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**MURDER TAKES AWAY
A DETROIT 'TREASURE'**

**AFFIRMATIONS DIRECTOR
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**MICHIGAN MUSICIAN
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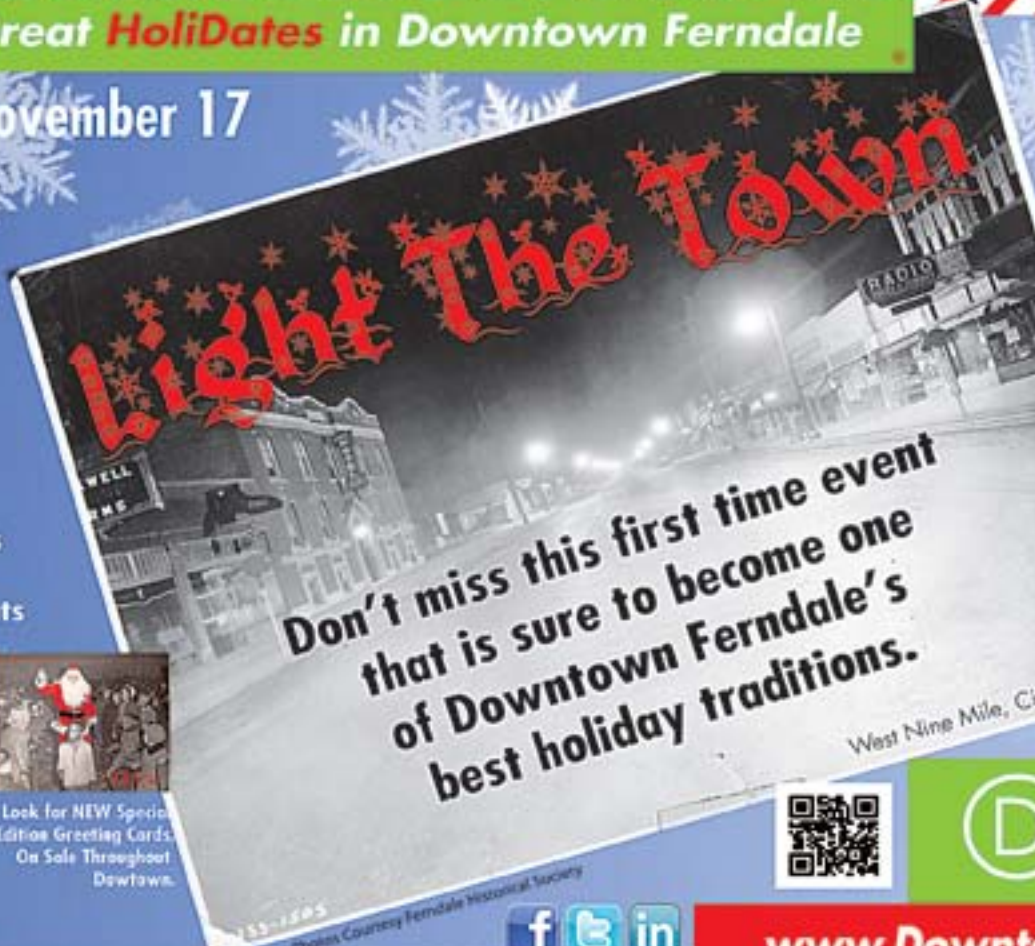
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- Saturday, December 17 Men/Dey Holiday Wrap!

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BTL THE Lines™

11.17.2011

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Ferndale couple Stephanie Holloway and Leseliey Welch choose The Roper School for their 3-year-old daughter. BTL photo: Andrew Potter

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Trans leaders decry murder coverage in Detroit newspapers

BY/BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT – It takes the old adage “add insult to injury” to a new level. Local leaders in the trans community are angry at reporters at Detroit’s two major newspapers – The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press – for incorrectly identifying murdered teen Michelle Moore.

In an un-bylined piece in the Nov. 7 edition of The Detroit News, Moore was identified in the headline as a “transgender man.” She was, in fact, a transgender woman. Subsequent stories in both the News and Free Press included – and referred to Moore by – her birth name and frequently used male pronouns to describe her.

“They should have used feminine pronouns because she identified as a woman,” said Michelle Fox-Phillips, executive director of Transgender Detroit. “If they wanted to use the word ‘transgender’ that’s fine. But they should have used ‘transgender female.’”

The Associated Press Style Book – or reporter’s Bible – backs Fox-Phillips up on this. In 2006, the Style Book, which up until then only included an entry titled “transsexual” that simply read “see sex changes,” inserted a new “transgender” entry. It instructs that reporters “use the pronoun preferred by the individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics (by hormone therapy, body modification, or surgery) of the opposite sex and present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth.”

Papers across the country, however, have not all caught up on the AP’s new standard, or simply opted not to follow it.

“It happens all the time and it really pisses me off,” said Rachel Crandall, executive director of Transgender Michigan.

Between The Lines Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Susan Horowitz said she doesn’t understand why local mainstream media does not reach out to her if they have questions on the subject.

“They certainly know we’re here and we exist and how to contact us,” she said. “I’d be happy to share with them how to appropriately and respectfully cover these issues, or refer them to people in the trans community who can help.”

So why do these errors keep happening?

“One reason is probably ignorance,” said Fox-Phillips. “Another is because they’re probably lazy. I think it’s just laziness and ignorance and sometimes it might be just malicious.”

Crandall said that she and her agency are available to offer training to local reporters, but she doesn’t believe they’d be receptive.

“They’re not willing to invest even a few minutes [to get this right] and that really makes me angry.”

Murder silences a ‘Treasure’

Trans teen recalled by mother, friends as a caring soul

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT– Her mother called her Treasure, but her killers treated her body like trash – chopping and burning it up before dumping it on the side of the road. The burnt torso of Michelle Moore, also known to friends as Shelly Revlon, 19, was discovered Oct. 23, the morning after she went missing, near I-94 on the east side. But it was only last week, after stories appeared in the mainstream media, that authorities made the connection and Moore’s mother, Lyniece Nelson, was able to identify her daughter by the cherry tattoo that remained on her shoulder.

Moore was last seen at around 1 a.m. on the morning of the 23rd, when a cab driver she used frequently dropped her off at a house in Detroit where three men were waiting outside. Just minutes after, Moore called the driver again saying she felt uncomfortable and asking that he return. But the phone went dead mid-call and by the time he made it back to the house there was no sign of her.

“Whoever she went to see, she obviously trusted him for her to get out of the cab and there were three guys standing outside of the house,” said Moore’s friend Angel Williams Revlon. “She wasn’t the type of girl to get out of the car if she saw three guys she didn’t know.”

The official cause of Moore’s death is still pending, and may never be known if the rest of her body is not discovered. Officials at Equality Michigan have asked the FBI to investigate the murder as a possible hate crime.

“This tragic event must not go unnoticed,” said Nusrat Ventimiglia, EM’s director of victim services, in a statement. “Transgender women of color are often targets of hate violence in our region and throughout the country. National research shows that transgender women of color face the most severe violence, including murder, and are most likely to experience discrimination and

intimidation.”

Moore’s violent end was not only horrific but also ironic, her friends say.

“She was a peaceful person,” recalled David Zanders, who knew Moore for about five years. “That’s why it’s shocking to me that she died like she did. She was not the type of girl who would be out in the streets doing crazy stuff. She never did wrong to nobody. Nobody around



Michelle Moore and her mother, Lyniece Nelson. “They thought they silenced her, but what they did was release a monster in her mother,” Nelson said of her daughter’s killers. Photo courtesy of family.

“I’m about to scream as loud as I can from the top of the mountain. If I have to go to the White House and bang on the gates, the FBI can throw me on the ground. But people will hear about this.”

– Lyniece Nelson, victim’s mother

her could say anything bad about her.”

Friends said that Moore was quiet and always had a smile on her face. She enjoyed taking photos – of herself and others – and loved music, particularly Rihanna. She had recently traveled across country and visited cities such

as Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

DeJuan LeBlanc remembered Moore as caring and compassionate.

“She always gave me advice when I needed it,” he said. “She was always there for me. She never just thought about herself.”

The same was felt by Tiara Jackson.

“She was always a good person to talk to about problems and stuff, even though she had a lot of her own,” Jackson said. “She was always a good listener to be so young.”

Even people in the community who didn’t know Moore are reeling from her death.

“I’ve been devastated, totally devastated,” said Michelle-Fox Phillips, executive director of Transgender Detroit and one of the organizers of the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, which is scheduled for this Friday. “We will be mentioning Shelly at the service.”

A mother’s heart breaks

Hurting most, of course, is Moore’s mother.

“I called her Treasure because of what the word, itself, means,” Nelson said. “That’s what she was: my treasure. She was – and still is – my everything.”

Nelson said she knew her daughter was dead long before the authorities finally contacted her to make the I.D.

“I knew my baby was gone,” she said. “I felt it in my loins. I just didn’t want to believe it.”

The third oldest of nine children, Moore felt a responsibility to be there for her family and to look out for her mother.

“Anything we needed, anytime we needed her, she was there,” said Nelson. “I teach my children to be there for each other because we are all we have. I taught my children to love and cherish their loved ones no matter what.”

Recalling when her daughter began identifying as female, Nelson said it was not an issue for her.

“It was never a problem when she transitioned. I said, ‘OK, whatever, when are you coming home?’ That’s all I needed to know. We didn’t need to sit down and discuss it and

Transgender Day of Remembrance

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 16

The Lives of Transgender People, 3 p.m. Join Spectrum for a presentation of groundbreaking research on The Lives of Transgender People, presented by Sue Rankin. Spectrum Center, Michigan League Building, Ann Arbor. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

THURSDAY, NOV. 17

Transgender Day Of Remembrance at University of Michigan Dearborn, 6:30 p.m. Transgender Michigan hosted ceremony in remembrance of victims of bigotry against Transgenders. Discussion and light refreshments to follow in 1019 CASL building. University of Michigan - Dearborn's Gender & Sexuality Alliance, 4901 Evergreen Road, Dearborn. 734-776-8104. umdgsa.weebly.com

Transgender Day Of Remembrance with Spectrum Center, 8 p.m. For more information, visit the following website www.transgenderdor.org. Spectrum Center, Michigan Union, Ann Arbor. willsherry@umich.edu spectrumcenter.umich.edu

FRIDAY, NOV. 18

Metro-Detroit Transgender Vigil of Remembrance, 5:30 p.m. Every year, transgender individuals around the globe are murdered simply for living true to themselves. All are welcome in remembering those who have fallen in the past year due to anti-trans hate and bigotry. Sylvia Guerrero, mother of the late Gwen Araujo, will be speaking at the vigil. (Transgender MI, Transgender Detroit, Equality Michigan, MIAAHC, GLSEN, Detroit Latin@z, GSA at Oakland University), 23 E. Adams Ave., Detroit. msfjp@sbcglobal.net

Transgender Day of Remembrance at Central United Methodist Church, 7 p.m. There will be an art show, featuring local artists and also a variety of speakers, including Sylvia Guerrero. Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams Ave., Detroit. 313-965-5422. centralumchurch.com

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland's Transgender Vigil of Remembrance, 9:30 a.m. Every year, transgender individuals around the globe are murdered simply for living true to themselves. All are welcome in remembering those who have fallen in the past year due to anti-trans hate and bigotry. Transgender Michigan and

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson Ave., Midland. 989-631-1162. www.transgendermichigan.org

SATURDAY, NOV. 19

Meet and Greet with Sylvia Guerrero, 9 a.m. Meet and greet on the morning after the TDOR Vigil to meet Sylvia Guerrero. There will be light refreshments and pastries laid out. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

SUNDAY, NOV. 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance: A Gathering of Hope at Plymouth United Church of Christ, 6 p.m. Plymouth UCC, GIFT, The Transgender Education Collaboration of West Michigan, and Transpectrum at GVSU, are coordinating a Transgender Day of Remembrance Service. Search "Transgender Day of Remembrance: A Gathering of Hope" on Facebook for more information. Plymouth United Church of Christ and Transgender Michigan, 4010 Kalamazoo Ave., Grand Rapids. 616-455-4260. transgendermichigan.org

MONDAY, NOV. 21

Candlelight Vigil for Transgender Day of Remembrance at Central Michigan University, 8 p.m. Join CMU for a candlelight vigil to remember those transgender individuals we have lost in the past year. We hope to create an honorable event to memorialize those lives, as well as incite inspiration for a future without hate. CMU Gay and Lesbian Programs and Transgender Michigan, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant. transgendermichigan.org

ART EXHIBIT:

University of Michigan's "My Right Self" Transgender issues and rights are particularly relevant to contemporary questions of social justice and human rights as they inherently invoke conversations on sex, gender, sexuality, behavior, and sociopolitical hierarchies of power, which affect all aspects of society. These images (and accompanying text) are meant to confront and dispel myths and misperceptions around marginalized and disenfranchised communities. Art Lounge, Michigan Union, Ann Arbor. Nov. 15 - Nov. 20. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

► Murder

Continued from p. 6

ask why. There was no why. That was my baby. I know that people are who they are from birth. She was my treasure."

Now that her treasure is gone, Nelson said she's determined to see that her killers are apprehended and brought to justice.

"They thought they had silenced her, but what they did was release a monster in her mother," she said. "I'm going to make sure that whoever did this will pay and justice will be served. I'm going to make sure

that no other LGB - and please don't forget the T - person has to go through this again."

To that end, Nelson is pledging to stay in constant contact with authorities and see that her daughter's case does not fall by the wayside.

"I'll be on them every day like a pimple, like a boil on their ass," she said. "I'm about to scream as loud as I can from the top of the mountain. If I have to go to the White House and bang on the gates, the FBI can throw me on the ground. But people will hear about this."

Helping her continue on her crusade, Nelson said, will be her daughter's memory - and spirit.



Murder victim Michelle Moore

"She will personify the term guardian angel," she said. "And not only is she going to watch over her family, she is going to watch over her sisters and brothers in the community. She's gonna make sure they're taken care of also.

"You don't turn your back on your children," Nelson continued. "They're all you have. They are an extension of you. Trans kids out there, if they need a mom, if they need a motherly hug, a nice warm meal, I'm going to be there for them. You can let them know that."

For now, the community is trying to be there for Nelson. At a benefit at Club Innuendo Sunday more than \$600 was raised.

"We wanted to rally around Shelly's mom and show her that the community cares," said John Trimble, one of the evening's organizers. "This touched me in a very special place. So I just reached out to all of our contacts to see what we, as a community, could do. I just felt strongly that something needed to happen."

While her pain is very personal, Nelson said everyone suffers when violence such as this occurs.

"For me to lose my child, it's a tragedy for everybody."

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Upcoming conference will explore sexuality and gender issues in education

ROCHESTER— Oakland University's School of Education and Human Services' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Initiative Task Force will hold the first ever-statewide conference on sexuality and gender issues in education. This one-day conference will be held on Feb. 3, 2012 at Oakland University in Rochester.

The conference goals include promoting preK-12/university dialogue about important issues involving sexual orientation and gender identity in schools, including representing the numerous community-based organizations supporting the LGBTQQI community. Organizers will provide preK-12 teachers and administrators with opportunities to inform and influence how schools and colleges of education are preparing pre-service teachers and administrators to effectively address these areas.

The conference will bring together community agencies, preK-12 practitioners (including staff, faculty and administrators), and faculty and administrators from teacher education programs across the state to engage in interactive dialogue about ways to work together to support individual and collaborative efforts to create safe and inclusive schools for all students, staff, faculty and administrators, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

Organizers are encouraging input and will accept all proposals submitted by Nov. 30. Organizers are particularly seeking input from community agencies, as well as preK-12 practitioners at all levels that can share the effective practices they have in place, and the effective policies they have developed and/or adopted. For more information see www.oakland.edu/sogi and/or follow on Twitter @OUSOGI, hashtag: #SOGICON.

A SEED to stop bullying

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Michigan is one of only three states in the nation with no anti-bullying law in place yet. But that hasn't stopped The Roeper School, with campuses in Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills, from taking action.

For the past five years, faculty and interested parents have come together by way of the SEED Project (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity for an Inclusive Curriculum) to target any form of bullying within their school system. This includes LGBT bullying which has gained national attention following a rash of teen suicides.

"It's more than just anti-bullying," says Carolyn Lett, campus and diversity coordinator at The Roeper School since 1993. "It's about educating ourselves and parents to understand someone else's experience, privilege or struggle. It's about how we view ourselves when dealing with various issues of diversity that we face like race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or class, and how that message is passed on to the children."

This has been The Roeper School way from the beginning when it was founded in 1941 in Detroit by George and Annemarie Roeper, noted German educators. It moved to Bloomfield Hills in 1946 and was reorganized as a coeducational day school for gifted and talented children, recognizing that giftedness is manifested in many ways.

"Students do not always feel safe and supported at school. We have a responsibility as faculty and as parents to change that. It's not OK for students to feel afraid or isolated. Students know that they can go to an adult here who will accept them in a safe and comfortable environment," says Lett about The Roeper School, which enrolls more than 570 students from 60 communities throughout the greater Detroit metropolitan area.

The National SEED Project was planted almost 25 years ago by founder and co-director Peggy McIntosh, associate director of the Wellesley Centers for Women. The American feminist and anti-racist activist wanted to help teachers create their own year-long, school-based seminars on making school climates, K-12 curricula, and teaching methods more gender-fair and multi-culturally equitable.

"Even at the preschool stage it was important for her to be in a place where people weren't going to make fun of her, where she wouldn't hear anything that would damage her self-esteem."

-Stephanie Holloway



Ferndale couple Stephanie Holloway and Leseliey Welch choose The Roeper School for thier 3-year-old daughter. BTL photo: Andrew Potter

"She (McIntosh) was a pioneer who asked questions like, 'How can we change the state of our world?,'" says Lett. "We have been facilitating conversations about our systems in place and we are always looking for opportunities to educate students and be a part of the process."

That requires attending a teacher-led faculty development seminar, which has been established in public and private schools throughout the U.S. and in English-speaking international schools. Lett explained that the week-long SEED training prepared her to openly address complex diversity issues once a month during the school year with faculty and parents through articles, videos, books, poetry, interactive exercises, and conversation.

"We're all teachers whether it's in school or in our own homes. We ask our faculty and parents not to just talk about it, but to be about it," says Lett.

African-American lesbian parents, Stephanie Holloway and Leseliey Welch are Ferndale residents, but chose The Roeper School for their daughter at the age of three.

"Even at the preschool stage it was important for her to be in a place where people weren't going to make fun of her, where she wouldn't hear anything that would damage her self-esteem," says Holloway. "We haven't ever run into any issues of bullying, but we know what's out there and did not want her to have to endure that at all, which is why we looked long and hard at different schools and Roeper was the best bet for us."

As minorities, participating in the SEED Project has changed how these women feel about people in general.

"We are more aware of what people have in common even though our experiences are so different. We learned so much about ourselves that was kind of unexpected. Not only did we explore other people and their prejudices, but we realized through open and honest dialogue that we're carrying around some of this stuff too," says Holloway.

That type of open and honest environment is the reason why Helen Slade, retired Middle School Girls Athletic Director and PE teacher



REC youth enjoy a vist from the DSO during last year's holiday celebrations. BTL file photo: Jason A. Michael.

Exciting changes coming up for REC

State contract gives LGBT youth better chance at placement

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

HIGHLAND PARK— The Ruth Ellis Center has been granted a contract by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services that will allow LGBT youth to be placed directly with the agency. While long a licensed child caring institution, up until now REC has operated as a non-contracted agency. This meant that an LGBT youth placed in the foster care system had to be rejected by not one, but six contracted agencies before they could be placed at REC.

“A case worker had to fill out - no exaggeration - 80 additional pieces of paperwork to get someone placed at a non-contracted agency,” explained REC Executive Director Laura Hughes. “So all these things were stacked against kids who needed to come to the Ruth Ellis Center. Having a contract with the state means that LGBT kids who come into the system have the chance to come to REC on their first instance and be served by providers who are LGBT experts. This is probably the biggest thing to happen to the center since we opened Ruth’s House.”

The center opened Ruth’s House in 2004. The Detroit duplex includes five beds on each side. The contract applies to the half of the house the center calls their intensive treatment units, where minors age 12-17 are placed. The other half operates as a transitional living center for

young adults from 18-21.

“You age out of foster care when you hit 18 and you’re on your own,” said Hughes. “Statistics show that 25 percent of those kids age out directly into being homeless, and another 25 percent are homeless within a year. That’s nationally. So if we think about LGBT kids who are underrepresented and least likely to be adopted, this really improves their ability and gives them the opportunity to be in an affirming environment, which means their chances are better later on.”

Drop-in center news

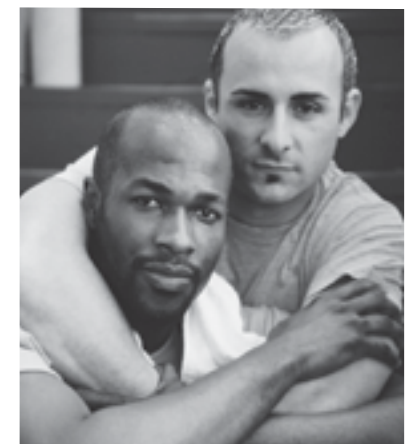
In addition to the state contract, other changes are in the works at REC as well. Among them, REC’s drop-in center in Highland Park is going to be open one additional day per week.

“We’re expanding the hours that we’re open,” Hughes said. “On Thursdays we’re going to have a workshop for lesbian and bisexual girls, and one for transgender youth as well. It really fits with our goal to build an inclusive environment for all LGBT youth. So I think that’s really exciting as well.”

While the agency, like most non-profits in the state, has faced the burden of reduced grant funding in recent years, diversifying its income streams in innovative ways has allowed them



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► **REC**

Continued from p. 9

to remain viable.

“We’ve had substantial changes in 2007 and 2008 as far as our funding sources,” said Hughes, who came on board in 2009. “Kevin Howley, our previous interim executive director, created a real sustainable business plan that we’ve followed to a T. We’ve worked really, really hard to try to get the stories of our young people out and to really talk about that really within our community. The greatest example of homophobia we face is the fact that people kick their kids - because they’re LGBT - out of their homes and think that’s OK.”

Hughes said that the biggest proof that their message is resonating lies with the outpouring of support the agency has received from the community.

“This past year has been an incredible year of support from the community,” she said. “For our annual event, we raised four times what we did last year. That’s just incredible. Plus, we’ve more than doubled the amount that we have brought in from individual donors from last year to this year – and we’re not done yet.”

Much of the credit, Hughes said, goes to her staff.

“We have a new team that is fresh and innovative,” she said. “It’s so powerful. So many really, really exciting things are happening. I think we’re really getting to see the seeds that we have planted come to fruition.”

For more information on the Ruth Ellis Center, visit www.ruthelliscenter.org.



Seated first on right, Carolyn Lett, director of diversity at Roeper, during a recent training.

► **SEED**

Continued from p. 8

at University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe Woods, decided to come out.

“At first I was afraid, but if I can’t be truthful and authentic, what am I relaying?,” says Slade, originally from England who became a U.S. citizen in 2010. “If I was in a safe environment when I was younger, I may have figured things out sooner.”

This was one of her motivations for bringing the SEED Project to Liggett following a workshop run by The Roeper School faculty where Slade was introduced and impressed by Lett.

“It was life-changing,” says Slade in her late 50’s. “SEED helps create an environment that allows you to speak your truth and be respected for it. This program has helped faculty be more authentic with each other in becoming role models for students. More importantly, it

helps parents see that their children are who they are and can be accepted.”

Upper School Director Lisa Baker admits that most people don’t know what a fabulous place The Roeper School is.

“It’s a responsive and wonderful space unlike any other school I’ve worked in” says Baker, adding that she uprooted her partner of 20 years and their son from Montgomery County, Maryland for this job. “Roeper embraced my family to the point where I don’t even think about it anymore because it doesn’t have to be a factor. It’s the most freeing experience.”

Baker describes how the SEED Project, which she underwent about four years ago, has made her a better educator.

“As a human being, I can relate to what the students are experiencing. I can remember being a teenager. We have to understand ourselves well enough to be able to interact with the students. It can’t be about you. It’s about them.”

She also explained why The Roeper School will continue to move forward.

“Our commitment to diversity is in the foundational documents of the school. It means we aren’t resting. The worst thing is to think you have it all down. Nobody ever stops growing, thinking, and changing. I’m unwilling to accept that we are anything but lifelong learners,” says Baker. “The SEED Project is not making a major shift in our environment. We are already extremely accepting. It’s just making us a little bit better at it.”

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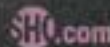
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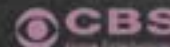


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PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Arts & Theater Editor

Donald V. Calamia,
curtaincalls@pridesource.com

Calendar Editor

Benjamin Jenkins
calendar@pridesource.com

CREATIVE

Art Director

David Ano, davidano@pridesource.com

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Contributing Writers

Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown,
Zach Childree, Jack Fertig, Lisa Keen,
Jeremy Martin, Anthony Paull, Andrea Potet,
Crystal Proxmire, Bob Roehr,
Hannah Schwab, Jody Valley,
D'Anne Witkowski, Rex Wockner, Dan Woog

Cartoonists

Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau, Joan Hilty

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ed Bohach, ed@pridesource.com
Ann Cox, anncox@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

Business Office

Diane Smith, dianesmith@pridesource.com
Nancy Blankenship

Circulation & Distribution

Diane Smith

Pride Source Media Group

11920 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48150
Phone 734.293.7200 • Fax 734.293.7201
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Transmissions



Never Forgotten

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Summer wanes, and the days get shorter. Blue skies give way to grey skies and the occasional rain shower. A slight chill now accompanies the sun's warmth – not too long ago pervasive and penetrating.

The change from summer to autumn has been a part of my life for as long as I've been alive, but in the last thirteen years, it has taken on a new connotation. It reminds that the Transgender Day of Remembrance is coming.

Not that I could forget, mind you. You can tell from its very name that it isn't here to be forgotten. For me, personally, it's indelibly marked on me, as permanent as a scar.

It's not something that crops up in my calendar app, or that others need to remind me about. It's not something I program around, like one might hang their seasonal tinsel in anticipation of the holidays. It's not the time I start to craft a carefully worded fundraising letter.

In some ways, I dread even having to write about it at all. Not because – after all these years – I won't have anything to say, but because there still quite a few things left to speak about.

Back in 1998, when I first had the notion to look at the state of anti-transgender murders, I did not think anyone would care. From anything I could tell, our dead were forgotten weeks after they perished. When Rita Hester died on Nov. 28 of that year, the trial of William Palmer – who had been accused of murdering Chanelle Pickett on Nov. 20 – had concluded roughly a year and a half prior. Yet some in Massachusetts, where both deaths occurred, could not recall Pickett's case.

So I began to chronicle these names. Not for the hope that anyone would pay attention, or that we'd have a big event every year, but that at least someone was not forgetting.

I recently talked with Ethan St. Pierre, who is the Squiggy to my Lenny when it comes to the Transgender Day of Remembrance. He and I discussed the difficulty in chronicling all these cases, how it changes you. You can't look into the eyes of those we've lost lightly. It's never just another murder, each one is a person, each one could be you, your friend, your family. Each one you have a sort of kinship with.

I think back to the Gwen Araujo murder. Seeing her in her coffin at the funeral home. Getting to know her family. Sitting in several courtrooms. Looking at forensic evidence. Watching her killers just a few feet from me, smiling and joking with their own families. Listening to eyewitness reports of what happened that night – and listening to defense attorneys try to claim that a several hour beating was somehow

a moment of “transgender panic.”

I think back to other cases, and how each affected me. Looking at those photos and hearing their stories, hearing the pleas from their parents and friends, and watching the trials and legal machinations changes you.

Then there are the new cases. You see, it doesn't really stop, at least not yet. There are cases every couple of weeks. There's many more than this we may never know of. Even with more than a decade of awareness, even with a lot of transgender victories in both the legal arena and the court of public opinion, we still die at a rate consistent to what we were in 1998.

The cases are not any less brutal, either. Not that you'd expect them to be. Our murderers don't typically kill us and go on their way: they attempt to obliterate us, to erase us fully from existence.

Consider one of the most recent – as of this writing – cases, that of 19-year-old Shelly Moore in Detroit. Her mother, Lyniece Nelson, had reported her as missing. Then Nelson had to identify her child solely from a charred torso.

Moore's killers did not just kill this teen. They dismembered her. They burned her. They dumped the remains along a service drive on the side of an Interstate. They did all they could to make her a non-entity.

This is why we don't forget. They may kill us, but we won't let these murderers get the chance to erase us from existence. We remember, and we fight to make a society where killing us is not an option, where maybe some day we can look at the Transgender Day of Remembrance as a curious part of our past, much like one might baffle over medical treatment in the days before sterilization.

It's not that we want to have a Transgender Day of Remembrance, it's that we still need to have one. Our deaths, as I said above, continue to happened at the same rates as they seemingly always have, from as best as we can tell. Some things have changed, but this remains an alarming constant. We still seem to lack the simple right to exist.

With all this said, I urge you to go to your local Transgender Day of Remembrance event.

Our murderers don't typically kill us and go on their way: they attempt to obliterate us, to erase us fully from existence.

Show your solidarity with your transgender family and friends. March, light a candle and be there for those we've lost while you remember those we have. If you cannot make it to an event for whatever reason, than just try to take a moment to remember privately.

Further, let us hope for an autumn in our future where we can remember when we had to remember, and when we can see that this brutality will no longer be tolerated.

Gwen Smith hopes everyone stays safe out there. You can find her at www.gwensmith.com



Parting Glances



How's your B3 advantage?

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

There's an old saying, "If you don't use it you lose it." It applies to both sex and voting. (Diddle in the parlor. Get screwed at the polls.)

While my own sex life is an open book (mostly blank pages of late) that "certain urge" comes and goes with alarming regularity. Daylight savings time has nothing to do with it.

If I may use my cell phone as a metaphor: Instead of getting rousing bars of Stars and Stripes Forever, I get a low-grade hummer in the pocket of my fleece-lined parka, or elsewhere, depending upon its handheld placement.

At my age I'm grateful for the slightest tremor. It means I'm alive and healthy. And God knows, I work at being both. Sometimes a little over-indulgently, I might add. Another observation: it takes real courage to get old.

For 20-plus years now I've been taking a daily tablespoon of cod liver oil. Although it's available in orange and mint flavors, I drink it full swim from the bottle. Ugh! you say. Maybe so; but I can't recall the last time I've had a cold (and fly casting has somehow become a favorite pastime of mine – hook, line, and zipper.)

I take a handful of vitamins at each meal, and while I may have the most expensive urine in my neighborhood – I plan to conduct a campus survey – my energy remains upbeat. I sleep well. (Instead of sheep I count Twin Labs Two-A-Day vitamin B capsules.)

While I've often confessed my foibles in Parting Glances, I still have a few up my sweatshirt sleeve. Here's two, flagged Stay Young Forever.

I also follow a daily exercise routine. Each morning I touch my toes 50 times, do right and left high kicks 35 times, arm crossovers, 100 a set. (I'm considering a stint as a standup comic.)

While I've often confessed my foibles in Parting Glances, I still have a few up my sweatshirt sleeve. (Years ago, a perceptive coworker – bless her low-cal heart – called them my "idiocracies.") Here's two, flagged Stay Young Forever.

For sometime, now, I've been taking monthly Human Growth Hormone (Secretagogue-Gold) and also a "combination of herbal ingredients" in tablet form to improve my "staying power." Apparently both have done the trick for me. I stay.

Of course it's all a grand illusion. Nonetheless it makes me feel good, and I'm not alone in my pursuit of the elusive soda fountain of youth. There are hundreds crowding at life's counter for a cherry coke or a banana split.

Or, so I recently chanced to discover while channel surfing on to a group of glamorous well-buffed guys and big-bosomed gals. They were talking coyly and seductively about "enhancement," "partner pleasing," and "measuring up" to "full performance."

It was a soft-core come-on for a combination of assorted "time-tested" aphrodisiac ingredients in financially convenient tablet form. What amazes me is that these studdabubbas would need anything to rake their coals or haul their ashes. (And when was the last time you had a niacin flush?)

More importantly, one hopes they're registered to vote. Straight or gay: Democrat.

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Heard on Facebook

Readers respond to BTL Leadership Project "Trans and triumphant" featuring Detroit LGBT Leader: Ryan Oliver

You are such a positive force in the community, thank you so much Ryan. I'm blessed to know you.
-Arlene Kish

You are so awesome. Thanks for all you do.
-Michelle Fox-Phillip

Rock on brother! Keep your impassioned spirit and momentum running high!
-Kristopher Kole

Ryan is amazing. Dedicated, passionate, giving, and determined to change things for the better. I am honored to know him and just sorry I don't get to see or work with him as much as I would like to do. Keep up the good work, Ryan! We're with you, and ready to help.
-Torii

One of my professors could also be aptly described as "a poor, white, barefoot girl from Ohio." As a white-skinned appearing Two-Spirit, I wonder if such an article about me would make mention of my professor's privileged white skin. If my appearance was more stereotypically Native, would the contrast then be salient? As a Native American, I tend to be suspicious of this paternalistic image of a "white savior" helping us "poor, brown people." It's not exactly empowering. Great job, Ryan, in keeping inclusion and empowerment in our shared consciousness! May we all keep these a priority in our trans activism.
-Steph

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



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ENDA, duality and religion



Mary Sue Coleman

"There is no evidence (the ban) will reduce health care costs, and it most certainly will make us less competitive. The University of Michigan must be able to offer an excellent benefit package to our employees and to those we hope to recruit to U-M for their unique talents, skills and expertise. The environment for such talent is extraordinarily competitive, and our ability to attract and retain top faculty and staff is a significant asset for the state of Michigan. The loss of our ability to offer such benefits would put the university, and our state, at a serious disadvantage compared to peers. Fortune 500 companies nationwide and in the state of Michigan offer partner benefits: It is simply good business that produces an excellent return on investment."

-University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman and Provost Phil Hanlon, in their Nov. 8 letter to Michigan's 38 state senators, asking them to oppose legislation that would prohibit public employers from providing benefits to domestic partners. The legislation (HB 4770-71) prohibits public employers from extending the benefits to unmarried same sex and opposite sex partners of employees. The Republican Rep. Dave Agema sponsored measure was approved by Republican-controlled state House and next goes to the Republican-led Senate.



Jeff Krehely

"Small-business owners favor workplace fairness, both with respect to their internal non-discrimination and benefits policies, and with respect to laws such as ENDA. They favor treating all employees equally - gay or straight, transgender or not transgender - and doing so is not a costly endeavor. Conservatives love to claim that policies and laws that advance workplace fairness are costly to our nation's small businesses. Small businesses have spoken, and they have spoken in favor of fairness."

-Crosby Burns and Jeff Krehely, authors of the Center for American Progress (CAP) poll showing most small businesses in America support workplace discrimination protections for LGBT people, www.americanprogress.org, Oct. 19.



Clay Cane

"I am not tragically colored. And I am not tragically gay, channeling the words of legendary author Zora Neale Hurston. When you are black and gay there is a particular duality that you live in. In my case, that double consciousness has allowed me to be as open and cosmopolitan as possible. When I quote Zora Neale Hurston it reflects how I feel about being both black and gay. I love being all of who I am. I see it all as a blessing."

-Clay Cane, 34-year old host of New York radio's WWRL new Equality Pride Radio show, Clay Cane Live, in an interview titled "NY radio station launches new voice of black gay life," www.thegrio.com, Nov. 05. Clay Cane Live streams worldwide at wwrl1600.com.



Kevin Kloosterman

"I feel like we needed to support the leadership of the Church in their movements forward with our gay brothers and sisters. I did use strong words and strong imagery. I quoted Zechariah 13:6, where someone comes with wounds and says, 'I was wounded in the house of my friends.' I used that imagery to characterize the scars of gay and lesbian people. I was trying to convey that I've felt a small sliver of what gay and lesbian people have gone through, and I've found strength and peace in the Savior."

-Kevin Kloosterman, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) bishop from Illinois, in an interview titled "Homophobia an 'Atrocity,' LDS Bishop Tells Gay Mormon Conference," about his use of the strong word "atrocity" to describe mistreatment of LGBT people, www.religiondispatches.org, Nov. 07.

A gay alumnus reflects on Penn State tragedy

BY KEVIN NAFF



When news broke this week about the heartbreaking tragedy unfolding at Penn State, a few easy predictions came to mind: iconic coach Joe Paterno wouldn't survive; the university

president would have to go too; and anti-gay hate groups would try to exploit Jerry Sandusky's sick crimes for financial gain.

On Wednesday, my first two predictions came to pass, as the university's board of trustees fired both Paterno and Graham Spanier. Then Thursday, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality launched its inevitable broadside against gays and the Westboro Baptist Church announced plans for one of its protests at the Penn State-Nebraska game on Saturday.

Sandusky faces 40 charges related to the alleged abuse of eight boys over 15 years, including allegations he raped at least one young boy in a shower on the Penn State campus. He used his charity, the Second Mile, which ostensibly helped at-risk children in Pennsylvania, to meet his alleged victims.

I am reluctant to address the canard that gay men are disproportionately predisposed to molesting children, as it has been debunked and disproven by dozens of studies. But in anticipation of the right-wing extremists trotting out that old lie, here goes.

AFTAH's leader, Peter LaBarbera, is a man oddly obsessed with gay people and has devoted his life to demonizing us. You know what they say about those who doth protest too much. In his recent commentary on the Penn State scandal, LaBarbera labels Sandusky as "homosexual," and contends, "There IS a long history connecting homosexuality to pederasty, and a disproportionate link between homosexuality and pedophilia."

AFTAH was labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center and has a long record of attacking gays using junk science to bolster its false claims. So consider the source.

Simply put, "homosexual men are not more likely to sexually abuse children than heterosexual men are." That's from the American Psychological Association.

LaBarbera cites pedophilia, but that term refers to an "adult psychological disorder characterized by a preference for prepubescent children as sexual partners," according to medical experts. A preference for children has nothing to do with sexual orientation.

"Many child molesters don't really have an adult sexual orientation. They have never developed the capacity for mature sexual relationships with other adults, either men or women. Instead, their sexual attractions focus on children – boys, girls, or children of both sexes," according to experts at University of California-Davis.

And Sandusky was married with two grown children, an inconvenient fact that further undermines LaBarbera's labels. Surveying the faces of the Penn State scandal — Sandusky, Paterno, Spanier, coach Mike McQueary, athletic director Tim Curley, vice president Gary Schultz — all are straight men. This scandal isn't about gay men; it's about greed and a culture that prized money over doing the right thing.

I'm a Penn State alumnus and have served on the board of the campus LGBT Student Resource Center for several years. The Center is an important and even life-saving resource for students there. Many Penn Staters come from rural parts of the state where acceptance and understanding can be tough to find. Some are disowned by parents after coming out. The Center is there to help and support them, offering a safe space on campus to meet and socialize, educational programming and scholarships and other resources. Only about 7 percent of the nation's colleges and universities operate such LGBT centers on campus and I'm proud that Penn State has emerged as a national leader in this area.

I've watched the incredible changes on campus since my graduation in 1992 with a sense of excitement, optimism and relief. There's so much good in Happy Valley — from the pioneering work of those at the LGBT Center, to the student athletes whose graduation rates rank No. 1 among the NCAA's top 25 teams. Paterno wasn't a stereotypical college football meathead. He emphasized education; the school's library bears his name. In four years there, I met him just once. On the morning of my graduation, I stepped outside my apartment at 6 a.m. for a cup of coffee. And there, standing on the street corner alone, was JoePa. The street was deserted at that early hour and I introduced myself. He asked about my graduation, what I'd studied and my future plans. He was a grandfather figure to everyone on campus.

All of that makes what's happening now so unimaginable to those of us who know the university. How could this happen on our campus? How could so many turn a blind eye? I fear the answers lie in details of an extensive cover-up yet to be revealed. The fact that Mike McQueary — the witness to rape who failed to intervene — remains on the coaching staff while Paterno is gone strongly suggests that we don't have the full story yet. Did McQueary call university police only to have senior officials bury the report? Nothing would surprise me now. Regardless, Paterno, Spanier and the rest got what they deserved.

But the scandal raises deeper questions about our society. There's been much indignation expressed about then-graduate assistant McQueary's actions. He witnessed Sandusky raping a 10-year-old boy in the showers yet reportedly did nothing. Commentators and bloggers have insisted they would have intervened. Maybe. Or maybe not.

Last month, a two-year-old toddler was struck by two vans on a busy street in China. Eighteen pedestrians and cyclists passed by the

child, who later died, before someone finally stopped to help.

That incident — and the Sandusky scandal — reminds me of a lecture I attended while at Penn State. My political science professor was talking about nationalism and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany. It was a frigid February morning and just before class started, she walked to the back of the room and opened a window. As she spoke, the classroom grew colder and colder and students began donning coats and hats. As the professor talked about the circumstances under which societies turn to nationalism and xenophobia, student after student expressed their doubt and indignation — "That could never happen in the United States." Finally, when the cold became too much even for the professor, she said, "How can you be sure you would stand up to the government and its weapons and tanks, when none of you even had the nerve to ask me to close the window?"

It's a lesson that rings tragically relevant today. Were senior officials afraid to call police because they wanted to protect the lucrative revenue stream provided by the football team? Were custodial staff who reportedly witnessed Sandusky's crimes deterred from reporting him out of fear for their jobs? It's comforting to think we'd all have helped that 10-year-old boy, but an entire network of adults failed him. And so many others.

To the students at Penn State: The eyes of the nation are upon you this weekend, so demonstrate the grace and compassion and leadership that was so lacking in your coaches

I am reluctant to address the canard that gay men are disproportionately predisposed to molesting children, as it has been debunked and disproven by dozens of studies. But in anticipation of the right-wing extremists trotting out that old lie, here goes.

and administrators. The anti-gay protesters headed your way are clowns who picket the funerals of fallen soldiers and AIDS patients. Ignore them and cheer on your team to victory.

To Penn State alumni who are disillusioned and angry: There are good people and institutions at the university and in State College who still need our support and involvement. Don't walk away. Give your time, money and talents to those who are making a positive difference.

And to everyone else shaking your heads on the sidelines: Let this sad spectacle remind us of the need to be better people, to look out for one another and, especially, the most vulnerable among us.

Kevin Naff is editor and co-publisher of the Washington Blade.

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Creep of the Week

Jerry Cox

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Newsflash: homosexuality and pedophilia are not the same things. Equating the two makes as much sense as equating adopting a pet kitty from a shelter with luring a stray into your yard so you can torture and kill him. Surely anyone who thought the two were the same would be insane.

Though they still might be invited to talk on Public Radio International, specifically the To the Point program, when the topics are the Penn State child abuse scandal and same-sex couples adopting kids. Nice juxtaposition there, guys.

Special guest on the program was Jerry Cox of the Arkansas Family Council, a group that tried like the dickens to prevent gays and lesbians from being foster parents in

Cox seemed to equate gays wanting to foster or adopt children with Penn State child-rapist Jerry Sandusky (who fostered kids in the past).

Arkansas to no avail.

Cox seemed to equate gays wanting to foster or adopt children with Penn State child-rapist Jerry Sandusky (who fostered kids in the past). Not that this comparison makes sense, but that's not Cox's job. His job is to spew anti-gay invective whenever a microphone gets near his face.

"I find it interesting that we talk about the Penn State situation, and then when we talk about other situations where certain categories of people say it's our right to adopt, it's our right to be a foster parent, in both of those situations the rights of children seem to be put in second place," Cox said.

Let's crack the code. "Certain categories of people" most certainly means gays. And when he says "in both of these situations" Cox is clearly equating letting a known child-rapist foster children with allowing gay people to foster children. In only one of these "situations" are the rights and needs of a child "in second place." Hint: it's the child being fostered by the child

rapist and second place is far too high of a finish. Last place is more like it.

For Cox, the most important things to look for in a foster family are one penis and one vagina.

"If you have a same-sex couple with an adopted child, what you're in effect saying is that moms don't matter or dads don't matter," he said. "Little girls grow up, little boys grow up and they need both of those role models to grow up in a balanced way."

Mind you, Sandusky is a married-to-a-woman man, which means his family structure meets these criteria. What Cox means by balanced, I don't know. Perhaps he's worried two moms will teach a boy to pee sitting down or two dads might teach a girl to pee standing up.

When To the Point hosts suggested that children would perhaps be better off in a house with same-sex parents rather than languishing in the foster care system, Cox rejected the notion.

"Sometimes we sound as if those are the only two choices," Cox said. "It's like, child be institutionalized or be in a same-sex home or cohabiting home, or whatever. And I'd like to challenge this a little bit, to raise our sights a little bit, and say, you know, the state surely can do better than that."

Yeah, stupid state. Being stuck in an orphanage on one hand, living in a household with two stable and loving foster parents who happen to be gay on the other. It's like Sophie's choice!

Of course, says Cox, those aren't the only options.

"With all the millions of stable homes that are out there, surely the state of California the state of Pennsylvania, the state of Arkansas, wherever we are, surely we can find stable homes with a married mom and dad for these children," he said.

Got that? There are millions of homes with stable one-penis-one-vagina structures oh so perfect for foster children. The problem is they're apparently very well hidden. We're just not looking hard enough. So come out, come out wherever you are. Cox has a pick-up truck full of kids with your (heterosexual only, please) names all over it.



Jerry Cox

Lots of love for new Affirmations director

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE— Affirmations was packed to capacity Monday night, as Antonio David Garcia, the new executive director, spoke about his vision for the community center and its role in connecting those interested in moving Michigan towards full equality.

The vibrant young activist, a single gay father who once walked 55 miles from Swartz Creek to Lansing to make a point about gay acceptance, is already making changes. The center is now open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day but Sunday. There are new members on staff and new programs in the works, including regular fitness classes, expanded counseling services, a taskforce to address aging citizen's needs, the addition of faith-based programming and possibly even a charter school someday. "This is YOUR community center," Garcia said repeatedly. "The sky is the limit."

Garcia said he delivered the 2012-operating budget to the board, which totaled \$890,000. He reminded everyone it takes money to keep Affirmations going, to the tune of \$70,000 a month, but he also emphasized there is a lot the center can do around programming without money, relying on the hundreds of volunteers that help out regularly.

The center is also opening its doors to organizations that want to meet there and Garcia hopes Affirmations can be a place for fun and gathering, but also a central location for community organizing.

He reminded the crowd that, "Michigan lacks same-sex marriage. Michigan lacks enumerated anti-bullying laws. Michigan lacks hate crimes prosecution. And the state is considering removing benefits for partners of state employees. In Michigan you can be fired for being gay."

Garcia also talked about the recent murder of a young transgender woman who used to come to Affirmations. "When Shelly walked through these doors, she felt safe," he said.

"We have a lot to do and this is why we need Affirmations."

The response in the room was one of overwhelming support and excitement. Every age group, gender expression and other demographic came out to support the new executive director, including representatives from organizations across the state.

Denise Brogan-Kator, executive director of Equality Michigan said, "We share the love. We are so proud to have (Dave) here. This collaboration is only going to get stronger."

Nicole, a transgender woman who can only fully express herself at places like Affirmations, said that a lot has changed in the five years she has been using the center's services. "I remember it in the old days when it was across the street," she said. "It was so dark and stinky, and small. We need a bright place like this...It's good to have it open more hours. Why have a community center if it's closed?" Nicole said she values the library and being able to come to the center on Friday and Saturday nights to watch movies.

London Bell is an Affirmations employee who served on the hiring committee. After a nine-month search process, she feels the board made a good choice offering Garcia the position. "I immediately noticed that



Seated, Affirmations Executive Director, A. Dave Garcia with Cass Varner, director of communications, Johnny Jenkins, director of programs and Jon Fitzgerald, director of operations. BTL photo: Andrew Potter.

Dave was the light in the room - personable, humble, down-to-earth," Bell said.

Many in the audience were former members or Center Partners who are considering getting re-involved. Carl Weiler said he stopped coming to Affirmations because there wasn't enough programming that catered to those of retirement age. After attending a recent event on aging, held at the center, he has taken a new interest. "Wow. That's all I can say. Wow. David is a strong leader and he's doing the right things. The school thing is central," Weiler said. "We need to stop bullying now and keep children safe." Weiler is also joining the organization Senior Action in a Gay Environment to help address the needs of the aging LGBT community.

Rosemary Linares of Detroit Latin@s said she is "very excited about David Garcia. I knew him from Kalamazoo and I know he is very appreciative of intersectional analysis that is inclusive of racial and economic issues." Latin@s is one of several groups that will be using the space for community organizing.

Garcia asked the audience to watch for an important upcoming survey that he and the board and staff plan to use to guide future programming decisions. He emphasized that a new strategic planning process was about to begin, which will include input from over 15 community demographics, as well as the survey data. He said the strategic planning process would rely on input from community members to guide any future programming.

There is one more change that Garcia called for, which he said is still being worked out with the board. He said they are simplifying their donation and membership process, and not having titles like "member" or "center partner." "We are all Affirmations... I don't care if you're a 15 year-old boy who can only give a dollar, you are a member... This is YOUR community center."



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Election 2011: Large gains for openly gay candidates across U.S.

BY LISA KEEN

Nov. 8 was a very good day for openly LGBT candidates around the country, with three out of four of the more than 60 candidates winning, including Annise Parker, who secured a second term as mayor of Houston.

But the real excitement in the Nov. 8 results came in some of the low-profile races of the day, many in notoriously conservative places. Four out of five openly gay candidates won in conservative North Carolina, including LaWana Mayfield, the first openly LGBT member of the Charlotte City Council. Another lesbian, Caitlin Cople, became the first openly LGBT person elected to city council in Missoula, Montana. Attorney Mike Laster became the first gay man to be elected to the Houston City Council, and businessman Zach Adamson became the first openly LGBT member of the Indianapolis City Council. Alex Morse, 22, won an upset victory over a long-time public official to become mayor of Holyoke, Massachusetts. Steve Pougnet glided to a second-term as mayor of Palm Springs, California. And attorney Chris Seelbach, who helped overturn Cincinnati's anti-gay charter amendment seven years ago, won a seat on the City Council Tuesday.

Data collected independently by Keen News Service and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund indicates there were at least 63 openly LGBT candidates on the ballot Tuesday: 47 of them won, 14 lost, and two outcomes remain uncertain.

Mayors win

Eight of nine openly gay candidates for mayor won Tuesday. Parker in Houston secured 50 percent of the vote in a field of six candidates, though none of her five opponents had anywhere near the funding or organization that Parker did. Still, going into the race, Parker had reason to worry. In mid-October, a local television news poll found that voters were split on her effectiveness. Fifty percent rated her job performance in her first two-year term as either "Fair" or "Poor," while 47 percent rated it "Good" or "Excellent."

In an interview with KHOU-TV, Parker attributed her poll split to people's anxiety around the economy.

"We have the worst economy here in Houston that we've had in decades and we have the worst economy that we've had nationally since the Great Depression," Parker told KHOU. "I understand completely why people are anxious, unhappy. It is what it is."

KHOU noted the bulk of the low job performance scores came from Houston's unemployed and that mayors in other big cities around the country were polling similarly.

Right-wing groups that opposed Parker in 2009 tried again to portray her as a lesbian activist, creating a youtube video that showed a slow-motion clip of her giving her partner-in-life a peck on the cheek after being sworn in. It also showed a news clip of Parker appointing a transgender person, Phyllis Frye, to a local judgeship, and a news clip of an executive order Parker issued to ban discrimination in public restrooms on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The video also showed a letter in which Parker referred to her partner, Kathy Hubbard, as "First Lady."

In Holyoke, Massachusetts, recent college graduate,

2011 Michigan election wrap-up

BY JAN STEVENSON

Pro-equality candidates win in most races

A majority of pro-equality candidates won Nov. 8 in local races across the state. Of the 19 candidates endorsed by Equality Michigan Pride PAC, 13 won their elections.

In Holland, pro-equality former public school teacher Wayne Klomparens won by just 18 votes, calling the tight race winning by "a whisker." His election secures four solid supporters of Holland's non-discrimination ordinance returning to the council. The ordinance lost by a council vote of 5-4 earlier this year.

"We did really well," said Amy Hunter, president of Equality Michigan Pride PAC, from her home in Kalamazoo. "If there is a trend there, it is that people don't look upon pro-equality and openly gay candidates as a negative anymore. Even when there was public push back on openly gay and supportive candidates it didn't seem to effect their margins."

Hunter explained that Jim Carruthers reelection to the Traverse City City Council and the two city council members reelected in Ferndale, Mike Lennon and Dan Martin, were each targeted because of their pro-equality stances. "People definitely voted pro-equality in those races," said Hunter.

In one of the few upsets in the Nov. 8 results, Democrat Marian McClellan beat the Republican incumbent Mayor of Oak Park.

"What we were really watching was the Oak Park mayoral race," said Hunter. "I got some push back because of our endorsement of a new candidate, but the PAC endorsed her because her stance on equality issues was so excellent. I'm hoping to see her move Oak Park forward in this traditionally conservative area."

Here is a list of the Equality Michigan Pride PAC endorsees winners and losers from the elections Nov. 8:

Won

Dave Coulter, Ferndale Mayor
 Jim Carruthers, Traverse City City Commission
 Stephanie Bell, Kalamazoo City Commission
 Don Cooney, Kalamazoo City Commission
 David Anderson, Kalamazoo City Commission
 Bobby Hopewell, Kalamazoo City Commission
 Robert Cinabro, Kalamazoo City Commission
 Nathan Triplett, East Lansing City Council
 Mike Lennon, Ferndale City Council
 Dan Martin, Ferndale City Council
 Marian McClellan, Oak Park Mayor
 Kyle DuBuc, Royal Oak City Commission
 Scott Craig, Northville Public Schools Board of Education

Pro Equality candidates, issues win big in Michigan



Lost:

Nicholas Wikar, Kalamazoo City Commission
 Lynne Martinez, Lansing City Council 1st Ward
 Rory Neuner, Lansing City Council At-Large
 Steve Manchester, Lansing School Board
 Charles Kellet, Pleasant Ridge City Commission
 Stephan Rapundalo, Ann Arbor City Council 2nd Ward

Traverse City voters approve non-discrimination ordinance by two-to-one margin

Voters overwhelmingly approved a measure to affirm the city's inclusive non-discrimination ordinance Nov. 8. The ordinance, which includes protections for LGBT citizens, was passed last year by the city council. An anti-ordinance movement had put a measure on the ballot to repeal the ordinance. Voters confirmed the ordinance by nearly a two-to-one margin, voting 2,818 to 1,661.

"The fact is that I was even more interested in getting a yes vote on the ordinance than having me reelected," said Jim Carruthers, City Commissioner who was reelected for second four-year term. Carruthers said that having the ordinance on the same ballot probably helped his reelection campaign. "It helped me. Barb Budros and I were up for reelection and we both were the top vote getters, and she was a supporter of the ordinance too. We had the support of the citizenry. We raised over \$25,000 for the campaign, mostly from our straight allies."

"I am really personally thrilled that we had such a large voter turnout and that the non-discrimination ordinance was upheld by such a tremendously large margin," said

Denise Brogan-Kator, executive director of Equality Michigan. "That means to mean that the citizens of Michigan want ordinances like this one, and the legislators in Lansing should sit up and take notice when they are considering HB5039 that would invalidate ordinances like this one that was just reaffirmed by the voters."

"This is a wonderful victory. Traverse City voters have defended fairness and taken a strong stand for all families," said Diana Ketola, steering committee member for Traverse City Equality and chair of the local Democratic Party committee, the campaign group supporting the ordinance.

Carruthers said that this should end the fight in Traverse City over the ordinance, once and for all. But he is concerned that the anti-equality activists are going to keep pushing.

"My concern is that Paul Napolti can't accept this," said Carruthers, referring to the leader of the anti-ordinance group. "He has been attacking the school board about an anti-bullying policy that they passed last year, and he plans to keep going at the school board."

Gay candidates win reelection

Jim Carruthers won reelection to his seat on the Traverse City City Council and David Coulter easily won his first mayoral election in Ferndale after last year's job-swap with current Oakland County Commissioner Craig Covey. Coulter defeated Raymond Willis with 84 percent of the vote.

Carruthers, Coulter and Covey are all openly gay.

Carruthers was heavily targeted by anti-gay activists, led by Paul Napolti, because Carruthers is gay and for his support of the city's inclusive non-discrimination ordinance.

"I'm really glad I'm on the city council," said Carruthers. "I think we are doing a great job and I'm glad I'm there."

► National election news

Continued from p. 18

but longtime local youth and community activist Alex Morse won an upset victory against an incumbent who had been a top town official for many years. The key issue had been over casinos - with Morse being against and incumbent Elaine Pluta being for. Morse had served on the one-time governor's LGBT commission and started a non-profit LGBT group. While attending Brown University in nearby Providence, Rhode Island, Morse worked for openly gay Mayor David Cicilline, who is now in Congress.



Houston Mayor
Annise Parker

In Palm Springs, California, incumbent Mayor Steve Pougnet, who is openly gay, won re-election over a field of six other candidates, taking 70 percent of the vote.

The only losing mayoral candidate Tuesday was Bevan Dufty in San Francisco, where, as of Wednesday morning, Dufty had earned less than four percent of the vote in a field with more than a dozen candidates.

The apparent winner, acting Mayor Ed Lee, will become the first American of Chinese descent to be elected mayor of San Francisco. Lee became acting mayor by appointment of then-Mayor Gavin Newsom, after Newsom was elected lieutenant governor. Lee was only the third choice of San Francisco's LGBT newspaper, Bay Area Reporter. (San Francisco voters were able to rank their choices - first, second, and third - among the 16 on the ballot.) The paper endorsed Dufty first and the current City Attorney Dennis Herrera second. One of the city's LGBT Democratic Clubs endorsed Herrera first, Dufty as second choice, and Lee as third. The other LGBT Democratic Club endorsed Supervisor John Avalos, followed by Herrera and State Senator Leland Yee.

In other interesting news from election day

- An openly lesbian candidate, Caitlin Cople, has won a seat to the city council of Missoula, Montana - a state with a very sparse LGBT population. While Cople's connections to the gay community were not consistently highlighted during the campaign, they weren't hidden either. The local daily newspaper, the Missoulian, ran an article about her involvement "with the Pride Foundation, which works to connect and strengthen Montana's gay rights movement."

- Four of the 63 races Tuesday were for seats in state legislatures. One of the most important of those was Adam Ebbin, who moved from the State House to the State Senate in Virginia, becoming the first openly LGBT person in that chamber.

Unfortunately, the State Senate lost a number of Democrats Tuesday and is switching from majority Democrat to majority Republican, giving the state a Republican majority now in both chambers and the governor's office. Two gay men won Assembly seats in New Jersey: Tim Eustace and Reed Gusciora. The only loss on the state level was Patrick Forrest, who fell short in his bid for a State Senate seat in Virginia.

- Two out of three candidates for judgeships won yesterday. The winners were Anthony Cannataro in New York and Hugh McGough in Pittsburgh. Daniel Clifford, a Republican, lost his bid for a judgeship in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

- All five candidates for local school boards won Tuesday, including Daniel Hernandez, with 60 percent of the vote, in Tucson. Hernandez is the openly gay aide to U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords (D-Ariz.) who is credited with saving her life after a shooter shot and killed a number of people attending a meet-and-greet the Congresswoman was hosting at a local grocery store.

- Of the 41 candidates running for City Council or its equivalent in their cities, 28 won. Two others are still pending. Brad Bender's bid for a Town Council seat in Southampton, New York, is too close to call. Lance Rhodes has been thrown into a run-off for a seat on the East Point City, Georgia, City Council.

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Affirmations relaunched

BY ANDREA POTEET

It's come a long way from a helpline: With a new executive director, new staff members, expanded hours and exciting new programs, Affirmations, the Ferndale-based LGBT community center, is starting a new chapter after years of cutbacks in the recent recession. Below is a look at the center's staff and programs as it readies for its 23rd year.

Antonio David Garcia

The first few months at a new job are usually reserved for getting to know coworkers, establishing a routine and testing the waters with a few starter projects.

But for A. David Garcia, Affirmation's new executive director, who joined the center's staff in August, his first three months have been dedicated to a massive restructuring of programs, staff and policies. In his brief time on the job, he has extended the center's hours to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, hired key staff members, launched new programs and is planning bigger projects including a charter school.

The packed schedule already has led to sacrifices for Garcia, who keeps a sleeping bag in his car for late-night meetings that make the drive back to the Fenton home he shares with his 15-year-old son less than appealing.

"The hardest part is finding enough hours in the day to accomplish everything that needs to happen," Garcia says, "especially in the first 90 days, the first six months, the first year."

The next year will see some big changes for Affirmations, Garcia said. Expansion of anti-bullying programs, the opening of a faith alliance office to represent pro-LGBT clergy and amped-up programs for adult and senior LGBT people are all on tap for this year, while other programs, like what Garcia hopes to be the best progressive charter school in the country, adhere to a less strict timeline.

The school, which will be housed within the center's 17,000-square-foot building, will make the most out of the center's spare space by providing a place for high school students of all orientations to learn things often left out of public school curricula in a safe, bully-free environment. Garcia said he hopes to open the school's doors in the next three years.

"Even the best public schools, if you're



Affirmations staff gears up for new hours, programs and vision. Staff seated from left: Jonathan Laye, Johnny Jenkins, Megh Hollowell, Antonio Dave Garcia, Cass Varner and Sarah May. Standing from left: Mark McMillan, Jon Fitzgerald, London Bell, Alfredo Smith, DeShaun Smith and Jack Miller. Photos: Andrew Potter

"We will listen closely to the community throughout this process and with your guidance, look to expand our influence in political advocacy and the education and protection of our youth."

- Executive Director A. Dave Garcia

lucky enough to learn who Walt Whitman is, they don't tell you he was gay," Garcia says. "Or Oscar Wilde, or Audre Lorde, or James Baldwin. In your science and math classes, if you're lucky enough to learn that Alan Turing is the father of computer science and created the Turing machine, they don't tell you he was gay, they don't tell you what happened to him because he was gay. Take health: Our normal students in the best schools are not learning about same-sex (people) at all in health class, much less same-sex health. We are failing our students. Even the best schools are failing LGBT students."

His dedication to gay youth began more than a decade ago when he was fired from his job as the community services coordinator of Swartz Creek High School in 2000 when he attempted to start a gay teen support group at the request of several students.

"I wasn't out professionally, and I thought

it would be hypocritical of me to tell them about all of these things and not come out, so I did," Garcia says. "I told the superintendent that I was going to start this after-school support group, and the next thing you know, my desk was out in the hall and they rearranged my hours. It was just a bad situation."

Coupled with growing frustration surrounding the murder of Matthew Shepard, Garcia said the incident spurred him into action. He marched from the doors of the school to the state capitol to deliver the first of many pro LGBT-rights speeches. His career also has included a stint as executive director of the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center. He is also an award-winning filmmaker and playwright.

With so much on his plate, Garcia said it's easy to get lost in the day-to-day tasks of launching new center programs, but his favorite

part of his job comes when he reflects on his role in the larger gay rights movement.

"I can get lost in the budget of Affirmations and the daily responsibilities," Garcia says, "and then a parent will call on the phone and their kid's coming out and they don't know what to do, so I can meet with them in-house... or have a conversation with a clergy member who's on the fence and wants to support us but has a congregation that's a little more conservative than them and developing a strategy to deal with that. Those are things that I enjoy the most."

Jon Fitzgerald

When Director of Operations Jon Fitzgerald talks to potential volunteers, his story has a bit more weight than that of an

average recruiter.

Just a few years ago, he was in their shoes.

After years spent in management positions for large corporations, Fitzgerald found himself without a job in 2008.

"I thought, 'What am I going to do with my time?'" Fitzgerald says. "And I started researching lots of LGBT organizations. The mission statement at Affirmations spoke to me the most because it included all sexual orientations. Not everyone in my life self-identifies as LGBTQ, so it was important to me that everyone was welcomed at the center."

His relatively quick rise within the organization is a credit to the organization and management skills he gleaned in the corporate world, he said. During his time at the center, the volunteer base he oversees has exploded from just about 60 to more than 475.

And most tell a story more than familiar to Fitzgerald.

"Unfortunately the economy really went south, so people all of the sudden had time on their hands," he says. "And they really wanted to fill that time by giving back. People were just showing up by the droves to volunteer."

And with all the burgeoning programs at the center, the influx of volunteers will have plenty to do.

See Affirmations, next page



Current Programs

Programs at Affirmations are changing as quickly as the Michigan weather. Here's a sample of what's available.

Advocacy: Includes programs to promote civic engagement and social justice, initiatives for anti-discrimination laws and marriage rights, along with legal referral services. Planned programs include a faith-alliance initiative comprised of area clergy. Programs aimed at bullying, adoption and hate crimes are also possible.

Culture and Society: Includes programs designed to create a welcoming space for LGBT people of common interests to gather and socialize. Groups include Caring Caregivers, Dykes on Bikes, Men's and Womyn's film groups and groups for the newly single and polyamorous.

Growth and Development: Groups designed to support and encourage growth in LGBT individuals and families. Includes the Youth Empowerment Program, a hang-out spot for LGBT youth, youth discussion and support groups and a Partnership in Parenting class. Possible additions include GED and Literacy programs.

Health and Wellness: Works to eliminate disparities in health for LGBT people while providing support for their health and well-being. Programs include Adult and Youth HIV testing, Tobacco Free Michigan initiatives, counseling services and the center's first program, a helpline. Obesity programs and mental health services have been discussed as additions.

Recreation: To provide fun, socializing and relaxation. Includes a choir, Eucre and yoga. Zumba has been discussed.

Partnerships: The center works with organizations including Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Crossroads, GLSEN, Metro Parent and Motor City Bears, with more partnerships to improve the lives of LGBT people and allies to come.

Johnny Jenkins

With extended hours, the center is going to need something to fill them with.

That's where Johnny Jenkins comes in.

Jenkins, the center's director of programs, is charged with evaluating and identifying programs to add to the center's schedule after programs were slashed in recent years due to economic strain.

Programs currently in development include a more active stance on marriage advocacy, bullying and hate crimes, amped-up health and mental services, and a tough stance on obesity to include more fitness options for LGBT people of all ages.

"A lot of them feel comfortable coming to the center," Jenkins says, "so we feel like it's something we need to be doing more of as we look at expanding programs."

After graduating from Western Michigan University with a marketing degree, Jenkins was active in corporate marketing and event organizing, skills he used as co-creator of the black gay pride event Hotter Than July, for which he is still a lead producer.

He said he loves that his current job, which he started a month ago, secures his place in the gay rights movement while allowing him to use his networking skills.

"My favorite part is that I'm still a part of a movement toward equality," he says, "and making sure our LGBT community is healthy, informed and well networked."



Staff member Johnny Jenkins

"My favorite part is that I'm still a part of a movement toward equality and making sure our LGBT community is healthy, informed and well networked."

- Director of Programs
Johnny Jenkins

Shelly McCallister

For Shelly McCallister, her ability to listen isn't just a good character trait; it's a job necessity.

As counseling supervisor, McCallister supervises nine to 13 graduate-level interns who provide reduced-cost counseling services to people ages 18 and over. McCallister said the individuals, couples and families the interns see either cannot afford traditional counseling services or simply feel more comfortable receiving them at Affirmations.

In the two years she's been employed with the center, in addition to her full-time position with the Visiting Nurse Association, she said watching the interns work reminds her why she initially chose a career in social work.

"The interns are always so eager to learn and grow in their chosen profession," McCallister says. "The exchange of ideas concerning theory and treatment practices between the interns and myself has a way of revitalizing my initial excitement. We all need to be reminded of that feeling at times."

Mark McMillan

Mark McMillan is thinking about bashes.

Under McMillan, who has served as events and sponsorship manager at the center since June, the center's annual Spring Bash event will now have a more casual sibling at a lower price point. The annual event will get gussied up in 2012 when it is held at the Detroit Institute of Arts and be joined by a Harvest-themed fall event at a yet-to-be-determined location in October 2012.

"I think with the first one coming to the DIA, people will be blown away," McMillan says. "The venue at the DIA is overwhelmingly beautiful and fantastic. I would hope people coming to the October event will find a welcoming environment, a fun environment and an 'Oh, I didn't think Affirmations was like this' type of environment. They may have stayed away for whatever reason, but hopefully they'll say 'Oh, I might try this out again.'"

McMillan started his ties with the center as a volunteer in the early 2000s, but came back to volunteer when he lost his retail job in

Meghann Hollowell

Program Coordinator Meghann Hollowell has been at the center for only about a month, but the activism that led her there started at a much younger age.

"I've been community organizing since I was 6," she says. "As a kid, I held rallies in courtyards of apartment complexes and suburban intersections, encouraging the community to go vegetarian because I believed that all animals should be treated equal. I wanted to be a voice for those who couldn't speak for themselves."

After coming out at 13, she attended an Affirmations youth group and said she realized she needed to extend her activism to include gay rights.

She went on to volunteer at various nonprofits promoting environmental and social change before taking on a job as Citizens Outreach and Campaign Director at the Arizona Public Interest Research Group in Phoenix, Ariz. before moving back to the area, where she volunteered at Affirmations for a year before being offered her current job.

At Affirmations, Hollowell is responsible for assisting the Director of Programs with developing, implementing and promoting a variety of programs including strategizing for a future gay marriage campaign.

"I love being a direct link to the community – a face of Affirmations, so to speak. The center is going through so many exciting changes – and with that comes a lot of work."



Staff members Megh Hollowell and Sarah May

2009. He said the center's warm and welcoming environment drew him there as a way to fill his suddenly free days.

"For me this is a beginning and I want to keep going and do the best that I can."

Cass Varner

In her eight years with Affirmations, Director of Communications Cass Varner has seen big changes at the center.

She's seen the center move in 2007 from its former location at 195 W. Nine Mile, an older building the staff shared with "creepy crawlies," to its new location just down the block. She's also seen the public's perception of the center shift with the move and the expansion of its services.

"There was a lot of perception that Affirmations wasn't a welcoming place to come to," Varner says. "So a lot of work has been done specifically targeting that issue."

That work includes a planned multicultural advisory committee, from which a report is due in the winter. A strategic plan for the next five years, to be unveiled at the Spring Bash, will also address the community's feelings on nearly every aspect of the center, from its logo, to its evolving mission. Both projects seek to reestablish the center's reputation as a welcoming, inclusive space, Varner said.

Varner, who began at the center using her secondary education degree in her role as a youth coordinator, said she became more interested in marketing as time went on and when a position in the center opened three years ago, she jumped at the chance to use her artistic skills on the center's various publications.

London Bell

Health and Wellness Manager London Bell can empathize with the LGBT people she helps every day.

As a lawyer in Chicago, she said her sudden illness and resulting struggle with the convoluted health care system made her realize how difficult receiving adequate health care was for her LGBT loved ones.

"I had to go through the system of getting

medical care and I had my own struggles with that," she says. "So I understand that the LGBT community has been marginalized and has not received the standard of care that we all deserve."

A straight ally and the daughter of a lesbian mother, Bell has used that awareness to open doors for the community in the three years she has been with the center. Last year, she partnered with Transgender Michigan to launch the state's first Transgender Health Fair to help fill a hole she saw in the health services available to transgender people.

Next year, she plans to further broaden the Transgender Health Fair with expanded services and add STD screenings to the full-time offerings of the center.

For Bell, the added services are all about helping the people she has come to befriend during her time at the center.

"I really love being able to interact with community members on a daily basis," Bell says "There are people that come regularly from the community, I get a chance to talk with them, get to know them, let them know who I am, and provide resources and a place they can come and be who they are. That's what we work toward every day."

Kathleen LaTosh

Kathleen LaTosh has held a variety of positions during her decade at Affirmations. So now that she's recently been promoted to Special Projects Consultant, she's enjoying time to focus on just a few projects, including the center's multicultural advisory committee, setting up billable mental health services at the center and working on an older adult LGBT coalition that seeks to establish an LGBT-centered retirement community in the area.

It's a welcome change for LaTosh, who has held positions ranging from communications director to chief administrative officer before recently transitioning to a part-time role to spend more time with her partner and two young boys.

"(In my past positions) every single day was different and there's a lot you're responsible for, it's very broad," LaTosh said. "I really enjoy being able to focus my attention on particular projects. I feel my impact can be greater."

Making the biggest impact for social change, after all, is what drew LaTosh to Affirmations and prior to that to the field of social work. She has worked for nonprofits catering to HIV awareness and domestic violence.

"I've always been interested in social change," LaTosh says. "And no matter what I do, it's going to be to affect change."

DeShaun Smith

Very few jobs include on-the-clock time spent in bars.

But one of the programs coordinated by the Center's Youth Empowerment Program staff sends youth ages 13 to 20 to Ferndale-area bars and restaurants with a message.

After educating themselves about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, the 15 members of YEP's peer-to-peer outreach program X the Line

Dear Friends,

On Nov. 12 we were informed of the brutal murder of a transgender member of our community. Last month a conservative and repressive state senate passed a "religious" and "moral" exemption to allow bullying. While the Michigan House has removed that exemption, the bullying legislation that appears to be on the road for passage will lack enumeration and have little or no enforcement measures.

Throughout the state of Michigan it is still illegal for LGBT people to adopt, yet legal for employers to fire Michigan citizens for being gay. Domestic partner benefits are under attack in Lansing. Representatives in the Michigan House are currently attempting to pass legislation that would nullify all statewide ordinances passed by Michigan voters to protect the LGBT community in matters of employment, housing and public accommodation. All of this, with a backdrop of Prop. 2 passed in 2004 to amend our State constitution to ban gay marriage. As far as the queer rights equality movement is concerned, Michigan is quickly becoming the Mississippi of the civil rights movement. One could argue we are already there.

Is there any doubt that organizations like Affirmations, Equality Michigan, Ruth Ellis Center and others are needed? Not only are we needed, we must be more effective. As the new executive director of Affirmations, I pledge to you that I will do my best to work more closely with all progressive organizations throughout the state to improve the lives of the LGBT community. We can all do more. We can all give more. We can all work harder and more effectively together.

In my first 90 days at Affirmations we have already begun to make many changes. Some of the changes include:

- Expanded hours of operation as well as adult, senior and youth LGBT programming
- Improved our staff
- Strengthened cooperation with other LGBT organizations
- Launching state-wide, anti-bullying and faith initiatives in January
- Partnering with Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority to vastly expand our counseling services.
- New health and wellness programs now include more recreation and sports

Importantly, we have started a strategic planning process that will help us determine and shape the direction of Affirmations for the next three years. This strategic plan will be heavily influenced by community input. A community-wide survey is currently being developed by our community-lead Strategic Planning Committee, for distribution in December. We will listen closely to the community throughout this process and with your guidance, look to expand our influence in political advocacy and the education and protection of our youth.

Please be patient with us as we continue our transition and strategic planning efforts. We invite you to stop by the center and see the many changes taking place. Most importantly, please get involved and stay involved in the queer rights movement. Now more than ever, we need every LGBT person and ally to step up their efforts, their giving and their commitment. I will make mistakes. I am not a perfect man. I will continue to work hard for you and I will do my best to improve the lives of all LGBT people.

In equality,

Antonio David Garcia



► Affirmations

from previous page

visit establishments to seek signatures from bar owners on a pledge stating they will never sell alcohol to minors, YEP Staff Member DeShaun Smith said.

For Smith, that's just one of the many youth-oriented programs she loves overseeing at the center. She also supervises drop-in hours from 4 to 9 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays where teens can come to dance, hang out and play games. She is one of two YEP staffers at the center.

Smith, who began her year-long stint with Affirmations as an intern before being hired for the program, said making the lives of the youth better is her goal. She said she was drawn to the center because she loves spending time inspiring creative young people who visit it.

"If I could be a part of creating a space where a lonely youth could feel less alone, if only for a few hours, or if I can help to create a space where a youth can feel safe to be themselves, then I can go home at night feeling proud of what I do," she says.

Sarah May

Office Administrator Sarah May might not be the first face people associate with the center, but her behind-the-scenes roll is crucial to its smooth running.

May handles payroll and accounts payable for the center, tracks donations and provides administrative support to staff members. Though she's worked as an office administrator at several companies, May, who has worked at the center



YEP staff members Alfredo Smith and DeShaun Smith.

for about a month, said she was excited to work for a nonprofit with a mission she believed in.

"What I love most about my job is the positive energy inside the center," May says. "Everyone at Affirmations works very hard to make this community center possible, and they are all passionate about their roles in making a difference. That type of working environment feeds upon itself and creates a motivational and inspirational atmosphere."

Jack Miller

If you've ever marveled at the welcoming feel upon entering Affirmations' building, you have Jack Miller to thank.

As facilities manager, Miller ensures the building is clean and tidy, with a precision left over from his military career. After a strict religious upbringing in Livonia ("not a great start for a gay guy"), he spent six years in the U.S. Navy in the late 1960s. After returning home to attend college, he married and divorced a woman before joining the Michigan National Guard as a volunteer and later as a full-time sergeant. He retired in 2000 after 24 years of service.

After attending the men's discussion group at the center, he decided he needed to give something back to the community center from which he received so much. He started as a volunteer four years ago and was offered the part-time job as one of two facilities supervisors last month.

"I absolutely love volunteering at Affirmations because of the people I get to meet and, hopefully, I can help those who visit us with questions and problems," he says. "The staff and volunteers are a dedicated group of people who toil many hours for little or no pay to ensure our community has somewhere safe and welcoming to go."

Rachel Crandall

Ever since she fielded her first depressed caller as a helpline worker more than 30 years ago, Rachel Crandall has been hooked.

"It gets in your blood," she says. "You have to be really empathetic and have a lot of patience."

Crandall says those skills come easy to her after her own fights, with a speech impediment and a struggle with her own transgender identity. But although she feared judgment about her speech, she says her desire to help won out. Her first call at an East Lansing crisis hotline came from a caller who threatened suicide, and lasted more than two hours. When she put down the phone, the caller had reconsidered and Crandall said her career path was laid out for her.

In her six-year tenure with the center, Crandall moved up from a helpline counselor to her current job as its clinical specialist, overseeing two staff members and 10 interns. In that time, she has seen the mostly local calls expand to include callers from all around the country. She says she's excited that the wider call area means she is helping to reach more troubled people.

"Sometimes it takes living through something to know what that feels like," she says.

Her desire to help people who struggled with problems she knows firsthand was also behind her decision to co-create Transgender Michigan in 1997, for which she also runs a helpline.

"When I came out, I was so lonely and isolated," she says. "I had very little support and I didn't want that to happen to anyone else."

And at both Affirmations and Transgender Michigan, she said she hopes her work eases those feelings for anyone on the other end of a telephone line.

A poster for an event titled "Big Bash" at Affirmations. The background is a photograph of a grand, ornate interior space with high ceilings and chandeliers. The text on the poster includes: "Big Bash" in large, bold letters; "Affirmations People Building Community" in a purple banner; "March 31, 2012 6:00 pm - Midnight"; the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) logo; and "The Art of ReCreation A Black Tie Affair" in a cursive font. At the bottom, it says "DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS".

A poster for an event titled "FAITH AND THE LGBT COMMUNITY". The background is a landscape with a large purple cross in the center. The text includes: "FAITH AND THE LGBT COMMUNITY" in large, bold letters; "Affirmations People Building Community" in a purple banner; "JANUARY 12 6:30 - 9 PM"; and a description of the event: "Join us for a movie screening and panel discussion as faith leaders come together to discuss the role faith plays in the LGBT community. We will be showing the full version of the movie, Fences, highlighting the important role faith plays throughout the LGBT movement as it relates to marriage equality and the moveable middle. There will be a community discussion with faith leaders following the movie." At the bottom, it says "Affirmations | 290 W. 9 Mile Rd. | Ferndale | 48220 | (248) 398-7105 | www.GoAffirmations.org".

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Adoption Day painful for LGBT families

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

While Michigan's Ninth Annual Adoption Day on Nov. 22 is something to celebrate, many families that want to adopt are feeling left out.

"Hundreds of children across the state have the legal protection of only one of their two parents, simply because not a single judge in Michigan is routinely granting second-parent adoptions. And children are sadly put into this position in the first place because same-sex couples are not able to jointly adopt children in Michigan," says Kathleen LaTosch, special projects consultant at Affirmations Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Ferndale.

Second-parent adoption means that "two unmarried persons (could) petition to adopt a child," according to the original language in HB-4131. The bill, introduced into the House in February 2009, would have allowed same-sex couples, who are not allowed to marry in Michigan, to become legal parents if the bill passed.

However, the bill did not pass and the LGBT community has former Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan to hold responsible. Same-sex couples used to be allowed to adopt if they found a judge who would grant it. Then, in Washtenaw County in 2002, Corrigan decided this wasn't



Renee Harmon listens to state Rep. Jeff Irwin on Valentine's Day. Rep. Irwin and state Senator Rebekah Warren, left, are re-introducing a bill to allow second-parent adoption. Harmon has not seen her children since 2009; she was never recognized as a legal parent. BTL photos: Tara Cavanaugh

going to happen anymore in courts around the state. What is known as the "Corrigan rule" caused county offices throughout the state to stop allowing same-sex couples from adopting.

"With domestic partner benefits on the chopping block in Michigan, this poses significant health risks for the entire family - to the child

'Corrigan rule' denies legal rights to kids in need

whose non-legal parent is unable to provide insurance to their children, to the partner who is unable to secure insurance benefits through his or her spouse's employer," says LaTosch.

Since this rule was ordered, state Rep. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor), and state Senator Rebekah Warren (D-18), re-introduced a bill into the House in February that would allow the state to grant second-parent adoptions.

As the bill languishes in the Republican controlled house, many questions are being brought to the forefront. What happens if the couple splits up? What protections are offered to the child? What happens to the child if one parent dies?

"In Michigan, there are countless stories of children being separated from a non-legal parent, with no on-going visitation, custody or financial child support required. If it's the non-legal parent, the "normal" social security benefits are denied to that child. Any rights to inheritance or property will have to go through lengthy and expensive probate actions in the court systems.

If the legal parent dies, any number of interested parties could step in and request custody and guardianship of the children, denying any further contact with the non-legal parent," says LaTosch.

Corrigan is now the Director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, which regulates adoptions (among many other services), and is slated to speak at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing on Nov. 22 along with Gov. Ricky Snyder and Chief Justice Robert P. Young Jr.

As designated by the Michigan Supreme Court, the goal of the event, co-sponsored by the Michigan DHS, is to draw attention to children and youth in foster care, particularly their need for permanent, loving families, and also to promote efforts to help those who remain in foster care. About 30 of Michigan's 83 counties are expected to participate this year, finalizing an anticipated 200 adoptions.

But this doesn't include second-parent adoptions.

"The easiest fix would be to simply legalize gay marriage. Adoption issues would become moot. In lieu of this, there is another simple solution. Simply putting into law that 'two unmarried individuals are permitted to adopt' would fix this," says LaTosch. "Just seven little words...seven little words that could make or break a family in Michigan."

Viewpoint: Michigan should allow LGBT families to adopt



BY JAY KAPLAN

Many kids are fortunate to have the legal protection of two parents. However, for Michigan's gay and lesbian community, jointly adopting children is complicated by political ideology.

Although Michigan's laws do not prohibit joint adoptions by unmarried couples, many gay and lesbian couples, who are not allowed to marry in our state, have learned the hard way that when it comes to adoptions, the best interests of a child are rarely considered.

Take Dennis and Tom Patrick of Superior Township who have jointly adopted four children, however, struggle today to adopt their fifth son whom they have fostered for years. Although all of their children have lived together like siblings, in the eyes of the courts, only four of the kids have the legal protection of both parents.

How could this be? With so many children who need loving and caring homes, how can we discriminate against potential parents simply because of whom they love? Much of the blame for making it difficult for gay families to adopt in

Michigan rests on Maura Corrigan, former chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. While serving as chief justice in 2002, Corrigan without legal precedent or a relevant case before her,

adoptive homes, it's dishonest to leave gay and lesbian couples out of the conversation. It is our hope that in exploring the various obstacles and challenges to adoption, the statewide event will

The statewide event should also look at the way most Michigan courts have denied and continue to deny gay couples the right to jointly adopt children.

instructed the Washtenaw County Family Court to stop accepting petitions for adoptions by same-sex couples. The impact reverberated throughout the state. Although Corrigan is no longer on the Michigan Supreme Court, she now holds a more important position with regards to adoption as the current director of the Department of Human Services, which oversees adoptions in Michigan.

The Department of Human Services and the Michigan Supreme Court recently teamed up to declare Nov. 22 as Michigan Adoption Day, in an attempt to draw attention to children and youth in foster care, particularly their need for permanent loving families. While we applaud Corrigan's efforts to focus attention on the plight of children in foster care and their need to be placed in

also look at the way most Michigan courts have denied and continue to deny gay couples the right to jointly adopt children.

The legal adoption of children by two parents allows the child to have protections and benefits on the most basic level, by allowing both parents to make emergency medical care decisions on behalf of their child, ensuring that both parents have an obligation to provide financial support and allowing the child to remain in the custody of the surviving parent in the event of a death or ensure that the child can have parenting time with both parents in the case of a break up. By manufacturing a prohibition against unmarried couples adopting, Michigan judges are punishing children and teaching kids a terrible lesson in

discrimination at a very young age.

Neither Michigan's adoption nor foster care laws prohibit gay or lesbian couples from adopting. Similarly, there is no specific language that says only married couples can jointly adopt children. However, family court judges across the state have denied petitions of gay couples to jointly adopt children, claiming that Michigan's adoption statute limits joint adoptions to married couples and since gay couples cannot marry in Michigan, they are ineligible to jointly adopt. An examination of the actual language of the statute, demonstrates that this interpretation is simply false. Michigan's adoption law merely requires that if a person who petitions to adopt a child is married, that the spouse must be joined in the adoption petition.

It's important as Michigan Adoption Day nears, that we send Michigan judges, our elected officials and decision makers at the Department of Human Services a clear message that adoption decisions should be made based on what is in the best interests of a child and not the marital status of people who wish to adopt.

We should not use our children as political pawns.


Jay Kaplan is staff attorney with ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project. He can be reached by email: jkaplan@aclumich.org

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Documentary explores LGBT elderly

Free screening, discussion to take place at Emagine Royal Oak Dec. 7

The Audience Choice for Best Documentary at the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival, "Gen Silent" will screen locally at 7 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Emagine Royal Oak. The film, by Stu Maddux ("Bob and Jack's 52-Year Adventure," "Trip to Hell and Back"), asks six LGBT seniors if they will hide their friends, their spouses and their entire lives in order to survive in the care system. Their



From the film 'Gen Silent'

surprising decisions are captured through intimate access to their day-to-day lives over the course of a year. It puts a face on

what experts in the film call an epidemic: older LGBT people so afraid of discrimination by caregivers or bullying by other seniors that many simply go back into the closet.

Unlike any film before, "Gen Silent" startlingly discovers how oppression in the years before Stonewall now affects older LGBT people with fear and isolation.

A local group, the LGBT Older Adult Coalition, is sponsoring the event along with BTL and Emagine Theater. Admission is free and space is limited. Contact Jay Kaplan at jkaplan@aclumich.org or call 313-578-6812.

limited. Contact Jay Kaplan at jkaplan@aclumich.org or call 313-578-6812.

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A black and white photograph of Simon Curtis. He is wearing a white dress shirt and a dark tie. He is holding a guitar in his right hand, which is partially visible on the left side of the frame. He has dark, wavy hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark.

Simon says

Pop artist – and Michigan native – talks catalyst for career change (Britney Spears?) and the gay fans he's glad to have

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Sex. Pop music thrives on it, and so does up-and-comer Simon Curtis, who explores his submissive side on "Flesh," a track from his latest album, released this past summer. Tied up, begging a lover to throw him down and have his way with him, it's a visceral act that could turn anybody on – gay, straight, kangaroo.

"Pop music is always going to be about sex," Curtis says. "Hit me baby one more time"? I mean, come on. It might as well have been, 'Eff me, baby, expletive, expletive.'"

See Simon Curtis, page 30



► Simon Curtis

Continued from p. 29

But Curtis' music, boundary-pushing electro-pop for the Lady Gaga circle, isn't just about getting busy in the bedroom; he goes deep on "RA" too, getting personal with "Joshua," "Dead to Me" and "Soul 4 Sale."

"It's a really heavy record," he says. "I don't think people really believed just how dark it was until they finally heard it. I've gone through a lot of deep betrayal with loved ones and life-altering, life-shattering experiences. I can't not put that in my music."

The sex, though, is just in his head.

"It's the only area where I like to write from an area of fantasy, like an author writing an erotica novel. It's definitely the most ephemeral of my music. It's weird."

Curtis, 25, released his robotic debut, "8Bit Heart," early last year and in no time had the gay community sold on his thumping beats and boyish good looks.

"I make pop music, so it comes with the territory," says Curtis, who won't comment on his own sexual orientation. "I'm honored that gay people have taken to my music so strongly,

because typically it's a goddess worship culture; it's Britney, Gaga, Madonna, Janet. Strong females. It's really flattering to know that they are accepting of a male doing it as well."

Curtis became a pop-music magnet years ago. He was brought up in a musical household in Alpena, Mich. (the family lived on Lake Huron in the woods), where he remembers his father, an ex-Marine Korean War vet, cranking up the disco and throwing on Pet Shop Boys and Village People LPs while the family unwrapped gifts on Christmas morning.

He was young when the family moved to Oklahoma, where he grew up with Spice Girls, *NSYNC and Britney Spears. His epiphany came in 2000, when Spears iconically had a snake tangled around her neck on the MTV Video Music Awards stage while performing a medley of "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" and "Oops! I Did It Again." "That was such an impactful moment for me," he recalls. "I was sick with the flu, just laying on the floor and watching it, and Britney Spears came on and I was dead sick and stood up and just jaw-dropped watched the TV. Then *NSYNC came on and they gave this incredible performance. Then Christina Aguilera. And I was just like, 'Forget Broadway; this is it.'"

Before making the move to Los Angeles, a "crazy place" that's kept him there for six years,

he auditioned for the second season of "American Idol." He shared a sleeping bag with finalist Kimberly Caldwell until he was called up for an audition. It didn't work out, though; Curtis, who was 16 then, wasn't their type. Producers wanted someone older, if not in age, then in looks.

"They were like, 'We'd love it if you came back,'" he recalls. "I didn't."

Instead, he focused on a solo career, building a fanbase through social-networking. Even Adam Lambert, who reached out to Curtis when his album, "8Bit Heart," became a trending topic on Twitter, loves the former Michigander.

"He's a huge supporter and he wants me to write on his new record," Curtis says. "I sent him the new album and he was just blown away by it, saying these insane compliments about the production and the songwriting. It really meant a lot to me."

Some people, Curtis knows, aren't as complimentary, but he still reads what they have to say; he can't help it. "It's human nature. You want to see if someone is saying something about you. But I've been tempered a bit." He laughs. "I know not to go on the Popjustice forums because it's an evil, evil place that will only make me want to kill myself."

Buzz circulated for a while regarding "Chip in Your Head," a song from "RA" that

"I was sick with the flu, just laying on the floor and watching it (the VMAs), and Britney Spears came on and I was dead sick and stood up and just jaw-dropped watched the TV. Then *NSYNC came on and they gave this incredible performance. Then Christina Aguilera. And I was just like, 'Forget Broadway; this is it.'"

features this line: "Song so catchy, gonna spread like AIDS/Words so absurd, they're like lyric grenades."

Says Curtis: "People have been offended, and I guess rightfully so, because it is a controversial line. But I don't necessarily edit myself when I write. I feel like people are taking it in a very mean-spirited way, and it's not meant to be."

"I must say, I find it ironic that no one has been offended by the cancer line (in the same song), because I'm a cancer survivor" — Curtis was diagnosed with leukemia at age 10 — "so it's funny to me that people would be shocked and appalled by this AIDS line but not the cancer line. I find it a bit hypocritical, to be quite honest."

Now that he's cleared that up, all he has left to do is, you know, dominate the pop pantheon. But it's not so easy — especially for someone like him, he says.

"I genuinely don't think there's anything more difficult that one could pursue in music than being a solo, white male pop artist. A pure pop artist. It's a female-dominated industry," Curtis says, "and the industry is run by tastemakers that choose what is allowed to rise to the top."

Something tells us it won't be long before he does.

Book Marks

LGBT-faith activist challenges 'God vs. Gay'

BY RICHARD LABONTE



"The Lost Women of Lost Lake," by Ellen Hart. Minotaur Books, 320 pages, \$25.99 hardcover.

The marvel of Hart's 19-novel mystery series is that each book is distinctive in its own compelling way. The constants are restaurateur and part-time P.I. Jane

Lawless and her chaotic sidekick, Cordelia Thorn; the variables are the well-drawn, always different characters and the moral lessons imparted as the plots progress. The lesson here: a violent past will haunt a peaceful present. The character haunted is playwright and theater director Tessa Cornell, in a long-time, loving relationship with Lost Lake resort lodge owner Jill Ivorsen. But the serenity of their idyllic resort-town life is shattered when a supposed journalist arrives with pointed questions about the identities of Jill and of another woman, the owner of the local soda shop. Jane and Cordelia, in town to help out after Tessa sprains her ankle, are soon drawn into the mystery. Rooted in the revolutionary passion of the late 1960s, Hart's unusually somber novel explores the intersection of retribution and justice and the stark decision one character must take with riveting storytelling.

"The Marbled Swarm," by Dennis Cooper. Harper Perennial, 208 pages, \$14.99 paper.

Time and again, the unnamed narrator of this deliciously, defiantly non-linear novel addresses the reader directly. "I've gotten lost, and so have you," and "I'll ask for a wad of your imagination," he announces, and that's about as true as this exalted jumble of dizzying twists and dazzling turns gets. Many of Cooper's familiar tropes are present, depravities rendered devout by authorial distance and literary formalism: sex aplenty, plenty of it gruesome, much of it involving boys, some of it sex by rape, much of it ending with blood, some of it leading to cannibalism – unless, possibly, it's all a sleight of hand lie. One element is new: a grandiloquent narrative style – the marbled swarm, a "cumbrous mouthful" – quite unlike the prose in Cooper's other novels, sentences that magically invest even the most salacious acts with sly wit. There is much to shock in this labyrinth of a novel, with its secret passageways, elusive truths and elegant intricacies. But it's not shock for the sake of shock; it's shock that evokes eloquent dispassion.

GOD vs. GAY?
The Religious Case for Equality
JAY MICHAELSON



"God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality," by Jay Michaelson. Beacon Books, 232 pages, \$25.95 hardcover.

And so it was written, that the Bible forbids homosexuality and condemns queers to perdition. Not so fast,

says LGBT-faith activist Michaelson in his three-pronged scholarly dissection of Bible-based homophobia. In part one and part three, the author makes the case, cogently, that basic human values buttress equality for sexual minorities and that their inclusion is good – not bad – for religious communities. He argues that there is no conflict between being religious and being gay, and that the basic tenets of both Judaism and Christianity dictate that queers should be embraced by people of faith, not shunned. Such reasoning is backed up by the book's middle section, in which Michaelson makes a well-footnoted case that the biblical verses used to condemn homosexuality – only seven of them, it seems, out of more than 30,000 – are riddled with translation errors, many rooted in the biases of early translators. The author's impassioned assertion is that sexual diversity is something normal, a fact that ought to be acknowledged by the haters – except that facts seem irrelevant to religious fundamentalists.

"The Unreal Life of Sergey Nabokov," by Paul Russell. Cleis Books, 384 pages, \$16.95 paper.

Fact is woven into fiction, to mesmerizing affect, in Russell's heart-wrenching novel based on the re-imagined life of famed novelist Vladimir's younger, sensitive and overshadowed brother, Sergey. The two lived far different lives: fiercely heterosexual Vladimir went on to achieve literary fame; quietly homosexual Sergey died in a German labor camp. But that comes after the conclusion of this story, which has the two brothers escaping revolutionary Russia for the calm of Cambridge and then sees young Sergey sexually active on the fringes of the Ballets Russes, drawn into the literary salon of Gertude Stein and lost in an opium haze with his occasional lover, Jean Cocteau, all before finding delicate contentment with a German lover – an interlude that ends with their arrest. Sergey is stranded in Berlin, the "present" of the story, working for the propaganda ministry but under surveillance for anti-war utterances that lead to his imprisonment. Russell's prose, engagingly evocative of the period in which the story is set, is studded with gems of dark wit that add quirky grace to a masterful novel.

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Editor's Picks

Outings

Every year, transgender individuals around the globe are murdered because of transphobia and untamed bigotry. Transgender Michigan and Central United Methodist Church invite members of the community to join them in recognizing those who have fallen and the family and friends who have been left in painstaking grief.

Sylvia Guerrero, mother of the late Gwen Araujo, will be speaking at the vigil. In 2002, Guerrero's transgender daughter was brutally murdered at the age of 17. Since then, Sylvia has become a full-time LGBT rights activist, working to protect other families from experiencing her pain.

Central United Methodist Church's vigil begins at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 18 at 23 E. Adams Ave. in Detroit. Parking is available in the church parking lot. For more information, find the event at transgendermichigan.org. See the calendar for other TDOR vigils taking place throughout the state this week.



Art 'n' Around



The University of Michigan Museum of Art's latest exhibit, *Face of Our Time*, examines more than 100 works by five photographers: Jacob Aue Sobol, Jim Goldberg, Daniel Schwartz, Richard Misrach and lesbian activist/artist Zanele Muholi.

Muholi was awarded her Master of Fine Arts degree in Documentary Media from Ryerson University in Toronto. Her thesis project documented the black lesbian and transgendered identity and politics in post-Apartheid South Africa. In this exhibit, Muholi commemorates and celebrates the rich history and struggles that black lesbians face in her native country.

Face of Our Time exhibits Nov. 12-Feb. 5 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art at 525 S. State St. in Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-764-0395 or go to umma.umich.edu.

Theater

The Kennedy Center production of "Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical" stops at Detroit's Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 20 as part of the Center's 19th annual Theater for Young Audiences on Tour series for young people and their families.

"Knuffle Bunny" tells the story of toddler Trixie who has a beloved stuffed bunny, which she misplaces while on a trip to the Laundromat with her slightly disheveled dad. The production is a story about family, best friends, baby steps and memories that last a lifetime. It is recommended for audiences ages 4 and up.

Tickets are \$7 for children and \$17 for adults and are available at Music Hall Box Office or by calling 313-887-8501. Music Hall is located at 350 Madison St., Detroit.



OUTINGS

Wednesday, Nov. 16

The Lives of Transgender People 3 p.m. Join Spectrum for a presentation of groundbreaking research on *The Lives of Transgender People*, presented by Sue Rankin. Based on the largest general study to date of transgender people in the United States, this book examines the diversity of transgender experiences and reveals how identity formation, relationships and societal climate impact this broad group. Spectrum Center, Michigan League Building, **Ann Arbor**. Spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Thursday, Nov. 17

YOU + Friends + Meanwhile Bar = LOVE 4:30 p.m. This is your opportunity to help one of the largest human rights movements in the country without leaving your barstool. A portion of sales will go to support the work of Until Love is Equal and their efforts to reverse an order in Holland and promote equality for the LGBT community. Until Love is Equal, 1005 Wealthy St SE, **Grand Rapids**. 530-346-4290. Info@untilloveisequal.com

A People's History of the LGBTQ Community in Grand Rapids 6:30 p.m. Following the model of radical historian Howard Zinn, this project involves the documentation of the history of the LGBTQ movement in West Michigan. By doing interviews and collecting archival material, this project has produced a documentary film and an online archive of material about the struggle for equality and justice by the LGBTQ community in West Michigan. Grand Valley State University's LGBT Resource Center, DC-122 E DeVos Center, **Allendale**. 616-331-2530. Gvsu.edu/lgbtrc

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 6782478. Jimtoycenter.org

Transgender Day Of Remembrance 6:30 p.m. Transgender Michigan hosted ceremony in remembrance of victims of bigotry against Transgenderers. Discussion and light refreshments to follow in 1019 CASL building. University of Michigan - Dearborn's Gender & Sexuality Alliance, 4901 Evergreen Road, **Dearborn**. 734-776-8104. Umdgsa.weebly.com

Transgender Day Of Remembrance 8 p.m. Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder in 1998 kicked off the Remembering Our Dead web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Since then, the event has grown to encompass memorials in dozens of cities across the world. Spectrum will take time to both remember our past and celebrate our future. For more information, visit the following website transgenderdor.org. Spectrum Center, Michigan Union, **Ann Arbor**. Willsherry@umich.edu spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Friday, Nov. 18

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

For expanded listings & to add a listing, visit our website

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

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland's Transgender Vigil of Remembrance 9:30 a.m. Every year, transgender individuals around the globe are murdered simply for living true to themselves. All are welcome in remembering those who have fallen in the past year due to anti-trans hate and bigotry. Transgender Michigan and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson Ave., **Midland**. 989-631-1162. www.transgendermichigan.org

The Forum Foundation Sock Hop Dance 6 p.m. Rock Around the Clock 2011 Dance with The Forum Foundation. Dinner provided, Open Bar, Dessert, 5050 Raffle, and Silent Auction. Tickets: \$45.00 each. Music provided by Double Play DJ Services. Tickets are also available at Five15 or Just 4 Us. Ukrainian Cultural Center, 26601 Ryan Road, **Warren**.

Kicked Out the Jams 2.0 6:30 p.m. Ozone House Youth and Family Services presents the 2nd annual: KICKED OUT the JAMS! benefit concert for LGBTQ youth at risk of homelessness. Features performances by Bitch, Nervous But Excited, Drag King Rebellion. Tickets: \$15 general, \$10 students. All proceeds benefit LGBTQ youth at risk of homelessness. Necto, 516 E. Liberty St., **Ann Arbor**. Facebook.com/ozoneqzone

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. Biprideannarbor@gmail.com

Mike McMath Gallery Reception 7 p.m. Light refreshments and reception for Midland artist Mike McMath's exhibit at the Pittmann-Puckett Art Gallery. Pittmann-Puckett Art Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Transgender Day of Remembrance at Central United Methodist Church 7 p.m. All metropolitan Detroit residents are encouraged to attend an event to memorialize those who fall victim to transphobia. There will be an art show, featuring local artists and also a variety of speakers, including Sylvia Guerrero. Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams Ave., **Detroit**. 313-965-5422. Centralumchurch.com

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: In Her Line of Fire - Mariel Hemingway stars in this action thriller as Sgt. Maj. Lynn Delaney, a Secret Service agent charged with protecting the U.S. vice president against a band of bloodthirsty guerrillas when his plane crashes near a remote South American island. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Nov. 19

Meet and Greet with Sylvia Guerrero 9 a.m. Meet and greet on the morning after the TDOR Vigil to meet Sylvia Guerrero. There will be light refreshments and pastries laid out. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Rev. Delores Berry at MCC Detroit

10 a.m. Rev. Delores Berry, musical evangelist, visits MCC Detroit to present a workshop. Love offerings will be taken at both services to help support Rev. Delores' ministry. MCC Detroit, 2441 Pincrest, **Ferndale**. 248-399-7741. Mccdetroit.org

3rd Annual Ann Arbor's Got Talent 7

p.m. 3rd Annual talent show fundraiser for Together We Can Detroit. \$5 entry. Special guest Dennis G. at 7 p.m. TWC Detroit, 306 N. Division St., **Ann Arbor**. Twcetroit.com

Pride Prom 2011: Masquerade 8 p.m. Pride Prom was originally created as a second-chance prom for those who couldn't bring their desired date to their prom in high school. Now it's open to all people, not just those of the LGBT community or members of Outspoken. It's put on by Outspoken. The theme is masquerade and food will be provided. Admission is \$3 with WMU ID, \$5 without. Outspoken, 100 W. Michigan Ave., **Kalamazoo**. Rso.wmich.edu/outspoken

Coming Out of Nowhere 8:30 p.m. Author, poet, actress, and dedicated activist, Natasha "T. Miller" celebrates the release of her second book "Coming Out of Nowhere" with a book signing, poetry and musical performance. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Sunday, Nov. 20

PFLAG Ann Arbor Meeting 2 p.m. 3rd Sunday of every month. Support group and monthly speaker at each meeting. PFLAG Ann Arbor, 306 N. Division St., **Ann Arbor**. Pflagaa.org

PFLAG Lenawee Social and Support Group Meeting 3 p.m. PFLAG Lenawee is a local support and advocacy group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer, Questioning, Intersexed individuals and their family, friends and allies. PFLAG Lenawee, 1247 E Siena Heights Dr., **Adrian**. 517-605-4827. Pflaglenawee@gmail.com sites.google.com/site/pflaglenawee

Conversation Station 5 p.m. LGBTQI 25 and over, join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. New topic each week. Topic: "Should religious leaders be paid or should their job be strictly voluntary?" GOAL, 714 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Transgender Day of Remembrance: A Gathering of Hope 6 p.m. Plymouth UCC, GIFT, The Transgender Education Collaboration of West Michigan, and Transpectrum at GVSU, are coordinating a Transgender Day of Remembrance Service. Search "Transgender Day of Remembrance: A Gathering of Hope" on Facebook for more information. Plymouth United Church of Christ and Transgender Michigan, 4010 Kalamazoo Ave., **Grand Rapids**. 616-455-4260. Transgendermichigan.org

Monday, Nov. 21

Candlelight Vigil for Transgender Day of Remembrance 8 p.m. Join CMU for a candlelight vigil to remember those transgender individuals we have lost in the past year. We hope to create an honorable event to memorialize those lives, as well as incite inspiration for a future without hate. CMU Gay and Lesbian Programs and Transgender Michigan, Central Michigan University, **Mt. Pleasant**. Transgendermichigan.org

Tuesday, Nov. 22

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

Wednesday, Nov. 23

Pre-Thanksgiving Party with MDSL 8 p.m. MDSL party the night before Thanksgiving. Selling 50/50 tickets all night to help raise funds for the Midwest Invitational Softball Tournament that MDSL is hosting in 2014. Metro Detroit Softball League, 23365 Hoover

Revenge and reconciliation: 'Figaro' is near perfect

BY MICHAEL H. MARGOLIN

New wine in old bottles seems an apt thought as Mozart's 200-year-old opera is given over to a smart cadre of youthful talent in Michigan Opera Theatre's finale to its fall season.

Yes, MOT has produced "The Marriage of Figaro" many times and we have seen the smartly designed set by Allen Charles Klein in 2007, I think, with its side walls that remind us the Revolution is coming, an apt metaphor for this comedy about bringing the nobles to their knees. Well at least the noble who stands in for the French aristocracy, Count Almaviva, who wants to return droit de seigneur for one night so he can bed Susanna, Figaro's betrothed.

The plot is still the same, but the production seems very fresh: The characters are delineated carefully by costume and makeup, and Mario Corradi has invented some quite clever staging, though Cherubino's leap from the balcony (in the libretto and a part of the scenic design) falls flat as he jumps into the orchestra pit instead; and there is that miscellaneous fiddling the Duke and the Countess do with the harpsichord for each of their big arias – if it means something to them, it was lost on me.)

But, as Noel Coward wrote, "Why quibble, Sybil" when the singing and acting are first rate? To begin with, the four leads.

As Figaro, bass Jason Hardy is tall, lithe and uses his voice with power and discretion, conveying tons through a simple narrowing of tone or body English; his opposite, Count Almaviva, is Corey McKern with a blue blood baritone and the acting chops to go from seducer to vengeful husband to plotter and, in his vengeance aria, pulling his wig apart in



"The Marriage of Figaro" closes Michigan Opera Theatre's fall season. Photo: John Grigaitis

REVIEW

The Marriage of Figaro

Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Nov. 16, 18, 19 & 20. \$29-\$121. 800-745-3000.
www.MichiganOpera.org

frustration, a comic villain.

The women are as wonderful. As Susanna, diminutive Grazia Doronzio is compelling and antic while convincing us that her character has real common sense and intelligence. Not to mention the beautiful, glowing soprano. As the Countess – a near tragic figure in the opera – Rachel Willis-Sorensen was deeply moving. Her aria, "Dove sono," melted my heart.

Lauren McNeese pranced and grimaced as she ought in this trouser role of Cherubino; Jason Budd was quite

charming as Dr. Bartolo; Brian Leduc was a solid, entertaining Don Basilio.

Outstanding in a role often lost in cliché, Melissa Parks was a riveting Marcellina, mugging discretely and singing superbly. She received a bit of help from great makeup and wigs by Elizabeth Geck (who also gave Don Basilio a unique look.)

In the remainder of the cast, Timothy Bruno (Antonio), Angela Theis (Barbarina) and Jason Wickson (Don Curzio) acquitted themselves well.

I thought the overture seemed a bit rushed and less transparent than it should be, but conductor Kazem Abdullah, new to MOT, got all under control and made heavenly music with the singers.

In the final moments, a portrait of Mozart descended upstage and the cast turned and bowed: Yup, Wolfgang would have been pleased. And so would Lorenzo Da Ponte, whose libretto seemed apropos and witty and funny this time out.

Who Wants Cake? seeks submissions for GPS

FERNDALÉ – Who Wants Cake? is sounding a call for new, original one-act plays to be performed at its third annual Gay Play Series. The Detroit-area's only LGBT short play festival is striving to provide early-career writers the opportunity to see their work produced, giving them what is oft-needed exposure.

Last year's expanded festival proved to be wildly successful, with Jason Sebacher's play, "A Few Survivors," winning the top prize. The 2011 Festival also saw more prizes handed out, with Christa Coulter winning the Audience Award for Favorite Performance and Matthew Turner Shelton winning the Audience Award for Best Director, both for Rich Orloff's play "Vowed

and Wowed." Artistic Director Joe Bailey says, "The GPS Festivals have continually exceeded our expectations and we have no doubt that the third annual one will be no different. We are incredibly excited to get to planning the 2012 festivities."

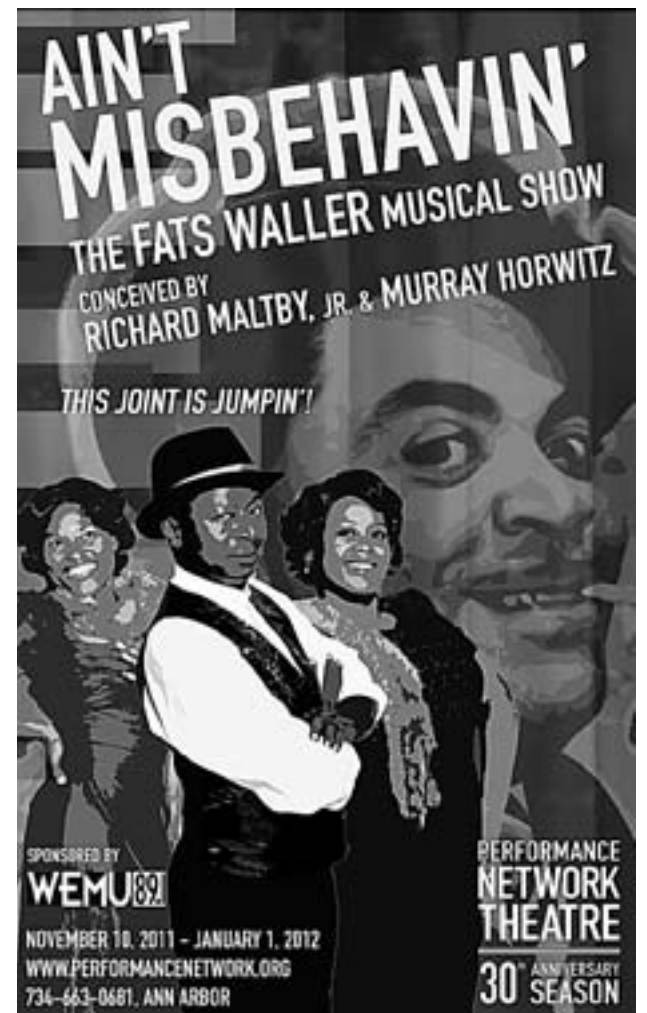
The plays submitted should have a performance time of 30 minutes or less and deal directly with issues or characters that are identified as gay/lesbian/transgender, or contain a gay sensibility. From the initial submission pool, a final line up will be chosen by a panel of judges to be performed at The Ringwald Theatre in June 2012. From those performed, an audience poll will be conducted to select one script that will

receive a full production at The Ringwald Theatre during the 2012/2013 season.

All submissions must be submitted electronically to: Submissions@WhoWantsCakeTheatre.com

Other submission guidelines are as follows: (1) The submitted script must be the script proposed for presentation, with no major alterations necessary; (2) Please provide an approximate running time and a one sentence synopsis in the body of the e-mail; (3) Neither fax nor paper submissions will be accepted; (4) Submission materials will not be returned; (5) The deadline for submissions is Feb. 16, 2012.

The final line-up will be announced in May 2012.



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Legislators remove license to bully language from bill

LANSING - Reacting to voter outrage and intense negative publicity, the Michigan legislature is backing away from a bill passed by the Senate Nov. 2 which allows bullying if it represents "a statement of a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction of a school employee, school volunteer, pupil or a pupil's parent or guardian."

The Michigan House passed a version of the bill Nov. 10 that does not include the "moral exception." In the Senate, Rick Jones (R-Dist. 24) offered an amendment that would carve out the

"moral exception" language. He later stated he would withdraw his amendment and simply support the House version.

"We are grateful that this legislation moves forward without the license to bully based on an outrageous religious exception, but that said, it won't be effective," Michael Gregor, communications director for Equality Michigan, told the Washington Post.

LGBT activists had wanted the legislature to pass an enumerated anti-bullying bill that listed the groups most subject to harassment at school, including LGBT students. Republicans in both houses rejected that version of the bill, and instead went with bills that contain general language and no recourse for victims or penalties for bullies.

Michigan is one of only three states that do not have an anti-bullying law.

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► **Outings**

Continued from p. 32

Road, Warren. MdsI.org

Friday, Nov. 25

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Secret Lives of Bees-Haunted by her mother's death, 14-year-old Lily Owens escapes her dreary life on her father's farm and heads to Tiburon, S.C., with friend and caregiver Rosaleen Daise, spawning a life-changing journey of self-discovery. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Nov. 26

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

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

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Dearborn Symphony Orchestra "Dance to the Stars" Dennis Carter is guest solo flutist with the Dearborn Symphony as they perform a piece by openly gay contemporary composer John Corigliano. Other performances: Carl Maria von Weber's "Invitation to the Dance," Anthony Iannaccone's "Dancing on Vesuvius," Antonin Dvorak's "Slavonic Dances," and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Symphony No. 41 'Jupiter.'" Tickets: \$30-10. Michael A. Guido Theater, Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 7 p.m. Nov. 18. 313-565-2424. Dearbornsymphony.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Brave New Works" Hailed by composers and audiences for championing new contemporary classical music, BNW was founded in Ann Arbor in 1997. A not-for-profit organization since 2004, BNW returns to Southeast Michigan each fall. Tickets: \$25-5. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Nov. 18. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

COMEDY

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase Heywood Banks. It's the annual Thanksgiving Weekend visit from the sometimes whimsical, sometimes wacky, and always hysterical, Heywood Banks. Tickets: \$20. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Nov. 25 - Nov. 27. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

Olympia Entertainment Mike Epps A stand-up comedy performance, with special guest Bruce Bruce. Tickets: \$48-78. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 27 - Nov. 23. Ticketmaster.com

CONCERTS

Olympia Entertainment "Special Night with Demi Lovato tour" in Detroit at the Fox Theatre. Tickets: \$29.50-\$49.50. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 16. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "Paul Simon's So

Beautiful or So What Tour" Tickets: 39.50-110. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Nov. 18. 800-745-3000. Olympiaentertainment.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre Puscifer Tickets: \$39.50. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 314 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Nov. 19. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark Matt Watroba Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Nov. 25. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Flint Cultural Center Corporation "Drumlin Live" Versatile group of musicians and dancers bringing an explosive energy and athleticism to an eclectic mix of sounds. Tickets: \$19-39. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 6 p.m. Nov. 18. 810-237-7333. Thewhiting.com

University Musical Society Meng Su and Yamng Wang, Beijing Guitar duo with Manual Barrueco. Widely noted for their outstanding technique and musicality. First met as children at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, where they studied with the acclaimed professor Chen Zhi. Ticket information available at ums.org. Rackham Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Nov. 20. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

OTHER

Fair Food Matters "The Fair Food Fair" Join us as more than a dozen of our community's most talented chefs compete for your votes to win the coveted Golden Ladle Award in the Second Annual Fair Food Fair at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. The event will include live music, cash bar (Michigan-made libations, of course), silent auction and more. Tickets: \$40 in advance, \$45 at the door. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. 6 p.m. Nov. 19. 269-492-1270. Fairfoodmatters.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.

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Clockwork Orange \$15. Korda Artistic Productions at The Kordazone Theatre, 2520 Seminole St., Windsor. Through Nov. 19. 519-562-3394. kordazone.com

Irving Berlin's White Christmas \$23-12. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Nov. 25 - Dec. 11. 269-343-1313. kazooicivic.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

August: Osage County \$20. The University Theatre at Shaw Theatre, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Through Nov. 20. 269-387-3227. wmutheatre.com

Dead Man's Shoes Staged Reading \$7. Eastern Michigan University Theatre at Sponberg Theatre, Quirk Dramatic Arts Building, Ypsilanti. Nov. 18 - 20. 734-487-2282. emutix.com

The Beaux' Stratagem \$13. Michigan State University's Department of Theatre at Arena Theatre, Auditorium Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Through Nov. 20. 1-800-WHARTON. whartoncenter.com

Trouble in Mind \$12. Studio Theatre at Hillberry Theatre, Wayne State University, Detroit. Nov. 25 - Dec. 3. 313-577-2960. wsustudio.com

Trumpets and Raspberries \$26. University of Michigan School of Music,

Theatre and Dance at Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. Nov. 18 - 20. 734-764-2538. umich.edu

PROFESSIONAL

A Christmas Story, The Musical! \$27-79. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Nov. 15 - 27. 313-872-1000. BroadwayinDetroit.com

Ain't Misbehavin' Previews Nov. 17 (\$15-\$37). \$30-\$46; \$75 New Year's Eve. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Jan. 1. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

Drumline Live \$19-39. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 8 p.m. Nov. 18. 810-237-7333. TheWhiting.com

Engagement Rules \$17. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through Dec. 23. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Escanaba in da Moonlight \$25-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 17. 734-433-7782. purplerosetheatre.org

Golden Dragon Acrobats \$35-18. Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 7 p.m. Nov. 19. 313-943-2354. dearborntheatre.com

It's a Wonderful Life \$28. The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Nov. 17 - Dec. 23. 734-268-6200. TheEncoreTheatre.org

Legacy \$20. Evelyn Orbach Productions at The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Through Nov. 22. 248-661-1900. jccdet.org

Much Ado About Nothing \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Nov. 19. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

Preacher \$15. 1515 Broadway, 1515 Broadway, Detroit. 7 p.m. Nov. 23. 313-965-1515.

Silent Night of the Lambs \$10-20. Who Wants Cake, The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Nov. 25 - Dec. 19. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold \$18-40. Century Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Nov. 23 - Dec. 31. 313-963-9800. gemtheatre.com

The Marriage of Figaro \$29-\$121. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Nov. 20. 800-745-3000. MichiganOpera.org

The Sunday Punch \$20. PlanetAnt Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Nov. 23 - Dec. 17. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Til Death Do Us Part: Late Nite Catechism 3 \$35. Wharton Center, Wilson Road, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Nov. 20. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

ART 'N' AROUND

323East "The Brooklyn - Detroit Connection" 323East's The Future is Now Part II. Kimyon Huggins, AVONE, and Ellis G all Brooklyn based artists in the Motor City Spotlight. 323East, 323 E. 4th St., Royal Oak. Nov. 5 - Jan. 4. 248-246-9544. 323east.com

Cranbrook Art Museum "No Object is an Island: New Dialogues with the Cranbrook Collection" First exhibition in the newly renovated and expanded museum exploring Cranbrook's continued influence in the world of Contemporary Art and Design. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave, Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 12 - March 25. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Downriver Council for the Arts "Michigan Woodworkers Guild & Sculptors Guild of Michigan Exhibition" Two 3-Dimensional mediums collide at the Wyandotte Arts Center. From wood to metal, this show will feature a wide variety of sculpture and craft. Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. Oct. 27 - Nov. 21. 734-720-0671. Downriverarts.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Perennials: Drawings and Paintings by Nora Venturoli" Born in Rosario, Argentina, Nora Venturoli immigrated to California with her family in 1968. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. Nov. 2 - Dec. 4. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Stephanie Nava: Considering a Plot (Dig for Victory)" A work in progress, developed by French artist Stephanie Nava. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave, Detroit. Sep. 16 - Dec. 30. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

Pittmann-Puckett Art Gallery "Mike McMath" Midland artist Mike McMath exhibits his work at the Pittmann-Puckett Art Gallery. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Nov. 1 - Nov. 30. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Riverside Arts Center "Song of the Birds" Each painting is researched for authentic color of the bird depicted and its' song sonogram and recording. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. Nov. 3 - Nov. 20. 734-480-2787. Riversidearts.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus" Dutch master Rembrandt van Rijn's finest paintings, prints and drawings that portray Jesus and events described in the Bible. The exhibition includes 70 works. Tickets: \$16 adult, \$8 youth. Group rates available via grouprequest@dia.org. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Nov. 20 - Jan. 29. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

University of Michigan "My Right Self" Transgender issues and rights are particularly relevant to contemporary questions of social justice and human rights as they inherently invoke conversations on sex, gender, sexuality, behavior, and sociopolitical hierarchies of power, which affect all aspects of society. Art Lounge, Michigan Union, Ann Arbor. Nov. 15 - Nov. 20. Spectrumcenter.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Face of Our Time" Examines more than 100 works by five photographers-Jacob Aue Sobol, Jim Goldberg, Zanele Muholi, Daniel Schwartz, and Richard Mischach-who operate within what Walker Evans referred to as the "documentary style." University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Nov. 12 - Feb. 29. 734-764-0395. Umma.umich.edu

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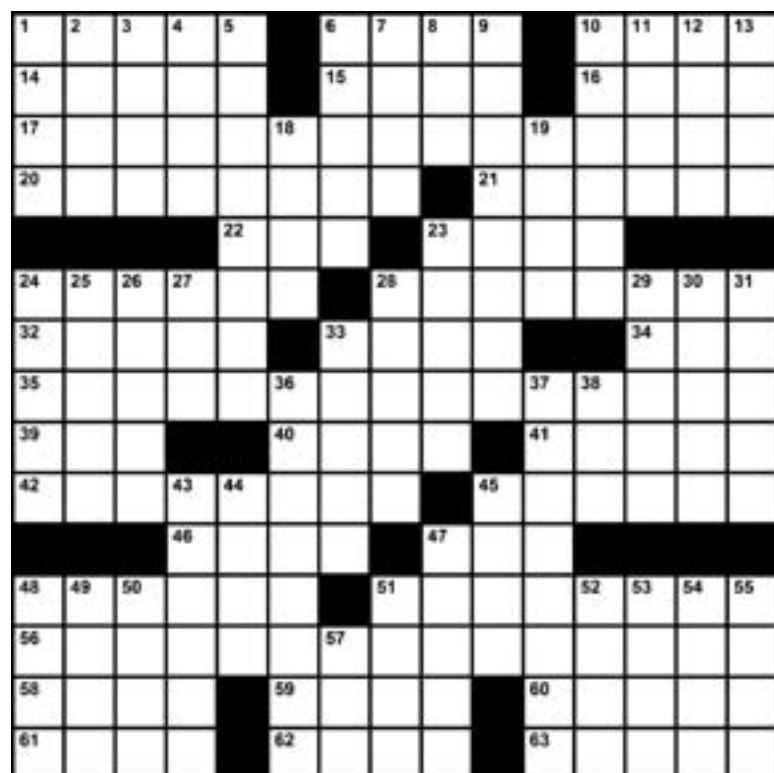


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Across

- 1 Lake, of "Hairspray"
 6 "Beat it!"
 10 What fruits do in orchards
 14 Hawke of "Hamlet"
 15 Jelly not for bread
 16 Tomato variety
 17 Start of a quote from Paula Ettlebrick
 20 They perform without payment
 21 Spain and Portugal
 22 Barely beat
 23 Cannon of Hollywood
 24 Excites a bit
 28 Rent
 32 Leave the sack
 33 What Shakespeare might be in, with "the"
 34 Darth, as a boy
 35 More of the quote
 39 Sweetie pie
 40 Russian gymnast Korbut
 41 Tried to go down on?
 42 One who doesn't come immediately
 45 ___ Rico
 46 "Hi" to Lorca
 47 Gone to Fla., maybe
 48 Escargot
 51 Piece of my heart and more?
 56 End of the quote
 58 Aspirin unit
 59 "Uh-oh!" to Lord Byron
 60 Priest role in "Superstar"
 61 They don't hang out in gay bars
 62 Word after Bush
 63 Rock-bottom

Down

- 1 "Queen of Country" McEntire
 2 Bit from Ted Casablanca
 3 "Pet" plant

- 4 Philosopher Immanuel
 5 Suckers, perhaps
 6 Sucking sound
 7 Sticks around a bar?
 8 Follower of Jim Buchanan
 9 Dish from the land of the Samurai
 10 Gay novelist Harlan
 11 Pride expression
 12 Potent head?
 13 "Papa ___ Rolling Stone"
 18 One-liner, e.g.
 19 New corp. hires
 23 Word for skin
 24 Hiking trails
 25 Flamboyant Flynn
 26 Elton John's instrument
 27 IRS info
 28 Inevitable online claim
 29 Shoot-'em-up
 30 Remove a condom?
 31 Link with
 33 Kevin Isom's "It Only Hurts When I ___"
 36 Jester's headwear
 37 Like seamen
 38 Long distance letters
 43 Pirouettes like a ballet dancer
 44 ___ sci
 45 "But," in Barcelona
 47 Ballet follower
 48 Bay Area bulls (abbr.)
 49 Drag queen's leg need
 50 With skill
 51 Many miles away
 52 Movie theater
 53 Glinda portrayer in "The Wiz"
 54 HHH, to Sappho
 55 Pt. of DOS
 57 Bullring shout

Solution on 37



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Horoscopes

Stay strong, Cancer!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mars is in Virgo trine to Jupiter in Taurus directing our energies to critical, constructive matters. Get to work! Flirtations and chatter are just distractions, but a little is good for morale.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): If you ask for a raise you'll get what you're worth. Are you willing to risk it? Quiet time alone can help you get insight into early traumas. Helping those less fortunate can help you to heal them.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Sex can be healing, but like any medicine one can overdose. Feelings of satiation can open new insights. Even in hard times life can be good and you have the resourceful creative instincts to make the most of it.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Advice from Mom about getting ahead is useful, not taken directly, but more as a springboard to clearer ideas. Although others may trigger your anxieties those worries are your own, likely from childhood shames. Still, choose your company carefully.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Showing off will lead to criticism, perhaps constructive. In any event, the trick is to consider the source, see what you might learn from it and don't let it bother you. Stay strong and focused to take charge and deal with family problems.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Try not to start arguments at home, and if they come your way listen and learn. An older sibling or neighbor has good advice even – or especially – if you don't like it. Hard work and efficiency at work will be rewarded with greater challenges.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Your energy is picking up, liable to go off in different directions. Getting busy around the house is a pleasant diversion – or a distraction. Focus on learning about practical issues. What do you need to learn to be truly successful?

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Keeping up with

the Joneses quickly becomes more jonesing than keeping it up. Challenge yourself to be thrifty. Bitchy, campy discussions can be fun, but easy to overdo. Improve on your own flaws; never mind others'.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Efforts to befriend colleagues can backfire. Constructive criticism should always be offered very carefully. Do your best to receive it graciously. Friends' insights can help your partnership, even if they challenge your friendship. You love a challenge. Work it out!

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Your eagerness to get ahead could be overdone. Credit and support to your colleagues will help you keep proportion. You don't need to oversell yourself. Humility – knowing what you're worth, no more or less – is your key to greatness.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Your own creative visions and hopes are likely to be too extravagant. Share them anyway. Invite your friends to critique your goals. They will help you to develop a keener focus. You have to face domestic discord in order to heal it.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Think before responding to any challenge. You're feistier than usual and a snap back is likely to make things worse. On the other hand, taking criticism to heart could provide a lot of material for self-improvement.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Too much explaining can undermine your efforts. Answer questions succinctly. In your personal feelings and your work, let your actions do most of the talking. Hunches may offer insight, but don't necessarily trust them. Stick to the facts!




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Solution to puzzle from page 36

R	I	C	K	I	S	C	A	T	G	R	O	W
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Cocktail Chatter

Drinking Alone with Friends

BY ED SIKOV

Oh, Lord – give me the strength to change that which I cannot accept. Like closing the beach house while my hottest housemates screw their brains out upstairs.

Dan was in St. Bart’s on a junket, bought by a big pharma behemoth and paid for by you and me. I couldn’t go because I found it morally objectionable, I had to close the beach house, and I wasn’t invited.

So while Dan sunned at some gorgeous resort, I washed out bottles of chutneys from the refrigerator and felt sorry for myself.

Then the “Porn’s Greatest Hits” playlist started blasting on the audio system. Kyle and Robbie spent the weekend with me, in a manner of speaking. Until they showed up groping each other I had no idea that they’d changed the middle word in BFFs. It was excruciating. And hot, in a tragic, out-in-the-cold kind of way. They were trying out new material while I emptied out the refrigerator.

Me (in the kitchen, thinking): “Nam

pla sauce – out.”

Robbie (in an upstairs bedroom, shouting): “Yeah, man, *there!*”

Me (heading for the liquor cabinet, thinking): “It’s 5 o’clock in Greenland.”

Kyle (from his core): “Oh God give it to me baby unh unh unh yeah yeah unh unh...”

Life Lesson #26: swigging straight from the bottle never affirms one’s self-image. I held a magnum of Jack Daniels high and started gulping.

Robbie: “Aaaaaahhhhhhhnnnnnnnn! Aaahhnn! Ahn!”

Kyle: “Here it comes! Unnnhhhhhhh! Yeah!”

This was more than a man should be asked to hear unless also he’s in the cast. I stomped out of the house and around the deck, but as I passed under the guest bathroom windows I heard running water, slapping noises and giggles. “So soon?” Kyle said with surprise. “Unh! Hey, you’re getting shampoo all over my... Oh? Yeah, sure, why not? Unh!” *Was there no sanctuary?*

A straggly patch of mint inspired me to make myself a vast mint julep to get me through this ordeal. The traditional mint julep consists of a small handful of mint leaves and a little sugar or syrup, which somebody (see below) bruises with crushed ice and a

fork to release the mint oil before adding bourbon. This is just plain dumb – another Southern discomfort masquerading as antebellum swank. Traditional mint juleps are easy to make *if you have slaves*. Bruising mint leaves with a fork to make six separate drinks? Hello, carpal tunnel syndrome. And it’s a dental comedy, since everybody ends up with bits of green leaves stuck to their teeth.

My version is cleaner, easier and tastes just as good; you get the mint flavor without the interdental leaves or the arm brace. I drank them to the rank, arousing sounds of puppy love – puppies in heat. They came down for dinner at some point, but by then I was shut tight in my bedroom with headphones on, the iPod bringing Jay Brannan’s beautiful voice directly into my brain. “F*** this, this can’t be my life....”

The Yankee Mint Julep

Put fresh, washed mint leaves into a shaker with ice. Add a few drops of simple syrup, then dump in as much bourbon or Jack Daniels as possible. If anybody complains that Jack is sour mash, not bourbon, tell him to shove his snob traditions where the sun don’t shine, then shake, strain into a cocktail glass, and serve. Or throw it in his face.

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Ann Arbor-Friday

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

Bloomfield Hills- Thursday

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

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

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

Farmington Hills- Monday

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

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

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

Ferndale-Wednesday

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

Ferndale-Saturday

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

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

Livonia-Friday

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

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday

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

Warren-Monday

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

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General Gayety



Enquiring about Chaz

BY LESLIE ROBINSON

The National Enquirer claims in a Nov. 14 cover story that Chaz Bono will die within four years due to his gender transition. The corpse-to-be is perturbed. His lawyer sent a cease and desist letter to the tabloid, accusing it of defamation and demanding a printed retraction and apology.

According to the lawyer, the story asserts that "obesity, testosterone supplements, and high suicide rates among transgender people all increase Chaz's risk of an early death."

As everybody this side of Carol Burnett knows, the National Enquirer doesn't let truth get in the way of a fabulous story. So, despite Bono's threat to sue if the tabloid doesn't apologize, I wouldn't be surprised if the Enquirer instead continued to hound him by producing another cover story similar to the following.

Chaz Bono: TRYING TO CONTACT SONNY! Weekly Séances.

Chaz Bono misses his daddy—and how!

The ENQUIRER has learned that Chaz, the transgender activist and recent "Dancing With the Stars" contestant, hosts séances in his home every Sunday night in a sad, touching attempt to contact his father Sonny Bono, the singer and politician who died tragically in 1998 when he slammed into a tree while skiing.

"The séances are weird, man. I go for the food," said one insider who has attended three of these macabre gatherings where some 15 people assemble around a spooky table.

"We all hold hands while Madame Mertzola chants and groans and moans and stuff. I think she's getting sort of frustrated. The last time she kept screaming 'The beat goes on!'"

So far, said the insider, Sonny has not materialized, "although a couple of people thought they saw that tree he hit."

Headstrong Chaz refuses to stop these whacky attempts to reach Sonny. "Y'know, now that Chaz is a dude and all, he wants guidance and stuff," said the insider.

Dr. Scott Pitts, distinguished owner of a framed diploma from the Acme School of Transgender Mental Health, let The ENQUIRER in on a shocking fact: Transgender individuals are often drawn to the occult!

"I know one who owns a magic store. That's good enough for me," said the esteemed expert.

Cher, the mother of Chaz and ex-wife of Sonny, is baffled that Chaz wants advice on masculinity from his father. "Why Sonny? Most of the time I wore the bell bottoms in that relationship," Cher told an insider, who told The ENQUIRER, which is telling you.

Inspired by Chaz's efforts
to be who he really is,
Cher has bravely decided
to return her rib cage to
normal.

Oh, and remember how Cher sadly, desperately, had two ribs surgically removed to make her waist smaller? The ENQUIRER has learned that she plans to put them back in again! Inspired by Chaz's efforts to be who he really is, Cher has bravely decided to return her rib cage to normal.

Meanwhile, all indications are the Sunday-night séances will carry on. The insider who attended three of the sad, heartbreaking events said Chaz has booked Madame Mertzola the medium through the end of the year.

"I'm not sure I'm going again," the insider said. Chaz wants to change up the energy in the room, in case, y'know, any of us are keeping Sonny away. That's cool with me. Last time when the lights went off I got groped."

The insider hopes Sonny appears, either in body or spirit. "Chaz is cool. He wants this bad. He deserves it. Can I have my check now?"

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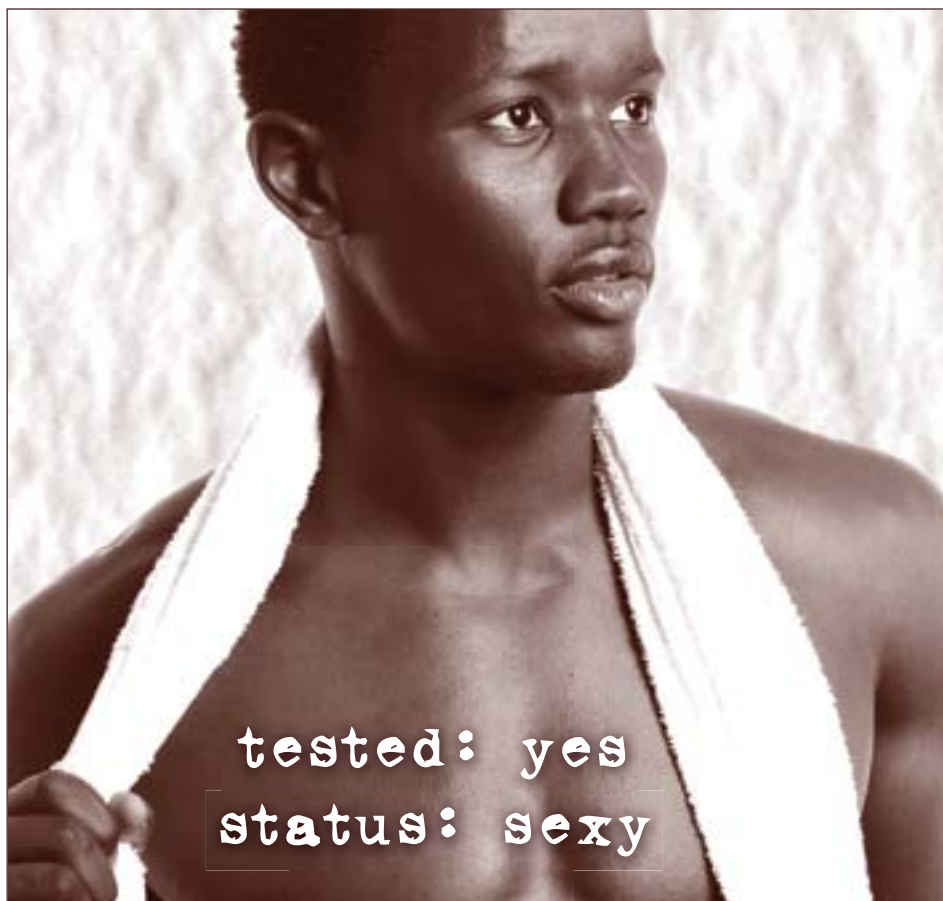
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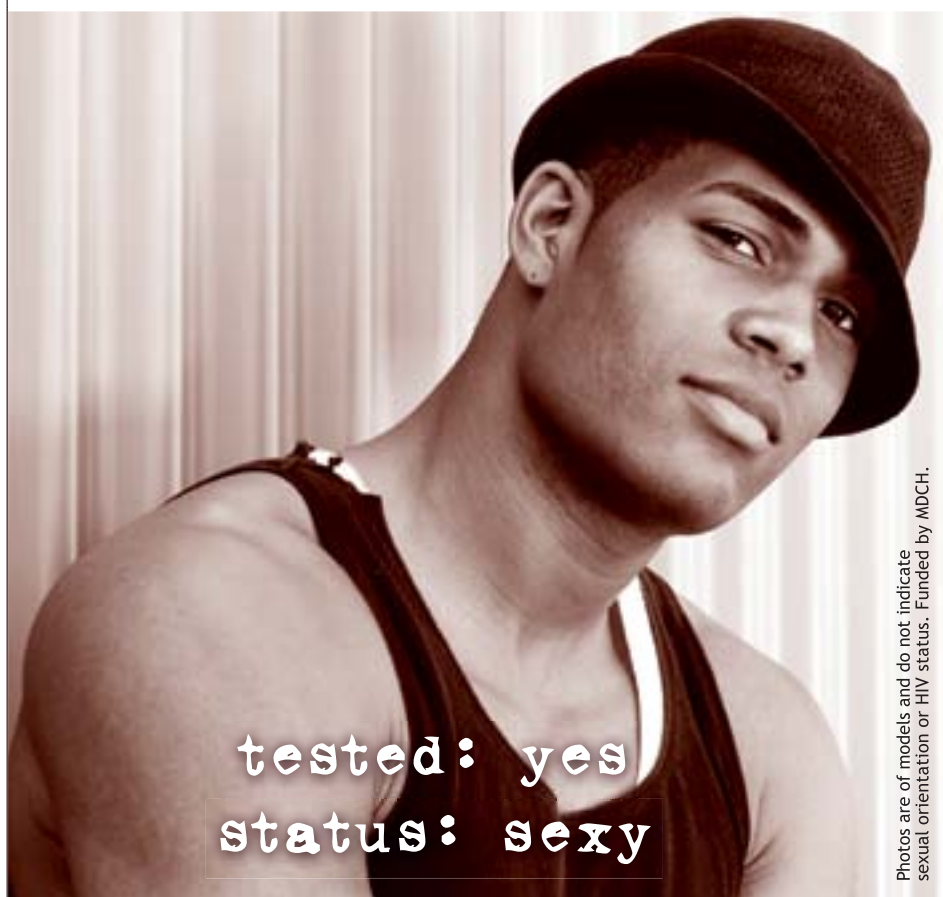


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Dating Diet



Thief of Hearts

BY ANTHONY PAULL

I'm behind schedule. I'm on this stupid whole foods diet because I watched a ridiculous documentary on healthy eating habits, and now my whole life is centered on baking enough pinto beans to get enough protein so I don't die of malnutrition. It's all rather fun except the beans have me running to the toilet every time I'm about to write or have sex. Hence, my column is late, my love life is on hold, BUT I'm going to live really long. I just have to eat like a goat and designate the toilet as my new bed.

Have you ever slept on a toilet? It's fun 'til you wake up. I promise. It's rather glamorous 'til you're talking to publicists and the media about your new book while having a movement. Then it's a test as you strategize the many ways to take a crap without making a sound. I haven't perfected the art form yet, therefore some of my friends have stopped calling. Well, except James.

"Oh my god! I totally downloaded it on my iPhone. I mean, I think so." He has a breath. "But I don't know how to open it. I mean, you're not going to be mad at me if I don't read it, are you?"

"No. I don't care if you read it. I just want you to buy it."

"Oh, I totally did!" he laughs. "I mean, who has time to read anyway? I don't even have five minutes to read your column."

"Thanks!" I gripe. "I'll make sure to include you in the next one."

"No! Don't do that!" he cries.

Of course, the excitement in his voice tells me the opposite – that starring in the next segment would ultimately be thrilling, something new to feed his mammoth ego. I guess that's why he launches into a tale. "I met a guy named Tom at the bar," he says. "He seems into me, but every time I text him, asking what he's doing, he just responds with chillin'."

"Well, what do you want him to say?"

"I want him to say he wants to do me." Over the phone, he squeals in delight. "You're the dating expert. How do we make that happen?"

Still on the toilet, I'm feeling pretty real, so I say screw it and put it out there. "How about this? Stop being desperate. Relax and let it happen by itself."

"Sorry. Tried that," he scoffs.

"Ugh. How many times have you texted him today?"

"Just four."

"Really? It's only 10 a.m."

"So? He's up early because he goes to bed early."

"How would you know that?"

"Hehehe," James laughs, showing me rather than telling me. Later that night in a packed parking lot, we sit staring up at Tom's apartment window, where a light shines on the

twirling blades of a ceiling fan. "Strange, he usually has the light off by now," Tom notes.

"I can't believe this. You're stalking him."

"It's not stalking. It's called marking my territory." As I begin to disagree, he blares the horn three times, peeling out of the parking lot. I'm surprised he doesn't stop to pee on a tree. "That should keep him awake," he says. "Now watch. I'll text to see if he's going out."

"And if he doesn't respond?"

"I'll set off his car alarm. At least that will get him downstairs."

"That's it. You need to take me home," I demand, as James texts while racing down the highway at an alarming speed. "Take me home!" I scream.

"Forget that! We're going to the bar. There's a band playing. They're so indie, they can't even afford microphones. You'll love them!" Sending Tom a text, he writes that he's in a really lonely place and needs someone to talk to. "Should I add that I'm thinking about hurting myself?" he giggles. "Or would that be too forward?"

I don't respond, sensing that silence might be my only saving grace. I'm afraid if I talk, I'll just start lashing out. After all, I've seen this scenario before. For James, it's not about liking Tom. It's about making Tom like him, which he thinks is possible if he strategically sets up the proper setting and markets himself right. Forget raw passion and organic chemistry, James plans to manipulate the law of attraction. "It's like how an author sells a book. It starts with a great cover. You can be my campaign manager." Purchasing me a cheap beer, he feels that's enough to get my vote. "Now, when he arrives, I need you to be my wing man. I need you to be defensive about me. Tell him I'm amazing and hot, but that you'll kick his ass if he tries to date me."

"Are you serious?" At the rear of the bar, a crowd of dirt-jeaned kids gathers, bobbing to the beat of a band filling the room with drums and horns. The faint smell of body odor bites at my nose. "How do you even know he's coming?" I ask.

He grins mischievously. "Because I have his credit card," he says, flashing it. I can't help but see red. "What? I didn't steal it. He left it at the bar the other night. I just texted him that I found it."

Ten minutes later, Tom enters the bar, searching for James, who rushes off to the bathroom, telling me to advocate for him. He hands me the credit card.

Later, in a sleepy, confused state, Tom passes me three times before I cave in and talk. "He's in the bathroom. Here's your card."

Baffled, Tom takes it, offering a distorted "thanks" as I wonder what I should say next. Should I recommend dating James? Should I hype him up as a great catch? A few awkward moments later, Tom says that he follows my column and likes what I write. After a friendly conversation, he disappears and James finds me in the crowd.

"So...did you tell him that I'm the most amazing guy?" He's absolutely giddy. "Did he buy it?"

"Actually no," I smirk, turning to view the band. The crowd, coated by fog and white light, sways in unison. "We talked about my book. He's buying that instead."

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