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Photo: IFC Films

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Publishers

Susan Horowitz
Jan Stevenson

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

News Editor

Tara Cavanaugh
taracavanaugh@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Arts & Theater Editor

Donald V. Calamia,
curtaincalls@pridesource.com

Calendar Editor

Benjamin Jenkins
calendar@pridesource.com

CREATIVE

Art Director

David Ano, davidano@pridesource.com

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Contributing Writers

Charles Alexander, D.A. Blackburn, Michelle E. Brown, Zach Childree, John Corvino, Jack Fertig, Lisa Keen, Jim Larkin, Anthony Paull, Andrea Poteet, Crystal Proxmire, Bob Roehr, Hannah Schwab, Gregg Shapiro, Jody Valley, D'Anne Witkowski, Rex Wockner, Dan Woog

Cartoonists

Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau, Joan Hilty

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter
Emily Locklear

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ed Bohach, ed@pridesource.com
Ann Cox, anncox@pridesource.com
Greg Flood, gregflood@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

Business Office

Diane Smith, dianesmith@pridesource.com
Nancy Blankenship

Circulation & Distribution

Diane Smith

Pride Source Media Group

11920 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48150
Phone 734.293.7200 • Fax 734.293.7201
www.pridesource.com

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International news: Gay pride march banned in Serbia to 'avoid bloodshed,' say authorities

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Eye on Equality

BY GUY BARAST

Show your pride this fall

Can you believe it's already October? As I sit here and contemplate the changing weather that is just outside the door, several thoughts run consecutively through my mind:

Summer is gone. Sure, we'll still have the occasional warm day, but mentally, for most of us, the season has already changed.

Winter is just around the corner (Wait. Let's not even go there just yet!).

And, it's gala season again!

Yes! It's time to get my evening wear to the cleaner, my best shoes not just shined but polished to a gloss, time to get ready to attend the galas, the benefits, the charity balls and other such events that crowd the calendar between now and the New Year.

Well, let's be honest here. I don't attend all of them. But I do make an effort to get to my fair share of these events, particularly those that are put on by our brother and sister LGBT organizations.

I encourage you to do the same.

Sure, we all know these events are fundraisers, first and foremost. But they're so much more than that. They are terrific opportunities to make new friends and build networks. And, frankly, they're usually a heck of a good time!

I know the fundraising aspect of these events can present a hurdle for many of us. But if you need to, just pick one event to attend. Even if you have to save a little or adjust your budget in order to afford the ticket, it will be worth it on many levels.

First of all, you'll be supporting a worthwhile organization. There are so many great organizations in our community that work hard every day to make Michigan a better place for LGBT people. Choose one of them to support, buy that gala ticket, and make that work go a little farther!

Second, your taxman will thank you. That ticket you bought may not have been cheap, but take a moment to read the fine print on the other side. Whatever you paid above the Fair Market Value of any goods or services you received at the event – such as your dinner – is typically tax-deductible.

You'll see old friends and acquaintances

and you'll probably make some new ones. And, in addition to supporting a cause that's near and dear to you, you'll undoubtedly have a great time!

In addition to all of the great events being put on by our fellow LGBT organizations, Equality Michigan's own State Equality Dinner returns this fall to The Henry in Dearborn on Oct. 22. This event has an impressive history and was known as the State Dinner when it belonged to the Triangle Foundation. Attended by state and local politicians, activists, allies and prominent LGBT supporters, it became an important affair. The main focus was the presentation of the Catalyst Awards, given to people and organizations that have made significant contributions to LGBT equality in Michigan.

This year's State Equality Dinner will build on those great traditions while offering an expanded format to the evening – giving you more opportunities to mingle, schmooze and network. It will include a VIP reception, open reception, dinner and silent auction, awards presentation and an afterglow celebration.

And if that's not enough, civil rights icon Cleve Jones will present the keynote address and receive the Catalyst Award for Lifetime Achievement. Jones is the founder of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt and co-founder of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. He will share the stage with Emmy Award winning WDIV news reporter Hank Winchester, who will be our emcee for the evening.

We have so many great LGBT community organizations that are doing fantastic work and that need our help. Show your support by attending at least one or two events. If you just can't do that, consider something else. Events require helping hands – pick one and volunteer your time. Whether you do one, the other, or both, it's just one more way you can show your pride.

Guy Barast is the director of fund development 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.

We have so many great LGBT community organizations that are doing fantastic work and that need our help. Show your support by attending at least one or two events this fall.

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Community struggles to heal after pastor resigns

Former Metropolitan Community Church-Detroit pastor Mark Bidwell admits to participating in sex-and-drug party that led to man's death by overdose

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

FERNDALE— The community is reeling after it was discovered last week that a popular gay pastor was involved in a drug-and-sex party that left one man dead of a drug overdose.

The Rev. Mark Bidwell, formerly the head pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, admitted to injecting methamphetamine and soliciting a man online for sex. Bidwell has since resigned from his post.

Jackie Walker, the vice moderator of the board of directors for MCC-Detroit, said Bidwell's credentials have been temporarily suspended pending a church hearing about his conduct. Walker did not know how soon the hearing would take place.

A get-together turns grim

The announcement of Bidwell's resignation comes after it was discovered last week that a Lincoln Park man died Wednesday, Sept. 21 after doing drugs in Bidwell's home.

According to a report from the Ferndale Police, Bidwell picked up Steven Michael Fitch, 43, in Plymouth around 9 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20 after connecting on a gay male website and agreeing to meet in person.

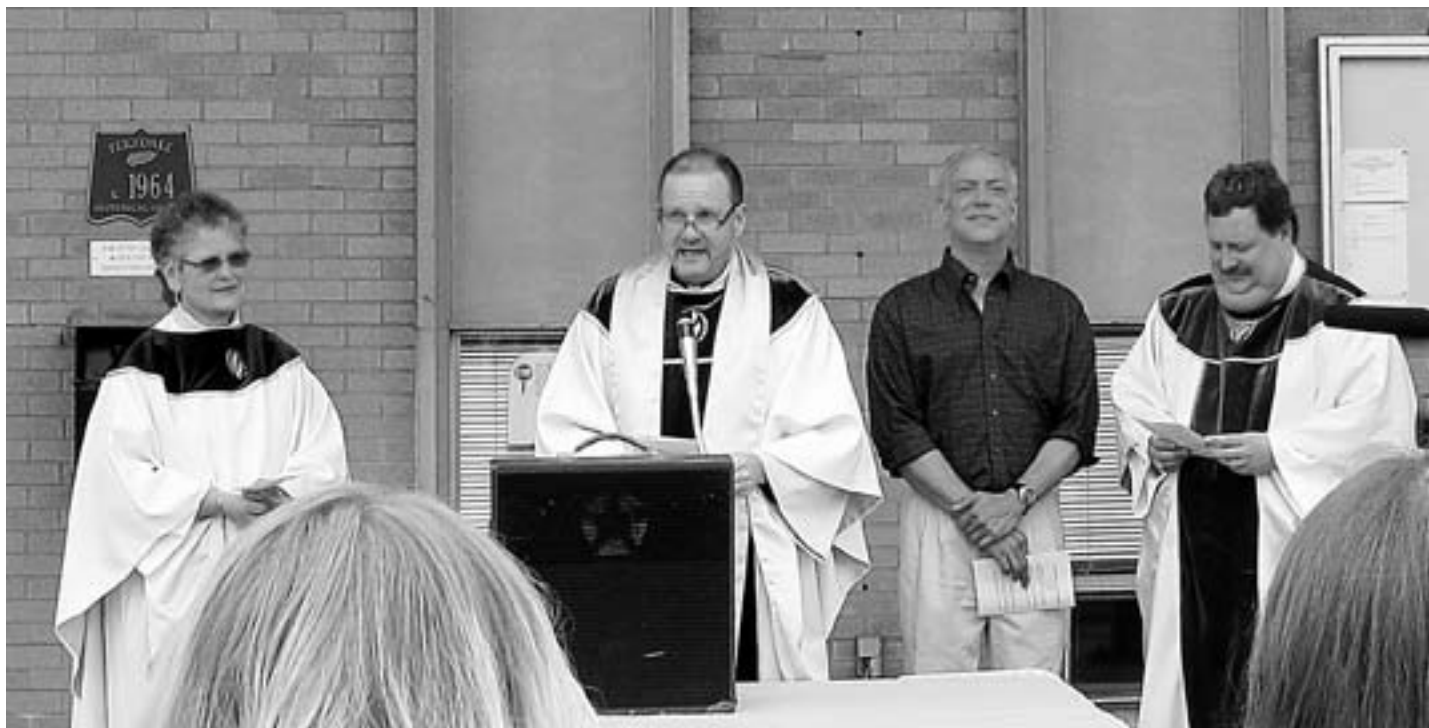
Bidwell took Fitch to his home and the two injected methamphetamine and had sex. Then Fitch went online to arrange for another man from Mount Clemens, Bret Colpaert, to come to Bidwell's home.

Colpaert told police he did not take any drugs and said he did not know either Bidwell or Fitch previously. Colpaert said Fitch went to the bathroom for two minutes, returned and sat on the bed and started turning blue. Colpaert attempted to administer CPR to Fitch. Bidwell called the Ferndale Police. When police arrived, Fitch had no pulse.

Fitch was transported to Beaumont

“Unfortunately we just have a person who has died and the people have to live with it.”

—Ferndale Police Lt. William Wilson



The Rev. Mark Bidwell, center, weds 8 couples in a commitment ceremony at Motor City Pride in Ferndale on June 5, 2010. BTL photo: Lucy Hough.

Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 6:53 a.m. on Sept. 21.

Ferndale Police Lt. William Wilson said Bidwell will not face charges.

“The long and the short of it is, there is no physical evidence to charge anybody with. There were some syringes remaining behind with maybe trace amounts of methamphetamines in them, but because the way the crime labs work and because of the syringes and the biohazards involved, no one's willing to process that. We have no evidence it's going to result in any criminal prosecution,” Wilson said.

“Unfortunately we just have a person who has died and the people have to live with it.”

Bidwell has been terminated from his position as a volunteer chaplain for the Ferndale Police.

Wilson said he did not believe Bidwell had a previous police record.

Mark Bidwell in the community

Previous BTL stories about Bidwell show a man who braved personal struggles and who was also dedicated to serving the community.

“When I get a call from someone telling me he or she is married with children and is gay or lesbian, I want to tell them: been there done that,” he told BTL in 2009. “My own experiences in being the whole gay

person that I am help me relate one-on-one to those I minister to. I have children. I've lost jobs. I've filed for bankruptcy. Been without transportation for a year. Lost loved ones. Cared for a father with Alzheimer's. Had my son serve in Iraq – not once, but twice.”

In 2004, Bidwell walked out of a chaplaincy training after the instructor promoted violence against homosexuals.

Bidwell continued encouraging civil disobedience. He co-officiated a mass “wedding” ceremony in Ferndale in 2004 at that year's Motor City Pride. “I believe that we're making both a political and a religious statement that God affirms our love and commitment to our spouses,” he said, “and it is time that our government acknowledge, affirm and recognize our commitment.”

Bidwell, who married his own partner in 2003 in a ceremony with 200 guests, continued pushing same-sex couples to demand their right to marry.

The grieving process

Walker said 139 people attended Sunday's service at MCC-Detroit. “It was almost as full as Easter,” she said.

Walker said a forum was held after the service to discuss Bidwell. Founding members of the first Detroit MCC congregation, Jim Toy and John Kavanaugh, also attended.

Many church members voiced their concerns and feelings. “I didn't hear anybody

angry,” Walker said. “People are hurt. People are sad.”

Eventually an interim pastor will be assigned to take Bidwell's place, and then the search for a permanent replacement will begin.

“We need to go through the grieving process,” Walker said. “Then we'll do a search for a pastor. But we have to go through a lot of stuff before we get there. There are a lot of hurt people.”

“We need to go through the healing process. There are a lot of hurt people.”

—Jackie Walker, the vice moderator of the board of directors for the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit



Protesters Monday showed their support of REC Boyz, a program at AIDS Partnership Michigan that recently lost its funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. BTL photo: Zach Childree.

'Our youth need us'

Effective AIDS prevention program closes doors after losing CDC funding

BY ZACH CHILDREE AND TARA CAVANAUGH

DETROIT— A dozen young Detroiters staged a protest Monday after an effective and popular program of AIDS Partnership Michigan was forced to close its doors. The program, REC Boyz – short for Real Enough 2 Change Boyz – lost its funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after 5 years of success.

Darius Hooper, a program coordinator at APM, said the program serves youth ages 13-24 “who really have nowhere else to go but to us” for prevention services, case management and testing.

“We hope to tell the community we’re here, we’re not giving up and we’re not going anywhere without a fight,” Hooper said.

According to APM, the program costs \$31,000 each month, which APM cannot afford to supply on its own. Barb Murray, executive director of APM, called the decision to shut down the program “gut-wrenching.”

“I have seen board members angry before, but I have never seen them cry,” Murray said. “It has been the most highly impactful and game-changing program this agency has had the opportunity to operate.”

“It’s more than just handing out condoms,” said Wayne Stallworth, a specialist in counseling and testing services. “This space gives our youth a chance to come to a place that is safe, nonjudgmental and very comfortable. Once they’re here, they can learn, and then take what they learn and teach their peers about it.”

The program used a peer leadership model developed at the University of California San Francisco Center for AIDS Prevention Studies. According to APM, the REC Boyz program has reached more than 5,000 high-risk young Detroiters with informational sessions, outreach activities, workshops and discussion groups.

The CDC contributed \$369,497 each year

for the program, which had a staff of 5 full-time employees. The program was located at 1959 E. Jefferson St., where Monday’s protest took place.

APM applied for renewed CDC funding in March, and the CDC conducted a site visit in August. But APM has not heard anything else from the CDC. The lack of response and funding forced the program to close.

“(REC Boyz) has been the most highly impactful and game-changing program this agency has had the opportunity to operate.”

—AIDS Partnership Michigan
Executive Director Barb Murray

“HIV prevention is important and needed especially in the city of Detroit,” said Stallworth. “Our youth here need it. We want the CDC to see us as an important city and recognize us as someone that needs to be in this fight.”

The REC Boyz planned the protest themselves, Murray said: “I’m very, very proud of them.”

Murray said that APM hopes to provide positions for the five full-time staff members who worked in the REC Boyz program.

“We are still working out budgets with our other funding streams and trying to see if we can hang on to any of them. None of that is final,” Murray said. “We’re doing the best we can.”



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GVSU offers gender-neutral housing

Students push for option for transgender students

BY TARA CAVANAUGH

ALLENDALE— After a student-led push, Grand Valley State University now offers gender-neutral housing in its campus dorms.

A group of students formed a group called the Gender Neutral Housing Coalition and worked with the GVSU Student Senate and student housing administrators to create the housing option.

“They met with different administrators, the director of Housing and Residence Life, the vice president, the provost and dean of students, and began to tell the stories of students whose needs were not being met by the current policy and the way that that impacted them personally and academically,” said Colette Seguin-Beighley, director of GVSU’s LGBT Center.

Earlier this year, the Day of Silence march ended by going to the office of Housing and Residence Life, Beighley said. “That definitely brought attention to the issue.”

Andy Beechnau, director of Housing and Residence Life, said the creation of the housing “is really the result of student leadership and talking with colleagues in the state.”

Few students requested the housing this fall, Beechnau said. “We don’t have a lot of demand but I think as we move in this direction we’ll see if a few more students take advantage of it.”

Students who request gender-neutral housing are not limited to certain housing options – when a student requests gender-neutral housing, the room or apartment given to that student becomes gender-neutral. This means that the student’s roommate will also have requested gender-neutral housing.

“If you make students live in only certain areas, you really are determining their cost,” Beechnau said, noting that different on-campus housing carries different prices.

“We’d much rather say, here’s our whole list of options, if it’s available and that’s the option you want, feel free to select it and we’ll do the best to match you up in a way that makes sense.”

Beechnau also said Housing and Residence Life has started training housing staff on gender and sexuality issues.

“We’ve made some very positive strides in training and partnering with some resources on campus,” he said. “But given this, it will be something we’ll continue to train on.”

“The response I’ve received, both

internally and externally, has been very positive. And it kind of makes sense. You want all of your students to be able to succeed, and that’s just what we’re about.”

According to a recently released

“You want all of your students to be able to succeed, and that’s just what we’re about.”

—Andy Beechnau, director of GVSU Housing and Residence Life

Campus Pride Index, which surveys schools for LGBT-inclusive policies and practices, six other state schools offer LGBT housing options: The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, U-M Flint, Grand Rapids Community College, Lansing Community College, Northern Michigan University and Central Michigan University. Not all of the 14 schools who were ranked in the index offer housing options, and participation in the index is voluntary.

Motown Invitational Classic returns Oct. 7-9

BY BTL STAFF

CANTON— The Motor City will pay homage to Hollywood this weekend with the start of the 26th annual Motown Invitational Classic, Michigan’s largest LGBT bowling tournament.

The series of competitive bowling events, held at Super Bowl in Canton, will include more than 200 participants from across the U.S. and Canada.

According to 2011 MIC Co-Director Phil Silvio, this year’s Hollywood theme will create a star-studded backdrop for the tournament.

“We have paparazzi, celebrity impersonators and opportunities for bowlers to receive special awards like the Oscars,” said Silvio. “A highlight will be our own version of Hollywood Squares that will take

place in our hospitality suite on Saturday night.”

Although the tournament theme adds a bit of fun for participants, the line-up of competitive events is the main attraction.

A special 9-Pin No Tap event on Friday, open to the public and bowlers of any skill level, allows a strike to be scored when nine pins are knocked down on the first attempt.

Cost is \$20 per person and registration in the MIC tournament is not required. Bowling begins at 9 p.m. and participants should arrive early to register.

On Saturday, the MIC tournament kicks off with a singles event that is immediately followed by doubles. Bowlers return to Super Bowl on Sunday for the last two events, including a team competition and an optional scratch master’s competition.

“Our scratch master’s event lets our

more competitive participants bowl one-on-one and be eliminated each round based on their individual scratch score,” said 2011 MIC Co-Director Terry Martin. “It’s one of the new features for our tournament that we hope our participants will be excited about.”

The tournament ends on Sunday night with a cocktail reception and awards banquet inside the SoundBoard at MotorCity Casino Hotel, which will once again serve as the host hotel for competitors.

The party doesn’t end until the last drag queen lip syncs. Gigi’s in Detroit will host the traditional closing party beginning at 10:30 p.m. with drag shows, raffles and dancing.

To find out more information about the 2011 MIC tournament and its Hollywood salute, visit www.mictournament.org for a complete schedule of events.

Ruth Ellis Center appoints Mark Erwin as director of programs

BY BTL STAFF

HIGHLAND PARK— The Ruth Ellis Center has appointed Mark Erwin as director of programs. In this position, Erwin is responsible for the planning, operation, coordination and refinement of all programs in the integrated spectrum of services for the youth Ruth Ellis Center serves and their families.

The Ruth Ellis Center is the Midwest’s only agency and one of four in the nation dedicated to serving homeless, run away and at-risk youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender or questioning.

“Mark’s experience working nationally

with several youth-driven organizations is a real asset to Ruth Ellis Center,” said Laura Hughes, Ruth Ellis Center’s executive director. “He also has particular knowledge and experience working in the LGBTQ community in Metro Detroit, which serves him well in entering this position and quickly understanding the unique characteristics of the population we serve.”

As director of programs, Erwin will also maintain the agency’s leadership in service programs by supporting managers of the Ruth House’s, the full-time residential program, the drop-in center, and the street outreach programs.

Prior to his role with the Ruth Ellis

Center, Erwin worked as an admission representative for the Institute of Production and Recording in Minneapolis, where he provided admissions counseling to prospective students and their families through one-on-one consultation.

Erwin also has experience as the former general manager for the School of Rock in Twin Cities, Minn. Additionally, he has volunteered at Ferndale-based Affirmations as its Center Partner Committee Chair, where he retains and enlists lapsed supporters and new donors.

For more information about the Ruth Ellis Center, visit www.ruthelliscenter.org or its Facebook page.

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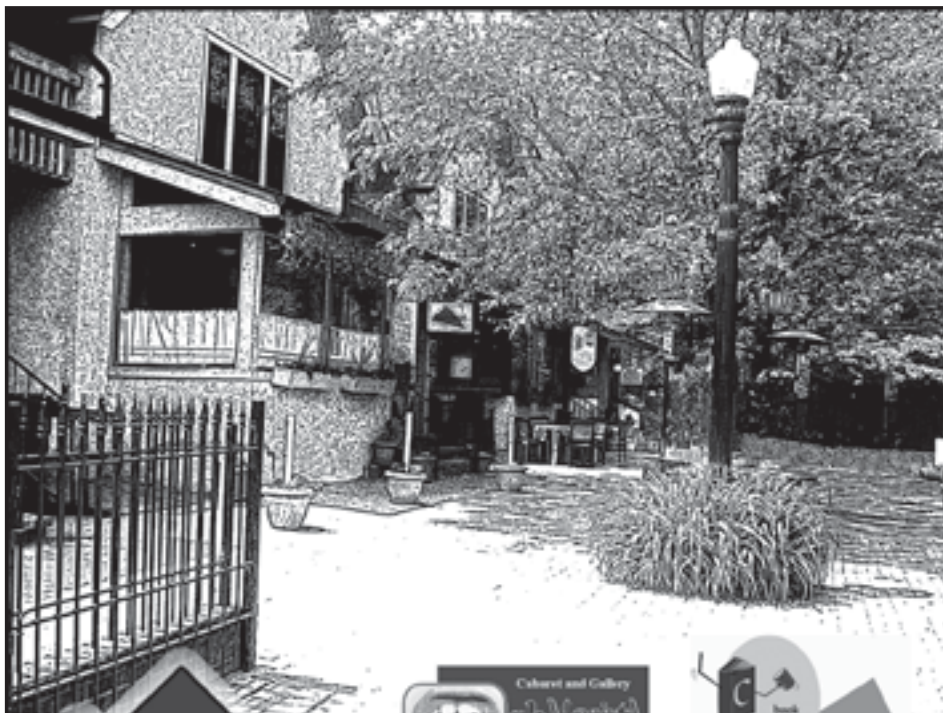
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BTL Viewpoint

BY MARK SEGAL

Uncovering America's gay history Historians have closeted our community's contributions to building the United States

October is Gay History Month, and we're celebrating it with the largest gay history project ever. The Philadelphia Gay News is partnering with 28 newspapers across the country (including BTL) to distribute essays for our "We are America" project, which shows how the LGBT community and its allies formed a nation.

We clearly make the case that historians have hidden – closeted – the LGBT community's contributions to building and preserving this country.

This isn't the first year this project has taken place. In past years, we've had exclusive interviews with Sir Elton John, Congressman Barney Frank, tennis greats Martina Navratilova and Billy Jean King, along with a guy by the name of Barack Obama.

I can bet Rick Perry a \$3 bill that, after reading this series, you'll never allow a conservative to say "Our Founding Fathers did not have gay people in mind when they formed this country." The Founding Fathers very much knew of – even recruited – those who pushed the boundaries of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Here are some humorous examples from the series – all true. You'll discover Benjamin Franklin was the first U.S. military recruiter who enlisted a gay man into the Revolutionary Army.

George Washington in all probability was the first American to offer domestic-partner rights. He gave housing to a known homosexual couple when housing was a premium at Valley Forge. And when faced with a homosexual scandal at Valley Forge,

he took the least harmful course of action and embarrassed the officer accused of sodomy rather than giving him the death sentence as Thomas Jefferson demanded.

How about the African-American gay man who led a troop of black men in the Revolution?

Or the women who dressed as men to enlist in the Colonial Army? After the war, when they could have taken off the drag, some chose to live out their lives as men.

Do you know about the lesbian who wrote one of the country's most patriotic songs, "America the Beautiful"?

You'll also read about the debate of whether President Lincoln preferred men over women. Many historians have clearly held a biased view of Lincoln, dismissing habits that suggest his true orientation.

And we showcase another gay president – and his partner.

And then there's the gay man who wrote the drill book and maneuvers that brought order to a rag-tag Revolutionary Army and led us to victory.

This project has been a labor of love and our writers from across the country deserve our

gratitude. So, all through October, read PGN's salute to our community's history and take pride that your community was among those who founded and kept this country together.

All this month, you'll find "We are America" essays in BTL's national news section. Mark Segal, PGN publisher, can be reached at mark@epgn.com.

BTL Editorial

A lesson in forgiveness

Last week, stories about local pastor Mark Bidwell could be found all over the Internet and on the nightly news. As we already know, the story is the textbook definition of scandalous. It has sex. It has drugs. It involves a religious figure and it ends in death. It has all the makings of a crime drama episode.

But behind every scandal are real people with real lives. And unlike a TV episode, closure isn't promptly delivered at the end of the last commercial break.

It would be easy to be mad at Mark. His actions will be used by bigots to stereotype our community. Mark was a recognized and trusted figure among us. He's counseled many of us, inspired many of us, and encouraged all of us to stand up for our rights. How could he do this to us? we might wonder. How could he let us down?

We have to remember that this story is not about us. It's about Mark, a man who has worked hard for our community, and a

man who has suffered from many personal problems, health issues and – as we now know – addiction.

Mark, though a leader and a professed man of God, is merely human, just like the rest of us.

Our feelings of anger, shock and sadness are perfectly warranted. But we must find the strength to forgive Mark and support him through recovery.

Our feelings of anger, shock and sadness are perfectly warranted. But we must find the strength to forgive Mark and support him through recovery.

It's not just the Christian thing to do. It's the human thing to do. After all, this isn't a TV

show, this is real life. The characters in our dramas don't follow perfect arcs along predetermined story lines; they zigzag over and under unexpected obstacles, adjusting as best they can, often making mistakes – some bigger than others.

The only closure we get out of this is the closure we give to Mark. We forgive and we move on.



Herman Cain, a 2012 Republican presidential candidate, has enjoyed a recent bump in the polls.

Cain says speaking up for gay soldier 'would have been appropriate'

Presidential candidate says he should not have stayed silent as gay soldier was booed at Republican debate

BY DOUGLAS BIRCH

WASHINGTON (AP)— Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain said he should not have stayed silent after the audience at a GOP debate booed a gay soldier serving in Iraq.

The Georgia businessman told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, Oct. 2 that it would have been "appropriate" for him to have defended the soldier. None of the candidates on stage at the Sept. 22 forum responded to the boos.

"In retrospect, because of the controversy it has created and because of the different interpretations that it could have had, yes, that probably — that would have been appropriate," Cain said, when asked if he should have asked the audience to respect the soldier.

Cain said it wasn't immediately clear to him what had drawn the audience's scorn, adding, "I happen to think that maybe they were booing the whole 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal more so than booing that soldier."

The so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy barring gays from serving openly in the military was officially lifted last month.

Cain's remarks came after President Barack Obama on Saturday, Oct. 1 chastised the GOP candidates at the debate, saying one of the duties of the nation's commander in chief is to stand up for Americans in uniform.

Separately, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said that the GOP candidates at the debate should have defended the soldier. "The fact is we should honor every man and woman who is serving in the military and should in no way treat them with anything but the highest regard," he told CBS' "Face the Nation."

McCain added that the GOP candidates may have been thinking about how to respond to the soldier's question rather than paying attention to the booing. "I would bet that every Republican on that stage did not agree with that kind of behavior," he said.

Last December, McCain led Senate opposition to the repeal of the restriction on gay service.

The soldier, Stephen Hill, was booed when he asked via a recorded video if any of the candidates would try to circumvent progress for gays and lesbians in uniform. Hill told the GOP hopefuls that when he was first deployed to Iraq last year, when "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was still in effect, "I had to

The nine Republican presidential candidates who said nothing as the debate audience booed a gay soldier have since been rebuked by many politicians, including Sen. John McCain, Rick Santorum, and President Barack Obama.

lie about who I was."

After the debate, former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman told ABC News that the incident was "totally unfortunate and unnecessary," and former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson said he was "embarrassed." Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum told Fox News, "I condemn the people who booed that gay soldier."

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The Rev. Mark Bidwell has resigned from the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit following a sex-and-drug scandal. What are your thoughts?

Just goes to show that religious hypocrisy is not limited to hetero churches.

—Mark Sartor

We as humans fall prey to error daily! How about let's pray for him. I know somebody prayed for me in my foolish errors!

—Jay Gold

My thoughts and prayers are with Mark and his family. He's a great guy and has been an amazing friend and pastor to many in their time of need. I hope in his time of need folks don't forget all he's done and turn their backs on him – he deserves better. I wish him the best of luck with his treatment and recovery – I will be keeping him in my thoughts and prayers.

—Gregory Varnum

Very sad indeed! Not to mention how undeniably embarrassing for our LGBT community at large – even The Daily Mail in the U.K. has a story on this. UGH!

—Jeff Newman

Oh please. The straight Christian community has done far worse. Start being Christian and treat Mark as a human being who made a terrible mistake.

—Dan Scaife

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

Gender issues, Republicans



Katy Butler

"You have to understand, this has nothing to do with your sexuality and everything to do with who you feel like inside. At the start of every LGBTQQA meeting, participants are first asked if they would like to share their P.G.P.'s (preferred gender pronouns). Mine are 'she,' 'her' and 'hers' and sometimes 'they,' 'them' and 'theirs.' P.G.P.'s can change as often as one likes. If the pronouns in the dictionary don't suffice, there are numerous made-up ones now in use, including 'ze,' 'hir' and 'hirs,' words that connote both genders because maybe one day you wake up and feel more like a boy."

—Katy Butler, a 16-year-old high school junior from Ann Arbor, Mich., in an article titled "The Freedom to Choose Your Pronoun," about young people's exploration of what gender means and the language they use to move away from masculine and feminine gender assumptions, nytimes.com, Sept. 30.



Ann Coulter

"The basic idea is that sexual bonds are disruptive to the military bond. Soldiers, sailors and Marines living in close quarters who are having sex with one another, used to have sex with one another or would like to have sex with one another simply cannot function as a well-oiled fighting machine. A battalion of married couples facing a small unit of heterosexual men would be slaughtered. That's why instead of pushing openly gay servicemen on the military, patriotic gays should come out against girls in the military. Fair is fair."

—Ann Coulter, in her column titled "Does Rick Perry Have A Performance Problem?," about the Republican presidential debate when a gay American soldier serving in Iraq was booed by the audience for asking a question about "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," anncoulter.com, Sept. 28.



Amanda Marcotte

"What gives with all the hatred for gay people coming from conservatives, even as the rest of country is beginning to get over long-held prejudices? ... Quite a bit of what's going on is that anti-gay bigotry is just one piece of a larger picture of conservative fear and loathing of all forms of sexuality. When you think of sex in terms of subversion and criminality, gay sex looms large in your imagination as the filthiest, most sexy-sex there is. Social conservatives simply can't get past the images in their minds of dudes sticking it to one another, and it completely skews their ability to think logically and fairly about extending basic human rights to gay people."

—Amanda Marcotte, writer about feminism and politics, in her column titled "Why Are Religious Conservatives So Scared of Gay Sex?," altnet.org, Sept. 29.



Louis F. Graham

"The harassment, discrimination and negative feelings about homosexuality that black gay and bisexual men often experience can contribute significantly to mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. ... If we think about a whole pie that represents factors that may cause depression and anxiety among this population, findings suggest that discrimination and internalized homo-negativity make up over 50 percent of the pie."

—Louis F. Graham, lead study author and a Kellogg Health Scholars postdoctoral fellow in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, in his study titled "Factors Influencing Depression and Anxiety among Black Sexual Minority Men," medicalnewstoday.com, Aug. 31.



Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

An open letter to Mark

I have known you for 20 years, as friend, pastor, activist, lately a troubled person dealing with serious health issues, who turned to alcohol and drugs for release from nonstop pain to body, mind, troubled spirit.

I'm also sure there's not one of your many, many friends who is not shocked, saddened, horrified, by the mess you've gotten yourself into. You've hit bottom, as they say in AA, hit bottom in a big way.

Having been there myself, I know what it's like. Living hell. It won't be easy recovering. My own "what if" days haunted me for years. (Alcohol can be as demonic as hard drugs. It takes a little longer to tighten the noose, that's all.)

I have known you for 20 years, as friend, pastor, activist, lately a troubled person dealing with serious health issues.

What happened to you when your nightmare of a night came to the light of day, happened in the worse possible way: hyped, headlined media coverage. Gay sex orgy. Drug party. OD at chaplain's home. Fired from jail ministry. (Oh, the godawful shame.)

The slightly arch, yellow journalism spin that sells papers. The irresistibility of a good scandal. The more prominent the villain. The more well-known the celebrity. A plus if a Democrat; five stars, if a Republican. Delicious. The public is insatiable for details.

More. More.

No doubt those of the fundamentalist types are savoring their cup of gloat because of your fall from Grace, Mark. That's predictable. Their so-called Christian compassion goes no farther than the tip of their shiny noses. Love the sinner; hate the sin. They were the Pharisees of Jesus' time. Holy hypocrites.

It's my observation that things began to change for you as your diabetes progressed. Blood sugar skyrocketed. Preaching became difficult. Your sermons became shorter. Your confidence varied from Sunday to Sunday. You were frequently absent from ministry. What's wrong with Pastor Mark? many wondered, but stayed on hoping, praying for the best.

There's no getting around it: panic attacks are a no-win situation. (I experienced withdrawal from Xanax. I was sure anyone looking at me could feel my inner turmoil. I wanted to run. Hide. I had no inkling that my doctor prescribed an antidepressant that was highly addictive.)

It's no exaggeration, Mark, to say that these days drugs are everywhere. Their use is prevalent in many minority communities. Our LGBT community, contrary to what some would have everyone believe, is not at the top of the list. Society permits drugs as a means of control.

Knowing you as I think I do, Mark, I'm pretty sure your drug use was of recent origin; your experience, somewhat naive (but damnably foolhardy). To use crystal meth is to walk naked into the lion's den. One dose invites being torn limb from limb. An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth.

So, Mark, what's to become of you? You who have done so many wonderful things for our community. You who have touched so many lives. You who have given hope, a sympathetic ear, a hug to so many in need. (Thanks for my share.) You who have performed hundreds of holy unions, blessed families, children, advocated solidarity, and led the way to better racial understanding. Ministered to homeless, shut ins, and prisoners. What indeed?

Your next two weeks in intensive therapy is a start. You have reached out for help, briefly considering an alternative that I, too, long, long ago considered, thankfully, without following through on - to live 30 more years of sober, and productive life. (MCC-D was there for me back in '82.)

Keep in mind, Mark, there are many of us who once hit bottom. With programs like AA and NA we've learned to live one precious day at a time. We understand. We support you. We offer our love. God be with you. I'm still proud to call you my friend. I'm not alone.

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Obama: Commander in chief must support gay troops

President speaks at Human Rights Campaign dinner in support of LGBT rights

BY JULIE PACE

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Barack Obama sharply rebuked his Republican rivals, saying anyone who wants to be commander in chief must support the entire U.S. military, including gay service members.

A combative Obama on Saturday, Oct. 1 criticized Republican presidential candidates for staying silent when the crowd at a recent debate booed a gay soldier who asked a question of the contenders via videotape.

“You want to be commander in chief? You

“He really has been an incredible champion for the issues that are important to us. It’s fair to say we’ve made more progress in the past two years than we have in the past 40 years combined.”

—Fred Sainz, HRC vice president for communications

can start by standing up for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States, even when it’s not politically convenient,” Obama said during remarks at the annual dinner of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest gay rights organization.

Referencing the boos at the Sept. 22 Republican debate, he said: “We don’t believe in standing silent when that happens.”

Obama touted his administration’s efforts to repeal the military’s ban on openly gay service members, as well as his orders to the Justice Department to stop enforcing a law defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

But, as expected, Obama stopped short of endorsing gay marriage, saying only that “every single American deserves to be treated equally in the eyes of the law.”

Obama has said his views on gay marriage are “evolving,” but for now he only supports civil union.

Obama’s position on gay marriage has become a sore point for some gay activists who say they’re otherwise pleased with the president’s handling of issues important to them. Some of the president’s backers say he could be wasting a chance to energize key segments of his base, including young people, if he doesn’t publicly advocate for gay marriage.

“If he doesn’t, he could be missing an opportunity to mobilize voters who need to be inspired to vote for him,” said Doug Hattaway, a

Democratic consultant.

The president’s position on gay marriage puts him at odds with some of his supporters. Numerous recent polls suggest a slight majority of Americans favor giving same-sex couples the right to marry, and support is highest among Democrats and young people.

Obama has acknowledged that public support for gay marriage is building. During a meeting with liberal bloggers last October, he said “it’s pretty clear where the trend lines are going.”

Obama aides have given no indication of where the president’s evolution on gay marriage stands. And some gay rights advocates believe political considerations could keep Obama from publicly backing gay marriage until after the November 2012 election.

Joe Sudbay, among a group of bloggers who met with Obama last year, said most gay rights advocates won’t vote against Obama if he stops short of backing gay marriage. But he said they may be less likely to volunteer their time and money to the campaign.

“He might not lose votes, but he won’t gain enthusiasm,” said Sudbay, deputy editor of *AmericaBlog.com*.

While gay rights advocates may not be getting everything they want from the president, they see little support for their cause among the field of Republican primary contenders.

Most top Republican presidential candidates, including former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney



President Barack Obama speaks in Washington, D.C. in 2006. Photo: Ryan Rodrick Beiler.

and Texas Gov. Rick Perry, favor limiting marriage to unions between one man and one woman.

Fred Sainz, the Human Rights Campaign’s vice president for communications, said he expects Obama to eventually declare his support for gay marriage. And even if that doesn’t happen before next year’s election, he said the president’s other actions on gay rights issued should not be ignored.

“He really has been an incredible champion for the issues that are important to us,” Sainz said. “It’s fair to say we’ve made more progress in the past two years than we have in the past 40 years combined.”

In his remarks Saturday night, Obama implored the supportive crowd of 3,200 to stand with him in his re-election campaign, declaring: “This is a contest of values.”

James Buchanan: America’s first gay president?

Not only was the 15th U.S. president likely gay, but he had a longtime gay lover, says historian

BY TIMOTHY CWIEK

More than 150 years before America elected its first black president, it most likely had its first gay president: James Buchanan.

Buchanan, a Democrat from Lancaster County, Pa., was the 15th president of the U.S. and a lifelong bachelor. He served as president from 1857-61, during the tumultuous years that lead up to the Civil War.

Historian James W. Loewen has done extensive research into Buchanan’s personal life, and he’s convinced Buchanan was gay.

Loewen is the author of the acclaimed book “Lies Across America,” which examines how historical sites inaccurately portray figures and events in America’s past.

“I’m sure that Buchanan was gay,” Loewen said. “There is clear evidence that

he was gay. And since I haven’t seen any evidence that he was heterosexual, I don’t believe he was bisexual.”

According to Loewen, Buchanan shared a residence with William Rufus King, a Democratic senator from Alabama, for several years in Washington, D.C.

Loewen said contemporary records indicate the two men were inseparable, and wags would refer to them as “the Siamese twins.”

Loewen also said Buchanan was “fairly open” about his relationship with King, causing some colleagues to view the men as a couple.

For example, when prominent Democrat Aaron Brown wrote to Mrs. James K. Polk, he referred to King as Buchanan’s “better half,” “his wife” and “Aunt Fancy ... rigged out in her best clothes.”

In 1844, when King was appointed minister to France, he wrote Buchanan, “I am selfish enough to hope you will not be able to procure an associate who will cause you to feel no regret at our separation.”

Loewen also said a letter Buchanan wrote to a friend after King went to France shows the depth of his feelings for King.

“I am now solitary and alone, having no companion in the house with me,” Buchanan wrote. “I have gone a wooing to

several gentlemen, but have not succeeded with any one of them. I feel that it is not good for man to be alone; and should not be astonished to find myself married to some old maid who can nurse me when I am sick, provide good dinners for me when I am well, and not expect from me any very ardent or romantic affection.”

Loewen said their relationship — though interrupted due to foreign-service obligations — ended only with King’s death in 1853.

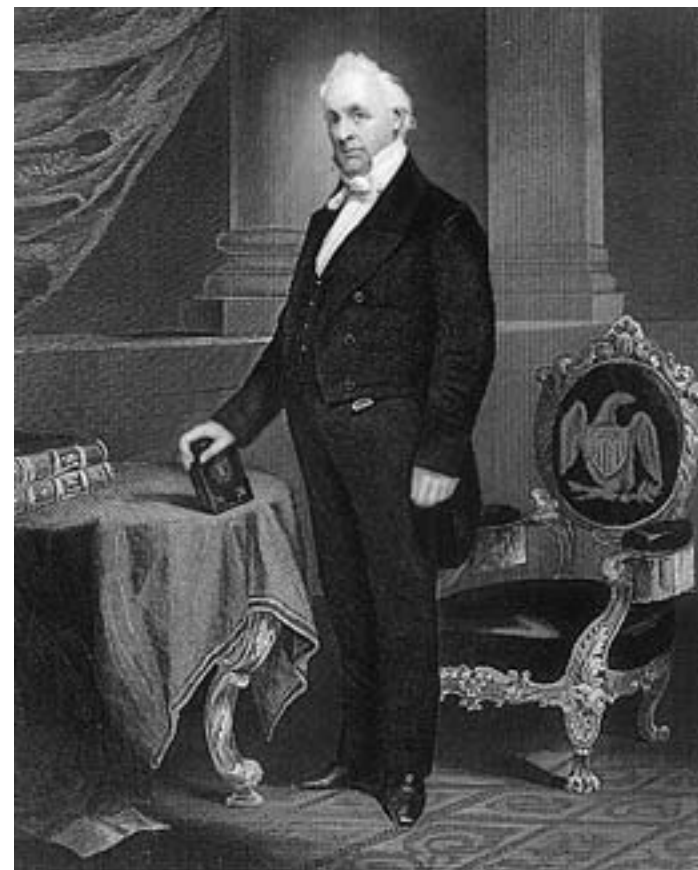
In the late 1990s, Loewen visited Wheatland, the mansion in Lancaster, Pa., where Buchanan spent his later years.

Loewen said he asked a staffer at Wheatland if Buchanan was gay, and the reply was: “He most definitely was not.”

Loewen said the staffer pointed to a portrait of Ann Coleman, the daughter of a wealthy iron maker, whom Buchanan was engaged to briefly 1819 — shortly before she committed suicide.

However, Loewen scoffed at the staffer’s suggestion that the brief engagement to Coleman proved Buchanan was heterosexual.

Loewen said Buchanan showed little interest in Coleman, appeared more interested in her fortune, and possibly contributed to her suicide due to his



James Buchanan may have been our nation’s first gay president.

See Buchanan, page 16

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Keith Ablow

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Full disclosure: I do not watch “Dancing With the Stars.” In fact, I can’t even say I’ve ever intentionally viewed it unless you count a YouTube clip of Bristol Palin dancing in a gorilla mask. And then there was the time I was subjected to about 10 minutes of the program while my wife was flipping through channels. And I really wish I could have those 10 minutes of my life back.



Keith Ablow

Another full disclosure: I do not love Chaz Bono. I don’t hate him either, mind you. He’s just not someone I think about a lot. He never calls, he never writes. But then again, neither do I. So when I heard he was going to be on DWTS I thought, “That’s nice.” I mean, hooray for transgender visibility and all that, but I still wasn’t about to watch the show.

Of course, that was before I learned that Bono is making kids who watch the show turn transgender. That’s not even something I thought was possible

before, but color me intrigued.

Bono, granted, has been rather coy about this whole thing. In fact, it was psychiatrist and Fox News contributor Keith Ablow who let the tranny cat out of the tranny bag, as the saying definitely goes.

“If you care about your kids, don’t let them watch ‘Dancing with the Stars’ starring Chaz Bono,” Ablow wrote in a Sept. 2 opinion piece on the Fox News website.

As far as Ablow is concerned, Bono’s DWTS role is the ushering in the era of the tranny tween.

Why? Because if kids see Bono strutting his stuff they’ll get the idea in their head that turning tranny will solve all of their problems.

According to Ablow, these impressionable youngsters will say to themselves, “Maybe all this angst and suffering I’m feeling as I emerge into puberty and pass through it isn’t just because I’m changing, but because I should change completely – and have my breasts removed or my penis amputated!”

That’s right. Bono will inspire mass amputation of this nation’s pubescent private parts.

“It would be wrong to think that gender dysphoria cannot be kindled by celebrating those who have undergone sexual reassignment surgery,” Ablow continues. In other words, just by seeing Bono getting any kind of positive attention, kids will want all of the fame and fortune and adoration and glory that comes with being a transgendered person in the United States. No, make that the world.

American Psychiatric Association President John M. Oldham, M.D. thinks otherwise. “There is no evidence that viewing a television game show with a transgender contestant would induce Gender Identity Disorder in young people,” he says.

But what does Oldham know? He’s merely the APA president, it’s not like he’s a Fox News commentator or anything.

Ablow’s view that being transgender is some kind of airwave born contagion has earned him some other critics as well, including Fox News’ own Megyn Kelly who called Ablow out on the Sept. 14 “America Live.”

“Isn’t it just tolerance?” Kelly asks after Ablow declares that letting transgender folk be shown on TV in a positive light is “irresponsible.” In fact, he is so adamant about this point that I shudder to think what would be an acceptable portrayal of transgender people on TV in Ablow’s eyes.

“There’s so much hate out there. There’s so much hate for gays and lesbians and transgendered people,” Kelly said, clearly exasperated with Ablow. “The thing is, Doc, you seem to be adding to the hate.”

Thankfully, Bono seems to be above all of that. As he told Extra, “I don’t really pay attention to the haters, but the people who’ve been so supportive have been a huge motivation for me.”

Not that Ablow sees it that way. As far as he’s concerned, Bono’s DWTS role is the ushering in the era of the tranny tween.

As for people who are already transgender, watching Bono on TV will not turn you trans. It will, however, make you believe that Cher is your mother.

► Buchanan

Continued from p. 14

emotional detachment.

Patrick Clarke, the director of Wheatland, said the staff now takes a neutral stance on Buchanan’s sexual preference.

“There’s no solid proof that Buchanan was heterosexual, nor is there solid proof that he was homosexual,” Clarke said. “If we ever come up with a smoking gun that proves it one way or the other, I would definitely encourage our staff to share it with the public.”

But, he said Ann Coleman’s portrait is no longer displayed at Wheatland.

“I have gone a wooing to several gentlemen, but have not succeeded with any one of them. I feel that it is not good for man to be alone; and should not be astonished to find myself married to some old maid who can nurse me when I am sick, provide good dinners for me when I am well, and not expect from me any very ardent or romantic affection.”

—James Buchanan, 15th U.S. President, in a letter to longtime live-in friend William Rufus King

The tours focus mainly on the mansion’s décor and activities that took place there during the later years of Buchanan’s life, he added.

Wheatland also has about 45 volunteer tour guides, and to Clarke’s knowledge, none of the guides is openly gay.

“The volunteer guides who we train to share the history of James Buchanan’s life and times are directed to take a neutral stance regarding (his) sexual preference,” Clarke said.

But Clarke said he wouldn’t object if a volunteer offered a personal opinion that Buchanan was gay, if asked by a visitor.

“When you have 50 minutes to take people through a nine-room house, there’s only so much you can discuss,” Clarke said. “But if the question is raised, the guide may express a personal opinion.”

Loewen said many historians rate Buchanan as one of the worst U.S. presidents. Buchanan was part of the pro-slavery wing of the Democratic Party, and corruption plagued his administration.

But Loewen said those flaws shouldn’t discourage members of the LGBT community from acknowledging Buchanan’s status as a gay man.

“Lots of gay people have been exemplary,” he said. “Let’s look at Walt Whitman. For my money, he’s the best poet in the history of the country. But we also have to acknowledge the failures. If we only admit that really great people are gay, what kind of history is that? And how is that believable? It’s ridiculous. We have to tell it like it was.”

As a heterosexual male, Loewen added, he has no hidden agenda in outing Buchanan.

“I’m not gay,” Loewen said. “I don’t run around trying to find gay folks or black folks underneath every rock. But I’m not going to ignore clear evidence.”

Timothy Cwiek holds a B.A. in U.S. history from West Chester University in Pennsylvania. He has written for the Philadelphia Gay News since the late 1970s and written freelance articles for many publications on topics such as the Lincoln assassination, the Kennedy family, the shootings at Kent State University and first ladies.

U.S. Census releases new, lower estimates of same-sex couple population

Michigan has more than 14,000 same-sex couples, new results show

BY HOPE YEN

WASHINGTON (AP)—Increasingly visible, the number of gay Americans telling the census they’re living with same-sex partners nearly doubled in the past decade, to about 650,000 couples.

More than 130,000 recorded partners as husband or wife.

But mistakes made on some 2010 census forms led the U.S. Census Bureau to report an “artificially inflated” number of same-sex households in August, census officials said Sept. 27. The census reported 901,997 same-sex households nationally in August.

“What went wrong is something that we have known about for some time,” said UCLA law school demographer Gary Gates, whom the census called in to review the revised figures for accuracy.

Unclear census forms led heterosexual couples in some cases to check boxes identifying themselves as same-sex couples, said Gates, who works for the Williams Institute, a national think tank at the UCLA School of Law dedicated to advancing research on sexual orientation law and public policy.

“There are something like 60 million different-sex (heterosexual) couples in the U.S., and if five or six per thousand make a mistake, the data comes in looking like there are far more same-sex couples,” said Gates.

Figures show an estimated 14,598 same-sex couples in Michigan. Original census estimates in August showed more than 21,000 same-sex couples.

Census figures released last week provide a rare snapshot of married and unmarried same-sex couples in the U.S. based on the government count conducted last year, when gay

marriage was legal in five states and the District of Columbia.

It comes at a time when public opposition to gay marriage is easing and advocacy groups are seeking a state-by-state push

Unclear census forms led heterosexual couples in some cases to accidentally check boxes identifying themselves as same-sex couples.

for broader legal rights.

Some 131,729 same-sex couples checked “husband” or “wife” boxes on their decennial census forms, the first time people could do so, after gay marriage became legal in Massachusetts starting in 2004.

That 2010 tally of married gay couples is higher than the actual number of legal marriages, civil unions and domestic partnerships in the U.S. Even after New York legalized gay marriage in June, Gates put the actual number of legally recognized gay partnerships at 100,000.

Gates, who has studied same-sex couple data since the 1990 census, told BTL in August that there’s still no way to get an exact count of the LGBT population just yet: “It’s impossible to count people who don’t want to be counted.” He also noted that there is no standard definition among researchers about the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, which often makes it difficult to compare and analyze the limited data available.

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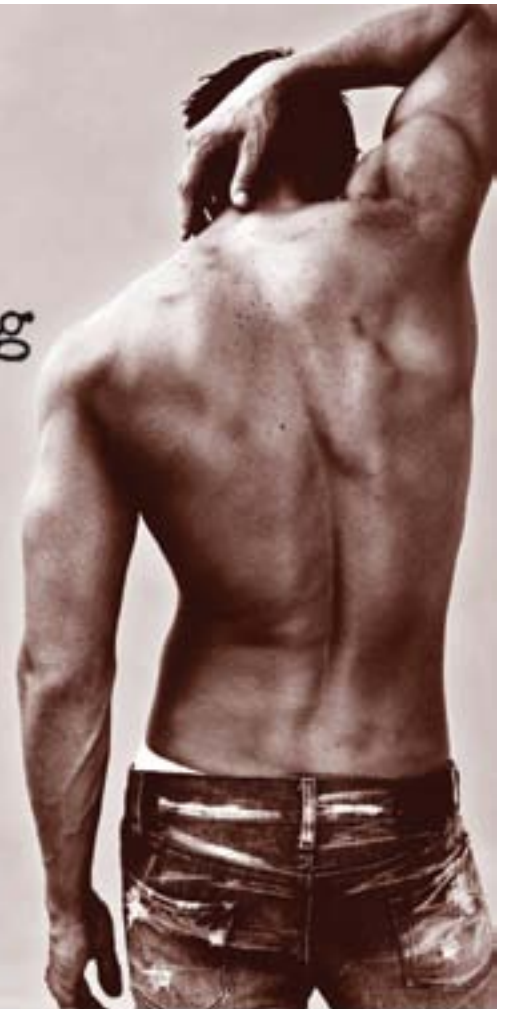
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Tom Cullen and Chris New star in "Weekend." Photo: IFC Films

Small Film Big Heart

Why 'Weekend' isn't just another gay movie

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Gay films once overlooked how much we're actually like everybody else. We live, we hurt, we love. And we don't all know people who look ready-made for the runway.

But director Andrew Haigh's "Weekend," opening Oct. 14 at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak, is the latest in a flood of queer cinema that know we're just as capable of loving, hurting and screwing up as any character in a mainstream movie. It's refreshingly outside-the-box with real-people characters who don't live in some fabricated world where they only speak in dick jokes and only six-packs and a spray tan get you some.

"I didn't think too much about the other gay films out there," says Haigh, whose only other movie credit is 2009's "Greek Pete." "I suppose in my head I made the film not thinking it was going to be seen alongside all the other gay films in the world. All I wanted to do was make a good film on its own merit and not fall into the clichés of a lot of gay films."

Oh, so it was made in opposition to them?

"Yeah, maybe only in retrospect," admits the British director, who carefully picked the film's setting (the story is set in Nottingham

instead of the what-might-be-more-typical London) and leads, relatively unknowns Chris New and Tom Cullen.

Far from twinkly, New and Cullen, as Glen and Russell respectively, engage with each other — sexually, intellectually and emotionally — over a brief period of 48 hours, after meeting at a bar on a Friday night. That's it. The whole plot. And it's a romantic slice-of-life that will stay with you longer than a weekend.

How we affect each other, even in brief encounters, is at the core of Haigh's realistically powerful rumination on human connection. In fact, Glen and Russell's bond is so evident it'd make Jack and Ennis envious.

"It's about two people muddling through things and just not quite sure what to do and how to be," Haigh says. "I suppose it's just about the confusion of things."

"There are a lot of people who don't quite

understand gay people and gay relationships, but we are all struggling with some of the same issues, as well — whether you're gay, straight, bisexual or whatever."

The stubborn and fearlessly bold Glen (New) is experiencing post-relationship damage that leaves him set in his anti-boyfriend ways; Russell (Cullen), the sweet and semi-closeted one, isn't nearly as freewheeling as Glen, even finding it awkward to recount their first drunken sex shenanigans. Really, the only thing about them that's the same is their scruff. But for all their differences, both are two of the most relatable characters in gay film.

"I'm probably somewhere in between the two of them," Haigh attests. "When I'm angry, I'm more like Glen; when I'm not, I'm more like Russell. I'm certainly not as dogmatical as Glen."

Says New: "There are a lot of people who are quite similar to (Glen) who have had some

sort of difficulties. I mean, it's a hard thing to say now, because there are so many different ways for people to grow up being gay. It's not just that you're in the closet and suddenly you come out of the closet and everybody hates it."

In the last few years, after 2005's "Brokeback Mountain" set the gay-movies-don't-have-to-suck standard in motion, filmmakers have tapped into a treasure trove of tales involving LGBT people that haven't been done to death — many released to critical kudos. Last year's "The Kids Are All Right," awarded a Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy), looked at family dynamics when the children of a lesbian couple want to reach out to their sperm donor dad. Harvey Milk's legacy was at the center of Gus Van Sant's 2008 Oscar winner "Milk." The next year, style icon Tom Ford made his directorial debut — an artistic masterpiece according to many critics — with "A Single Man," starring Colin Firth as a gay man contemplating suicide after his partner's sudden death.

Now, "Weekend" joins the ranks of admired gay cinema. After being screened at the SXSW Film Festival, the indie walked away as the Audience Award Winner. "To be honest, it's crazy," Haigh says, flustered even just

See Weekend, page 26

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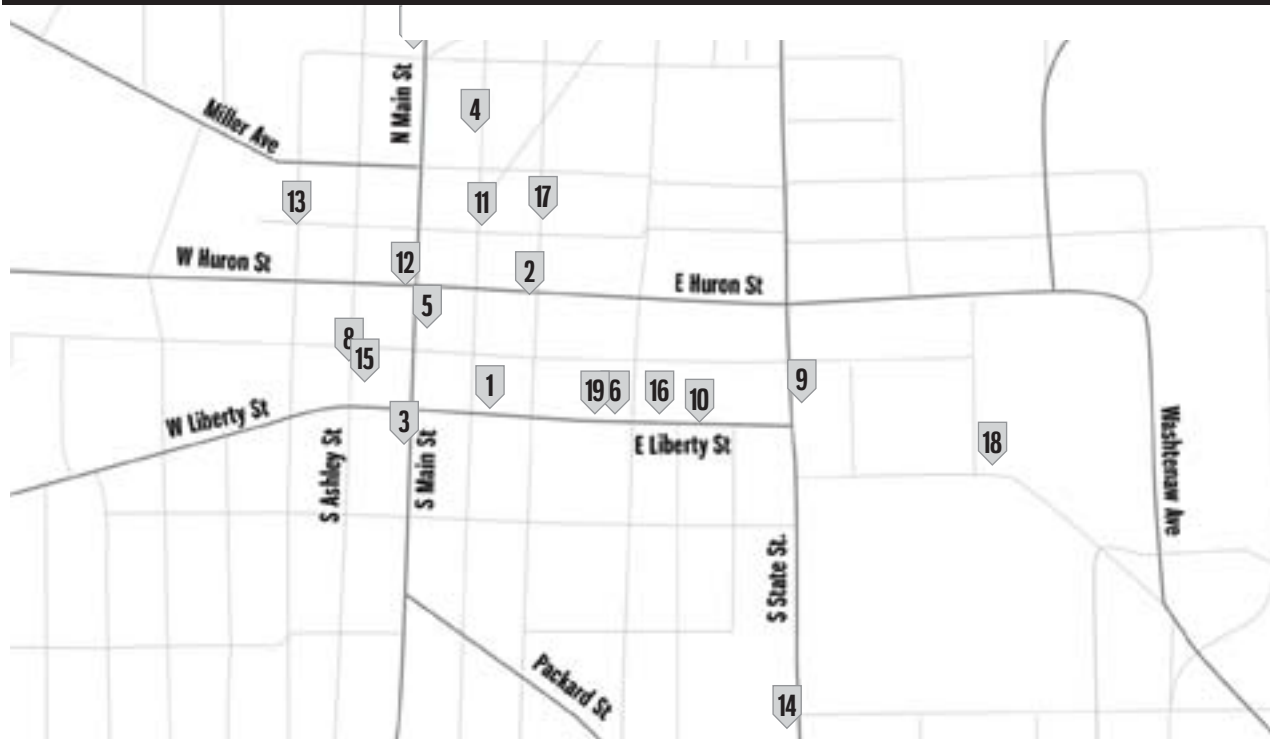
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Spectrum Center to celebrate 40th anniversary

Performers and presenters include Dustin Lance Black, David Burtka

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

The Spectrum Center of the University of Michigan celebrates its 40th anniversary this year with a weekend of commemorative events.

Founded in 1971 by Radical Lesbians leader Cindy Gair and longtime LGBT rights activist Jim Toy, the center works to enrich the campus experience of LGBT students through education, outreach, advocacy and support. Spectrum Center became the first staffed office for gay and lesbian programming in a higher educational institution in the U.S. In its 40 years, the Spectrum Center has been a central aspect of LGBT student life in Ann Arbor.

Gair and Toy were hired with a small budget to address gay and lesbian issues on campus. Today, the center has expanded greatly with Jackie Simpson as the center's director and a staff of eight to support programming and communication.

Since the center's creation, it has founded a Lavender Graduation, developed a coming-out training and ally training, amended the University bylaws to protect "sexual orientation," "gender identity," and "gender expression" in their non-discrimination clause, and presented numerous advocacy and education programs. The center also expanded its focus to include bisexual and transgender affairs.

Spectrum will celebrate its 40th anniversary the weekend of Nov. 18 through alumni performances, unique workshops and other celebrations. "Given what we've planned, I think it is truly going to be a wonderful weekend and a lot of fun for students and alumni," says Jackie Simpson.

The Spectrum Center's 40th anniversary events, below, are open to the LGBT and allied public:

Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov. 17

- Transgender activist Sebastian Colon of the School of Social Work will speak.

Luncheon and Workshop Session, 12 p.m. Nov. 18

- Three 45-minute programs beginning at 1:30 p.m.
- Alumnus Barbara Timmer leads a discussion on "It Gets Better – But When?"
- Alumnus David Bohnett and founder of the Bohnett Foundation discuss nationally changing LGBT policies.
- Former athletic trainer Lindsay McLean talks on LGBT athletes and sports.
- Photograph on the Union steps following workshops.



Student, staff and volunteer training for the Spectrum Center last September

Tribute Performance, evening, Nov. 18

- A special tribute performance from five alumni of the School of Music, Theater and Dance. Performers include Gavin Creel, Celia Keenan-Bolger, David Burtka, Dan Reichard and Danny Gurwin.

Rainbow Tailgate, Nov. 19

- Spectrums tent will be next to University

president Mary Sue Coleman on the golf course, prior to the football game.

"8," Nov. 19

- A reading of the latest work by Academy Award-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, writer of "Milk." U-M will be the first university to premier a performance of the work, related to the testimonies during the Prop. 8 case in California.


7

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Not-So-Nervous But Excited

Ann Arbor duo talks new album and their BFF... the banjo

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Nervous But Excited

8 p.m. Oct. 14
The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor (\$15)
www.nervousbutexcited.com

Nervous But Excited's Sarah Cleaver started a song while she was coming out, and then let it sit for nine years. A banjo she received as a birthday gift helped her turn those long-lost lyrics into "Ohio to Michigan," which lands on the duo's upcoming album.

It's one of 10 authentic songs from Cleaver and Kate Peterson's new studio album "You Are Here," which the lesbian pair will celebrate on Oct. 14 at The Ark in Ann Arbor.

"I finished the song last February when the banjo and I found each other and I revisited the song lyrics and added the chorus about Kate and I and what we do," says Cleaver, who learned to play the instrument during the making of the album. "(The song's about) how sometimes it feels like we are all we need out there on the road, but also talking about how hard it can be and how you need to learn to let go of some things and hang on for dear life to others...like each other."

There's no denying the chemistry between Cleaver and Peterson. Together they have established themselves at the epicenter of folk music in Michigan. They connect with their community through reliably good and honest songs, consistently delivering albums that showcase rich harmonies and share relatable life stories and experiences.

The strength of their friendship is obvious during their live performances and their laugh-out-loud sense of humor is captured through videos and photos on their official website (www.nervousbutexcited.com).

When asked what they hope listeners will take away from what Peterson said is an "edgier" album, they agreed there are many ways to interpret it.

"It's very comforting to find a place

in a song wherever you are," says Cleaver. "We believe that listeners can find a place for themselves in each song on this record" – from the pop-folk of "OneFourThree" and "Blank Pages" to the indie-folk of "Hiding Out" and the sultry soul that is "No Telling." They wouldn't be NBE without the humorous song "Happiest We've Ever Been," written in light of the stereotypes surrounding a certain sub-culture that they happen to exist within.

"A lot of these songs are about being in the moment," says Peterson. "One song in particular is 'Away, Awake.' When I'm singing about myself, I keep perspective and remember how small I am in comparison to the world. With that in mind, I realize there are bigger issues out there than I could ever have. That's the way I look at it."

Whether it's a case of love/post-love, an intense political or environmental issue, or an opportunity for introspection, Cleaver and Peterson both use songwriting as "a way to express raw emotion when really trying to process something and get it out."

Lots of passion, innovative style and positive energy went into this album with a plethora of instruments – including the banjo – and others played by NBE band members Susie Giang and Murray Stewart-Jones as well as guest appearances by some of the best local talent – Chris Bathgate, Frontier Ruckus, Theo Katzman, Erin Zindle (The Ragbirds), Mike Lynch (Kid Rock) and Kaylan Mitchell (The Juliettes).

Another song, "Puppeteer," is about moments in life when a person feels out

of control, but the duo is anything but that. They seem to have found a balance between consistency, integrity and growth as they have expanded their horizons and pulled from more places than they ever have before.

"How we write is more mature and the songs are more developed in terms of arrangements. Every song has its own voice and its own feel," says Peterson, adding that Giang, who is also their manager, has been a strong driving force in their search to find where the music lives within all of us.

Where Cleaver and Peterson live, in Ann Arbor, has been a source of inspiration for them. They have what they call "Mitten Pride" and don't try to hide their attachment to their hometown, drawing from their roots in songwriting.

As self-described road warriors, NBE is on the road a lot, which Peterson said makes staying home that much more valuable.

"Michigan has a lot of beauty, a lot of reasons to come here, but people don't know about it," says Peterson, who photographed the Chicago Skyway Bridge off Lake Michigan for the album cover art.

Cleaver talked about the Midwest and its "well-deserved reputation where there is an open community, where people are welcoming and friendly."

That's a feeling NBE is accustomed to as they are a favorite at festivals like the Michigan Roots Jamboree, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Woodstock Folk Festival and Michigan, Detroit and Milwaukee Pride, to name a few.

"We're performers and we love to feel that energy from the audience," says Cleaver, looking forward to their CD release party where fans can expect an intimate and interactive environment with NBE – and the banjo. "They keep us going and loving what we do. If we're not having fun, it's not worth doing it."

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► **Weekend**

Continued from p. 19

acknowledging it. “I don’t even like to think about that because it’s almost too odd for me. We made the film for not much money, and you don’t know if it’s going to resonate for anybody. I thought it’d be just my mom who’d see it!”

New couldn’t be happier over all the positive buzz, which isn’t just building in the gay community – or among moms. “One of the best things about it is that it hasn’t been a totally gay audience,” says the British actor. “We never even dreamed that people would go see it, but to have a proper release and to have such good word of mouth is really surprising – and across all ages, all sexes, all sexualities.

“Andrew told the story so well that all or any impediment just sort of falls away, because the story’s so strong. I mean, you don’t go, ‘Only beasts and pretty French girls would go see *Beauty and the Beast*.’”

It was Haigh’s intention all along. “I always wanted it to be a film that wasn’t just for a gay audience,” he says, “and that’s important to me, because even though it’s about two gay people – I never wanted to pretend it wasn’t and not water it down to a straight audience – I still wanted it to be acceptable to a wider group of people.”

So don’t worry: There’s sex, and the guys get naked like there’s not a camera in sight. Thankfully there was, though – because both gents can’t only act, but they look good doing it. New wasn’t sure about all the nudity at first, though Haigh assured him it wouldn’t be unwarranted nakedness.

The actor laughs. “But it was to me because, you know, it’s me! But no, I think the balance is right – both in the way emotions are shared and all the other ways in the film. It never goes too far.”

We do, however, see Russell’s post-climax stuff all over his tummy. It’s not what you think, though. The trick? Handsoap.

“That’s it,” Haigh says. “We did lot of tests to find what looked the most appropriate. Soap was always the one we used, but getting the right color soap (was the issue) – because sometimes it looks a bit too white, sometimes it’s a bit too yellow. It’s gotta be a little bit off-white.”

“We shouldn’t tell people these tricks!” New says.

Orgasm fakers, though, might find it handy. “Right!” he says. “Just grab soap and throw it on your partner: ‘See, loads!’”

Soapy sex or not, it was still awkward when it came to, well, shooting those scenes – even



Director Andrew Haigh (right) is earning critical acclaim for his new indie film, “Weekend.” Photo: IFC Films

though they weren’t the hardest.

“Tom is straight, but he had no problem at all with those scenes,” Haigh says. “They were in the script. Everyone knew they were going to happen. And they were just as difficult for Chris as they were for Tom. And they were fine. They were more nervous about the big dialogue scenes than they were doing sex scenes.”

Those conversational scenes were worked out at the apartment the two of them shared, where Cullen and New stayed for the month-long shoot. (“Longer than a weekend,” Haigh quips.) The film was unusually shot in sequence, allowing for spontaneity and, in Haigh’s case, sanity.

“It’s just the way my brain works,” he says. “I find it quite stressful shooting completely out of order.”

It also helped the actors live out the experience of the relationship as if it were actually happening, though New admits how bizarre it is to go between make-believe and real life.

“It’s very strange, actually, because you kind of feel as if you’ve got a very strong connection but know at the same time you don’t; it’s only pretend,” New says. “It’s a very strange thing that your mind does to you.”

But it was worth some insanity – and not just because New was all about the script. He and Haigh

also clicked immediately.

“What really got me into the film was when I met Andrew,” he recalls. “We just got deep very, very quickly.”

The film does as well, with intense chats – and sometimes heated arguments – on same-sex marriage and being openly gay. One particularly touching scene involves Glen role-playing Russell’s dad, as if they were reenacting a coming-out.

“The gay struggle, if you want to call it that, changes as new issues arise,” Haigh says, “and I think it’s good to discuss those issues on the screen. I’m sure a lot of people have those same kind of discussions in their own lives.

“I wanted these characters to feel very real. They’re spending this short amount of time together, and I think they would discuss all of these things that go on in their heads as a way to get to know each other and define themselves to each other.”

To critics who say there’s too much chitchat, who say show don’t tell, Haigh adds: “I’ve never really kind of understood that, because in real life people talk a lot. So it seems good to me to put that on screen sometimes. Because people do talk.”

They do, and many of them are talking about the sexuality of one of the actors, Cullen, who’s actually straight. Heterosexuals flip-flopping

is nothing new in film (Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal did it in “Brokeback Mountain”), but Haigh’s already getting hell for it.

“We didn’t really want to say to anyone who was gay in real life and who was not, but obviously the question comes up so many times that in the end you just have to be honest,” he says, “and it usually pisses off someone. Some people are like, ‘Why didn’t you use two gay characters?’ You just go with the best people.”

Similarly, he’s getting flack for the way Glen and Russell meet (at a bar), engage (in a bathroom) and then end up (in bed). The film addresses the difficulties of meeting other gay people, and so does Haigh, who defends their encounter: “That’s how I did it, and I think when you’re gay you don’t have so many opportunities to meet people. You kind have to go to bars to meet people” – or fire up Grindr, as the film notes – “so it’s an inevitable part of gay life for a lot of people.”

But Cullen and New’s onscreen connection is so powerfully magnetic, breaking through all sexuality barriers, that “Weekend” doesn’t just feel restricted to gay life. Just life in general.

“It’s a part of human interaction,” says New, who recently married his partner. “We meet people and some people have very strong effects on us and some don’t, but those strong effects are the ones we remember.”

Even if just for a “Weekend.”

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On Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day, over 25 organizations and businesses gather at Level One Bank in Ferndale for an expo titled Coming Out for Equality. The expo will allow LGBT and allied individuals to connect with the local, state and national organizations working to achieve equality.

The event will offer information on coming out to family and friends, influencing legislation and a variety of other topics.

Personal coming out stories will be presented during the expo to be supplemented with refreshments and a musical performance by The Fundamentalists.

Coming Out for Equality begins at 5 p.m. Oct. 11 at Level One Bank, 22635 Woodward Ave., in Ferndale. For more information, go to jccdet.org or call 248-432-5661.



National Coming Out Day

Thursday, Oct. 6

OUTober 2011-Keynote Speaker Pat Griffin, 2 p.m. Pat Griffin addresses LGBT and allied students of EMU. EMU LGBTRC, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. Emich.edu/lgbtrc/programs

Euchre Tournament, 7 p.m. Euchre tournament fundraiser to benefit Out Loud Chorus, Washtenaw County's original GLBT chorus. \$10 entry, cash prizes. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 South Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor. 734-265-0740. outloudchorus@gmail.com olonline.org

Tuesday, Oct. 11

Coming Out for Equality, 5 p.m. Regardless of your attractional orientation or gender identity – be proud of who you are and your support for LGBT equality this Coming Out day. Entertainment, guest speakers, refreshments, and resource tables. The Jewish Gay Network, 22635 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-432-5661. Jccdet.org "It Gets Better Project"

Video Testimonials, 10 a.m. Record a 3 minute personal testimonial to ensure those tormented by bullying that it will get better. Schoolcraft College GSA, Schoolcraft College Campus, Livonia. 734-462-4422.

OUTober 2011-Gender Awareness Program, 3:30 p.m. Programming for Eastern Michigan University's OUTober 2011 week promoting awareness of gender. EMU LGBTRC, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. Emich.edu/lgbtrc/programs

Support Equality-Kalamazoo, 5 p.m. Equality Michigan Pride PAC is dedicated to the notion that all Michigan citizens deserve to be treated fairly, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Identifying and supporting candidates for elected office at all levels of government hear Equality Michigan Pride PAC helps strong voices for equality heard above the noise. Celebrate NCOD with hosts Amy Hunter, David Feaster, Jonathan Richardson, Jon Hoadley and Kelly Doyle. Equality Michigan Pride PAC and KAFE, 411 N. Westnedge, Kalamazoo. info@eqmipridepac.com

West Michigan Pride Open House, 5 p.m. West Michigan Pride moves into its new office and invites the community to celebrate Coming Out Day with an open house of the new space. Wine and Hors D'oeuvres to be served. West Michigan Pride, 211 Logan St., Grand Rapids. westmipride.org

Sign the Closet Doors, 7 p.m. Signing closet doors in front of the university flagpoles to show support for National Coming Out Day. OUTspoken, Flagpoles of the campus, Kalamazoo. rso.wmich.edu/outspoken

Coming Out Monologues, 7 p.m. Sharing of coming out stories with Oakland University's GSA. Free refreshments included. Oakland University's GSA, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. 734-891-0501. gsaatoaklandu@gmail.com

Friday, Oct. 14

Andrea Gibson Spoken Word Artist, 7 p.m. Powerful live performer Andrew Gibson, winner of the 2008 Women's World Poetry Slam, performs at CMU, hitting hard on themes of gender norms, sexuality, class, patriarchy and white supremacist capitalist culture. Pearce 127, CMU, Mount Pleasant.

Monday, Oct. 17

OUTober 2011-Meeting the Movement: Equality Michigan, 7 p.m. Programming for Eastern Michigan University's OUTober 2011 introducing LGBT students to the LGBT activists, Equality Michigan. EMU LGBTRC, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. Emich.edu/lgbtrc/programs

OUTINGS

Wednesday, Oct. 5

Gene Robinson at University of Michigan-Dearborn, 3:30 p.m. Openly gay bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire speaks to the LGBT and allied community. Food and refreshments included in reception at 6 p.m. in Kochoff Hall. A suggested donation of \$20 dollars is asked for to, all of which will be given to the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit. BorgWarner Auditorium, IAVS Building, 4901 Evergreen Road, Dearborn. 734-776-8104. tinyurl.com/bishoprobinson

Thursday, Oct. 6

Euchre Tournament, 7 p.m. Euchre tournament fundraiser to benefit Out Loud Chorus, Washtenaw County's original GLBT chorus. \$10 entry, cash prizes. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 South Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor. 734-265-0740. olonline.org

Friday, Oct. 7

Woman 2 Woman, 5 p.m. providing woman who identify as lesbian, bisexual or transgender a safe space to discuss woman specific issues. An initiative of KICK's health and wellness campaign, receive and Restore. Food and beverage served. KICK-The Agency for LGBT African-Americans, 41 Burroughs St., Ste. 109, Detroit. 313-285-9733. e-kick.org

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Funny Ladies of British Comedy. This homage to the wittiest and most hilarious female British entertainers to have graced both the big and small screens. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

S.P.I.C.E., 7:30 p.m. S.P.I.C.E. works to empower and enhance the lives of women of color in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning community in Metropolitan Detroit, by eradicating the health, social and educational barriers facing them. Meetings are on the first Friday of every month. S.P.I.C.E., 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Oct. 8

Motor City Bears, 7 p.m. Social group for metro area bears. Meets every second Saturday of the month. Motor City Bears, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Sunday, Oct. 9

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

Conversation Station, 5 p.m. LGBTQIA 25+, join GOAL each Sunday for food and discussion. Suggested Topic: should Religious Law govern by Civil Law or marriage? RSVP to 248-981-4227 so that seating is reserved. GetOutAndLive.me, 714 S. Washington, Royal Oak. 248-981-4227. getoutandlive.me

Monday, Oct. 10

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

Gender Explorers, 8 p.m. A social and support group for transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, TG-questioning people and those who transgress gender binaries. Meets 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. Spectrum Center, Michigan Union-Spectrum Center 3200, Ann Arbor. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Tuesday, Oct. 11

Transgender Life Support, 7 p.m. Support group for transgendered people and allies. Transgender Life Support, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Wednesday, Oct. 12

LGBT in the Park, 5:30 p.m. Social and discussion group focusing on a variety of topics with speakers, social outings and events. Topic: 2012 Election. LGBT in the Park, 620 W. Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 248-460-3251. Jffryoliver@yahoo.com

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

Thursday, Oct. 13

Meet 'n Greet, 7 p.m. Meet new people, socialize and discuss age-relevant issues. Dinner at local restaurant afterwards.

Ages 18-33. Metro Detroit LGBT 20Somethings, 222 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. the20somethings.org

Friday, Oct. 14

Michigan Power Summit, 10 a.m. Grassroots organizing training for the LGBT community. A weekend conference put together by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Registration costs: \$100. Learn to create winning strategy, engage voters, recruit a large team, etc. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Flint. thetaskforce.org

Riot Youth Weekly Meeting, 4 p.m. Riot Youth is a youth-led, safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, questioning youth and their allies (LGBTQQA) at the Neutral Zone, Ann Arbor's youth-driven teen center. Through leadership skill building, community organizing, networking, support and socializing, Riot Youth connects youth to build an inclusive community. Meets every Friday. The Neutral Zone, 310 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. 734-214-9995. Neutral-zong.org

Dinner at Rocky's of Northville, 6:15 p.m. Meet other like-minded people who enjoy food, friendship and good conversation. Group meets for dinner and social networking at a different restaurant on the second Friday of each month. Enjoy! Plymouth Lesbian Supper Meet up Group, 41122 W. Seven Mile Road, Northville. Rockysnorthville.com

Older Lesbians Organizing, 7 p.m. Provides older Lesbians with the chance to meet like minded women in their common struggles, to share mutual interests and to play and work together. Meets the 2nd Friday of every month. Older Lesbians Organizing, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734 6782478. jasmithers@sbcglobal.net

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Training Rules-This documentary explores the case of Jen Harris, a gifted college basketball player who was drummed out of Penn State's basketball program by Coach Rene Portland when she admitted to be a lesbian. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Oct. 15

Tea Party, 2 p.m. Tea Party benefit for KICK-The Agency for LGBT African-Americans. A member supported Michigan non-profit. KICK-The Agency for LGBT African Americans, 6426 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 313-285-9733. e-kick.org

Sunday, Oct. 16

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

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Michigan Philharmonic "The Red Violin" Tchaikovsky's youthful Symphony No. 2 along with the movie music favorite, "The Red Violin" with violinist Anicka Skalova. Individual Concert tickets: \$22 general, \$18 senior and \$10 student. Full subscriptions available online. Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8. 734-451-2112. Michiganphil.org

The Detroit Chamber Wind & Strings "Third Coast Percussion" New music ensemble Third Coast Percussion will be featured on Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings first Nightnotes concert of the series. Tickets: \$22 adults, \$10 students in advance. Detroit Chamber Wind & Strings, 20300 Civic Center Dr., Southfield. 8 p.m. Oct. 14. 248-559-2095. detroitchamberwinds.org

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Symphony Fantastique" Starts with Rossini's galloping William Tell Overture, as well as the North American premiere of the Fred A. & Barbara M. Erb Jazz Creative Director Chair Michel Camilo's new piano concerto, with the composer and Detroit favorite at the piano. North American Premiere. Tickets: \$15+. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 8-Oct. 9. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

University Musical Society "State Symphony Capella of Russia" Features 50 voices of Russia, founded in 1991 as a result of a merger of the USSR State Chamber Choir and the State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR Ministry of Culture. Ticket information available at ums.org. St. Francis of Assisi, 2250 E. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 13. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

COMEDY

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase Lynne Koplitz of Comedy Central Presents: Lynne Koplitz, performed at HBO's Montreal Just for Laughs Comedy Festival twice,

co-hosted comedy cooking show "How to Boil Water" on the Food Network and "Show & Style" on NBC. Tickets: \$10-15. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Oct. 13-Oct. 15. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

The Palace Frank Caliendo, Comedian/Impressionist Frank Caliendo. Tickets: \$29.50-49.50. Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 8 p.m. Oct. 8. 248-377-0100. Palacenet.com

CONCERTS

Royal Oak Music Theater "Explosions in the Sky" With Wye Oak. Royal Oak Music Theater, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 8 p.m. Oct. 8. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

Royal Oak Music Theater "Beirut" Tickets: \$25. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Oct. 11. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark Vienna Teng The San Jose Mercury News likened Vienna Teng to "a child of Chopin and Sarah McLachlan," and she took her first name in adulthood as an homage to the city of Mozart and Beethoven. Tickets: \$30. Power Center, 121 Fletcher, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct. 7. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark Jackie Greene Tickets:\$25. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m. Oct. 9. 734-761-1800. theark.org

The Ark Karen Casey & John Doyle Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct. 12. 734-761-1800. theark.org

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra "An Evening of Rodgers and Hammerstein" Favorite hits from Oklahoma! The Sound of Music, The King and I and South Pacific. Tickets: \$19. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 14-Oct. 16. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

University Musical Society Yuja Wang Chinese pianist widely recognized for playing that combines the spontaneity and fearless imagination of youth with the discipline and precision of a mature artist. Ticket information available at ums.org. Hill Auditorium, 825 University Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Oct. 9. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

Vyne Records "Dune Buggy Attack Battalion" Performing for their latest album "Ypsidelica" as well as the addition of their new bassist, Raja Saab. With performances by The Boilerroom, Volcanoes&Cigarette and Merry-Go-Round. \$3 cover. The Old Miami, 3930 Cass Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Oct. 8. 734-262-0356. Vynerecords.com,

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

August: Osage County \$18. Redbud Productions at Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. Oct. 6-9. 734-663-7167.

Meet Me in St. Louis \$25, \$18 in advance. Stage crafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. Through Oct. 9. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org

Terra Nova \$12. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. Oct. 7-15. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com

To Kill a Mockingbird \$14-16. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Through Oct. 22. 248-553-2955. farmingtonplayers.org

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Noises Off \$15. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 14-23. 313-577-7679. bonstelle.com

PROFESSIONAL

A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Oct. 15. 313-577-6798. wsushows.com

Beehive: The 60s Musical Sensation \$15-\$20; \$49.95-\$59.95 dinner & show packages per couple. HappenStance Productions at Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Through Oct. 9. 248-348-4448. www.andiamonovitheatre.com

Carmina Burana \$29-121. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Oct. 15-23. 313-237-SING. michiganopera.org

Come Fly Away \$27.50 and up. Broadway Grand Rapids, DeVos Performance Hall, 303 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids. Oct. 4-9. 800-745-3000. broadwaygrandrapids.com

Daddy Long Legs \$34.50-44.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave, Detroit. Through Nov. 20. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com

Gazillion Bubble Show \$25-49. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Oct. 14-16. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com

Hedwig and the Angry Inch \$10-20. Who Wants Cake? at the Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave.,

See Happenings, page 30

MSU students go 'bare' for first production

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

There are many reasons to do theater. Dennis Corsi put his reasoning into the name of his new theater company, Touch Your Soul Productions. It's a name pulled directly from a song in the first musical that the company will perform, opening this week: "Bare."

"Our mission statement is that we believe in the power of art to touch the soul and will use that power to make positive change in the world," said Corsi, a senior majoring in theater at Michigan State University. "I firmly believe that art has a power to really get at people's hearts and to make people think different things, so my goal with all the shows I do is to not just entertain, but to make a difference and share a message."

The message with the first production is one that speaks to all teenagers who are, as the musical says, "dying to fit in." It especially focuses on gay teenagers and the disapproval they face from peers, parents, religious figures and themselves.

"Bare" sets its characters in a Catholic high school theater class, telling its story with pop music, a play within a play and, in this production, the use of custom-made Venetian masks as a metaphor for how teens hide their true selves.

"I've heard this show described as 'Spring Awakening' meets 'Rent,'" said Corsi. "The style of music is very pop rock like 'Rent' and the story has a lot of similarities to 'Spring Awakening.'"

The overlap in issues include the exploration of teenage sexuality, suicide,

REVIEW

bare: A Pop Opera

Touch Your Soul Productions at the RCAH Theatre located in the basement of Snyder Hall on Bogue St. on the campus of Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7 p.m. Oct. 6, 8 p.m. Oct. 7-8 & 2 p.m. Oct. 9. \$10 adult, \$7 student. www.touchyoursoulproductions.com



Dennis Corsi is founder and artistic director of Touch Your Soul Productions.

pregnancy, religion and popularity. "Bare" also deals with drugs and physical self-identity.

Krista DeLong, a theater senior who is performing in the show says each character provides a different perspective on the musical's issues. "I think every single character in this show has something that they are unsure about – themselves, or afraid of themselves in the world. It's about learning to find your place in the world and belonging with the people you want to be surrounded by, people you love and who also love you. It's about recognizing that fact that you do fit in."

For both DeLong and Corsi, this musical is the culmination of a dream they've had for many years. Corsi knew when he first saw the musical that he wanted to stage it, while DeLong fell in love with one of Nadia's songs and has wanted to play the role ever since.

"I heard the show for the first time a little over two years ago and when I first heard it, I was completely overtaken and inspired by it and decided right then that I would do this show some day," Corsi said. "For the past two years, I've been thinking about it,

waiting until I was prepared in my life and in my academic career to do it."

To further their mission of educating along with entertaining, the company is hosting panel discussions after each show. The topics are "The Masks We Wear," "Homosexuality and the Church," "Hot Topics Among Youth" and "Coming Out." The company also plans to donate a portion of its proceeds to the Trevor Project.

"I would hope that after seeing the show, people would be more willing to talk about things that are upsetting, because the ending is so upsetting," DeLong said. "It is a real situation that could happen. No one wants it to happen, but it could if things are kept quiet."

U-M celebrates birthday of Tennessee Williams

ANN ARBOR— The U-M Department of Theatre & Drama opens the 2011-12 season with a celebration of Tennessee Williams' 100th birthday with a production of his one-act play "Suddenly Last Summer" and a four-day conference examining the work of the prodigious playwright.

The story tells the tale of two women trying to come to terms with the death of a loved one. Once the sole companion of her son Sebastian, Violet Venable is devastated by his mysterious death abroad. Sebastian had spurned his mother's companionship on his last trip, choosing instead to travel with his beautiful cousin Catharine. Since returning to New Orleans, Catharine's wild accounts about the trip have begun to call into question Sebastian's immaculate reputation. In part jealous of her dismissal by her son for a younger woman, Violet is ruthlessly determined to protect his memory at any cost.

Following the performances on Friday, Oct. 7 and Thursday, Oct. 13 will be a post-performance discussion moderated by director Philip Kerr and featuring members of the cast and creative team. The discussions are free and open to all.

In conjunction with the production of "Suddenly Last Summer," the Department of Theatre & Drama presents a four-day conference entitled Tennessee Williams @



The play "Suddenly Last Summer" is part of U-M's celebration of the 100th birthday of playwright Tennessee Williams. Photo: Peter Smith

100 to celebrate the playwright. Scholars, playwrights and theatre artists will gather to share their perspectives on Tennessee Williams' impact on American theatre and his enduring influence on writers today. All conference events are free (with the exception of the performances of "Suddenly Last Summer") and open to the public.

"Suddenly Last Summer" plays at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 6 & 13, 8 p.m. Oct. 7, 8,

14 & 15, and 2 p.m. Oct. 9 & 16 in the Arthur Miller Theatre in Ann Arbor. The conference, Tennessee Williams @ 100, runs Oct. 12 - 15.

Tickets for "Suddenly Last Summer" are \$26, with students only \$10 with ID. Order by phone at 734-764-2538.

The Arthur Miller Theatre is located within the Walgreen Drama Center at 1226 Murfin Ave. on the UM North Campus.



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► Happenings

Continued from p. 28

Ferndale. Oct. 14-Nov. 7. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

Hustle and Love \$20. Necwerk Productions at Wayne State Community Arts Auditorium, 450 Reuther Mall, Detroit. 7 p.m. Oct. 7. 313-872-0220. necwerkproductions.com

Jersey Boys \$35 and up. Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Through Oct. 16. 1-800-Wharton. whartoncenter.com

Love Song \$16 all others. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Oct. 8. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

Much Ado About Nothing \$15. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company at Dog Story Theater, 7 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids. Oct. 13-16. dogstorytheater.com

My Son The Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy \$35; \$89.95 dinner package for two. Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Oct. 13-30. 1-800-745-3000. andiamonovitheatre.com

Something Wicked This Way Comes Previews Oct. 5-7 (\$24-\$30). \$30-39. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Oct. 5-Oct. 29. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

The Dead Guy Previews Oct. 6 (\$15). \$22-\$25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through Oct. 30. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

The Extraordinary Ordinary \$27-\$29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Oct. 9. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

The Laramie Project \$20. What A Do Theatre at First United Methodist Church, 111 E. Michigan Ave., Battle Creek. Oct. 7-22. 773-744-8598. whatado.org

The Mystery of Irma Vep \$28-\$30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through Oct. 9. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

Time Stands Still \$25-41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Oct. 23. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

YOUNG AUDIENCES

Mickey & Minnie's Magical Journey \$18-55. Disney on Ice at Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. Oct. 12-16. 1-800-745-3000. ticketmaster.com

The Fisherman and His Wife \$10 adult, \$7 children. Children's Theatre Network at Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. 1 p.m. Oct. 15. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Cass Cafe "6 Degrees" Exhibit of paintings by Detroit-based artist Craig Paul Nowak. The show features a range of works in a variety of media, and features large-scale portraits drawn from the artists' circle of family and colleagues. Cass Cafe, 4620 Cass Ave., Detroit. Aug. 27-Oct. 29. 313-831-1400. casscafe.com

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

Flint Institute of Arts "Quilting Traditions: The Art of the Amish" Amish women's traditional quilts assembled by collectors Marsha and Thomas French. Examples

are from the Amish communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana from the 19th to mid-20th century. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. Sep. 9-Nov. 13. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "All Dubrovich Invitational" Features the works of FIA Art School faculty member, Alla Dubrovich and her students in the Bishop Gallery. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. Sep. 19-Oct. 16. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

Hand-Craft "Hand-Crafted Photography's Opening Reception" Opening reception for Anne Storm Van Leeuwen, Eric Law and Candace Law's "Hand-Crafted Photography." Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, Ferndale. 6 p.m. Oct. 7. 248-544-0394. lawrencestreetgallery.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Stephanie Nava: Considering a Plot (Dig for Victory)" A work in progress, developed by French artist Stephanie Nava. Its installation at MOCAD marks the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States. The installation is based on the specifications and history of English allotments, or subsistence gardens. Museum of

Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave. Detroit. Sep. 16-Dec. 30. 313-832-6622. moca-detroit.org

Swords and Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery "Beyond the Wall: Images of Israel-Palestine" Barbara Barefield, a Detroit photographer, member of JVP and an organizer of the exhibition, expresses the hope that "this exhibition may bring the realities of this tragic conflict to the attention of our Jewish community as well as all metro Detroiters." Detroit's Central United Methodist Church, 33 E. Adams Avenue, Detroit. Sep. 24-Nov. 5. 313-963-7575. jvpdetroit.blogspot.com

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Gift of a Lifetime: The James Pearson Duffy Collection" The DIA received the rich art collection from James Pearson Duffy, Detroit's most unorthodox collectors. Showcases drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures and photographs. Free with museum admission. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Sep. 15-Feb. 29. 313-833-7900. dia.org

The Henry Ford "The Wizard of Oz" Children's Exhibit" Visitors will step into

a child-size Land of Oz with stops at the Gale Farm, Munchkin land, The Crossroads, The Witch's Castle and The Emerald City before heading back, because, of course, "there's no place like home." The Henry Ford Museum, 20900 Oakwood, Dearborn. Oct. 1-Jan. 9. 313-982-6001. thehenryford.org

The Gallery Project "Subjective World/ Umwelt" Umwelt or subjective world is a foundational concept in the study of animal behavior. It challenges people to think about animals as they might experience the world through their own senses and respond to it with their own bodies, according to their own priorities. The Gallery Project, 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Sep. 21-Oct. 30. 734-997-7012. thegalleryproject.com

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Multiple Impressions: Contemporary Chinese Woodblock Prints" 114 works by 41 artists, including Xu Bing, Kang Ning, Song Yuanwen, Chen Qi, He Kun, and Fang Limin, as well as many other accomplished printmakers. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 South State Street, Ann Arbor. July 16-Oct. 23. 734-763-4186.

Editor's Picks Art 'n' Around

American sculptor Mark di Suvero is best known for his dynamic and monumental works of steel and salvaged material that populate museum grounds, landscapes and urban environments around the world.

This fall and winter, the University of Michigan Museum of Art will feature 15 of di Suvero's rarely exhibited smaller pieces – "tabletops" – from the 1950s to present. These unique pieces explore concepts of calligraphy, balance, proportion and motion. This exhibit complements UMMA's two outdoor di Suvero sculptures already showcased just outside the museum.

Tabletops will be showcased Oct. 8 through Feb. 26 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St., in Ann Arbor. The gallery is open at 10 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday, noon on Sunday and closed on Mondays. For more information, go to umma.umich.edu or call 734-764-0395.

Theater



Eastern Michigan University Theatre opens its 2011-2012 Mainstage season with Moliere's outrageous farce "The Imaginary Invalid," translated and adapted by James Magruder.

Argon, a raging hypochondriac, attempts to marry off his beautiful daughter Angelique to an incompetent doctor in order to obtain permanent health care. Argon's gold-digging dominatrix of a wife, Beline, has her own plans for the future, however.

Director Lee Stille gives a booster-shot of contemporary humor to Moliere's classic comedy while designers Melanie Schuessler, John Charles and Jeromy Hopgood add unexpected elements of visual wackiness that take this big, bold farce over the top.

"The Imaginary Invalid" will be performed at 7 p.m. Oct. 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 and 2 p.m. Oct. 16 in the Quirk Theatre in the Quirk Dramatic Arts Building located at the intersection of East Circle Drive and Best Hall on EMU's Ypsilanti Campus.

Tickets are available by phone at 734-487-2282.

Care for yourself, Pisces!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mercury conjoins Saturn in Libra raising knowledge and articulation of what our relationships are about and where they're going. Feeling limited can create arguments or healthy productive discussions. Stay focused on what you want and who you love.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): A drop in energy can leave you feeling high and dry – not that you're becoming lethargic. You've been cranked up, and it couldn't last. A serious talk about romance can make or break a relationship. Be very clear on what you want.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Dreams of great accomplishment can be inspiring or distracting. Stick to the task at hand and make sure your goals are realistic. Discussions with co-workers can get unpleasant, but face the tough facts and you'll be better for it.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Is fun really fun? Take time out from idle pleasantries to apply your wit to more creative endeavors. A little competitive spirit can be a great boost to your efforts. Be careful not to go overboard and get nasty about it!

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Power struggles at home can be sugarcoated with apparently good intentions. Sensing underlying motives can stress you out. Confronting them is sure to create some trouble now, saving lots of trouble in the long run.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): It can be very hard to keep secrets, to know whom to trust. Getting high, even a little buzz, can impair your judgment. Trying to one-up your partner in conversation can get nasty. Be nice to the one you love!

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): A serious conversation about money can leave you feeling deflated, but all the better to deal with reality. Striving to improve your finances does not mean keeping up with the Joneses, nor does economizing require you to suffer. Get creative!

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Partnered? A sense of domestic security can open deeper intimacy. Little competitions with your partner

can be fun. Just remember you're really on the same side! Single? Dating isn't a competitive sport. Being serious is good, but not too serious!

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Remember the reason you work so hard is to keep a nice home. It may not be the castle of your dreams, but it's the best you have. Keeping that in mind can help you improve your relationship or find one.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Where people are taking their own ideas too seriously and not listening to each other your practicality and humor can help break those barriers. Just be careful that you don't fall into the same kind of stubbornness.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): If you can't have meetings with important people, at least keep communications open! It can take hard work to clear up confusion, but your work will be a lot harder if you don't.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): You might be more brilliant than the world's geniuses, but it's usually better to let their ideas challenge your thinking. If you can really do better, write it down and find a publisher pronto!

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Guard against cranky outbursts. It's too easy to get into needless, stupid arguments. Anger comes from hidden wounds. Take time alone to care for yourself and work on practical concerns. Cleaning house can be a meditation. Exercise and conversations with trusted friends helps.

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.



BTL Dear Jody

BY JODY VALLEY

Stop with the drunk texts

Q: “Kristen” and I have been together for one-and-a-half years. We have a really great relationship, and I want to keep it that way. My problem is my ex.

First, I need to give you a little history about my ex “Ann” and me. Ann and I were together for nine years. The first few years were good, but around the sixth year things started to go downhill. I won’t go into all the problems we had, but I ended up leaving Ann. Well, I actually left her several times because I kept going back. The third time I was able to break the tie and stay away. Though I was finally able to move on, Ann hasn’t really been able to let go.

Ann is in a relationship, right now – though it has only been about five months, and they don’t live together. (She was in a short relationship with another woman for several years before this present relationship.) So, you would think that Ann had moved on as well, but as I said, she really hasn’t.

Ever since I left her, she has been drunk-texting me. There have been periods of time when she’s not done it much, but she’s never really stopped for more than a month, I’d say. However, it seemed to get worse when I got together with Kristen, and lately it has gotten much worse. Like, it’s almost every weekend. I really don’t think she’s an alcoholic, at least she wasn’t when I was with her. I think she just gets a drink or two under her belt and that releases her desire to connect with me. On several occasions she has sent pics that were sexual.

As you can imagine, Kristen doesn’t appreciate this – nor do I for that matter. I started out by not telling Kristen, but she found out and was enraged. I keep telling Kristen that I can’t do anything about it, and I can’t. Kristen knows how often I went back to Ann and she thinks that maybe there is still something between us. There is not! Ann is no good for me, and I’m very happy to have broken the connection with her.

Kristen and I have had a few fights about this. I’m writing you, now, because we just had another fight. Last night Ann sent a text

and a very suggestive picture. (She was in the bathroom of a bar – one that we used to refer to as “our bar.”)

How do I get Ann to stop her drunk-texting, and how do I get Kristen to understand that I don’t want, nor like, Ann’s interference in my life?

Not Amused

A: Your having returned to the relationship with Ann, several times, might give her hope that you would do it again. I don’t know if you’ve ever told Ann that you don’t appreciate her drunk-texting or hearing from her, but if not, you need to firmly let her know that you are no longer interested in her and are happy with your current relationship. So, if you’ve not done it, send her a message that it is over between the two of you and request she not send anymore texts. However, as you are well aware of, you don’t have any control over her behavior. So, if that doesn’t work, you might check with your phone carrier to see if you can get your phone number changed.

As far as Kristen is concern, if she sees you doing these things, it should assure her of your intentions. But also, Kristen needs to understand that you can’t control what Ann does. If she can’t understand that – and you’ve made every effort to get Ann to stop her behavior – then you’ve got a problem with your relationship with Kristen. And that’s a whole different problem, one dealing with trust.

Go to Dear Jody Valley on Facebook to find resources for everyday problems.

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.

Solution to puzzle from page 32

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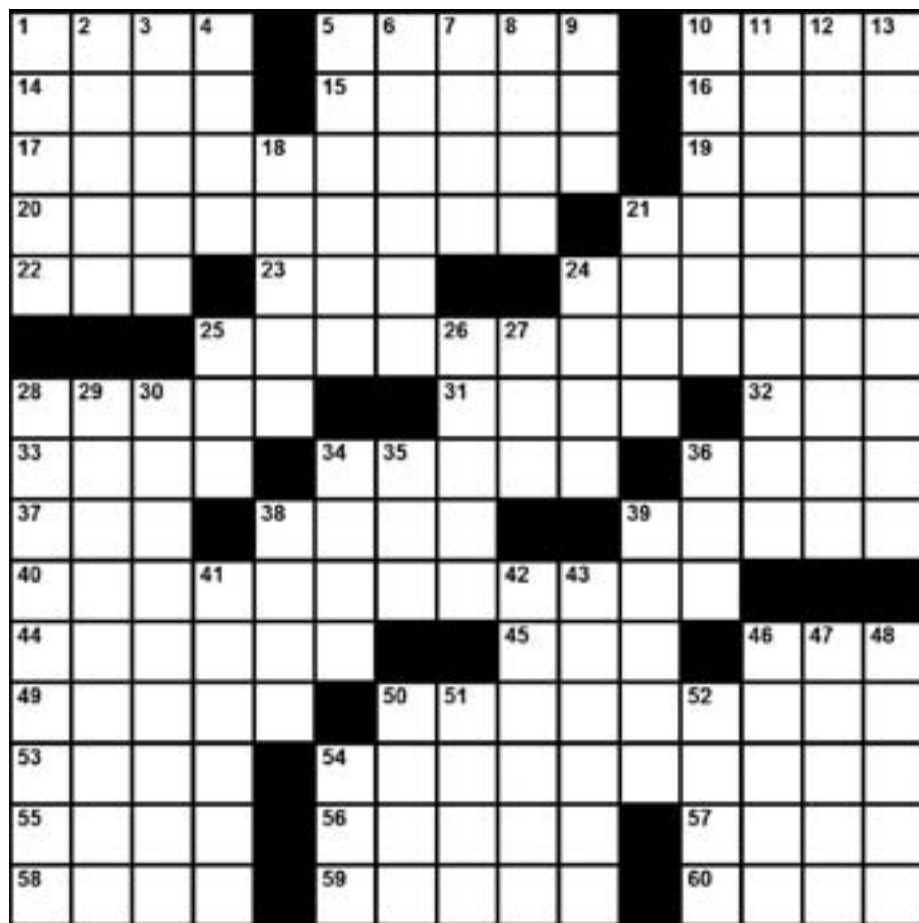
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Project Mercury

Across

- 1 Sprint at the Gay Games
- 5 Marlon Brando's hometown
- 10 Fruit ____ (gay district)
- 14 Really a fan of
- 15 Significant others
- 16 Cube designer Rubik
- 17 With 25-Across, Freddie Mercury song
- 19 Tartan wearer
- 20 Rita Mae Brown novel
- 21 Tennis great Ivan
- 22 Site of Gay Games VI (abbr.)
- 23 Queens on a chessboard, ironically
- 24 Shades
- 25 See 17-Across
- 28 "She'll Be ____ 'Round the Mountain"
- 31 Like some student bodies
- 32 Butch lesbian's fashion accessory
- 33 "The Wizard ____"

Down

- 34 With 40-Across, Freddie Mercury song
- 36 Jamie who cross-dressed on _M*A*S*_H_
- 37 Org. of Bears
- 38 Place for a wish
- 39 Endora portrayer
- 40 See 34-Across
- 44 Bacon serving
- 45 "I taught I ____ a puddy tat!"
- 46 Theater admonition
- 49 Playwright Chekhov
- 50 "Hollywood Squares" basis
- 53 Exchange at Metropolitan Community Church
- 54 Freddie Mercury song
- 55 Magritte or Russo
- 56 Like the space around Uranus
- 57 Hurler Hershiser
- 58 Traditional apple tree spot
- 59 Arouses with one's stick
- 60 Comes together

Down

- 1 Knobs, sometimes
- 2 Piss off
- 3 Brought up the rear?
- 4 Sexual attraction, with "the"
- 5 Egg concoction
- 6 Macho service man
- 7 Lying on
- 8 Prey for chicken hawks?
- 9 Org. for bears
- 10 Ten-incher, for example
- 11 Sumatra dweller
- 12 1955 Rock Hudson film
- 13 People with opinions
- 18 Cut off from escape
- 21 Served up whoppers
- 24 Pronoun for King James
- 25 Make an offer
- 26 Protection for one's head
- 27 Hard top?
- 28 "Au ____!"
- 29 Unrehearsed
- 30 Testicle in a large package?
- 34 Tear's companion
- 35 Shade maker
- 36 3-pointers to Kopay
- 38 "Lilacs" preceder in a Whitman title
- 39 Nobelist Sadat
- 41 Picked
- 42 Had a seven-year problem with Marilyn Monroe?
- 43 B westerns
- 46 Barneys, e.g.
- 47 Dumpy digs
- 48 Drag queen's shoes
- 50 Madonna's Blonde Ambition, e.g.
- 51 Leave-Beaver bridge
- 52 Drain trouble
- 54 Unruly mane

Solution on 31

Pet of the Week



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Rear View

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday

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

Bloomfield Hills-Thursday

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

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

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

Farmington Hills-Monday

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

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

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

Ferndale-Wednesday

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

Ferndale-Saturday

1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday

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

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday

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

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

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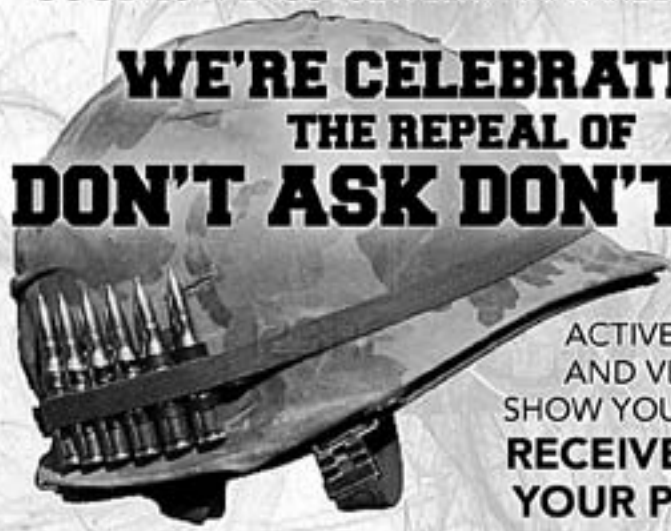
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BTL Cocktail Chatter

Irene

BY ED SIKOV

"Jack Fogg started it," I whined.
"You sound like a 6-year-old," Dan replied.
"But *he did!* It wasn't my fault."
"Oh yes it was," Dan said with finality. "He held out the bait, but you're the one who made the choice to bite."

I hate this kind of conversation – where you begin in satisfying moral outrage and end in abject shame. This one flipped in 15 seconds. I had no time to vent before Dan terminated the discussion with his wise observation, which was a line I'd used on him about eight months ago.

There had been *un petit* scene at the beach house. It was mercifully short – no blood, no corpses – but only because I bit my tongue and didn't point out to Mr. Harvard C. N. N. Aging Prepster that he was the most obnoxious ass I had ever plowed, and that he'd taken quite a different tone with me when I rammmed my etc. etc. etc.

We were all lined up on loungers around the pool: Jack Fogg, Sammy, Paolo, Chipper, Dan and me. Having finished sweeping up the leaves and branches that littered the deck, we stripped down to our swimsuits, and were happily watching in lust as the shirtless, straight, but turned-on-by-gay-gawkers pool boy skimmed and vacuumed more leaves out of the pool. Each of us had *un cocktail du weekend* in hand, and life was beautiful.

Then Jack Fogg cleared his throat portentously. My back was up even before he said anything. "Don't you think you're being, uh, a little obvious?" "About what?" I snarled. "I mean, really. Hurricanes?" He snickered smugly.

"It's a theme drink," I said with forced merriment – "the bartender's answer to occasional verse."

"Every queen on this island is drinking Hurricanes this weekend," Jack Fogg barreled on. "You made us trite." I noted with bitter amusement that he was polishing off his second Hurricane at the time.

"I told you," I said, irritated. "They are not Hurricanes. They are *Irenes*."

"You only used guava juice instead of passion fruit because the Pantry sold out of passion fruit. Their entire stock of passion fruit juice had already been snapped up by every other cliché-prone cocktail dominatrix in the Pines."

Dan's hand shot over and held my arm down. He knew that I was about to throw my



Irene in Jack Fogg's face.

"Boys," said Paolo.

"Girls," said Chipper.

"Dudes!" said Sammy. "You're both out of your friggin' minds! I don't care what they're called or what's in them or whether they're named 'Michele Bachmanns.'" "Wait a minute," Dan objected, but Sammy steamrolled through. "They're awesome!"

"I named them," Chipper announced.

"What? You think 'The Irene' is clever? That was the goddamn storm's name!" This came not from Jack but from Paolo.

"I didn't call them 'the Irene.' They are simply, chically named 'Irene.' Just one diamond-solitaire word. Like Adrian or Travilla. In fact, like *Irene!*" I high-fived Chipper for his command of one-named costume designers from the 1930s.

"Who?" asked Sammy.

"Never mind," I said, winking at Chipper.

"You're too young. And that's why we adore you." I got up, knelt next to Sammy, kissed him squarely on his rock-like six-pack, and headed for the kitchen to make another round.

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- 2 oz. dark rum
- 2 oz. light rum
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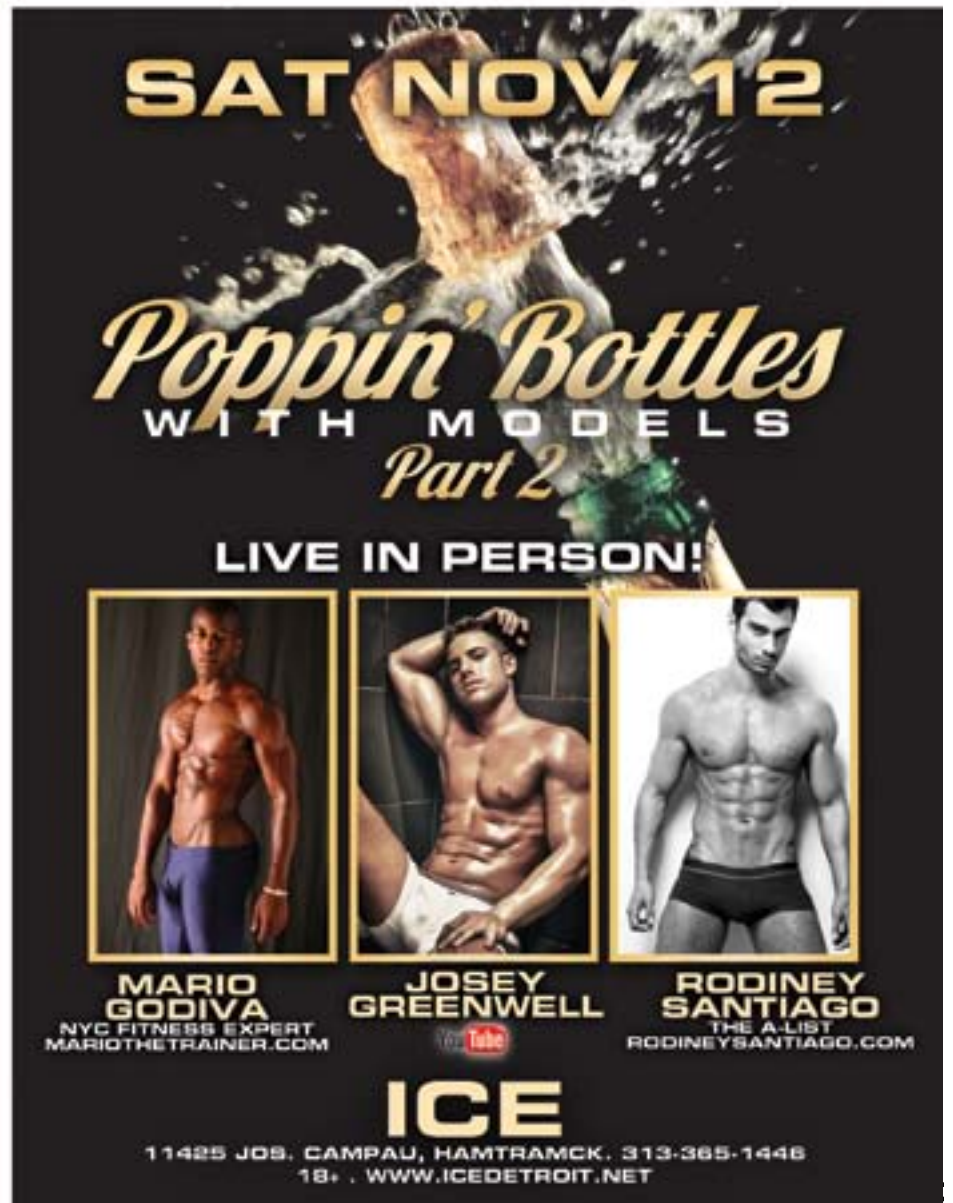
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