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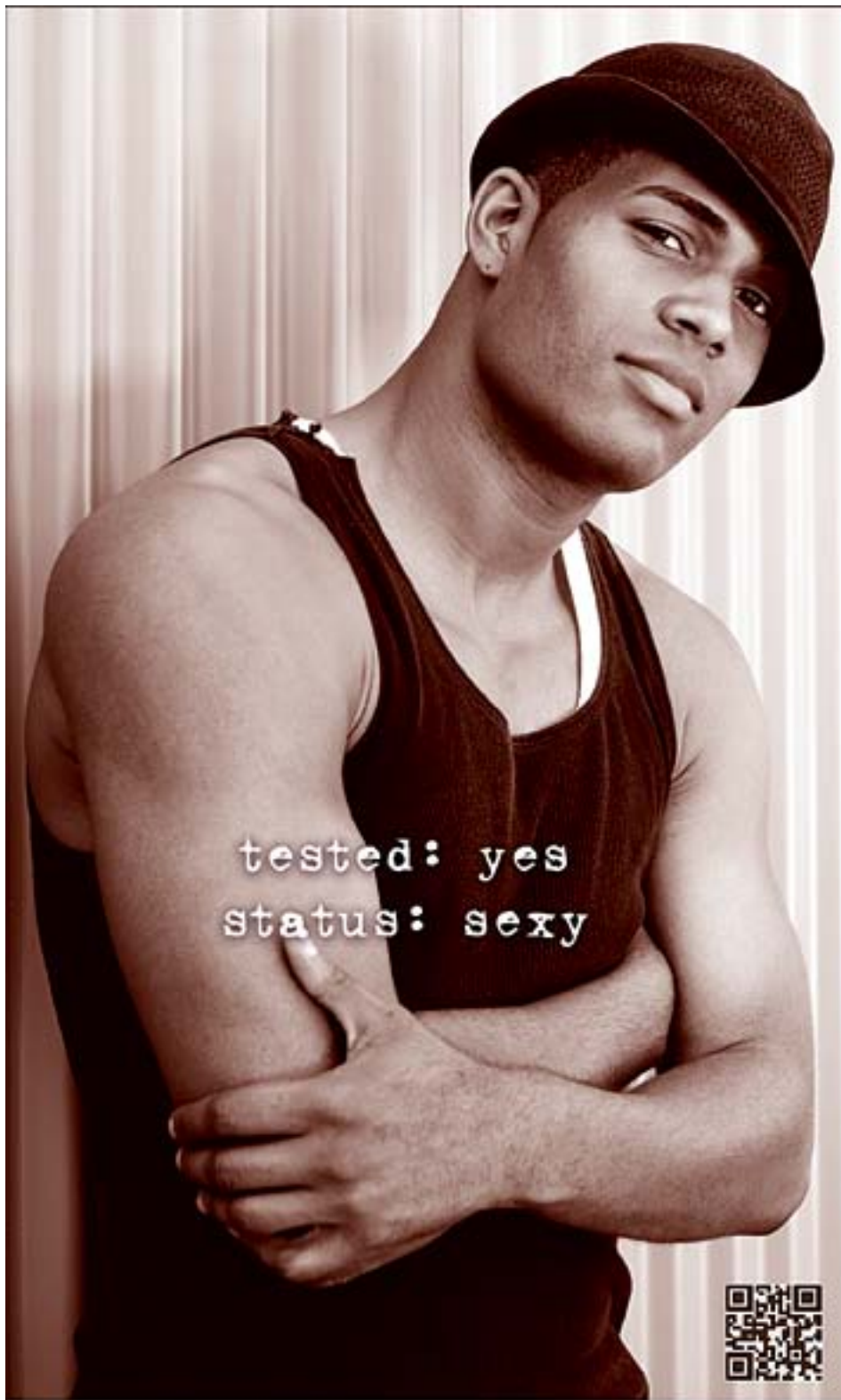
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- Wed., July 27, 6-10 pm, at the Liberal Art Gallery, Detroit
- Thurs., July 28, 7:30-9 pm, Interfaith Candelight Vigil, Palmer Park
- Sat., July 30, Noon-8 pm, Palmer Park Festival, Palmer Park
- Sun., July 31, 10 pm-2 am, Closing Party, Mars Bar, Hamtramck

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WEB WINS



Read our exclusive interview with Beyoncé on page 13 – and then win her latest CD! Hop onto our Facebook page this week for a chance to nab the new album, “4.”

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Video: David Blair reading his poem, “Detroit (while I was away)”

National news: Couples wed on 1st day marriage is legal in NY, California may see anti-gay ballot measure

International news

Book Marks: Sally Bellerose's debut novel embraces sisterhood

'Much Ado' promises healing after harm

Tibbits Opera House orders an evening of merriment

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Hotter Than July, which kicks off Wednesday, July 27!

plus DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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NATIONAL GAY
NEWSPAPER GUILD
Nothing average about it.

Between Ourselves

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Shannon Dettore directs the Office of LGBTQ Services at Central Michigan University. A newlywed, she is pictured below, resting on her wife.



I want to make sure the students realize they really have someone on their side.

1 Can you tell us about your job at CMU?

We actually just changed our name, so finally it's more

inclusive. It was the Office of Gay and Lesbian Programs; now it's the Office of LGBTQ Services – which is very exciting, something I've been fighting for in my three years of being here. Really the big mission of our office is to provide a safe and inclusive environment. And that's one of the big things that I push for in making all of our students feel safe. The other side of what I really push for is equal treatment on our campus and making sure that our queer students feel as if they have a voice and that there's someone here fighting for them.

While I'm trying to make sure our campus is safe and inclusive, I also want to make sure the students realize they really have someone on their side.

2 Tell us about the student groups you lead.

We have two student groups and we're in the process of starting Queer People of Color as well. So we have Spectrum, which is our gay-straight alliance, and then we have Transcend, which is our transgender student group. I'm the advisor for our transgender student group, which was new last year. We have seven members, which is small, but on our campus that's a pretty good representation of the transgender community. It's open to allies as well, but the majority of folks that attend do identify as transgender or gender queer.

3 So Queer People of Color will begin this fall?

That is in the process of getting started. We did hold one meeting last school year. And we had about 50 students show up, which was a phenomenal representation. I really have this big push for recognizing race and sexuality, how they intertwine and how they're different.

Really the basis is to have those conversations and go there.

4 What else are you working on for the fall?

I am teaming up with our Student Ombuds Officer to teach an LGBTQ First Year Experience class. We have First Year Experience class on our campus already, which is for freshmen coming in, so that they get the feel of what campus is and get studying techniques. We are going to still focus on those issues but also focus on bringing strong leadership for our student

groups, on activism and social justice.

We're also in the process of feeling out what the follow up to this class should be. I'm having conversations with folks from our women's studies department and family studies department, talking about possibly having a minor for these students that are interested in doing activism.

My partner's a teacher, so I see what she's gone through being queer in the teaching system. And we have a very predominant teaching program on our campus. So we wanted to make sure that we had something so that other teachers going out into the teaching field are able to connect with teachers that are already out there working and that are queer. With this mentoring program, before students are in the teacher education program, we'll be able to connect them with teachers that are out in the teaching field and have that mentor to talk to.

The way that our state is with our (lack of) nondiscrimination policy, we want to make sure that our students feel like they do have support prior to going out into the teaching field.

We definitely have a lot of exciting things going on. I'm the first full time director to be in this position, so it's nice to be able to take on that role and show our campus that it was vital for us to have a full time director here.

5 You have a really positive attitude. How do you encourage students to have that kind of attitude as well?

When I speak with students, I always try and meet them where they are. I know what it feels like to come out in a religious household and how scary that can be. And I know those fears that come with holding your significant other's hand as they're walking down the street.

I think it's important to always say OK, these are the realities of things, and these are the things that can happen. But if we allow ourselves to be sucked in by what we don't have and what we can't do, then you're going to live a very miserable life. Because the reality of it is, we don't live in the best state to be queer. And it's hard sometimes.

I think that instead of always being reactive or down on things, I try to be as proactive as I can in stepping up and making sure that our students see that these are the things we need – and while we don't have these protections, we're still OK and still able to live our lives and not be sucked in by the negativity.

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

Revitalizing a city with ‘creative justice’

The Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative sparks artistic freedom



Left: The firehouse that is home to the Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative was originally built in 1903. After 1953 when it could no longer fit modern-size fire engines, it tried on many faces, including a photography studio and a Laundromat. The building was nearly demolished ten years ago. Right: Denise Miller and Michelle Johnson stand proudly in the arts center, bustling with youth engaged in creative projects. BTL photos: Jeremy Martin.

BY JEREMY MARTIN

At first glance, Michelle Johnson and Denise Miller look like a typical couple. Both hold full time jobs, worry about paying bills, and save as much time as they can for each other.

A recent Saturday found the couple at a local hardware store shopping for paint, a standard domestic activity. But under the surface, there is a far more complex, creative and enigmatic relationship at work.

The paint the couple wants isn't for their home; it's for the interior of a restaurant that Miller is planning to open in September. Fuel: Unpredictably Vegetarian will feature regional vegetable based dishes from around the world.

But Fuel is only one of several projects that Johnson and Miller are currently working on. Together they run the Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative in Kalamazoo, which has been a gathering place for those seeking artistic freedom and community since 2006. The energetic couple keep themselves busy by focusing their projects on social justice.

“(Fire has) always been about people finding their passions and living it,” Miller says, “and I think for me, my relationship with Michelle has done that exact same thing.”

The fire behind Fire

In 2005, the couple had the opportunity to rent one of Kalamazoo's oldest firehouses. They first thought it could be an office space – but quickly changed their minds.

“As soon as we saw the space, we started talking about all the things that we wanted to do. Michelle had always worked with youth in different ways, and I had always worked with youth in the arts,” Miller says.

With that, the Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative was born: a place for

members of the Kalamazoo community to gather, learn about and explore the artistic merits of themselves and of each other.

But a problem remained: how to turn Fire into a focal point of a community known more

This makes Johnson think about the synergy between Fuel and Fire.

“Fire and Fuel are separate entities,” she says, “except now Fire’s culinary arts program, Bites, will have a home in the restaurant.”

“The neighborhood that we’re in certainly has stigmas attached to it. We truly believe that there’s a key in art and culture to be able to pick up the revitalization of a neighborhood, even be able to shift the stigmas.”

—Michelle Johnson

for gang activity than for artistic expression?

They created an answer by coining the term “creative justice.”

“The creative expression of justice is the model that we see happening at Fire: people finding out who they are, what they’re really into, having an opportunity to get the foundation underneath them to be able to do that,” Johnson says.

The hard part is finding a way to make Fire and the idea of creative justice a self-sustaining philosophy. Fire receives funding from several area sources who have donated their time and money into helping the organization succeed, but Johnson and Miller would like to see Fire stand on its own two legs.

“We work really hard to find ways to be as self-sustaining as possible. We do rentals, and some of our programming helps pay our operating costs,” Johnson says before Miller interrupts her with paint swatches. They take a moment to consider bamboo green and charcoal gray.

up the revitalization of a neighborhood, even be able to shift the stigmas,” Johnson says.

“We’re especially excited about the social justice aspect that we do, especially looking at issues of violence from a creative, artistic perspective. We’re very excited about our young people’s projects this year.”

One of Fire’s youth projects is the Youth Speaks Readers Theater, which was created by local youth to help stem the spread of violent ideas and activities.

The children research, write and read essays on a range of violent acts affecting both the Kalamazoo community and beyond. Recent Youth Speaks events have focused on sex trafficking, domestic violence and homophobia.

The Youth Speaks series sums up the message that Fire is attempting to spread: by using a combination of social justice, education and artistic awareness, the center is attempting to adjust the ideals and thoughts of a generation of young people into a place where creativity, learning and self awareness reign supreme.

Though Fire caters to a youthful crowd, not all of its events are specifically for children or teens. On Aug. 13 Fire will host its first rooftop festival, an evening of entertainment and awareness taking place in downtown Kalamazoo on the roof of the Radisson hotel parking structure. Musician Annette Taborn, founder of the Kalamazoo Blues Festival, will headline the evening, which also features adult beverages, multi-media presentations and speakers.

And that event is just one of a dozen projects that Johnson and Miller are working on at the moment, perhaps none more important than continuing to cultivate their relationship.

“We always want more time together,” Miller says. “I don’t think if we were together 24 hours a day it would be enough.”

Learn more about the Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative at www.thisisfire.com

Since its inception, the culinary arts program has spun through different locations like a city-wide lazy Susan.

“It made it really difficult for us to do our culinary training and catering, to sustain that part of the project,” Johnson says.

“Three years ago we shifted from being for profit to non-profit,” she says, and they’re getting close to being self-sustaining.

Changing spaces

In the same way that Fire’s building was saved from demise by demolition ten years ago, Johnson and Miller are using the historical and cultural center to boost up a neighborhood that has seen its fair share of hard times.

Kalamazoo’s Edison neighborhood, the most populated in the city, has gained a reputation for harboring illicit activity.

“The neighborhood that we’re in certainly has stigmas attached to it. We truly believe that there’s a key in art and culture to be able to pick

Lesbian mother turned down by state Supreme Court

Renee Harmon seeks custody of three children



Renee Harmon keeps reminders of her three children around her home. She has not seen them in two years. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

After being turned away from the Michigan Supreme Court, Renee Harmon, a mother who has not seen her three children in two years, will now pursue her case through federal court.

Harmon is seeking custody rights for the children she raised with her former partner, Tammy Davis. Harmon appealed to the Supreme Court for the right to be able to present evidence showing she acted as a parent. The Supreme Court denied her request in a 3-4 decision on July 22.

Under Michigan law, Harmon was never a legally-recognized parent to the children she raised for ten years. Davis and Harmon planned the children together, and Davis bore the children through artificial insemination. Michigan adoption law does not explicitly say that same-sex couples cannot adopt, but many adoption judges have interpreted the law to say so.

Harmon is represented by two lawyers, Nicole Childers and Dana Nessel. Nessel is not surprised that the case was turned away by the state Supreme Court.

“Something we can’t help but notice is that this decision comes on the heels of the new laws that allow marriage in the state of New York,” Nessel said. “While thousands of New York families can now celebrate their newfound rights, Renee’s been mourning the loss of her three children. We see a stark contrast between what other states are doing in moving forward and what Michigan is doing, which is moving backwards at every step.”

Harmon plans for a fundraiser to help pay legal fees this fall. To contribute, search for “Harmie’s Army” on Facebook.

“We think that’s shameful and we think better of our state than that.”

The three Democratic judges on the state Supreme Court, Justice Michael F. Cavanagh, Justice Diane M. Hathaway and Justice Marilyn J. Kelly, dissented. Justice Kelly authored a scathing dissent of the decision, writing: “Plaintiff’s

application raises significant constitutional questions that this Court has not yet considered. Courts across the country are grappling with similar issues... Yet the majority today declines to consider plaintiff’s arguments... This case cries out for a ruling from the state’s highest courts.”

After the ruling, Harmon said she felt “Devastated. Discouraged. But I guess in the back of my mind I knew ... there was a very good possibility that (the judges) would follow party lines, and that’s exactly what they did. So I was prepared. But I held out some hope. But I’m also determined to keep going forward.”

Nessel said that LGBT foundations and community centers have been unwilling to support Harmon’s quest for rights to her children. “Any time we have tried to do anything either with Renee’s case, or with other cases that involve same-sex second parent adoption issues, it’s unfortunately our experience and it’s been Renee’s experience that the LGBT groups don’t seem interested in supporting legal causes,” she said.

“Even though it’s our opinion that it’s the best way to change the law in Michigan when you have a legislature that is clearly unsupportive of that.”

Harmon plans for a fundraiser to help pay legal fees this fall. To contribute, search for “Harmie’s Army” on Facebook.

“We see a stark contrast between what other states are doing in moving forward and what Michigan is doing, which is moving backwards at every step.”

—Dana Nessel, Renee Harmon’s lawyer

Hotter Than July heats up Detroit this week

Annual festival hits city hot spots

Be sure not to miss the 16th annual Hotter Than July celebration. Organized by the Black Pride Society, the series of events brings fun, education and community to Detroit’s African-American LGBTs. The official hot accommodations are at the Detroit Marriott at 100 Renaissance Center and 313-568-8000. Use booking code HTJHTJA for the discount rate of \$109.



Friends hang out in Palmer Park during HTJ 2010. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

Wednesday, July 27

Artist exhibit and reception

Featuring Poor Man’s Art Collective

3361 Gratiot Ave.

7-11 p.m.

KICK presents KICKIN’ It On The River

Three hour cruise on the Detroit River, featuring music by DJ Cent

7-11 p.m.

Boarding begins at 6:20 p.m. at Rivard Plaza

Tickets: \$55, available at www.e-kick.org or by calling 313-285-9733

Glow in the Dark Party

Presented by R.E.C. Boyz and Club Inuendo

744 E. Savannah in Highland Park

9 p.m.-2 a.m.

Partygoers must wear white or neon colors.

For more information call 313-285-1166

or visit www.facebook.com/recboyz

Thursday, July 28

Interfaith candlelight vigil at Palmer Park in Detroit

A night of remembrance for those who have passed away

7:30-9 p.m.

Poetry & Comedy Open Mic Night

Hosted by award-winning writer, producer and educator Ifalade Ta’Shia Asanti

Detroit CARES Multi-Center Complex

8100 W. Davison in Detroit

9-11 p.m.

Admission: \$10 before 10 p.m. and \$15 after 10 p.m. All spoken word artists and comedians are encouraged to participate. For sign up and details call 313-865-2170 ext. 3 or email kofi.adoma@karibuhouse.org

Hotter Than July Kickoff Party

Presented by AW Entertainment and DJ Reggie Reg, with special guest performer Sisqu

Club Waterfalls

673 Franklin St.

9 p.m.-2 a.m.

Advance Tickets: \$15; Advance VIP Platinum Pass with artist meet and greet: \$50. Contact Leshone for tickets: 313-574-1960

Friday, July 29

Genesis Conference Workshops XVI

The Detroit Marriott

4-10 p.m.

-Writing & Publishing 101, 4-6 p.m.

-Cocktail hour sponsored by Equality Michigan, 5-6 p.m.

-Black Pride Society’s Authors Cafe, 7-9 p.m.

-Agape Spirit Life Ministries presents For Men, By Men: Authentication, Validation and Empowerment, 7-9 p.m.

-Books & Brandy Afterglow sponsored by Affirmations, 9-11 p.m.

Saturday, July 30

12th annual Ruth Ellis Pride march

Registration and lineup at 10 a.m. on Woodward in front of tennis courts

Parade kicks off at 10:45 a.m.

16th annual Palmer Park Pride Festival

Noon-8 p.m., bring a picnic basket

Kid’s festival from 1-4 p.m., hosted by Karibu House. For more information or to volunteer call 313-865-2170 ext. 3

Rough Language Detroit Poetry Slam

Presented by All I Wanna Say Productions

AJ’s Café

240 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale

8:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m.

Tickets \$15 in advance

Contact T. Miller for details at 313-282-1196

The Experience 4

Party for ages 25 and up, featuring DJ Stacey

“Hotwax” Hale and special guest DJ Christa Schrupp of Chicago

Club Waterfalls

673 E. Franklin in Detroit

9 p.m.-2 a.m.

Tickets \$15 in advance at Flo Boutique in Detroit, \$20 at the door or online at www.hotwaxproductions.com

Sunday, July 31

Jazz and Soul Brunch

Andiamo Riverfront Restaurant

Noon-4 p.m., brunch served at 1 p.m., showtime at 2 p.m.

Official Pride Closing Party

Mars Bar

10001 Jos Campau in Hamtramck

10 p.m.-2 a.m.

Admission \$10

The Bachmann 'pray away the gay' clinic is the latest glitter bomb victim. Is glitter bombing making a statement...or making us look silly?

I thought glitter makes your day better?
—Jessica Ann Grant

It simply reinforces the GLBT stereotype and makes us look foolish. It does nothing to further our quest for equality.
—Jack Miller

I dont know, it would have personally made my day amazing if someone walked into my work and threw glitter around while playing Gaga.
—Jessica Ann Grant

Well, this is a hard call. I agree, it does reinforce the stereotype but that's the point of it is to make them look gay. Now, I don't think there is anything wrong with it. I chuckle at it, well, because they deserve it, but we do need better ways of dealing with things...so I'm pretty split here.
—Carla Hallman

My vote is "silly." Kind of plays into stereotypes.
—Jeanne Ruzzin

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

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

S/he Said

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' discrimination



President Barack Obama

"Today, we have taken the final major step toward ending the discriminatory 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality. As of September 20, service members will no longer be forced to hide who they are in order to serve our country. Our military will no longer be deprived of the talents and skills of patriotic Americans just because they happen to be gay or lesbian."

—President Barack Obama, certifying that the military is ready to allow gays to serve openly in the armed forces, clearing the way for an end to the 17-year old "Don't Ask Don't Tell" law in September, whitehouse.gov, July 22.



Zach Braff

"My old website got hacked. Someone issued a 'coming out' statement on my behalf. I'm still straight and in love with my girlfriend. But not too straight; I still love musicals, brunch and Doogie Howser."

—Zach Braff, the "Scrubs" actor, after his website had been hacked with a fake coming-out letter posted in his name, salon.com, July 20.



Heather Corliss

"Prior studies in homeless street youth have found that sexual minorities occur in much higher numbers than we'd expect based on their numbers in the community in general. Teens with a sexual minority orientation are more likely than heterosexual teens to be unaccompanied and homeless rather than part of a homeless family. This suggests that they may be more

likely to be mistreated or rejected by their families and more likely to leave home. The high risk of homelessness among sexual minority teens is a serious problem requiring immediate attention. These teens face enormous risks and all types of obstacles to succeeding in school and are in need of a great deal of assistance."

—Heather Corliss, Ph.D., MPH, of the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at Children's Hospital Boston, lead author of new study titled "High Burden of Homelessness Among Sexual-Minority Adolescents" that found 1 in 4 gay/lesbian high school students are homeless in Massachusetts, childrenshospital.org, July 21. Of the 6,317 students who gave full information on their sexual orientation and homelessness status, less than 5 percent of students overall identified themselves as GLB, yet they accounted for 19 percent of those who identified themselves as homeless.



Avory

"Appearance and mannerisms often serve as a proxy for anti-gay or anti-trans discrimination because they are a visible marker of what makes the bigot uncomfortable. That's why it's crucial for non-discrimination legislation to address not only members of a group but those perceived as belonging to it. You shouldn't have to claim an identity

to be protected – bottom line, it's wrong to discriminate against someone because of how they look or act. That's equality 101."

—Avory, in her blog titled "Looking Gay, the Blood Ban, and Anti-LGBT Discrimination," about the straight man in Indiana who is suing a blood bank because it turned him away on account of "looking gay," radicallyqueer.wordpress.com, July 22.

Opinions

Publishers: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz



Editorial

Renee Harmon needs our support

Renee Harmon is a mother. She raised three children over ten years with her former partner, Tammy Davis. And when their 19-year relationship ended, so did Harmon's relationship with her children. She hasn't seen the children in two years. But she has seen a lot of courtrooms and paperwork and disappointment. This week, the State Supreme Court denied her the right to even present evidence in court so she could custody rights for her kids.

This situation would never happen with straight married couples. In the event of a divorce, there are plenty of laws and processes that allow both parents access and responsibility to their children.

But there are no laws in our state that protect the children of same-sex couples. Harmon was never even recognized as a legal parent to the three children she helped plan and raise. In Michigan, though there's no law explicitly against same-sex parent adoption, there is a widespread ban on the practice. Judges have interpreted state law (incorrectly) to mean that same-sex parents cannot adopt, even though such discrimination is written nowhere in our statutes. As a result, many children in Michigan with same-sex parents only have one legal parent.

And if those parents split apart, the legal parent has all the rights and responsibilities. This is what happened with Harmon's family.

Michigan courts won't even allow Harmon to present evidence showing she acted as a parent, which is a shocking affront to this community's values and rights. There have been many cases that prove "de facto" parenting. These cases established custody rights (or child support payments) between heterosexual couples who were never married. Despite these previous cases, Harmon isn't even allowed to present her case before a court in our state. The only difference is that she was in a same-sex relationship, not a heterosexual relationship.

Harmon is a brave woman who is soldiering on. Because she has been denied the right to

present her case in the state courts, she is taking her case to the federal courts.

Harmon is fighting for rights that our entire community does not have. Harmon is not the only parent in the state without the right to care for his or her children. But she is choosing to be the one who fights the battle.

Do the right thing. Support Harmon. Support her right, and our right, to have a family.

This means that we are the ones who must give her our support.

One of Harmon's lawyers, Dana Nessel, has discussed with BTL her difficulties in securing support from our LGBT community centers and foundations. This we find embarrassing, and—as we stated in our editorial last week—shockingly shameful. Not only would these organizations not support Harmon financially, but they wouldn't even voice public support of her cause or encourage their members to help her.

Harmon has been fundraising, and she will continue to keep on raising money to launch a new round of arguments in the federal courts this time. We must support her with our time and money. If she wins, she secures rights for our entire community. If she loses, all of the children in our community lose.

Do the right thing. Support Harmon. Support her right, and our right, to have a family. Do it for her children, and do it for all the children in this community.

To help Renee Harmon, connect with her Facebook group by searching for "Harmie's Army." Anyone seeking Harmon's direct contact information may contact News Editor Tara Cavanaugh at tara@pridesource.com.



Viewpoint

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Showing up, showing out: gay, gifted and black

Sometimes it's not enough just to be here and queer. Sometimes you have to show up and show out to tear down the curtain of homophobia and show the depth and breadth of our community in the fabric of America.

We all get tired of the stereotypes, but often by our silence we perpetuate the image of "gay" as a white, primarily male and affluent community. Case in point: OUT Magazine's "Power 50" and their take on this year's list and, rightly so, our community pushed back, resulting with OUT's publishing "The Hidden 105" and identifying leadership by people of color and transgender members of the LGBT community.

Our LGBT community, like the community-at-large, benefits from and is strengthened by its diversity. Unfortunately while those of us within the LGBT community receive frequent reminders through our outstanding leadership of all races and ethnicities, the community at large is missing the message that America benefits and is strengthened by its LGBT community.

Ignorance, denial and fear have led many in the heterosexual community to look at the LGBT community as a threat, a sin, something unnatural. This is particularly true in the African-American community where being out and open can be not just unbearable but life-threatening.

We, LGBT African-Americans, are invisible in our own community and for years we have wrapped this cloak of invisibility tightly around our private worlds to avoid the backlash at home in our neighborhoods and churches. Being in the closet at work is as hurtful and inauthentic as being closeted in your community but it's just something we all choose to just not talk about.

Black Enterprise, a monthly magazine, is considered the premier business and investment resource for African-Americans. Aspiring African-American professionals, myself included, have since 1970 turned to BE to find our black success stories—those, who against the same odds we faced in our lives, had not just survived but thrived. They headed companies, had their own African-American firms and were otherwise noteworthy. The magazine in effect said this is not beyond your grasp and YES YOU CAN long before the possibility of a Barack Obama was even fathomed. And although some of these leaders may have been and probably are LGBT, that aspect of their life was kept way in the back of BE's closet. But all that is about to change with July's issue of Black Enterprise magazine.

There's a healthy class of educated African-Americans that for the most part has received no recognition of their existence, but it's a new day for the gay, gifted and black. Working with

Pride in self and in one's community can overcome hatred and hardship

the National Black Justice Coalition, Black Enterprise set about telling the story "Black and gay in corporate America: breaking through isolation and fear." This is the latest and perhaps the most influential coverage of the black LGBT community in mainstream publications, sending shockwaves through the black community and blowing open the doors of those closets.

In February this year both Essence and Ebony magazines featured the stories of two African-American lesbian couples on the journey from love to marriage. Tackling marriage was big, but shattering the myth that the only career path for black gays was choir director or hairdresser—now that's huge. But that's just what Black Enterprise is doing. Profiled are executives in for-profits, non-profits and foundations including GM, the Arcus Foundation and American Express. They are influencing policies not just at their employers, but through affinity groups and even at historically black colleges. At the work place being out has freed them to be more productive, creative and innovative, and hopefully through BE they will start to bring the same freedom, creativity and innovation home to their communities—by knocking down stereotypes, inspiring youth, and building dreams.

"Coming out" remains part of the evolutionary process of all communities. Pride in self and in one's community can overcome hatred and hardship while inspiring a community to be bigger than the limited space a majority may have segregated for the minority.

Black Enterprise continues to be the premier business and investment resource for African-Americans. By turning its focus on blacks and gays in corporate America, it has opened the doors wide so that all African-Americans, including black LGBT youth, can see a world of success and opportunity, all while saying to the African-American community, "these are your sons and daughters too. Aren't you proud of what we as a people can accomplish? Open your eyes, open your arms and open your hearts, Black America"

Follow Michelle E. Brown on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/mychangeiam www.twitter.com/mychangeiam



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Moles, motes, migraines

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

There's an old saying about making a mountain out of a mole hill. Another about removing the beam from your own eye before demanding your neighbor remove the mote from his.

I have a theory, born of the experience that generally, but not always, comes with age. No it's not: if only I could do it over, I'd do things differently (now that I have to pay the Pied Piper for the jaunty tunes I've fox trotted to.)

It's a simple theory: we frequently create problems that are seemingly major – but actually are also seemingly manageable – if we keep working at them, and working at them, and working at them – in order not to have to deal with a big problem that has the appearance of being insurmountable. (It not infrequently is. Viagra helps.)

Let me consider dealing with A,B, and C. I may have a headache that comes and goes, but, God knows that X, Y, and Z, subset 1, 2, and 3 is a major migraine showing no sign of letting up in the near or distant future.

In this country we go to war on foreign soils – spending billions of dollars, in the process killing thousands of people, some militant, most innocent, our own and others – perhaps because the one insurmountable problem here where we live is dealing with – take your pick – crime, poverty, overpopulation, abuse of environment, failure of education, drugs, lack of meaningful health care, aging. All of the above?

Singly or collectively insurmountable? Or just seemingly so? It depends upon whom one asks. What politician and/or political party one confronts for answers. (And whether that senator, congressman, mayor, council member, or dog catcher is seeking reelection.)

Consider as egregious example: our major adversaries. Those who advocate keeping DADT in place, holding tight without budging on DOMA, insisting on employing discredited quack reparative therapy for LGBT youth, overwhelmingly working to ensure that any civil rights won for us at the ballot box be rescinded; by hook, crook, or crucifix.

These of the Fundamentalists (frequently, but not always evangelical) tribe of zealots – fundygelicals, Rebiblicans – keep attacking us gays because, well, when it comes down to it, confronting us, often to the point of day in, day out, 365, 24/7 obsession – keeps a bigger Biblical bugaboo at bay. Yea, verily! What if...

Those on the religious right are faced with a multitude of pressures that weren't present when the Puritan-steeped, Calvin-predestined, Southern Baptist-endorsed, "the Bible is free of all error;" "the world is 6000 years old;" "if you're not a born-again believer, you'll turkey roast it in Hell forever," got going full tilt in the latter half of the 19th Century. Amen! Selah!

It's a new hand-held ballgame, and what's being hand held is not the Bible (in spite of 125 "specialty bibles" being a million dollar industry – with the once sacrosanct Zondervan Publishing Company now owned by Murdoch). It's the Internet, with access to "revelations" undreamed of in biblical times.

What if the earth is several billions of years old? What if evolution is true? Creation Science, a pseudo science? What if the X-rated sites are being viewed by – Heaven forfend! – Christian believers? What if Rev. Fred Phelps gives the lie to the gospel of Jesus? What if muslims are making headway in America?

What if mega-churches are swallowing up smaller churches? What if missionaries are not welcome in India and China? What if wily televangelists and faith healers are exposed as frauds? What if fifty percent of church-sanctioned marriages end in divorce? What if our kids need Hard Rock Gospel to convert? What if ... What if ...

Jesus doesn't come. (But gays usually do?)

Charles@pridesource.com Have a rainbow day!

David Blair found dead

Detroit poet, singer and songwriter was only 41

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

The last time David Blair spoke with BTL in 2009, Michael Jackson had just died.

The death of the King of Pop, grieved by fans around the world, hit Blair – who authored a poetry anthology about Jackson – especially hard. BTL writer Chris Azzopardi captured Blair in mourning, writing "Whoever thought Michael Jackson would die?" the 39-year-old asks, as if the artist was – or should've been – immortal.

Blair's friends, family and admirers now find themselves asking the same question. Blair, a renowned poet, singer and songwriter, was found dead this past

weekend. The Metro Times reports no foul play is suspected, but heat stroke may have been the cause of his death.

Blair, who was born in New Jersey but lived in Detroit since the 1990s, was a prolific artist. He earned a National Poetry Slam Champion title, performed with Urban Folk Collective and The Boyfriends, and taught poetry and songwriting in Detroit Public Schools. Performances took him throughout the U.S., Russia, Europe and South Africa.

Blair was also a 2010 Callaloo Fellow, a 2009 Seattle Haiku Slam Champion and the recipient of Seattle's 2007 BENT Mentor Award for LGBT Writers. He was named Best Urban Folk Poet by Detroit's Metro Times and Best Folk Artist by Real

Detroit Weekly.

His first book of poetry, "Moonwalking," about the life of Jackson, hit shelves in April 2010.

"What interests me about (Jackson's) life – and about writing about him – is that everything that he is calls to mind a discussion of race, gender, sexuality, poverty, stardom, rags-to-riches and age," Blair told BTL in 2009. "He's a very American figure. I don't think that all that Michael Jackson is could've been produced anywhere else in the world but right here."

Blair was also well-known for his poem, "Detroit (while I was away)," which he performed at the 2009 TEDxDetroit conference.

Equality Michigan names executive director

Denise Brogan-Kator has served as interim executive director for six months

Equality Michigan, the statewide gay and transgender advocacy and anti-violence organization, is pleased to announce that Denise Brogan-Kator has been appointed to the role of executive director after six months of serving as the interim executive director. Praise for her selection came from around the community and across the state.

"Denise is a skilled leader who will continue to provide strategic direction for the organization," said Dr. Dennis Jacobs, Equality Michigan board chair. "We are grateful that she is willing to continue serving Michigan's gay and transgender community in this capacity. Under her leadership, I am confident that we will continue building a strong movement for fairness and equality."

Equality Michigan is the result of a 2010 merger between the Triangle Foundation and Michigan Equality, two advocacy organizations.

"We need strong leadership to deal with ongoing threats to our liberty and our lives," said Former Triangle Foundation Executive Director Jeff Montgomery. The appointment of Denise Brogan-Kator as executive director provides stability and credibility to an organization with deep roots and a proven record of accomplishments protecting and promoting the safety and respect of Michigan's LGBT communities."

Brogan-Kator brings a mix of extensive business experience and more than fifteen years of activism to her position. A Navy veteran, Brogan-Kator prepared for her business career by earning a bachelor's degree in accounting and an M.B.A. From there, her career grew through a series of promotions until she became the vice president of finance with a Florida medical products company. She was terminated from that position because

she is transgender.

Brogan-Kator's activism began in the mid-1990s when she co-founded a national organization that worked to promote transgender equality. While at the University of Michigan Law School, she contributed to a major change in the university's bylaws to add gender identity and gender expression to its existing non-discrimination protections. After completing her Juris Doctor in 2006, Brogan-Kator and her spouse founded Rainbow Law Center, which assists gay and transgender individuals with the many legal complications that result from unequal protection under Michigan law. She has also served on the boards of the Jim Toy Community Center and the former Triangle Foundation. She was the recipient of the Pride Banquet Committee's Choice Award for "outstanding contributions to the LGBT community" in 2009.

Brogan-Kator is succeeding former Executive Director Alicia Skillman, who stepped down from the role at the end of 2010 and had this to say of Brogan-Kator's selection: "Denise is an excellent choice to lead Equality Michigan. She has a great understanding of Michigan's needs. Denise is a strategist and will be very thoughtful in leading us to equality."

Colette Seguin Beighley, Director of the LGBT Resource Center at Grand Valley State University, said "Denise is a woman of high integrity who is a passionate fighter for justice. I look forward to continuing the work for equality under her leadership. Congratulations to the board for this selection – it makes Equality Michigan the first statewide LGBT organization in the country with a transgender executive director."

"I am excited about the opportunity to move equality forward with our talented team, and humbled by the support



Newly appointed Executive Director of Equality Michigan Denise Brogan-Kator. Photo supplied by Equality Michigan.

I've received," said Brogan-Kator in a statement after her appointment. "My focus is to end legal workplace and housing discrimination in Michigan by bringing our antiquated state nondiscrimination law in line with those states that understand that equality for all is central to being competitive. I know what it is like to lose a job after you've performed well; I know what it is like to hear homophobic and transphobic slurs; I know what it's like to nearly lose my children in the legal system; I know what it's like to feel unsafe walking with my partner – all for no reason other than who I am."

"I am committed to doing my part to end such ignorance and bias. I sincerely believe that Michigan is better than this and that once the public truly knows us and knows our stories, people will join in our mission to achieve full equality and respect for our community and that all of Michigan will be better for it."



President Barack Obama signs the certification stating the statutory requirements for repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" have been met in the Oval Office on July 22. Official repeal will take effect in 60 days on Sept. 20 of this year. Pictured from left: Brian Bond, Deputy Director of the Office of Public Engagement; Kathleen Hartnett, Associate Counsel to the President; Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta; Kathryn Ruemmler, Counsel to the President; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen; and Vice President Joe Biden. Official White House Photo by Pete Souza.

DADT dies for good Sept. 20

Military certifies its readiness to officially repeal ban on openly gay and lesbian service members

BY REX WOCKNER

"Don't Ask Don't Tell," the military gay ban, will be fully and permanently dead on Sept. 20.

It already can't be enforced against active-duty troops, courtesy of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

But on July 22, military readiness to implement Congress' repeal of the ban was certified by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta; Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and President Barack Obama, setting in motion a 60-day waiting period until the policy is history.

The certification confirms that the armed forces' implementation of the repeal and the transition to open service will not affect "military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention of the armed forces," Panetta said.

"The final countdown to repeal begins today," said Servicemembers Legal Defense Network Executive Director Aubrey Sarvis, who urged Obama to now issue an executive order banning anti-gay discrimination and harassment in the military.

"Signing legislation that allows for repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' was necessary but it is not sufficient for ensuring equality in the military," Sarvis said. "It's critical that gay and lesbian service members have the same avenues for recourse as their straight counterparts when it comes to harassment and discrimination."

SLDN also promised to advocate for legally married service members to receive the same benefits as their straight counterparts, and to assist veterans in correcting or upgrading discharge paperwork.

U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.,

an open lesbian, said people victimized by DADT now deserve an apology.

"I remember and honor the service of all the courageous lesbian and gay members of our armed forces who have been required to live a lie so that they can serve our country, or have been discharged because of who they are," Baldwin said. "These patriotic Americans deserve our thanks and our apologies."

President Obama issued this statement: "Today, we have taken the final major step toward ending the discriminatory 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality. In accordance with the legislation that I signed into law last December, I have certified and notified Congress that the requirements for repeal have been met. 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' will end, once and for all, in 60 days – on September 20, 2011.

"As Commander in Chief, I have always been confident that our dedicated men and women in uniform would transition to a new policy in an orderly manner that preserves unit cohesion, recruitment, retention and military effectiveness. Today's action follows extensive training of our military personnel and certification by Secretary Panetta and Admiral Mullen that our military is ready for repeal. As of September 20th, service members will no longer be forced to hide who they are in order to serve our country. Our military will no longer be deprived of the talents and skills of patriotic Americans just because they happen to be gay or lesbian.

"I want to commend our civilian and military leadership for moving forward in the careful and deliberate manner that this change requires, especially with our nation at war. I want to thank all our men and

women in uniform, including those who are gay or lesbian, for their professionalism and patriotism during this transition. Every American can be proud that our extraordinary troops and their families, like earlier generations that have adapted to other changes, will only grow stronger and remain the best fighting force in the world and a reflection of the values of justice and equality that define us as Americans."

Panetta issued a statement which said, in part: "All men and women who serve this nation in uniform – no matter their race, color, creed, religion or sexual orientation – do so with great dignity, bravery and dedication. As secretary of defense, I am committed to promoting an environment free from personal, social or institutional barriers that prevent service members from rising to the highest level of responsibility that their talents and capabilities warrant. They put their lives on the line for America, and that's what really matters. Thanks to the professionalism and leadership of the U.S. military, we are closer to achieving the goal that is at the foundation of America – equality and dignity for all."

A statement from Mullen said: "Certification does not mark the end of our work. Ready though we are, we owe it to ourselves and to the nation we defend to continue to train the remainder of the joint force, to monitor our performance as we do so, and to adjust policy where and when needed. My confidence in our ability to accomplish this work rests primarily on the fact that our people are capable, well-led and thoroughly professional. I have never served with finer men and women. They will, I am certain, carry out repeal and continue to serve this country with the same high standards and dignity that have defined the U.S. military throughout our history."

Ruth Ellis Center lands \$110,000 grant to enhance street outreach

HIGHLAND PARK– Ruth Ellis Center, the Midwest's only organization solely dedicated to serving homeless, at-risk and runaway lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender or questioning youth, is receiving a \$110,000 grant from the McGregor Fund to enhance its street outreach program. The 18-month grant will fund the Center's efforts to evaluate the program and remodel it to be more effective and sustainable for the future.

"One of the Ruth Ellis Center's greatest challenges is meeting youth where they are in the community, which for the young people we serve, can include on the streets or in parks and abandoned buildings where they are living," said Laura Hughes, Ruth Ellis Center executive director. "The McGregor Fund's grant will support our ability to create an outreach infrastructure that allows us to better serve the youth and will also make us more competitive for state and national street outreach funding streams."

The grant will support the center's efforts to maximize its outreach to youth through one-on-one outreach and the social networking platforms that youth utilize for survival. The center has historically benefited from the natural referrals networks that LGBTQ homeless and runaway youth utilize to take care of each other. Ensuring that the street outreach uses the social platforms will be critical to reaching LGBTQ homeless youth who are primarily categorized as couch surfers and the least likely to utilize shelters or runaway assistant lines.

The McGregor Fund is a private foundation established in 1925 to "relieve the misfortunes and promote the well-being of mankind." The foundation awards grants to organizations in human services, education, health care, arts and culture and public benefit.

Community Foundation's HOPE Fund launches media partnership to promote growing LGBT leadership of color

DETROIT– The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan announced Tuesday a unique media partnership between Issue Media Group and Between The Lines. Aimed at highlighting local LGBT leaders of color, the partnership is supported by The HOPE Fund's Racial Equity Initiative.

The first step in the partnership is the wide release and distribution of a HOPE Fund-produced short film called "Growing Leadership." Over the last several years, The HOPE Fund has made grants to several organizations serving LGBT people of color. The film focuses on the leaders of these organizations and what it takes to incite and inspire others to make the region a more welcoming place.

"There is exciting momentum within the region's LGBT community, in great part due to the growing base of leaders serving communities of color," said Allan D. Gilmour, chair of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and co-chair of The HOPE Fund. "The HOPE Fund is very pleased to release this film, which highlights several of our Racial Equity Initiative grantees and their leadership philosophies and experiences."

The 3-minute film is available at both www.modeldmedia.com and www.pridesource.com

Subsequent to the film, BTL and Issue Media Group (parent company of Model D Media and MetroMode) will showcase a number of LGBT leaders of color through written and video interviews over the coming year.

This activity builds on a series of activities by The HOPE Fund over the last four years to help build the capacity of LGBT people of color communities through its Racial Equity Initiative.

Created in 1994, The HOPE Fund of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan exists to strengthen and empower organizations that serve the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, by supporting important charitable activities in southeast Michigan and by encouraging individuals to consider what they can do with their personal philanthropy. Since its inception, more than \$1.3 million in grants have been made through the Foundation's HOPE Fund. The HOPE Fund also helps people carry out their charitable wishes to benefit the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

Bryan Fischer

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Like many gay and lesbian Americans I've been proudly watching videos and news stories about same-sex couples getting to – finally! – legally wed in New York.

I got especially choked up reading about the first couple in the state to marry, Phyllis Siegal and Connie Kopelov, who are 77 and 85 years old respectively. They've been together 23 years.



Bryan Fischer

"I am breathless. I almost couldn't breathe," Siegel told a reporter. "It's mind-boggling. The fact that it's happening to us – that we are finally legal and can do this like everyone else."

It's hard to imagine that anyone could look at a photo of these two women and not feel something akin to joy. I am so happy for them.

I can't help but wonder what it must be like for young LGBT people witnessing this. When I was in high school, two women marrying each other was inconceivable. I figured I was sentenced to live in the closet forever.

There wasn't a lot of information out there when I was a kid. I devoured everything I could find about gay people and I can't help but think that it would have been really good for me to learn about people like Bayard Rustin in history class. Or how about Adrienne Rich? She was in every poetry anthology I encountered but no one ever mentioned that she was a lesbian.

Homosexuality just wasn't talked about when I was in school. We didn't learn that there were LGBT people who mattered. And though a lot has changed, homosexuality still isn't talked about much, which is why California passed a measure mandating the inclusion of LGBT figures in public schools. Historically, LGBT people have been kept in the closet. This measure seeks to rectify that.

And boy are people pissed. God forbid an LGBT high school freshman learn in school that gay people have made and are making important contributions to history. They might inspire him. He might look up to them. He might even consider them role models.

But he shouldn't. Just ask the American Family Association's Bryan Fischer, a man who never seems to tire of railing against LGBT people in a way that your great uncle Larry only does when he's off his medication.

Fischer is no fan of the new California law.

On July 24, Fischer addressed the issue on the AFA's Focal Point radio show. "A controversial law in California was enacted last week that's going to require that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender role models be taught, starting in kindergarten, in California schools," he said. "Ladies and gentleman, by definition, somebody who engages in sexually aberrant behavior is not and cannot be a role model, period, end of story."

You got that? Fuck off Bayard Rustin. Stuff your poems up your ass, Walt Whitman. Go jump off a hot tin roof Tennessee Williams.

Look, I don't know who put Fischer in charge of defining the term "role model," but he has spoken. The role model buck has officially stopped.

Of course, Fischer is under the misguided impression that teaching students about the contributions of gay people is the same thing as teaching them how to be gay. That's not really how it works. Everybody knows that most people become gay after being asked to take a personality test by a well-dressed stranger and then sitting through an educational film. Wait, that's Scientology.

In any case, if Fischer thinks that learning about gay people in school makes you gay, then does he also believe that learning about straight people makes you straight?

No doubt Fischer is the kind of guy who watches Phyllis Siegal and Connie Kopelov exchange marriage vows and feels sick. Where so many see two people in love, he sees two old lady sex perverts. Sucks to be him.

Defence of Marriage Act repeal hearing shows heated debate

BY LISA KEEN

U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., a legendary civil rights activist, led off last Wednesday's hearing to discuss repealing the Defense of Marriage Act, likening it to laws decades ago that required separate water fountains and restrooms for "whites" and "coloreds."

"I find it unbelievable in the year 2011 that there is still a need to hold hearings and debates about whether a human being should be able to marry the person they love," Lewis said.

But there was a hearing, and there was debate.

Republican Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa and the ranking minority member on the Senate Judiciary Committee came well prepared for battle.

No other Republican senators showed up to ask questions, and Democratic senators in support of the Respect for Marriage Act (SB 598) were also well-prepared for battle.

Senator Al Franken, D-Minn., called DOMA an "immoral and discriminatory" law and he challenged Grassley's chief witness, an official with Focus on Family. The witness, Thomas Minnery, claimed a federal study found that children raised by a male-female married couple are happier and healthier than children raised by other families.

"I checked the study out," said Franken, referring to a 2010 study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "It doesn't say what you said it does. It says 'nuclear family,' not opposite sex married families, are associated with those outcomes."

Minnery said he understood "nuclear family" to mean heterosexual.

The study didn't use Minnery's definition, Franken replied. "It says 'two parents who are married to one another and are the adopted or biological' parents of their children. I don't know how we can trust the rest of your testimony if you are reading studies these ways."

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., opened the hearing by saying he hoped to "assess the impact" of the law on American families. He said the 1996 law "goes well beyond the harm to a family's dignity," harming it economically, health-wise, and in other ways.

Several of Leahy's seven witnesses provided personal stories to illustrate those harms. Ron Wallen, a 77-year-old man from California, said his life was thrown into "financial chaos" after his life partner for 58 years succumbed after a long illness. Because he was not eligible to receive his same-sex spouse's Social Security benefits and pension, his household income dropped from \$3,050 per month to \$900.

Susan Murray, an attorney who help usher in Vermont's civil union law and who represents many same-sex couples, said many corporations believe DOMA prevents them from providing equal benefits to their employees.

DOMA does allow states not to



Thomas Minnery, right, with Focus on the Family, testifies during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the Respect for Marriage Act, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, July 20. At left is Ron Wallen of Indio, Calif., who sits with a photograph showing himself and lifelong partner Tom Carrollo, now deceased. Wallen experienced "financial chaos" after his partner died. AP photo by J. Scott Applewhite.

"I find it unbelievable in the year 2011 that there is still a need to hold hearings and debates about whether a human being should be able to marry the person they love."

—U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga.

recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, and it allows the federal government to deny giving benefits to partners of federal employees.

The mainstream media gave some attention this week to a statement by White House Press Secretary Jay Carney that President Obama supports the Respect for Marriage Act.

Carney, in response to a question, said Obama "has long called for a legislative repeal" of DOMA.

"He is proud to support the Respect for Marriage Act... which would take DOMA off the books once and for all," said Carney in a press conference last Tuesday.

Numerous LGBT groups issued statements applauding the president after Carney's statement. They consider Obama's support for the repeal measure specifically to be a significant step forward in his position.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, a spokesman for Obama said he had supported the repeal of DOMA since 2004. But after he became president, his Department of Justice initially mounted a vigorous defense of the law in courts, arguing, among other things, "DOMA does not discriminate against homosexuals in the provision of federal benefits."

After considerable outrage from the LGBT community, the DOJ softened its arguments in court briefs. And then, in a dramatic announcement in February this year, Attorney General Eric Holder said that he and President Obama believe DOMA is unconstitutional and that laws disfavoring LGBT people should have to pass the strictest form of judicial scrutiny.

Rep. Lewis seemed to have been

referring to President Obama when, in his remarks, he chastised those who are "comfortable sitting on the sidelines" and called on "elected officials ... to lead, to be the headlights, not taillights."

Ranking minority member Grassley was the only Republican senator to comment and ask questions during the hearing, saying – at times with the vigor of a preacher – that DOMA is "not an expression of dislike for gay and lesbian people." He and other opponents of the bill pointed out that many of the Democrats on the committee – including Chairman Leahy and Senators Dick Durbin of Illinois and Charles Schumer of New York – voted for DOMA in 1996.

Whelan also said that repealing DOMA would "have the federal government validate" same-sex marriage and "require taxpayers to subsidize the provisions of benefits. And, he said, repealing DOMA would "pave the way" for polygamists and other polyamorous unions to be recognized under federal law.

Bill sponsor Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said DOMA denies rights and benefits to legally married same-sex couples. And she vowed that, "However long it takes" to repeal DOMA, "we will achieve it."

The hearing was covered live by C-SPAN and will be rebroadcast.



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Beyoncé

'4' The Gays

In this gay press exclusive, Queen Bey talks being inspired by her gay fans, loving Lady Gaga and remaking 'A Star Is Born'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

If there's any girl who runs the world, it's Beyoncé. The reigning diva – she's called Queen Bey for a reason, people – is one of the biggest and best voices behind a long run of hits dating back to the late '90s, when she was part of supreme girl-group Destiny's Child.

Years later, Beyoncé still demonstrates just how irreplaceable she is as a solo artist, having released four albums – and dedicating her latest one, "4," to that milestone – with some of the most memorable and gay-celebrated singles in pop music history. Not every artist can say they've had a gay boy lead a football team to glory by performing "Single Ladies," as seen on "Glee." And not every artist can say they have 16 Grammy Awards, making her one of the most honored artists in Grammy history. But that's Queen Bey, who's also assembled a gaggle of gay fans who are – you guessed it – crazy in love with her.

In this exclusive chat with Beyoncé, her first gay press interview since 2006, the singer/actress/glamour-girl spoke about how the fierceness of her gay fans inspires her, the intimidation she's feeling following in the footsteps of Judy and Barbra for her upcoming role in "A Star Is Born," and what she really meant by the "girls" who run the world.

I know, according to you, the girls run the world – but what do you think about the girls and the gays teaming up and running the world together?

Well, that's what I meant when I said girls. (Laughs)

Sure – we could all be one.

Yes, exactly! We are all one.

Do you know enough gay people so that we could successfully pull this off and take over the world?

Absolutely. I think it's happening already. I remember my friends were telling me when the song "Run the World (Girls)" first came out in the clubs the kids were going crazy, and I thought it was so wonderful and I was so excited to know that the reception was so positive.

You don't do a lot of gay press, but you have to know that you have a huge gay following.

Yes, I do.

When did you feel a real connection with your gay fans?

I've always had a connection. Most of my audience is actually women and my gay fans, and I've seen a lot of the younger boys kind of grow up to my music. It's great when I'm able to do the meet-and-greets, because I'm able to really connect and have conversations. People look at some of the artists that I admire – like Diana Ross and Cher – and they identify that glamour with Sasha Fierce, and I've been really inspired by the language. I have my (gay) stylists and my makeup artist, and all of their stories and the slang words I always put it in my music. We inspire each other. Like I said, we're one.

What do gay people tell you when you meet them?

I have so many stories; I don't even know where to begin. I know that I just recently had a contest where I had everyone reenact my artwork. Just seeing some of the

See Beyoncé, page 20

Photo: Greg Gex

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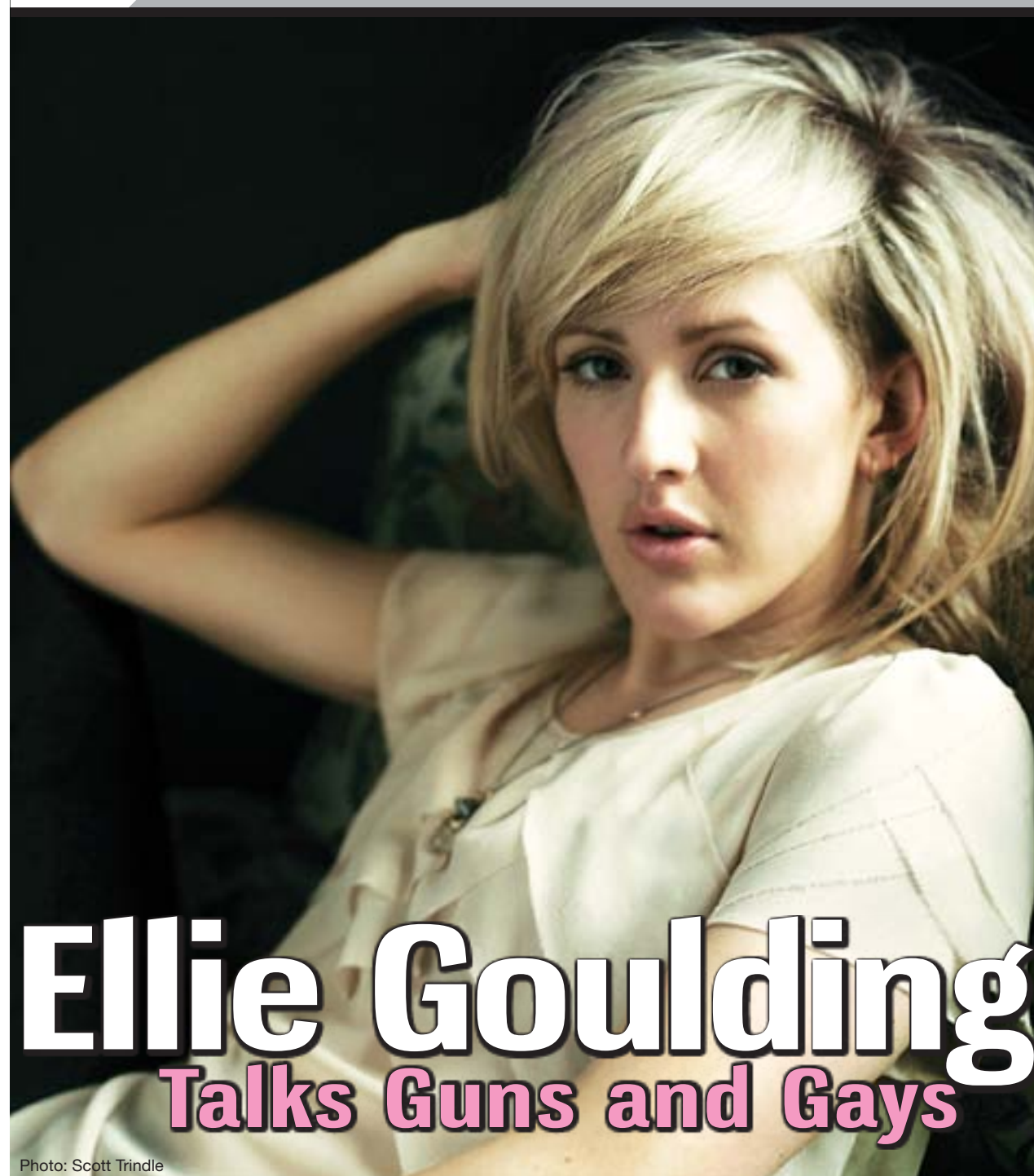
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Ellie Goulding

Talks Guns and Gays

Photo: Scott Trindle

Musician on royal couple connection, lesbian love

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

"Guns and Horses," a single from her debut album, might have given Ellie Goulding some much-deserved attention, but it's a different type of guns that the ladies love.

"I think that I have a lesbian following because I'm quite muscley," the English singer-songwriter says. Whatever the reason, the gays were onto Goulding even before one of her greatest career coups – being the only performer to play at the royal couple's wedding. Now the 24-year-old is bringing her folk-pop songs on the road in support of her album, "Lights," which was released last year.

We caught up with the charmingly giddy Goulding, who chatted about her big gay following, moving into a dark place for her sophomore album, and how covering an Elton John song was a blessing in disguise.

I hear there's a big gay turnout at your

Ellie Goulding

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shows, is that right?

Yeah, there is for some reason. I found I have quite a lesbian following, and I feel like I have quite a big gay following – and I don't know why.

Does your boyfriend ever get jealous of the lesbians that love you so much?

Yes! But he realizes that I meet a lot of people just generally on tour – but, you know, he always gets guys and girls after him, so... (Laughs)

Have you always had gay people in your life?

For sure; since I was young. Several of my favorite people in the whole world are gay and absolutely amazing. Also, I do have a lot of gay guys who are huge fans. And I get the occasional "I'll go straight for you" on Twitter. (Laughs)

I like how my gay fans are more in touch with their feelings. Some people say I've helped them through a breakup or my music makes them feel better about something or better about themselves or lifts them out of a bad mood – and that's a nice thing to hear.

And straight people have absolutely no emotions.

(Laughs) Yeah, exactly! But that's kind of what I've found (with gay fans). My manager is gay and he's my favorite person in the world.

What are your shows like?

I guess people describe me as quite
See **Ellie Goulding**, page 19

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The Equality Band of Michigan plans to play "America the Beautiful" on the field before the game starts. Katharine Lee Bates, who wrote the words to the song, shared her life with another woman for 25 years. The Equality Band is a statewide band that supports equality for all LGBT citizens. A community chorus for equality may join the band on the field to sing along while the band plays.

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Life PERFORMING

► Ellie Goulding

Continued from p. 17

raunchy but not slutty, because I do like to be sexy when I perform but also I have moments where I just sit with my guitar. It kind of varies. But when I'm doing a song like "Salt Skin," I like to move.

Why did you choose to cover Elton John's "Your Song" for the album?

I actually didn't. It was a song I did for an advert here – quite a big Christmas ad campaign. I would've never thought twice about covering an Elton John song. I love Elton John with all my heart, but it just never occurred to me to do an Elton John cover. And then when I started practicing to get in the studio, I realized how beautiful it was – and so my appreciation for him grew a bit stronger. I guess now that the song has been a big success I feel really grateful, and I feel like it wasn't such a bad idea after all. And the more I sang it, the more attached I got to it – and to Elton.

Wasn't it sort of your ticket to the royal wedding?

No, it wasn't – because I believe it was planned way before that happened. Way before the cover. Because I met them last year.

What was it like performing for Prince William and Kate Middleton?

Pretty awesome. I can't really say anything about it, but it was one of the best experiences of my life.

You can't talk about it?

On two levels, really: First of all, we said we wouldn't say anything, and also, I kind of don't want to because it's so private.

Can you talk about how you merge folk and electro pop on "Lights"? Why do you refer to yourself as a folk-pop artist?

I make sure I keep the guitar running all the way through, and I start everything on guitar and add everything else afterwards. The sound of a guitar is a thing for me because my dad used to play guitar, and I always used to listen to guitar music. So not only do I write my songs on it, but it's a big feature on all of my songs. Even "Animal," the danciest track on the album, has guitar running through it.

How will the new album you're working on compare to "Lights"?

I think it will be different because the stuff I've been listening to is really different lately, so I think it will just be kind of inspired by that. I've been listening to Warpaint and Beach House, and I want my voice to come

out on this record a bit more.

I hear this album will be darker, too. Why's that?

I don't know. It's just me; it's just who I am. My music is solely happy at some points, but there's always a dark kind of thing running through my songs. I am just kind of a dark person. There's always a place in my head I go to to write songs, and the darker it is, the more genuine it feels to me. Everyone's different, but I'm just one of those. I think a lot. I think too much, even when I'm really happy.

Is there pressure on you to be weirder and more over-the-top because the bizarre bar has been set so high with artists like Lady Gaga and Katy Perry?

Not really. It's a tough one, because I love Lady Gaga – who doesn't? – but I also love, like, Feist, and she doesn't dress up or anything. I just think of myself as a singer, really. I love fashion; I'm obsessed with fashion, but most of the time I'm in my gym stuff, running, and it doesn't really go very well with high fashion.

True. Running in a meat dress would be a challenge.

Exactly! So I have to make a compromise.



Photo: Scott Trindle

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► **Beyoncé**

Continued from p. 13

guys who dressed up – like my hairstylist dressed up as Sasha Fierce from “Single Ladies” for Halloween, and I saw so many people dressed up in that glove and bodysuit – really makes me feel like I’m doing my job and some of the fashion is making its mark. To know that people can be free and confident and do what they want themselves, and I can be the person they want to look like (laughs), is really such a blessing for me, and it’s very inspiring. I’m very happy and proud of that.

Yes, you’ve inspired lots of drag queens out there. What tips can you give them to be a better Beyoncé?

I have many different looks, so find what works best for your silhouette and your face. I’ve had every kind of hair style and I know, for me, there are certain things that I love to wear and there’s certain makeup and colors – bright colors on my eyes – that just don’t complement my features. So I think just figuring out which Beyoncé works best for your figure and features.

For your upcoming role in the remake of “A Star Is Born,” you’ll be part of a lineage of gay icons including Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. How does it feel knowing that? Is it intimidating?

I’m slightly a bit intimidated, I have to say.

I feel a bit overwhelmed, and I’m still in shock. (Laughs) But the studio and Clint (Eastwood, the director) believe in me, and I feel like I’ve been really selective and I’ve waited and worked really hard and I’ve done different types of movies – from comedies to thrillers to drama when I played Etta James – and I really wanted to make sure I was ready. I do believe that at this point I am ready, and I’ve been disciplined and I’ve surrounded myself with really good actors. I hope this is going to be as wonderful of an experience as I feel it’s going to be.

I just remember growing up seeing Barbra Streisand and knowing that she represented that generation’s star, and being an African-American woman and being the person that’s represented is such an honor. I respect it and I cherish it and I’m going to work so hard – harder than I’ve ever worked – to make sure that I live up to filling the shoes of those other women.

Last year, Lady Gaga made this remark in an interview with E! News: “I was very excited to be working with Beyoncé again. It just sort of works out because we both like women.” What did she mean by that?

(Laughs) Well... I’m all about women working together and supporting each other and learning from each other, and I feel like sometimes women get a bad rap. It’s like we’re competitive and we can’t respect each other, especially if we’re both out around the same time – they think we’re going to kill each other. And

“If anyone is brave and true to themselves, it’s my gay fans. The amount of confidence and fearlessness it takes... is just so beautiful.”

it’s all about women learning from each other, and I respect talent and I respect people that work hard – and good people.

I love Gaga. I mean, if she didn’t perform and she wasn’t a singer, just as a human being I love her to death. But on top of it, she is the most talented pop star right now, and I’m so happy for her. It’s just really inspiring to see someone who just creates their own destiny and comes up with their own looks and writes their own songs and choreographs and is in control and is not contrived. If you took away every bit of costume and she just sat in front of a piano, she would still tear it down. She’s just that talented, and she deserves it all. And I’m just happy to work with her. I love her.

“I Was Here,” a song on “4” written by Diane Warren, is all about you changing lives. What do you hope is the effect you’ve had on your gay fans over the years?

I hope that I’ve given them confidence, and I hope that I’ve given them inspiration. I just want everyone to become a better person, and I hope that when they see me perform they can live out their fantasies and see my work ethic and apply it to their lives and be confident and proud. If they’re bootylicious, be proud; whoever they are, be proud. On this album, I really focused on making people feel good and feel love and know that there is love out there and goodness exists. I wanted to make a body of work that took risks – to be brave and be myself, and not focus on being cool.

That’s what I love about this album – you did what you wanted to do. Through that, you’ve taught gay fans how to stay true to themselves. What have you learned from them, though?

If anyone is brave and true to themselves, it’s my gay fans. The amount of confidence and fearlessness it takes to do what maybe is not what your parents expect you to do or what society may think is different – to be brave and be different and to be yourself – is just so beautiful. It’s the most beautiful thing you can be, and it’s what we all want to be at the end of the day. And not worrying about satisfying or becoming what other people think you’re supposed to be, that’s like the ultimate dream – to just be that brave.

'Tartuffe' bubbles over with energy and fun

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

Whether it is Stephen Colbert's latest show or Moliere's 1664 farce, sometimes the most biting forms of truth can be found in the heartiest of laughter.

If the original actors performed "Tartuffe" with the relish and commitment that the Michigan Shakespeare Festival actors did this weekend, it is little wonder France's archbishop threatened to excommunicate any who watched it. It is, after all, a persuasive farce showing how a charlatan can wear the outer face of piety as a means for personal financial and political gain. Even though Moliere, through the voice of the play's (mostly) rational brother Cleante, is quick to praise true piety and warn his brother against lumping all religious men with the outrageous behavior of Tartuffe, the play still stands as a condemnation of those who lead others into scandalous behavior by invoking the name of heaven.

Don't think, though, that you'll be attending a sermon or agitprop theater. No, Director Robert Kauzlaric plays this one straight, which is to say with all the affectations of a French farce with its over-the-top characters, quick pacing, humorous wordplay and intense physical humor. Every moment is played for laughs while always supporting the furtherance of the story.

REVIEW

Tartuffe

Michigan Shakespeare Festival at
Baughman Theatre at Jackson Community
College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd.,
Jackson. Plays in repertory through Aug. 6.
\$30-\$36. 517-998-3673.

www.michiganshakespearefestival.com

Moliere's tale is of Orgon, an upright man who has served his country well in a civil war and has now fallen under the influence of Tartuffe, a man who makes much show of his piety and religious devotion. So skilled is he in attributing to heaven's will all that he does, that he manipulates Orgon into falling completely under his sway. Much to the dismay of his family, Orgon disrupts their lives utterly to elevate and uplift Tartuffe. Tartuffe, meanwhile, manipulates Orgon's devotion to his greatest advantage, whether it be helping himself to his purse, his reputation, his property, his wife or his daughter.

From the first syllable the actors speak, it is apparent that the audience is in for a wild ride. Orgon's mother, Mmme. Pernelle, storms onto the stage. Janet Haley takes a role that is prone to screeching and turns it into a show stealer with the night's most effective and uproarious use of a prop — a fan that accentuates her every point and



"Tartuffe" continues at the Michigan Shakespeare Festival through Aug. 6.

terrorizes all the other family members. Haley launches the play with zeal and energy and if the production has a major flaw, it is that once she stalks off, she is absent from the stage until the final scenes.

Her absence, though, is balanced by an ensemble of actors in which there is no weak link. Each performer shows equal and total commitment in an impressively consistent manner throughout the four acts of this classic farce. Buz Davis as Orgon is a man in love who swings between passions with agile vocal and facial gymnastics. He turns his puppy dog eyes upon Tartuffe with all the devotion of a love-sick lad who has newly discovered the hormonal wrenching that gets dubbed as romance.

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

Give us moe of 'Five Guys' at Mason Street

BY SUE MERRELL

Everything about Mason Street Warehouse's production of "Five Guys Named Moe" is bigger than life — from the high-enough-to-hide-an-actor boom box to a monster mama stick puppet who peeks in between the curtains. And the high-energy entertainment keeps building for two hours until the final medley is so big and powerful, it sounds like the room is going to explode.

Written by Clarke Peters (Lester Freamon to fans of HBO's "The Wire"), the 1990 musical revue features the upbeat songs of Louis Jordan and other blues and jazz composers of the 1940s, presented by a rainbow-hued male quintet, with each member called some variation of Moe. Like a high-jumpin', fast-movin' basketball team of song, they put the full-court press on Nomax, a lonesome, foolish fellow who needs to get his act together and reclaim the woman he loves.

Okay, the plot is worse than weak and the show would probably be better off if somebody just pulled the thread, but thankfully the "story" doesn't slow down the action much.

Director/choreographer D.J. Salisbury has put together a fast-paced show that seems to slide effortlessly from song to song, while highlighting the individual strengths and talents of each performer. They can move together as a synchronized ensemble, or stray way off into splits, back flips or just a sexy strut. Members

REVIEW

Five Guys Named Moe

Mason Street Warehouse, 400 Culver St.,
Saugatuck. Tuesday-Sunday through Aug. 7.
\$26-\$39.75. 269-857-4898.

www.masonstreetwarehouse.org

are continuously wandering off stage and reemerging with a crazy prop or costume piece that fits into the song.

Four-Eyed Moe (Zachary D. McConnell), in his bright orange suit and orange glasses, dons a feathered hood when singing "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens" in a high falsetto. Little Moe (Will Lee-Williams) is the most likely to add the splits or a back-flip to his dance routine, or go for the wide-eyed comic expression, which was especially effective in "I Like 'em Fat Like That."

Lithe No Moe (Erick Pinnick) could wow the audience with his tap dance routine or act silly in a curly lion wig. Big Moe (Tony Perry) works well with the audience in the early "Beware, Brother, Beware" and leads audience participation in one of the best numbers of the evening, "Caledonia." Eat Moe (Wayne Pretlow) keeps up the expected patter about food, but also nails the bluesy "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," which features a great sax solo.

Nomax may need the quintet's advice on life, but the actor playing the role, Charles



Singing "Safe, Sane & Single", from left to right: Will Lee-Williams, Zachary McConnell, Wayne W. Pretlow, Erick Pinnick, Tony Perry and Chas Lowery IV. Photo: Jonathan J. Barnes

Lowery IV, needs no help in the voice department, giving excellent jazz stylings to the opening number, "Early in the Morning," as well as "I Know What I've Got."

With the prominent on-stage band and Rosanna Stewart's colorful cityscape setting, the show feels more like a night club act than a play, and certainly it functions that way with several opportunities for interaction with the audience including a conga line at the end of Act I.

For me, the biggest surprise was the country hoedown interpretation of "Safe, Sane and Single," which showed off the versatility of the cast while adding lots of fun.

What a wonderful way to end a fun day in Saugatuck.

To read the complete review, log on to ...
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THE COLOR OF FLESH

BY JOEL GROSS

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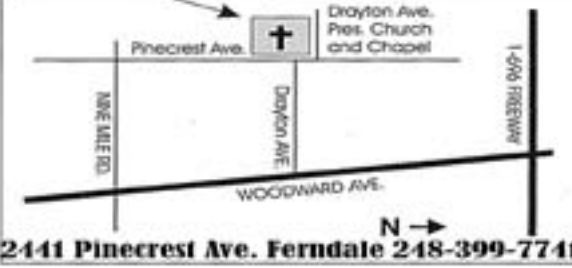
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Life THEATER

Water Works bewitches with spirit-filled 'Tempest'

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

When Paul Hopper takes center stage at Water Works Theatre Company's production of "The Tempest" as the magician Prospero, he summons his sprites who transport the audience to the otherworldly island where the fantastical is commonplace and all who enter risk the transformation of their body and soul.

With a plethora of found instruments and flying spirits, the island becomes a fully realized locale as Director Jeff Thomakos bewitches the audience with stage magic and enchanting original music by Composer Dan Bilich.

The spirits perform gymnastics in the air, playing their instruments as they twist on the rigging the lets them fly over the stage and through the audience. The trio of spirits, Jaelyn Strez, Samantha White and Katie Terpstra, are fascinating to watch and are led by the outstanding performance of Sara Catheryn Wolf as Ariel, the lead spirit who does Prospero's bidding and helps to transform his spirit from one of vengeance to one of forgiveness. Wolf's howls as she reenacted her imprisonment in the tree were heart-wrenching and convincing.

Hopper creates a highly sympathetic Prospero, a man who grows in virtue and honor as the play progresses. He shares his vulnerability under the gentle tutelage of Wolf's Ariel, eventually exchanging his power to claim a humanity of the most tender sort. He is a doting father who

REVIEW
The Tempest
 Water Works Theatre Company at Starr Jaycee Park, 1101 W. 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak. Thursday-Sunday through Aug. 7. \$20.
www.waterworkstheatre.com



Paul Hopper and Rusty Mewha appear as Prospero and Caliban in Water Works Theatre Company's presentation of "The Tempest." Photo: SMyers

delights in his daughter's wonder at the world and the love she feels for Prince Ferdinand. Julia Garlotte as Miranda and Zach Hendrickson as the Prince are sweetly taken with each other, filled with such a wonder at the other that the rest of the world fades away.

Rusty Mewha's Caliban falls from the sky to leer at Miranda and begrudgingly perform Prospero's tasks. He moves as a monster, as twisted on the outside as he is on the inside, his strong voice and performance later overshadowing the two drunken clowns Stephano and Trinculo.

The transport to the fantastical isle was aided by the more than 50 masks that Nina Barlow designed and created (with help from Holly Conroy). These creations created an island full of spirits who could be hospitable, beautiful, frightening and befuddling. The masks let Prospero tell his tales of the past, frighten his guests and enchant those who would do harm. They also served as the device that let him lift enchantments and clear away the confusion in the eyes of the hunted.

When you have trained professionals

with voices as powerful as those of Hopper's, why would you subject it to the vagaries of a sound system? The squealing of the microphones and the fading in and out as people moved through the space was a distraction that bumped the audience out of the fantastical world that had been created.

The cacophony of the microphones were the only distraction from a finely performed show in which everything from singing, dancing, unusual set dressing, costumes, sound effects and committed physicality worked together to allow a soul's tempest to calm and those caught up in its throes to emerge better than they were before.

BTL Horoscopes

Flirting is your forte, Virgo!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mercury and Neptune are in opposition, creating a struggle between rationality and irrational, artistic passions. Religion and atheism are articles of faith that cannot be explained or proven. Artistic appreciation is subjective. You can explain and describe how you feel about all those things especially well now, but there's no winning any arguments there.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Pay attention to details. Don't obsess, dither or fret! When you find yourself losing perspective, meditate – or at least stop and breathe. Take your work seriously, but not morbidly so. A little fun and relaxation is necessary!

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): You need to change a few things around the house, but what...? If you don't live alone, your frenetic aesthetics could be disrupting. Talk with your roommates or family members. They could help you develop a plan.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20): Family chats can get very dramatic. Is your sibling really helpful or a provocateur? You do need to talk, but you may want to be more careful about what you actually say. Also, be very careful to listen!

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Remember what's important. If being right is among the top 10, you need to revise the list. Advance ideas to provoke discussion to learn from others. Facts and figures aren't everything, but when using them, make sure they're accurate!

LEO (July 23 – August 22): What's most important to you? No, darling, not "being fabulous." That only works when it serves a deeper purpose. That's what you need to get clearer on. When it's all over, what do you really want to be remembered for?

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): A little self-criticism promotes self-improvement. Taking to heart every negative piece of crap from everyone around you is quite another. Filtering is your forte. Consider the source and intent behind all remarks aimed at you.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Let your friends distract you from your worries, but also let a few of the more sensible, trustworthy ones help you sort out the real problems from the pointless head trips.

Helping others worse off also helps you keep perspective.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): As your artistic vision turns to deeper directions, let friends lead you to new possibilities. To make sense of them, let go of logic. Inspirations for your career also defy logic, but at least think ahead before acting on them.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Overwatering your garden? Romanticizing (or over-blaming) your family? Look out for soggy roots. To know where you're going you need to know clearly where you've been. Deep affection and new understandings are great, but don't lose perspective!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Nothing seems quite right, and logic won't make sense of it. Some mad, flashy display – say a drag show or surrealist art exhibit – could put you in the state of acceptance to make more intuitive connections.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): You know what's really sexy? The answer to that is too subjective and ethereal. Sometimes you can't even connect with your most beloved, adoring partner on that. Relax; hold on to your self-confidence. It will pass.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): When you lose track of who you are, trust your partner to tell you, engendering even more confusion. Throw yourself into your work; the tasks you take greatest pride in will help you get back on track.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 27

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Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Sex for three

Q. "Lacy" and I have been good friends since Q. way back, like 20 years or so. I would do just about anything for her, and now I'm being asked to go beyond what I feel is comfortable, or for that matter, right.

First off, let me tell you that Lacy is straight. She's married and has a wonderful 5-year-old daughter. I often babysit her, and I love that kid as though she were my niece. I like her husband, "Fred," very much, too. He and I have always hit it off. We both are sports nuts, and have spent a lot of time in front of the TV watching games. I'm included in many of their family outings. In fact, they have really been more like family to me, as I have little family of my own. And, those I have don't approve of me because of my sexuality. I'm bisexual, but I mostly lean toward women. At this time, I'm not involved with anyone.

I broke up with my ex "Michele" about five months ago. It was a very difficult time for me. Lacy and Fred have been so supportive of me. I'm not sure how I would have made it, had it not been for their love and support. They have really been there for me.

I don't have a lot of friends. I guess it is just not easy for me to get out and meet other people. I do have some friends at work, but they're all married and into their families – and a lot of them don't know that I'm gay, and I'm not sure how it would go over if they did know. (Though I have known Lacy for many years – we were friends in high school, and remained long-distance friends – I just moved here two years ago.)

So, to my problem: Last week Lacy and Fred asked me if I would be interested in a threesome. I don't mean any Mormon-like thing, like sister wives. They meant that they would like to have me be part of their sex lives, not all the time but occasionally – maybe more frequently if things turned out well.

I was floored by this proposition. Jody, I never saw it coming. I am bisexual and they have been aware of that fact, but I didn't think they would ever see me as someone wanting to be part of their sex lives. I don't want that! I want

them to be my friends, my family.

I just stood there, floored, unable to say anything because I was so blown away. They said that I didn't need to tell them that day, and to think about it. So I left. I haven't been back since. But I know that I have to face them and give them an answer.

How do I tell them that what I want is their friendship, without being part of their sex lives; what I thought I had? I don't believe they'll like that, and it will be the end of something that I thought was wonderful and special.

No Threesome for Me

A. You have to go with what's right for you – and for sure, it may mean losing people who have been dear to you. I know that's hard.

Let them know that you love them as a family but are not interested in being a part of their sex lives, and you hope that it can continue that way. Maybe they'll be able to accept that, and you can continue as just friends. Maybe not.

In any case, I think it's important for you to make the effort to get out and find other friends. It's not good for you to have all your friendships in one basket. Find other things and interests to get involved in. I know this is difficult for you, but it is so important that you stretch yourself, and get involved in other things and with other people.

Saying "no" is difficult for most of us. Want to know when saying "no" is not only appropriate, but necessary for our mental health? Go to Dear Jody Valley on Facebook.

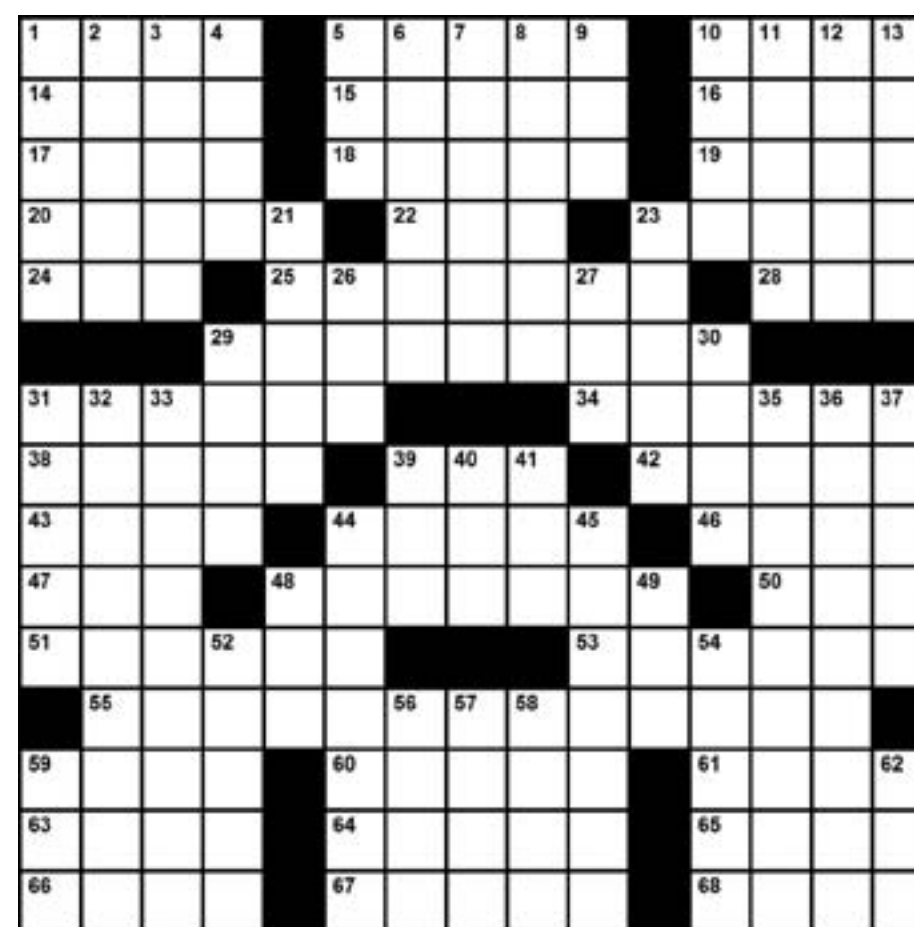
Jody Valley spent 12 years as a clinical social worker. She worked with the LGBT community both as a counselor and a workshop leader in the areas of coming out, self-esteem and relationship issues. Reach Jody at DearJodyValley@hotmail.com. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly.

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Rear View ODDS & ENDS



NY's New Law

Across

- 1 Gossip from Ted Casablanca, e.g.
- 5 Radar images
- 10 Asks from one's knees
- 14 Word used in dating
- 15 All fired up
- 16 Go on and on
- 17 Muse to John Boswell
- 18 AZT, et al.
- 19 Morales of "Resurrection Blvd."
- 20 Start of a message about NY's new law
- 22 Batman portrayed Kilmer
- 23 More of the message
- 24 Leave open-mouthed
- 25 Rio beach of song
- 28 Oohs' partners
- 29 End of the message
- 31 Early release
- 34 Family of R.E.M.'s Michael
- 38 Humped antelope
- 39 Cruising area
- 42 Celebrity outing, perhaps
- 43 Jockey's gear
- 44 Shut out
- 46 Suffix with differ
- 47 Request to Sajak
- 48 Venue of the message
- 50 Bears' home, briefly
- 51 Prostitute, to Baudelaire?
- 53 Like hands with roamin' fingers?
- 55 Celeb who sent the message
- 59 Gumbo veggie
- 60 Gay parade center?
- 61 Neeson of "Kinsey"
- 63 Bone separator in the back
- 64 Digital dealings
- 65 Drops the curtain on
- 66 Ready for service
- 67 Max and Albert, to Nathan
- 68 "The multitudinous _____ incarnadine" (Shakespeare)

Down

- 1 Country house, to Nureyev
- 2 Mother of the bride, to the other bride
- 3 Shoot off unseen
- 4 Goal for Sheryl Swoopes
- 5 ____ death (loss of interest)
- 6 Future flies
- 7 Nocturnal reptile of Tennessee
- 8 It extends from a pirate's crotch
- 9 AARP members
- 10 La ____ Tar Pits
- 11 2010 flick that references "The Scarlet Letter"
- 12 Grind one's teeth
- 13 Follows a direction from The Naked Chef
- 21 Triangle sign
- 23 Walking styles
- 26 Start of mature ejaculation
- 27 Rainey and Kettle
- 29 Goose sound
- 30 Commercial time of day
- 31 Piece of a pansy
- 32 He played Grace's dad
- 33 A real stud
- 35 Cho delivery
- 36 Where Christian Chavez rolls up his meat?
- 37 Writer Gertrude
- 39 Do the moguls
- 40 Had partners, with "out"
- 41 Tiny toiler
- 44 Janitor's tool
- 45 Debris from corholing?
- 48 Bi plus mono
- 49 Score for Glenn Burke
- 52 Honshu port
- 54 Palindromic tennis star
- 56 "Here ____ go?"
- 57 Prepare for phone sex
- 58 Comic strip dog
- 59 Auberjonois on "Deep Space Nine"
- 62 Workloads for eds.

Solution on 25

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Queeries

BY STEVEN PETROW

When are you getting married?

Q. We're going out of our minds. Ever since New York passed the law allowing same-sex couples to get married there (no matter where they live), every straight person we know wants to know when we're getting hitched (and a lot of our gay friends, too). It's become oppressive. Help!

A. You, too? I've joked to some friends that I feel like Mary Tyler Moore in her eponymous sitcom: the world wouldn't be quite right until she got married (even though she never did). Anyway, hurrah that we've won the right to marry in the Empire State, but let's hold on just a New York minute and remind our well-intentioned friends that marriage isn't mandatory.

But how do we say it? Oddly, it's easier to be snarky to a blatantly rude person than to a friend with foot-in-mouth disease. Still, there are a number of ways you can answer the altar call:

- "You'll be the first to know, after we decide who has to propose in a gay relationship – but don't hold your breath."
- "We're talking to our accountant to figure out whether this makes sense for us financially. It doesn't for everyone."
- "It ain't broke, so we ain't fixing it."

How do I tell a poz guy I don't want to date him?

Q. I'm HIV-negative, and my last lover died of AIDS. After years of taking care of him, I'm just not prepared to go out with an HIV-positive person right now. How can I explain this without making a new guy feel bad?

A. Your question illustrates why Craigslist can be so helpful, whether you're a top seeking a bottom or an HIV-negative guy "seeking same." If you're not screening guys beforehand, remember that HIV-negative men are free to just say no to poz guys – and vice versa, for that matter.

For starters, you'll need to use your words: That means talking about HIV before having sex or getting too emotionally close. But what you say and how you say it are critical. No one should ever make another feel badly about their HIV status. Start the conversation by saying something like: "I just want you to know that my last HIV test came back negative." In this scenario, the burden of disclosure isn't automatically placed on

those with the most to lose, given the stigma associated with being HIV-positive. A positive guy could then say, "Thanks for telling me that. You know, I'd be more comfortable not taking this to the next level. I'm just more comfortable having sex with poz guys." Or he could decide that he doesn't want to disclose; or, if he doesn't know his status, he could say: "Thanks for telling me that, and I'm glad you brought up safe sex. If we decide to have sex, how about we make sure that we only have safe sex?" Then you would need to decide how to respond.

One last point: Don't forget that there's a sizable proportion of HIV-positive gay men who think they're negative but who have, in fact, seroconverted since their last HIV test came back negative. Test results are a snapshot; nothing more.

Which hand do we wear our rings on?

Q. My boyfriend and I are planning our wedding, and I heard that gay couples often wear their rings on their right hands instead of their left. Is that true?

A. Well, it's true that nothing says "married" quite like a gold band on your left ring finger. But this is another straight wedding tradition that gay couples have been known to play around with, in this case by wearing our commitment rings on our right hands to symbolize (and protest) the fact that we couldn't get legally married. For some, it's a bit of an inside joke, a queer variation on an overwhelmingly straight convention. For others it's an explicit political statement.

Now that six states and the District of Columbia have adopted marriage equality, the era of using our rings to make in-jokes and political statements is coming to an end. Not surprisingly, some couples plan to move their rings from right to left when they officially tie the knot. Actor Neil Patrick Harris, who has been engaged to his partner for five years, once joked that his right hand had become calloused during the long wait. "It'd be nice to move the ring over here someday," he said, indicating his left hand.

The bottom line is that whichever hand is right for you is the right one. Either way, your rings symbolize the lifelong commitment you're making.

Steven Petrow is the author of 'Steven Petrow's Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners' and can be found online at www.gaymanners.com. Got your own question? E-mail it to him at ask@gaymanners.com.

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101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday

7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.

Bloomfield Hills-Thursday

7:00 pm, Sobriety in The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).

Farmington Hills-Monday

8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Wednesday

8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Saturday

1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.
8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday

8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday

8 p.m., Pontiac Gay AA, Shrine of St. Joseph, 400 West South Blvd. Closed/Discussion.

Warren-Monday

7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay AA, Faith-Trinity United Church of Christ, 12221 Martin Rd. East of Hoover. Closed/Discussion.

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Deep Inside Hollywood



James Franco. Photo: Fox Searchlight/Chuck Zlotnick

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

James Franco tells yet another gay story with 'Sal'

It looks like James Franco is making gayness his primary cinematic concern. First he played Harvey Milk's boyfriend in "Milk," then Allen Ginsberg in "Howl." Currently he's directing and starring as doomed young gay poet Hart Crane in "The Broken Tower" (hitting film festivals near you right now) and, going for a trifecta of gay biopic entries, he's now directing "Sal," the film version of the life of "Rebel Without A Cause" star Sal Mineo. Franco will also act in the film but the title role goes to young Mineo look-alike Val Lauren. There are a lot more gay biopics left to be shot, too, so if Franco wants he can just keep going and give us movies about Paul Lynde, Rock Hudson, Charles Nelson Reilly, Keith Haring, Montgomery Clift and Sylvester before moving on to the life of still-living people like Neil Patrick Harris. The possibilities are endless and we're happy to let Franco explore them. "Sal" is due in 2012, so you young people still have time to go watch "Rebel" and study the subject matter.

Glenn Close passes in 'Albert Nobbs'

"Damages" star Glenn Close hasn't been as active on the big screen lately as she was in the 1980s when she was nominated for (yet didn't win) five Academy Awards over the course of a seven-year span. But that might change this fall when the Irish drama "Albert Nobbs" hits theaters. Based on the George Moore story, "The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs," it concerns a woman who, desperate for work, poses as a male butler in a Dublin hotel in the 1860s. While living as a man, she winds up in an affair with another man. The film also features "The Kids Are All Right" star Mia Wasikowska and "Kick-Ass"'s Aaron Johnson - and, more importantly for Close, is already enjoying pre-release Oscar buzz. It's always nice when a deserving veteran actor gets a second chance at an Academy Award. And if they snub her again she can always go full-tilt "Fatal Attraction" on the voting members.

'Gay Dude' goes back to high school

You probably didn't see Disney's prom-themed teen comedy called "Prom." Don't worry, you're not alone. It tanked at the box office. But one of its young stars, Nicholas Braun, exuded dorky teen charm as a shy boy trying to get a date to the big night, and now he'll have another chance to play a high-school nerd in "Gay Dude." Yes, that's the title. The teen comedy revolves around two best friends whose pact to lose their virginity before graduation hits a snag when one of the boys comes out as gay. Lionsgate will produce and release the hot-property script from "Parks and Recreation" writer Alan Yang. The best news here is that screenwriter credit; call it a sign of hope that the finished product will resemble something more like a classic John Hughes comedy than the last big gay-themed movie Lionsgate released: the Cuba Gooding, Jr. "comedy" "Boat Trip." If you didn't see that one either, don't bother. Your health insurance might not cover the consequences.

'Hung' casts trans actor to play trans character

Jamie Clayton isn't exactly a household name. Her biggest media exposure to date has come from hosting the VH1 reality show, "TRANSform Me." But the transgendered actress is about to make the leap to HBO's hit series "Hung," where she'll play a trans woman who hires male prostitute Ray Drecker (Thomas Jane). Additionally, her character is scheduled for a story arc that may well include her becoming Ray's girlfriend. In a casting world where trans actors are routinely passed over for trans roles, this isn't just good news for one actor, it's one more step in the march of progress. Now just cross your fingers that her character is portrayed authentically, reflecting actual trans viewers' lives. The storyline gets rolling in season three, beginning this October. We'll be watching.

Romeo San Vicente has made all the self-referential "Hung" jokes he can possibly make. There just aren't any left at this point. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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