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"It was party time...a Balkan free-for-all, and the jam-packed auditorium went wild." (*The Jerusalem Post*) Goran Bregovic is a Balkan music superstar known for fusing fresh, modern influences with traditional ethnic sound. Touring with a wild 20-piece ensemble consisting of a brass band, a classical string ensemble, an all-male choir, and two Bulgarian female singers, Bregovic blends raucous Gypsy dance tunes with traditional Eastern European Orthodox choral music, spinning it all through a rock-and-roll cycle. Ann Arbor is one of only a handful of cities in the United States that will present Goran Bregovic this year.

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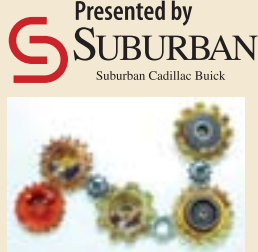


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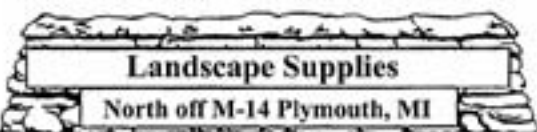
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Between Ourselves

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Angel Carrion won this year's Rising Star Award at the annual Pride Banquet in June. Carrion, 22, recently started a new job at AIDS Partnership Michigan. He has also worked with youth at Affirmations Community Center in Ferndale.



This is something that impacts everybody. HIV doesn't discriminate on race, gender, religion, anything.

1 What did Affirmations do for you, before you worked there?

I had a place where I could just be myself. I had a place where I could just be free; I didn't have to worry about who was behind me or who was going to find out, if my parents were going to see me for being who I am. It was a good place to go to because it built up my personality. Because when I did come out, I came out to my family, but not all the way – I didn't come out with my personality. So when I was at Affirmations, it gave me the opportunity to come out with my full personality too.

2 What did you like about working with youth at Affirmations?

When you first come out, it's awkward for most people. And then you start building yourself more. There's a couple of youth I've seen there that were in the awkward stage, they didn't know where they fit and they were defining themselves. Now when I see them, it's a whole big personality. They're happier with their personality. I don't know if they're happier with their lives, but as time progresses, they'll start finding themselves more. That's what I liked about it: watching people find themselves.

3 How's your new job going at AIDS Partnership Michigan?

I'm an early intervention specialist, which is basically a step before case working. What we do is work with people who are newly diagnosed or who have fallen out of care. We see if they need insurance, make sure they're signed up for a doctor, and take them to doctor's visits. We help

them because they need that support and we help them get everything that they need. It's for a good cause, and being able to help somebody and support them to get what they need makes me happy.

4 So do you like your new job so far?

I'm excited about it because I've been in HIV prevention for a long time. The person who inspired me to get in it is named Alfredo Smith, who works at the REC Boyz. I looked up to him, and in 2009 I got my certification to be an HIV specialist. Ever since then I've been doing volunteer work and outreach, and now that I have a job in it, it makes me feel like I'm doing what I'm meant to do.

5 The AIDS walks fundraisers are happening this month. Why is it so important for people to show their support?

Because it's something that has hit the LGBTQ community for a long time. I think everything we did in the past and that we're still doing now is bettering HIV education and treatment. This is something that impacts everybody. HIV doesn't discriminate on race, gender, religion, anything. This is something that hits every person.

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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Between the Lines

House eliminates domestic partner benefits

GOP attacks health care benefits for partners of state employees

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

LANSING—The state House voted to eliminate health insurance benefits for the domestic partners of state employees on Thursday, Sept. 15.

This renders the benefits, which were set to take effect Oct. 1, likely dead before they even began. The bills will also need to pass the state Senate, which already made clear its intent to get rid of the benefits in March.

The bills, HB 4770 and 4771, prohibit any government entity – including universities and city governments – from providing such benefits and prohibit unions from including them in collective bargaining agreements.

The GOP attack on domestic partner benefits began this winter when the Michigan Civil Service Commission voted to allow state employees to share health care benefits with an “other eligible adult.” The OEA benefits term is used in place

“You want to have a highly skilled workforce. And we feel to compete we need to attract the best people and provide opportunities for people. In this day and age, we need more people insured, not less.”

—Ray Holman, legislative liaison
for the UAW Local 6,000

of “domestic partner benefits,” which the state Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in 2008, after Michigan voters approved an anti-gay marriage amendment to the state constitution in 2004. The state Supreme Court said defining marriage as only between a man and a woman also means that benefits should only be shared between those who can legally marry in Michigan.

State Republicans already tried to overturn the MCSC benefits twice this year but failed.

Rep. Dave Agema from Grandville is the primary sponsor of the HB 4770 and 4771.

“It is not the responsibility of taxpayers to support the roommates and unmarried partners of public employees,” Rep. Agema said in a press release. “Michigan voters, our Supreme Court, and the attorney general all agree with these bills, and passing legislation is just another way to underline their point to those who don’t seem to get it. This is a fiscal issue. We are doing all we can to respect the will of the people and not place an unnecessary economic burden on our residents while so many are struggling to make ends meet.”

In May Attorney General Bill Schuette announced he is suing the MCSC, challenging the constitutionality of its ability to grant the benefits.

The MCSC is an independent, state constitution-created office of four officials who administer civil and human resource services. None of its decisions have ever been reversed by state lawmakers since its inception in 1908.

Ray Holman, the legislative liaison for the UAW Local 6,000, one of the biggest employee unions in the state, was disappointed by the House decision. State unions negotiated with the MCSC in order to secure the OEA health benefits.

“Those benefits and agreements we worked out at the bargaining table,” he said.

“Every time (Republicans) introduce a piece of legislation just based on hate that’s only purpose is to try to make a vulnerable population even more vulnerable, they’re wasting time, they’re wasting energy, they’re wasting dollars.”

—Emily Dievendorf, director of policy at Equality Michigan

“You want to have a highly skilled workforce. And we feel to compete we need to attract the best people and provide opportunities for people. In this day and age, we need more people insured, not less.”

One problem with the House bills is that they go beyond state authority on city governments and universities by legislating how they offer health benefits, noted Emily Dievendorf, policy director at Equality Michigan.

“We can completely expect legal battles to come from this,” she said – legal battles that will be expensive.

Dievendorf also noted that Gov. Rick Snyder called Republican attempts earlier this year to financially penalize state universities for offering domestic partner benefits “unconstitutional and unenforceable” in a May 18 letter from his legal office.

Gov. Snyder’s media office did not respond to requests for comment about Thursday’s House bill.

“This session has been exceptional in its hate-inspired legislation,” Dievendorf said. “Unfortunately they’re still calling those bits of social policy economic policy.”

Republicans say their opposition to the benefits only concerns cost. Some GOP

lawmakers initially projected the benefits to cost the state as much as \$20 million, but then they changed their estimate to \$8 million. Dievendorf said another estimate projected the benefits would cost the state an extra \$6 million, which would have a very small fiscal impact on the state’s overall \$46 billion dollar budget.

“Every time (Republicans) introduce a piece of legislation just based on hate that’s only purpose is to try to make a vulnerable population even more vulnerable, they are spending tax payer dollars to do that,” Dievendorf said. “They’re wasting time, they’re wasting energy, they’re wasting dollars.”

Dievendorf did not know of any current similar legislation pending in the Senate but said she would not be surprised if bills were introduced soon, due to Republicans’ many previous attempts to get rid of the benefits.

“It’s the same story – that can get a little frustrating to me after a while,” she said. “We have to remain as angry about this as we were in the beginning. If they wear us out, then they win this one. And we can’t allow that to happen. Every time it reaches any point in the process towards getting passed into law, we should all be making calls to our legislators. We should all be just as fired up. You stop doing that, and it opens up the door for them.”

Timeline: The long fight for domestic partner benefits isn’t over yet

November 2004

Michigan voters approve an amendment to the state constitution prohibiting same-sex marriage or civil unions.

December 2008

—Gov. Jennifer Granholm negotiates domestic partner benefits with state employee unions. The Michigan Supreme Court rules that these benefits are too similar to benefits shared by married partners. In prohibiting “domestic partner benefits,” the Court also notes that public institutions are not prohibited from offering benefits to another unrelated individual.

—Universities change language in their health care policies. Instead of offering “domestic partner benefits,” they offer employees the option of sharing benefits with an “other eligible adult.”

January 2011

—In a 3-1 vote, the Michigan Civil Service Commission negotiates with state employee unions to offer “other eligible adult” benefits. The OEA cannot be related, cannot be a tenant and must have lived with the state employee for more than one year. The OEA’s dependents are also eligible.

—Republican lawmakers voice their opposition to the benefits. Gov. Rick Snyder says he is “frustrated and disappointed” with the decision because it is an added cost to the state budget.

March 2011

—Republicans try to overturn the MCSC decision. In order to do that, they need a 2/3 majority vote in both the House and Senate.

—The Senate votes along party lines to overturn the MCSC decision.

—Republicans fail to get the 2/3 majority vote needed in the House to overturn the MCSC decision.

May 2011

—Attorney General Bill Schuette sues the MCSC, saying giving benefits to an “other eligible adult” is unconstitutional.

—Republican lawmakers submit a budget proposal to Gov. Snyder that penalizes state universities 5 percent of their state money if they offer domestic partner benefits. Snyder calls the proposal “unconstitutional and unenforceable.” Republicans remove the language.

September 2011

The House approves House bills 4770 and 4771, which prohibit government entities, such as universities and city governments, and state unions from negotiating partner benefits with state employees.

Republican dilemma: Create jobs or destroy families?

BY DENISE BROGAN-KATOR

For many of my 30 years in business, I was one of those “fiscally conservative, socially liberal” type Republicans. Although my politics have changed, I still believe that government has a role in the economy: to create an environment where businesses have the best chance to start, to grow, and to thrive, providing good jobs and stable communities. As a result, I can understand why Michigan voters – believing the Republican message focused on improving our business climate – elected a Republican governor and a majority of Republicans to the Michigan House of Representatives last November, switching over 20 seats that were previously held by Democrats.

What this power shift in Lansing will do to create Michigan jobs remains to be seen. But what we do know is that it has unleashed a vicious social agenda attacking Michigan’s LGBT citizens, as we saw when the legislature voted earlier this year to penalize state universities that offer domestic partner health care benefits to employees. We saw it again last week when the House voted along party lines to ban these benefits for all public employees.

Rep. Dave Agema, a Republican from Grandville, was the primary sponsor of the bill. Although he tries to pretend that denying health insurance to domestic partners and their children is about cost savings (the net cost savings, if any, is measured in the hundredths of a percentage point of our state budget), Rep. Agema is well known for his anti-gay rants. Unfortunately, he is not alone. Rep. Tom McMillan, a Republican from Rochester Hills, has become another outspoken leader of the anti-gay mob in Lansing and a supporter of this bill. And let’s not forget co-sponsor Rep. Thomas Hooker of Byron Center, whose transphobia was on display for all to see when he proposed a bill banning gender reassignment surgery for Michigan prisoners without knowing anything about the subject. (He told me, to my face, that he proposed that bill in order to save Michigan money – while we’ve never spent a dollar on such medical procedures).

These men and other Lansing cronies of Gary Glenn (who the Detroit Free Press called “a handful of myopic zealots”) want to do whatever they can to undermine our rights and to divide us. Unfortunately, because the Republican legislators who hold the majority of both chambers either share their views or can’t think for themselves, they are able to hurt us, hurt our families, and by doing that, hurt our state.

These people do not represent the people of Michigan. The majority of our citizens want all people to be treated fairly, with respect and dignity. They especially want equality in the workplace. This is not just my belief. Polls show that a substantial majority of Michiganders believe in fairness – that employees should be protected against discrimination based on sexual



orientation or gender identity, just like they are protected against discrimination based on other things that don’t relate to job performance, such as race, sex, age, disability and religion.

Preventing public employers from offering workers with domestic partners the same health insurance they offer to (heterosexual) married workers is mandating discrimination in the workplace, pure and simple.

Preventing public employers from offering workers with domestic partners the same health insurance they offer to (heterosexual) married workers is mandating discrimination in the workplace, pure and simple. It’s unprecedented, it’s wrong and it’s stupid. Just like Michigan’s other laws that deny LGBT people full access to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, this unconstitutional and unfair bill drives away qualified employees who would otherwise contribute to rebuilding Michigan’s economy. It makes us a state with a “not welcome” sign at our borders, keeping away talented people and fair-minded businesses. Our governor, for all his faults, recognizes that to have a strong Michigan, we need an inclusive Michigan. We call on him to show leadership and to veto this bill, should it reach his desk. The rest of the Republicans in Lansing just don’t get it.

We must work together to take Lansing back. For us, for our families and for the future of our state.

Denise Brogan-Kator is the executive director at Equality Michigan, which works to achieve full equality and respect for all people in Michigan regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Find out more at www.equalitymi.org.

They passed the bills – here’s what we can do now

BY JAY KAPLAN

This past week the Michigan House passed, along partisan lines, bills HB 4770 and 4771, which would prohibit public employers from providing health insurance coverage for unmarried domestic partners whether they are heterosexual or same sex. However, make no mistake, the targets of this legislation are gay couples whose families are receiving health insurance coverage.

Public employers include state colleges and universities, cities and townships, public school districts, and the Michigan Civil Service Commission. Should this legislation become law, hundreds of LGBT families stand to lose their health insurance benefits.

Not only is this legislation mean-spirited and a blatant attempt to discriminate against LGBT families, it also represents a dangerous interference by Michigan’s legislature with the constitutional authority of public employers to set the terms and conditions of employee contracts.

It is truly disheartening to know that 66 out of 109 elected leaders have chosen discrimination over the state’s critical need to attract and retain the brightest talent and new industry. The legislature’s failure to recognize and support the diversity of Michigan’s workforce will only make our state a less welcoming place for innovative entrepreneurs who are willing to invest their talent and resources in our state. It’s no coincidence that the majority of Fortune 500 companies provide health insurance for employees with live-in partners.

Although this development may seem grim, the fight for domestic partner benefits in Michigan isn’t over. It now has to pass the Senate and be presented to the governor. That’s where all of us come in. We need to let Gov. Rick Snyder know why this bill is bad for Michigan. In 2010, Gov. Snyder ran on a platform based on improving Michigan’s economy. He specifically stated that he would not let socially divisive issues, including whether gay people should have access to healthcare, interfere or detract from improving our state’s economy. Tell Gov. Snyder to keep his promise and reject HB 4770 and 4771 for the following reasons:

1. It’s bad for our economy. Our elected officials should not be in the business of telling employers what to do to attract the brightest and best talent. It goes against best practices of the biggest and most successful corporations in Michigan. If we are truly going to attract the most talented and loyal people to invest in Michigan, we cannot pull away the welcome mat.

2. It is unconstitutional. It clearly usurps specific powers granted in Michigan’s Constitution giving public employers



the autonomy to decide the terms of compensation, including health insurance coverage. The governor’s own legal counsel previously advised the legislature that it is unconstitutional to penalize colleges and universities that provide health insurance coverage to domestic partners of employees. In addition, should the legislation pass, it will be challenged on constitutional grounds in court. Costly litigation is not the best way to spend the state’s scarce resources. Especially when we already know the outcome – the law

Although this development may seem grim, the fight for domestic partner benefits in Michigan isn’t over.

will be overturned.

3. At a time when state resources are severely limited, we cannot take away employee health insurance coverage from families. Less insurance coverage will only increase the demand for state funded insurance programs, like Medicaid, which are already financially strapped. Michigan families are stronger when health insurance is available to all.

We must keep vigilant. Now is the time to fight for what is right for Michigan and the LGBT community. It’s our responsibility to start making the collective voice of the LGBT community and its allies heard. Contact your state senator and tell him/her to vote no on this package. Then contact Gov. Snyder and tell him that should House Bills 4770 and 4771 arrive on his desk, he needs to do the right thing and veto these bills. For questions, feel free to contact me at Kaplan@aclumich.org.

Jay Kaplan is the staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project

Domestic partner benefits for state employees look like they're dead – even before they went into effect. What are your thoughts?

I loathe witless, self-centered, mean-spirited pissant Republicans.

–Donna Fisher

I am Jack's complete lack of surprise.

–Michael Suitts

Douches ...every one of them!

–Scotty James

Benefits provided by employers are earned compensation to share with your family, no matter what family configuration you enjoy. I hate these diversion tactics from conservatives in Michigan.

–Tim Meyers

If they are so worried about the economy maybe they should give up their own spousal benefits.

–Pflag Jackson

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

DADT repeal, politics



Melvin Dwork

"The US military is making changes of its own, although they aren't really being publicized either. Along with the sensitivity training that's been required of all servicemembers to acclimate them to the new, post-DADT military, the Navy made another, more personal gesture this week. Melvin Dwork was expelled from the Navy in 1944, in the middle of World War II, when his own boyfriend in the service reported him. Now 89, he was notified last month that the 'undesirable' discharge on his record will finally be changed to 'honorable.' Because of his 'undesirable' discharge, Dwork was unable to draw GI benefits and is now in need of an expensive hearing aid that he might be able to afford if he got the pension he deserved. The Navy has said his benefits will be reinstated retroactively, although it's not clear whether Dwork will receive back pay for the last 67 years. Since the proceedings to end DADT began, dozens of veterans have stepped forward asking for their records to be corrected; Dwork is the first WWII veteran to achieve it."

–Rachel, senior editor, in her column titled "The Last Days of Don't Ask Don't Tell Are Finally Here," about the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," and about Melvin Dwork's experience being expelled from the U.S. Navy, autostraddle.com, Sept. 18.



Hugo Schwyzer

"Among young guys today, body image anxiety is so high that I'm not sure that if you were to take a bunch of 18-year-olds, that an 18-year-old straight guy and an 18-year-old gay guy would have different ideals for themselves. They may have different sexual fantasies, but their sense of what they need to do to be sexually attractive is probably the same."

–Hugo Schwyzer, columnist for The Good Men Project, a web site focused on enlightened masculinity, about studies that have shown that gay men tend to adhere to an even more hypermuscular body ideal than heterosexual men, in an interview titled "Isn't He Lovely," bitchmagazine.org, Sept. 12.



Jason Dabrowski

"Look we're all Americans. We all love our country. So can we PLEASE stop calling people who disagree with us 'UnAmerican' or say they 'hate America'? Grow up. Whether we are black, white, Latin, tall, short, fat, Republican, Democrat, green, independent, tea party, party animals, gay, straight, bisexual, transsexual, or no-sex-at-all, we all love our country. We just have different ideas of what's the best way to show that love. We just have different ideas of how it should work."

–Jason Dabrowski, in his blog posting titled "UnAmerican," jasonsez.blogspot.com, Sept. 11.



Jeff Krehely

"Congress should pass comprehensive federal legislation requiring schools to enact programs and policies that reduce and eliminate the harassment and bullying of LGBT students. In the absence of a federal law, states have woven together a patchwork of policies to protect LGBT students. This policy quilt is riddled with weak patches and holes that leave many students vulnerable to bullying and harassment. While most states have added some form of protection for at least some students, three states currently have no antibullying policies: Michigan, Montana, and South Dakota. The effectiveness of the policies in the other states varies, as many do not enumerate the categories for protection, leaving it up to individual school districts to determine who is covered by the policy and whether the perpetrators receive mandated bullying punishment and counseling."

–Jeff Krehely and Mark Hines, in their brief titled "Comprehensive Federal Approach Needed to Create Safe Schools for All Students – Obama Administration Takes Important Steps to Help Nation's LGBT Youth," asserting that all students in the U.S. deserve access to not only a quality education, but also one that takes place in an environment that is safe and respects their basic human dignity, americanprogress.org, Sept. 8.

Closeted service member: DADT repeal makes no difference for me

Young Michigan man says he'll stay quiet, even after repeal

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Talking to Kris S. – the name he prefers to be printed – is like talking in code. He's serving in the National Guard, but he can't say where, just that he's in the Middle East for Operation Enduring Freedom. Over spotty cell phone service, he talks to BTL about the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the military's ban on openly gay service, but he can't say the word gay. Kris is not out.

Through all the code speak, one thing is clear: DADT repeal doesn't mean much for this closeted service member.

DADT repeal is hailed as a great advancement for the LGBT community. Originally signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993, it prohibited gays and lesbians from serving openly. Men and women who outed themselves when applying for service could be turned away, and those who were outed when serving could be discharged.

"Today's achievement is a tribute to all the patriots who fought and marched for change; to Members of Congress, from both parties, who voted for repeal; to our civilian and military leaders who ensured a smooth transition; and to the professionalism of our men and women in uniform who showed that they were ready to move forward together, as one team, to meet the missions we ask of them," said President Barack Obama in a statement Tuesday, the day repeal became official.

President Obama signed DADT repeal into law last December, with the condition that the repeal wouldn't go into effect until the military signaled its readiness, which it did late this summer. The idea was to make sure that service members had enough training before DADT was officially off the books.

Kris's training was a 4-hour Power Point presentation that covered the new rules of repeal, and not much else.

"They talked about the new regulations, the new laws, sharing quarters, things like that," Kris said. "It's basically still 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' But (now) it's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Care.'"

"Other services like the Navy, Air Force, even Marines, actually had better training than we did. Our training sucked."

What's it like on the ground, with his peers? What's their attitude toward DADT repeal?

"A lot of people do care about it, but a lot of people don't want to say anything about it," Kris said. "It's like going to your grandma's house for Sunday dinner. There's something you need to talk about, but no one wants to talk about it, so we all talk around it."

Kris doesn't worry about being outed,

because he keeps his personal life separate from military life. If he were outed, only a select few would be bothered. Unfortunately, the ones most likely to be bothered are his superiors.

"The older generation is still the same," he said. "The newer generation is totally different. We grew up with it." Kris has especially seen a change in attitudes among his peers in his four total years of service.

Kris later writes to BTL in an email, where he feels he can be more open and descriptive: "Since it is the older generation that makes the decisions for now, many of the LGB service members that I have talked to want no one to actually know about them."

"Social media has become the unspoken way of the gay in the military. Just like everything else, we keep these groups top secret, so that we can just be ourselves and let our hats off without reprisal from outside prejudices."

–National Guard member Kris S.

The military hasn't done enough to prevent acts of retaliation, he writes. "They have not created any new programs in units that have a high prejudice rate. They have just said, 'We know you're gay, but we don't want to deal with it. No, we won't give you money or insurance for your spouse. No, we will not honor those commitments that your spouse is entitled to when you die.'"

"All they have done is say, 'You're in.' But now what?"

The hurdles regarding benefits that Kris describes result from the Defense of Marriage Act. Because of DOMA, which defines marriage as only between a man and a woman for federal purposes, the federal government does not have to recognize same-sex marriages or partnerships. The act prohibits the military from giving same-sex partner benefits.

With the everyday stresses of being an active member, and the additional work of keeping part of himself hidden, Kris needs a strong support network.

"I have good friends at home, but one of the things about being here is that you tend to lose communication with a lot of your friends because you're not there," he said.

"So I have a support network, but every time I go on active duty orders, they more or less become inactive."

He knows he can call a select few confidants, but he prefers to tough it out first, only calling if he really needs to. When he does call, he talks to Barb Murray, the executive director at AIDS Partnership Michigan, where he's worked as an HIV testing counselor. Or he might call a friend from the REC Boyz, a group he's been active in.

Social media helps a lot, Kris writes in an email.

"I thank my faith that I came up in a technological era," he writes. "Social media has become the unspoken way of the gay in the military. Just like everything else, we keep

these groups top secret, so that we can just be ourselves and let our hats off without reprisal from outside prejudices. We have created our own sites, blogs and even social media events that to the common eye would look like a military hangout."

What does Kris look forward to most, when he returns home next March?

"Going to school and graduating," the 22-year-old said. "I joined the military to (pay for) school, but I haven't had the opportunity to do it full time. Another thing I'm looking forward to is just being able to relax. Being able to be myself. Being able to call people when I want to call them, being able to talk about what I want to talk about, and never talking in between the lines."

There's no trace of sadness or whine in Kris's voice. He's a young man who's there to fulfill a duty – nothing more, nothing less.

"I learned this on this deployment: if you let everything bother you, you defeat your purpose of trying to get something accomplished," he said. "You'll never get anything accomplished because something's always keeping you upset, something's always keeping you down. That's the one thing I've been taught by the military: I can overcome anything, as long as I have faith in myself."

PAC seeks nominations for pro-equality candidates

Gay and transgender political organizers throughout Michigan are gearing up for November's election by offering financial support to pro-equality candidates. The Equality Michigan Pride Political Action Committee is looking for candidates to endorse and is asking Michigan voters to help out. Anyone can nominate a pro-equality candidate for consideration by the PAC. Once nominations are closed, qualified candidates will be advanced to a voting period. Supporters will then be able to vote for their top 10 candidates. The PAC will endorse and financially support the winning candidates.

"While radical policymakers continue to attack gay and transgender Michiganders, it's crucial that we build power for candidates who will stand up for fairness and equality," said Amy Hunter, Equality Michigan Pride PAC president. "Anti-gay activists are working as hard as they can to dismantle social and economic security for gay and transgender people and their families in our state. We need people to get involved and fight back. We need to show what Michiganders really value – fairness, equality, and inclusion."

The public can nominate pro-equality candidates online at www.eqmipridepac.com. The deadline for nominations has been extended to Friday, Sept. 30.

Equality Michigan Pride PAC works to support candidates committed to helping Michigan achieve full equality and respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Find out more at www.eqmipridepac.com.

Michigan AIDS Coalition receives \$14K grant

FERNDALÉ– The Michigan AIDS Coalition, in partnership with the Southeastern Michigan Health Association, is departing from their standard work of providing HIV testing and is entering a new arena: syphilis intervention services.

This pilot grant, one of three in the area, includes a minimum of 3 events each month to screen for syphilis individuals most at risk in clubs, bars, bathhouses and other community based organizations. MAC will also sponsor town hall meetings, informational parties and Sunday health meetings at their Detroit and Ferndale facilities.

Chief Executive Officer Helen Hicks is elated with the grant. "Our board has been seeking to expand the mission into areas that affect the population we serve. We are focusing on Hepatitis C, Syphilis, other sexually transmitted diseases, and as always, HIV/AIDS. Co-infection is common and we are now much better prepared to address the needs of the clients we serve."



NOTICING MICHELE BACHMANN AT THE NEXT TABLE, HEATHER AND RHYANNE TRY TO GET MENTIONED IN HER NEXT TV INTERVIEW.

Editorial

Gov. Snyder must veto discriminatory bill

The United States is moving forward. Michigan is moving back. As of Tuesday, the U.S. officially got rid of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the ban on openly gay and lesbian service members in the military. Just five days before that, our state House decided to take away health benefits for domestic partners of state employees.

Neither of these actions come without caveats. The end of DADT signals a new era in the military’s treatment of the gay community, but there’s much more work to do. The fact that our state House voted to take away those health benefits – and that the Senate will very likely do the same – isn’t the end of that battle, either. By taking away those benefits, our state Republican lawmakers are stepping on the independence and the rights of three important entities: universities, city governments and unions. In other words, don’t expect those three institutions to accept losing rights without a fight.

Instead of engaging in long and costly legal battles, we hope that Gov. Rick Snyder vetoes the bill if it lands on his desk. Snyder ran as a moderate with a campaign that completely avoided social issues; instead, he said he would focus on fixing Michigan’s failing economy.

We assume that Gov. Snyder, with his Doogie-Houser-like achievement of three degrees by the age of 23, is too smart to be fooled into believing that these House bills are sound fiscal policy. We assume that Snyder will understand that taking away health benefits for hundreds of families in our state only hurts our economy. We hope that Snyder reiterates his disinterest in social issues by refusing to attack the hard-earned benefits of those who deserve them solely to advance the social agenda of a few

Republican bigots.

Those few bigots are Rep. Dave Agema from Grandville, Rep. Tom McMillin from Rochester

If Snyder chooses not to stop these homophobes in their paths, the state will continue to run backwards, socially and economically.

Hills, and Rep. Tom Hooker from Byron Center. We sincerely hope their constituents realize that the men they voted into office are more interested in pushing a backwards social agenda than they are addressing the serious economic issues facing the state. We also hope those constituents realize that they are paying those representatives with their tax dollars.

Perhaps most of all, we hope that Gov. Snyder realizes that he will have to address social issues if he hopes to truly move Michigan forward. He cannot ignore a select few zealots’ social agendas, even if they are thinly veiled as fiscal agendas. If Snyder chooses not to stop these homophobes in their paths, the state will continue to run backwards, socially and economically.

We must ask Snyder: who’s really governing the state?



General Gayety

BY LESLIE ROBINSON

Find me a find

Yente would plotz. The matchmaker in “Fiddler on the Roof” would have a coronary over the kind of matchmaking being practiced these days. And by a rabbi, no less. The shmendrik.

For his part, Rabbi Arele Harel doesn’t need criticism from fictional characters, as he’s receiving plenty from real people who are angry over his efforts to match Orthodox Jewish gay men with Orthodox lesbians.

On the face of it, pairing a zebra and a wombat might stand a better chance of success.

Harel, who lives in a Jewish West Bank settlement, told The Associated Press he fixes up gays and lesbians so they can have children, a commandment of Jewish law.

“The main aspiration here is parenthood,” he said. “It allows them to become parents in a way that is permitted by religious Jewish law and prevents a conflict between their religious world and their sexual world.”

Um, the conflict between the two will still be there, as surely as I don’t intend to marry a wombat.

But I get what he means. He’s helping people live by the letter of the law. Even as the spirit of the law and their individual spirits won’t fare so well.

Harel believes some gays shift their orientation through therapy. He said his approach is for those whose orientation won’t budge, but who want to remain observant. Six years ago he started matching gay men and women, recognizing a “deep distress” among those “facing a dead end road.”

Instead of finding a new road, 24 gays and lesbians chose to tread the straight and narrow one – Harel said he’s wed 12 couples, some of whom produced children. Perhaps with assistance from Falcon Studios and Angelina Jolie movies.

Adultery is a no-no under Jewish law. In Harel’s view, when two married straight people mess around they’re guilty of adultery, because the two are sexually compatible. In a gay-lesbian marriage, as long as both persons know the other is dating, it’s not adultery.

Seems like Harel has found a loophole big

enough to force a huppah through.

He maintains that once kids come, the gays learn to love each other. “Their love is based on parenthood. Parenthood is the glue and it’s strong.”

A number of Israelis are critical of Harel’s unorthodox approach to Orthodox gays. Most Orthodox Jews view the homosexual as slightly more appealing than the arsonist. Orthodox rabbis say Harel should be pushing gays to change their orientation.

On the other side, a liberal religious gay group charged Harel with trying to “erase” gays from the Orthodox community.

Harel’s position is a precarious one. Kind of like – didn’t you know I was going to say this? – a fiddler on the roof.

Rabbi Arele Harel is receiving plenty of criticism from people who are angry over his efforts to match Orthodox Jewish gay men with Orthodox lesbians.

A group for gay Orthodox Jews called Kamoha independently fielded many phone requests for gay-meets-lesbian matchmaking, so Kamoha has joined with Harel to offer the service.

Kamoha’s website reads, “In this project, all of the cards are open, and without the lies, half-truths, and ‘mistakes,’ because both participants know very well the nature of the prospective spouse’s orientation.”

Do they ever. They can spend many a happy evening swapping coming-out stories. Or non-coming-out stories.

You know, now that I really think about it, Yente was nothing if not pragmatic as a matchmaker, so maybe, if she were living in Israel today, she wouldn’t be appalled at these gay pairings. She might even be getting in on the act. A successful match fetches about \$400 from both groom and bride.

Whoever performs the unlikely matching, the endeavor brings to mind lyrics sung by Tzeitel in “Fiddler” as she wryly imitates Yente: “I promise you’ll be happy. And even if you’re not,

There’s more to life than that. Don’t ask me what!”

Leslie Robinson can’t get Bea Arthur’s Yente out of her head. Email Leslie at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and check out more LGBT humor at www.generalgayety.com.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

With Bruce and Dickie at home

I'm not one to indiscriminately name drop, but I had dinner with the Wayne-Graysons, celebrating their 75-plus years together. I flew Delta to Gotham City for the gala event, staying at the Crusader City Y.

I'm pleased to report that the original dynamic duo, retired and devoted to LGBT philanthropic work, looked – to use our favorite five-star adjective – fabulous. One would think that with all the street fights they've been through the two celebrities would have aged shockingly. They haven't. Uncanny.

I've always thought Bruce handsome, in a stuffy kind of way, and little Dickie, well-packaged eye candy. (Gentlemen cultural heroes, they said nothing about my non-heroic facial nooks and crannies.)

They live opulently – but quietly – in their penthouse in the 100-story building they own – Commissioner Gordon Condos – at the intersection of Crusader and Mobile boulevards. As multimillionaires – thanks to rerun TV residuals – they private jet a lot, give well-attended lectures, speak openly of their once guarded life.

Their ever-faithful butler Alfred's now 125. Bruce tried to pair us with a bed-share inducement. Unfortunately, Alf's not a top. (I did learn that he and a leather guy calling himself Mr. Penguin once played an intense Scrabble session with a loose cannon calling herself Ladylove Joker, the latter in drag. Very kinky.)

Now a much admired couple, Bruce and his beloved Dickie admit it wasn't always wedded bliss. They almost lost everything when they were outed in 1953 by an evil shrink, Frederick Wertham. His book "Seduction of the Innocent" claimed comic heroes like Wayne and Bruce turned kids gay.

"I have never come across any adult or adolescent who had outgrown comic-book reading who would ever dream of keeping these ten-centers for any sentimental or other reason," Wertham snooted. (Footnote: "Action Comic #1; 1938" markets for \$38M to \$350M.)

I'll admit as a kid I admired Captain Marvel. I knew that his alter ego, dot-eyed Billy Batson, was an ordinary runt like me. That was encouraging. With exercise, Wheaties – "the Breakfast of Champions," eight hours of sleep, and bedtime non-naughty thoughts, life held possibilities for real rooftop soaring.

But Wertham's darts weren't directed at Captain Marvel, Mary Marvel, Superman, Plastic Man, Submariner, The Flash, or Mr. Tweedle Dee Dee. All heroes of mine. They were aimed at closet queers Batman and Robin and crypto-dyke Wonder Woman. (Her condo takes up all of floor 99. She's annotating her memoirs.)

Yes, blabbed Wertham, the Caped Crusader had a "ward" (guardian, not prison) and Wonder Woman, well – as her plump sidekick Etta Candy woo-woo'd it, "Aphrodite be praised" – she hailed from an island of Amazons, and they weren't selling books online in the forum, either.

"At home they lead an idyllic life," leered Wertham. "They are Bruce Wayne and 'Dick' Grayson. They live in sumptuous quarters with beautiful flowers in large vases. Batman is sometimes shown in a dressing gown. It is like a wish of two homosexuals living together."

(Under 30s, please note: A dressing gown is not drag. Large vases are House & Gardens optional. But, as everybody knows, 'Dick' is dick.)

"For boys Wonder Woman is a frightening image," boogey-boo'd Wertham. "For girls she is a morbid ideal. Where Batman is anti-feminine, the attractive Wonder Woman and her counterparts are definitely anti-masculine."

Wertham still haunts Bruce and Dick. "DC Comics," said Alfred privately, as he reluctantly kissed me goodbye, "still refuses to grant permission to use any illustrations of the crusading pair – gardening or fisticuffing – for psychological gossiping about their sexual orientation. Maybe, it's just as well. Come see us soon, Stud Muffin. Shazam, er, shalom!"

I shan't be around to celebrate Bruce & Dick's 150th anniversary, but I'm sure they'll still be raking in money hand over fist. (As the saying goes.)

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BTL Creep of the Week

Dave Agema

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

There's one thing you can say about the state of Michigan: it's too friendly to gays.

I mean, yes, it's still legal in Michigan to be fired for being gay. And second-parent adoptions aren't available, meaning that kids with gay parents are only allowed one legally recognized parent despite the fact that they have two, never mind the complete lack of protections for the non-biological mom or dad. Oh, and then there was that 2004 anti-gay marriage amendment added to the state's constitution.



Dave Agema

But hey, I'm just being picky. It's not like Michigan's gays are being rounded up and sent to prisons or anything. So who can really complain?

Well, public employees, for one. I mean, it's no secret that Republicans consider public employees a bunch of freeloaders looking for handouts from taxpayers. I mean, to think that teachers or police officers, for example, want things like livable wages and health insurance. Greedy, greedy, greedy.

Mind you, if public employees are awful then gay public employees are, obviously, the worst.

So it should come as no surprise that Michigan Republicans are, yet again, attacking domestic partner benefits for gay and lesbian state employees.

A little background is necessary here. The 2004 marriage amendment included the language "the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose."

Supporters of the amendment swore up and down that they were not after domestic partner benefits; they just wanted to make clear that only a penis and a vagina were allowed to say, "I do" to each other.

But that whole "or similar union for any purpose" thing led many people to fear otherwise. And wouldn't you know it, those people were right.

Then Attorney General Mike Cox, a Republican, jumped on the chance to declare DP benefits unconstitutional and the Michigan Supreme Court ruled as such in 2008. Public institutions like colleges and universities scrambled to continue offering DP benefits while not blatantly disregarding the ruling by calling them something else and revising the eligibility requirements.

But this just will not do for Michigan Republicans who are apparently still losing sleep over the fact that some gay and lesbian public employees are receiving benefits of any kind for their "roommates," as state Rep. Dave Agema, R-Grandville, put it.

According to the Chicago Tribune, "Republicans say some public employers have gotten around the implications of (the 2004) constitutional amendment by extending the health care benefits to domestic partners of the opposite sex, along with same-sex partners."

Agema is the sponsor of bills that seek to eliminate these benefits once and for all. The bills passed in the Republican-controlled state House and are headed to the Republican-controlled Senate.

"It is not the responsibility of taxpayers to support the roommates and unmarried partners of public employees," said Agema. "Providing benefits in this way is not the role of the state, especially when tax dollars are in short supply and there are critical programs being affected by the decrease in revenue."

It apparently is the role of the state, however, to further exacerbate the inequality its gay and lesbian citizens are subject to under the law and to publicly dismiss their families as frauds.

"Michigan voters, our Supreme Court, and the attorney general all agree with these bills, and passing legislation is just another way to underline their point to those who don't seem to get it," Agema continued. "This is a fiscal issue. We are doing all we can to respect the will of the people and not place an unnecessary economic burden on our residents while so many are struggling to make ends meet."

Oh, "this is a fiscal issue," is it? Bullshit. Using Michigan's economic crisis as an excuse for going after benefits is a smokescreen. The truth is, gay and lesbian families don't count in Michigan. Not to the people in power, anyway.

Transgender Health Fair focuses on treatment, guidance

Second annual fair features all transgender individuals need to know to make a healthy transition

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE— The audience at Affirmations on Saturday, Sept. 17 was a diverse one. There were confidently smiling transwomen, well-dressed and softened by years of estrogen. Others sat anxiously, taking notes for themselves or for the sake of a friend or family member. There were plenty of young gender nonconformists, each with their own label or identity, and each in various stages of the transition process. All were hungry to learn more about what goes on when one decides to take the plunge and transition.

The second annual Transgender Health Fair educated attendees about hormones, safe sex, gender reconstruction surgeries, counseling, laser hair removal, prescription drug coverage and supportive organizations. Transgender Michigan hosted the event, filling Affirmations' front gallery with rows of informational booths, seminars and forums. More than 100 attended.

Counselors Rachel Crandall and Robin Seaton shared their experiences both as transgender women and as counselors. Crandall, who is also co-founder of Transgender Michigan, began her transition fourteen years ago. Seaton started her hormones eleven years ago.

Both women agreed that at least 4-5 sessions with a client are needed before they will consider recommending hormone treatment. "Generally you don't have to convince me you're transgender," Seaton said. "It's more about making sure you're ready for what you're getting into."

Crandall explained that it's the role of counselors and doctors to make sure that patients are prepared before they jump into major physical changes. "I'm not trying to discourage anybody, but there are losses when you transition," she said. "I lost my job. I had a lot



Left to right: Wayne State University medical student Christopher Hanai, Professor Paul Schiavi, students David Ly and Shaun Saboo give out free blood pressure screenings at the second annual Transgender Health Fair at Affirmations Sept. 17. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire.

of friends and family that I lost. But fortunately I had a good counselor who warned me about the losses I would face, so it made it easier."

Seaton explained that doctors will require blood tests before and after beginning treatment. "Hormones are not as expensive as you might think. I pay \$4 a month," she said, "but another expense is blood tests and office visits." As for counseling, many counselors offer sliding scale services.

Seaton and Crandall warned against starting treatment without a doctor's guidance. "One dangerous thing people do is starting their hormones and stopping them," Seaton said. Inconsistent treatment stresses the body and can cause mood and physical disorders.

Crandall said that some people obtain hormones on the Internet or in the bathrooms of gay bars: "This is bad for you because you never know what you're getting. You can't tell if

it is mixed with anything else or if it is even safe. And your body needs to have a regular amount of the hormones. It is safer to start when you are in a position to keep doing it with a doctor's supervision and in steady doses."

Transgender people can find trans-friendly providers at LGBT health fairs, through the Pride Source Directory, or through contacts on the Transgender Michigan website.

Other presenters gave more in-depth information on hormone usage and effects, and Michigan AIDS Coalition shared safe sex information. Allies in the community, like Paul Schiavi of Rite Aid Pharmacy in Troy, came out to show that transpeople are welcome. He also brought along four pharmacy students from Wayne State University to give them first-hand experience meeting diverse customers and answering drug and hormone-related questions. The students also gave free blood pressure tests.

FernCare, the free health clinic in Ferndale, is another resource for trans-friendly care. The clinic provides free care to people without health insurance who are between the ages of 18 and 65. FernCare works directly with transgender-friendly counselors to provide free services or low-cost referrals for services that the clinic cannot provide, such as surgery.

Other resources for transgender wellness and support can be found at the Transgender Michigan website at www.transgendermichigan.org.

"Your body needs to have a regular amount of the hormones. It is safer to start when you are in a position to keep doing it with a doctor's supervision and in steady doses."

—Rachel Crandall, founder and director of Transgender Michigan

Exhibit showcases LGBT art, talent in Metro Detroit

Detroit Design Festival features 'Beyond the Bar,' challenges LGBT stereotypes

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

DETROIT— There's more to David Wysocki than being a gay man. He loves wine, travel, sewing and interior decorating. He also installs roofs, works as a landscaper, and has been a graphic designer for 17 years.

Wysocki is just one of the many graphic designers and illustrators who will have artwork on display at "Beyond the Bar: An LGBT Graphic Design and Illustration Showcase" during this year's Detroit Design Festival. The showcase challenges stereotypes

about LGBTs.

"Yes, we are hairdressers and interior designers," Wysocki said. "(We're also) doctors, builders, athletes, mechanics and graphic designers."

"A lot of people stereotype the careers of LGBT professionals, and while they may not mean it to be offensive, it's actually quite demeaning."

DDF is a weeklong festival taking place all over Detroit through events and exhibits featuring artists, illustrators and graphic designers from the metro area. The event was

established by the Detroit Creative Corridor Center as a way to showcase the talent and creativity of metro Detroit and connect designers with consumers and each other. The city will host 60 happenings, including panels, studio tours, roundtable discussions, fashion shows, art battles and more.

"Beyond the Bar" is presented by the Detroit chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts and exhibit sponsor DishKin. According to exhibit curator Alex Harvilla, this is DDF's first LGBT-specific showcase.

"We wanted to show that art and creativity has a place in the professional world, and that the LGBT community has done so much for the graphic design and professional art world," said Harvilla.

Start Gallery will display the exhibit, which is made up of 30 pieces by 15 different LGBT artists. Artists were encouraged to include two pieces to showcase both their professional and artistic styles. The exhibit will include website designs, T-shirt graphics used in fashion lines as well as a marker rendering used by the Detroit Zoo.

"Beyond the Bar" designers and illustrators will also be present during the exhibition to



David Wysocki's illustrations will be on display at the "Beyond the Bar" showcase Sept. 23. Art by: David Wysocki

"We wanted to show that art and creativity has a place in the professional world, and that the LGBT community has done so much for the graphic design and professional art world."

—Exhibit curator Alex Harvilla

talk about their art and make connections with attendees. "I wanted artists to be there to talk about what they do," said Harvilla. "It's a way to make the show more interactive."

Artist information will be available for businesses interested in connecting with graphic designers or illustrators. The showcase will be open to the public 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 23 in the Street Gallery at 206 E. Grand River. For more information, go to detroitdesignfestival.com.

Check out our photo galleries online at pridesource.com

ROYAL OAK— The 20th annual AIDS Walk Detroit on Sept. 18 was sponsored by both Steppin' Out and Health Emergency Lifeline Programs, which will fully take over organizing the event next year. This year's walk attracted as many as 2,000 attendees, estimated Teresa Roscoe, executive director at HELP. Although final donations were not tallied by BTL press time, Roscoe also estimated that the walk was on target to raise more than the \$160,000 it raised last year. BTL photos by Andrew Potter.

ANN ARBOR— The 17th annual OutFest, which benefits the Jim Toy Community Center, took place Sept. 17 in Braun Court. BTL photos by Matthew Paquin.



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Repeal of gay ban welcomed by civilian partners

Gay, lesbian couples share their difficulties hiding love, living in fear

BY DAVID CRARY

NEW YORK (AP)— After 19 years hiding her relationship with an active-duty Army captain, Cathy Cooper is getting ready to exhale.

On Tuesday, the policy known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” will expire. And Cooper will dare speak her love’s name in public.

“This is life-changing,” said Cooper, choking up. “I just want to be able to breathe — knowing I can call my partner at work and have a conversation without it having to be in code.”

Much has been reported about the burdens that DADT placed on gay and lesbian service members who risked discharge under the 1993 policy if their sexual orientation became known in the ranks. There’s been less attention focused on their civilian partners, who faced distinctive, often relentless stresses of their own.

In interviews with The Associated Press, five partners recalled past challenges trying to conceal their love affairs, spoke of the joy and relief accompanying repeal, and wondered about the extent that they would be welcomed into the broader military family in the future.

Even with repeal imminent, the partners — long accustomed to secrecy — did not want to reveal the full identity of their active-duty loved ones before Tuesday.

Cooper, who works for a large private company, moved from the Midwest to northern Virginia to be near her partner’s current Army post, yet couldn’t fully explain to friends and colleagues why she moved. “It’s been really difficult — it’s really isolated us,” she said. “I became much more introverted, more evasive.”

Cooper said her partner’s Army career is thriving, though she’s had to hide a major component of her personal life.

“I don’t know any of her co-workers,” Cooper said. “She says, ‘You’re the best part of me and I have to pretend you don’t exist.’”

Looking ahead, Cooper is unsure how same-sex partners will be welcomed by the military establishment.

“Will it be, ‘Hey, come join all the family support programs?’” she wondered. “I’m not going to be so naive as to think that ... I’m just hoping the door is open.”

DOMA still a hurdle

During the long, arduous campaign to repeal “don’t ask, don’t tell,” activists and advocacy groups tended to downplay issues related to post-repeal benefits for civilian partners. “It’s not something we’ve been pushing very hard for yet, but it’s obviously going to be the next front in the ongoing battle for equality,” said Alex Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United.

Nicholson’s organization, which advocates on behalf of gay and lesbian military personnel, conducted a survey of same-sex partners last year to gauge their concerns. One widespread hope, he said, was the military might issue ID cards to same-sex civilian partners so they could gain access to bases, commissaries and support services on their own.

In general, same-sex partners will not get the same benefits that the Pentagon grants to heterosexual married couples to ease the costs of medical care, travel, housing and other living expenses. The Pentagon says the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act — which defines marriage as a legal union between a man and woman — precludes extending those benefits to gay couples, even if they are married legally in certain states.

Same-sex partners can be listed as the person to be notified in case a service member is killed or injured, but current regulations prevent anyone other than immediate family — not same-sex spouses — from learning the details of the death.

Some activists predict that gay couples will remain second-class citizens in the military’s eyes as long as the Defense of Marriage Act is in force. It is currently under challenge in several court cases, and the Obama administration has said it will not defend DOMA in court.

In the meantime, some activists suggest the military could allow all its personnel — gay or straight — to be eligible for subsidized off-base housing, emergency leaves and other benefits by virtue of a relationship with an unmarried partner.

Heather Lamb, an IBM software engineer in northern Virginia, looks ahead to the post-repeal era and hopes that eventually, same-sex couples receive the same support as other military families.

How will the military handle the changes? “I think it will be like any neighborhood or city in America,” she said. “There will be people in the military who are very open and accepting, and there will be people who will not be.”

The advent of repeal emboldened Lamb to propose earlier this month to her partner of six years, an Air Force officer named Adrianna.

No wedding date is set, but Lamb, 35, is excited in part because marriage — impossible under DADT — offers a more secure future for their son, Jacob, who she gave birth to in April.

Adrianna took leave from her post near Washington, D.C., to be present for Jacob’s birth, Lamb said, but “don’t ask, don’t tell” nonetheless took its toll.

“Most people at work share the news of a birth,” Lamb said. “When Adrianna went back,

she couldn’t get congratulations. It was one of the sad things — she had to keep quiet about it.”

Living in fear

For Ariana Bostian-Kentes, repeal comes at an already emotional time. Her partner of nearly five years, an Army medical supply officer named Nicole, has just started a 12-month deployment in Afghanistan with the 1st Armored Division from Fort Bliss, Texas.

Before repeal became certain, Nicole was leaning toward leaving the military after the deployment, Bostian-Kentes said. Now, there’s more of a chance she’ll stay in the service, and the two are discussing the possibility of marrying after Nicole returns to the U.S.

“She might go back in, since she won’t have to hide her private life,” Bostian-Kentes said. “Before, it was let’s get out as soon as we can, and not have to lie to our family and friends.”

The two women, both 28, met in 2006 while on a rugby team at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where Bostian-Kentes now works at the university’s center serving gay, lesbian and transgender students. At that stage, Nicole was in the ROTC program, and Bostian-Kentes had to learn the intricacies of dating someone governed by DADT.

“I’d never had to be in the closet, but I happened to fall in love with someone in the military and had to create a closet that didn’t exist before,” she said. “We couldn’t hold hands walking down the street, couldn’t write this or that on my Facebook site — it was a huge learning curve for me.”

There was a brief scare last October, when a fellow reveler at a Halloween party posted a photo on Facebook of Ariana and Nicole embracing.

“I freaked out and called the guy who posted it and said, ‘Take it down. This could ruin her career,’” Bostian-Kentes recalled. “The guy did take it down — but it was a terrifying two hours of my life.”

Bostian-Kentes, who co-founded an advocacy group called the Military Partners and Families Coalition, is hopeful that repeal will enable her to be an active part of the military community and its various support systems.

“It’s so much more difficult to shoulder the burden of deployment without support,” she said. “It’s exhausting, it’s scary — the continuous web of lies that’s being weaved. I can’t wait to come out of that, to come out as a military spouse.”

15 years of hiding

The repeal process has been watched closely by Catherine Crisp, a professor of social work at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, who endured DADT for 15 years as partner of a career Army officer, Kaye McKinzie.

McKinzie, 47, a West Point graduate, retired two years ago after being promoted to colonel, and now teaches in the University of Central Arkansas College of Business.

“I felt like I spent 15 years holding my

Online resources for servicemembers

Servicemembers United: <http://www.servicemembers.org>

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network: <http://www.sldn.org>

The Campaign for Military Partners: <http://militarypartners.org>

breath,” Crisp said. “I did not realize until Kaye retired what a toll it had taken on both of us, that we lived in constant fear that became a part of who we were.”

Crisp, 46, said both she and McKinzie were dedicated to their careers, lived apart for long stretches, and often took exhausting steps to conceal their relationship.

“In hindsight it seems ludicrous that we had to spend time and energy on stuff like that,” Crisp said. “We lived in fear not of ‘the enemy’ but of our government and the fear of disclosure and discovery under this horrible policy.”

There were delicate moments along the way, said Crisp, who noted that much of her academic research has focused on topics related to gays and lesbians. She taught about DADT in some of her classes, and challenged her students to think about the plight of civilian same-sex partners.

But her own experience went unmentioned.

Duty and sacrifice

Stephen Peters, 31, knows the strains of DADT from two perspectives. He’s a former Marine discharged under the policy in 2007 after telling his commander he was fed up with having to lie constantly about himself.

As Peters was leaving the military, he met an active-duty Marine who’s been his partner ever since. Peters recently followed him from Hawaii to a posting in the San Diego area.

“I had to go to work and lie to people, and say I was single,” Peters said. “I made up excuses about why I had to move — made it seem I was crazy.”

Throughout their relationship, Peters said, there were recurring fears of being seen together by his partner’s Marine colleagues.

“We’d see people he worked with and he’d make up some story about who I was, constantly creating a profile that wasn’t real,” Peters said.

Peters said his partner, who is 38, hopes to stay in the Marines. Peters is unsure how easy it would be for them to live together if the partner is deployed overseas, given that he would not be officially recognized as family.

On a less weighty matter, Peters wonders how he’ll respond if the opportunity arises to attend a Marine Corps ball with his partner.

“Personally, I don’t feel a desire to go,” he said. “But maybe it’s important for my partner, given everything he’s sacrificed, for his family to be part of that community.”

“We lived not in fear of ‘the enemy’ but of our government and the fear of disclosure and discovery under this horrible policy.”

—Catherine Crisp, partner of a career Army officer

BTL Home Guide



Award-winning interior designer Jimmy Angell creates classic, unfussy but strikingly stylish rooms. Here, he lounges at his home, which he renovated in 2006. BTL photos: Andrew Potter.



Down-to-earth interior designer creates homes that are as pretty as they are practical

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

Award-winning interior designer Jimmy Angell should be more than a little full of himself. He has a booming firm and clients clamoring for his services, which range from single-room makeovers to entire house overhauls, reconstruction included.

But the in-demand designer is anything but pretentious. One of the first things clients notice about Angell is his surprisingly down-to-earth demeanor.

When he starts working with a client, "I always go to their home and I see how they live," Angell says. He looks at the whole house, to get a feel for style, space and needs. Then he zeroes in on one room, asking clients what patterns and colors they like.

"I'm pretty practical," he says, "and I want everything to be obtainable. You can flip through a magazine, and it's beautiful, but you don't want to touch anything.

"My clients really *live* in their homes. They cook, they entertain, they party. They're not real show-y. They like it to be nice, of course. But my clientele is pretty down-to-earth.



Left: In interior designer Jimmy Angell's home, it's easy to see what he favors: neutral colors, well-crafted furniture with unique details and playful texture. Right: Angell admits that he never considers his own home "finished," as he can't help but periodically tweak and update different rooms, much to his partners chagrin.

See Jimmy Angell, page 20

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► **Jimmy Angell**

Continued from p. 18

“I just must attract that kind of person,” Angell muses. “I don’t have the society client. I just don’t.”

Angell’s rooms exude an inviting sense of timeless style. They’re stylish but not trendy; they’re classy but not stuffy.

So what inspires Angell?

“I’m a huge fan of great textures and a neutral palette,” Angell says. “I just think it’s really easy to live in.”

Angell is also inspired by old European architecture. He spent some time in France this spring with his partner. “I feel like there’s so much history there, the streets are so interesting, the ironwork is so interesting,” he says. “I went around and I photographed all this window hardware, because it all had these little cast bronze faces in them.”

“The hinging, the strap work, – all those little details are so cool to me, and we don’t see them here, in our everyday life.”

“I want everything to be obtainable. You can flip through a magazine, and it’s beautiful, but you don’t want to touch anything.”

An eye for those little details comes naturally to Angell. When living in Chicago in the early 1990s, he did promotion and box office work for different theaters. But when he redecorated his flat, he received tons of compliments – and he started to feel a calling towards a career in interior design.

So Angell went back to school and finished a degree at Lawrence Technological University. He worked for design firm Perlmutter-Friewald until 2005, when he opened his own: James Douglas Interiors, named for his first two names.

His firm now operates entirely by referral. He doesn’t need to advertise; his clients happily do that for him.

‘He’s honestly in it to make people happy’

Jan Naz, who describes herself as a “happy housewife” in Port Huron, just could not figure out how to fix the living room she hated for 25 years – until she found Angell.

“He’s transformed it into something that’s unbelievable,” Naz says about her new living room.

Naz worked with other designers who were so focused on their own vision that they didn’t even ask her how the room was used or what colors she liked. Working with Angell was different. “He did it from my perspective,” Naz says, “and just showed me how to do it.”

See Jimmy Angell, page 25



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Home tour offers glimpse of gorgeous gardens, homes that could be yours to own

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

DETROIT— The Oct. 9 East English Village Home Tour is offering a glimpse of more than just pretty homes at bargain prices.

The tour also offers visitors a chance to become part of a thriving Detroit neighborhood that is determined to stay that way.

Beckie Themer, chair of the tour, has lived in the neighborhood with her husband for 24 years. “We have a really eclectic group of people that live in this neighborhood – we have all shapes, colors, sizes, you name it,” Themer said.

Kate Devlin, who has lived in the neighborhood with her wife for seven years, said one of her favorite things about the village is the active neighborhood association, which helps residents stay involved keeps the village clean and comfortable.

“It’s very community-oriented,” Themer said. “We spend a lot of time socially together, and we’re real big on helping each other.”

“I don’t think all the gay and lesbian people are going to leave Ferndale anytime soon, but I think our neighborhood could be just as cool as Ferndale.”

—Kate Devlin, who has lived in the village with her wife for seven years

While idyllic, friendly neighborhoods seem a relic of the past, the village is bent on securing its future. The neighborhood association created a crime watch, and neighbors know each other’s names. The village is nothing like the often-alienating suburbs, Themer said.

“We don’t want to be that kind of community. We want to be the kind of community that is concerned about their neighbors and knows what’s going on. If somebody is parked out in front of my house, I want to know if that car doesn’t belong there.”

Scott Teran has lived in the neighborhood since 1996. “East English Village has kept its prestige throughout the years,” he said. “The home values right now are very low, which makes it really appealing for people to come and move in.”

The village is also appealing for its architecture. “The Dutch stone masons were in here and they did the facades on most of these houses,” Themer said. “There’s limestone inserts

See Home Tour, page 25

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► Jimmy Angell

Continued from p. 20

The living room was originally dark and narrow, with fifties-esque knotty pine walls. Naz drowned herself in design shows and home magazines in hopeless attempts to fix it up herself. So what does it look like now?

Naz sighs with dreamy content: "Oh my goodness. It's formal but not formal. It's very welcoming, and you feel really comfortable in here. I just can't say enough about it."

Angell had the pine walls covered in drywall, added drapes to soften the huge windows, and recreated the fireplace in bronze-toned marble. He also guided Naz in selecting furniture and art.

Now Angell is helping Naz redo her kitchen and her family room. "I think I've learned a lot from him," Naz says. "I've learned to step outside my own comfort zone. but I don't think I'd do it without him. I don't trust myself."

But she trusts Angell: "Oh definitely. I'd let him do a room blindly. And that's saying a lot, because I'm a control freak."

"I think it's fulfilling for him," Naz says. "It's not just to say, I'm a great designer, I want to make it to the top. I think he's honestly

in it to make people happy."

"It's all what people are comfortable with," Angell says. That's why I ask those early questions. Listening is a huge part of this."

After all, he adds, it's not *his* space, it's not *his* home – it's the *client's* home.

'It's a little bit chaotic'

For Angell, who excels at intuiting clients' wants and needs, it's anyone's guess as to what's up with the DIFFA installment he created this year.

DIFFA stands for Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, and it teams up with AIDS organizations in cities across the country for an event called Dining by Design. Designers, architects and artists create installments the size of small rooms, complete with tables and chairs. National and local sponsors donate thousands of dollars to support the installments, which they eventually dine in at a fundraising gala. DIFFA has teamed up with the Michigan AIDS Coalition for its second year of the event.

Angell, who is participating for the second time, finds his installment uncharacteristically confusing, even to him.

"The floor is white, the table is white, the walls are white, the upholstery is white, and I have this great lavender and black stripe that I've cut out a fabric and I'm just running this stripe all over the place," he says.

"It's got right angles, and it kind of symbolizes a journey. It's on the walls, across the floor, over the upholstery, comes up over the table, it's kind of maze-like. It's a little bit chaotic. It's just not... me."

Maybe he's embracing chaos in one of his few opportunities to be whimsical. Or maybe the chaos reminds him of his business right now. "We are really busy here," Angell admits.

Angell can't predict what exactly is in store for his design firm, other than to say "I'm having some growing pains, and I have some decisions to make."

Until then, he says, he'll keep doing the best work he can do. As if anyone had any doubt.

"My clients really *live* in their homes. They cook, they entertain, they party. They're not real show-y."

► Home Tour

Continued from p. 23

and different colors of red brick and it's beautiful. Most of the homes are very well-built. Every one of them is different, too." Homes range in size from 1200 to 3500 sq. feet.

The neighborhood is a testament to Detroit's potential, said Themer. "I think in order to have a city thrive you have to have viable neighborhoods – and I mean the ones in the city, I'm not talking about the suburbs.

"(The neighborhoods) have to be safe. They have to be places where people want to be. And I think if we can encourage that and we can make this an enjoyable place to live, well, I think that will be better for Detroit and the whole southeastern Michigan in general."

"When they talk about making Detroit into smaller, echo-villages, when they talk about this whole transformation, I have mixed feelings about it," Devlin said. "But if the neighborhoods were to become more like villages, I think this would be an awesome village to live in."

"I don't think all the gay and lesbian people are going to leave Ferndale anytime soon," Devlin added, "but I think our neighborhood could be just as cool as Ferndale."

The village is working with the Detroit Land Bank, which is buying up old homes and renovating them with federal funds, and Project 14, which is Detroit Mayor Dave Bing's effort to attract more police, fire and city workers back into Detroit neighborhoods.

The tour showcases four homes and gardens, but 18 properties are available for purchase. Real estate companies and a local bank will also be available at the tour. There's no pressure to buy, Themer stressed. "We just wanted to make sure that if people wanted information, they'd be able to get it," she said. "We really, really, really want this neighborhood full again."

The tour, which is free, takes place from 1-5 p.m. on Oct. 9, starting at 4240 Kensington Ave. in Detroit.

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Lady Bunny: And I Am Telling You...



This drag queen's not going anywhere – even after a dildo incident and hair accident

BY ANDREA POTEET

What does a drag queen do for Labor Day? If you're New York City drag icon Lady Bunny, not much. "New York really shuts down over Labor Day," she says in her sugary southern drawl. "So maybe everyone else was invited to barbecues. Maybe they looked at my waistline and decided I didn't warrant an invitation."

It's an uncharacteristically quiet holiday weekend for Bunny, who for more than 20 years presided over Wigstock, the city's preeminent outdoor drag festival that drew more than 30,000 people in its heyday and inspired the 1995 documentary of the same name before a run of bad weather led to its ultimate cancellation.

"We got rained out two years in a row, and there's nothing sadder than a soggy drag queen," Bunny says. "It led to some very bad hair days. When you are looking out at the audience after your number and they're not clapping and then you realize they are holding umbrellas... we just decided to end it."

Born Jon Ingle in 1962 in Chattanooga, Tenn., Bunny says she was obsessed with drag queens from her first encounter, while sneaking into a bar at 13, but never pictured the path her life would take.

"I was mesmerized, it was somewhat inevitable," she says. "I was college-aged during the time that punk and New Wave were popular, so I was experimenting with androgynous eye makeup, but not fully in drag. There was just something in me that was saying, 'Go further. Add a wig. Add heels.' I never sat down and said, 'I'm going to be Lady Bunny and she's going to have big wigs and wear mini dresses.' It just kind of happened."

After spending time in Atlanta where she roomed with none other than drag legend RuPaul, she moved to New York in her 20s and quickly became inspired by the drag queens she saw at the East Village's Pyramid Club.

"Down South I had only seen queens who were lip synching to Patti LaBelle, Barbra Streisand, etc.," she says. "The queens at the pyramid were writing their own original music. They were impersonating people like Mona Lisa. And I thought, 'This scene is incredible, it's so creative and I think that I need to showcase these performers to a wider audience.' And it turned out that my instinct was right."

Since the last Wigstock in 2005, Bunny has kept busy, lending her trademark wit and mile-high bleached blond wigs to Logo Channel's "RuPaul's Drag U," where she serves as Dean of Drag. She's also turned up on Comedy Central's roast of Pamela Anderson (where she quipped that she and Courtney Love were the evening's two scheduled "boner breaks") and regularly deejays, contributes to Star Magazine's "Worst of the Week" fashion column and performs at gay bars across the country, blending stand-up with risqué song parodies and her unique brand of "fast-paced drag craziness."

She'll bring her show to Hamtramck's Ice nightclub Oct. 1, and promises the appearance will be a far cry from her last in the Detroit area.

"I don't remember the name of the venue, but it was a blast," she says. "But it wasn't in the best neighborhood. There was a supermarket advertising pigs' feet. You know you're not in the best neighborhood when pigs' feet are on the menu."

The menu for Bunny's live shows usually include hearty helpings of raunchy jokes, which she said contributed to one of her worst bombing moments when her show at a Gay Pride festival in the Bible Belt was mistakenly labeled "all ages."

"Someone sent me a picture," she says. "I was dangling a dildo from my crotch and in the front row there was a little girl sitting on her dad's shoulders with her face a couple feet away from the dildo...I don't want to be the Typhoid Mary that shuts down Gay Pride in Richmond, Va."

Most of the time, though, Bunny isn't bombing. She's a hit among crowds who are...well...bombed.

"Generally speaking, I perform in gay bars so they are open to dirty material and they've normally had a few drinks," Bunny

See Lady Bunny, page 30

MSU extracts poetry from ashes of 9/11

Two East Lansing shows recall pivotal moment in history

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

EAST LANSING – Ask any adult today what they were doing on Sept. 11, 2001 and the stories will start to flow. Everyone has one the way everyone in the previous generation knew where they were when they heard Kennedy was shot.

A decade ago, the answers were even more raw. The Theatre Department at Michigan State University is probing the theatricality and humanity of those memories in a pair of plays that were written during the six months following the terrorist attacks. Both draw upon the memories of people who experienced the events, but do so in two distinct styles.

“What Happened: The September 11 Testimony Project” takes the form of a documentary, as every word in the play comes from a transcript of people interviewed in the six months after the event. “Return to the Upright Position” was an online collaboration of artists that produced a poetic remembrance.

Wes Haskell, who is making his directorial debut with “What Happened,” was 15 when the planes were hijacked and used as suicide bombs. Growing up in South Dakota, he was in an earlier time zone and was just heading to school for a jazz band rehearsal.

“My neighbor who was in his 70s and was never a very social man – especially toward me a teenager – saw me coming out to my car and he ran out to the deck and said, ‘Did you hear what happened?’ He said the World Trade Center got hit. I didn’t even know what that was,” Haskell said. “I got to school and our teachers wouldn’t allow us to watch it. In my geometry class, the teacher finally said, ‘I think we need to watch this.’ He turned it on the big screen and it was right when people started jumping out of the building.”

Haskell, who is a third-year M.F.A. in Acting student, said most of the 19 students he is directing were ages 9 through 14 at the time, which has made research an important preparatory element for this production.

“They’ve had a hard time connecting with it because they don’t remember much. They were old enough to understand, but not really grasp.”

The research they’ve done – talking to survivors and those who witnessed the events that



Delvon Roe and Casey Shipman in “Return to the Upright Position.” Photo: Emily Young

‘What Happened: The September 11 Testimony Project’ & ‘Return to the Upright Position’

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day – bears great similarity to how the playwright Amy Green originally created the work. A theater professor at a law school in New York City, she returned to class on Sept. 13 and observed how gray all of her students were and that everyone was still in a state of shock. She told each of her students to find a first responder or a citizen who was at the site and interview them. They were given tape recorders and told to ask a single question and then shut up. That single question was, “What happened?”

The responses were transcribed and turned into a series of monologues and testimonies similar to “The Laramie Project.”

“Everyone has a story,” said Haskell. “These are just transcriptions of people’s testimonies of what happened, yet it is so poetic and beautiful. The stories are beautiful and tragic.”

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► Lady Bunny

Continued from p. 29

says. “Even drugs, occasionally...I’m told.”

It’s not just chemically-enhanced clubbers who adore Lady Bunny; her appearances have led to run-ins with childhood idols like “I Dream of Jeannie’s” Barbara Eden – who once complimented her hairdo – and Charo, who appeared as a judge on “Drag U.”

“I actually got her on video saying (adopts accent), ‘Lady Bunny is the biggest puta in the United States,’” she says. “Some people have their childhood videotapes... but I have Charo saying, ‘Lady Bunny’s the biggest whore in the United States.’”

When the last season of “Drag U” wrapped in April, she left with more than a record of Charo’s sendoff.

“RuPaul turned me on to this really strong adhesive to glue the wig on, and it sure did

work,” she says. “When I pulled it off, some of it had gotten into my own hair and pulled it out, so I have an idiotic reverse widow’s peak now. We stopped taping in April, and it’s grown like 1.5 inches since then.”

Looking back, she says that even though the festival she helped create has peaked, she still hasn’t.

“I guess everyone would say Wigstock (was my biggest accomplishment) because it ran for 20 years and it really did kind of cement the gay community and it was a bit of a New York City institution,” she says. “That’s what most people would say. I would say you ain’t seen it yet.”

Though she describes herself as a “seasoned” drag queen, she says she’s not ready to hang up her wig yet.

“I don’t know how to do anything else,” she says. “Luckily I’m in comedy, so looks are not important.”

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From Stork to Finish

'Daddy Long Legs' strides into the Gem

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

Who doesn't love a tale about a plucky orphan prevailing? Oliver Twist, Anne of Green Gables, Homer Wells (John Irving's "The Cider House Rules") – each the hero of a popular book, not to mention a movie, a musical and/or a stage play. They had tough childhoods, but for every one of them the sun came out tomorrow.

So it goes for Jerusha Abbott, heroine of "Daddy Long Legs," the newish two-actor musical based on Jean Webster's oft-filmed 1912 novel about a young woman and the mysterious benefactor who pays for her college education, the man she calls Daddy Long Legs because she has never seen him, only his elongated shadow.

Written and directed by John Caird (co-director of "Les Miserables"), "Daddy Long Legs" is something of an orphan itself. Born in 2009, it has played in California, Ohio, Illinois and now Michigan as it hopes, according to its publicity, for a home on Broadway.

Broadway seems unlikely for a little musical with only two actors and a score (by Paul Gordon) that advances the story but is short on enticing melodies or memorable lyrics. Still, if Oliver, Anne, Homer and Jerusha have taught us anything, it's to never bet against a plucky orphan.

And "Daddy Long Legs" is such a cuddly kitten of a show that one wants it to succeed. (Set your sights on



Kevin Earley and Christy Altomare star in "Daddy Long Legs" at The Gem Theatre. Photo: Santa Fabio

REVIEW

Daddy Long Legs

The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit.
Wednesday-Sunday through Nov. 20.
\$34.50-44.50. 313-963-9800.

www.gemtheatre.com

off-Broadway, Daddy.) The story is so appealing that it's approaching 100 years of popularity. She's poor and lonely; he's rich and lonely; she's an aspiring writer; he's a voracious reader; he's a lot younger than she thinks. You see where this is going.

The two performers, Christy Altomare and Kevin Earley, are terrific. The plot covers four years, from Jerusha's last days at the John Grier Home for

Orphans through her college graduation. Jerusha grows to full adulthood, a transition Altomare plays so subtly that you don't realize it as it's happening.

Jervis, the man Jerusha calls Daddy Long Legs, experiences a different kind of growth, a kind of emotional thaw as he understands he'll have to open up to escape his life of loneliness. Earley handles the transition with delicacy. Both actors have glorious voices and harmonize with particular precision.

Well-suited to family audiences, "Daddy Long Legs" ought to appeal to the same pre- and early teen girls who've made "Wicked" such a hit wherever it plays.

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

'Love Song' poses interesting questions

BY JOHN QUINN

John Kolvenbach's comedy, "Love Song," is a deceptive little work. Superficially it appears a run-of-the-mill, boy-meets-girl retread. Yet under a layer of outrageous characters and an overreliance on obscenity and repetition for comic effect, there is a powerful exploration of the human condition and its greatest motivation – the need to love and be loved. It's getting an outing at Broadway Onstage in Eastpointe.

Premiering in 2006 at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre, "Love Song" is a comic challenge of reality. It moves between the reclusive, depressed Beane (John Arden McClure) and his sister and her husband, Joan and Harry (Beth Ducey and Ed Schneider), a stressed couple who may be too busy to offer Beane any real help. Beane comes home to his bleak, Spartan flat to find it has been burglarized. What's more, the burglar is still there. Molly is one more oddball character to add to actress Sharron Nelson's resume; she has played a number of them for Broadway Onstage. Molly has stayed to confront the hapless Beane for not having anything worth stealing. Molly is not so much cat-burglar as revolutionary, using

theft as a personal vendetta against the system. Beane is smitten. Finding the free spirit, Molly brings him out of his shell, and his exuberance rubs off on Joan and Harry.

The second act opens to an offbeat scene that sets the theme for the play. The newly emancipated Harry and Joan play "hooky" from work and rekindle their waning romance. The love play is exactly that – "play." They indulge in imaginary cigarettes, imaginary booze, imaginary drugs and have a ball doing it. The question arises: Are the things that make us happy necessarily real? Or can we will ourselves to happiness?

While the tempo sometimes flags in this production, it helps an audience catch up with the tremendous amount of material to digest. Under the direction of Dennis Wickline, the cast brings a competence and certainty to the characters, each nicely tapping into

REVIEW

Love Song

Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Rd.,
Eastpointe. Friday-Saturday through Oct. 8.
\$16. 586-771-6333.

www.broadwayonstage.com



Sharron Nelson as Molly and John Arden McClure as Beane in "Love Song." Photo: Broadway Onstage

a wealth of subtext. In addition, the split-personality set, presumably Mr. Wickline's design, is an apt metaphor for the rather schizophrenic characters appearing on it.

If "Love Song" is not a great play, it's a good enough play. One can't be reminded often enough of the transformative power of love. The Broadway Onstage production is a diverting evening of entertainment.

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

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RTM Happenings

Editor's Picks

Outings

Detroit Restaurant Week returns Sept. 23 through Oct. 2 with over 20 of the city's premier establishments. Participating restaurants will offer special three-course dinners throughout the week at a discounted price of \$28 per person.

During last spring's restaurant week, nearly 37,000 people dined at participating establishments. Since its inception two years ago, more than 120,000 people have participated and at least 2.1 million sales have been generated for participating restaurants. This weeklong event can serve as a superb economic boost for the independent businesses of Detroit, as well as the city itself.

DRW is a collaboration of the Greater Downtown Districts and Paxahau Event Productions. The \$28 price does not include drinks, tax or gratuity. For more information, including a complete list of participating restaurants, go to Detroitrestaurantweek.com



Music & More



Latin pop music singer Enrique Iglesias, who Billboard named "King of Dance," has had two number one hits on the Billboard Hot 100, won five American Music Awards and a Grammy. His "Euphoria Tour" has taken him across the U.S., Canada and Europe this year alone.

Initially the biggest seller of Spanish-language albums of the '90s, Iglesias has become one of the world's biggest pop stars, selling over 100 million records worldwide, blowing up radio stations and creating quite the gay following along the way. In 2007, Iglesias even pulled up a male fan on stage and sang his hit ballad "Hero" to him in London's G.A.Y. nightclub. When Chicago Pride asked what the difference was between his gay fans and straight

girl fans he replied, "That they're guys! That would be the biggest difference. For me, fans are fans."

Iglesias performs with special guests Pitbull and Prince Royce at 7 p.m. Sept. 30 at the Palace of Auburn Hills, 6 Championship Drive. Tickets are \$19.50-\$89.50. Visit palace.net for more information.

Theater

Tickets are on sale now for the East Lansing premiere engagement of the Tony, Grammy and Olivier Award-winning hit musical "Jersey Boys," the story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons, playing Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall from Sept. 28 through Oct. 16.

Directed by two-time Tony Award-winner Des McAnuff, "Jersey Boys" won the 2006 Tony Award for Best Musical, the 2006 Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album, the 2009 Olivier Award for Best New Musical, the 2010 Helpmann Award for Best Musical (Australia), and continues to break box-office records on Broadway and across North America. As of Jan. 30, "Jersey Boys" worldwide has grossed over \$1 billion dollars and been seen by approximately 12 million people.

Tickets for "Jersey Boys" begin at \$35 and are on sale at the Auto-Owners Ticket Office at Wharton Center, online at whartoncenter.com or by calling 1-800-WHARTON.



OUTINGS

Thursday, Sep. 22

Voices, 4:30 p.m. The voices of the lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender or questioning homeless youth will be heard and celebrated at the Ruth Ellis Centers annual benefit, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. Tickets to Voices are \$175 for VIP, which includes a private reception at 5:30 p.m. and exhibition tour \$125 for the main reception at 6 p.m. with spoken word performances and a silent auction. \$50 for guests under 30. Ruth Ellis Center, 4454 Woodward Ave, **Detroit**. 313-252-1950. Ruthelliscenter.org

Dining by Design-Cocktails by Design/ Artworks Auction, 6 p.m. Spectacular designs from Detroit's design community, showcasing local talent and raising fundraiser for HIV/AIDS services and education organizations in the nation. \$100 admission to the auction includes cocktails, live entertainment, 25 local chefs and over 100 original works of art for auction. Michigan AIDS Coalition and DIFFA, 441 West Canfield, **Detroit**. 248-545-1435. MichiganAIDScoalition.org

Ladies Night Out, 6 p.m. Over 40 retail shops participating, in events, wine tastings, discounts, sales and more. Several restaurants offering drinks and appetizers. Go to roarevents.info for list of participating shops and coupons. Various Venues, **Royal Oak**. Roarevents.info

Friday, Sep. 23

Dining by Design-Party by Design, 6 p.m. Spectacular designs from Detroit's design community, showcasing local talent and raising fundraiser for HIV/AIDS services and education organizations in the nation. \$10 admission to an evening after party with cash bar, food, entertainment and dancing. Michigan AIDS Coalition and DIFFA, 441 West Canfield, **Detroit**. 248-545-1435. MichiganAIDScoalition.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film-Salt. After she's accused of being a Russian sleeper spy, rogue CIA agent Evelyn Salt goes on the run, using every tactic, accent and disguise she knows to elude her pursuers, clear her name and protect her husband. Affirmations, 290 W. Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Sep. 24

Know Us Project, 1 p.m. KUP conversations are about telling personal stories about what it has been like to experience discrimination, bias, prejudice or even hate crimes. No cost for attendees. PFLAG, 3333 Coolidge Hwy, **Troy**. 248-981-4227. NewsEditor@pflagdetroit.org mpipp.org/kup-information.htm

Partnerships in Parenting, 1 p.m. Promoting the importance of relationship and family development for LGBTQ parents and their children. Seeking to build a stronger connection between parents and children through social networking and community outreach. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 734-574-5953. GoAffirmations.org

Dining by Design-Gala Dinner, 6 p.m. Spectacular designs from Detroit's design community, showcasing local talent and raising fundraiser for HIV/AIDS services and education organizations in the nation. \$250 admission. Limited seating, silent auction, dinner and appetizers provided by the Matt Prentice Restaurant Group. Live entertainment and complimentary valet parking. Michigan AIDS Coalition and DIFFA, 441 West Canfield, **Detroit**. 248-545-1435. MichiganAIDScoalition.org

World Music Dance Party, 6:30 p.m. Celebrating diversity and support for the Jim Toy Center that serves the Ann Arbor area's LGBT Community. Tickets sold online, by phone at 734-424-2797 or at the door. Admission: \$10 each or two tickets for \$15. Jim Toy Center and Interweave of UUAA, 4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, **Ann Arbor**. 734-424-2797. Carole777@aol.com jimtoycenter.org

2nd Annual Red Party, 9 p.m. Raising money in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Red attire suggested. Wristbands cost \$10, which permits access to four venues. Michigan Pride & LAAN, Esquire Bar, Turner St.; Grand Cafe, 201 E. Grand River Ave.; Spiral Dance Bar, 1247 Center St.; and Rave Barn across from Spiral, **Lansing**. Michiganpride.org

Sunday, Sep. 25

Lezread, 4 p.m. Ann Arbor's book group for Lesbians. Meets the last Sunday of every month. Lezread, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. lezread@yahoo.com

The Conversation Station

4 p.m. Discussion Group with facilitator for LGBTQ and allies age 25+. New topic e-mailed in advance to all who request to be added to the group notification. Topic: Is an emotional affair harmful to a relationship? (i.e., online affairs, or flirting—any behavior that does not involve physical touching). LGBT Group, 110 S Main St, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciLWilliams@yahoo.com

Monday, Sep. 26

Out Loud Chorus, New Member Night for the winter concert season. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. All are welcome—LGBT & allies. No sight-reading skills are required! Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Trinity Lutheran Church, 1400 West Stadium Blvd, **Ann Arbor**. 734-265-0740. Olconline.org

Wednesday, Sep. 28

Ladies Who Lunch, 11:30 a.m. Ladies meet at Nina's Cafe for food and conversation. Contact Angie to make a reservation. The Resource Center, 1710 W. Main St., **Kalamazoo**. Kglrc.org

Friday, Sep. 30

KGLRC Wine and Cheese Mixer, 6 p.m. Celebrating a new direction for the KGLRC. Meet new staff members and socialize over snacks and beverages. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film- Better than Chocolate. Scant hours before her uptight mother and brother move in with her, Maggie meets the woman of her dreams. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Oct. 1

Allies and the Road to Inclusion, 2 p.m. Workshop to explore questions such as "How have our allies been critical in the struggle for the recognition of the equality of people who are transgender, bisexual, lesbian and gay? How can our allies be encouraged to claim their place in this struggle?" Looking at the roles of allies in the movement toward greater inclusion within Christian churches. Panel includes Rev. Matthew Bode, Valerie Brader, Linda and Ryan Haywood, Rev. Ellen Acton and Linda and Tom Karle Nelson. Oasis Ministry Workshop, 306 N. Division St., **Ann Arbor**. 734-846-3578. jsummers@umich.edu

Sunday, Oct. 2

Fashioning Our Future, 2 p.m. Affirmations is looking for models to participate in their first fall fashion show. Models (Over 21) of all shape and size will be responsible for collecting pledges to support affirmations and the "Campaign for the Future." Tickets are available online. For more information e-mail JSimpson@Goaffirmations.org. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

GOAL Book Club, 4 p.m. October's book choice: "Moo" by Jane Smiley. GOAL, 515 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. Getoutandlive.me

HARC provided HIV/AIDS testing, 5 p.m. Jim Toy Community Center and HARC, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. HivAidsresource.org/hiv-testing

Tantric Energy Touch Workshop, 6 p.m. Leslie Blackburn led workshop-guiding exploration of energy through breath, sound, touch and movement. Women, men, singles or couples of any sexual and gender identity are welcome and encouraged. Registration: \$30 for individuals, \$50 for couples. Mystery School of the Temple Arts, Location details upon registration, **Dearborn**. 313-269-6719. Dakini@MysterySchooloftheTempleArts.com and onespaceconnected.com

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Michigan State University College of Music "Symphony Orchestra" Kevin Noe conducts Brahms' Concerto in D major for violin and orchestra and Stravinsky's La Sacre du Printemps. Tickets: \$10 general, \$8 seniors, free to students with ID. Cobb Great Hall, 1 Wharton Center Dr., East Lansing. 8 p.m. Sep. 23. 517-432-2000. Music.msu.edu

Michigan State University College of Music Walter Verdehr, Ralph Votapek and Suren Bagratuni perform a faculty recital. Beethoven's Sonata No. 4, Charles Ives Sonata No. 2, Schubert's Rondo in A major, Brahms' B major piano trio. Tickets: \$10 general, \$8 senior, free to students with ID. Music Building Auditorium, West Circle Drive at MSU's Grand River Avenue Parking Ramp, Lansing. 7:30 p.m. Sep. 27. 517-353-5340. Music.msu.edu

COMEDY

Olympia Entertainment Chris Tucker's comedic timing genius and signature voice. Chris Tucker hits Detroit during his 20 date stand-up tour. Tickets: \$45.50-75.50. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 1. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

The Ark Fleet Foxes with special guests The Walkmen. Tickets: \$34. Hill Auditorium, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sep. 29. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark Patrizio Buanne Tickets: \$25. Hill Auditorium, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sep. 26. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark Ollabelle Tickets: \$20. Hill Auditorium, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sep. 29. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

CONCERTS

Joe Louis Arena "How Sweet The Sound" Largest gospel celebration of the year. \$13-18. Joe Louis Arena, 19 Steve Yzerman Drive, Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Sep. 24. 313-396-7000. Olympiaentertainment.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Freddie Cole Quartet" Younger brother of Nat King Cole performs piano and vocalists of a classic jazz quartet. Tickets: \$35-20. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Sep. 23, 9:30 p.m. Sep. 23. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre Tommy Emmanuel tickets: \$39.50. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Sep. 24. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre Dream Theater Tickets: \$39.50. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Oct. 3. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark Mavis Staples tours for recently released a new album, "You Are Not Alone," produced by fellow Chicagoan Jeff Tweedy at Wilco's studio The Loft. Fund raises for The Ark. Tickets: \$50-\$500. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 6 p.m. Sep. 23. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark Eileen Jewell Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. July 21, 8 p.m. Sep. 21. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

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BTL Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

He sees something in me that I don't

Q. I think I have a question that I've never seen before in your column. I've been bothered by this since early summer, and I can't seem to get over it.

My boyfriend "Sam" and I have been together for a year and a half. Everything is going really well. I have absolutely no complaints, but I can't understand why he would choose me as his boyfriend! I'm probably a "seven" on the scale of one-to-10 when it comes to looks. As far as body type is concerned, I'm not exactly flabby but not what you'd call muscular or toned, either.

The reason I'm feeling insecure these days is that, for one thing, Sam is at least a nine-plus; he's toned, muscular, and has a great personality. Up until June I was just feeling lucky to have gotten such a catch as Sam, not really thinking about how I might be over my head, like he was way too hot for me.

What happened, you might ask? Well, I went to a party and saw Sam's ex. (Sam moved to my city two years ago.) We went back to his former city for the party. When I met his ex-boyfriend, "Jon," I couldn't believe it. He was hot – really hot. He could have been on the cover of a men's fitness magazine. He had a great career, fantastic house (the party was held there; he was hosting a birthday party for a friend of his and Sam's), and a very expensive car. He absolutely has it all! And, he's still single; he and Sam broke up two and a half years ago. They had been together for three years.

That's when my insecurity hit the panic button. First, I thought that Jon would hit on Sam, and that's why we were invited, but that didn't happen. At least I couldn't see Sam being at all interested in Jon, or Jon interested in Sam. Sam talked to Jon, but mostly he talked to his other friends. Sam always introduced me, and was even affectionate with me much of the time there. He didn't seem at all like he was ashamed of me, actually quite the opposite when I think about it.

I really don't get why Sam chose me when he could land so much more. I'm sorry I ever

went to that party and met his ex-boyfriend. I guess I was in la-la land before then. Can you give me a clue why he'd settled for me and not someone like his ex?

Everyday Joe

A. You are forgetting that Jon is Sam's ex. Sam quite possibly feels that Jon wasn't all that great, or at least, not the kind of partner that he wanted in life. By your description of how you were treated by Sam at the party, it sure seems to me that he is very happy and proud of having you as his boyfriend. I wonder why that is not evident enough that Sam wants to be with you.

You are assuming that a person's looks is what attraction is all about, though it's certainly a factor – more so with some people than others. However, there are so many other factors, such as personality traits and interests that draw one person to another. Chemistry between two people is a complicated thing and difficult to figure out.

Perhaps your insecurity would be lessened if you were to find out from Sam what qualities attracted him to you. You could do this by telling him what you love about him, and then ask what it is about you that attracts him; doing this will help you understand why he chose you, and should help you appreciate what you have to offer Sam.

If you would like to know more about why people are attracted to each other, 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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BTL Horoscopes

You can relax, Leo!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mars entering Leo inflates energy and egos, and trine to Uranus in Aries, will lead to unexpected results. Stubborn assertion will lead to wacky disasters. Be bold, but adaptive and humble for best results.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): You want to have fun, but work demands your time and energy. Getting boisterous only upsets things and exposes resentments. It doesn't matter if they're jealous of your brilliance. You have to get along! Focus your energies productively.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Be as productive as possible while your discipline and drive are especially sharp. Worries about the future and pre-occupation with details are distractions. Just stay the course; keep putting one foot in front of the other.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): It is the social season and you're going to be in greater demand soon. Fix up your home now so it will be ready for company then. Friends' one-upmanship throw you off your game. Maybe you should throw those "friends."

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Social opportunities abound. You may expect to be happier at home with just a few of your dearest and nearest, and some of your favorite recipes, but get out and develop connections. They'll serve you well!

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Your state of mind is likely to change more than your finances, but yes, you can relax! Or can you? Your energy is cranking up and could lead you into interesting adventures. Look for new ideas and experiences, not arguments!

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Self-consciousness can lead you to fashion disasters. Play around with a new look where nobody – except perhaps a friend you can really trust – has to see it, just so you can be satisfied that it is indeed wrong for you.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Recent domestic victories can make you cocky. Better to offer an olive branch and build reconciliation. Be mature and take the long view. You can afford to be big. Don't dread the cake with all those candles. Focus on accomplishments and goals.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): You can count on your friends to help you get ahead, but who are your friends really? Keep your eyes open to colleagues who might double-cross you. Don't worry: A rude surprise can prove a blessing in disguise.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): It takes teamwork to get anything accomplished, so be very attentive to friends and colleagues who can make or break your efforts. They're inclined to support you, but they want the credit they deserve, and generally deserve the credit they want.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Focus on your career and getting ahead. Recent struggles are over and you can focus on your goals with little interference. The boss is about to take notice and is likely to be very supportive. Just let your work speak for itself.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Connect with older, well-educated people. Don't be shy. You could learn a lot and get a clearer idea of your direction in life. You can't help but to say the wrong thing to your partner, but it should work out for the better.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Even sweet, affable chatter can get annoying and silence can arouse suspicions. Staying between the extremes is often your biggest challenge. Lean to the quiet side. Letting them wonder will arouse more interest in you.

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

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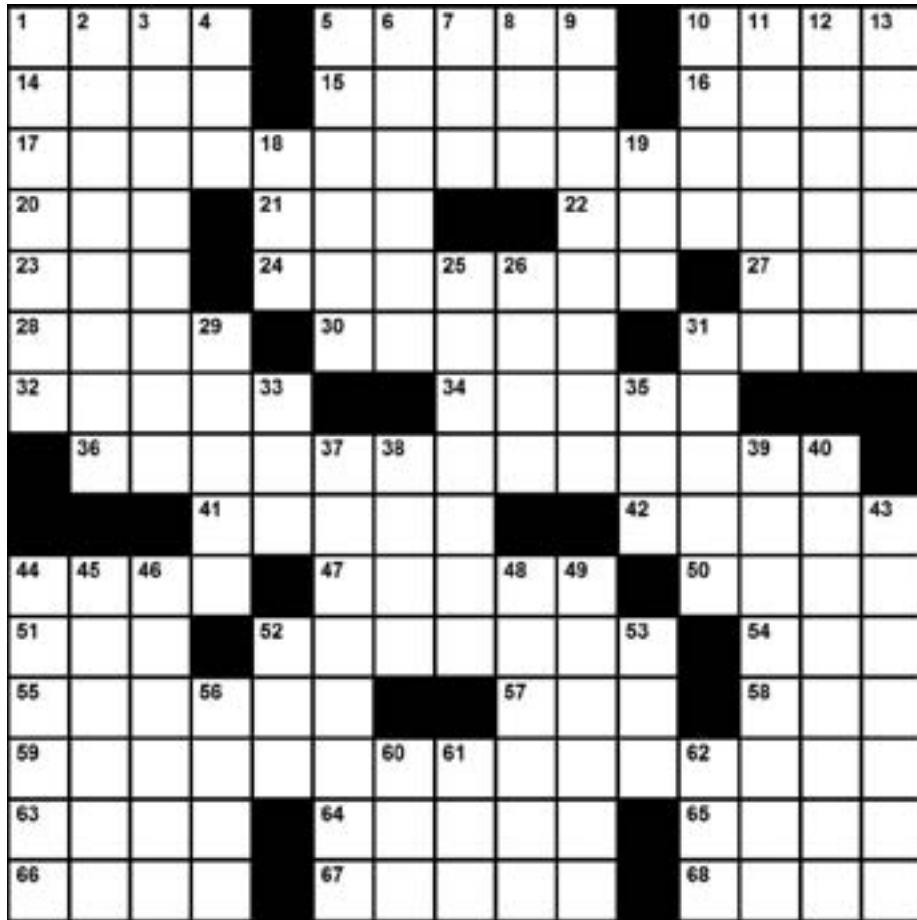
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Solution to puzzle from page 36

D	I	S	C	S	N	O	O	P	R	A	T	A		
A	N	E	W	C	A	P	R	I	I	R	A	N		
W	H	A	T	M	A	T	T	E	R	S	M	O	S	T
D	E	S	A	R	I	A	S	S	U	M	E			
L	A	C	C	A	V	E	A	T	S	S	A	E		
E	L	A	M	B	E	N	J	I	L	E	N	D		
S	T	P	A	T	C	A	N	D	O					
H	E	L	L	O	G	O	R	G	E	O	U	S		
A	C	T	O	R	O	I	L	E	R					
A	S	H	Y	T	R	E	S	S	E	T	R	E		
L	E	E	T	O	Y	S	H	O	P	I	V	S		
I	N	A	J	A	M	I	W	O	M	A	I			
B	A	R	B	R	A	S	T	R	E	I	S	A	N	D
I	T	S	A	N	E	V	E	R	E	T	T	E		
S	E	E	R	S	C	A	R	S	P	A	S	S		



Funny Girl

Across

- 1 Junior Vasquez is this kind of jockey
- 5 Stick your nose in
- 10 ___-tat
- 14 From the top
- 15 Old Mercury
- 16 Neighbor of Pakistan
- 17 64th album of 59-Across
- 20 Chef Traci ___ Jardins
- 21 Cardinals, on scoreboards
- 22 "___ the position!"
- 23 Erie, to fifty million Frenchmen
- 24 Warnings
- 27 Motor oil can letters
- 28 Jack of old Westerns
- 30 Zach Braff in "Broken Hearts Club"
- 31 Do a banker's job
- 32 Patron of Wilde's homeland, briefly
- 34 Is capable, like a horse in "Guys and Dolls"

- 36 Upcoming biography of 59-Across
- 41 Thespian
- 42 Lube user?
- 44 Pale gray
- 47 Part of a drag queen's wig
- 50 French 101 verb
- 51 Appomattox signatory
- 52 Where to buy a top
- 54 Dr. George O'Malley has them inserted
- 55 Up the creek
- 57 Pacific battle site, in brief
- 58 Spring month for Vivien Australia
- 59 Gay icon for nearly half a century
- 63 "___ shame"
- 64 "Over my dead body!"
- 65 Luncheon ending
- 66 One who gazes at crystal balls
- 67 "Leaves a mark on
- 68 Overture to a split end?

Down

- 1 Screws around
- 2 Wedding vow phrase
- 3 Albee Pulitzer Prize work
- 4 100 lbs.
- 5 Amulet for Antony's girlfriend
- 6 Like one's own tongue
- 7 Make a choice
- 8 Prospector's find
- 9 Jack Sparrow activity
- 10 Hoops for the New York Liberty
- 11 Turn on
- 12 Explorer of southern Australia
- 13 Chipped in
- 18 Britten's raincoat
- 19 Teakettle sound
- 25 Broadway cries of "More! More!"
- 26 Open a crack
- 29 Asia's ___ Peninsula
- 31 One under a captain
- 33 Gentle handling, initially
- 35 God of Gaius
- 37 Big footstools
- 38 Like slasher films
- 39 "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" and others
- 40 Slaves, to a master
- 43 A liver does this
- 44 Cover stories
- 45 Place to turn pages?
- 46 _Six Feet Under_ auto
- 48 Third Reich chronicler Willia
- 49 They scatter their seed afar
- 52 It gets laid in the street
- 53 Waikiki paste
- 56 Type of ski lift
- 60 Debussy's dry
- 61 Some dam govt. project
- 62 30-day mo.

Solution on 35

Pet of the Week



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BTL Cocktail Chatter

Pernod and Roses

BY ED SIKOV

"I went out with Jennifer and the gals last night," Ramona said just before she dug into her salad Niceoise. A little bistro had opened on West 18th Street - *Le Quai à Nice*. All very lovely and evocative, until Ramona made a face after tasting the tuna. She shrugged and took another bite. "We went to that awful 'Kittens' place in Soho on Saturday. Blechhh! Lily wanted to go. Never again. Anyway, for the first time in like forever I got really wasted. Margaritas." She leaned toward me confidentially. "So I did something I never did before: I took the bus home!" "So?" I said. "Well, I made it home safely, which was surprising, since I never drove a bus before."

She spread out her arms in a "ta-da!" gesture, which caused me to laugh so abruptly that I choked on a bit of frisee and briefly wondered if Ramona could be trusted to actually *perform* the Heimlich maneuver rather than just take my gagging literally - as a gag. The joke was pure Ramona. I've adored her for 35 years.

"So Mo," I said. "What am I going to do about Dan?"

"Dan who?" It's not that she didn't like my partner. She was just wildly jealous of him. If I hadn't come out during our senior year in college, I'd have married Ramona. She was stunned and hurt by my big revelation, which I accomplished involuntarily when Mo caught me getting blown by an all-but-blind physics major. After the operatic and very public first week (the spectators being the entire student body of Haverford College, the opera reminiscent of *Lucia di Lammermoor*), she recovered quickly. Her rampant sex drive saw to that. She didn't exactly set out to plow her way through the soccer team, but she didn't leave many guys out in the cold. Her mother hasn't spoken to me since.

"Come on, Mo," I said. "This isn't funny." New York State had just legalized same-sex marriage when Dan stopped speaking to me over my fling with Jack Fogg. The timing wasn't ironic. It felt more like inescapable fate - dark and portentous, kind of like Oedipus but without me screwing my mother and gouging my eyes out.

"Guiltyflora.com?" She smirked at her own wit. I giggled.

"Please?" I begged.

"OK," she said through a mouthful of green beans. "Here's whatcha do. One night when he's at home working into the wee hours, get out of bed, go to the secret place where you've hidden a dozen red roses - *long stem*; you'll look bad if you cut corners - and surprise him. Be naked. It's both sexy and abject, both of which you are." She forked another bunch of beans and delivered them to her still-chewing mouth. "Mmm, 'n get down on one knee. Act chivalrous."

So I did. I hid the roses in a vase in the closet where I keep my toolbox; I's bet his life he'd never go in there. Naked, I offered my apology, roses and love to my life partner, and he accepted it. I also brought out a bottle of Pernod and two glasses. Then we... well, it's actually too personal to write about, even for me.

Pernod, the legendary anise-flavored *aperitif*, is mixed with a little water and served in what are called *longdrink glasses* - tall liqueur glasses that flare out beautifully at the top. I bought ours on eBay. I remember the items' description vividly: "Rare and Superb Pernod Glasses." I got two for \$1.98 each plus shipping.



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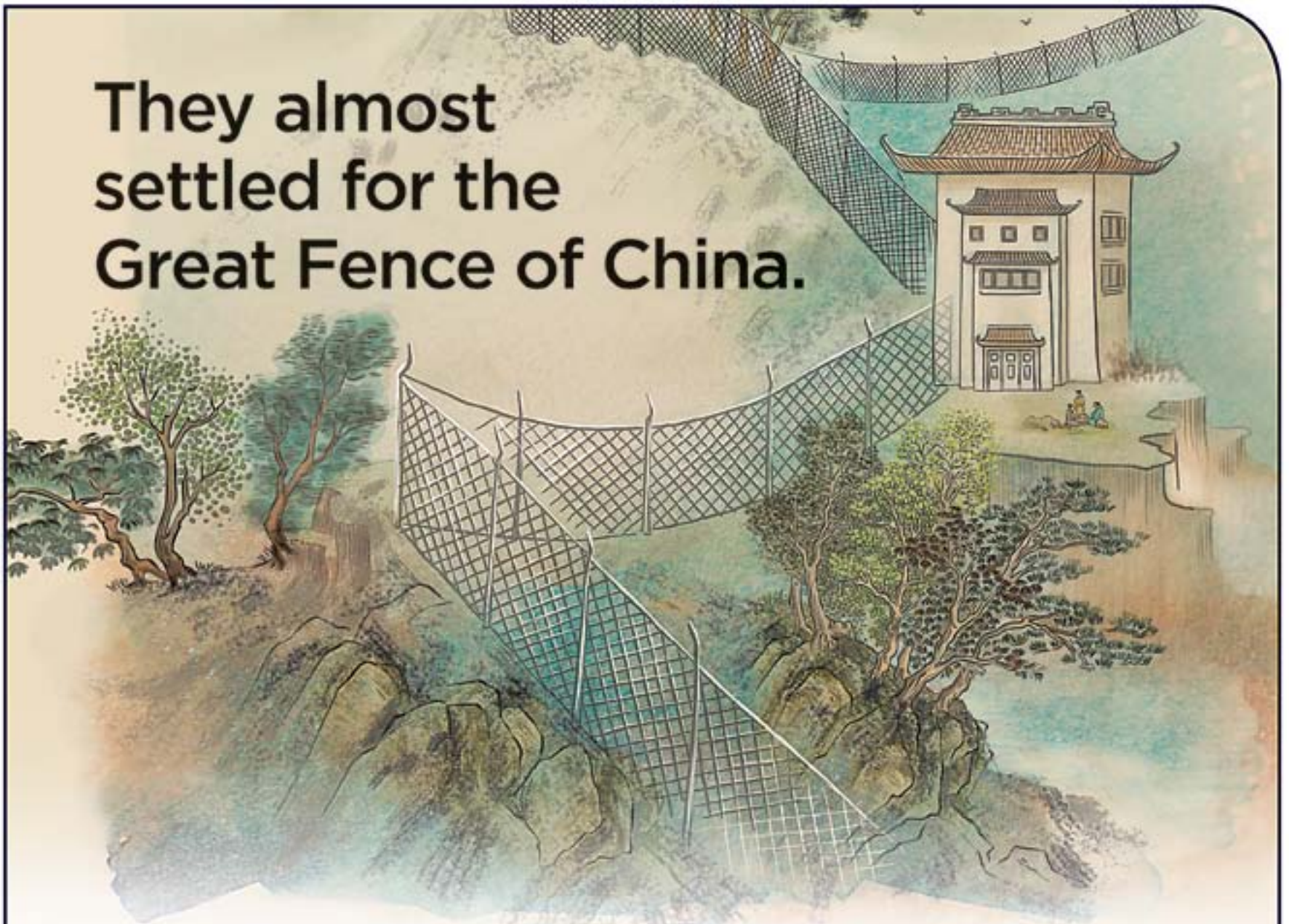
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