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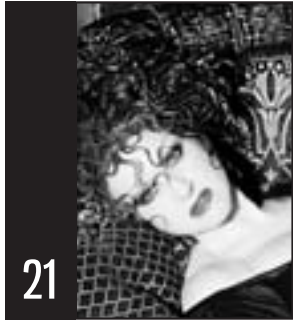
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Between THE Lines™



Motif presents 'It Gets Better' benefit concert

BIRMINGHAM – Bullying is a problem that affects countless people of all ages, religious beliefs, sexual orientations and races. A local group of talented musicians has banded together in an effort to celebrate diversity and hope. On Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. at the Birmingham Unitarian Church, Motif will present the "It Gets Better" benefit concert on behalf of the Trevor Project, a non-profit organization that provides crisis intervention to LGBT and questioning youth to prevent suicide. The Trevor Project has partnered with the It Gets Better Project, a collection of videos that inspire LGBT youth to get through their current difficulties with the promise of a brighter future ahead.

"There is so much diversity in our troupe," says co-founder Eric Swanson. "We aren't a huge group, but within us there is a variety of religions, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, occupations and world views. I think that speaks to our mission statement in the way we honor the perspective of each audience member and performer. Wherever we perform, we respect the differences of everyone in that space."

Even as musicians, Motif strives to eliminate the discrimination that happens within the industry and create a home where emerging artists can grow.

"There was too much local talent that wasn't being showcased," says co-founder Gerianne Ditto. "There aren't many opportunities in Michigan, many people move away to get things off the ground. Motif is an opportunity to give the community something it's lacking and broaden people's horizons of the music world - and the world in general."

Motif is encouraging everyone to come out and support the musicians and their message. The Birmingham Unitarian Church is located at 38651 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$15, \$8 for all students.

To learn more about the Trevor Project, visit www.thetrevorproject.org. To learn more about Motif, visit www.musicofmotif.com.

Praise Fellowship closes doors after 11 years

Praise Fellowship Christian Church held its last service on Oct. 9 after 11 years of ministry to the Detroit LGBT community. In an email sent by Rev. Rick Green he wrote, "Only God knows how many lives were touched over the years, how many came to know of God's love and care for His LGBT children. We are blessed to know that God used Praise Fellowship to bring many back to faith and many to reconcile their faith and orientation, or gender expression."

Over the years Praise Fellowship worked with the Ruth Ellis Center, held concerts, conferences, homosexuality and the Bible seminars, was a presence at Motor City Pride and helped build a school and church in the Dominican Republic.

"Never allow someone to keep you from being a person of faith. Find a community of faith that affirms who God make you to be and get involved," Rev. Green said in closing.

Cleve Jones looks back on a life of achievement

Activist to be honored at Equality Michigan awards dinner Oct. 22

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Cleve Jones got to experience something that every generation of gay men that came after him envies: He lived in San Francisco in the '70s, in a world without AIDS.

"What I remember most fondly about that time was just how new it was," said Jones, this year's recipient of the 2011 Catalyst Award for Lifetime Achievement, to be presented Saturday, Oct. 22 at the annual state dinner benefitting Equality Michigan.

"It was sexual freedom, but it was also the beginnings of a political movement and community building that hadn't ever happened before. I think all of us were aware that we were participating in something that was brand new."

At the helm of a lot of that, until his tragic assassination in late 1978, was San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first open gay elected official in the country. Jones worked as a political intern in Milk's office while attending San Francisco State University.

"Working with Harvey was wonderful," Jones recalled. "He was very kind and very funny. I think the most important lesson I learned from him was the importance of coalition building and reaching out to people who are different from us and not being frightened of those differences. When I got to San Francisco, I was very heterophobic and wanted to live in the ghetto. And watching Harvey, a gay Jewish guy from New York, and he came to San Francisco and conquered its heart. So it was a really important lesson to see how he could be open about who he was and find ways to connect with people in our common struggle."

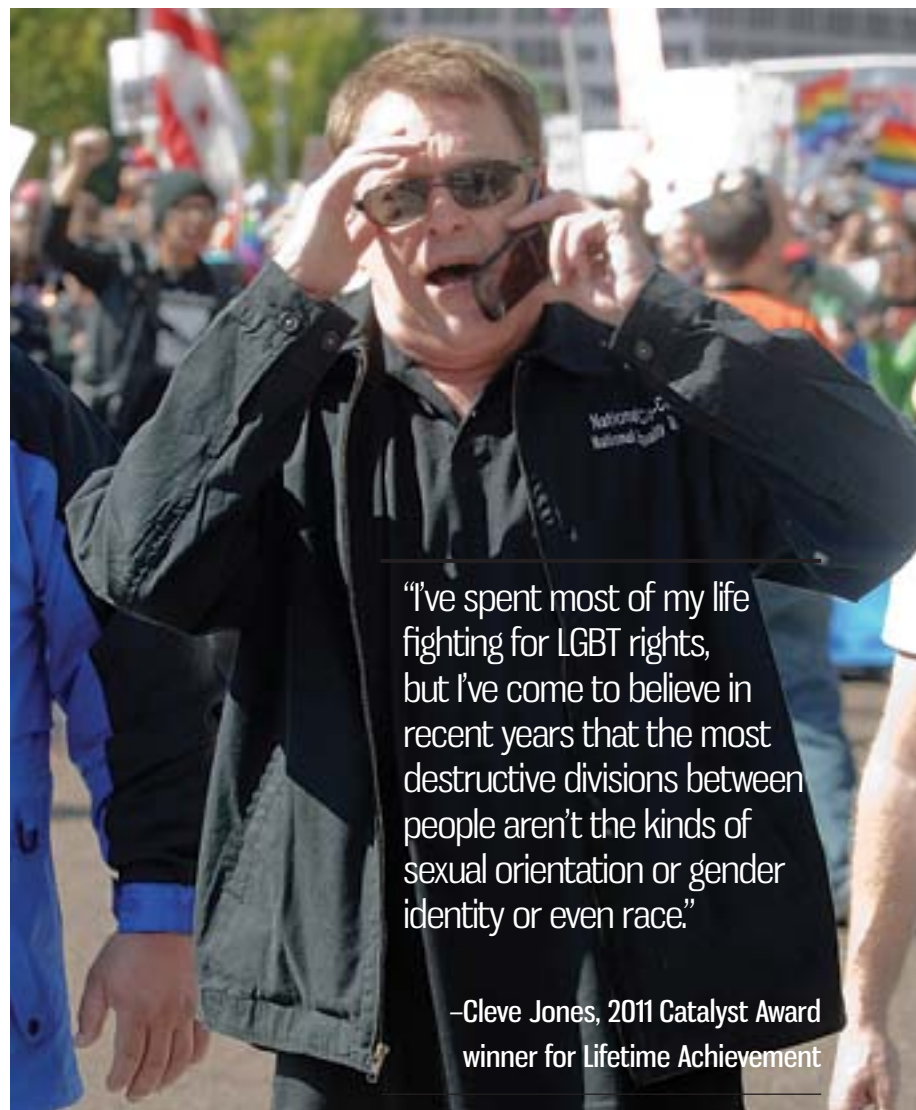
Not long after Milk was murdered, Jones began losing loads of other friends to something just as insidious: AIDS. Jones was losing friends and loved ones at an alarming rate before it even had a name. Most unsettling about this epidemic was how slow President Ronald Reagan and the federal government was to respond to it.

"We were abandoned," said Jones. "We lost most of our friends. I'll never forget that and I'll never forgive it."

Reagan never publicly uttered the words "AIDS" until 1987 – by which time, Jones said, more men had died from it than in the Vietnam War. Jones said that the tragic inaction of Reagan was stunning proof of the harm homophobia causes.

"Look at tens of millions of dead and dying heterosexuals and their children, who are dying because this country, who had the knowledge and the resources early on in this epidemic, failed to use them. And we failed for one reason, which is homophobia, which was very quickly compounded by racism ... there was an attitude of 'let them die.' It's a hard lesson to learn. I don't know if the world's learned it or not, but that's what happened."

Jones' reaction to the epidemic, in addition to co-founding the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, was to create the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. To date, the quilt, which features 40,000 panels, has been viewed by over 18 million



Cleve Jones at the October 2009 National March on Washington. Photo by: Joe Tresh

people, includes more than 90,000 names and has raised over 4 million dollars for people with AIDS. But when Jones first introduced the idea in the mid-80s, he was told over and over again how stupid it was.

"Whenever I'm speaking in high schools or colleges I always tell them that part of the story," said Jones. "That if they ever have an idea or something burning in their heart that they know they have to do, don't listen to what people say, just do it. One of the sad things about working in the LGBT community is that we're often very unkind to each other. I think most people that put themselves out there and fight for the gay community actually take more abuse from other gay people than we do from our heterosexual opponents."

Today, Jones works largely within the labor movement.

"I'm taking all of the lessons that my friends and I learned from the struggle for gay rights and the fight against AIDS to try to take those skills to the broader struggle for peace and social justice, not just in this country but around the world," he explained. "The whole country, and the whole

world, is facing some overwhelming challenges right now.

I've spent most of my life fighting for LGBT rights, but I've come to believe in recent years that the most destructive divisions between people aren't the kinds of sexual orientation or gender identity or even race. It's really about economic status and class and I think LGBT people can play a role because we're a part of all of these classes and maybe we can be the bridge builders and the people who build the coalitions necessary to save this planet. We've got some big issues in front of us and I want LGBT people to think about not just how to work with themselves, but how we can work with other people who address these issues."

Jones will be honored alongside Alexa Van Vliet (Henry Messer Youth Activist Award), State Senator Glenn Anderson (James K. Dressel Political Courage Award) and Rev. Ed Rowe (Ally in Faith Award) at the 2011 Catalyst Awards presented by Equality Michigan. For more information on the awards dinner, which will take place Saturday, Oct. 22 at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, visit www.equalitymi.org.

Former Assistant AG slammed by judge

Case alleging harassment of University of Mich. gay student continues

BY BTL STAFF

DETROIT – Former Michigan Assistant Attorney General Andrew Shirvell was reprimanded by a federal judge last week for attempting to find a shortcut to end a lawsuit against him for allegedly harassing an openly gay University of Michigan college student.

Beginning in 2010, Shirvell waged an online campaign against the former student body president, Christopher Armstrong. Shirvell also stalked Armstrong on campus, protesting his public appearances with harassing signage and shouting out insults. In April of this year, Armstrong, 21, filed a lawsuit against Shirvell, seeking more than \$25,000 in damages.

For most of the 2010 school year, Shirvell used his blog to harass and attack Armstrong, describing him as a “racist, elitist and liar,” and “Satan’s representative on the student assembly.”

“You’re basically at the beginning of the lawsuit trying to get to the end,” said U.S. District Judge Arthur Tarnow. “You’re wasting a lot of energy.”

The lawsuit alleges Shirvell “developed a bizarre personal obsession” with him in early 2010 after claiming the student was a radical homosexual activist. The suit also claims that Shirvell accused him of getting minors to drink alcohol and Armstrong was trying recruit others to become homosexuals.

Shirvell, who is representing himself, filed several motions to throw out the majority of a lawsuit. He claimed he was just exercising his

First Amendment rights. He also stated that Armstrong pursued a “course of action” against him “to make an example out of (me) in order to deter others from criticizing (Armstrong’s) homosexual activist agenda.”

Shirvell argued that he was not trying to inflict intentional emotional harm on Armstrong and that none of his criticisms of him were over the line of acceptable criticism.

Shirvell was fired by the state Attorney General’s Office in November 2010 for using his state computer to update his blog and then lying to investigators about it. In court, he continued to argue he’s the victim and that Armstrong is responsible for his professional troubles, including being fired.

Tarnow dismissed the motions saying that a jury would decide on the merits of the suit and that after his review of its allegations, and that in his opinion there was more than enough to move it forward to a jury trial.

“They are so many allegations that even if one of these are (true) you’ll be going to trial,” the judge told Shirvell. Tarnow repeatedly denied motions to knock out parts of Armstrong’s suit.

Tarnow told Shirvell he had proven the adage that it’s “not wise” to represent oneself in court.

Shirvell told the Detroit Free Press that “he plans to keep fighting and will file more motions to try to get the suit tossed before it gets to the jury trial phase.” Shirvell has asked Tarnow to compel Armstrong to answer questions about his sex life and religious beliefs.

Sexy Slam 2011 arrives at WSU

DETROIT– In the ongoing battle to prevent HIV, Status Sexy is going to war with some very hot words. The community mobilization project is sponsoring the first ever Sexy Slam 2011, an open poetry slam to fight HIV.

The event will be held on the campus of Wayne State University and hosted by Def Jam poet Malachi London. Admission is free. As a new way to get the message across, prevention-themed slams will be part of the competition. The event will also feature free and anonymous HIV testing along with free giveaways.

Established in July 2010, Status Sexy is the moniker for metro Detroit’s Community Mobilization Project. It is the result of a grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health to increase the level of testing among young black men who have sex with men in Detroit, Pontiac and Washtenaw County. AIDS

Partnership Michigan, in collaboration with HIV/AIDS Resource Center, is coordinating and overseeing all efforts.

The event is open to anyone who would like to slam on a first-come, first-slam basis. There’s a \$5 fee to slam. The first round will be 2 to 3 minutes, and must have a prevention message. Three to five finalists will then be selected for a final round of Poet’s Choice. Winners will receive cash prizes, and the first-place winner will also receive a custom microphone trophy created by local artist Alex Stchekine.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for registration and free HIV testing. First poetry round starts at 6:30 p.m., at 289 Student Center, 5221 Gullen Mall, WSU. Additional sponsors for the event include MedCart Pharmacy as well as Wayne State’s School of Social Work for the Advancement of LGBTQ Students and Allies.

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STATE LAWMAKERS TARGET LGBT CITIZENS

Bill would void all local protections for LGBT people

BY JAN STEVENSON

LANSING - On Oct. 5, anti-gay MI State House Rep. Thomas McMillin (R-Rochester) introduced a bill that would in effect negate all local ordinances protecting LGBT people from discrimination. It also would negate any protections that state universities, school districts or any other state agency has for LGBT people, and make it impossible for any local or state agency protections to be passed in the future.

If passed, House Bill 5039 would amend the state's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, passed in 1976, to limit protected classes to only those that are currently covered in the original legislation. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not

"It does seem hypocritical for the legislative majority to speak of local control and home rule when it comes to anti-bullying policies, then to try to take it away when it comes to civil rights for unprotected groups, like LGBT people,"

-Jay Kaplan, Staff Attorney for Michigan's ACLU LGBT project

protected classes under the current law.

"This bill is one of the most appalling pieces of legislation we've seen come out of Lansing so far. It's a direct attack on the well-crafted local ordinances around the state that go above and beyond state law," said Denise Brogan-Kator, executive director of Equality Michigan, a statewide organization that advocates for LGBT rights. "It also aims to exclude local voters from the democratic process. Local nondiscrimination ordinances are important - they send a crucial message that everyone, including LGBT people, should have a fair chance at a job. We need everyone who believes in equality to stand up and oppose this bill."

"I think McMillin's proposed legislation raises a number of legal issues," said Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for Michigan's ACLU's LGBT Project. "Under Michigan's constitution, municipalities have the right to 'adopt resolutions and ordinance relating to its municipal concerns,' which clearly includes the right to pass human rights ordinances that provide for anti-discrimination protections that include categories in addition to those in Michigan Civil Rights laws."

Kaplan said the legislature has to decide if they support the concept of home rule as enshrined in the state constitution.

"Why is the legislature seeking to micromanage local communities to tell them that there is limit to how much 'fairness' they can provide to their residents? It does seem hypocritical for the legislative majority to speak of local control and home rule when it comes to anti-bullying policies, then to try to take it away when it comes to civil rights for

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unprotected groups, like LGBT people," said Kaplan.

McMillin's bill is just the last in his long line of anti-LGBT obsessions. From 1994 to 1997 he was the field director for the Michigan Christian Coalition. In 2000, McMillin was heavily involved in the defeat of Ferndale's LGBT-inclusive Human Rights Ordinance where he was the treasurer of Oakland County Residents for Equal Rights Not Special Rights. The committee was heavily funded by the American Family Association and sent mail and made phone calls to voters encouraging them to vote down the ordinance.

When Royal Oak took up a similar ordinance, McMillin and his Special Rights group emerged again. That ordinance was defeated as well.

As an Oakland County Commissioner in 2003, McMillin sponsored and passed a resolution in support of the constitutional amendment

House Bill No. 5039 language

October 5, 2011, Introduced by Rep. McMillin and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

A bill to amend 1976 PA 453, entitled "Elliott-Larsen civil rights act," (MCL 37.2101 to 37.2804) by adding section 706:

Sec. 706. (1) A state agency or unit of local government shall not adopt any ordinance, rule, regulation, or policy that includes, as a protected class, any classification not specifically included as a protected class under this act. Any existing ordinance, rule, regulation, or policy that includes, as a protected class, any classification not specifically included as a protected class under this act is void.

(2) As used in this section: (a) "State agency" means a department, board, commission, office, agency, authority, or other unit of state government. (b) "Unit of local government" means a political subdivision of this state, including a city, village, township, county, authority, school district, community college district, intermediate school district, and public school academy.

banning marriage for same-sex couples. Similar resolutions were then introduced, and largely passed, by county commissions throughout Michigan.

Bill would permit counselors to discriminate at colleges

BY JAN STEVENSON

LANSING - On Oct. 5, a group of 34 conservative State House Republicans introduced a bill that would penalize colleges and universities if counseling students are required to provide services to all students. The bill would permit students to refuse to counsel a client if doing so conflicts with a student's religious belief or moral conviction.

The proposed act, known as the Julea Ward Freedom of Conscience Act, is named after the Eastern Michigan University former graduate counseling student who sued the school for dismissing her from the program because she refused to counsel a gay student and affirm his relationship. Ward's refusal, she told her supervisors, was due to her religious beliefs.

Ward lost her suit against EMU in federal court last year.

Walter Kraft, EMU's VP for Communications, explained that EMU's dismissal of Ward was not about LGBT issues or religion, but was about what is in the best interest of a client who is in need of counseling, and following the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association and the Ethical Standards of the American School Counselor Association. Those Ethical Standards require that counselors are not to allow their personal values to intrude into their professional work.

"As one of the premiere teacher-training institutions in the United States, Eastern Michigan University takes seriously our Constitutional mission to ensure that every student who graduates from our academic programs meets applicable curricular and regulatory requirements. We will continue to pursue and defend this mission at every opportunity," said Kraft.

"It's very dangerous to have the legislature micromanage public universities' curriculums that not only interfere with the university's autonomy, but could very well jeopardize their accreditation," said Jay Kaplan, staff attorney at the Michigan ACLU's LGBT project. "It raises constitutional concerns, and once again brings up the question of why? Why when we need our leaders to focus on the problems inherent in Michigan's economy are they wasting time and tax payers' money on legislation like this?"

Kraft strongly defended EMU's position in the ward case. "The July 2010 ruling by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan dismissed the entire case against EMU - all six claims against 17 defendants," said Kraft. "The Court's ruling reflected strong views on the case, as conveyed in this particular section: 'Plaintiff has distorted the facts in this case to support her position that defendants dismissed her due to her religious beliefs.'"

HOUSE BILL No. 5040 language

October 5, 2011, Introduced by Reps. Haveman, Rogers, Kowall, Daley, Pscholka, Heise, Shirkey, Hooker, Kurtz, Bumstead, Jenkins, Shaughnessy, Poleski, O'Brien, Knollenberg, MacMaster, Gilbert, Genetski, Franz, McMillin, Walsh, MacGregor, Huuki, Rendon, Lyons, Price, Johnson, Damrow, Foster, Olumba, Roy Schmidt, Yonker, Opsommer and Olson and referred to the Committee on Education.

A bill to protect the right of a student to assert conscientious objection to providing certain counseling or other services; to prohibit certain actions by institutions of higher education; and to provide remedies.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Julea Ward freedom of conscience act".

Sec. 3. A public or private degree or certificate granting college, university, junior college, or community college of this state shall not

discipline or discriminate against a student in a counseling, social work, or psychology program because the student refuses to counsel or serve a client as to goals that conflict with a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction of the student, if the student refers the client to a counselor who will provide the counseling or services

Sec. 5. (1) A person who alleges a violation of this act may bring a civil action for appropriate injunctive relief, or actual damages, or both within 90 days after the occurrence of the alleged violation of this act.

(2) An action commenced under subsection (1) may be brought in the circuit court for the county where the alleged violation occurred, the county where the complainant resides, or the county where the educational institution is located.

(3) As used in this section, "damages" means compensation for injury or loss caused by each violation of this act, including reasonable attorney fees.

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UNITY Campaign targets employment discrimination

BY ZACH CHILDREE

A coalition of Michigan pro-gay groups announced the start of a new campaign on Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day, to bring attention to the inequality in Michigan anti-discrimination laws.

"We want to warn Michiganders that coming out may cost them their jobs," said Jon Hoadley, director of the UNITY Michigan Coalition. "Our state still does not protect gay and transgender people from employment discrimination."

UNITY Michigan is a coalition of 6 pro-equality groups including Affirmations Community Center, ACLU of Michigan, Equality Michigan, KICK, The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion and the Ruth Ellis Center. The "Don't Change Yourself, Change The Law" campaign uses a humorous approach to point out that, in Michigan, people can be fired for being gay or even being suspected of being gay.

Denise Brogan-Kator, Executive Director at Equality Michigan said the campaign centers around the idea that it is ridiculous that a man can lose his job for wearing a pink shirt or a woman can lose her job for wearing a backpack. "Our campaign offers tongue-in-cheek tips on how to look 'not gay' at work. It's a humorous take on the extremes someone may have to go to to

keep their job," Brogan-Kator said.

Dave Garcia, Executive Director of Affirmations, said the hope is that the use of humor can spur serious conversation. "We are certainly not trying to make light of the fact that gay people can be fired," Garcia said. "I certainly didn't find it funny when I was fired for being gay. The focus [of the campaign] was that the absurdity of the law is so ridiculous that we felt humor would be the best way to go to reach the audience we're trying to reach."

Hoadley acknowledges that there are a lot of issues facing LGBT people in Michigan but the time to address employment discrimination is now.

"There are a ton of really important issues out there affecting LGBT folks," Hoadley said. "People are doing amazing work. But, we chose non discrimination protection because it impacts every Michigander, it's an issue whose time is overdue."

Hoadley said that non-discrimination policies are an issue that is gaining a lot of traction in a way for grassroots activists to get involved on a local level. Brogan-Kator pointed out that states where full LGBT equality is more of a reality started with employment non-discrimination legislation.

"One of the things that resonates with

the majority of Americans is the right of everybody to be able to work, to be able to engage in the stream of commerce, to be able to provide housing, healthcare and food for their families," Brogan-Kator said. "It goes to the core value of America."

While there is no specific legislation in the legislature which would remedy this issue right now, Hoadley said that Unity Michigan hopes to raise awareness about the issue in order to prepare the way for a solution. "Currently we want to be able to work with Michigan House Speaker James Bolger on finding an appropriate solution," Hoadley said. "The key point about this campaign is to say 'we know that the problem is that discrimination occurs and we want to find the most appropriate way to make sure that gay and transgender folks are protected in the law.'"

The website features downloadable wallpapers and posters which suggest ways in which an employee can appear "Not Gay".

"If you're good at your job, that should be the only thing that matters," Brogan-Kator said. "Don't change yourself, change the law!"

You can find more information about the campaign at www.dontchangeyourself.com along with links to UNITY Michigan.

Faith inclusion breakfast with Jacob Reitan

TROY— Jacob Reitan is the founder of the Soulforce Equality Ride and a well-known participant in the documentary "For the Bible Tells me So." On Friday, Oct. 21 the young activist will be the keynote speaker for a Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion breakfast where he will talk about Soulford Equality Ride and other projects he's implemented spreading a message of equality across the country.

"We chose Jacob Reitan to meet and speak to Michigan faith and equality leaders for a number of reasons," said Michigan Roundtable Manager Kevin Hogan. "He is unique because he is a high-profile LGBT equality activist who comes from a religious background. He has also obtained this position in the community at a very young age. At the Roundtable, we wanted our attendants, mostly ranging from age 40 to 80, to hear from a young person doing the work."

Hogan is especially proud of Reitan's organizing of the Soulforce Equality Ride, which brings gay students to schools that discriminate against LGBT individuals. "These tours have been a great success. They have created conversation at these colleges and universities where conversation never would have happened otherwise. It's helping to move LGBT equality issues forward."

"What I hope people take away from this breakfast is that as a faith community we need to work together for LGBT Equality in Michigan. The faith community has a powerful voice that can no longer be ignored by those individuals and political leaders who wish to limit basic human rights for all citizens - including the LGBT community."

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion is a 70 year old civil rights organization working to build relationships that create social justice and build sustainable inclusive communities for all. The breakfast is \$50 per person and takes place at the Troy Marriott Hotel located at 200 W. Big Beaver from 8-9:30 a.m. Tickets can be purchased online at www.mroundtable.org/lgbtfaith.html. Tickets may also be available at the door.

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Eye on Equality

BY ROLAND LEGGETT

The high cost of inequality

There is no question that we are in challenging economic times. Around the country, families are struggling to make ends meet, workers can't afford to retire and recent college graduates are unable to find jobs. The struggles that the country has been experiencing over the last several years have been particularly potent here in the Midwest. I'd argue that here in Michigan, we've been hit the hardest. Michiganders are hardy folks, and we often tackle adversity with a sense of humor. We have a saying that when the nation's economy catches a cold, Michigan's catches the flu. On top of this, many of Michigan's best and brightest workers have been forced to seek employment in other states with a more inviting economic climate.

The exodus of some of our best workers has gone a long way toward making our own economic comeback that much more difficult. It's because of this that I was very disheartened to read a study released by the American Journal of Sociology recently that found that employers in the Midwest are less likely to interview openly gay men for job openings. The Harvard University study found that "gay men encounter significant barriers in the hiring process because, at the initial point of contact, employers more readily disqualify openly gay applicants than equally qualified heterosexual applicants." Combine this with the fact that in Michigan, it is legal to fire someone because they're gay, and you have one of the most hostile employment environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees in the country.

Michigan's non-discrimination law - The Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act - prohibits discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations for a variety of categories of residents. However, the law does not include the LGBT community. The study underlines the importance of ensuring that the LGBT community be included in our non-discrimination laws. This is particularly important because these laws affect everyone in Michigan, not just the LGBT community. In addition to affecting individuals, Michigan's discriminatory climate hurts efforts to position the state as an inclusive and welcoming place to do business. In fact, 89 percent of the nation's Fortune 500 employers. Without a welcoming employment environment, these companies have a tough time attracting top talent, making it that much more difficult for them to do business in the state. All of this has made me wonder - if we want to turn our economy around, shouldn't we be adopting the

We fostered a workplace where an employee was evaluated based on the quality of their work, not based on who they love. We are now at a crossroads where we must decide if we are a country defined by innovation and equality or divisiveness.

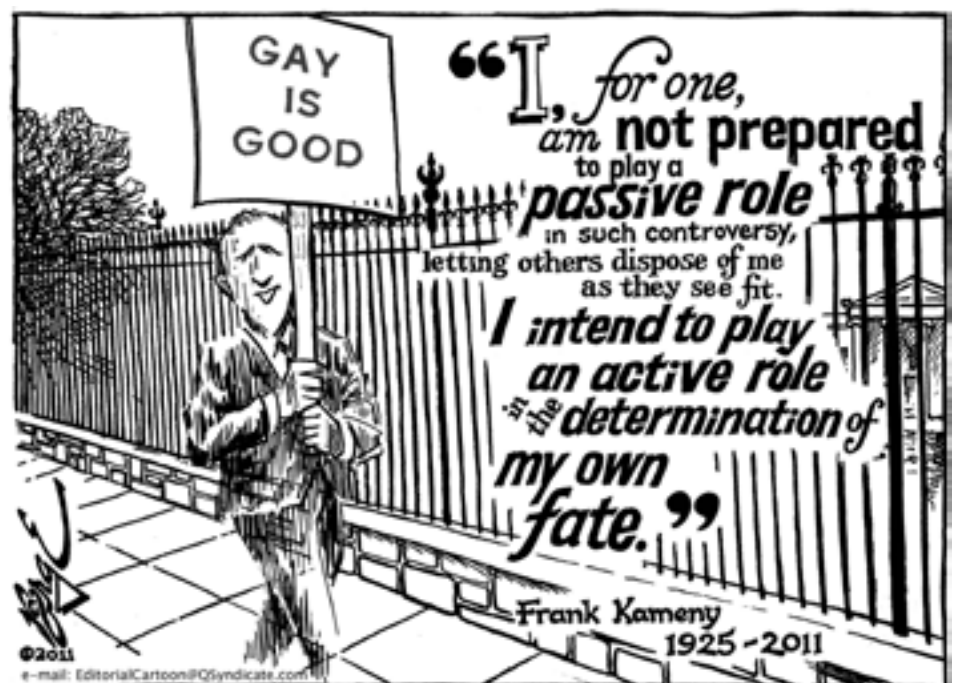
best practices of some of our most successful businesses?

I know that despite our challenges, Michigan has a unique opportunity to establish itself once again as a center of innovation here in the United States. We are more than just the birthplace of the automotive industry - arguably, we are the birthplace of the middle class. What made our economy so robust over the course of the last century was not only our ability to support and encourage innovation, but also to provide a fair and safe work environment. That means that we fostered a workplace where an employee was evaluated based on the quality of their work, not based on who they love.

We are now at a crossroads where we must decide if we are a country defined by innovation and equality or divisiveness. Updating Michigan's Elliott Larsen Civil

Rights Act to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression will go a long way toward protecting all families and supporting our economic comeback. Passing employment non-discrimination on the federal level will help to send the message to employers around the world that we are a country that values fairness and equality. As a nation, one of our greatest strengths is our ability to rise to a challenge. Our challenge now is not only to restore ourselves as being the world's premier economic engine, but also the place where all things are possible for all people.

Roland Leggett is the Director of Field Organizing at Equality Michigan, which recently launched a campaign, with five other organizations, to update the state's nondiscrimination law. Find out more at www.dontchangeyourself.com.





Parting Glances Then and Now

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Faded rabbits, empty hats

Shortly before retiring from the digitally enhanced adventure called teaching 14 years ago I chanced across a bound volume of back issues of news about students, teachers, education, circa early-50s.

Flipping through the collection I was startled to find a poem I had written while at Harry Burns Hutchins Intermediate School (to and from which I took a 10-cent bus ride for three happy years, 1948 to 1951. I still judge Hutchins one of my best education learning experiences.)

My poem was originally included in a student-illustrated hand-stapled, mimeographed booklet, "The Coach and Four." (I began writing poetry during my first summer at Baptist Camp. The "gift" came along with an equally inspiring crush on my camp counselor.)

Though I wrote "The Clock" when I was 13, I'll be the first to admit -modestly, of course -that there's about it a touch of precocious, otherworldly, Emily Dickinsonian, Americana genius. (Get you, Mary!) Said youthful opus contains insights not normally accessible to persons, shall we say, less "sensitive." Or, "jocund." Or, gay.

Here's the poem in its pristine simplicity. (I'll be delighted to read same in person for any festive occasion warranting the inclusion of a spiritually uplifting, LGBT-inspired, rhymed composition. Gratis.) And so...

"Our dusty old clock sits on the shelf./ Ticking softly there by itself./ Slowly counting the hours away./ As night turns to another day./ Winter. Summer. The whole year through:/ Tick tock, I hear it. Do you?/ We grow old and pass away./ But the clock goes on from day to day."

(Shared in remembering: when I went to Burton Elementary School part of our learning experience was memorization. So; If asked -again gratis -I can recite "Casey at the Bat" -an offer I'll add that was once curiously declined by the Womyn's Coffee House.)

Come to think of it as a kid I was Mr. Starlit Stairway -with an enthusiasm I find refreshing looking back on it.

In Auditorium class I excelled. We students learned rudiments of acting, blocking, projecting, and making five-minute speeches. I loved being center stage. It was fun.

At Hutchins I did a ventriloquism act, with a dummy named Hermann, purchased at Hall's Magic Shop, once located in downtown Detroit. I haven't a clue what my script was. I think it had something to do with the terrors of jaywalking, but apparently I got enthusiastic applause for my schizoid efforts.

That same year I put on a magic show at the Cass Avenue Methodist Church. As the proud owner of a multipurpose Gilbert's Magic Set: linking rings, deck of prepared cards, trick magic wands, vanishing handkerchiefs, fake mustache, I felt myself Harry Houdini incarnate. (Handcuffs came much later.)

My assistant was Carolyn Clark, whose father George Murray Clark claimed to have worked with Harry Blackstone, one of magicdom's greats. Our performance left a lot to be desired I'm sure. But Carolyn and I had a grand time, and the applause and free dinner made stars of us if only for an hour's indulgence.

(Carolyn's father would on occasion pretend to hypnotize me, for the amazement of apartment tenants gathered on the building's back porch. I'd go along with it for 25 cents a session, until he "suggested" I act like a five-year-old girl. Even then, there were limits to what roles I would and wouldn't do to augment my limited actor's equity income.)

Looking back on "me" I smile at the unsullied innocence of the likable kid I was. Life had a wow! pow! quality about it. Get out on stage. Take charge! Pull rabbits out of hats! Link rings. Change silken hankies: purple, blue, green, red, yellow, orange. Take bows. Hocus pocus!

Now you see it . . . Now you don't. (How time flies!)

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JACK CHRISTENSON REALTORS

Another gay teen, 15-year-old Jamie Hubley, committed suicide last Friday. When will it stop?

So sad.
-Johnny Rheume

Keep sharing.
-Donald Campbell

Sad.
-Frank Vaca

Two more of God's children have left this world due to kids who have nothing better to do than make life a living hell for those who are born different. To those "bullies" of the world, I say "How does blood on your hands feel?" It will be there for the rest of your life. Maybe when you become parents and one of your children is gay, perhaps then and only then will you truly feel the *sting* of what you have done.
-Nancy Jen Barrows

I am so sick of hearing news like this; when are the leaders of our countries going to stand up and demand an end to bullying. I am so sad to hear yet another innocent life gone because of ignorance and hatred and the toleration of it! RIP.
-Marc A Roark

When will this stop? ... We are all human in spite of who we choose to love.
-Dee Moor-Mouele

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

Political action, religion and bullying



Karen Ocamb

"LGBTs have a stake in this growing protest movement since our unemployment numbers and job searches are often made more complicated by having no job protections such as would be provided with the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. For instance, the Labor Department reported the unemployment rate for African Americans surged to 16.7 percent in August, its highest level since 1984, while the unemployment rate for whites fell slightly to 8 percent. The unemployment rate in California is 12.1 percent. LGBTs are in those statistics!"

-Karen Ocamb, in her column titled "Guide to 'Occupy Wall Street' Protests," about the relevance of the Occupy Wall Street movement to LGBTQ people, www.lgbtpov.com, Oct. 04.



Frank Kameny

"Gay is Good."
-Frank Kameny (1925-2011), considered the father of American Gay Movement, coined the phrase in 1968, publicly advocating the propositions that homosexuals were throughout the population, they were not mentally ill, and that there was neither reason nor justification for the many forms of discrimination prevalent against them, passed away on National Coming Out Day October 11, www.gaycitynews.com, Oct. 12. Kameny was fired from his U.S. government job in 1957 because he was homosexual and challenged the government's discrimination against him by appealing to the White House, the Civil Service Commission, and the Civil Service Committees of the US House and Senate, and the US Supreme Court. Kameny was a special invited guest when President Obama signed the bill that repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."



Charles M. Blow

"Children can't see their budding lives through the long lens of wisdom - the wisdom that benefits from years passed, hurdles overcome, strength summoned, resilience realized, selves discovered and accepted, hearts broken but mended and love experienced in the fullest, truest majesty that the word deserves. For them, the weight of ridicule and ostracism can feel crushing and without the possibility of reprieve. And, in that dark and lonely place, desperate and confused, they can make horrible decisions that can't be undone. I wrote that because I knew it - personally. Bullying isn't just a harmless game. It can be a deadly one, and we need to be reminded of that constantly. You never know how your words are affecting another person. Sometimes they don't tell. I never told."

-Charles M. Blow, in his New York Times op-ed column titled "The Bleakness of the Bullied," in light of the epidemic of bullying stories, revealing his disturbing story of being bullied alternately by classmates and extended family, www.nytimes.com, Oct. 14.



Dan Savage

"It is right-wing fundamentalist asshole monster Christians who are claiming to speak for all Christians, who are fighting the bad fight. Trying to prevent social progress for LGBT Americans."
-Dan Savage, in his keynote address, during a seminar titled "Pro-Queer Life: Youth Suicide Crisis, Catholic Education, and the Souls of LGBTQ People, which called upon the Catholic Church, as a significant provider of education and producer of culture, to seek the well-being of LGBTQ people," at the Union Theological Seminary, in an interview titled "Dan Savage Does Not Hate You*," http://thenewcivilrights_movement.com, Oct. 08.

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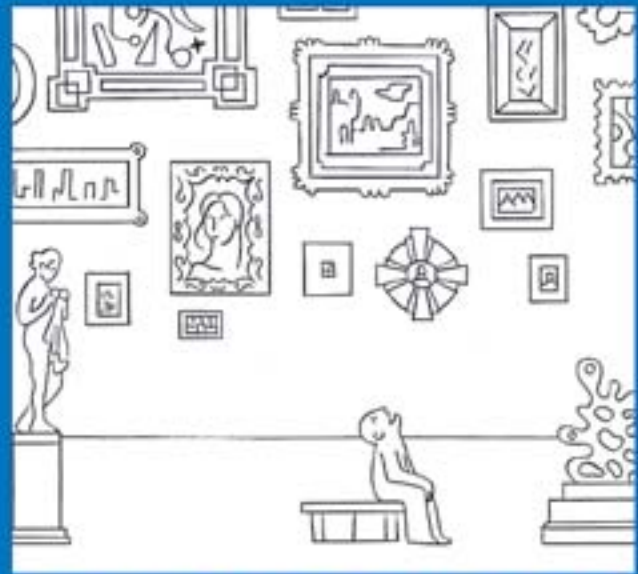


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John Boehner

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

The Defense of Marriage Act makes John Boehner weep. Not because of how sadistically cruel it is to gays and lesbians, nor how unconstitutional. No, DOMA makes him weep because he is in love with it. I dare say that Boehner wants to marry DOMA.



John Boehner

But he can't. Because that's not legal. However, Boehner can live in sin with DOMA so long as it's still on the books. And he's fighting like hell to keep it there.

You may recall that President Obama declared that DOMA was unconstitutional and that his administration wouldn't defend DOMA in court. Boehner went bananas and decided that if Obama wouldn't defend his beloved DOMA, then he would, personally. Not by himself, mind you, but with the help of a Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group. Don't let the name fool you. There's nothing bipartisan about this group. It has a decidedly pro-DOMA Republican majority telling House lawyers what to do. The two

Democrats in the group are basically window dressing.

On October 8 Boehner graced the stage of the Value Voters Summit, one of the most anti-gay conventions in the United States. "I've raised my hand to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and the laws of our country," said Boehner. "And if the Justice Department was not going to defend this act passed by Congress, well, then we will. And we have defended the law that the Congress passed."

Boehner and Company's latest legal maneuver is to argue that because gays and lesbians have political clout they don't deserve the kind of legal protections that, say, racial minorities receive.

Oh, got it. Since homosexuals aren't downtrodden little match girls, they're on their own. The government isn't going to step in and protect them from discriminatory laws.

Also, the pro-DOMA congressmen argue that DOMA isn't bothering anybody. "There is nothing intrusive in the least about DOMA," they said. "It is simply a definitional statute that defines, for federal law purposes, marriage and spouse."

Got it? It's just a simple little definition. No harm no foul. Unless, of course, you consider what falls under "for federal law purposes." If a gay couple married in, say,

Massachusetts moves to, say, Michigan wants to file a joint tax return, no dice. Social Security survivor benefits? Nope. Need an I-130 visa so your immigrant spouse isn't deported? Too bad, so sad.

But hey, that's not intrusive at all.

"A spate of recent news stories only confirms the conclusion that homosexuals are far from politically powerless," the filing says. "Accordingly, gays and lesbians cannot be labeled 'politically powerless' without draining that phrase of all meaning."

In other words, "Quit yer whining, homos. Sure you're still discriminated against, but you're not discriminated against as much. Any less discrimination and you'd practically be full-fledged citizens worthy of respect and protection under the law." And that'll happen as soon as monkeys fly out of Boehner's (totally not gay) butt.

If only gays and lesbians were "politically powerless." Ah, to go back to the pre-Stonewall days.

Actually, Boehner and his boys are right. If it weren't for Stonewall and the brave gays and lesbians of that era there probably wouldn't be a DOMA at all. DOMA was, after all, a reaction to the growing visibility and political savvy of homos. And once homos stopped letting themselves to be loaded into police vans and started fighting back, it was hard to argue that they were weak and pathetic. The strength of gays and lesbians has only grown.

No wonder Boehner's afraid.

Boehner went bananas and decided that if Obama wouldn't defend his beloved DOMA, then he would, personally. Not by himself, mind you, but with the help of a Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group.

Pioneering gay activist Frank Kameny dies at 86

BY BRETT ZONGKER AND JESSICA GRESKO

WASHINGTON (AP) - Frank Kameny was out and proud before people knew what being "gay" meant.

Fired from his job as a government astronomer in 1957 for being gay, he refused to go away quietly. Instead, he got louder. He took his case to the Supreme Court in 1961 and helped stage the first gay rights march in front of the White House and Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 1965.

Kameny died Tuesday at 86, leaving a 50-year legacy as an advocate who chipped away at countless other barriers for gay people in America. Kameny served as the initial protester, leader and legal strategist of what would become a movement, one historian said.

"Frank Kameny was the Rosa Parks and the Martin Luther King and the Thurgood Marshall of the gay rights movement," Yale Law Professor William Eskridge told The Associated Press in May when Kameny's papers became part of a Library of Congress exhibit on U.S. constitutional history.

"Frank never accumulated a nest egg or a retirement fund or any of that," Eskridge said Wednesday after learning of Kameny's death. "His full-time occupation was activism."

In recent years, Kameny saw changes in society that he never thought possible. Gay marriage became legal in a handful of states, including his adopted city of Washington. In 2009 he stood in the Oval Office as President Barack Obama signed a directive extending benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees. Most recently he celebrated the repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

"Being gay has become infinitely better than it was," he said in May.

Kameny was proud of his work toward gaining equality for gays and lesbians. When his petition to the Supreme Court was put on display at the Library of Congress, he was clearly tickled.

"I suppose you can say at this point, I have become one of the creators of the United States," he told the AP, echoing the exhibit title "Creating the United States."

Gay rights groups said it was Kameny's work that helped make life better for gay Americans and called him a pioneer and an inspiration. He had been in poor health and died on what is celebrated as National

Coming Out Day, when many gay people celebrate coming out and encourage others to have the courage to do the same.

In 2009, Kameny said he wanted to be remembered most for coining the phrase "Gay is Good" in 1968 to counter an onslaught of negative language about gays and lesbians.

Franklin Edward Kameny was born May 21, 1925, in New York City. He graduated from Queens College and served in World War II before earning a doctorate in astronomy from Harvard.

He was a government astronomer for just five months when he was asked to meet with federal investigators. He had been arrested for a misdemeanor in San Francisco that tipped off the civil service that Kameny was probably gay, and was fired, Eskridge said.

Kameny didn't back down. He contested his firing, writing letters to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, both houses of Congress and eventually the White House. He sued and lost in lower courts but pressed on with a lengthy brief in 1961 that is now regarded as the first civil rights claim based on sexual orientation to be brought to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The court denied his petition.

Soon after, he co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington, which advocated for equal rights for gays and lesbians.

In 1965, Kameny and 10 others became the first to stage a gay rights protest in front of the White House and later at the Pentagon and in Philadelphia.

"First class citizenship for homosexuals," their signs read, along with "Homosexuals ask for the right to the pursuit of happiness." They wore suits and dresses at Kameny's insistence.

He wrote to then-president Lyndon Johnson saying gay people were second-class citizens "in a country which claims that it has no second-class citizens."

Kameny's sister, Edna Lavey, 83, said her brother was championing gay issues when the subject was still taboo.

"The word gay did not exist yet," she said Wednesday from her home in New York. "Before that time homosexuality was never mentioned. It was a different world then."

Lavey said her brother was willing to endure verbal abuse and tormenting to try to win people over.

"My brother didn't care how unpleasantly he was treated," she

said, adding that as long as he was getting publicity for his cause, that was all he cared about. "He wanted homosexuality to be recognized as something not abnormal, just another way of living."

Kameny's early activism and advocacy for soldiers and federal workers who faced discrimination provided a model for the civil rights group Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union's agenda on gay rights. He also helped persuade the American Psychiatric Association to delete homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses in 1973.

Friends and his sister said Kameny never spoke of having a long-term boyfriend or partner.

"Frank was guarded and private," said Bob Witeck, a Kameny friend for three decades. "Often when asked about it, he said he didn't have time for that."

He didn't have a regular job for most of his life, depending on friends and family for support.

In later years, Kameny was increasingly recognized for his work as a gay rights pioneer.

A self-described "pack rat," Kameny amassed thousands of documents related to his activism and gay rights history.

In 2006, gay rights groups had the papers appraised and bought them from Kameny for \$75,000. They donated some 70,000 items from his collection - ranging from letters to buttons and picket signs - to the Library of Congress and Smithsonian.

In 2009 the U.S. Office of Personnel Management issued a formal apology to him for being fired solely based on his sexual orientation. The office is headed by John Berry, who is gay.

On Wednesday, Berry said Kameny was a hero who was feisty and combative and whose "force of will led to victory in a decades-long fight for equality."

Berry said Kameny "showed his ability to forgive" by accepting his official apology "for the sad and discredited termination of his federal employment."

When gay marriage became legal in the nation's capital in 2010, Kameny attended the first weddings. That same year the District of Columbia designated a portion of 17th Street as "Frank Kameny Way."

Planning is under way for a memorial service in November.

Online: <http://www.kamenypapers.org>

Frank Kameny: A personal remembrance

BY JOHN CORVINO

I was in San Francisco when I received the news, about to go on stage to deliver a National Coming Out Day lecture. A friend texted me: "Frank Kameny passed away today." The godfather of the gay rights movement died in his sleep at the age of 86.

Like others, I saw Frank as a movement giant. But I also had the great privilege of knowing him personally, having participated on a listserv and exchanged many e-mails with him over the years. Mostly I saw him as a moral force, an elder from whom to draw both wisdom and fortitude.

I last saw Frank two years ago, when I was a volunteer faculty member for Campus Pride's Leadership Camp. Camp was in D.C. that summer, and when I told everyone that I knew Frank and that I could arrange for him to visit, I drew the expected reaction: the faculty were in awe, and the campers (all of whom were college students) were quizzical: "Who's Frank Kameny?"

The easiest way for me to answer that question succinctly was to say, "Frank Kameny is like the Rosa Parks of the gay rights movement." But the analogy is imperfect in many ways. Parks' civil disobedience was backed by an organized movement; Kameny had to forge a movement. Parks is in the history books; Kameny - like LGBT history more generally - has been largely overlooked, despite his half-century of leadership.

It is no exaggeration to say that every living

LGBT person has benefited from that leadership. Frank was out and fighting at a time when being openly homosexual was not only professional suicide - Frank lost his job as a government astronomer in 1957, and never again worked in the field - it also put one in physical danger. But Frank never shrank from the fight for justice.

Elsewhere in this issue is a full obituary, detailing Frank's many accomplishments. Here I want to highlight three lessons which I personally carry with me thanks to Frank. They were the sort of things of which he would often remind me and others in the vigorous e-mail correspondence he kept up; things that, even now, I can hear his distinctive voice saying.

Jonathan Rauch once wrote aptly that Frank's voice "has been compared, unfairly, to a foghorn (unfairly, that is, for the foghorn)." But foghorns do get your attention.

Three lessons

The first lesson is parity. Whenever someone asked "What makes people gay?", Frank insisted that the question could not be separated from the question "What makes people straight?" Because of his unrelenting belief in equality, he challenged any approach that treated homosexuality as "abnormal" or in need of some special explanation.

The second is engagement. Whenever Frank would hear me or other "young" activists griping about some stupid anti-gay argument, policy, or

legislation, he would growl "Don't tell me, tell them! Contact the people who can do something about it."

Frank himself was constantly writing letters to anti-gay legislators, public figures, and bloggers. Here's an excerpt from one, written in Frank's distinctive style:

"Our true God gave us our homosexuality as a divinely-inspired gift and blessing, to be enjoyed to its fullest, exultantly, exuberantly, and joyously.

'Gay is good, Godly, moral and virtuous, and American. You homophobes are evil, ungodly, immoral and sinful, irrational to the point of utter lunacy and beyond, and un-American and anti-American. You don't have a clue to what America and true Americanism are all about.'

The reference to "God" is amusing: Frank was an outspoken atheist. But he didn't mind helping himself to religious rhetorical flourish when the moment called for it.

The third lesson was about seizing the moral high ground. Frank understood that the fight for equality was a MORAL fight if anything is. He once told me that his own proudest accomplishment was coining the slogan "Gay is Good" in 1968; it captured his vision succinctly.

My own work as "The Gay Moralist" has been powerfully influenced by Frank's example of never conceding "moral values" to the other side.

Let me close with a favorite personal anecdote.

In 2004 Frank came to Detroit to speak at a screening of the documentary "Gay Pioneers,"

Jonathan Rauch once wrote aptly that Frank's voice "has been compared, unfairly, to a foghorn (unfairly, that is, for the foghorn)." But foghorns do get your attention.

in which he is prominently featured. Before the film Frank visited my house for dinner. When I offered drinks in my living room, he asked if I had any peach schnapps. To my surprise, I found some in the cabinet, so I poured him some. Then some more, and more again, not really keeping track. Finally, when it was time to leave for the film, we all stood up ... and Frank proceeded to trip over my coffee table and fall flat on the floor.

Everyone gasped. A news headline flashed before my mind: "Young gay writer kills veteran gay activist with cordial." But then Frank spryly jumped up, laughed, and boomed in that unforgettable voice, "Too much peach schnapps!"

I'm raising a glass of schnapps to you, Frank. We will always remember: Gay is Good.

John Corvino is a philosophy professor at Wayne State University in Detroit.

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Gay military personnel ready for 1st convention

BY LISA LEFF

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - The nation's only professional group for active-duty gay military personnel is holding its first conference in Las Vegas this weekend, an event only made possible by the recent lifting of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prohibited gay and lesbian troops from serving openly in the armed forces.

The OutServe Leadership Summit is designed to highlight the diversity of gays in the military and the challenges they face, and marks the largest gathering of gay troops in one location since the ban was lifted last month. OutServe is a formerly clandestine network of gay and lesbian service members that lobbied the Pentagon to support repealing "don't ask, don't tell."

The four-day conference kicked off Thursday at the New York, New York hotel/casino with private meetings for leaders of the group's 48 chapters around the world. At least 215 service members, veterans and civilian supporters - registration was capped to make the event manageable - have signed up to mingle and to attend panel discussions that range from marriage and the push to secure benefits for gay military spouses to post-military careers and the remaining ban on transgender troops. The CIA is among the event's sponsors, and other scheduled workshops include topics such as Scriptures and Homosexuality.

"There are issues of leadership and faith and family that are specific to our community and that by addressing, our folks can be better soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and better leaders," Sue Fulton, a founding OutServe board member and the first openly gay West Point graduate to be appointed to the academy's board.

OutServe announced Thursday that an openly gay Department of Defense official, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Douglas Wilson, would keynote the summit's Saturday night dinner, which also will recognize a Minnesota couple, Jeff and Lori Wilfahrt, whose son was killed this year while serving in Afghanistan with an Army unit whose members knew he was gay.

"Part of the goal of the conference is to recognize the past, and also as an organization plan for the future," said Ty Walrod, a civilian

who co-founded OutServe and served as its spokesman when his friend and co-founder, Air Force 1st Lt. Josh Seefried, used an alias to avoid being discharged under "don't ask, don't tell."

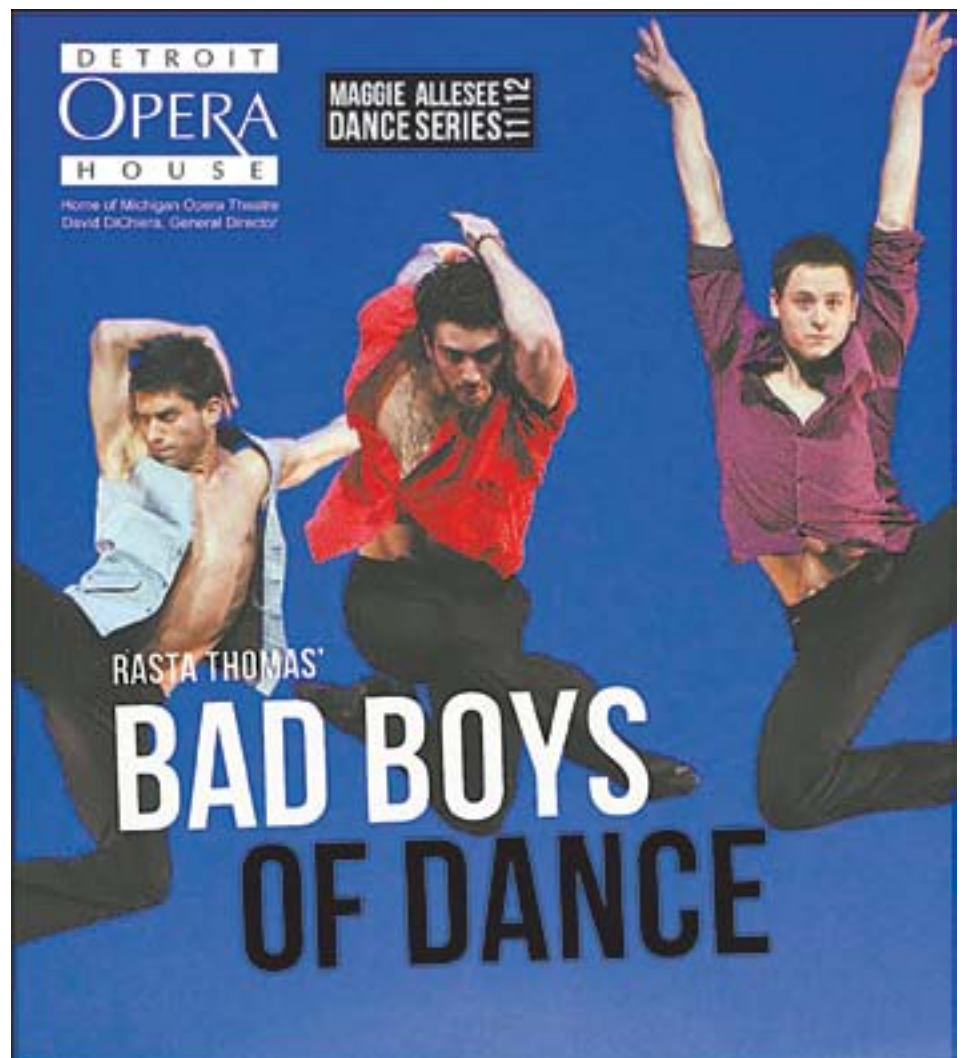
Nathaniel Frank, a historian whose 2009 book, "Unfriendly Fire," argued that banning gays from serving freely hurt U.S. military readiness, said that gay men and lesbians have formed secret social networks going as far back as World War I. Aided by technology, research and the public's increasing indifference to sexual orientation, OutServe is the first such group to be able to take its activities from anonymous to aboveground, he said.

"Don't ask, don't tell' obviously required people who in many cases needed support, the support of each other and mutual assistance, to remain in the shadows even to one another," Frank said. "So to have a conference like this, where people can step out of the shadows and come together to discuss the things that are important to being the best soldiers they can be, is historic and is essential and is one of the reasons so many people have been advocating for an end to a policy that requires you to hide."

OutServe leaders announced plans for the convention in May, two months before Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen and President Barack Obama certified that the armed forces were ready to welcome openly gay and lesbian troops. Under the law abolishing "don't ask, don't tell" that Congress passed in December, the policy would not officially end until 60 days after such certification.

The timing ended up working out, but if the ban had remained in effect, this weekend's summit would have most likely been postponed "out of respect for the military and for the policy," Fulton said.

Organizers are acutely aware that some opposition to the integration of gay and lesbian troops still exists in Washington and within the U.S. military. They reminded conference participants this week that they should not make comments that could be perceived as political. They were also urged to not wear their uniforms since the conference is not an official military event, or engage in the debauchery for which Las Vegas is known.



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Cyndi shines

After all these years, singer/activist isn't so unusual – she's just human

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Twenty-five years ago, Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors" shined through – on the radio, and in the hearts of so many. It was in the midst of the horrifying AIDS epidemic when she lost her dearest gay friend, came across the song, and made it into a hit that comforted millions.

"I was very much in mourning," the 58-year-old icon recalls of the chart-topper, the title track from her 1986 album, in our recent

chat. "I was sad and I wanted to be able to do something. He wanted me to sing a song for him, and I had written one ("Boy Blue"). That didn't work out too good, because I wrote about my feelings – which were big."

But "True Colors," originally written by Billy Steinberg and Tom Kelly for Anne Murray, spoke to her. Years later, it's not just a song; it's an anthem for everything that Lauper – a selfless, admirable activist for the community – stands for. As part of her True Colors Fund, she launched a project last year, the Give a

Damn Campaign, to create awareness of LGBT discrimination with the help of high-profile celebrities; many of them heterosexual.

"In any civil rights movement, you need everybody," Lauper says with heartfelt indignation. "That's how you win. You need your straight allies."

She had them on the tour, also named after the song, which ran for two years and featured Debbie Harry, Margaret Cho, The B-52s and Erasure. Now, Lauper's showing her support with a shelter, recently opened in Central Harlem, to

offer supportive housing for LGBT youth without any place to go, who may have been thrown out of their own homes. A mother herself, Lauper can't fathom a parent disowning their child.

"Parental love should be unconditional," she says. "Love your kid for who they are or who they aren't. The parent/child bond should never be broken."

But if it is, they have a place that loves them: the True Colors Residence. Lauper's quick not to take all the credit, though; she names off a

See Cyndi Lauper, page 25

'Speaking Out' tells 13 stories of bullied youth



"Speaking Out!," edited by Steve Berman. Bold Strokes Books, 284 pages, \$13.95 paper.

This anthology of fiction about LGBTQ youth facing down bullying and coming out into self-assured lives is certainly timely, after a sad summer of too many teen suicides. Edited with a craftsman's skill by Berman, the 13 stories embrace every letter of the queer community's tongue twister of an acronym: Rigoberto Gonzalez, one of the more accomplished contributors, opens the collection with "Lucky P," about relatively loving parents confused by their son's attraction to both girls and boys; Sandra McDonald closes the book with "All Gender U," about a boy with a preference for girl's clothes angling for a college recommendation letter. Dia Panne's "The Spark of Change," about a lesbian who shames her firefighter father for refusing to respond when a small town's lesbian couple's house is ablaze, is the book's most emotional; Lucas J.W. Johnson's "Subtle Poison," about a trans-boy's tortured relationship with both family and friends is the most (nearly) tragic. Queer and questioning teens are likely to

find themselves reflected in one or more of this heartfelt anthology's stories; let's hope it finds a place on the nation's school library shelves.

"Moffie," by Andre Carl van der Merwe. Europa Editions, 368 pages, \$15 paper.

Young Nicholas Van der Swart, already scorned by his strict Afrikaans father as a moffie – a gay sissy – is an unhappy conscript into South Africa's National Defence Force in the 1970s. Apartheid still rules, homosexuality is deemed abhorrent by both church and state and the segregated nation is fighting a dirty guerilla war along its border with Angola – not the best of worlds for a sensitive young man. Despite brutal military harassment and the suicide of a fellow conscript broken by grueling boot-camp training, Nick forges close friendships with three other boys, and finds first romance with one, while defying every effort by one particular officer to humiliate him. Flashbacks to the narrator's boyhood reveal some good times, particularly before Nick's beloved and protective older brother dies tragically. For the most part, the military bullying is foreshadowed by schoolyard humiliations and a father's intolerance. But by story's end, this atmospheric fact-based fiction tells the gracious story of a boy growing into a man and of a moffie triumphing over internal fear and external prejudice.



"Folsom Street Blues: A Memoir of 1970s SoMa and Leatherfolk in Gay San Francisco," by Jim Stewart. Palm Drive Publishing, 224 pages, \$14.95 paper.

It was a time and a place that will never be again – freewheeling, pre-AIDS San Francisco, South of Market, an era echoed faintly today by the city's annual Folsom Street Fair but chronicled with gusto by a survivor with a splendid memory, an easy wit and a way with words. Stewart's jaunty memoir of his years living in the Folsom – with a short detour to the Russian River – is more personal narrative than it is sweeping history. And, as befits a man who in younger years photographed the butch and the beautiful, it's more a series of anecdotal snapshots than it is a linear narrative. Intertwined with Stewart's own occasionally bawdy memories are notable gay names of yore, including leather legend Jack Fritscher (publisher of this book almost four decades after meeting Stewart) and artist Chuck Arnett, whose manly mural for South of Market's Tool Box bar was featured in "Life" magazine in 1964. For the author's peers, this is a breezy

trip down memory lane; for younger readers, it's a proud remembrance of things past.

"Status," by Marvin K. White. RedBone Press, 180 pages, \$10 paper.

This amusing, reflective, quixotic, self-proclaimed collection of poetry (looks more like prose, though) is a splendid oddity. According to the back cover, the hand-sized book is "...an emergent poetic form, the Facebook status." So it's snippets of thought, then, suitable for posting (if not all actually posted) for White's friends and "friends" to see? Could be. Most of the entries are pithy: "Fall is forgiveness weather." Some are witty: "No, skinny jeans ain't Jesus but yes, you can rejoice in their second coming." Some ask questions of unfathomable depth: "Why is it legal for dogs to pee outside and not you?" Some assume the tone of a self-help thought-a-day book: "Take some credit for just being here" and "Cut this joy with water to make it last longer." And, most Facebookly: "Friend requests are 'Hello' and not marriage proposals or IRS audits. Enjoy the familiar spirit of Facebook and the nosy neighborliness of it all." Inventive, addictive and inspirational, this is one weirdly great book.

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Bette, 'Bridesmaids' and Jem

Bette Midler: The Showgirl Must Go On

"I'm alive!" Bette Midler joyfully proclaims at the onset of her appropriately glitzy, gay and all together fab Vegas show. Unless you were aware that the Divine Miss M spent two years (180 shows!) at Vegas' Colosseum in Caesars Palace, who can blame you for thinking Midler had dropped dead? M's been on the downlow in the last decade, releasing just a Christmas album in 2006 before heading out to Sin City for this wildly entertaining but less-ornate-than-Celine show at the Colosseum, now on DVD and Blu-ray. You'll feel jipped considering that almost a third of the live show was cut for the release, an abbreviated version that clocks in at just over an hour (allegedly, it was an hour-and-a-half concert. Bette even says so. On the DVD!). Not cool, but definitely not as lame as the lack of extras – what, no backstage access? No Miss M commentary on the flamboyantly outrageous get-ups? I wanna see Bette do a



quick change, dammit! Still, "The Showgirl Must Go On" is a real treat, showcasing Bette's biggest hits: "Friends," "The Glory of Love," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "From a Distance" and "Wind Beneath My Wings." She loses all the frills for "The Rose," stunningly singing it under a single spotlight like she was 30 years younger. Her voice, even at 65, still stirs with power and personality. But a Vegas show isn't just

about the singing and in-between banter (what's a Bette show without boob talk?), and so there's sequins, an "Octomom" mouth couch, shimmery backdrops and a troupe of dancers called "The Caesar Salad Girls." It's all very gay, and very funny, even without Midler making note of the fact. "I share the Colosseum with Cher. Does it get any gayer?" Nope. Sure doesn't.

Jem and the Holograms: The Truly Outrageous Complete Series!

Madonna, Cyndi, Whitney... Jem? Yep, the cartoon chick rocker was as much a part of the '80s as those real-life divas with big hair and boy fans. She was truly outrageous, but if you knew Jem – and what gay kid growing up in the '80s didn't? – that's not all she was. She sang and worked the Tina Turner 'do like a contestant on "RuPaul's Drag Race." She was Superman with a vagina and an electric guitar. An explosion? Jem dodged it. Car dangling over a cliff, about to fall off and kill everyone inside it? Not with Jem around. Fancy earrings gave her persona-swapping powers that instantly morphed her from everyday Jerrica to Jem, rad rock goddess. She could time travel! Be a mermaid! But the real reason for her supernatural switches

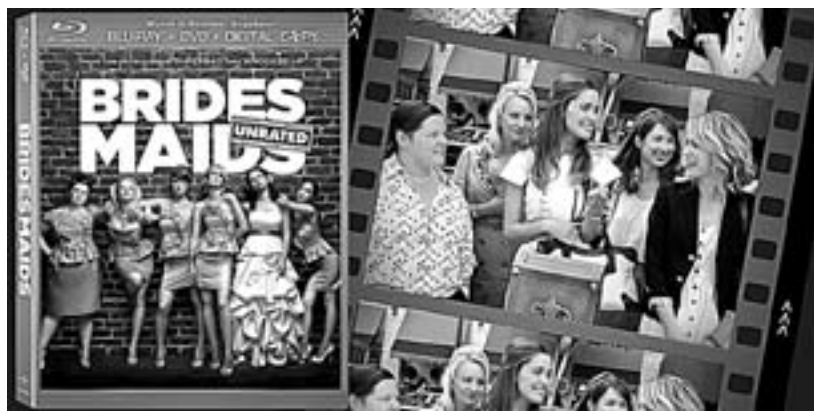


was to support a foster program for girls called Starlight. Cool couture was just a bonus. "Jem and the Holograms" was a sign of its times: a cultural zeitgeist that mirrored MTV (you know, when MTV played music) with its attitude, glamour and mini music videos – not to mention cheesy dialogue and absurd shit's-going-down cliffhangers – that were part of

every episode. All 65 are featured on this DVD box set, which includes the entire four-year run and never-before-seen extras: animated storyboards, video jukebox, fan show-and-tell and cast interviews (hear what they have to say about a "Jem" movie!). Dig out that Jem doll, slip into a onesie and go to town. It's showtime, Synergy!

Bridesmaids

Put yourself in Annie's shoes: cupcake business closes, nosey roomies want you out and you're sleeping with a sleazy womanizer who loves himself more than you. Then your closest gal pal drops this bomb: She's getting married. Life couldn't suck harder for Annie (Kristen Wiig, rocking her first lead role) now that she's losing Lillian to domesticity. But that doesn't mean she won't fake a happy face for her BFF to be part of the bridal party, taking the prestigious maid-of-honor role among the other women – a cast that's one of the best ensembles this year (gotta love Melissa McCarthy, a gut-busting, man-hungry butch bridesmaid who acts and looks like a lesbian but isn't). Together they unite, in holy marriage hilarity, to plan this screwy wedding. Almost everything goes wrong: The bridal fittings go to shit. Their bachelorette party ends in arrest. Competition creates tension between Annie and Helen, who – in a classic scene



of hysterical better-than-you trumping – try to outdo each other with their shower speeches that finally (or not finally) close with Wiig singing "That's What Friends Are For." But "Bridesmaids" isn't just for shits and giggles – there's lots of heart in Wiig's down-on-her-luck Annie (eating a cupcake never looked sadder) – though it's sweat-and-tears hysterical with wildly

raunchy gags and one-liners you'll be Facebooking to your friends. Look for more laughs during the Blu-ray extras, where the cast goofs around during the decent Gag Reel, the girls debate a shrimp fork in one of the Deleted Scenes and there's a cut part with Paul Rudd as a whackjob date. Also: Check out Line-o-Rama, a showcase for McCarthy's potty talk.

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► **Cyndi Lauper**

Continued from p. 21

list of important key players who made this – a six-story, 30-bed facility, the first permanent establishment of its kind in New York – happen. Her manager, Lisa Barbaris, is one of them, along with the West End Intergenerational Residence, a non-profit focused on providing housing for homeless families and the elderly.

“I was the famous person there, but a lot of people did a lot of work,” she says of the shelter’s official opening in September. “I was just the one who cut the ribbon. It’s an interesting project because it’s a low-income housing project, which makes it work on so many other levels. It’s kind of fabulous.”

Same could be said for Lauper’s career, officially launching in the early ’80s – during an out-of-control house party that had the singer persuading her parents to whoop it up, all for a little single called “Girls Just Want to Have Fun” off her 1983 debut “She’s So Unusual” – as the New Yorker shot to superstardom instantly with funky-punky sunburst hair (one of many colors we’d see throughout the decade) and her outrageous fashion sense. She, like Madonna, was Gaga before we knew she existed. Lauper had the eccentricity, and she certainly had the hits.

There was the sweet charm of got-your-back ballad “Time After Time,” a song still in heavy rotation nearly 30 years later. “A magical time,” she calls it now. “She Bop” blasted myths of masturbation, promoting it as something just as routine as brushing your teeth. The video – and “all my friends and family that showed up in the

video with me” – is what she remembers most. There was also “We Are the World,” the all-star charity single – a monster one, at that – featuring Michael Jackson, Diana Ross and Lauper. Her fondest memory: “That I walked in with almost the same jacket that Michael had on, and I changed it really quick. But I was upset anyway because I had the flakes in my hair, because I was doing that performance-art piece for the American Music Awards and didn’t have time to clean up. I was having a moment.”

In the next three decades, Lauper would have many more moments. She would win Grammys. Have a son. Sing to a disgruntled group of flyers at an airline terminal. Flub the “Star-Spangled Banner,” and gracefully recover from it, as she did recently before the US Open just this past September.

Looking back, what would she have told her younger, more “unusual” self? “I know I said all the wrong things to the right people,” she laughs, “but probably not listen all the time to everything everybody told me. That there was a bigger world out there.”

A world she’s still happy to be a part of. “I’ve been told, ‘No, it’ll never work.’ It’s always the same. But I’m still working.”

Something she was told she could never do – by Sony, her label at the time – was the blues. She sure showed them: “To Memphis, With Love” is Lauper’s latest release, a live CD/DVD combo that captures one night of her most recent, and one of the more extensive, tours in her career. The songs performed are off last year’s “Memphis Blues,” her baby she’d been working toward her whole career. Her 11th studio album, the project scored the top spot of the Billboard Blues Chart for 14 consecutive weeks.



Cyndi Lauper releases her live CD/DVD “To Memphis, With Love” on Oct. 24. Photo: Ellen Von Unwerth

“It’s the spirit of the blues that propels you into an otherworldly state,” she says. “Basically, that’s what you would hope for from music.”

While editing the docu-style DVD, filmed at The Warehouse in Memphis and featuring special guests Jonny Lang and Tracy Nelson, Lauper had to do the unthinkable for anyone who can’t stand mirrors: look at herself for hours on end.

“Once you get over the fact that you thought you looked different but this is what you really look like, it’s fine,” Lauper laughs. “It’s always that way. You can’t ever take yourself seriously.”

Next up for Lauper? New original music, which she’s currently working on; writing for the Broadway show “Kinky Boots”; and a memoir

that’s still in the early stages. A reality show, set to air early next year, is also in the works.

Lauper’s also determined to get the True Colors Tour, on hold because of the economy, back off the ground.

“It’s going to take a minute to figure out how to do it right but I’ll get it back,” she says. “I always wanted it to be a little party, a real festival in one place – different stages, food and music. But I don’t know how to do that. I’m not a businessperson; I’m an artist that wanted an inclusive tour with straight people and gay people and transgender people – everybody mixed together. That was my big dream.”

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Editor's Picks

Outings

This Oct. 20, millions of LGBT and allied folks will be sure to leave the house in purple to celebrate "Spirit Day." Launched after the suicide of Tyler Clementi and numerous other LGBT youth in 2010, this day allows people to show their support for LGBT youth and to speak out against bullying.

Canadian teen Brittany McMillan created "Spirit Day" through a Facebook event gone viral in 2010. Soon after, numerous celebrities and agencies (including GLAAD) promoted the event through social networking such as Twitter and Facebook. Last year, 1.6 million Facebook users attended the event globally.

The color purple was chosen as a representative of the purple stripe on the Rainbow Flag, defined by Gilbert Baker as "representing spirit." Show your support for LGBT youth and anti-bullying efforts by wearing purple or by tinting your Facebook profile picture and Twitter avatar purple using GLAAD's website, glaad.org/spiritday.



Music & More



American humorist, bestselling author and radio contributor David Sedaris is one of the most successful LGBT writers of his time. His numerous autobiographically dark-humored books have collectively sold over eight million copies. Sedaris' voice has been heard in hundreds of instances on National Public Radio and "This American Life." He is known for his iconic voice and charming and eloquent narratives:

"It's astonishing the amount of time that certain straight people devote to gay sex - trying to determine what goes where and how often. They can't imagine any system outside their own, and seem obsessed with the idea of roles, both

in bed and out of it," Sedaris wrote in his latest memoir, "When You Are Engulfed in Flames." "Who calls whom a bitch? Who cries harder when the cat dies? Which one spends the most time in the bathroom? I guess they think that it's that cut-and-dried, though of course it's not."

Sedaris will be performing all new material at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Detroit Opera House. Tickets are \$45 to \$60. For more information, go to michiganopera.org or call 313-237-SING.

OUTINGS

Thursday, Oct. 20

Spirit Day: Show Your Support, 1 a.m. Millions of Americans wear purple on Spirit Day as a sign of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth and to speak out against bullying. Teenager Brittany McMillan as a response to the young people who had taken their own lives started Spirit Day in 2010. Observed annually on Oct. 20, individuals, schools, organizations, corporations, media professionals and celebrities wear purple, which symbolizes spirit on the rainbow flag. Getting involved is easy—participants are asked to simply "go purple" on Oct. 20 as we work to create a world in which LGBT teens are celebrated and accepted for who they are. GLAAD, everywhere, glaad.org/spiritday

"It Gets Better" Concert, 7 p.m. Group of talented musicians as they band together in an effort to celebrate diversity and hope. Motif presents the "It Gets Better" benefit concert on behalf of the Trevor Project. Tickets: \$15. Trevor Project and Motif, 38651 Woodward Ave., **Bloomfield Hills**. Musicofmotif.com

OUTober 2011-Film: The Adonis Factor, 7 p.m. Programming for Eastern Michigan University's OUTober 2011 presenting the film "The Adonis Factor." EMU LGBTRC, Eastern Michigan University, **Ypsilanti**. Emich.edu/lgbtrc/programs

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

Friday, Oct. 21

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

The Sexy Slam, 5:30 p.m. Statussexy is hosting a poetry slam. \$5 to slam with two rounds. 3 minutes in the 1st round to spit a piece on prevention. The finalists are poet's choice. Cash prizes for the winners, custom trophy and of course free HIV Testing. Testing and registration start at 5:30. Status Sexy, 5221 Gullen Mall, **Detroit**. Statussexy.com

MSU LGBT Homecoming Party, 6:30 p.m. All friends of MSU, faculty & staff, students and MSU Alumni are invited to

attend the 6th annual MSU Homecoming Party/Reception. Tickets sold at the door for \$20. MSU LGBTRC, MSU Kellogg Center, **East Lansing**. 517-337-1419. beachlerb@sbcglobal.net

Bisexual Peer Group, 7 p.m. Meets monthly on the third Friday. Discussion relating to bisexuality, pansexuality, omnisexuality. Allies are encouraged and welcomed to attend. Building is handicapped accessible using ramp to rear entrance. Bisexual Peer Group, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. bjprideannarbor@gmail.com

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

Saturday, Oct. 22

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

State Equality Dinner, 6 p.m. State Equality Dinner event "Out on the Town" at The Henry in Dearborn. The gala evening is Equality Michigan's signature fundraiser. In addition to a VIP reception with live entertainment, the evening's festivities will feature a silent auction, formal dinner and afterglow celebration. The dinner program will include a guest speaker and awards ceremony celebrating recent achievements toward equality for Michigan's gay and transgender community. Tickets: \$150 standard, \$250 VIP. \$50 afterglow party only. Equality Michigan, 300 Town Center Dr., **Dearborn**. 313-537-7000. Equalitymi.org

Lavender Event Dance Party for Women, 7 p.m. Women only smoke-free dance and social event. DJ'ed by DJ Jenn. Lavender Event, 3600 Plymouth Road, **Ann Arbor**. lavenderevent@yahoo.com

Until Love is Equal Autumn Gala, 7 p.m. Chef selected appetizer stations, cash bar, silent auction, and classical and jazz performance by Mark Moran. Special guest speaker Wade Rouse. All proceeds will help Until Love is Equal with their mission for LGBT equality. \$25 per person until Oct. 10, \$30 after. Until Love is Equal, **Holland**, 2255 S. Shore Dr., Untilloveisequal.com

Karaoke Fundraiser/Halloween Bash, 8 p.m. Sing Out Detroit fundraiser with raffles, silent auctions, bowling and more. Halloween costume encouraged. Sing Out Detroit, 2101 E. 12 Mile Road, **Warren**. Getoutandlive.me

Lavender Event Dance Party, 8 p.m. Fall Lavender Event Dance Party. Evening of socializing and dancing the night away in a women only smoke-free space.

DJ Jenn to spin. \$5 Cover. Lavender Event, 3600 Plymouth Road, **Ann Arbor**. lavenderevent@yahoo.com

Sunday, Oct. 23

For The Bible Tells Me So, 2 p.m. Et Al will host a public screening and discussion of this provocative and highly entertaining film examining and refuting the widely held impression that homosexuality and the Christian faith are at odds with one another. The screening is open to the public. Et al-A Saline community group, 7265 N. Ann Arbor Road, **Saline**. 734-429-2991. Holy-faith-church.org

The Conversation Station, 4 p.m. Topic: "Is Pornography Harmful to a Committed Relationship?" RSVP via e-mail or call so seating can be reserved. G.O.A.L., 714 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. GetOutAndLive.me

TransCend, 4:30 p.m. Open to persons 18 and older. Younger are welcome with parent or guardian permission. Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Monday, Oct. 24

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. 25

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

David Sedaris, 7:30 p.m. David Sedaris (born December 26, 1956) is a Grammy Award-nominated American humorist, writer, comedian, bestselling author, and radio contributor. Sedaris will be reading some of his latest material. Tickets: \$44-60. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., **Detroit**. 313-237-SING. Michiganopera.org

Wednesday, Oct. 26

Intersex Awareness Day, 4 p.m. Oct. 26th is Intersex Awareness Day. Oakland University's GSA will be hosting two speakers to talk about their experiences as intersex people in our society. Oakland University's GSA, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, **Rochester**. 734-891-0501. gsaatoaklandu@gmail.com

OUTober 2011-Rainbow Variety Show, 8 p.m. Programming for EMU's OUTober 2011 events: a variety show. Audition to Josh Richardson (jricha36@emich.edu) EMU LGBTRC, Eastern Michigan University, **Ypsilanti**. Emich.edu/lgbtrc/programs

Friday, Oct. 28

Halloween Spooktacular at Ferndale Public Library, 5:30 p.m. Dress up in your

See Happenings, page 28

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http://groups.yahoo.com/group/michigan_mens_clothing_optional_yoga

Comedy is bittersweet at Andiamo Novi

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Every year, countless young people flock to The Big Apple armed with their freshly minted theater degrees and a stack of headshots eagerly searching for that first big break. But as actor/comedian Brad Zimmerman testifies in “My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” at Andiamo Novi Theatre, what’s planned and what actually happens are often two different things. And the result may be a career that was once thought of as only a necessary, temporary gig.

Raised in New Jersey, the athletic 57-year-old arrived in New York City in 1978 to pursue a career as an actor. Instead, he spent the next 29 years as a waiter, which he explains is “a lot longer than is considered understandable.” True, but the experience helped shape a finely-honed, one-man show that had the opening night audience laughing throughout the 70-minute performance.

“I don’t really live life,” Zimmerman explains near the start of the show. “I tolerate it.” Unlike many one-man comedies, “My Son the Waiter” isn’t a rapid-fire series of loosely connected jokes. Rather, Zimmerman simply tells the story of his life’s journey – its ups and its downs. His style of delivery is direct, but conversational; deliberate, yet leisurely.

Not quite a stand-up routine nor a

REVIEW

My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy

Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Thursday-Sunday through Oct. 30. \$35; \$89.95 dinner package for two. 1-800-745-3000

www.andiamonovitheatre.com

one-man play, “My Son the Waiter” is completely autobiographical, Zimmerman once said in an interview. “If you haven’t made a penny acting in 10 years and you have a Jewish mother, you’re going to have conversations. Those are in the play.”

That they are – thanks to the recurring “character” of his mother – a staple of Jewish comedy acts. Knowing she’s been a major source of his material, she once asked what he’ll do once she’s gone. “Sell your house,” he deadpans.

His father, too, makes a handful of “appearances.” But mixed among the laughs is a particularly poignant and powerful moment: his recollection of his father’s final days.

A regular at casinos, resorts and comedy clubs throughout the country, Zimmerman performs the show on a mostly bare stage. If he looks familiar, you may recognize him as Johnny Sack’s lawyer on



Brad Zimmerman is the creator and star of “My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” at Andiamo Novi Theatre. Photo: Courtesy of Sharon Klein Productions

“The Sopranos.”

Although Zimmerman bemoans the fact “The world today is not my kind of place” – an observation to which many in the mostly middle-aged audience nodded in agreement – “My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” is timeless in its message. As he proves, no one should ever give up on his dreams – even if they take three decades and a change of direction to come to fruition.



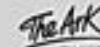
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Former Affirmations CEO Leslie Thompson continues to be a leader – in comedy

BY BTL STAFF

Former Affirmations CEO Leslie Ann Thompson is following her long-time passion of stand-up comedy on a full-time basis – and it’s paying off. “I was invited by Mark Ridley, from the Comedy Castle in Royal Oak, to compete in a contest organized by The Improv Comedy Club, called Up Yours,” explains Thompson. The Improv is traveling around the country and inviting local comics to compete with a 3-7 minute set and then posting them online for people to vote.

At the time of this interview Thompson was maintaining a short lead over the second place contender, a young man from Florida. “I was thrilled to have been invited to compete but now am really excited about the chance I might have to win,” she said. The winner gets two shows at Improv clubs in Vegas and a meeting with an agent. Also, at the end of each month of voting (October, November and December) the current winner gets a smaller gig at an Improv club somewhere in the country.

Thompson has used her many contacts on Facebook as a means of motivating voters stating she wouldn’t be in the lead without the wonderful

Facebook friends and family members who vote every day.

“I love the fact a woman is in the lead – and a lesbian, to boot!” she exclaimed. The promo on the homepage of the site actually contains clips from the competition at Mark Ridley’s Comedy Castle and, even though out of the 30 comics competing four were women, they only used clips from male comics. Thompson has been in the lead with anywhere from four to 40 votes, ahead of the same comic who has a strong hold on second place.

“It’s very hard for women to make it in this industry,” Thompson said. “If you look at the calendar of 52 headliners that perform at the Comedy Castle each year, you can usually count on one hand the number of female comics. Not that Mark Ridley wouldn’t book more – he is probably one of the most ardent supporters of women comics – but the pool of female comics he has to pick from is so small.”

Thompson is no stranger to being a winning comic. In 2008 she took first place in the Women’s Show at the 1st annual Detroit International Comedy Festival. She has placed second in several statewide comedy competitions, always losing a close race to a male comic. “I



really want to win on so many levels,” said Thompson. “Obviously this would be a huge boost to my comedy career, but I want to also prove a point that women comics can be successful as well – and a lesbian comic can win in the wider arena that includes straight audiences.”

To watch the audition performance and vote for Leslie Ann Thompson, go to www.improvcc.com

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► Music

Continued from p. 26

favorite costume and join the Ferndale Public Library's Halloween celebration. Special appearance by Dan the Creature Man and his creepy crawlies. This is a special after-hours drop-in event for kids of all ages. Visit the Children's desk to register or call 248-546-2504. Registration closes Oct. 24. Ferndale Public Library, 222 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-546-2504. Jilleanmc@gmail.com

Womyn's Film Night, 7 p.m. Film: Flight Plan—Still reeling from her husband's unexpected death, Kyle Pratt is on a plane heading from Berlin to New York when her daughter vanishes. But the captain and the air marshal begin to doubt that the child was ever on board. With no support from the plane's staff, Kyle can only rely on her to find her little girl. But their growing suspicions about her sanity prove problematic. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Oct. 29

LGBT Summit for High School Youth, 9:30 a.m. A leadership and LGBT issues summit aimed at increasing awareness regarding Gay Straight Alliances, youth leadership, creative expression, and more. The event is aimed at high school-age youth, but all youth are welcome. Parents, teachers, GSA Advisors, counselors, school staff, and all adults are also invited but some workshops may be closed to adults. Hosted by the GSA Alliance of Southeast MI, the youth board of GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) Southeast MI. GSA Alliance of Southeast MI, 20500 West 13 Mile Road, Beverly Hills. Gsa.alliance.sem@gmail.com

Monster Bash, 9 p.m. Sober dance to benefit TWC, a GLBT organization that sponsors an AA/Al-Anon conference in the spring. Admission: \$5. Costumes encouraged! Together We Can, 2441 Pinecrest, Ferndale. 248-838-9905. TwcDETroit.com

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Access. Dance "Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance" Founded by dance superstar Rasta Thomas in 2007, BBD dancers have performed on Broadway, in feature films, and have been adored by millions on hit TV shows. In 2010 they performed at Carnegie Hall with Sir Elton John for a charity event alongside Lady Gaga, Sting and Bruce Springsteen. Tickets: Starting at \$25. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 29. 313-237-SING. Michiganopera.org/access

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Tchaikovsky's 'Pathetique'" Jerzy Semkow leads the DSO performance of Tchaikovsky's final work, the 'Pathetique' Symphony. Tickets: \$15+. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 20, 8 p.m. Oct. 21. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Beethoven's Fifth" Louis Langr'e leads the Detroit Symphony in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—its infamous four opening notes often described as "fate knocking at the door." Tickets: \$15+ Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 27-Oct. 29. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Royal Oak Music Theatre Evanesence With special guests The Pretty Reckless and The Rival Sons. Tickets \$36. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Oct. 24. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark Robin Spielberg Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct.

28. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark An Evening With Joan Baez at The Ark. Tickets available on ticketmaster.com. 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 1. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Whiting Brad Garrett, best known for his Emmy nominated role as Robert in CBS's hit series Everybody Loves Raymond. Tickets: \$19-49. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley, Flint. 8 p.m. Oct. 22. 810-237-7333. Thewhiting.com

University Musical Society "Schola Cantorum de Venezuela" Choral society from the growing choral movement in Venezuela, with a repertoire of more than 50 major symphonic-choral works. Ticket information available at ums.org. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 27. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

The Dance P.E.A.C.E. and Ann Arbor Community Center "African Dance Tour dance classes" Cultural exploration of Africa through African-inspired dance, movement and music. Every other Saturday. Admission: Adult and youth \$10, children (6-12) are \$5. Ann Arbor Community Center, 625 N. Main St., Ann Arbor. Oct. 22-Dec. 17. 734-829-7930.

ART 'N' AROUND

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

Lawrence Street Gallery "Uniform Variations" Memorable characters struggling to find meaning as they begin their final act. Dave Hardin's subjects, men of a certain age, are depicted in vintage military uniforms. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Nov. 2-Nov. 30. 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. Mocadetroit.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Detroit Revealed: Photographs 2000-2010" Contemporary artists present photographs and video inspired by Detroit, its people, diverse culture, and industries in work created from 2000-2010. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Oct. 16-Jan. 29. 313-833-7900. Dia.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

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, Munchkinland, 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

UMMA "Mike Kelley: Day is Done" UMMA inaugurates its New Media Gallery this fall with Mike Kelley's "Day is Done," which continues the artist's career-long investigation into the relationships between order and transgression, popular and avant-garde culture, while touching on contemporary notions of trauma and repressed memory. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 South State St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 27-Dec. 31. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

Ypsilanti District Library "The Actor Within" Photo exhibition by photojournalist Rose Eichenbaum. Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whittaker Road, Ypsilanti. Oct. 1-Nov. 30. 734-482-4110. Ypsilibrary.org

THEATER

Frankenstein \$13-15. Avon Players, 1185 Washington Road, Rochester Hills. Oct. 28 - Nov. 12. 248-608-9077. avonplayers.org

Little Shop of Horrors \$5-12. Warren Civic Theatre at Warren Community Center Auditorium, 5460 Arden, Warren. Oct. 21 - 30. 586-268-8400. warrencivic.org

The Full Monty \$26. UM Department of Musical Theatre at Lydia Mendelssohn Theater, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. Through Oct. 23. 734-971-2228. tickets.music.umich.edu

The Rocky Horror Show \$25. WMU Department of Theatre at Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Oct. 28 - 29. 269-387-2300. millerauditorium.com

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

Daddy Long Legs \$34.50-44.50. The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave, Detroit. Through Oct. 30. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

Evil Dead: The Musical \$25. Who Wants Cake? at City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Oct. 29. 800-745-3000. whowantscaketheatre.com

Freud's Last Session \$39.50 - \$44.50. Century Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Through Oct. 30. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

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

Spooky Dog & The Teen-Age Gang Mysteries For adults only. \$15. The Box Theater, 51 N. Walnut, Mount Clemens. Through Oct. 28. 586-954-2311. theboxtheater.com

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

The Great Pumpkin Massacre \$10. Crawlspace Theatre Productions at Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Oct. 28 - 31. 269-343-2727. crawlspace theatre.com

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

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

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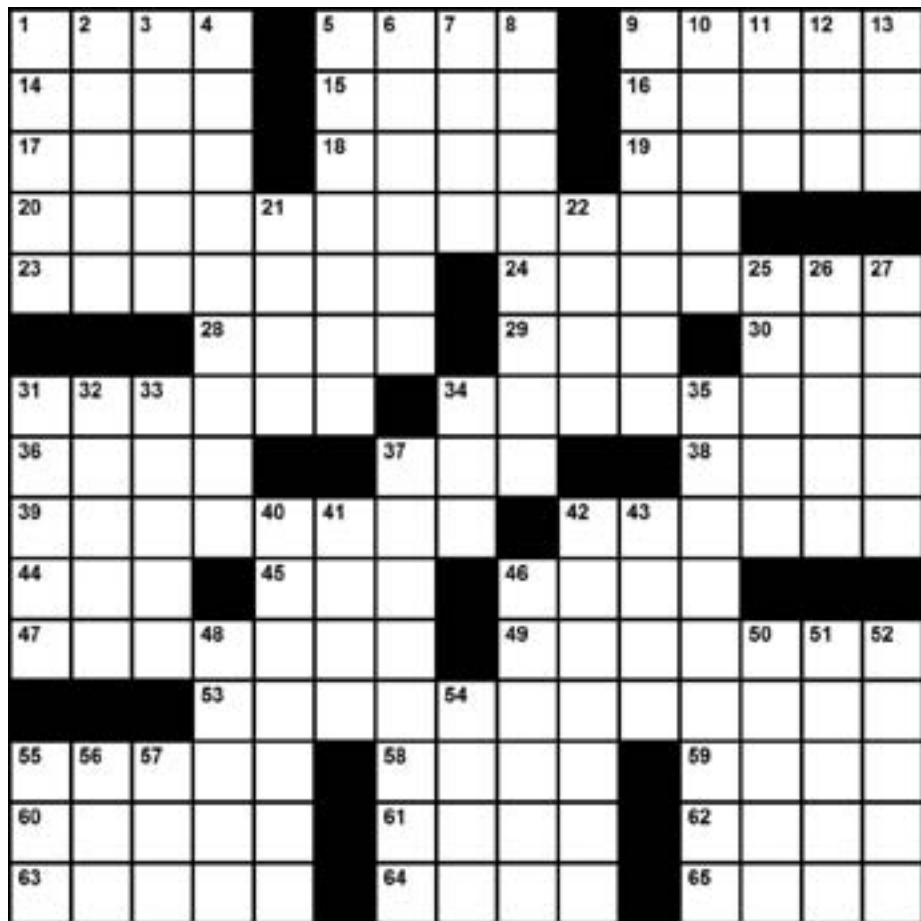
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Gay TV

Across

- 1 It gets a gel hard
- 5 Suffix with Smurf
- 9 Jack on the card table
- 14 Major or minor, to Jerry Herman
- 15 Lo follower
- 16 Desi's daughter
- 17 Got on one's knees and asked for it
- 18 Fruit cover
- 19 Out-and-out
- 20 Series with an out gay guy named Max
- 23 With the waterworks on
- 24 Margaret Mead interviewees
- 28 Trick
- 29 New Deal org.
- 30 Colette, to herself
- 31 Smile self-consciously
- 34 MTV show with a gay lacrosse player
- 36 Tale opening
- 37 Before, in verse

- 38 Jabba the ____ of "Star Wars"
- 39 Program set in Toronto with a transgender character
- 42 Is noisy in bed
- 44 Art, these days
- 45 Log Cabin member, for short
- 46 Carbon compound
- 47 Mississippi riverboat
- 49 Word-for-word
- 53 Comedy in which Lily has two dads
- 55 Kind of bear
- 58 Mapplethorpe's "Man in Polyester ____"
- 59 May be seen now
- 60 Taper off
- 61 Triangle ratio
- 62 Give for a while
- 63 Still in the closet, perhaps
- 64 Estimating words
- 65 ____-highs (drag queen's hosiery)

Down

- 1 Theater opening for Greeks?
- 2 Word on a map of Israel
- 3 Highly skilled
- 4 Ingredient for a Susan Feniger dish, perhaps
- 5 Hans Christian Andersen's naked marcher
- 6 Itty-bitty
- 7 Was active in B&D
- 8 One no longer subject to DADT
- 9 Jack of "The Odd Couple"
- 10 Crackers or bananas
- 11 Dramatic division
- 12 Go head to head
- 13 Always, to Byron
- 21 Jodie Foster's alma mater
- 22 Church section
- 25 Illicit love affair
- 26 Streisand's "Prince of Tides" costar
- 27 Separates, as flour
- 31 Parts of floats
- 32 Not potent
- 33 Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby ____"
- 34 More than bi-
- 35 Well-integrated Harvey?
- 37 Oral pleasure with a foamy head
- 40 With thick plates
- 41 Rank Billie Jean, e.g.
- 42 Brandy sipper's glass
- 43 Bene beginning
- 46 Bad weather culprit
- 48 Place for a G-string
- 50 Out of bed
- 51 Dress with a flared bottom
- 52 Paul of "Hollywood Squares"
- 54 Screw royally
- 55 Butter portion
- 56 Tie for Madame Butterfly
- 57 On the ____

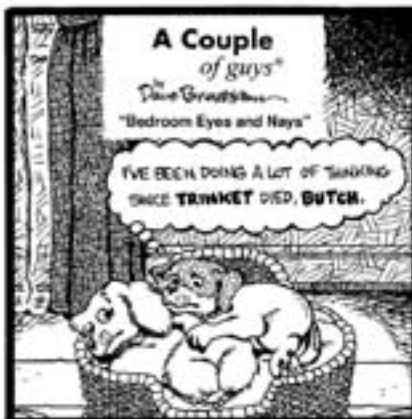
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Cocktail Chatter

The TinaTini

BY ED SIKOV

The housemates season just got to me, along with a few of my last *cocktail du weekend du season*, which I invented minutes before Unhappy Hour began. The words "beware of dog" were written all over my face. I'd had it with everyone but Dan – Jack Fogg and his ego, Sammy and his perfect little body, Phil Levine and all the fawning Asian geisha boys who'd passed through the house for the last four months... I was sick of myself, too – the humiliating blend I'd become of one of the losers at open mic night at some comedy club: the Little Red Hen, Max the bartender and Shirley Booth as "Hazel."

It was too breezy for the beach, but the deck was sunny and protected from the wind, so there they were, all lined up on chaises like Atlantis boys with body hair. (Question: Do you really have to wax everything off to go on an Atlantis cruise?)

My creation was simple: Absolut Pears with a little ginger liqueur mixed in. I added a touch of homemade ginger syrup, but it would be fine without it. But what would I call it?

As housemate after housemate trooped past wearing Speedos, in my half-inebriated state I became aroused, then angry. So

I belligerently rejected all their naming suggestions, which were uniformly based on the suffix "tini." This abomination drives me crazy. Just because a drink is vodka-based and destined for a classic cocktail glass does not mean it *must* be called, in this case for example, a *Gingertini*.

Then Jack Fogg brought up the rear (so to speak) and redeemed every snotty thing he ever said by violating my strict anti-tini law and dubbing the new ginger cocktail *The TinaTini* in honor of Tina Louise.

The TinaTinis tasted better and better the more of them I consumed. At the end of the main course, I made a little joke at Phil Levine's expense: "And who would like a nice bowl of homemade ginge' rice queen – I mean ginger ice cream!" There were giggles from Jack and Sammy, a glare from Dan, and a lawyerly, eye-to-eye stare-down from the victim of my *petit bon mot*, bulldog Phil.

"Why is my attraction to Asian men so hilarious to you?" he asked me point-blank. "Do you think it's about girly-boy guys with 28-inch waists as if I'd really like 11-year-old white kids but make do with legal-age Asians or is it the old dick-size canard, 'cause I tell you what, you asshole, I've had Asian guys with dicks bigger than



yours, lots, ha."

"I'm sorry, Phil," I squealed. "I guess I don't know'nough'boudit." I offered my hand in drunken friendship.

Did he really refuse to shake my hand? I let it sort of wave in the air, just like the late Queen Mum. I was in no shape for backtalk. "I'm sorry again, Philip," I managed to get out, "but now's not the time for shoshiography – shoshology, I mean." At which point, I am told, I leaned back in my chair and fell asleep.

The TinaTini

1 oz. Absolut Pears
1 tablespoon Domaine de Canton
ginger liqueur
ginger syrup to taste (optional)

For every ounce of Absolute Pears you pour into a shaker full of ice, add one tablespoon Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur and, if you have any, ginger syrup to taste. Shake. Serve.

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org/midsouthmi/ for a complete list of all of our excellent opportunities! Nurse Practitioner: The focus is on providing the absolute highest level of quality patient care in a collaborative, fast-paced environment. PPMSM also offers professional growth opportunities with room for advancement. Qualifications and Knowledge/Skills/Abilities. Current licensure as a Nurse Practitioner or Certified Nurse Midwife in the State of Michigan is required. One or two years of experience as a family Nurse Practitioner, or Certified Nurse Midwife is preferred. NCC, ANA, ACNM, or NCCPA Certification is preferred. Health Center Manager: The focus is on managing the administrative and operational activities of the health center in order to provide quality healthcare services, maximize productivity, and optimize customer service. Qualifications and Knowledge/Skills/Abilities. Bachelor's degree and two years of supervisory experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required. Medical experience preferred. Ability to work independently and as part of a team essential. Knowledge of relevant community preferred. Planned Parenthood Mid and South Michigan In addition to competitive salaries, offers outstanding health and welfare benefits including medical, dental, vision, disability and life insurance, 403B and a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan. PPMSM also offers paid-time off to full and part-time benefit eligible employees. Planned Parenthood Mid and South Michigan is an Equal Opportunity Employer PPMSM is a drug-free workplace employer and performs pre-employment substance abuse testing. Please apply online at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/midsouthmi/>

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BTT Horoscopes

Don't overdo it, Aquarius!

BY JACK FERTIG

Just before leaving Libra the Sun trines Neptune, prompting sweet romantic dreams, ideals and – oh, dear – promises. When Sol moves into Scorpio those promises may prove hard to keep. The test of a relationship is not just in keeping promises, but forgiving the broken ones.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19):

Playing too hard could lead to injuries and/or fights. Do you really want to annihilate your opponent or are you there to have some fun together? Lighten up! You're taking yourself way too seriously.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20):

Flirtations can lead to something more serious, but take it one step at a time and even if it is a passing fancy, enjoy it while it lasts. Renegotiating loans and debts can work in your favor if you can stand your ground.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20):

Concern about your health or your work could make you defensive. Be diplomatic if you must tell others to mind their own business. What you really need is a new view to your problem, but one that's based in traditional wisdom.

CANCER (June 21- July 22):

The need to take care of domestic issues can feel overwhelming and constrictive. You may be putting too much pressure on yourself. Structure and discipline slow you down, but are still more effective than panic.

LEO (July 23 – August 22):

Expressing romantic notions is good for any relationship whether you've just met or lived together for decades. Just don't take any sudden whimsies seriously enough to make significant changes. Enjoy the moment while it lasts.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22):

Conversations with a sister – or a "sister" – can prove very healing if you're willing to dig up and deal with long buried challenges. Excavating an ugly past can help clear the road for a brighter future.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22):

A creative partnership can become more enduring than you'd expected. Romantic commitment is also possible but demands more work. Serious, heartfelt discussions can help to clarify illusions and help you find your

way in good company.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21):

Some innovation is necessary, but getting too clever at work will only exacerbate existing problems. Keep communications open and if you can't be friendly be tactful. Charm works well for you, but don't exploit it at the expense of substance.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20):

Getting too comfortable with the wrong people can tempt you to spill secrets. In better company that could be called "therapy." Focus on where you want to be in five years with the one you love. Follow that inspiration.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19):

Have a safe, appropriate outlet for your playful energy. The more you can sublimate it into your work the better, but be mindful of behavior and boundaries. Maybe a hard choice, but what really is more important – your partnership or your career?

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18):

Roleplay or reversal with your partner can open up some insights. Confusion in other relationships requires a more intuitive approach. Defending your turf at work may be necessary; don't overdo it! Kind words are more effective than usual.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19):

Don't prolong arguments. The sooner they're done the sooner you can learn from them and move on. Fantasy play is one way to be more intimate with your partner. Sharing long held secrets can also prove liberating.

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.

Meet Trina at Monroe SUPERSTORE

Trina L. Foley, Monroe, MI resident since June 2005. Previously lived in Toledo, Ohio for 36 years. I celebrated my 1st Birthday here at the Monroe Superstore on Aug. 24, 2011. Collectively I have over 10 years of Sales experience in the Automotive Industry. I would like to personally invite anyone who lives within the tri-state area to give me a call, and find out why so many people have chosen the Monroe Superstore as their preferred dealer site that satisfies all automobile needs and desires! I look forward to many successful years to come while working at the Monroe Superstore, and can't wait to have the opportunity to earn your business and welcome you as a new member to our humble family!



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Ladies of Monroe Dodge (from back to front) Kim Roe, Nikki Blackford, Rosalye Chadwell and Kate Resume

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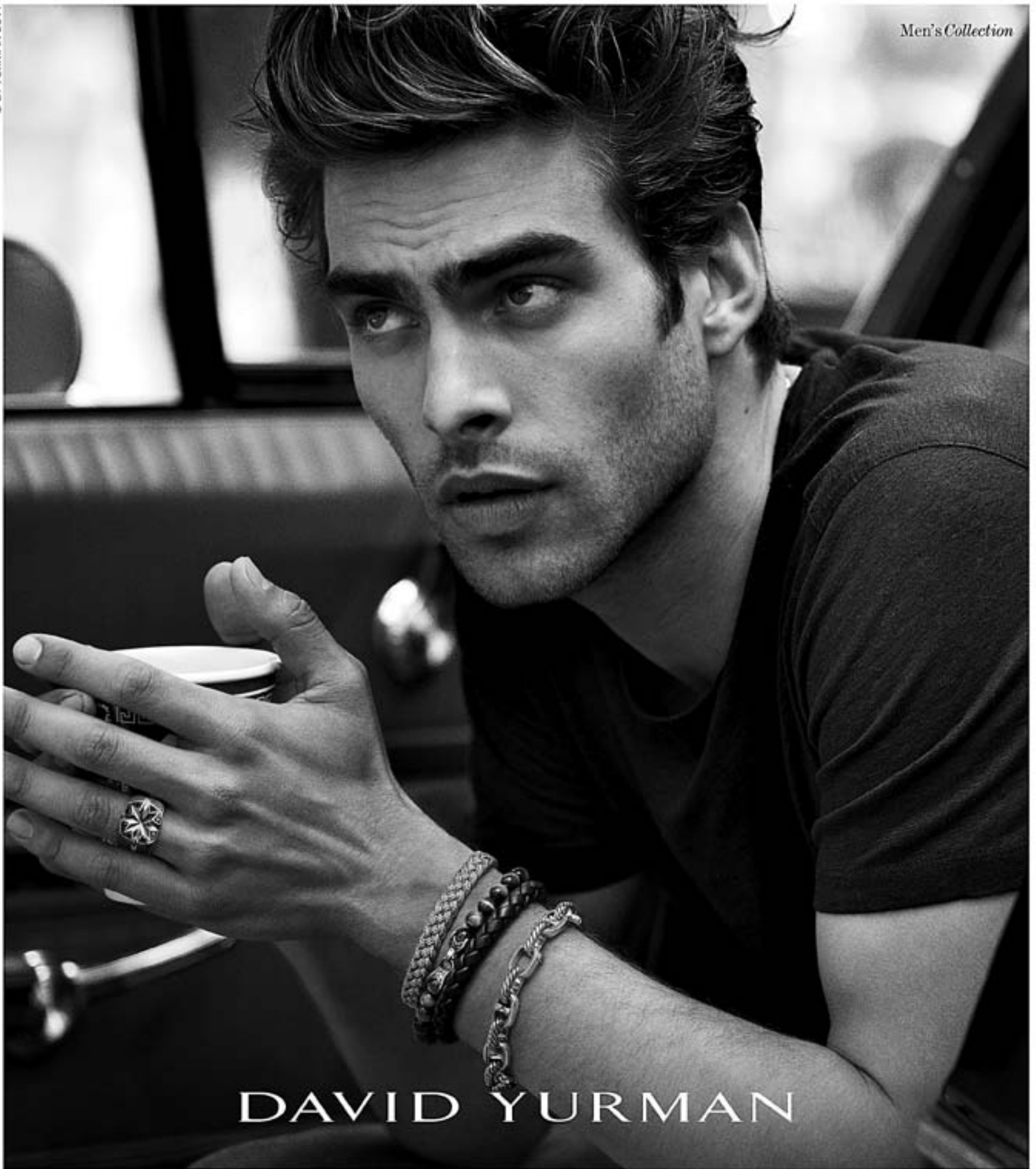
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Solution to puzzle from page 30

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