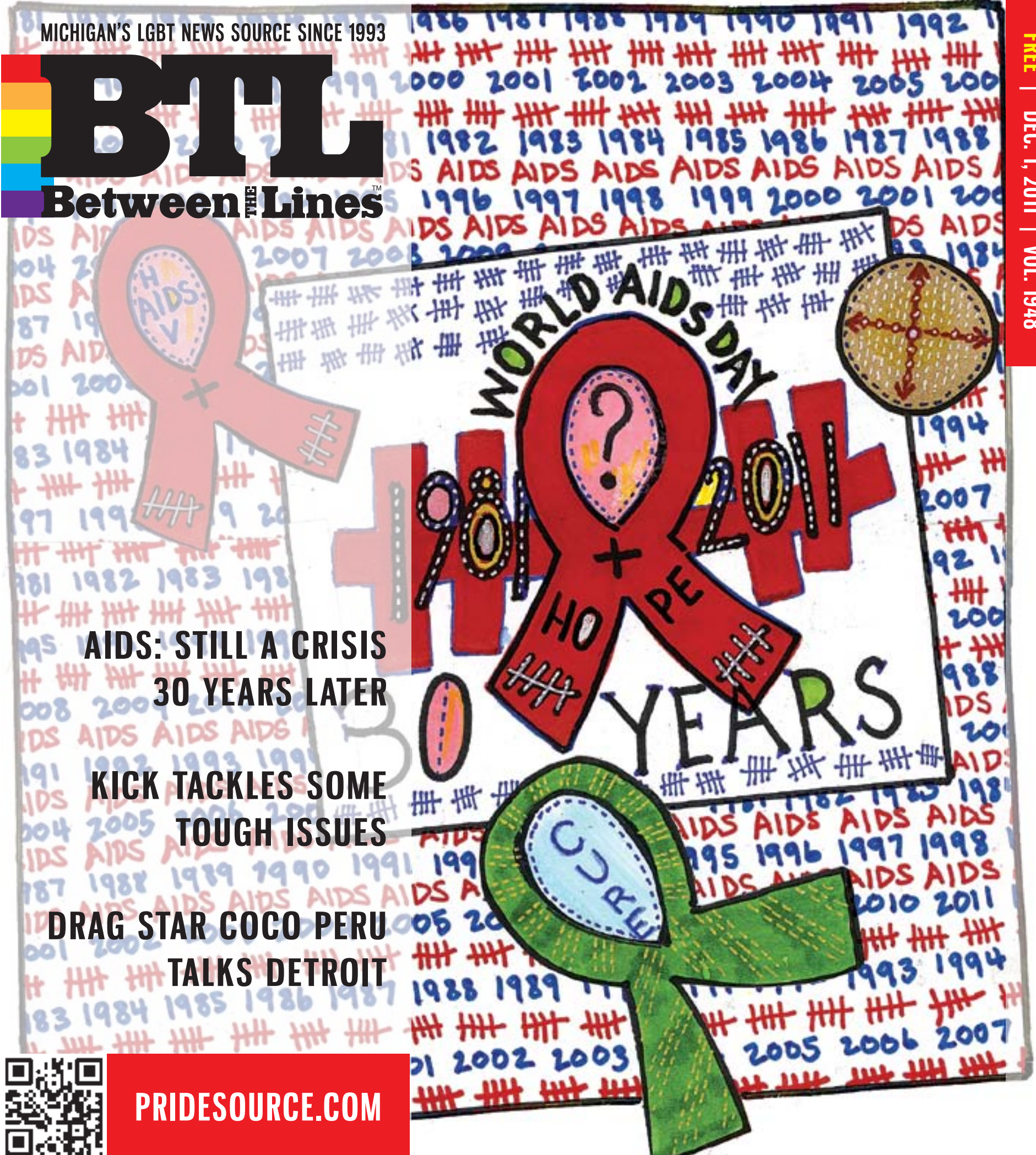


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# BTL

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### INDICATION

COMPLERA® (emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) is a prescription HIV medicine that contains 3 medicines, EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine), EDURANT™ (rilpivirine), and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) combined in one pill. COMPLERA is used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 infection in adults (age 18 and older) who have never taken HIV medicines before.

COMPLERA does not cure HIV and has not been shown to prevent passing HIV to others. It is important to always practice safer sex, use latex or polyurethane condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids, and to never re-use or share needles. Do not stop taking COMPLERA unless directed by your healthcare provider. See your healthcare provider regularly.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you get the following side effects or conditions while taking COMPLERA:

- Nausea, vomiting, unusual muscle pain, and/or weakness. These may be signs of a buildup of acid in the blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious medical condition
- Light-colored stools, dark-colored urine, and/or if your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow. These may be signs of serious liver problems (hepatotoxicity), with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly), and fat in the liver (steatosis)
- If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B virus (HBV), your liver disease may suddenly get worse if you stop taking COMPLERA. Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will monitor your condition

COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works, and may cause serious side effects.

Do not take COMPLERA if you are taking the following medicines:

- other HIV medicines (COMPLERA provides a complete treatment for HIV infection.)
- the anti-seizure medicines carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®, Tegretol-XR®, Tenil®, Eptol®), oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®), phenobarbital (Laminal®), phenytoin (Dilantin®, Dilantin-125®, Phenytek®)
- the anti-tuberculosis medicines rifabutin (Mycobutin), rifampin (Rifater®, Rifamate®, Rimactane®, Rifadin®) and rifapentine (Pristin®)
- a proton pump inhibitor medicine for certain stomach or intestinal problems, including esomeprazole (Nexium®, Vimovo®), lansoprazole (Prevacid®), omeprazole (Prilosec®), pantoprazole sodium (Protonix®), rabeprazole (Aciphex®)
- more than 1 dose of the steroid medicine dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
- St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum)
- other medicines that contain tenofovir (VIREAD®, TRUVADA®, ATRIPLA®)
- other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (EMTRIVA®, Combivir®, EpiVir® or EpiVir-HBV®, Epicoem®, Trizivir®)
- rilpivirine (Edurant™)
- adefovir (HEPSERA®)

In addition, also tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- an antacid medicine that contains aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA
- a histamine-2 blocker medicine, including famotidine (Pepcid®), cimetidine (Tagamet®), nizatidine (Aid®), or ranitidine hydrochloride (Zantac®). Take these medicines at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA
- the antibiotic medicines clarithromycin (Biaxin®), erythromycin (E-Mycin®, Eryc®, Ery-tab®, PCE®, Pediazole®, Ilosone®), and troleandomycin (TAO®)
- an antifungal medicine by mouth, including fluconazole (Diflucan®), itraconazole (Sporanox®), ketoconazole (Nizoral®), posaconazole (Noxafil®), voriconazole (Vfend®)
- methadone (Dolophine®)

This list of medicines is not complete. Discuss with your healthcare provider all prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements you are taking or plan to take.

## New COMPLERA

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Ask your healthcare provider if it's the one for you.

Before taking COMPLERA, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- have kidney problems
- have ever had a mental health problem
- have bone problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child
- are breastfeeding, women with HIV should not breast-feed because they can pass HIV through their milk to the baby

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you experience any of the following serious or common side effects:

Serious side effects associated with COMPLERA:

- **New or worse kidney problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems in the past or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do blood tests to check your kidneys during your treatment with COMPLERA
- **Depression or mood changes** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms: feeling sad or hopeless, feeling anxious or restless, or if you have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do additional tests to check your bones
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effect of these conditions are not known
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV medicine

Common side effects associated with COMPLERA:

- trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, and depression

Other side effects associated with COMPLERA:

- vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles), and pain

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. These are not all the possible side effects of COMPLERA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist. Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it

- **Always take COMPLERA with a meal.** Taking COMPLERA with a meal is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. A protein drink does not replace a meal
- **Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA and see your healthcare provider regularly**

Please see Patient Information for COMPLERA on the following pages.



**COMPLERA®**  
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Learn more at [www.COMPLERA.com](http://www.COMPLERA.com)

## FDA-Approved Patient Labeling

### Patient Information

#### COMPLERA® (kom-PLĒH-rah)

(emtricitabine, rilpivirine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) Tablets

**Important: Ask your doctor or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with COMPLERA.** For more information, see the section “What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?”

Read this Patient Information before you start taking COMPLERA and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

#### What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?

**COMPLERA can cause serious side effects, including:**

**1. Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take COMPLERA or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. **Lactic acidosis** is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death.

Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**

- feeling very weak or tired
- have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
- have trouble breathing
- have stomach pain with
  - nausea (feel sick to your stomach)
  - vomiting
- feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
- feel dizzy or lightheaded
- have a fast or irregular heartbeat

**2. Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take COMPLERA or similar medicines. In some cases these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis) when you take COMPLERA.

**Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**

- your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice).
- dark “tea-colored” urine
- light-colored bowel movements (stools)
- loss of appetite for several days or longer
- nausea
- stomach pain

**You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking COMPLERA or a similar medicine containing nucleoside analogs for a long time.**

**3. Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you also have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and you stop taking COMPLERA, your HBV infection may become worse (flare-up). A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV therapy with your healthcare provider.

- Do not let your COMPLERA run out. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your COMPLERA is all gone.
- Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
- If you stop taking COMPLERA, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do regular blood tests to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking COMPLERA.

#### What is COMPLERA?

COMPLERA is a prescription HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) medicine that:

- is used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have **never** taken HIV medicines before. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).
- contains 3 medicines, (rilpivirine, emtricitabine, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) combined in one tablet. EMTRIVA and VIREAD are HIV-1 (human immunodeficiency virus) nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) and EDURANT is an HIV-1 non-nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI).

It is not known if COMPLERA is safe and effective in children under the age of 18 years.

#### COMPLERA may help:

- Reduce the amount of HIV in your blood. This is called your “viral load”.
- Increase the number of white blood cells called CD4+ (T) cells that help fight off other infections.

Reducing the amount of HIV and increasing the CD4+ (T) cell count may improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

#### COMPLERA does not cure HIV infections or AIDS.

- Always practice safer sex.
- Use latex or polyurethane condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.
- Never re-use or share needles.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

#### Who should not take COMPLERA?

- Do not take COMPLERA if your HIV infection has been previously treated with HIV medicines.
- **Do not take COMPLERA if you are taking certain other medicines.** For more information about medicines that must not be taken with COMPLERA, see “**What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?**”

#### What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?

**Before you take COMPLERA, tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- have liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- have kidney problems
- have ever had a mental health problem
- have bone problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child
- **Pregnancy Registry.** There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. Its purpose is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that mothers with HIV not breastfeed because they can pass the HIV through their milk to the baby. It is not known if COMPLERA can pass through your breast milk and harm your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

**COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works, and may cause serious side effects.** If you take certain medicines with COMPLERA, the amount of COMPLERA in your body may be too low and it may not work to help control your HIV infection. The HIV virus in your body may become resistant to COMPLERA or other HIV medicines that are like it.

**Do not take COMPLERA if you also take these medicines:**

- COMPLERA provides a complete treatment for HIV infection. Do not take other HIV medicines with COMPLERA.
- the anti-seizure medicines carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL-XR®, TERIL®, EPITOL®), oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®), phenobarbital (LUMINAL®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN-125®, PHENYTEK®)
- the anti-tuberculosis medicines rifabutin (MYCOBUTIN®), rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®) and rifapentine (PRIFITIN®)
- a proton pump inhibitor medicine for certain stomach or intestinal problems, including esomeprazole (NEXIUM®, VIMOVO®), lansoprazole (PREVACID®), omeprazole (PRILLOSEC®), pantoprazole sodium (PROTONIX®), rabeprazole (ACIPHEX®)
- more than 1 dose of the steroid medicine dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
- St. John’s wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

**If you are taking COMPLERA, you should not take:**

- other medicines that contain tenofovir (VIREAD®, TRUVADA®, AIRIPLA®)
- other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (EMTRIVA®, COMBIVIR®, EPIVIR® or EPIVIR-HBV®, EPZICOM®, TRIZIVIR®)
- rilpivirine (EDURANT™)
- **adefovir (HEPSERA®)**

#### Also tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- an antacid medicine that contains aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA.
- a histamine-2 blocker medicine, including famotidine (PEPCID®), cimetidine (TAGAMET®), nizatidine (AXID®), or ranitidine hydrochloride (ZANTAC®). Take these medicines at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA.
- the antibiotic medicines clarithromycin (BIAXIN®), erythromycin (E-MYCIN®, ERYC®, ERY-TAB®, PCE®, PEDIAZOLE®, ILOSONE®), and troloxandemycin (TAO®)
- an antifungal medicine by mouth, including fluconazole (DIFLUCAN®), itraconazole (SPOIRANOX®), ketoconazole (NIZORAL®), posaconazole (NOXAFIL®), voriconazole (VFEND®)
- methadone (DOLOPHINE®)

**Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one that is listed above.**

**Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.** Your healthcare provider and your pharmacist can tell you if you can take these medicines with COMPLERA. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that can interact with COMPLERA.

#### How should I take COMPLERA?

- **Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA.**
- **Take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.**
- **Always take COMPLERA with a meal.** Taking COMPLERA with a meal is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. A protein drink does not replace a meal.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider. See your healthcare provider regularly while taking COMPLERA.
- If you miss a dose of COMPLERA within 12 hours of the time you usually take it, take your dose of COMPLERA with a meal as soon as possible. Then, take your next dose of COMPLERA at the regularly scheduled time. If you miss a dose of COMPLERA by more than 12 hours of the time you usually take it, wait and then take the next dose of COMPLERA at the regularly scheduled time.
- Do not take more than your prescribed dose to make up for a missed dose.
- When your COMPLERA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is very important not to run out of COMPLERA. The amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time.
- If you take too much COMPLERA, contact your local poison control center or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

#### What are the possible side effects of COMPLERA?

**COMPLERA may cause the following serious side effects, including:**

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?”**
- **New or worse kidney problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems in the past or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do blood tests to check your kidneys during your treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**
  - feeling sad or hopeless
  - feeling anxious or restless
  - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicidal) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do additional tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effect of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV medicine.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include:

- trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- abnormal dreams
- headache
- dizziness
- diarrhea
- nausea
- rash
- tiredness
- depression

Additional common side effects include:

- vomiting
- stomach pain or discomfort
- skin discoloration (small spots or freckles)
- pain

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of COMPLERA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 (1-800-332-1088).

#### How do I store COMPLERA?

- Store COMPLERA at room temperature 77 °F (25 °C).
- Keep COMPLERA in its original container and keep the container tightly closed.
- Do not use COMPLERA if the seal over the bottle opening is broken or missing.

**Keep COMPLERA and all other medicines out of reach of children.**

#### General information about COMPLERA:

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use COMPLERA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give COMPLERA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about COMPLERA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about COMPLERA that is written for health professionals. For more information, call (1-800-445-3235) or go to [www.COMPLERA.com](http://www.COMPLERA.com).

#### What are the ingredients of COMPLERA?

**Active ingredients:** emtricitabine, rilpivirine hydrochloride, and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

**Inactive ingredients:** pregelatinized starch, lactose monohydrate, microcrystalline cellulose, croscarmellose sodium, magnesium stearate, povidone, polysorbate 20. The tablet film coating contains polyethylene glycol, hypromellose, lactose monohydrate, triacetin, titanium dioxide, iron oxide red, FD&C Blue #2 aluminum lake, FD&C Yellow #6 aluminum lake.

This Patient Information has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Manufactured and distributed by:

Gilead Sciences, Inc.

Foster City, CA 94404

Issued: August 2011

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## ABOUT THE COVER

This issue's World AIDS Day cover is by community artist and BTL Parting Glances columnist Charles Alexander. It is his fifth cover to commemorate the yearly Dec. 1 remembrance date. "Those in their twenties today have no idea of the panic, fear, bewilderment - horror - that the onset of GRID (Gay Related Immune Disorder), later AIDS, was met with 30 years ago. Today hope for a complete cure just may be on the horizon," says Alexander.


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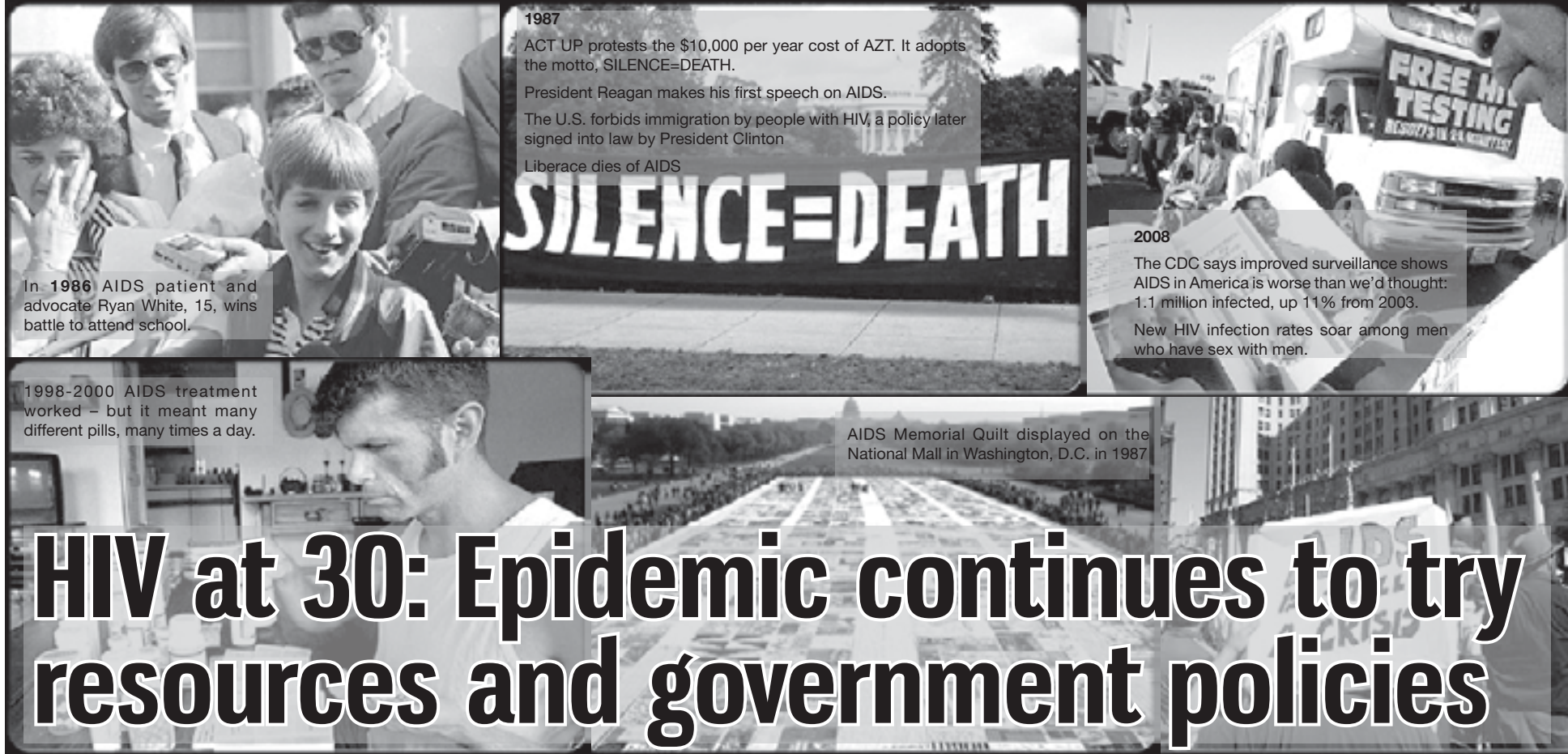
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**1987**  
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President Reagan makes his first speech on AIDS.  
The U.S. forbids immigration by people with HIV, a policy later signed into law by President Clinton.  
Liberace dies of AIDS.

**2008**  
The CDC says improved surveillance shows AIDS in America is worse than we'd thought: 1.1 million infected, up 11% from 2003.  
New HIV infection rates soar among men who have sex with men.

1998-2000 AIDS treatment worked – but it meant many different pills, many times a day.

AIDS Memorial Quilt displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in 1987

# HIV at 30: Epidemic continues to try resources and government policies

BY TODD A. HEYWOOD

**LANSING** – The HIV epidemic reached its 30th anniversary earlier this year, but in Michigan the battle against the crisis continues to be hampered by misguided and out of date policies and funding cuts.

## By the numbers

According to the October 2011 statewide analysis, Michigan has an estimated 19,500 cases of HIV, but only 15,000 have been identified. Of these, 49 percent are men who have sex with men, with another four percent not only MSM but also intravenous drug users. Heterosexuals account for 18 percent of the cases, intravenous drug users account for 10 percent, while a whopping 18 percent have an undetermined transmission route. The epidemic is concentrated on the lower end of the age spectrum. Thirty-four percent of the cases were diagnosed in people 30-39, while 13-19 year olds account for five percent, 20-24 year olds account for 14 percent and 24-29 year olds account for 17 percent. In short, 36 percent of those living with HIV in Michigan are under the age of 30, and 70 percent are under 40. The epidemic is centered in Detroit - with 65 percent of the identified cases. And the epidemic is crushing in some areas of the city, with prevalence rates of three, four and five percent in over half of the city's zip codes, while one zip code has a prevalence of six percent. Of the identified cases, 54 percent are African American men and 39 percent are white men. Women are heavily weighted to African Americans with 78 percent of the cases, while white women represent 19 percent.

There is some good news when looking at the long-term review of HIV cases in Michigan. The number of newly diagnosed cases has dropped since peaking in 1992, but it has held relatively steady in the decade since. The number of AIDS deaths has also dropped dramatically since the 1996 advent of anti-retroviral medication treatments. Many of the people with HIV have their drugs - which can cost \$15,000 or more a year - paid for by the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. ADAP is a federally funded program which combines drug discount prices, some state cash and federal money to provide the life saving medication. The program costs millions of dollars a year to provide medications to just fewer than 2,000 residents.

## Uncertain funding future

Funding for Michigan's financial programs is under assault due to both federal and state budget challenges. With an exceptionally anti-gay and hostile Republican legislature, Michigan has seen an attempt by Rep. Dave Agema (R-Grandville) to defund the Healthy Michigan Fund Initiative. This fund provides the entire cash match the state has to provide for HIV funding programs. Agema introduced legislation in January that would have transferred the funds to airport upkeep. The bill has gone nowhere, but continues to float in the legislature. On a federal level, a new formula to determine HIV funding priorities will result in a 33 percent cut to Michigan's share of federal prevention cash. On top of this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta announced earlier

this year that it would shift funding priorities for HIV prevention away from traditional programming that targets HIV-negative persons or persons who do not know their status to funding prevention for positives programming. Prevention for positives focuses cash and prevention messaging on those who know their HIV-positive status, but critics have raised concerns the programming contributes to stigma and could contribute to increased HIV infections.

## A shift in policy

While the funding picture for HIV appears muddled at best, the state department of health has made moves to bring Michigan HIV policies in line with current science. After over a year of delay, the Michigan Department of Community Health launched protocols for administration of non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis (n-PEP). This is the use of powerful anti-retroviral medications for 28 days following a sexual or needle sharing exposure to HIV. The medications have to be administered within 72 hours of exposure or the medicine does not work. The CDC and the World Health Organization issued guidance for n-PEP administration in 2005 and 2006, respectively. But the state did not adopt a policy until after a 2009 investigation by Michigan Messenger found access to the life saving medication was dependent on where one was in the state. While the state has an official policy, access to the medications is limited. The MDCH has announced that there is not a program to assist in paying the \$1,000 price tag for the medications, and the federal programs for medical access to

medication is limited to those who have already tested positive for the virus. Ingham County, home to the state's capitol, has the highest prevalence rate of HIV outside of Detroit. The health department announced in 2010 that it would offer n-PEP and the drugs are now covered by the county's health plan for low income residents, says Renee Canady, interim health officer for the county.

## Disclosure and stigma

Access to prevention medications is not the only issue the state has faced in terms of policy in the last year. A multi-year investigation by Michigan Messenger and Between The Lines found that many counties were having persons who tested positive for the virus sign documents which outlined supposed legal obligations for the HIV-positive person. Many of these documents were legally inaccurate, resulting in the MDCH directing local health departments to review their documents. "The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) does not endorse or encourage the use of 'Client Acknowledgment Forms,'" wrote Anna Osman, director of the Division of Health, Wellness and Disease Control. "We do not support or endorse any practice or policy which may contribute to stigmatizing HIV or associated risk behaviors as this may serve as a deterrent to individuals seeking testing to learn their HIV status, or from seeking care, if they know they are HIV-infected." Osman also indicated in the letter that such forms are not required under Michigan law. "We strongly encourage LHDs - local

See HIV 30, page 23

# The fire this time!

## Infection rates among young, black men soar past all other populations

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It is a global pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than 33 million men, women and children since 1981. It is an indiscriminate, insidious killer. But here in the States, AIDS is beginning to be looked at by a new generation of young adults as not so big a threat; and one subset, in particular, has taken a dramatic lead in new infection rates while experts remain uncertain how to reach them.

According to data recently released by the National Center for HIV/AIDS at the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of infection among African-American gay and bisexual men aged 18-29 increased 50 percent from 2006-2009. This group was the only segment of the population to experience a significant increase in new infections during that period and the numbers are shocking. In 2008, for example, 75 percent of all diagnosed HIV infections in youth ages 13-19 were among black youth, even though blacks represented only 17 percent of the population in that age group.

Locally, the trend is the same. "The prevention messages that we're giving are not landing on deaf ears, but there are a lot of people who are of the mindset that, 'If I get HIV I can just take a pill and that's not so bad,'" said Royale Theus, program director for the Michigan AIDS Coalition. "They're not afraid."

Hank Millbourne, associate executive director and director of prevention services for AIDS Partnership Michigan, agreed that as the younger generation begins to view HIV/AIDS as a chronic disease and not a deadly one, they feel less compelled to protect themselves. They often fail to consider the challenges that come with taking antiviral medications over long-term periods, the risk of reinfection and varied strands of the disease and the fact that AIDS still claims the lives of 1.8 million people every year.

"I think that's a message that you have to keep telling young people over and over and in several different ways in several different types of settings," Millbourne said. "What I think the REC Boyz and Mpowerment Detroit has been trying to do is influence community norms around that. That takes time."

Time is not on the side of those trying to

tackle this trend though. In October, the CDC failed to renew funding for REC Boyz, APM's highly acclaimed HIV prevention program for young men of color who have sex with men. With reduced funding in the face of rising numbers of infections among this group of young men comes a conundrum that few know just how to handle. "It makes me think, is the work that we're doing beneficial?" questioned Theus. "Is that why they're taking all the money they were giving us and moving it down south? Because from the outside looking in, it would look like we're not really doing our job. They see all the money they're pouring into prevention and education and they're not seeing a change, so why would they give us money? But it's not that we're not doing the work, it's that the consumer has the

tus, complacency about transmitting the virus, alcohol and drug use and the failure of regular prevention messages to reach this population as possible causes. But the real root of this problem goes even deeper. "I get annoyed with people who dismiss this phenomenon as, quote, the natural recklessness of youth," said longtime AIDS activist Cleve Jones, Equality Michigan's 2011 Catalyst Award winner for Lifetime Achievement. "There's this kind of dismissive way of looking at it, particularly with young gay men of color. I think this is a consequence of despair and fatalism that comes from lack of opportunity and the continual marginalization of these populations." DeJuan LeBlanc was just looking for a little affection. His search resulted in him testing



On Oct. 5 R.E.C. Boyz staff and volunteers took to the streets in downtown Detroit to protest the closing of the program due to lack of federal funding. The five year program run by AIDS Partnership Michigan was demonstrating critical life saving results in one of the most at-risk communities, African American men who have sex with men. Photos courtesy of APM.

right to do what they want to do. They still have to make that choice to wear a condom or not wear a condom." Theus said feedback from counseling sessions even prompted APM to change the type of condoms they distribute. "I've heard that the condom is being used but the condom is being taken off because of the feeling," he explained. "The regular condoms aren't working. So we looked at giving them the thin condoms because they want something that feels like it's not there. So we've been trying to change the behavior from that end." Key to changing the behavior, of course, is understanding the cause of it. The reasons, it seems, are many. CDC materials on the topic list individuals lack of knowledge of their sta-

positive at 17. "It was an emotional thing," said LeBlanc, now 19. "I craved attention because I didn't get it as a child. That's how I got into this situation. Me wanting to please everybody first before I pleased myself." In a situation that's not rare among young, black men who sleep with men in Detroit, LeBlanc was raised by a single parent. And in his case, his parent suffered from substance abuse issues that only compounded his problems. "It isn't like I didn't know about the safe sex thing," he said. "I knew everything about safe sex. I knew to use a condom. I knew to get tested. It's just an emotional thing. When somebody gives you attention or says that they love you, holds you or something ... well, you

get sidetracked." While still in operation, the staff running the REC Boyz program heard stories such as LeBlanc's all the time. "We conducted a pretty robust evaluation and part of that looked at self-esteem," Millbourne said. "What was surprising to us is that on self-esteem measures, our young men measured very high. But when we looked at self-worth - what they thought they were worth to themselves and their communities - those measures were very low. If you tease out the difference between what you think about yourself and what you think your worth is to the world or the community, those are really two different types of things." Adding yet another layer to this quagmire is a recent marketing trend that promotes unsafe sexual practices - barebacking - as sexy, stimulating and the new norm. By the late 80s, all mainstream porn companies had begun using condoms in their videos. But in recent years there's been a bumper crop of internet start-ups specifically promoting sex without condoms. Sites such as RawRods and Breed It Raw are multiplying daily. These sites are often advertised in and cross-promoted with events at clubs that cater to black MSMs. One such local company, ThugSeduction, announced in September that raw porn was not for them. The site had long had a partnership with Mpowerment Detroit that provided them with condoms. "Someone this morning told me 'don't lose my integrity 'cause that's all you have,'" said site owner Andre Perkins on his FaceBook page. "That's the motivation I needed to continue to do condom porn." Within weeks, though, Perkins had changed his tune. "People rather see raw porn than condom porn," Perkins posted. "If I don't throw my morals out the window I will go out of business." Millbourne said this trend is a definite cause for concern. "We're seeing a proliferation of raw and bareback porn nationally," he said. "It's disturbing. It's counter to the message we're trying to put out there for people. I can't say how much that influences behavior, but I do think it does have some influence." Millbourne is not alone in believing this. "If that's what they're watching, they're gonna mimic that behavior," said Theus. "They see it's so seemingly enjoyable when there's no barrier being used, and they think, 'I should be able to do the same thing.' This is the mindset of someone who hasn't even matured mentally. These are teenagers who are trying to figure out what sex is, let alone how to do it properly." While experts agree there is no surefire way to curb the trend of rising infections numbers in this community, there are strategies. "We now know that people who are being

See Fire, page 22

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# Max Fisher to speak at free fundraiser luncheon for MAC

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

**FERNDALE** – How did Michigan AIDS Coalition swing getting Max Fisher, son of Mary Fisher, to come for a free luncheon and talk on Dec. 15, and how will this vibrant second-generation AIDS activist help to renew interest in the cause of AIDS prevention and research in Michigan?

According to MAC CEO Helen Hicks, it was a heart-warming series of coincidences that connected the state-wide agency with the nationally-known speaker.

When Hicks and Ann Duke, who serves as vice-chair of Michigan AIDS Coalition's Design Industry Foundation Fighting AIDS event, flew to New York as guests of DIFFA, they had no idea who the speaker would be. Whoppi Goldberg was the mistress of ceremonies for the surprise guest, and the ladies were already "thrilled to see such a big star," Hicks said.

"It was a big deal when they announced the speaker. It was Mary Fisher, who is a big name in the AIDS community. She's the woman, the housewife, who was a spokesperson for a community needing heightened visibility. She went to Washington (in 1992) and told the Republicans 'shame on you' for letting so many people die before taking the AIDS epidemic seriously. I mean people were getting sick and dying, and the government wasn't doing anything. But Fisher put a face to the issue. She went with her young children and campaigned to bring attention to the fact this affected everyone. Every family could be touched by AIDS."

After contracting HIV from her second husband, Fisher founded the Mary

Fisher CARE (Clinical AIDS Research and Education) Fund to support long-term, outcomes-based research for the care of people living with HIV, especially women. In Africa, she established support groups where women infected or affected by HIV/AIDS can earn a living wage, producing hand-beaded bracelets that Mary designed and markets in the United States.

Hicks said she was "dazzled" by Fisher, and impressed with her son who



Mary Fisher is seen here speaking at the 1992 Republican Convention where she told her audience they should be ashamed at how they had handled the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Her son Max Fisher will be speaking on Dec. 15 at the MAC offices in Ferndale.

came to speak with her. Fisher was just a child when his mother became an activist, and he's grown up now and taken the cause to heart himself.

"He walked out with Mary Fisher and I recognized him," Hicks said. "I was so surprised. Earlier this year we had a DIFFA event here in Michigan, and Max Fisher had been here, volunteering just like anybody else. He told me his name, but it didn't register that he was related to the Mary Fisher. But there he was, not making a big deal or trying to be in the limelight, just in the pit doing volunteer work like everyone else."

After the Washington, DC presentation, Hicks spoke with Max Fisher and thanked him for his service. They talked about the fight for funding in Michigan, and Hicks ended up asking him to come to the state and help.

The talk will be a donation-based lunch, with the first 60 to RSVP enjoying food from the Matt Prentice Restaurant group. The lunch will be held at the MAC headquarters at 429 Livernois in Ferndale on Dec. 15 at noon. There is no charge, but donations are suggested.

"We're doing this here because we want to keep the costs low so that the money can go directly into MAC programming," she said. "Some organizations can afford to rent a hall or bring in expensive entertainment, but we want to keep it simple."

Matthew Prentice, proprietor of the Matt Prentice Restaurant Group, is donating the food for the event. "When he heard this was going to fight AIDS he immediately came forward and wanted to help," Hicks said. "We rely on monetary donations that come from events like this, but when businesses help like Matt does, by donating food and keeping costs down when we use him for other events, it makes a difference too. Every generosity helps us with our mission."

The luncheon will also include the showing of a clip of Mary Fisher speaking at the Republican National Convention in 1992. "We hope that events like this will remind people that AIDS has not gone away, there is still more work to be done," said Hicks.

To RSVP, contact Hicks at [hhicks@michiganaidcoalition.org](mailto:hhicks@michiganaidcoalition.org). To learn more about MAC, go to <http://michiganaidcoalition.org>.

## U-M Dearborn appoints new LGBTQ coordinator

BY BTL STAFF

Richard "Rick" Robinson, Ph.D., has been appointed part-time LGBTQ Coordinator at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Robinson, a well-known anthropologist, lecturer, political consultant, Chief of Staff to Detroit City Council Member Mel Ravitz for 15 years, is also an HIV/AIDS activist/advocate and founding member of Wellness House of Michigan, the first AIDS hospice during onset crisis years to

provide housing and home services to HIV/AIDS individuals.

Robinson has worked extensively with many LGBT anti-violence and activists organizations. Most notably he was an advisory board member for the Triangle Foundation for 13 years.

"The University of Michigan-Dearborn is a thriving academic setting with bright and eager students from many diverse backgrounds. I am very excited to assume the role of LGBTQ coordinator. I've been warmly welcomed on campus,

and have already had the opportunity to attend Gender Sexuality Alliance (LGBTQ organization) meetings. I'm impressed by their perspective, their willingness to create an active awareness of LGBTQ persons on campus.

"The leadership at University of Michigan-Dearborn places a high priority on campus diversity and inclusion. In the near term, I will be focusing on creating and fine tuning programs and supporting a safe, nurturing environment for LGBTQ students."

# KICK tackles tough issues in discussion series

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

**DETROIT** – Transgender sex workers and Detroit's Red Light District was the topic of discussion at Live and Learn, a weekly discussion group hosted by KICK.

Members of KICK, mainly black gays and lesbians of all ages, gather at The Center in Detroit (41 Burroughs St) each week to share food and enjoy frank discussions about topics that affect them. Sometimes the talks are lighthearted, like the upcoming "Holiday Recipe Night" on Dec. 6 or "Tis the Season to be Merry and Gay, Tools for Enjoying the Holidays" on Dec 13. But other times topics touch on the core of community problems, such as an evening of "Coming Out Stories" held Oct. 11, "Dating, Commitments, Polyamorphism and Everything Else" held Oct. 18, and "Sex Sells" Parts I and II, held Nov. 22 and 29.

On Nov. 22 the group heard from Bré Campbell, a 26 year old transgender woman from Detroit who earns her living doing HIV testing for the Horizons Project. Campbell talks with sex workers who come in for testing, and also is friends with other young transwomen who sell sex as a way to earn their living. "In the community I feel like a minority because I don't do sex work. In a way it is glorified and there are a lot of young transgender women that do fall into that stereotype. In the transgender community it is so glorified. I feel that because I don't participate in certain things, I act like I think a lot of myself....And I do. But it's not that I'm up here looking down. I think a lot of everyone who is out there in our community," she said, adding that "while there are a lot of young women that sell their bodies, there are also a lot of transgender women that don't. The majority of transgender people have other jobs and a lot you wouldn't even recognize as transgender. It's just that transgender sex workers are out there and that's what people see on the street and on TV. The rest of us

"When you are 13 years old and there is nowhere else for you to go, it may sound glamorous and the money might be good, but it is not a choice."

- Bré Campbell

aren't as prominent."

Though she doesn't participate in sex work, several friends and acquaintances do. "I've been in a room and friends say, 'um... there's a guy coming, can you hide in the bathroom or sneak out the back?' and I don't want anything to do with it so I say 'see ya later' and leave. I get stopped on my way out, and I say 'no, you're not here to see me, she's in there.' And that's it. That's just how life is for some people."

Campbell said she feels lucky that she "passes" as a woman and that she was able to find a job doing something she is passionate about, helping others. She credits waiting until she was 24 to begin the process of transitioning with her ability to get good work and make good choices. "If I would have transitioned at 16 I would not be here right now," she said. "Because I was older it gave me more options."

At Horizons she works with sex workers who are as young as 13 and 14 who test positive for HIV. "I know a 13 year old girl who was thrown out of her home and had nowhere else to go. She's living in a home with other transpeople. This girl is HIV positive. Heavy into drug use. And she feels like if she goes into care people won't understand where she's coming from. But there on the street, it's normal. She sees the older girls on the stroll and so that's what she does too."

Some sex workers do it because they enjoy it, and it affirms their attractiveness as a female, while others do it because they don't have any other way to get by. "When you are 13 years old and there is nowhere else for you to go, it may sound glamorous and the money might be good, but it is not a choice."

"What is it that these women need? We know it is a problem, but what can we do to help?" These were some of the questions raised by Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of KICK, and discussed by nearly 30 attendees.

"I can't speak for everybody, but if I could do anything for the black transgender community it would be more programming to help them get jobs and get ahead, medical, housing, substance abuse help and a transitional style charm school, teaching girls how to better themselves. ...There are a lot of girls who want to

be treated like women but they don't act like it."

"We want to understand why people are doing this, and how we can help," said KICK board president Tiffany McLean. KICK held two discussions on the topic and as a group hopes to set up more of a community dialogue by inviting sex workers to come to the table and share their needs and concerns. Those involved with Detroit's LGBT sex worker industry who are willing to talk at a future meeting or forum, or just to share information privately, can contact KICK at [info@e-kick.org](mailto:info@e-kick.org).

In addition to building community dialogue, KICK is planning a Holiday in December fundraiser for Saturday, Dec. 10 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the First Congregational Church. Tickets are \$75 or \$125 for patrons.

Find out more about KICK at [www.e-kick.org](http://www.e-kick.org).

## Salvation Army anti-gay policy protested by locals

**FARMINGTON HILLS** – Like most of us at the holidays, Susie Symons and John Glick have passed lots of Salvation Army bell ringers. But instead of feeling compelled to donate, they have wanted to confront the solicitors about their group's anti-gay policies. Now, the couple has devised a simple, respectful and non-confrontational way to protest the group's discriminatory corporate policies without attacking the freezing cold person who is stuck with the bell ringing job.

Instead of putting money into the kettle, they are putting slips of paper that read in part, "I refuse to give to Salvation Army because of its expressly discriminatory policy towards gays and lesbians." Symons and Glick want others to join them in placing these paper protests into the Salvation Army kettles in hopes it will raise awareness within the group's management that they are insulting a large group of potential donors.

The Salvation Army website cites Christian dogma as justification for their anti-LGBT policies. This quote is from their website:

"Scripture forbids sexual intimacy between members of the same sex. The Salvation Army believes, therefore, that Christians whose sexual orientation is primarily or exclusively same-sex are called upon to embrace celibacy as a way of life. There is no scriptural support for same-sex unions as equal to, or as an alternative to, heterosexual marriage."



To learn more visit [www.salvationarmy.org/ind/www\\_ind.nsf/vw-sublinks/80256E520050A2E280256CBA0028A203?openDocument](http://www.salvationarmy.org/ind/www_ind.nsf/vw-sublinks/80256E520050A2E280256CBA0028A203?openDocument)

**PLEASE GIVE THIS TO THOSE AT SALVATION ARMY WHO TAKE COLLECTIONS. DO NOT THROW AWAY.**

I am a generous, moral person who gives to many charities, and I do volunteer community work in my city. I would ordinarily donate at the holidays each time I see a red donation kettle.

**HOWEVER, I REFUSE TO GIVE TO SALVATION ARMY BECAUSE OF ITS EXPRESSLY DISCRIMINATORY POLICY TOWARD GAYS AND LESBIANS. YOUR POLICY IS UNFAIR, UNEQUAL AND HURTFUL TO GAY FAMILIES, AND THAT'S WHY I DO NOT SUPPORT S.A..**

**This is my form of protest. I hope you will change your policy to INCLUDE ALL PEOPLE, EQUALLY in your organization.**

A citizen in \_\_\_\_\_







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PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

EDITORIAL

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# BTL Editorial

## 30 years, still a crisis

Thirty years into the HIV epidemic, it is easy to pretend the crisis is over. After all, fewer people are dying. There are miracle drugs that breath new life into those who are desperately ill.

So fewer people are being newly infected. Right?

Wrong. Michigan's epidemic continues, people are dying from AIDS still, and the medications sometimes work, but have horrible side effects and the virus itself can develop resistance to them if they are not taken properly. Why haven't we heard more about the epidemic?

Because some in the gay community believe our own rhetoric that the epidemic is no longer a gay disease. Some believed that as infection rates increased among heterosexuals that we could let down our guard. But we were wrong. Over 50 percent of new HIV infections are in men who have sex with men in Michigan. That is an unacceptable number of new infections for any community.

Further exasperating efforts to stem the tide of new infections in MSMs, the virus is spreading most quickly among some of the most vulnerable and least resourced of us. Young men of color who have sex with men – many of them in the age group of 13-24 – are more likely to have little access to economic or social service resources. As infection rates spiral out of control in this community, there is little in the way to stop new infections. A program that was in the way of rising infections was lost this fall - REC Boyz – due to lack of federal funds. A simply maddening decision.

Apathy is perhaps the worst enemy in the fight against new infections. The virus has become nothing to fear in the minds of many, and in others, HIV infection and being gay go hand in hand – an inevitable fatalism of failed moralistic prevention programs which have written off men who have sex with men and ceded them as an acceptable loss to the battle.

That is why Between The Lines is launching the PrideSource.com interactive HIV/AIDS portal this month. We believe that you are either part of the problem or part of the solution, and we stand squarely on the side of solutions.

The continuing epidemic is a crisis. In part it is a crisis of communication.

A Kaiser Family Foundation study released in June 2011 found that while the epidemic has been around since 1981, the public's understanding of how the virus is spread remains poor. Of the respondents in the study, 25 percent thought one could get HIV by sharing a drinking glass

with someone with HIV, 45 percent say they would be uncomfortable having their food prepared by someone who is HIVpositive, 36 percent with having an HIV positive roommate,

Over 50 percent of new HIV infections are in men who have sex with men in Michigan. That is an unacceptable number of new infections for any community. But making this worse, the virus is preying on men of color who have sex with men, many of them in the age group of 13-24.

29 percent having their child in a classroom with an HIV positive teacher, and 18 percent working with someone with HIV.

The problem of ignorance is linked to another reality: where people get their information on the virus.

"Six in ten Americans say most of what they know about HIV/AIDS comes from the media,

putting it ahead of other sources like school, their doctors, friends and family, and the church," the report says. It found that mainstream media coverage of HIV is often shallow and reinforces stereotypes. Culturally sensitive prevention messages are rare, and the number of stories that deal with HIV related issues is disproportionately low compared to the severity of the epidemic.

"Media is the top information source on HIV across racial/ethnic groups and for younger and older adults alike. Substantial shares of the public, and much larger shares among blacks and Latinos, say they'd like to have more information on a variety of HIV related topics, including how to prevent the spread of HIV, how to know whether to get tested and where to do so, and how to talk with children, partners, and doctors about the disease," the report says.

Pridesource.com is launching this HIV portal in order to help address these stunning numbers and provide accurate, current information about the epidemic in Michigan. Together, we can, as Secretary of State Clinton said in November, fulfill the dream of an AIDS-free world. But it will take all of us to get there, and we are stepping up to the plate. What are you doing?

Kaiser Family Foundation report: <http://thinkprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/HIV-AIDS-Public-Opinion.pdf>



## Parting Glances



### My Argentine knees

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I've a friend, Wardell, who shamelessly flatters new acquaintances in oddball ways. "You've got exciting toes," he'll tell a guy wearing sandals.

"Your earlobes indicate you're well endowed," he'll remark to a party guest. "I'd kill for those elbows," he'll chat up a gym buff.

Recipients of these left-field compliments don't know whether to laugh, say thanks politely, or fall off the bar stool. Mostly they just wonder: Is there something wrong with my hearing aid or this guy's bifocals?

Exciting toes? Endowment earlobes? Sexy elbows? Wardell just blathers on. "I don't suppose you get many compliments like mine; but it's true: your elbows are sexy. Is it your genes, or do you work out?"

"Why do you say goofy things like that?" I ask Wardell (after spending minutes in front of my full-length mirror, looking at my Argentinean tango knees). "Aren't you afraid people will think you're a nut case?"

"Sure; but there are plenty who find my come-ons fun. Besides, who secretly doesn't mind hearing they've got eyebrows like a NASA rocket scientist or the rebel wrists of a hard rock guitarist?"

"Doesn't everyone like to feel special in special ways? Anybody can be handsome. Anyone can be beautiful. (Anybody can be a bottom. You should know.) But how many can own up to charismatic urban nostrils? Affluent suburban upper lips? Sisyphian-induced triceps? A continentally butch basket?"

"Yes, but Wardell; come on now. What you're saying makes little syntactical or physiological sense. What in heck are 'Sisyphian-induced triceps' and 'a continentally butch basket'?"

"What's that got to do with it? (Just because you obviously haven't got either.) The important thing's that it sounds like something manly. Sounds sexy. You want to believe you're one in a million. You begin to wonder how you can use it, make out with it, show it off in public.

"The trick's adding to your compliment by linking it to an important person or persons. Say: Did you know it's a political given that Wall Street bankers have similar testicular outcroppings like yours, more so than Euro Dollar counterparts. How about buying me a drink, Big Guy?"

I wish I'd nerve enough to use Wardell's technique of offense kissy footing (as opposed to my defense back scratching), but I'd feel real stupid going up to a stranger and saying, "Hey, dude, that's really one monumental botox lip job you're sporting!"

But, I do find Wardell's ploy works miracles with 30-watt Fundies, pinhead theocrats, right-wing poop deckers, who - because they truly believe they're the only ones who'll win God's Heavenly Bingo Game - like being told they're very, very special in no uncertain, "isn't that special," Church Lady ways.

"Has anyone told you your Garden of Eden coccyx is divinely prehensile, and your cherubic nose is sweet Shinola shined to utter holy perfection? And, good gracious me, those marvelously hairy grapes-of-wrath toes ... And your left behind's quite rapturous ... Amen! Got any 3-in-1 lube?"

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OR call and ask for them at 734-572-9355

**HARC**

## Creep of the Week

T.I.

BY DANNE WITKOWSKI

Attention gays: recently paroled felon and rapper T.I. thinks you are too sensitive. And maybe he's right. Maybe years of being treated like second-class citizens and being accused of and equated with with pedophilia and bestiality and being at risk of losing jobs or homes or family and being bullied and beaten and even killed just for being gay has made gays a little sensitive.

Combine all of this with a love for Barbara Streisand, Broadway, and Bette Midler and yeah, I can see where sensitivity overload might be an issue.

I mean, a person can't even tell a little gay joke these days without the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation putting out a press release.

Thankfully, T.I. has an exceptionally insensitive sense of humor, which he shared in a recent interview with Vibe magazine.

"Man, I will say this, the funniest joke I ever heard Tracy [Morgan] say during a stand-up was, 'C'mon man, I think gay people are too sensitive,'" T.I. said. "If you can take a dick, you can take a joke. That shit was funny to me. And it's kind of true."

I know, right? It's so true! I can't stop LOLing at the hilariousness of it.

Actually, I don't get it. How are taking "a dick" and taking "a joke" related? Maybe he's saying that both dicks and jokes go in the same place? In this case he's talking about the butt. And there certainly are a lot of butt-related jokes out there, not to mention dick jokes. So maybe T.I. is just saying he loves his dick jokes good and gay.

In the same interview T.I. accuses gays of being un-American for protesting anti-gay slurs.

"They're like, 'If you have an opinion against us, we're gonna shut you down,'" he says. "That's not American. If you're gay you should

have the right to be gay in peace, and if you're against it you should have the right to be against it in peace."

Ah, there you go. If only anti-gay folks were left to be anti-gay in peace things would be fine. Never mind the fact that the only reason gays can't be "gay in peace" is because of the anti-gay folks who not only want to deprive gays of their rights, they also want to deny that gays are fully human and would prefer that they disappear. That, to me, seems like a difficult position to maintain "in peace."

T.I.'s aforementioned favorite joke comes from an anti-gay rant Tracy Morgan went on during a June 4, 2011 stand-up gig. Kevin Rogers, a gay man in the audience, detailed Morgan's remarks on Facebook after the show.

Morgan made plenty of anti gay remarks, including that lesbians just pretend to be lesbians because they hate men, kids learn to be gay from the media, and that being gay is a choice. However, all of this paled

So maybe T.I. is just saying he loves his dick jokes good and gay.

in comparison to what Morgan said about his son.

Rogers wrote, "[Morgan] said that if his son was gay he better come home and talk to him like a man and not [he mimicked a gay, high pitched voice] or he would pull out a knife and stab that little N (one word I refuse to use) to death."

Got that? If Morgan's son was an effeminate gay man, Morgan would murder him in a gruesome and violent way. This certainly goes against the T.I. claim that you should be anti-gay "in peace." There's really nothing peaceful about Morgan's comments. Or funny, for that matter.

As far as gays being too sensitive, Rogers wrote, "I figured at some point the gay jokes would fly and I'm well prepared for a good ribbing of straight gay humor. I have very thick skin when it comes to humor; I can dish and I can take."

But threatening to stab your son to death for being gay? That's not a joke. And it's not funny. Morgan has since apologized for the anti-gay rant. T.I., on the other hand, seems determined to keep this "joke" alive.

# NH same-sex marriage push highlights GOP shifts

BY STEVE PEOPLES

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) – Whether they like it or not, Republican presidential candidates are joining New Hampshire's intensifying gay marriage debate.

State lawmakers plan in the coming weeks to take up a measure to repeal the law allowing same-sex couples to wed and a vote is expected at some point in January – the same month as New Hampshire holds the nation's first Republican presidential primary contest.

Already, candidates have been put on the spot over the divisive hot-button social issue when most, if not all, would rather be talking about the economy, voters' No. 1 concern.

The impending focus on gay marriage carries risk for several of White House contenders - including former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Texas Gov. Rick Perry and former businessman Herman Cain - whose inconsistencies on the topic are well documented. The GOP candidates' increasingly vocal support for "traditional marriage" also threatens to alienate a growing number of younger Republicans and independents here who support legal recognition of same-sex couples. That note of divisiveness could bode poorly for the eventual GOP nominee come the general election.

Even so, the Republican candidates aren't shying away from the topic as they run for the nomination of a GOP dominated by conservatives and pushed further to the right by the tea party over the last few years.

"As conservatives, we believe in the sanctity of life, we believe in the sanctity of traditional marriage, and I applaud those legislators in New Hampshire who are working to defend marriage between one man and one woman realizing that children need to be raised in a loving home by a mother and a father," Perry told a New Hampshire audience recently, becoming the latest contender to address gay marriage directly.

While the issue hasn't yet become a regular talking point on the campaign trail, most Republican candidates declare support for the effort to repeal the law. And groups like the National Organization for Marriage hope to force the presidential contenders to publicly embrace the repeal.

"We will be using all the tools at our disposal to lobby the New Hampshire legislature and the broader population," said Christopher Plante, regional director for the National Organization for Marriage. "One of those tools is the echo chamber of presidential candidates continuing to show their support of marriage as defined by one man and one woman."

Plante concedes that for some candidates, "there has been an evolution on a number of fronts" on this issue.

Romney was the Massachusetts governor when his state legalized gay marriage. The Romney administration, as directed by the courts, granted nearly 200 same-sex marriage requests for gay and lesbian couples in 2005.

Campaign spokesman Ryan Williams said the former governor had little choice but to follow the state Supreme Court ruling at the time. He noted his candidate's consistent opposition to both civil unions and gay marriages, adding that Romney openly supports the New Hampshire repeal effort.

But Romney has reversed himself on whether gay marriage should be addressed at the state or federal level.

This past June, he said during a debate that he favors a federal constitutional amendment banning the practice. That's been his position at least since the beginning of his 2008 presidential bid, when he was the only major Republican candidate to support such an amendment.

But as a Massachusetts Senate candidate back in 1994, Romney told a Boston-area gay newspaper that same-sex marriage is "a state issue as you know - the authorization of marriage on a same-sex basis falls under state jurisdiction." Aides say it's unfair to scrutinize Romney's position in 1994 - when there was virtually no discussion of a federal amendment. And they suggest Romney's rivals have far more blatant inconsistencies in recent months.

Both Perry and Cain have drawn conservative criticism for recent comments related to gay marriage.

Asked in mid-October whether he supports a federal marriage amendment, Cain told the Christian Broadcasting Network that federal legislation is necessary to protect traditional marriage. That seemed to be a direct contradiction from his statement of just six days earlier, when he told "Meet the

Press" host David Gregory that states should be allowed to make up their own minds.

"I wouldn't seek a constitutional ban for same sex marriage, but I am pro traditional marriage," Cain told Gregory.

In Perry's case, the Texas governor says he supports the New Hampshire repeal. But in July he said that New York's move to legalize gay marriage was "fine by me." A week later, facing social conservative criticism, he walked back the comments.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich has another problem.

Earlier in the fall, he told an Iowa audience that gay marriage is a "temporary aberration" likely to go away because it defies convention. Gingrich, who has been married three times, has a half-sister in a same-sex marriage.

"The truth is that you're living in a world that no longer exists," Candace Gingrich-Jones wrote the former speaker in a letter posted on the Huffington Post in 2008: "In other words, stop being a hater, big bro."

Despite the presidential candidates' support for the New Hampshire repeal, younger Republicans in this state are skeptical, especially as voters are focused on the economy.

"Why is the NH House wasting time trying to repeal gay marriage? Capital ugh," Robert J. Johnson, chairman of the New Hampshire College Republicans, wrote on Twitter.

Polling suggests it may not be a winning issue.

A recent University of New Hampshire poll found that 62 percent of state residents oppose repealing the same-sex marriage law. And nationally, public opinion has gradually shifted toward supporting same-sex marriages, even among Republicans.

An August Associated Press-National Constitution Center poll found that 53 percent of Americans favor legal recognition of same-sex marriages; 32 percent of Republicans say same-sex couples should get some legal recognition from the government, compared with 71 percent among Democrats and 50 percent of independents.

Democrats hope to use the Republican contenders' positions against them in the general election next fall.



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**f Heard on Facebook**  
**Last week in Abby Dees' Editorial, she wrote, "I don't believe there will be a better time than now to make our next bold move toward equality." BTL Asks: Do you agree?"**

We agree. But the Roberts-Scalia court is not where the next blow to end marriage discrimination will be struck. It will be at the ballot box. Join the fight at [lovehonorcherish.org](http://lovehonorcherish.org)  
 -@Lesteraponte

Mr. Scalia attends the same Catholic Church in Virginia as Brian Brown, President of the National Organization For Marriage. I know that their decision will come down to one nice meal (between them), and when the Supreme Court hands us our ass, our own community will be too busy shopping or watching a TV show to even notice.  
 -Michael

What Michael says is true about our community not getting off their asses long enough to care about their civil rights. But I hope Michael, and Lester, are wrong about the Supreme Court.  
 -Billy Bradford

This is a Supreme Court that could look at Kraft and say "Yep, that's a person." I think we can wait a little longer.  
 -Jay Kay

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.

**f Join the conversation ...**  
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**S/he Said**  
**Discrimination, baseball**

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Rafael McDonnell

*"I ask as an LGBT fan and on behalf of the center that you both please add sexual orientation provisions to the MLB's new collective bargaining agreement, and encourage each team owner to add sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression protections to their team's employment nondiscrimination policies. The National Football League added a provision that the league would not discriminate against a player based on his sexual orientation to the collective bargaining agreement approved earlier this summer. The National Hockey League added similar protections for its players in 2005, as did Major League Soccer in 2004. By adding the sexual orientation nondiscrimination language ... these leagues send a strong signal to the league's LGBT fans that they are supported and affirmed, since professional sports have been described as one of the last bastions of homophobia."*

-Rafael McDonnell, communications and advocacy manager for Dallas' LGBT community center, in letters to Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig and Major League Baseball Players Association exec director Matthew Weiner, [www.dallasvoice.com](http://www.dallasvoice.com), Nov. 22. The agreement will add "sexual orientation" to the league's anti-discrimination policy.



*"Most of us are still Neanderthals."*

-An anonymous New York Mets baseball player, about the comfort level of Major League Baseball (MLB) players knowing openly gay teammates, responding to the new collective bargaining agreement between the Major League Baseball Players and MLB adding "sexual orientation" to the league's non-discrimination policy, [www.nydailynews.com](http://www.nydailynews.com), Nov. 23.



Peter Sprigg

*"In the larger picture, homosexual activists are trying to have their ideology become dominant, not only in the most liberal segments of society, like academia, but in the most conservative institutions, such as the military, the church, and now in sports. Liberals attack conservatives for the idea of legislating morality, but this is exactly what's happening when one of these codes is adopted."*

*It's saying that anyone who disapproves of homosexual conduct, for whatever reason, is a bigot and we are taking a moral stance against that. This is not a neutral act. It's taking sides in the culture war."*

-Peter Sprigg, Family Research Council, [www.citizenlink.com](http://www.citizenlink.com), Nov. 25. CitizenLink is the political arm of the Family Research Council.



Andrew Belonsky

*"You're probably wondering to yourself, 'How did so-called Christian conservative group Family Research Council show their gratitude this Thanksgiving weekend?' The answer: they didn't. Instead they spent their holiday blasting major league baseball for including sexual orientation non-discrimination rules in its collective bargaining agreement. But to FRC, baseball is simply cowering before the gay agenda. Even if baseball*

*were a bastion of right wing conservatism - depending on the region and fan base, some teams may be - it does not belong to conservatives. FRC, Sprigg and other anti-gay activists forget that baseball is all of America's pastime, not just right-wing fundamentalist bigots' pastime."*

-Andrew Belonsky, in his column titled "Conservative Group Spends Thanksgiving Gripping About Baseball's Gay Love," responding to comments made by Peter Sprigg, [www.deathandtaxesmag.com](http://www.deathandtaxesmag.com), Nov. 25.

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**L**ots of laughs, food and drinks were enjoyed by the clients of Royal Oak dentist Dr. Ron Williamson who hosted a holiday open house Nov. 18. Photos: First Impressions Photography

Top Right: Dr. Williamson with his friendly office staff

Bottom Left: Crazy times in the on-site photo booth

Bottom Right: Happy patients enjoying the refreshments



**► Fire**  
 Continued from p. 11

treated successfully are not capable of transmitting the virus," said Jones. "So I think a new slogan for years to come is that 'treatment equals prevention.' We need to turn the complacency into a real desire for people to learn their status and get treatment.

"I think it's also important to remember that we do know some things that work," Jones continued. "We know that prevention education campaigns – when they are targeted, when they're explicit and when they're prevalent – are effective. They are hampered by a lack of funding and by censorship, but when we pay attention to these populations with appropriate messages and involve the community in creating these messages, it does make a difference."

AIDS Partnership Michigan has been trying to develop such messages.

"In the last two years we've implemented three strategies that just target young MSMs," said Millbourne. "We have a social networking strategy, we have a text messaging type program that we run and then the Status Sexy campaign. They see those efforts and get tested."

To develop such messages effectively and stop these risky behaviors, Millbourne said we have to realize why young, black MSMs are engaging in them.

"We need to look at the contextual



Photos courtesy of APM.

and environmental conditions in which behaviors happen," he said. "I don't think we can downplay how the economic situation that we are in now disproportionately impacts young people and their ability to live independently. It impacts their choices, in terms of whether or not they may participate in a riskier behavior for survival. We don't often look at that but I think it has an impact in behavior in ways that are detrimental to our youth."

But maybe the biggest cause of this problem is that these young, black men aren't being looked at all by the LGBT community at large. And maybe the solution lies, at least in part, in giving them the attention they crave.

Jones summed it up succinctly. "We need to tell them that their lives matter and we value them greatly and that we want them to live and grow."

**► HIV 30**

Continued from p. 10

health departments – that are currently using Client Acknowledgment forms to review this practice immediately," Osman wrote.

But even as the state was directing counties to stop using the legally inaccurate documents, it was continuing to use an obscure section of the public health act to track and challenge those living with the disease. The Health Threat To Others program is a civil procedure to force those with HIV to disclose their status and to engage in safer sex behaviors. The program follows a strict process of warning, followed by a list of sanctions. Failing to fulfill the obligations of a warning and sanctions can result in civil confinement for up to six months. In addition, those under observation under the program are listed in a statewide database of HTTO orders.

Trevor Hoppe, a doctoral student at the University of Michigan studying the application of Michigan's disclosure statute by public officials, reported at the CDC's National HIV Prevention Conference this summer in Atlanta that he had documented health officials using sensitive health information to assist in their health threat investigations. Interviews with health officials showed that some were actively cross-referencing the state's name-based database of known HIV-infected persons with partner services referrals to identify potential HTTO cases. In addition, Hoppe reported that some officials said they would identify as a health threat any HIV-positive woman in their jurisdiction who became pregnant – something advocates say impinges on the sexual and reproductive rights of those living with HIV.

While the HTTO program appears to be the preferred tool of Michigan's health officials, a felony law remains hanging over the heads of any HIV-positive person. That law requires an HIV-positive person to disclose his or her status prior to sexual penetration, "however slight." However, it does not require disclosure prior to sharing needles. Failing to disclose is a felony punishable by up to four years in prison in Michigan.

Criminalization has become a major issue for advocates who note that research shows the law has no impact on the behavior of HIV-positive people, and may in fact be hampering prevention and testing initiatives. Advocates say more and more people who are engaged in high-risk behavior are unwilling to get tested in order to prevent being held criminally liable for their behavior.

**Testing issues**

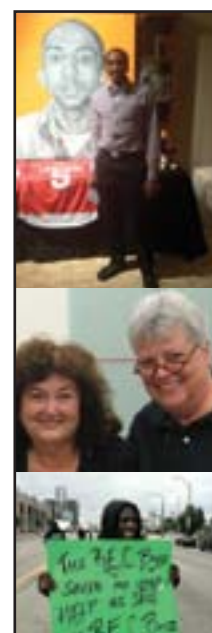
People who refuse to get tested hampers efforts to slow the progress of the disease. Strong scientific evidence has shown that those on successful medication treatment are extremely unlikely to transmit the virus. This has led to high impact drives to increase testing and access to care in a program federal authorities call test and treat.

Part of the test and treat strategy is a requirement from the federal government that state governments track viral loads of persons living with HIV. The goal is to reduce the community viral load and in the process reduce the new incidence rate of infections.

In some jurisdictions, health officials are beginning to use viral load testing to find people who are not on treatment and to confront them about it.

Michigan tracks viral loads, but MDCH says those results are not used for anything.

"Currently MDCH collects HIV viral load, western blot and CD4 results for epidemiological surveillance of HIV disease in Michigan," says Angela Minicucci, spokesperson for the MDCH. "Physicians will follow up with their patients on any positive HIV test results (such as a detectable viral load and reactive western blot) and will then report that case to the MDCH for the epidemiological surveillance. Additionally, viral load (detectable and undetectable) and CD4 results are aggregated and used to identify areas of the state where there may be gaps in service for persons living with HIV. This helps us to make well-informed funding decisions."



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November 2011

I have always been of the opinion that serious, downtrodden AIDS activists are not particularly appealing. A sense of humor and laughter has always been considered a great weapon in the arsenal. That's probably why I have a framed award from APM staffers for the "Loudest Laugh."

Well, I must not be laughing much lately because Connie ... my next door office mate ... announced to all in the office yesterday that I had finally laughed ... loudly. And you know what? She is right.

Thanks to the failed vision at the Centers for Disease Control, we shut down one of the most effective HIV prevention programs I have seen in my 22 years here ... the REC Boyz. The program is a peer leadership program designed by the University of California Center for AIDS Prevention Studies. We worked with 300 young African American men ages 13 to 24 each year. These are young men who have sex with men and are frequently homeless because their families disown them. Educational activities designed by the REC Boyz have reached an average of 5,000 Detroit young people each year. Our CDC proposal was "approved but not funded."

But ... every other day or so one of the REC Boyz come to my office ... Curtis, Darius, Delicious, Angelo ... and THEY MAKE ME LAUGH!

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With Love and Much Laughter,

*Barbara A. Murray*

Barbara Murray ... and the Incredibly Talented APM Staff and REC Boyz PS REC Boyz graduates have earned their GED degrees, they have jobs, several are attending college and one has been deployed to the Middle East with his National Guard Unit. These young men are the future!

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# Cuckoo for Coco Peru

## Drag star talks Detroit and being a queen of all trades

BY SAMANTHA WHITE



December in Detroit is going to heat up this holiday season with a shot of hot Coco. Coco Peru, that is. The beautiful and talented drag queen – with a capital Q – will bring her New York attitude and flavor to Detroit and perform a “best of” her work

Coco got a taste of the hometown hospitality a few months ago while in town shooting for a now-defunct TV show. And now she’ll get a taste of our winter weather when she performs at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 at Five15 in Royal Oak.

“I am going to come from this nice warm weather to Detroit,” says Coco, who lives in Los Angeles. “It’s cold in Detroit right now, isn’t it? I had the chance to meet some local peeps when I was filming an episode of ‘Detroit 1-8-7.’ I love the people in Detroit – they’ll keep me warm!”

Coco is a quadruple threat – singer, comedian and actor. Not to mention, she writes all her material.

Looking back, “I would change those one-night stands. I gave it away for free for too many years!” Peru says frankly when asked about her groundbreaking 20 years in the business.

Inspired by the humorous grownups in her life, Coco, born Clinton Leupp, knew while growing up in the Bronx that she wanted to perform.

“I grew up surrounded by adults who I thought were funny. I liked being around adults more than children,” she says. “From the time I was small I knew. I loved being around them and I liked making people laugh.”

It helped that Coco had parents who encouraged her enthusiasm for performing. “I was very fortunate, because my parents realized I had a love for the theater. My parents took me to Broadway shows, Radio City Music Hall, all of that. It made me realize, ‘Hey, I can do this!’”

The city itself also played a vital role in her desire to perform and make a career out of being funny. “There was this edginess that New Yorkers had back then. Their sense of humor was borderline blue and there

was a lot of innuendo to it that was really funny.” Coco took all that inspiration from her childhood and, years later, gave birth to the alter ego Coco Peru. But even industry veterans spend time arduously writing engaging and entertaining shows. Comedic genius takes time – and can be scary as hell.

“I literally sit in front of my computer for hours. It can be terrifying, and I think to myself, ‘Do I have a show here?’ It’s scary until you get into it.”

Peru is well into it, with critically acclaimed one-woman shows like “Miss Coco Peru in My Goddamn Cabaret,” “Miss Coco Peru: A Legend in Progress” and “Miss Coco Peru’s Liquid Universe.” The latter garnered her one of several GLAAD Award nominations. In 2004, she won for “Miss Coco Peru is Undaunted.”

Her most rewarding moment came from the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center in 2009, winning the Board of Directors Award for her activism in the LGBT community.

Peru has many accomplishments onscreen, in addition to her stage and activism endeavors. She has appeared on “Arrested Development,” “Will & Grace,” “New York Undercover” and “How I Met Your Mother.”

“I really enjoyed working on ‘How I Met Your Mother’ because everyone is happy there,” Coco says. “There’s nothing worse than an unhappy cast who complains about everything. What do you have to complain about? You are making millions of dollars. I hate when they complain. It makes me want to smack them across the face. But, that show has a really lovely cast.”

She goes on: “I told myself I’d never play a tranny-hooker because that’s one of the stereotypes in our community. And, I ended up playing one on the show! Hey, they dangled money in my face. I’m only human.”

Two decades in the business has afforded Coco dozens of accolades and fans, great opportunities to work with some of film and television’s biggest stars and a few one-night stands here and there. She gets the spotlight, but Clinton just likes being at home in the backyard.

“I like watering the plants in my backyard and pulling weeds. I like to talk to my fruit trees and I have a beautiful lime and lemon tree,” Coco/Clinton says proudly.

The multi-talented performer was born to perform but enjoys the simple life with a husband of 16 years. The key to being together for so long? “A mortgage.”

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# Old and new friends at 35th annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival

## Ryan Adams, Emmylou Harris among performers

The annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival, organized yearly by The Ark, recently announced the lineup for the two-day event at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 27 and 28.

Highlighting a selection of the world's finest traditional and contemporary performers, each night of the Festival includes a blend of well-known and up-and-coming artists (and comedian Heywood Banks as emcee both nights), providing you with an opportunity to hear artists you know and love while discovering great new talent. Here's a taste, according to The Ark's website, of what you can expect:

### FRIDAY, JAN. 27:

#### Ryan Adams

As co-leader of the band Whiskeytown, Ryan Adams emerged into the 1990s alt-

country scene. Prolific, with ideas coming as fast as he could write and record them, Ryan released an album a year (or even more) over much of the past decade. His latest release, "Ashes & Fire," marks his return to recording following the disbanding of backing band the Cardinals in 2009 and a quiet period in which he married singer and actress Mandy Moore. Of "Ashes & Fire" Ryan says: "The record is obsessed with time. I believe that there is a kinder view of the self. I'm passing through my own life as a ghost, and looking at these pieces and places in my life. I'm looking at California, and the idea of being lost and found at the same time."

#### DeVotchka

For more than a decade, the Denver band DeVotchKa has welded its influences – from Eastern European wedding bands to Mexican norteño ballads – into an authentic

and totally original blend of popular music. The members of DeVotchKa spent their early career fostering musical connections with fellow explorers like Calexico and gypsy punks Gogol Bordello. DeVotchKa's major break came when Nic Harcourt of KCRW introduced his listeners to a then-unknown rock band on his daily radio show, "Morning Becomes Eclectic."

#### Dawes

With admirers like Jackson Browne and Tom Petty keyboardist Benmont Tench in their corner, this self-described "American rock 'n' roll band" has drawn instant acclaim for its rootsy revitalization of classic L.A. rock. Dawes is a classic rock 'n' roll ensemble: four talented friends making music together, fueled by a shared belief in the power of their songs. They blend singer/songwriter reflection with

folk, country, and album-rock-inspired arrangements filled with ringing guitars, soaring harmonies and heartfelt melodies.

Also playing: Carbon Leaf, Elephant Revival, Sunny War and David Wax Museum

### SATURDAY, JAN. 28:

#### Emmylou Harris

In Nashville they call her the conscience of country music, but there's no label large enough to encompass Emmylou Harris. Over a career that's lasted more than 40 years, Emmylou has influenced musical movements from country-rock to the bluegrass revival to Americana, which she helped make into an ongoing genre with her remarkable 1995 album "Wrecking Ball." In the 1970s and 1980s, Emmylou helped reenergize traditional country music with her silvery voice. Emmylou Harris has long been a friend to The Ark – one of the great performers in the 35-year history of the Festival who has been instrumental in supporting them with her stunning performances.

#### Glen Campbell

With 17 gold albums and 27 top-10 pop and country singles, he has brought us songs – "Gentle on My Mind," "Galveston," "Wichita Lineman" – that are familiar



Ryan Adams. Photo by David Black

evergreens in this country and around the world. But what's sometimes forgotten is that Glen's songs remain fresh because they were innovative in the first place. Glen released the first of his roughly 70 albums, "Big Bluegrass Special," in 1962, and he emerged as a top-notch instrumentalist who played guitar on the Beach Boys' "Pet Sounds." His latest album, "Ghost on the Canvas," and his current tour, featuring members of his family in his band, will be his last.

#### Nanci Griffith

"Nanci Griffith," writes Jon Cummings of Popdose, "is arguably the most important folk-music artist of her generation." You can make a good argument for that: no other songwriter has fused introspective folk songwriting with popular roots so

thoroughly. On Nanci's own 18 albums she draws on personal confessions, a photographer's eye for Texas landscapes, and social and political themes, forging a kind of homespun but often complex Texas poetry that nobody else has quite matched. She also has a portfolio of songs that became major country hits for other artists. This is Nanci Griffith's fifth appearance at the Ann Arbor Folk Festival; her first was in 1985, and new facets of this diamond have appeared every time since then.

Also: Joe Henry, Sarah Jarosz, Caravan of Thieves and Seth Glier

Tickets are on sale now. For information on all artists and tickets, including special discounts for Ark members and students, visit [www.theark.org](http://www.theark.org).

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# Transgender character grounds 'Fugue'

## Shared tragic event launches search for identity in The New Theatre Project production

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

**YPSILANTI** – In Audra Lord's play about memory and identity, only one character is fully comfortable with herself and who she is: Princess Stephanie, a transgendered rock singer who doesn't need a life history to fit into her own skin.

The four main characters in "Fugue," a new work that is premiering at The New Theatre Project in Ypsilanti, have all suffered severe memory loss. Throughout the course of the play they learn their names, and bits of their histories float back into their awareness.

Each character responds in a different way to the memory loss, some with anger and frustration at not knowing who they are, others with excitement about what they can now create out of their lives. It is only Stephanie who lives completely in the present, fully aware that she is transgendered even while lacking knowledge of any of her past or of the people who were once in her life.

"This character grounds it," said playwright Audra Lord. "I don't think that she's the center of the play, because she's not, but she has this wonderfully zen energy in which she is the one character who is perfectly good with where she is. She has no idea who she is, but everything is good. She is probably the most stable character in the piece."

She stated that Keith Paul Medelis, the group's artistic director, is the perfect person to play Stephanie because he has the grace and soul to properly portray her. Medelis said he prepared



Keith Paul Medelis plays Stephanie in Audra Lord's "Fugue." Photo: Janine Woods Thoma

for the role by researching transgenderism and what it means.

"It doesn't matter what parts you have, it's what you desire to have," Medelis said.

**REVIEW**  
**Fugue**  
The New Theatre Project at Mix Studio Theatre, 130 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. \$15. Friday-Sunday, Nov. 30-Dec. 18. 734-645-9776. www.thenewtheatreproject.org

"She wants to be a woman. It was really important that I not play Stephanie as a drag queen or a gender performance, but as a woman. She has a few lines about how she doesn't want to be a man, that she never felt like she was a man."

While Stephanie has her campy moments where she performs as a musician, Medelis said what was more important was making sure he portrayed a character who was comfortable living in the in-between space of being born one gender and identifying as another.

Lord drew inspiration for Stephanie from a Ferndale artist, Stephanie Loveless, publisher of "Ferndale Friends." Loveless had been composing what she called "inventions" that Lord felt captured the ideas of the "Fugue." She asked Loveless to compose music that could be played in the production.

While Loveless has not attended any of the readings or workshops that have led up to this premiere, she was one of the early readers of the script. She observed that the Stephanie of "Fugue" doesn't speak or act like her, but that she is honored to have inspired the part.

"I told Audra to make it big so I can ride on her coattails," Loveless said.

The fugue "Silently Falling" that she composed for the play was based on a love song that she had written for a girlfriend. Written in a Baroque style, she played with her original piece until she developed the theme that works for "Fugue."

"A fugue is kind of like a musical jigsaw puzzle where you are trying to weave together more than one melodic line," Loveless explained.

"Fugue," directed by Luna Alexander, features Jon Ager, Don Johnson, Medelis, Linda Rabin Hammell and Jamie Weeder. The New Theatre Project first did a reading of "Fugue" nearly a year ago as did Performance Network, both experiences that gave Lord opportunity to rework the script.

"It's a great drama with really poetic stuff," said Medelis, referring to the play as an intense and emotional piece. "We have almost the same cast as when we did a reading of the first draft last December. It was magical when we first read it and was very funny. We knew that this was something we wanted to do."

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# Play packs a punch at Planet Ant Theatre

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

One aspect of Michigan's professional theater community that makes it stand out from others around the country is this: the willingness to take risks. In particular, I'm referring to the fact that many of our theaters both big budget and small are willing to take chances on producing original works that may or may not bring in an audience, or scripts written by new and/or untested playwrights. While Chicago and other cities may have broader support or may move a play to New York every once in a while, none of them is a haven like Michigan is for creative souls needing to express themselves through a new live stage play.

Sure, many of the locally produced original works end up as one-shot projects – and a few will hopefully never be seen again on any stage – local playwrights such as Kitty Dubin, Joseph Zettelmaier, Kim Carney and even some guy named Jeff Daniels would never have become

**REVIEW**  
**The Sunday Punch**  
Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Friday-Saturday through Dec. 17, plus Sundays Dec. 4 & 11 and a Community Night Tuesday, Dec. 6. \$20. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com



Wendy Katz Hiller, Sean Paraventi, Eric Bloch and Sonja Marquis in "The Sunday Punch." Photo: Planet Ant Theatre

celebrated or prolific in their chosen profession if it wasn't for some producer at some theater deciding to give them their first shot on a major stage.

Hamtramck's Planet Ant Theatre has long championed original works, and its latest offering carries on that proud tradition. And if the world premiere of "The Sunday Punch" is any indication, I predict Linda Ramsay-Detherage may soon find herself included among the list of important local playwrights mentioned earlier. (Along with a handful of others, of course.)

coat, hat and nothing else. The reaction she gets, however, is NOT what she anticipated. "You saw me naked, and you screamed," the stunned wife says to her shell-shocked husband. The reason, we soon discover, has nothing to do with her age-related imperfect body, but with a lifetime of verbal abuse Gordon has been subjected to by his 75-year-old father, Arthur (Clement Valentine), a self-described prick he's about to spend a weekend with at a family gathering that includes his successful brother Max (Sean Paraventi), sister-in-law Sarah (Wendy Katz Hiller), and mother Rose (Dominique Lowell). As Max says, there's no biblical provision for flattening thy father or dueling with thy elderly parent, but nevertheless, Gordon decides a physical confrontation with the old man is inevitable. And Arthur is ready for the challenge. But will the end result turn out as either planned?

As "The Sunday Punch" opens, we find a long-married couple having problems in the bedroom. Gordon (Eric Bloch), it seems, is in the midst of an unspecified midlife crisis and is unable to perform his husbandly duties. So Claire (Sonja Marquis) decides to spice up their lovemaking by entering their bedroom wearing a trench

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

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## Have yourself a swingin' little Christmas

BY JOHN QUINN

The store displays have been up since Halloween, but I'm just now getting into the holiday spirit. "The All Night Strut Holiday Show," now on stage at The Gem Theatre, is partially responsible. That can't be attributed to nostalgia; this revue is not the music of my youth. I, like most of the opening night audience, am at least a generation too young. Could its appeal lie in the fact it's a joyous, seasonal celebration of some of the best popular music America has to offer?

It's been a little over 20 years since the unprecedented relocation of The Gem Theatre, and the first offering in the restored venue was 1991's "The All Night Strut!" The revue is a salute to the music of the '30s and '40s, when composers took the playful rhythms of ragtime and doubled the beat – "eight to the bar." Daddy! That and close harmony orchestrations produced the multi-textured, sophisticated styling of "swing."

For this revival, Gary Thompson has recreated author Fran Charnas's work. Act I is a selection of the best numbers of "The All Night Strut!" that carries the audience through the Depression, World War II and the post war boom. Act II is "A Strut! Christmas Concert," featuring some old standbys and a few new twists.

**REVIEW**

### The All Night Strut Holiday Show

The Gem Theatre, 333 Madison St., Detroit. Wednesday-Sunday through Dec. 31, plus Dec. 26-28; no shows Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. \$20-45. 313-963-9800. www.gemtheatre.com



Celebrate the holidays with "The All Night Strut Holiday Show" at Detroit's Gem Theatre. Photo: Santa Fabio

The four performers are Lianne Marie Dobbs, Marja Harmon, Jared Joseph and Denis Lambert. The singers are pitch-perfect and easily handle the complexities in the score, whether singing solo or in harmony. If the choreography isn't served up with the same authority as the vocals, just consider dancing as window dressing for the "haute couture" music.

There are some real standouts among the numbers, especially a first act medley of World War II songs in which Johnny Mercer's boogie-woogie "GI Jive" morphs into the wistful "I'll Be Home for Christmas," one of the most evocative seasonal songs ever. Also of note are the unexpected comic possibilities in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" as the quartet moves through musical genres, baroque to swing to doo-wop to rhythm and blues.

There were many hands and ears

at work in the musical arrangement, but bottom line, those guys have a syncopation fascination. One familiar with the Glenn Miller Orchestra's rendition of Joe Garland's big band icon "In the Mood" might be surprised just how good it sounds played by a jazz trio. The song is great, natch, but serious credit is due to the talents of percussionist Rob Emanuel, Ralphe Armstrong on bass and musical director Sven Anderson tickling the ivories. It may be cliché, but there's never a dull moment.

"The All Night Strut Holiday Show" has all the class of a Macy's window display at Christmas. What better way to have a "Kool Yule?"

## You better watch out for Santa Lecter!

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

The Santa stalking the Who Wants Cake? stage in Ferndale is far creepier than just a brightly dressed home invader who spies on children throughout the year to gauge their naughtiness levels.

No, their Santa is in a high-security prison where he is subjected to psychological tests by a rude elf. His crime? Killing and eating several naughty children one Christmas Eve while making his rounds. Now, as Clarice Starling, the daughter of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, comes to him for help in solving the Skinner serial killings, he wants her help to rehabilitate him so that children will believe in him once more.

"Silent Night of the Lambs" is a campy romp through famous Christmas stories such as "A Christmas Carol," "Frosty the Snowman," and "The Little Match Girl" while following the plot line of the thriller novel and movie "Silence of the Lambs." Ryan Landry's script also mixes in a few other stories and modern political figures for good measure.

Fans of the 1991 movie will appreciate Melissa Beckwith's spot-on imitations of Jodie Foster's voice and mannerisms and the way in which Dave Davies invokes the

**REVIEW**

### Silent Night of the Lambs

Who Wants Cake? at The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Friday-Monday through Dec. 19. \$10-20. 248-545-5545. www.whowantscaketheatre.com



Melissa Beckwith is Clarice Starling and Dave Davies is the psychotic Santa Claus in "Silent Night of the Lambs" at Ferndale's Ringwald Theatre. Photo: Colleen Scribner.

creepiness of Anthony Hopkins. Both are delightfully humorous in their recreation of FBI recruit Clarice Starling and serial killer Hannibal Lecter. Then there is the talented ensemble who fully commits to each groaner of a plot twist, whether it is the recreation of a Christmas Carol, a drunken Rudolph-turned-wife-beater, a Blitzen who is horny in more places than just her head, or the Lady Gaga making ludicrous demands. Genevieve Jona is the perfect victim as Macy Penney, daughter of JC Penney, who whines and cries while held hostage by Chris Berryman's character – the Skinner.

"Silent Night of the Lambs" takes aim with a double-barrel shot gun at both the horror genre and the touching Christmas morality movies. Director Joe Plambeck and Dyan Bailey collaborated

on projections and video that provided a myriad of backgrounds so that a unit set can accommodate all of the play's scenes with only a few speedy set changes.

At times the script feels a bit forced, and it is only the commitment of the actors that keeps the play from eroding into sketch comedy. Landry seemed unable to resist throwing in extraneous bits of pop culture and political humor that fell flat.

When Landry sticks to the story arc of "Silence of the Lambs," the play is effective as a spoof and thoroughly entertains in true Who Wants Cake? style.



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Photo: Weinstein Company

# Michelle Williams shines in 'My Week With Marilyn'

## Actress transforms magically as legend in brilliant biopic

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Some like it hot, and some like it with a little more oomph. "My Week With Marilyn," an Oscar shoo-in for the ever-fabulous Michelle Williams ("Brokeback Mountain"), is remarkably made to appeal to whatever Marilyn you adore.

This Marilyn, shooting a feature by Sir Laurence Olivier (Kenneth Branagh, hilariously cutthroat), is a hot mess of insecurity and codependency, with her omnipresent acting coach always hanging in the wings and a man at her side for confidence boosts.

The pressure for Norma Jean Baker to be Marilyn Monroe was sabotaging her from the inside out, and she was cracking. During the particular time captured in "My Week With Marilyn" – in 1956 while

shooting the Olivier film in England – Monroe was seemingly flubbing lines so often on set that Olivier's intense scrutiny crippled her spirit and drove her into the arms of big-dreaming boy Colin Clark (a charming Eddie Redmayne), the third assistant director on the film.

He pushes her to perfection, and she – using her flirtiness most inventively – seduces him every which way she can: skinny dipping in a lake and scheming him into "accidentally" seeing her fresh out of the shower. Undeniably, there's a loveliness forged within their give-and-take rendezvous, but is it enough to sustain Monroe's aplomb so she can finish this movie? Enough for him to not feel used?

"My Week With Marilyn" is more than an insightfully candid and often funny-by-way-of-awkwardness snapshot of one of the most famous women ever; it's an allegory on fame – the power, the pressure and how both can destroy a human soul. Monroe, as we know and as depicted in director Simon Curtis' film, finds refuge in drugs and alcohol. That pain was hidden securely behind a wink and a smile. Williams captures that so ingeniously that not for one second do

The actress walks a mile in Marilyn's heels for an hour-and-a-half, embodying every aspect of Monroe: the floozy, the diva, the codependent.

you believe that you're not actually seeing Marilyn Monroe onscreen in all those iconic moments: the toes-in-the-air tub scene and flashy song-and-dance numbers, for instance.

The actress walks a mile in Marilyn's heels for an hour-and-a-half, embodying every aspect of Monroe: the floozy, the diva, the codependent. Marilyn, in Williams' handle, isn't just a sex kitten; she's empathetic and real, sensitive and sweet. The resemblance is uncanny as she recreates the life of a legend that so few of us actually ever knew.



# Aging and gay?

## Imagine screens topical film Dec. 7

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIERE

**ROYAL OAK** – What would you do if you were old, disabled or ill and the person feeding you put down the spoon and said that you are going to hell unless you change your sexual preference? What if your partner could not be at your side in the hospital or be close to you out of fear that a caregiver might see? What if you could not find housing that would allow you to grow old with the one you love? What if you were abused or neglected by nursing home staff, or harassed by other care home patients? These are the problems faced by aging LGBT seniors who are unable to find the support and care they need in the sunsets of their lives.

But a new coalition is being formed to help seniors in Southeast Michigan unite and address these issues. Service and Advocacy for Gay Elders is a national organization that provides research, resources and support for those looking to make a difference in the lives of older LGBT individuals. A Detroit chapter is in the works, and the group behind it, LGBT Older Adult Coalition, is hosting a documentary film screening at 7 p.m. Dec. 7 at Imagine Theater in Royal Oak.

There will be a free showing of the documentary "Gen Silent," directed by Stu Maddux. The film follows six gay seniors for a year as they try to navigate a health care system that is not sensitive to their situation or needs. It gives an eye-opening look at the discrimination they face and the challenges that come from going "back in the closet" in order to have an easier time receiving the care they need.

The film will be followed by information about the LGBT Older Adult Coalition and time to discuss what issues are important to the community. According to the film's producers, there are almost 38 million LGBT Americans over 65, or 12.6 percent of the population. This will nearly double by 2030. They also say that 50 percent of nursing home workers said their fellow workers would be intolerant of LGBT people in a recent survey.

The LGBT Older Adult Coalition consists of groups and individuals, including ACLU of Michigan, Adult Well Being Services, Affirmations, Citizens for Better Care, Equality Michigan, Jewish Gay Network, the Jim Toy Community Center and S.P.I.C.E. This coalition is working to create the SAGE chapter and is being funded with a grant from the HOPE Fund, administered by the ACLU of Michigan.

In addition to the upcoming movie and meeting, there currently are programs available for older adults through the Affirmations community center. Young @ Heart is a socializing and conversation group for those aged 45 and older, which meets 7-9 p.m. each Wednesday at Affirmations. The Senior Koffee Klatch is a discussion group that also plans outings to places like the Detroit Zoo, The Henry Ford Museum and Frankenmuth. Koffe Klatch meets each Wednesday from 1-2:30 p.m. Outskirts is a social group for women aged 45 and over. Events and meetings are organized through volunteers Paula or Kristen, who can be reached at 586-243-1005.

For more information, contact Kathleen LaTosch of Affirmations at 248-398-7105.

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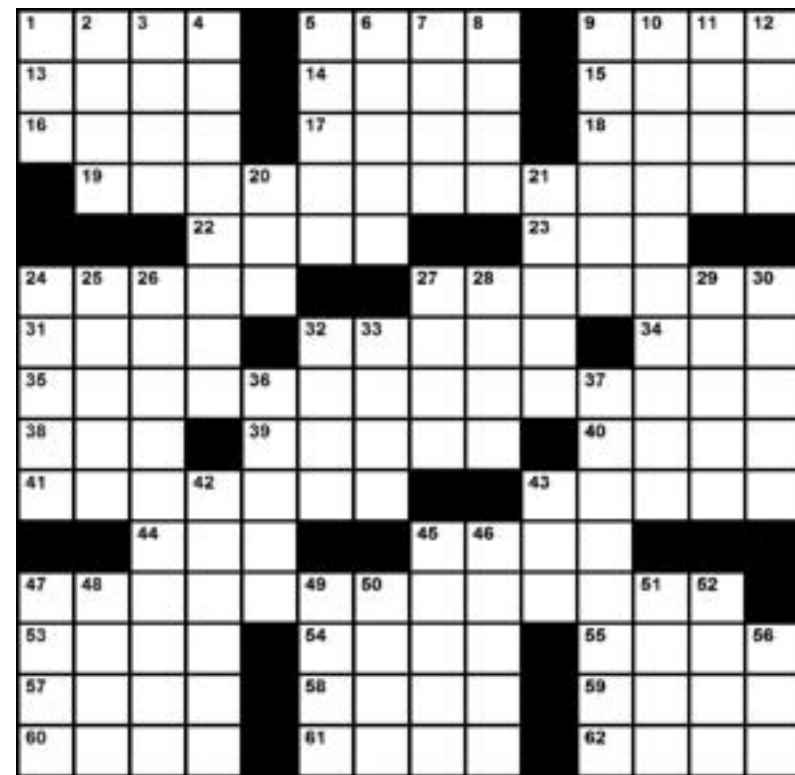
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- 5 "West \_\_\_ Story"
- 9 Little fairies
- 13 Where you can eat a hero
- 14 Bipedal dino
- 15 Egypt's lifeline
- 16 Distribute sparingly
- 17 Garb for Mychal Judge
- 18 Secluded valley
- 19 Character who recently kissed John Cryer's character on TV
- 22 Dances to jazz
- 23 Cheerios essence
- 24 Nut for pies
- 27 Big bird
- 31 AfterEllen.com and AfterElton.com
- 32 One who runs the show
- 34 Shipping magnate Onassis
- 35 TV show with John Cryer
- 38 Contraction in a carol about gay apparel
- 39 Writer Chekhov
- 40 Magi origin
- 41 Give a cocky look to
- 43 What Mickey Mouse has down below that Donald Duck lacks
- 44 Cul-de-\_\_\_
- 45 "Stop it!"
- 47 Actor who plays 19-Across
- 53 Afternoon socials
- 54 R.E.M.'s "The \_\_\_ Love"
- 55 Wax-covered balls from Holland
- 57 Sitarist Shankar
- 58 Stagger from a Cukor film?
- 59 \_\_\_ Mae Brown
- 60 Pious ejaculation
- 61 No better than
- 62 Winetaster's guess

### Down

- 1 Dipstick word
- 2 Sneaky Pie cry
- 3 Earthenware pot
- 4 Long piece of meat
- 5 Deep throat problem
- 6 Jeremy of "M. Butterfly"
- 7 Young women who have balls
- 8 Business VIP
- 9 Director Bergman
- 10 Guy that shot off at Lexington, e.g.
- 11 Got on one's knees and asked for it
- 12 Tickle pink
- 20 Mafia figure
- 21 Valet employer
- 24 Strokes from Spencer-Devin
- 25 "Desert Fox" Rommel
- 26 It gives a drag queen smooth legs
- 27 Estefan's eight
- 28 Penn of "Milk"
- 29 Wave top
- 30 Dropped hankie and such
- 32 Poet St. Vincent Millay
- 33 "Today" cohost Lauer
- 36 Drug agent, for short
- 37 Like a boia
- 42 Has dinner at home
- 43 Snapshot
- 45 "We're here, we're \_\_\_ ..." (Cryer's response to the kiss)
- 46 Scrabble piece that often goes with Q
- 47 Razor choice
- 48 Clothes line
- 49 \_\_\_Cheers\_ barfly
- 50 You may go down on one
- 51 Falco of \_The Sopranos\_
- 52 \_\_\_-tat
- 56 Put a scuff on

Solution on 41



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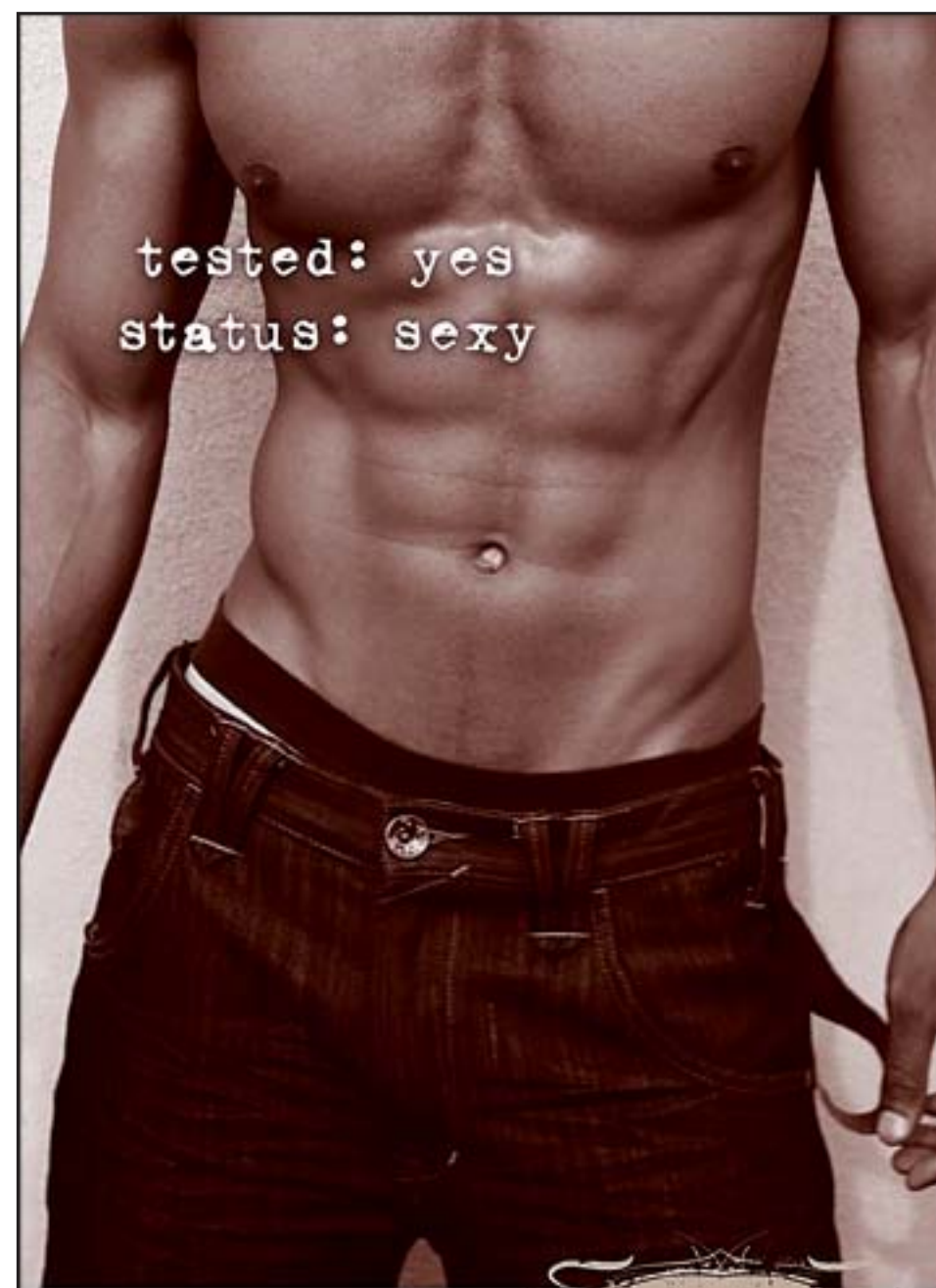
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## Cocktail Chatter

### Water of Life

BY ED SIKOV

I once found myself at a meeting of urine drinkers. No, under no circumstances – including Chinese water torture and being strapped to a chair and forced to listen to Ke\$ha – would I ever in a trillion years drink my own piss. But I was accompanying someone who was HIV-positive, and I swore there would be no outbursts, groans, or wrenching noises. We both were willing to try anything to keep him healthy. The group called itself “Water of Life.” They believed, like the late Prime Minister of India Morarji Desai (he lived to be 100; something must have worked), that a glass of pee was like a good Chablis, a healthy tea, a drink that’s free, a tonic for thee... you get the drift.

Before you stop reading, I assure you that this column’s featured cocktail is not urine based, nor does it contain half a teaspoon of urine-infused syrup, nor does urine float on top like a yellow Tequila Sunrise. This column is actually about *water*, which those of us who drink alcohol regularly should consume in large quantities. Hydration! Hangovers are less severe if you drink water while tying one on. Water flushes out those nasty toxins they’re always mentioning – those vaguely criminal substances we’re said to be full of in our natural state and must rid our systems of daily. (Silly me. I thought urine contained the toxins, and getting rid of them involved peeing them into the toilet and not a tumbler. Boy, am I dumb!)

I’ve been drinking a lot lately: friends have been taking us out to celebrate our marriage; I spent some boozy days drowning my sorrows at closing the beach house; it’s getting colder and darker by the day, which led to sneaky passes by the liquor cabinet on my way anywhere in the apartment. So, I decided to take a week off and drink water. No flavored stuff. Just plain water.

I regret to say that I felt better immediately. No, I’m not staying “on the wagon,” an expression that comes from horse-drawn water wagons at the turn of the 20th century. I felt good but bored. Oh, sweet Sauterne, sobriety is dreary! Your mind improves – never a good idea. Reality comes into sharper focus – big mistake in these wretched times. You gain clarity, both mental and



spiritual. Dullsville. But for this brief period it was worth the painful monotony of better health. I kept imagining those nasty toxins exiting my body through my favorite organ, my overworked kidneys bathing in a clear wash of something other than vodka – something cleansing and healthy and tedious as hell.

**The Best Plain Water:** Ignore the know-it-alls who insist that tap water is as good as bottled water. It isn’t. It may start out dandy in the hills upstate or the underground springs that serve your community, but after it passes through all those corroded pipes and lands in your glass, it’s acquired a distinct tang. So drink Deer Park or Evian. (Did you know that Dasani comes from municipal water supplies?) My vote goes to Poland Springs.

**The Best Sparkling Water:** My vote once again goes to Poland Springs, but only the plain, unflavored kind. Pellegrino and Perrier are too flat; Canada Dry is manufactured. Poland Springs is naturally and generously carbonated.

And if you’re bored by a refreshing glass of chilled Poland Springs Sparkling? You can always pee into it, add some ice and call it an all-natural cocktail.

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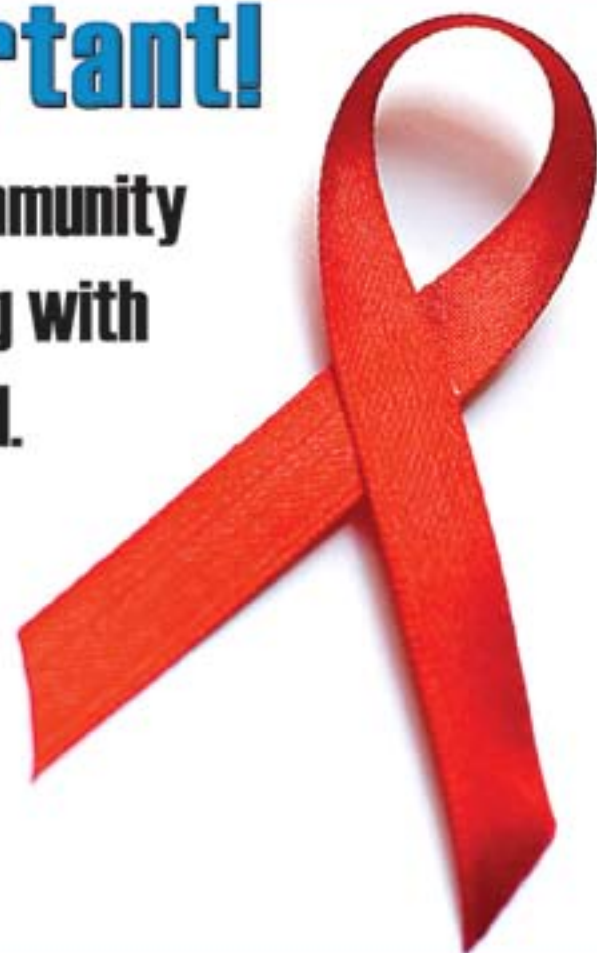
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