Arbor, Downtown, Ann Arbor. May 17 - July 23. 734-994-5260. Artfair.org

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 “Saarinem House and Garden” rare integration of art, architecture, design and nature’s total work of art. Designed in the late 1920s, Saarinem 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.

Farmingtown Downtown Development Authority “Farmingtown Farmers & Artisans Market” Each Saturday. Fresh Michigan produce, baked goods, locally produced honey, handcrafted 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

Flint Institute of Arts “Something Waits Beneath It” Early work by Andrew Wyeth, 1939-1969 is an intimate exhibition of early and seldom seen works by the young Andrew Wyeth, including watercolors of Maine and Pennsylvania made from 1939 through the 1960s. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. June 1 - Aug. 7. 810.234.1695. flintarts.org/exhibitions/current_wyeth.html

Flint Institute of Arts “Edmund Lewandowski: Precisionism and Beyond” This is the first retrospective exhibition of Milwaukee-born artist Edmund Lewandowski (1914-98), the preeminent second-generation Precisionist, who achieved recognition for extending the style of Precisionism beyond the East Coast and into the Midwest, making it a national style. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. June 1 - Aug. 7. 810.234.1695. Flintarts.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



2010 Ann Arbor Street Art Fair

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 “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

Kerrytown Concert House “A Matter of Light and Depth” Photography by Angela and Jim George, using light to give depth. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. July 1 - Aug. 12. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kresge Art Museum “Hiraki Sawa: Other Dwellings” Sawa’s videos are intimate, sometimes hermetic meditations on place and the wonderfully odd activities that can occur in imaginative dimensions. MSU, Auditorium & Physics Road, East Lansing. April 30 - July 21. artmuseum.msu.edu.517-884-0659

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

Lawrence Street Gallery “Summer Invitational” Annual exhibits featuring newest work by local artists. Showcases over 50 works in two and three-dimensional media. The Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward, Ferndale. June 29 - July 30. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

MOCAD “barely there” Group exhibition featuring James Lee Byars, Luis Carrnitzer, Jason Dodge, Pable Helguera, Christoph Keller, Lee Lozano, Rivane and Sergio, Neuenschwander, Wilfredo Prieto, Pascale Marthine Tayou and Adolf Wolff. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit,

Between THE Lines™

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Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Freaked out on the Fourth

Q. This Fourth of July was horrible for me, and I am so embarrassed: A group of my friends planned a Fourth of July get-together for me with about 30 of my friends. This is the first Fourth I have been able to attend here in the U.S. in three years because I was in the Army and have been overseas. We went to a big celebration, with parade, picnic, concert and fireworks. My group of friends even arranged for me to have a date with a man that I have wanted to date for quite some time. I knew him from before but never had a date with him.

We were having a really good time up until the fireworks started, and then for me all hell broke loose. As I was watching the fireworks the atmosphere reminded me of the war and what I experienced in Iraq, and I acted really stupid. I couldn't keep from wanting to duck and run for safety. I felt like I couldn't breathe. For a while I just tried to calm down and not pay attention to what was going on, but all of a sudden I couldn't stand it anymore. I turned around and just left the party and the park. I didn't tell anyone I was leaving or where I was going. I ran to the bus stop, caught the bus and went back to my hotel.

I had to catch a flight out the next day to get back to my unit. I flew out the next morning without contacting anyone about where I was or what had happened to me. I know people must be really puzzled. I've gotten a few phone calls from friends, which I didn't answer. A couple of people left messages, basically wondering what's going on and why I left. I've just ignored them.

Now I feel like such a fool. I know I will never have a chance with the guy I was with at the party. What's even worse is that I am so embarrassed. I don't think I will ever be able to talk with my friends back home again. I don't even know how I will ever be able to go back home and face all the people if they find out what happened to me. They all thought they were doing a really big thing for me by arranging this day, my being back from the war and all.

I can't even talk with anyone at the base because most of them know I am gay and will just think I am a pansy. I have had to be stronger, and do everything better to be accepted by them. Now I can't let them know what happened to me.

How do I live with myself knowing what happened? How do I know it won't happen again? I'm so confused and angry with myself; I don't know where to turn.

So Embarrassed

A. Sounds like you may have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I'm sure you have heard of it. It's a pretty common problem for civilians and soldiers who've served in war zones, or people experiencing other kinds of trauma.

It is important for you to contact your military medical personal and let them know what happened to you. You don't want this to occur to you when you are on duty. They have many programs for treating and dealing with PTSD.

If I were you, I would contact your friends whom you feel are the most understanding, and let them know what happened. Right now they are probably thinking you are rude and weren't appreciative of the party that they arranged for you. After letting them know what happened to you, I can't imagine that your friends won't understand. Then, ask the friends you've confided in to explain it to others, so that when you come home again, you don't have to explain this event – unless you choose to.

Stay in communications with your friends; your friendships are important. I would email or write to the man you had a date with. He may be willing to keep in contact, and give the date another try when you come back home the next time.

Thanks for serving your country.

PTSD can result from being in combat, but it also can result from other traumatic events such as sexual abuse and natural disasters. If you think you or someone you love might suffer from this condition, go to Dear Jody Valley on Facebook and learn more.

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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RTT Horoscopes

Stay clear, Cancer!

BY JACK FERTIG

The sun in Cancer deepens our sense of identity with family and tribe. (And did you have a nice Pride celebration?) Sun squaring Eris, however, can increase tribalism and factionalism. Being with people is important; against others, not so much.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Rushing to defend your family (natal or chosen) may be necessary, but don't circle the wagons! Your greater challenge, and better for all concerned, would be to take on a more expansive view that sees your tribe in a more global connectedness.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Revealing your deepest secrets is scary. It's also necessary for your well-being. Holding onto all that tension and fear can undermine your health. If there's nobody you can trust enough to share that with, find a professional counselor.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): If you don't know what a "potlatch" is, Google it. Be careful not to get sucked into competitive spending. Relationships are built on shared values and a vision of the future, not rounds of drinks and flashy baubles.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Nobody succeeds on their own. Stay clear on your goals and dedicated to your own hard work, but knowing your family, your teammates, and where you come from is essential for getting ahead in any endeavor.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Temptations to arguments may come out of inner doubts and insecurities that are better confronted than the annoying schmuck at hand. The most worthwhile challenges are the internal ones. Creative expression in any mode can help you gain insights.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Some of your friends may have a better idea than you as to how sexy you really are. Try to see what they see. Your sign is all about detailed appreciation and utilization of material facts. That alone offers immense erotic skill!

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Love or career? Great opportunities may be pulling you away from the one you adore. Make your baby a partner in building your success. Be sure to reciprocate! You may have to start by sitting down and talking about it!

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Sharpen your mind, not your tongue. To be the best at whatever you do, you need to branch out and learn more about your field, new and different techniques or philosophies. Focus on priorities, even if it does slow down your sex life.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Good sex is not about being the best there is, but about being authentically who you really are and accepting your partner in the same authenticity. Then again developing technique doesn't really hurt either!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Family members mean well trying to help your love life, but the best they can do is to butt out. Time alone may be the best thing to get clear on what you need in a relationship, existing or hypothetical.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Keep a clear eye to the future! That may require going back and brushing up on old skills, or learning new ones to remain competitive at work. Heed advice from your partner and colleagues!

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Hone your skills at games and/or arts, just don't expect to win any prizes right now! Being your best is the way to get ahead; trying to be better than others distracts you from that.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 30

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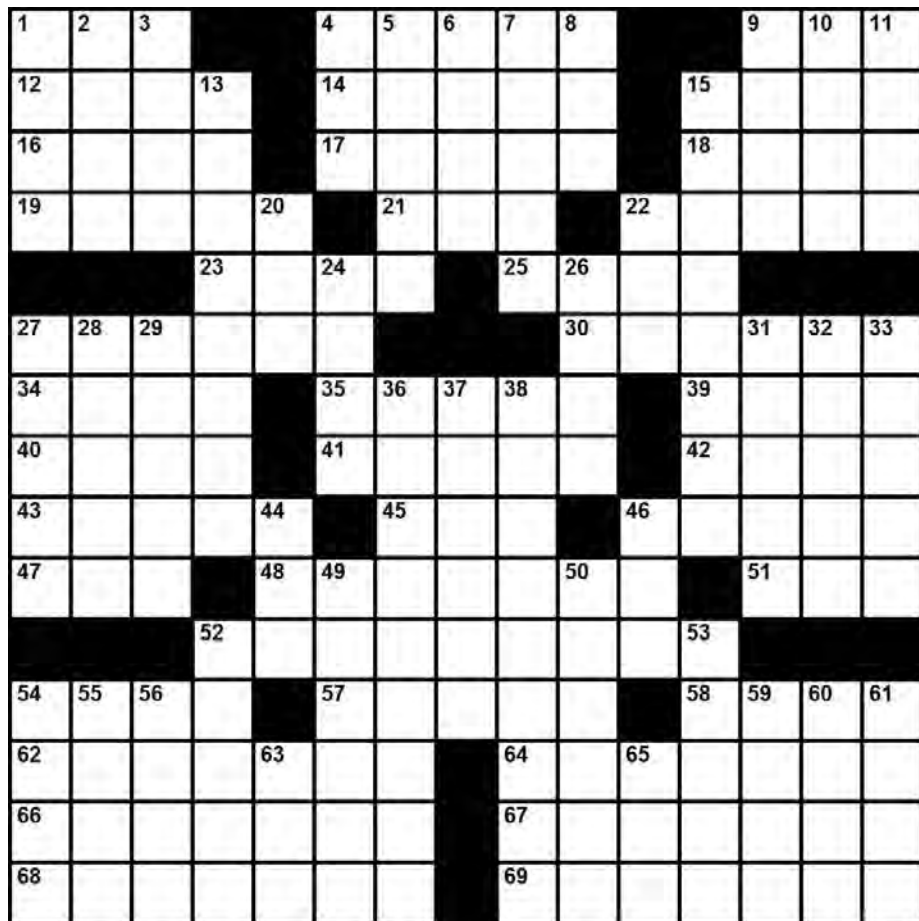
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Brutus and Julius

Across

- 1 Acknowledge a queen
- 4 Choreographer Bob
- 9 Just out
- 12 Forget about
- 14 LuPone Broadway role
- 15 Jodie Foster's "___ Driver"
- 16 Nathan of "The Producers"
- 17 Furnishings
- 18 River near Dunkirk
- 19 "... a ___ deferred" (Hughes)
- 21 MGM rival, once
- 22 Madonna flick, with Dick
- 23 Huck Finn's transport
- 25 Mariah or Madonna
- 27 Peter Pan opponent
- 30 Paul Taylor, for example
- 34 Windows picture
- 35 James Baldwin work
- 39 Legal plea, briefly
- 40 "Forbidden" perfume
- 41 Ribbed fabric

Down

- 42 Davenport site
- 43 Pithy, like Quentin?
- 45 "___ Yankee Doodle Dandy"
- 46 Lesbos and others
- 47 Coop group member
- 48 Tennis champ Pete
- 51 Old barrier breaker
- 52 With 15-Down, words to Julius attributed to Brutus
- 54 Top
- 57 Papal court
- 58 Michelangelo's David, and such
- 62 Wrinkly-skinned bitch, perhaps
- 64 Dickhead
- 66 Opening for relief
- 67 Shakespeare's Globe, e.g.
- 68 Sonny and Cher, to Chaz
- 69 Purchases at San Francisco's Good Vibrations

Down

- 1 Cheeky
- 2 Barbra's "Funny Girl" guy
- 3 Fruity drink
- 4 Impatient, with "up"
- 5 In-your-face
- 6 With 37-Down, perverted smile, to Brutus?
- 7 Brought up the rear?
- 8 Organ pleased by Bernstein
- 9 Mercury maker
- 10 Business VIP
- 11 Lean and strong
- 13 Rip a new asshole, to Brutus?
- 15 See 52-Across
- 20 Wrestling surface
- 22 New Deal org.
- 24 "Six ___ Under"
- 26 Pastoral work
- 27 Throw, to Billy Bean
- 28 Empathetic phrase
- 29 Williams of "The Night Listener"

- 31 Puts on ice
- 32 Cary of "Robin Hood: Men in Tights"
- 33 Cut of meat
- 36 South Beach attire
- 37 See 6-Down
- 38 They're prone to cry out
- 44 Pitchfork-shaped Greek letter
- 46 Sussex suffix
- 49 Gomer's drawl, e.g.
- 50 Attack helicopter
- 52 Start something with Mauresmo
- 53 Tried to tackle tight ends, e.g.
- 54 Lickety-split (abbr.)
- 55 Pet with green hair
- 56 Golf announcer Dave
- 59 Old paper part
- 60 Colonist loyal to Britain
- 61 Barely makes (out)
- 63 Whitman's tool
- 65 Put the whammy on

Solution on 29

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The French Riviera: Nice and Cannes

The French Riviera, or Côte d'Azur, ranks among Europe's most enduring – and alluring – gay playgrounds. True, this stretch of rugged Mediterranean coastline at the southeastern tip of France doesn't generate quite as much buzz with LGBT travelers as Sitges, Ibiza or Mykonos, as it's not a pure party playground. But the sunny and sophisticated French Riviera (www.frenchriviera-tourism.com) is ideal for a romantic getaway, and the most gay-popular communities – Cannes and Nice – abound with beautiful beaches, chic shopping, exceptional art museums and atmospheric cafes and open-air markets.

Nice

Nice (www.nicetourisme.com) – the largest city in the region, with about 350,000 residents and an international airport with direct flights from North America – also supports an active LGBT organization, AGLAE (www.aglae06.fr) which sponsors Gay Pride each July and produces a gay guide to that's distributed free at many businesses. The city is home to several fine museums, including the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, and the Matisse Museum of Nice. This is also a fine city for shopping, with dozens of upscale boutiques set along Rue Pastorelli and Rue du Marechal Joffre, including the famous Galeries Lafayette department store.

For great views of the city and harbor, climb the stairs to Castle Hill and stroll among the botanical gardens and medieval ramparts, soaking up the views of the bustling port neighborhood – you can see for miles up and down the coast. At the base of the hill, Old Town's narrow streets, classic architecture, esteemed galleries and open-air flower and food markets contain a number of the city's gay-frequented businesses.

Old Town fringes the city's shoreline, which you can stroll along the broad, palm shaded Promenade des Anglais, which fringes the miles of pretty (but pebbly) beaches. A couple of the many beachside restaurants along here fly rainbow flags to welcome their sizable gay clientele: the beach at Castel club (www.castelplage.com), which lies in the shadows of Castle Hill, and the beach club run by the trendy HI Hotel (www.hi-beach.net), a favorite see-and-sun spot of the Nice A-listers. The clothing-optional section of rocky shoreline right below Restaurant Coco Beach, a short walk beyond the Port of Nice, is another favorite gay hangout.

Continue east around Cap de Nice to reach the exclusive village of Villefranche-sur-Mer, immortalized in the Bond movie *Never Say Never Again*. It's also home to St-Pierre Chapel, whose restored interior contains murals painted by famed gay novelist Jean Cocteau. Across the bay is one of the world's wealthiest enclaves, Saint Jean Cap Ferrat – everybody from Tina Turner to Bill Gates have homes around here. Head farther toward the Italian border, and you'll reach the ancient cliff-top village of Eze and beyond that the Principality of Monaco, with its exclusive casinos and ritzy shopping.

Cannes

The Riviera's other gay hub, Cannes (www.cannes.travel) – which is renowned for its legendary film festival each spring – curves gently around a sheltered bay, its glamorous hotels and swanky beach bars strung like jewels along La Croisette promenade. Cannes has an

increasingly visible LGBT community – Cannes Rainbow (www.cannes-rainbow.com) promotes gay tourism to the area.

This city of about 80,000 is perfect for strolling and window-shopping, rife as it is with antiques and food markets as well as luxury boutiques and department stores. To get your blood flowing, climb the steep, narrow streets to Suquet hill for majestic views of the harbor, and then walk back down through Old Town, perhaps stopping at a sidewalk café for lunch.

Set aside a half-day for taking a passenger ferry across the harbor to the Lerins Islands, the most famous of which is Île Sainte-Marguerite, home to the famed 17th-century Fort Royal, the cliff-top fortress (now a museum) in which the legendary Man in the Iron Mask was imprisoned in the 1600s. The island is also home to the excellent (seasonal) open-air restaurant, La Guerite, which serves superb seafood, including the addictively delicious tiny fried fishes, called blanchaille.

Picasso's stomping grounds

Between Cannes and Nice, you can visit a pair of lovely communities, Vallauris Golfe-Juan and Antibes (www.antibes-juanlespins.com), whose Roman fortifications overlook the largest pleasure-boat harbor in Europe. A walk through Old Town's narrow lanes leads to the exceptional Picasso Museum, outside of which a small sculpture garden looks over the sea. Around the corner you'll find the city's famous city market, which hums with activity and sells everything from fresh peaches to stuffed rabbits.

Vallauris Golfe-Juan, where Picasso lived for many years, has boasted a reputation for pottery-making that dates back 2,000 years. It's home to several arts museum, including the amusingly offbeat Museum of Kitsch, a celebration of jade-hued ceramic poodles and tropical-fish ashtrays. More esteemed attractions include the Castle Museum complex, which comprises three distinct art museums, including the National Picasso Museum "War and Peace" (with massive murals by Picasso). Finally, there's Espace Jean Marais, a gallery celebrating the sculpture (and film career) of the celebrated gay actor, Marais, who was the lover at one time of Jean Cocteau.

Two nearby interior villages of note include the medieval town of Vence, whose delightful village center is home to Chapelle du Rosaire, which contains stained-glass by Henri Matisse, and nearby Saint-Paul de Vence, a walled, medieval hilltop town whose cobblestone alleys are lined with art galleries, open-air cafes, and fashionable boutiques. Be sure to walk through the cemetery in which artist Marc Chagall is buried – he lived here late in life, as did the gay American novelist James Baldwin. Down the hill, check out the Maeght Foundation museum, whose grounds and galleries are filled with dramatic, large-scale contemporary art installations and sculptures.

Fabled culinary

The French Riviera enjoys a fabled culinary reputation – you'll find no shortage of superb restaurants in every town, plus markets and gourmet shops specializing in local olives, oils, cheeses, pastries, and every other imaginable treat. Rosé is the most commonly produced wine in Provence, and locals consume it happily and regularly at virtually every meal. If you're looking to pick up a bottle or two, check out the outstanding La Cave Bianchi



View from Fort Royal of Île Sainte-Marguerite and, across the harbor, the hills above Cannes and the French Riviera. Photo by Andrew Collins

(www.cave-bianchi.fr) wine shop in Cannes. The town also has some favorite gay restaurants, including breezy Restaurant le Vegaluna (www.vegaluna.com) along the beach; see-and-be-seen Le Sparkling et son Club (www.sparkling-cannes.com), which is also fun for pre-clubbing cocktails; and Barbarella (www.barbarellarestaurant.fr), a romantic spot with sidewalk seating in at Old Town.

In Nice's pedestrianized Cours Saleya district in Old Town, you'll find dozens of sidewalk cafés, most of them specializing in local seafood and pizzas, among the flower and food markets. If you make it around the Cape to Villefrance, do not miss the wonderful seafood restaurant La Mère Germaine (www.meregermaine.com), which has tables right on the bay. If you're seeking a lunch spot in Vallauris, try cozy, gay-owned Le Clos Cosette, which turns out traditionally Provençal cuisine, or fashionable Cafe Marianne (www.cafemarianne-vallauris.com). The interior village of Saint-Paul de Vence is one of the country's finest small towns for dining – it's home to a handful of Michelin-star restaurants.

Gay nightlife

Gay nightlife in the region is relaxed, very friendly and concentrated in Nice and Cannes. In Nice, consider Bar Le Fard (www.lefard.com), a snug spot on Promenade des Anglais – it's a good place to start the night. Other good bets include centrally located Le 6 Bar (www.le6.fr), which draws a stylish mix for cocktails, conversation, and dancing; and Le Glam club (www.leglam.org), a small but lively spot for dancing to pop tunes. Fairly near the harbor is the Eagle (www.eagle-nice.com), a typical leather-oriented and cruise bar, and the fetish/sex club called Le Block (www.leblock.com). Nice also has a few very popular gay saunas, including the small but quite clean and attractive Les Bains Douches, and the large and always-crowded Sauna du Chateau (www.saunaduchateau.com).

In Cannes, the intimate and rather ancient Zanzibar tavern makes a nice starting point, perhaps before heading to the city's top gay venue, trendy Le Night Disco (www.night-club-cannes.com). Also, the nightclub and casino Palm Beach Cannes (www.casinolepalmbeach.com) occasionally hosts gay parties and is always very LGBT-welcoming.

You'll find a nice mix of swanky seaside hotels and affordable gay B&Bs throughout the region. Movie stars in Cannes regularly nest at the stunning Carlton Inter-Continental Hotel (www.ichotelsgroup.com) – many suites are

named for luminaries, from Sean Penn to Elton John. The gay-popular Hôtel 3.14 (www.3-14hotel.com) lies just around the corner and is notable for its over-the-top quirky rooms – floors have fun, if bizarre, themes like American pop art and Moroccan chic. The rooftop pool is a wonderful place to while away an afternoon.

In the leafy, inviting Juan les Pins section of Antibes, the gay-friendly Hôtel Juana (www.hotel-juana.com) and Hôtel Belles Rives (www.bellesrives.com) – which have the same owners and are within walking distance of each other – make excellent bases for exploring the entire Riviera. Hotel Belles Rives, in which F. Scott Fitzgerald lived while writing *Tender is the Night*, is the more historic and atmospheric of the two, and it's home to the exceptional restaurant, La Passagere. Up in the hilly Vence, the gay-owned La Maison du Frêne (www.lamaisondufrene.com) is an exquisitely decorated B&B whose stunning rooms are hung with bold, playful contemporary art – it's a perfect hideaway for a romantic vacation.

Nice has the best variety of lodging options, which include reasonably priced gay B&Bs like Blue Angels (www.blueangels.fr) and ThyJeff Guesthouse (www.thyjeff.fr), both of which are close to the train station – the owners of the latter also run a cheerful gay café nearby, Le ThyJeff. Also consider the upscale four-room guest house, Mas des Oliviers (www.masdesoliviers-nice.com), a gay-owned retreat set amid quiet gardens in the foothills above Nice – amenities include a pool, fitness room, and two terraces with lovely views.

Among larger properties, the chic and artfully design HI Hôtel (www.hi-hotel.net) – with its bold color schemes, rooftop pool, and stellar sushi restaurant – is a favorite of trendy and discerning gay travelers. The hotel also operates the previously mentioned HI beach club and restaurant, a few blocks. Other Nice favorites include the opulent Hôtel Palais la Méditerranée (palais.concorde-hotels.com), a grand dame with a magnificent Art Deco facade overlooking the sea, and the elegant and smartly undated L'Hôtel Beau Rivage (www.hotelnicebeaurivage.com), an 1860s beauty overlooking Promenade des Anglais – it's been a favorite accommodation of such arts and literary figures as Matisse and Chekhov.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website GayTravel.About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

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Dating Diet

BY ANTHONY PAULL

It (Kind of) Gets Better

I'm acting a little crazy lately. I can't help it. I'm a writer, and I can't afford meds so I take extra vitamins and work out a lot. I thought it would help, but it only causes me further expenses. Like last week, I pulled my abdominal muscle trying to do a backwards sit-up and ended up in the ER because I convinced myself I had appendicitis. Diagnosed with a bad diet, I was later informed by my dad that I wasn't really ill. I was just faking it to get groped by a doctor.

"Please. He examined my stomach," I replied.

"That's plain sick. He could have jerked you off. He charged enough."

Welcome to my life. My father wants me to be a slut because then I'll lead a more

interesting existence. Nobody wants to hear about a boyfriend who loves me. How boring! Dad wants me foaming from the mouth, bopping a doctor on the exam table.

"Why do you think he put you in a backless nightgown...to show off that ass," he told me.

"Thanks, but I'm not desperate," I attested.

"Who are you kidding?" At the store, he watches me sort through various antacids. "Why do you think you're doing back flips at the gym? You're trying to keep your man. I know those games."

Games? I'm not playing games. I'm at the gym to stay fit. Everyone's doing it. Is that bad? Apparently yes, I'm not allowed to exercise. I have to rest my stomach. Oh, and according to the doctor, I can't consume liquor, caffeine or sweets either. Instead, I must maintain a high-protein diet. You know chicken, fish, the occasional load in my face. But then again, I suppose that I can't have sex either because I'm not fit enough to do back-flips in bed.

I want to talk to Dan Savage. I'd like to tell him, yes, it does get better, but it also gets complicated. He left that part out. That as an adult, instead of being bullied by peers, you get bullied by television and magazines that program your stupid brain into thinking you always need to lose five more pounds to be attractive; that never changes.

Well, it does a little.

I mean, it gets harder to lose five pounds, and eventually, you just give up.

Maybe that's the "better" part. You stop caring.

Instead of playing leapfrog at the gym, you happily drown in a pound of Twinkies and tell everyone to suck it. That's what I'm doing today, except I'm out of sweets and I'm not sucking anything at all. Well, I am kind of sucking in my stomach.

That's when my friend Donald calls,

asking me to go on a walk. I agree, and we head downtown, where he talks of having similar problems. Though instead of exercising to feel attractive, he ditched a long-term boyfriend and has been having sex with random people.

However, the plan is backfiring. He enjoys the sex, but it's never enough. It's like that five pounds. Once you've experienced true love, it's hard to lose yourself in a one-night man.

Therefore, Donald recently looked to a friendship that had the potential of being upgraded to the next level. In the past, they were merely college mates, but Donald had always felt they could be more, that he could be the one.

For the reunion, Donald planned a dreamy camping trip in

I want to talk to Dan Savage. I'd like to tell him, yes, it does get better, but it also gets complicated.

The Rocky Mountains, but forgot one important thing – he doesn't like camping or mountains. But he does like it in the butt, so that kept him quiet for the first 10 minutes of the trip. The next 48 hours were dreadful, though. The illusion ended when his fantasy man began to tell him to shut up and listen to nature whenever Donald began to reflect on their past.

"Well, what did you want him to tell you?" I asked.

"I don't know...that I'm beautiful."

"You flew a 1,000 miles to hear that?"

"Wouldn't you?"

I guess I would, though I don't admit it. Instead, I tell him to turn on the radio and listen to some pop singer tell him instead. You're beautiful. Why is it hard to say it? Why is it harder to accept? Often, I hear friends say, it doesn't matter if you say I'm beautiful because you have to. But when does it matter? When some random guy is trying to get in your pants? Or when you lose those five pounds you didn't need to lose in the first place?

A friend recently introduced me to writer Masaru Emoto, who claims that positive changes can occur to water crystals just by attaching positive words to them. An ordinary water crystal told "you are beautiful" flowers into an intricate snowflake. Perhaps that's why a grown man, made up of 66-percent water, would fly 1,000 miles to hear it – because we all long to bloom.

So tonight, when I rest, I say it over and over. I'm beautiful. The gym won't say it, neither will the magazines or TV. They'd rather I buy their products for a boost; they'd rather brush me off if I'm not airbrushed. As an adult, it's good to realize that. Still, I fear for the kids, because some won't make it. And for those that do, life won't get better until we do something to change it.

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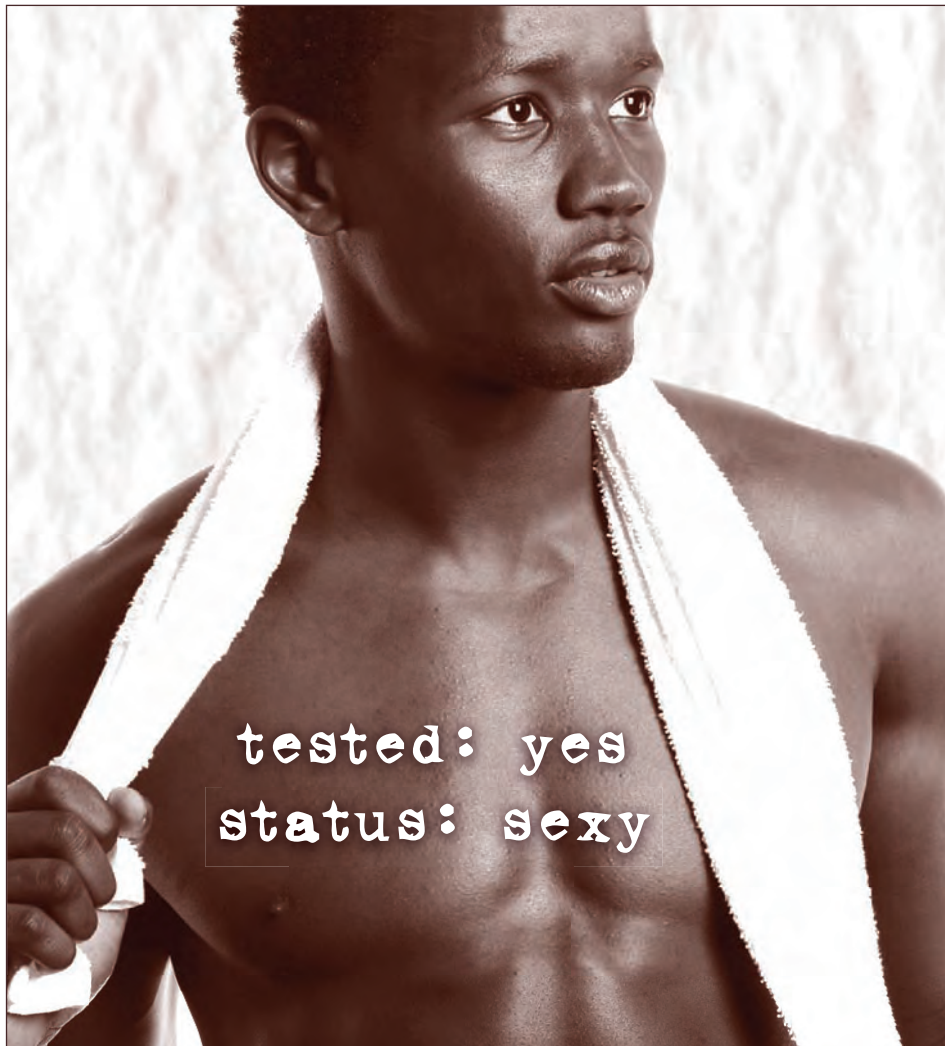
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RTT Deep Inside Hollywood



Todd Haynes and Kate Winslet. Photo: HBO

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Goldie Hawn sneaks a peak at 'The Viagra Diaries'

Who sits down to watch TV instead of getting online or playing a video game? Baby boomers, that's who, and their sitcom needs are, more and more, getting the attention of Hollywood with shows like "Hot In Cleveland" and "Men of a Certain Age." And if all goes as planned another player called "The Viagra Diaries" (based on the novel by Barbara Rose Brooker) will be joining the team. HBO is behind the show, which will feature Goldie Hawn in her first acting job in a decade, as is "Sex and the City" creator Darren Star. The concept involves Hawn's character facing the single life again when, after 35 years of marriage, her 65-year-old husband abruptly leaves. Of course, if Goldie simply moved to "Cougar Town" she wouldn't have to worry about her dating life involving Viagra at all. But then there'd be no show.

'Mildred Pierce' director Todd Haynes's next conservative move

If you haven't yet seen Todd Haynes's five-and-a-half-hour, book-faithful miniseries masterpiece "Mildred Pierce," you still have your chance when the DVD release happens and plenty of time after that before his next movie takes shape. That project, as current and full of possibilities as it can be given the subject matter, will concern "contemporary conservative politics in America." Haynes's collaborator is Jon Raymond, whose critically impressive body of work so far includes episodes of "Mildred Pierce" and the acclaimed indie films "Wendy and Lucy" and "Meek's Cutoff." In fact, "Pierce," "Wendy" and "Meek's" explored contemporary politics in their own subtle ways, never directly addressing problems like the battered economy or wartime paranoia, but infusing the action and language with those themes all the same. In other words, when this film, whatever it turns out to be, comes to your local arthouse cinema, expect no broad, obvious attacks on the right. These guys are too smart for that.

The mournful history lesson of 'We Were Here'

Thirty years ago, when mysterious illnesses began taking the lives of urban gay men, it was beyond imagining what would transpire over the course of the next decade and beyond. And though there have been documentaries on the subject as well as emotionally powerful fictional narratives like "The Normal Heart," "Angels In America" and "Longtime Companion," the current place of AIDS in the media is solidly centered on the back burner. That's why it feels like exactly the right time for "We Were Here," the new film from documentarians David Weissman and Bill Weber ("The Cockettes"). Focusing on the response to AIDS in San Francisco, the film lets the generation who lived through it tell their stories as well as the stories of those who died. Already screening at film festivals, the powerfully moving documentary comes to theaters in September. Don't miss it.

It's the American Family Association vs. 'DeGrassi: The Next Generation'

Any younger queer person who grew up watching "DeGrassi: The Next Generation" knows that the Canadian high-school-themed drama has always been the leader of the pack where depicting a variety of LGBT characters and themes is concerned. And currently, the very long-running series which, under several different names, has been on and off the air since 1979, features both a gay football jock (yep, before "Glee" got around to it) and an FTM trans character. Which is why it's more than a little funny to note that the American Family Association is only now taking notice of the sinful ways of Canadian kids. They've launched a boycott of the series — so far unsuccessful — and are doing their part to discourage advertisers from sponsoring a show that they've now deemed "irresponsible." Based on quotes from AFA spokespeople, the argument seems to be that there's no such thing as gay teenage jocks or trans teenagers. Anywhere. So not only are they bigots but they also don't know what they're talking about. And it's all taking place on cable channel Teen Nick, in case you want to put it in your DVR. "Go DeGrassi!"

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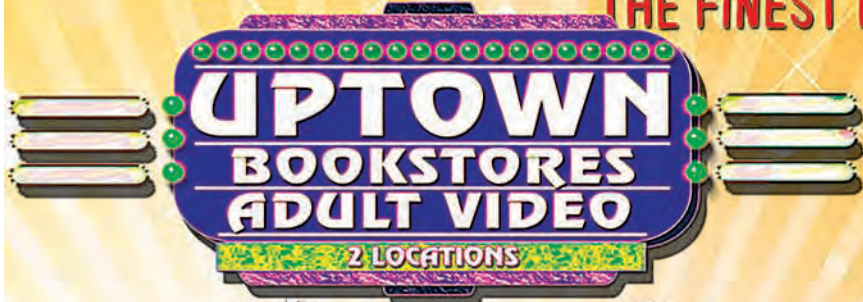


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