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BTL EDITORIAL:
LET'S PROTEST JAN. 18

ACLU SUES
GOV. SNYDER FOR
DISCRIMINATION




A man in a dark vest over a blue shirt stands behind a young girl with long blonde hair. They are at a podium with microphones. One microphone has a 'FOX 2 NEWS' logo. The man is looking down at the girl, who is looking towards the camera. The background features a colorful stained-glass window.

GAY FAMILIES STRIKE BACK

FREE | JAN. 12, 2012 | VOL. 2002



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Saturday \ January 28 \ 8 pm
Rackham Auditorium \ Ann Arbor

PROGRAM

Handel Concerto Grosso in B-flat Major, Op. 6, No. 7 ("Hornpipe") HWV 325 (1739)
Telemann Suite in a minor for Alto Recorder, Strings, and Basso Continuo, (b. 1681)
Sammartini Concerto in F Major for Soprano Recorder and Strings (b. 1700)
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Daniel Landau filmmaker
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This event is part of *Pure Michigan Renegade*.
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BTL THE Lines™ 1.12.2012



7



15



20

Cover Story

4 | Domestic Partner Health Care Ban challenged in federal court, discriminatory animus cited

ACLU: "We cannot stand idly by"

News

7 | OBITUARY: Mark Bidwell

Pastor embroiled in scandal leaves behind legacy of good works that cannot be denied

9 | 'Moral exception' senator gives Michigan another black eye

9 | Traverse City rejects anti-gay bill H.B. 5039

9 | Dems to hold endorsement convention

10 | Donna Brazile to deliver keynote at WSU tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.

11 | Local leaders visit White House

12 | Santorum success in Iowa likely to increase gay-related debate

14 | Fed redefines definition of rape

Opinions

6 | BTL Editorial

Let's do something about it!

8 | Heard on Facebook

8 | S/he Said

2012 presidential election

10 | Parting Glances

Angel Bruce's Platinum Plates

12 | Creep of the Week

Rick Santorum (Again!)

Life

15 | The Power of 'Pariah'

Star, out director talk coming-of-age film – and how other LGBT teens can relate

16 | Book Marks

Reviews of "98 Wounds" and "Fit to Serve"

20 | Queens to the rescue

Drag face-off to benefit LGBT community

22 | Out of Town

Maui, Lanai and Molokai

23 | Theater

"Nunset Boulevard" is habit-ual fun

24 | Happenings

Featured: Faith and the LGBT Community on Jan. 12 at Affirmations

Rear View

26 | Classifieds

26 | Dating Diet

27 | Horoscopes

28 | Puzzle

29 | Cocktail Chatter

30 | General Gayety

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Domestic Partner Health Care Ban challenged in federal court, discriminatory animus cited

ACLU: 'We cannot stand idly by'

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

DETROIT – The Michigan ACLU announced Jan. 4, they have filed a federal lawsuit against Gov. Rick Snyder to strike down a new state law that bans many public entities from providing health insurance to same-sex domestic partners.

"This is the most shameful and cruel law that Michigan has seen in a long time," said Michael J. Steinberg, Michigan ACLU Legal Director about the Public Employee Domestic Partner Benefit Restriction Act, signed by Gov. Snyder on Dec 22, 2011. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of school teachers, city and county workers and their domestic partners who will lose their health insurance as a result of the law.

"We cannot stand idly by while politicians undermine the value of equality and fairness that make this state great. This law creates a hostile environment for many of our residents to work and live. We, working with our clients and people of good will in this state, will do our very best to restore some measure of common decency and equality to this state," said Steinberg.

The lawsuit, *Bassett et al. v Snyder*, was filed on behalf of four same-sex couples who will face real hardship trying to find affordable and comprehensive health care plans given their current health conditions such as high blood pressure, breast cancer, glaucoma and rheumatoid arthritis.

Under the terms of the act, which took immediate effect as early as Jan. 2, many of Michigan's gay and lesbian public employees have already been stripped or will soon be stripped of family health care coverage for their domestic partners.

"This law serves no purpose other than to single out a small minority of people and to deprive them of critical protections that are available to all other family members. This law is wrong, it's discriminatory, and it's unconstitutional," said Jay Kaplan, Michigan ACLU LGBT Project staff attorney. "We believe that the act violates their equal protection rights under the 14th Amendment as well as interferes with their fundamental rights and protected liberty interests."

Cost is a major concern for Doak Bloss and his partner Gerardo Ascheri of East Lansing as they will pay an additional \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year for individual health insurance coverage.

"Even though the financial implications are

"This is the most shameful and cruel law that Michigan has seen in a long time."

- Michael J. Steinberg, Michigan
ACLU Legal Director about the
Public Employee Domestic Partner
Benefit Restriction Act, signed by
Gov. Snyder on Dec 22, 2011.

important, what really hurts is the message...that this is not a place where you are welcome simply because of who you are. We want to stay here, but simply won't be able to for emotional and financial reasons if this law isn't overturned," said Bloss, an Ingham County employee.

Ascheri said it is "shocking" to feel second-class again as he left his oppressive life behind in Argentina and became a U.S. citizen on June 15, 2010. "This law is appalling. It is beyond belief. It goes against all principles and ideals this country is founded on and I am very grateful for the ACLU and that they are challenging it," said Ascheri, a self-employed piano teacher.

With his nine-year-old daughter Aliza at his side, Ann Arbor school teacher Peter Ways explained what a hard lesson this has been for him and his partner of 20 years, Joe Breakey, a self-employed licensed therapist.

"Our family is under attack. It is clear to me that it is time for us to fight back. I thank the ACLU for putting forward their legal challenge. I thank the many supporters who have voiced their support. I have no personal desire for publicity, neither does Joe. It is only upon long reflection and consultation with family and friends that Joe and I have honored Aliza's request to be here and to make her voice heard.

If by raising our voices we can help our political leaders to make better decisions then we are here to be counted," said Ways.

Although the application of the law needs clarification, Steinberg weighed in stating that universities are exempt because they are an autonomous entity under the Michigan constitution. The Michigan Civil Service



ACLU LGBT Project Attorney Jay Kaplan addressing the press Jan. 4 as Michael J. Steinberg, Michigan ACLU Legal Director. BTL photos: Andrew Potter

Commission determines compensation and the benefits for state employees. "This does not save the state any money on benefits for its own employees. It only prohibits school districts and municipalities from voluntarily providing benefits because they believe it's in the best interest of the school district and the municipality," said Steinberg.

But, Kaplan said, unlike heterosexual

employees with domestic partners who can marry in order to continue their eligibility under the law, Michigan does not permit, nor recognize the marriage of same-sex couples. Government employers remain free to offer health insurance benefits to all other family members, such as parents, siblings, uncles and cousins.

See ACLU, page 10

HAD ENOUGH?

LET'S TAKE A STAND - BE SEEN and HEARD
GAY FAMILIES MATTER

Join together at
the State Capitol Building in Lansing
Wednesday, January 18 at Noon

Protest the recent legislative attacks
on LGBT people in Michigan
Enough is ENOUGH!

Organized by MICHIGAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER NETWORK

Currently in formation and includes:

Affirmations 290 W. Nine Mile Rd. | Ferndale, MI | (248) 398-7105 | info@GoAffirmations.org | www.GoAffirmations.org

The Jim Toy Community Center 319 Braun Court | Ann Arbor, MI | (734) 995-9867 | tjmcginn@umich.edu | www.wrap-up.org

Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Community Center 629 Pioneer St., suite 102 | Kalamazoo, MI | (269) 349-4234 | zachary@kglrc.org | www.kglrc.org

KICK 41 Burroughs, suite 109 | Detroit, MI | (313) 285-9733 | curtislipscomb@e-kick.org | www.e-kick.org

Out Center 132 Water Street | Benton Harbor, MI | (269) 925.8330 | info@outcenter.org | www.outcenter.org

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BTL Editorial

Let's do something about it!

BY JAN STEVENSON AND SUSAN HOROWITZ

At BTL, we have reached an extreme level of anger and disgust at our current political environment in Michigan. We believe strongly it is time – now – to do something, to protest the passage of blatantly discriminatory laws and out-right attacks on our community. That is why we will join other LGBT leaders at the State Capitol at noon on Jan. 18 to raise our voices against the deplorable state of our State for LGBT citizens.

Gov. Snyder will deliver his State of the State speech that same day, and before he goes to the podium we want him to hear from us that the State he has created for LGBT families is unacceptable. We want him to understand that the attacks, the animosity and the shunning of LGBT citizens is hurting not just us, but everyone who cares about equality and fairness.

Michigan is fast becoming known as a bastion of discrimination and restricted opportunity, just when it would behoove us most to be open, accepting and encouraging of new ideas, new people and new energy. Significant employers, especially in high tech industries, know that extending benefits to the families of their LGBT employees is not only the fair thing to do, it is good business. It makes companies more attractive to the best and brightest potential employees. But Michigan keeps adding bricks to the wall at the border that is intended to keep out young, educated, entrepreneurial people – the very people that could help rebuild Michigan into the economic powerhouse it once was.

In case Gov. Snyder and the out-of-touch legislators don't know what we want, here it is:

- We want the repeal of recent legislation that strips health benefits from the families of LGBT public employees.
- We want the recently introduced bill that would invalidate all local anti-discrimination ordinances to be retracted or killed in committee.
- We want LGBT people to be included in Michigan's Elliott Larsen legislation, Michigan's civil rights law that protects citizens against discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation.
- We want LGBT families to have the same parental rights, protections and responsibilities as other families. We want full second-parent adoption.

We will add our voices and our editorial pages to the cry for equality and justice. We will do so on Jan. 18, and every day thereafter until LGBT people in Michigan are recognized as full citizens.

This Jan. 18 action is called for by an impressive coalition of the many LGBT community centers in Michigan. Affirmations in Ferndale, Jim Toy Center in Ann Arbor, The Network in Grand Rapids, The Kalamazoo Resource Center, Kick-Detroit, Perceptions in Saginaw/Midland, the Ruth Ellis Center Detroit and the Out Center in Benton Harbor have banded together to bring as many fair-minded people as possible to the capitol to protest, to be seen and to be recognized by the politicians in Lansing. It is exciting to witness these groups working together for a common cause. It is also heartening to see this coalition cooperating with Equality Michigan and the ACLU towards a unified message and movement in our state.

We want to applaud the ACLU's recent lawsuit against Gov. Rick Snyder, who lied when he said during last year's campaign that he was not interested in "social issues" and would focus his political capital on rebuilding Michigan's economy. On Dec. 22, 2011 he lost all his credibility when he became the first and only governor in America to strip domestic partner benefits from public employees. By his actions, he showed that he is willing to sacrifice our state's economic competitiveness for his belief that LGBT people are an inferior class.

Lobbying, lawsuits and political gamesmanship are pieces in the puzzle

Gov. Rick Snyder lied when he said during last year's campaign that he was not interested in "social issues" and would focus his political capital on rebuilding Michigan's economy. On Dec. 22, 2011 he lost all his credibility when he became the first and only governor in America to strip domestic partner benefits from public employees.

that make up the movement to eventual equality. Direct action is necessary too, particularly at this time when the opposition acts with impunity, as if they can pass the most outrageous laws with no negative consequences. On Jan. 18, it will be up to us to begin to create a negative consequence for Gov. Snyder and the radical right wing of the Republican Party. They must hear that we are paying very close attention. We will react and we will vote. As Michael Steinberg of the ACLU said, "We cannot stand idly by."

Join us – everyone – Jan. 18 at the State Capitol at noon!



MAN ON DOG

OBITUARY: Mark Bidwell

Pastor embroiled in scandal leaves behind legacy of good works that cannot be denied

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

In the preceding 20-plus years before his very public fall from grace, Rev. Mark Bidwell built a solid reputation as a minister, activist and all-around compassionate human being that no one scandal can besmirch. The former senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church - Detroit died Jan. 3 at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. He was 53.

"Regardless of what they'll say on the certificate of his passing, I really do believe that Mark died of a broken heart," said Rev. Delores Berry, a traveling evangelist who frequently appeared at MCC-D and knew Bidwell well. "I know that his work will outlast the memory of his rough times. He was a dynamic individual who thought of helping people in healing situations and he was tireless in that."

Bidwell was born Dec. 28, 1958 and raised in Metropolitan Detroit. He worked for a time for General Motors before beginning his ministerial career. Joining MCC-D in 1989, at a time of great turmoil for the church, Bidwell quickly became a deacon. In April 1993, Bidwell began serving as interim pastor even though he had yet to be ordained. That came in 1997, when he began his tenure as senior pastor for the church, a position he held until September 2011.

Bidwell earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Lawrence Technological University before going on to get his master's in pastoral ministry from MCC's Samaritan College. He also attended Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake.

Once at the helm of MCC-D, Bidwell began reaching out and the ministry expanded under his guidance. In 2000, he attended the first Transgender Day of Remembrance. The event took place outside the old Affirmations community center on a cold, rainy November day.

"After the service, Mark came up to me and offered the church for the following year," said Michelle Fox-Phillips, one of the event's organizers. "Since then he's been on the planning committee every year.



Rev. Mark Bidwell in 2007 leading a service for Transgender Day of Remembrance. MCCD is planning a memorial service on Saturday, Jan. 28. BTLfile photo: Andrew Potter

As part of the weekend's events, he also offered to baptize transgender individuals who wanted to be baptized in their new name. So he was an integral part of the Transgender Day of Remembrance from the first year we had it."

After the passage of Proposal 2, which banned same-sex marriages in Michigan, in 2004, Bidwell became active in the fight for marriage equality. He organized annual trips to the Oakland County Courthouse, where same-sex couples applied for marriage licenses, and performed mass same-sex commitment ceremonies in front of Ferndale City Hall as part of the annual Motor City Pride festivities.

Bidwell received the Unity Award at the 21st annual Community Pride Banquet in 2006, and traveled the following year to Bucharest, Romania, to take part in a gay pride march where marchers were outnumbered by police and surrounded by armored vehicles.

"Fortunately, because I speak no Romanian, I didn't understand what the protesters were angrily screaming and shouting at us," Bidwell told *Between The Lines* at the time. 'Axil, a German MCC minister, and I carried an MCC banner with 'God Loves All' (written) in Romanian. It

was a hit with the TV news crew."

Roland Smith joined the MCC-D church in 2006 and was instantly impressed by Bidwell's presence.

"I had never met such a warm and compassionate man," Smith reflected for an article on the MCC movement's 35th anniversary in 2007. "He loves people. That impressed me."

Indeed, Bidwell believed it was his calling to reach out to whomever he could.

"We've fed the homeless and strived for human rights and justice for all people," he said in the same article. "We realize that a church is more than Sunday services. We're called to do great things in the world."

Bidwell's works and position often saw him featured in the media, and at times he was even the recipient of hate mail and death threats. But in September, he made the news for a much different reason. Struggling in recent years with diabetes and ill health, Bidwell, whom parishioners say had recently taken to sitting to deliver his sermons, which were noted for their brevity, revealed he had fallen victim to addiction.

On Sept. 21, a man with whom

See **OBIT: Bidwell**, page 10

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Heard on Facebook Readers respond:

A student claims Troy Mayor Daniels (who referred to gay and lesbian people as “queers” on her Facebook page last month) wanted to invite “a panel of psychologists who would testify that homosexuality is a mental disease,” to an anti-bullying forum.

And she still holds a public office, why?

–Shari Smith Bence

Mayor Daniels needs to step down and just go away.

–John Merlino Jr.

If this doesn't remind the LGBT community why every political race matters, I don't know what will. VOTE.

–Rachel Lutz

I think she likes the publicity; stealing it from aunt Sarah and aunt Michelle.

–Alfred Franje

What a joke.

–Josh Schirle

She certainly shouldn't be put anywhere near kids that may be thinking of suicide. I wonder if Troy is regretting voting for this idiot.

–George Borg

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

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S/he Said

2012 presidential election

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



RuPaul

“I am not Ron Paul and I am not running for president of the united states. Contrary to recent reports, I did not come in third in the Iowa caucus. I am not even a member of the Republican Party. But I am a proud American. I'm not a political person by nature. But anytime a man leaves the house in a wig and a pair of cha cha heels, he's making a political statement. Let us not forget that this great nation was founded by a bunch of men wearing wigs. Forward thinking men, who fought for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all. And honey, watch out, because they started a revolution.”

–RuPaul, promoting the seasonal premiere of “RuPaul's Drag Race,” <http://queermeup.com>, Jan. 06.



Meghan McCain

“There's a difference between being against marriage equality and equating same-sex marriage to bestiality. I mean it's so dated and it's so gross. It's far off the course of mainstream America, and it's enough for me just to say goodbye. The more people know Santorum, the less they will like him. If you nominate someone like Rick Santorum, I guarantee he will lose.”

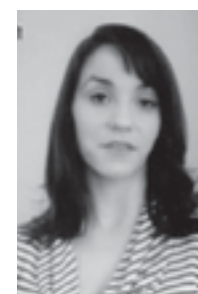
–Meghan McCain, daughter of Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), in an interview on MSNBC, critical of Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum's opposition to gay marriage, http://thenewcivilrights_movement.com, Jan. 06. (On the campaign trail in Manchester, N.H. Santorum suggested it was so important for children to have both a father and mother that an imprisoned father was preferable to a same-sex parent.)



Nancy L. Cohen

“For years we've been told 'it's the economy, stupid.' Iowa showed that 'it's the sex, stupid.' Iowa should put to rest the myth that social issues are unimportant. It's easy for Republican voters to tell pollsters that the economy is their most important issue. But that's only because every candidate has promised the radical anti-abortion and anti-gay activists the world.”

–Nancy L. Cohen, historian, author of the upcoming book, “Delirium: How the Sexual Counterrevolution Is Polarizing America,” quoted in a column titled “It's the sex, stupid,” about the aggressive anti-sex rhetoric of the Republican presidential candidates, www.salon.com, Jan. 07.



Tracy Clark-Flory

“Anti-sex rhetoric is hardly new to the Republican Party, of course, which has routinely campaigned to increase the dangers and consequences of sex by restricting access to contraceptives and abortion. But the GOP war on sex also comes at a time when the party's presidential candidates have perhaps never been more out of step with the sexual beliefs and practices of most Americans. The Republican primaries have been a decidedly unsexy affair.

Candidates have passionately spouted rhetoric against premarital sex, gay sex - even non-procreative sex within marriage. It's enough to make you wonder if the country has gone to the prudes.”

–Tracy Clark-Flory, Salon staff writer, in her column titled “It's the sex, stupid,” about the aggressive anti-sex rhetoric of the Republican presidential candidates, www.salon.com, Jan. 07.

'Moral exception' Senator gives Michigan another black eye

BY SUSAN HOROWITZ

LANSING – A controversy involving Sen. Rick Jones (R-Grand Blanc) is flaring after he called a female public relations executive a “hooker.” On Friday MLIVE.com reported that Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville (R-Monroe) had apologized on behalf of the Senate GOP caucus, though Jones has yet to do so himself claiming it was all meant as “humor.”

Jones is best known by BTL readers as the author of the “moral exception” clause included in antibullying legislation last fall.

Apparently Jones did not enjoy being called out by Kelly Rossman-McKinney, founder of public relations firm Truscott Rossman, who named Jones (along with House Democrats) among her biggest political



Sen. Rick Jones (R-Grand Blanc) photo appeared on tumblr series online

loosers of 2011. Upon learning this, Jones responded in an unsolicited email to MIRS news service writing, “Unfortunately Kelly, like a ‘hooker,’ works for whichever client hires her – policy be damned.”

BTL readers should note that when the 2010 census data came out indicating Ingham

county was the second largest county in Michigan with same-sex couples Jones weighed in saying, “I don’t think all those are same-sex couples. They are probably just friends.”

Readers can find more of Jones’s insights at <http://imrickjones.tumblr.com>.

Traverse City rejects anti-gay bill H.B. 5039

TRAVERSE CITY – Municipalities around Michigan are making known their strong opposition to H.B. 5039 bill introduced last October by republican state Rep. Tom McMillin (Rochester Dist. 45). The bill aims to prohibit local government bodies from expanding non-discrimination laws beyond what is currently spelled out in Michigan’s 1976

civil rights law. It essentially targets any localities that have moved to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. The current Elliot-Larson law fails to protect LGBT citizens and McMillin wants to keep it that way.

On Wednesday, the Traverse City commissioners represent the most recent

municipality in the state to take up a resolution recommended by the city’s Human Rights Commission, opposing H.B. 5039. It passed unanimously. Last November, 63 percent of the city’s voters upheld a nondiscrimination measure that prohibits discrimination in housing and employment.

Dems to hold endorsement convention

LANSING – The Michigan Democratic Party will hold an Endorsement Convention on Saturday, March 10 at Cobo Center in Detroit. Delegates will endorse three candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court and eight candidates for statewide Education Boards.

“This is a great opportunity for candidates to introduce themselves to Democratic activists from around the state and begin meeting the voters,”

MDP Chair Mark Brewer said. “For our activists, it is a great way to kick off the 2012 campaign where are goals are to re-elect President Obama and Sen. Stabenow, add to the Democratic Congressional Delegation, and take back both the State House and the State Supreme Court.”

“The Michigan Supreme Court is one of the most blatantly partisan courts in the country,” added Brewer. “The Court continues to rule in

favor of corporations, insurance companies, oil companies, and drug companies over victims. I’m confident that whomever we endorse on March 10th can help us take back the Court for the people in 2012.”

In order to be eligible to vote at the Convention, delegates must be members of the Michigan Democratic Party at least 30 days in advance or by Feb. 9.

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Parting Glances



Angel Bruce's Platinum Plates

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I'm a skeptic when it comes to Divine Revelations - excepting of course, the OT and NT (King James version), and the final-edited version of Mitt Romney's beloved Book of Mormon.

I was sent the following item by an unknown party, interested only, I'm sure, in my well being and spiritual salvation. (God knows I need it!)

If I seem reticent to be converted that's no doubt because at my advanced age, I hesitate to give up my Post-Stonewall Inn religious beliefs. You, my devout PG readers, are invited nonetheless to judge the news item's spiritual validity for yourself.

What I do find refreshing is that the following message "from on high," delivered by an entity claiming to be Angel Bruce (no relation to the LDS Angel Moroni), is for LGBT worshippers only.

Would you believe it? A revelation translated from recently found platinum plates, and not for sharing with straights, who already have hundreds of religions, cults, and Rebiblican dogmas to choose from. (Religion is a choice, by the way.)

Said platinum plates (no disrespect to American Express) were found hidden in walking distance from a nearby sequestered restroom stall at the Washington Monument.

Under divine inspiration the plates were translated by a former Salvation Army holiday bell ringer turned drag queen, using, so I'm told, an enchanted pair of Gucci gold-rimmed sunglasses (and a cocktail or two) while channeling the lost lingo of Reformed Hieroglyphic Lip-sync. The news item's from DPP, Disassociated Persons Press . . .

Headline: Drag Queen Translates Platinum Plates! Sub headline: Revelation for Gays Only A Sensation!! (Picture: Prophetess Bliss in gold-rimmers grinning radiantly, holding 12 glittering rectangular-shaped plates.)

"Hundreds of devout gay men and a few intrepid so-called dykes are gathering just outside of Roswell, New Mexico, these days to learn about the teachings of a tribe of long lost same-sex inhabitants exiled from Jerusalem for their beliefs and unusual spiritual practices.

"The tribe, called Rainbowites, who seeing the rainbow following Noah's flood, decided it was time for a change, gathered together for mutual support, and following persecution for their private lifestyle, traveled thousands of miles by festooned rafts, eventually settling near what is now Roswell, NM, in about BC 609. Unfortunately, their numbers were decimated by UFO aliens who landed there on their first excursion to that area from outer space.

"The history of the Rainbowites is written upon platinum plates - stolen from one of the crashed UFOs - and this history was 'thankfully preserved', says Prophetess Bliss, 'by a compassionate UFO inhabitant, later known as Angel Bruce. S/he apparently was a closet believer in the Rainbowite holy agenda'.

"In a nutshell, says Prophetess Bliss, the Platinum Plates of Angel Bruce 'teach that same sex partnerships are best for succeeding ages of turmoil, war, and hardships. These partnerships, as long as they are monogamous and not plural, are suited for living in the end times or ongoing last days'".

If interested about the Platinum Plates or joining the Rainbowites, a meeting at your neighborhood LGBT Center is planned for April 1, 2012. (Come hell or high water.)

Charles @pridesource.com

Donna Brazile to deliver keynote at WSU tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.

DETROIT – Renowned political strategist, author and syndicated columnist Donna Brazile will deliver the keynote address during Wayne State University's annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the Max M. Fisher Music Center, located at 3711 Woodward Ave. in Detroit.

A recipient of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's highest award for political achievement, Donna Brazile has worked on every presidential campaign from 1976 through 2000, when she served as campaign manager for former vice president Al Gore, becoming the first African American woman to manage a presidential campaign. She is the vice chair of voter registration and participation for the Democratic National Committee.

"The King tribute gives us an opportunity to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King while celebrating diversity,



Donna Brazile

the arts and the many contributions of our community," said Victor Green, WSU director of community relations. "We are excited to have Ms. Brazile as the keynote speaker. She is a powerful leader whose work personifies the spirit of the King

observance. The 2012 tribute is sure to inspire all who attend."

Net proceeds from the event will support Adopt-A-Classroom, a national organization that empowers teachers with community partners and funds to purchase resources for their classrooms. Wayne State, in partnership with its tribute sponsors, has donated more than \$28,000 to Adopt-A-Classroom over the past four years.

The event includes special recognition of community leaders who exemplify King's goals and philosophy, as well as a performance by the InsideOut Literary Arts Project's Citywide Poets, an award-winning group of high school spoken word artists.

Tickets are \$10 for the program only, or \$65 for the program with strolling luncheon. Parking is free. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit govaffairs.wayne.edu or call 313-577-0701.

► Obit: Bidwell

Continued from p. 7

Bidwell had injected methamphetamine died in Bidwell's Ferndale home as the result of an overdose. Though no charges were filed in the incident, Bidwell soon found himself in the center of a media storm. The local print and television media picked up on the story and anti-gay religious groups carried it across the world.

He resigned from his pastoral position and MCC temporarily suspended his ministerial credentials. Sadly, Bidwell would not live to make penance and see his reputation restored. His health continued to deteriorate and, distraught, he attempted suicide. Bidwell was hospitalized on multiple occasions and

died of organ failure last week.

"Toward the end of his life he struggled with addiction which ultimately led to medical complications," Bidwell's daughter, Amy Dooley, told the Daily Tribune. She recalled her dad as "a fantastic father to my brother and I, and a fantastic grandfather to my two children."

Despite the tragedy of his last days, friends, family and ministerial colleagues all agree that there is no undoing Bidwell's good works, and no denying the impact he made as a champion for gay - and, indeed, human - rights for many, many years.

"There were many good things about Mark before he got in trouble with alcohol and drugs," said Jackie Walker, MCC-D's vice-moderator. "He did a lot for our church. He brought it from shambles in Roseville and built it up to the 150 members we have today."

► ACLU

Continued from p. 4

"It is clear from the statements made by the sponsors of this law that it was motivated by discriminatory animus toward gay and lesbian people. Sponsors of this bill clearly mischaracterized the current state of Michigan law regarding providing health insurance coverage for same-sex domestic partners and offered irresponsible and wildly inaccurate



statements regarding cost savings. Proponents of the law ignore the fact

Berry said that Bidwell deserved to be remembered for his successes and not his shortcomings.

"We place people like Mark on a pedestal because he's done so much and helped so many, and I'd like to keep him there," she said. "I acknowledge that he has some broken places like the rest of us, and I think he lost his way. I really do believe that his heart just couldn't keep beating. He knew he was responsible for a lot of hurts. So I think Heaven took him home.

A memorial service is in the planning stages for Saturday, Jan. 28 at MCCD. Funeral services for Bidwell took place Saturday, Jan. 7 at the Lynch & Sons Funeral Home in Clawson. The family has asked that memorials be made to The Ruth Ellis Center, 77 Victor Street, Highland Park, Michigan 48203.

that public employees pay income taxes on the health insurance premiums for same-sex partners and often contribute to a percentage of the premiums out of their own paychecks," said Kaplan.

Cost is a major concern for Doak Bloss and his partner Gerardo Ascheri of East Lansing as they will pay an additional \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year for individual health insurance coverage. BTL photo: Andrew Potter



From left, KICK Vice President Jeremiah Jones with KICK Executive Director Curtis Lipscomb at the White House Dec. 13, 2011.

Local leaders visit White House

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Each year the President and his family receive guests from all over the world to share in holiday celebrations at the White House. In 2011 there were three receptions and at least two Michigan LGBT community leaders and their guests were selected to make the visit.

KICK founder Curtis Lipscomb and KICK Board Vice President Jeremiah Jones and Equality Michigan Executive Director Denise Brogan-Kator and her partner Mary Kator were both touched by their invitations and their experiences with the First Family.

"The White House was amazing," said Lipscomb. "We were able to come and go through much more of it than I would have thought. My favorite was the Green Room. There was a Green Room and then a Red Room, and in the Green Room you can see the taffeta patterns in the wall. The pictures of past Presidents impressed me as well. There were people like Teddy Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and William Clinton and I wonder if sometimes Obama thinks about where his picture might hang when he leaves office."

Even more amazing, Lipscomb said, was the food. "When I got there I was told this was the best food I'd ever eat in my life and they were right. The First Lady and the President had a wonderful spread. There were so many hor d'ourves, cheeses and breads, and I had beef and fish. And then there was the best eggnog in my life. It was wonderful. The Marine Band did swing jazz interpretations of holiday standards and they were absolutely amazing."

But the best thing about the visit was being able to meet and mingle with "people doing all kinds of work in the private and nonprofit sector, leaders in many communities with different backgrounds. It was an honor to be among them. I met people from the Two Spirits community and I was really surprised to see one of my

favorite comedians Cheryl Underwood there," said Lipscomb.

He had been invited by the Obama for America campaign. His organization, KICK, helps connect African American LGBT people and allies with events, advocacy and discussion groups.

For Brogan-Kator it was the second visit to the White House in 2011, having been there in June for the LGBT Pride Reception, and then again on Dec. 13, 2011 with her partner Mary.

"We were not expecting to meet the President or the First Lady and, instead, were looking forward to seeing the White House all decked out for Christmas," Kator said.

"We were, therefore, surprised when we arrived and were given cards with a time on it for a 'receiving line.' Nevertheless, we spent our time enjoying the White House. The White House was spectacularly decorated - with something like 37 Christmas trees, in total, though we didn't get to see them all. The desserts included a gingerbread replica of the White House and cookies made to look like the first family's dog, Bo.

"We dined in the State Dining Room under the painting of President Lincoln. The food was exquisite.

We were only given just a few seconds with President Obama and the First Lady, just enough to exchange a greeting. I thanked the President for his work for gay and transgender Americans and he asked me where I was from. When I said 'Michigan,' the First Lady looked over and said 'Michigan? We're going to Michigan.' I then stepped over to speak with her and Mary stepped up to speak with the President. He asked her where she was from and she, pointing to me, said "I'm here with my wife; we're from Michigan."

"It is a memory I will always treasure - especially as this President has done more to advance equality for gay and transgender Americans than all other previous presidents combined," said Brogan-Kator.

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Creep of the Week

Rick Santorum (Again!)

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

I'll be frank. I'm tired of writing about Rick Santorum. But the man just cut an incredible anti-gay streak across New Hampshire. Come on, Rick, give the other guys a chance!



Rick Santorum

On Jan. 5 Santorum made the tired same-sex couples getting marriage equals inevitable polygamy argument. Then the next day he told a town hall meeting that marriage was "an essential good," which is why gays can't have it since gays are, you know, essentially bad.

During a campaign speech on Jan. 7 at a private boarding school (I didn't think that kids could vote, but then again maybe rich kids can. Hell, at this point that would not surprise me at all) he actually told the audience that they'd be better off with a dad in jail than with two same-sex parents.

Mind you, he claimed that this "fact" came from an unnamed researcher, but Santorum is still the one who stood in front of a crowd of kids and said it out loud. "[The expert] found that even fathers in jail who had abandoned their kids were still better than no father at all to have in their children's lives," Santorum spewed.

Totally true. Kids with daddies in jail are so lucky. Known fact. Kids with gay parents are soooooo jealous. Especially the three students in the audience who, according to the school's headmaster, have gay parents. Well played, Rick. No doubt these kids will start up some prison pen pal relationships to make up for what is missing in their lives.

Although, Santorum did just

mention missing fathers, so maybe he's just talking about lesbian parents? Maybe having two daddies is okay so long as one of them is in prison? It's all so confusing.

Which is why America must now allow same-sex couples to marry and have kids.

"Marriage is not a right," Santorum said according to the Los Angeles Times. "It's a privilege that is given to society by society for a reason." And that reason? "We want to encourage what is the best for children."

Otherwise we're "robbing children of something they need, they deserve, they have a right to," he said. "You may rationalize that that isn't true, but in your own life

and in your own heart, you know it's true."

Okay, first of all, what does "given to society by society for a reason" even mean? Last time I checked, gays and lesbians are part of society. Santorum likes to talk about "we" and "America" as if gays and lesbians are some shiftless

souls on the outskirts of civilization. Which, to use Santorum's own words, requires quite a bit of rationalizing.

Far more rationalizing than being able to admit that gay and lesbian parents are raising lots of kids who are doing just fine. Better than fine, even. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a kid with two loving, committed parents is pretty fortunate. Even if both of those parents are moms or dads. And especially if neither is having their cellmate ink a teardrop on their face with a tattoo gun fashioned out of a Bic pen, toothbrush, and a guitar string.



Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum speaks to supporters following his come-from-behind photo finish tie with Mitt Romney, the former Massachusetts governor. Photo: Facebook.com/Rick Santorum.

Santorum success in Iowa likely to increase gay-related debate

BY LISA KEEN

The Republican presidential field's most anti-gay candidate scored big Tuesday night when he landed in a virtual tie for first place in the Iowa caucuses with the candidate who has been seen by the media as the party's most viable candidate against President Obama.

Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, who took numerous opportunities in his campaign to espouse his opposition to equal rights for LGBT people, secured just eight votes fewer than former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, out of about 60,000 cast for the two men. Each won 25 percent of the 122,000 votes cast for seven candidates, in what may be the closest Republican caucus race in history. The final result was not announced by the

state Republican Party until after 1 a.m. Iowa time.

"[N]o other candidate has made opposing basic rights for LGBT Americans such a guiding principle of his or her public life," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign.

U.S. Rep. Ron Paul of Texas came in third, with 21 percent of the caucus votes. U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia followed in fourth place, garnering 13 percent. Texas Governor Rick Perry took 10 percent of the vote in fifth place, followed by U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota in sixth place with five percent of the vote.

Openly gay candidate Fred Karger did not compete in the Iowa caucuses. The field's only candidate supportive of legal recognition of same-sex relationships (albeit through

civil unions only), former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, claimed less than one percent of the vote.

Although an Iowa victory is an important symbolic victory, especially in the eyes of the media, it does not secure any of the state's eventual 25 delegates to the Republican national convention.

Also, polls nationally and in other key states suggest Santorum still has an uphill battle for the nomination. The latest national poll, by Gallup, showed Santorum in fifth place with only six percent of support from 1,000 Republican voters surveyed. Romney led the field with 24 percent. The poll was conducted from December 26 to January 2.

A CNN poll of New Hampshire voters on Tuesday night after Santorum's success was apparent, showed an increase in support for

Santorum - to 10 percent, twice what it was in late December. But Romney held fast to his 47 percent of the New Hampshire support, Paul held onto 17 percent, and Huntsman held onto 13 percent.

Santorum's success in Iowa will probably bring increased attention and support for his passionately proclaimed anti-gay views. Those views and his toughly stated opposition to abortion appeared to fuel his strong showing in the caucuses. A CNN entrance poll indicated that 84 percent of those participating described themselves as either "very conservative" (47 percent) or "somewhat conservative" (37 percent). The majority of those participants (54 percent) voted for Santorum. Fifty-seven percent of participants also described themselves as "white evangelical/born-again Christians." And 32 percent of those supported Santorum.

The most important issue for Santorum supporters in Iowa, was abortion, according to CNN. CNN apparently did not ask about same-sex marriage on the entrance poll. For Romney supporters, it was the economy.

One CNN commentator, Gloria Borger, suggested Santorum's ascension might draw Romney into more discussions about social issues, including same-sex marriage.

Santorum, onstage with a large crowd of supporters, thanked his wife Karen, God, and Iowa. He said "rights come to us from God," he talked about the need for "a plan that includes everyone," and he talked about the "dignity of every human life." He said that "when the family breaks down, the economy struggles." But, despite repeatedly emphasizing his opposition to same-sex marriage throughout his campaign, Santorum did not mention his definition of marriage as being "one man and one woman."

Romney, onstage with his wife and four of his sons, congratulated Santorum for his success and noted, at 12:40 a.m. Wednesday, that he did not yet know what the final result would be. (Two percent of the vote was yet to be counted, and Romney was leading by only 41 votes. Before he finished his speech, Santorum was leading by five votes.) Romney said nothing about same-sex marriage either, and said "freedom is a gift from God."

Santorum, who polled near the bottom of the field with only single-digit support for months

on end, jumped ahead in the polls in the last few days before the caucus. Bob Vander Platts, one of the leaders against same-sex marriage in Iowa, reportedly took some credit for Santorum's surge, which started about a week after Vander Platts'

Santorum, who polled near the bottom of the field with only single-digit support for months on end, jumped ahead in the polls in the last few days before the caucus. Bob Vander Platts, one of the leaders against same-sex marriage in Iowa, reportedly took some credit for Santorum's surge, which started about a week after Vander Platts' group, The Family Leader, endorsed him..

group, The Family Leader, endorsed Santorum.

Both national and local media gave much credit to Santorum's decision to campaign in every one of Iowa's 99 counties for his victory. And the Des Moines Register pre-caucus poll indicated that Santorum's supporters showed a greater likelihood of showing up at the caucuses (76 percent) than those of other candidates.

More than 40 percent of Iowa Republicans were undecided going into the caucuses.

In remarks after most media declared him the third place candidate in Iowa, U.S. Rep. Ron Paul emphasized the importance of staying faithful to the constitution and limiting government interference in private lives.

Perry, Bachman

Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who went onstage with just his wife and three kids, mostly read from a letter from a supporter. .

An unusually low-key Rep. Michele Bachmann vowed to continue her campaign, but she, too, read her remarks to the crowd, including a reiteration of her promise of "protecting marriage between one man and one woman." On Wednesday morning, Bachmann announced the end of her campaign and Perry vowed to continue into South Carolina..

Openly gay candidate Fred Karger did not compete in the Iowa caucuses, saying he knew the turnout would be "mostly social conservatives" and that his strongholds of

support there, the colleges, were not in session.

Karger was in New Hampshire Tuesday night, where he has been campaigning for months. He said that, regardless of how he does in New Hampshire's primary, Jan. 10, "I'll

absolutely stay in all primaries and caucuses."

Democrats happy with Santorum, GOProud ignores him

CNN commentator Al Sharpton said Santorum's success in the race is good for Democrats.

"As long as a Santorum is in the race, Romney's going to have to keep playing to the right," said Sharpton, "and the longer he has to debate and stay to the right, he loses the middle."

Log Cabin Republicans Executive Director

R. Clarke Cooper issued a statement early Jan. 4 saying that Romney was "one of the best" of the Republican candidates in Iowa on issues affecting LGBT Americans.

"By contrast," said Cooper, "Senator Santorum rose by appealing to a uniquely socially conservative electorate. The divisive social issue politics which helped Santorum's campaign in Iowa will only hurt him in New Hampshire and beyond as voters learn more about his record. Winning the White House will require the politics of addition, not division."

"If using gay and lesbian Americans as a wedge can't score enough political points to win more than 25 percent in Iowa," said Cooper, "it certainly won't help the Republican nominee in November."

Jimmy LaSalvia, head of GOProud, a national gay conservative group, issued a statement that ignored Santorum's success in Iowa. Instead, LaSalvia praised Romney and Paul on taking "two of the three top spots in Iowa" and said, "It is clear that the message of economic renewal and limited government is resonating with Republican voters."

"While there are certainly big differences between Governor Romney and Congressman Paul, especially when it comes to foreign policy," said LaSalvia, "both chose to emphasize issues like the economy and the size of government over demonizing gay people. We are pleased to see that so many Republicans in Iowa are focused on the issues that unite us as conservatives, instead of the side show issues."

Candidates challenged on gay rights

CONCORD, New Hampshire (AP) – The Republican presidential candidates are being challenged on gay rights.

In a nationally televised debate Sunday, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was queried on comments he made in 1994 saying he would be a voice for gay rights in the Republican Party.

Romney stood by those words, saying he did not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and that a member of his cabinet

had been gay.

Romney says he has never supported same-sex marriage.

Rival Rick Santorum says he believes in respect and dignity for all people but reiterated his opposition to gay marriage and adoptions by gay parents.

The former senator from Pennsylvania is an outspoken social conservative and has made opposition to abortion and gay marriage central to his campaign.

Follow the GOP presidential campaign online at www.pridesource.com

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NJ Dems ID gay marriage bill

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) – Democratic leaders in the Senate and Assembly say sending the governor a gay marriage bill will be a top priority in the new legislative session.

The leaders gathered Monday to announce a push to make New Jersey the seventh state to recognize same-sex

marriage.

The bill failed in the Senate two years ago. But Senate President Steve Sweeney, who didn't vote for it then and has regretted it since, says he'll work diligently to correct the mistake.

Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver says her house is fully on board.

Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican, has said he's no fan of same-sex marriage.

Democrats don't enjoy veto-proof majorities in either house. So Christie could ignore the bill if it reaches his desk, which would allow it to become law without his signature.

WA lawmakers to look at marriage

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) – Lawmakers convened a new legislative session Monday with the main task of closing a roughly \$1 billion budget shortfall.

The House and Senate have just 60 days to weigh budget cuts and a potential sales tax increase.

Gov. Chris Gregoire proposed spending cuts that included a shortened school year, the elimination of social services for thousands of low-income

residents, and the early release of some prisoners.

Lawmakers will also address major social issues, including gay marriage and marijuana legalization.

Gregoire renewed a broader discussion on same-sex marriage as she publicly announced her support last week and said she'd be pushing for legislation to be passed in the coming months.

In the House, Speaker Frank Chopp, D-Seattle, included same-sex marriage in a

list of priorities during a speech on Monday on the floor.

"I respect that there are strong views on both sides of this issues, but this is the right time to be fair to people - and choose equality," Chopp said.

Chopp also said his caucus is focused on creating jobs, funding basic education, saving the state's safety net and providing opportunity through higher education.

Attorney General announces revisions to Report's definition of rape

Data on rape to better reflect state criminal codes, victim experiences

WASHINGTON, DC - Attorney General Eric Holder announced Jan. 6. revisions to the Uniform Crime Report's definition of rape, which will lead to a more comprehensive statistical reporting of rape nationwide. The new definition is more inclusive, better reflects state criminal codes and focuses on the various forms of sexual penetration understood to be rape. The new definition of rape is: "The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." The definition is used by the FBI to collect information from local law enforcement agencies about reported rapes.

"Rape is a devastating crime and we can't solve it unless we know the full extent of it," said Vice President Biden, a leader in the effort to end violence against women for over 20 years and author of the landmark Violence Against Women Act. "This long-awaited change to the definition of rape is a victory for women and men across the country whose suffering has gone unaccounted for over 80 years."

"These long overdue updates to

the definition of rape will help ensure justice for those whose lives have been devastated by sexual violence and reflect the Department of Justice's commitment to standing with rape victims," Attorney General Holder said. "This new, more inclusive definition will provide us with a more accurate understanding of the scope and volume of these crimes."

The revised definition includes any gender of victim or perpetrator, and includes instances in which the victim is incapable of giving consent because of temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity, including due to the influence of drugs or alcohol or because of age. The ability of the victim to give consent must be determined in accordance with state statute. Physical resistance from the victim is not required to demonstrate lack of consent. The new definition does not change federal or state criminal codes or impact charging and prosecution on the local level.

"The revised definition of rape sends an important message to the broad range of rape victims that they are supported and to perpetrators that they will be held accountable," said Justice Department

Director of the Office on Violence Against Women Susan B. Carbon. "We are grateful for the dedicated work of all those involved in making and implementing the changes that reflect more accurately the devastating crime of rape."

The longstanding, narrow definition of forcible rape, first established in 1927, is "the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will." It thus included only forcible male penile penetration of a female vagina and excluded oral and anal penetration; rape of males; penetration of the vagina and anus with an object or body part other than the penis; rape of females by females; and, non-forcible rape.

Police departments submit data on reported crimes and arrests to the UCR. The UCR data are reported nationally and used to measure and understand crime trends. In addition, the UCR program will also collect data based on the historical definition of rape, enabling law enforcement to track consistent trend data until the statistical differences between the old and new definitions are more fully understood.

The Power of *Pariah*



Focus Features

Star, out director talk coming-of-age film – and how other LGBT teens can relate

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Just a girl looking for her place in the world isn't an all-too-uncommon tale. But Alike is black. And gay.

It's a minority double whammy that singles out the Brooklyn teen from the rest of the world, so she seeks acceptance in gay bars – and, because she's not definite in her identity, doesn't find it. Alike (pronounced “ah-lee-kay”) is the epitome of a “Pariah,” the name of out director Dee Rees' personal – and very powerful – indie film. A hit on the festival circuit, opening Jan. 20 at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak, Rees' real-life-inspired story finds the universal thread in navigating Alike's journey to self-actualization and the power of loving yourself first.

Rees and Adepero Oduye, who plays Alike, spoke recently about their advice to LGBT teens, getting into character at a lesbian bar and the reason “My Neck, My Back (Lick It)” was perfectly inappropriate for the film.

How would you break down “Pariah” and the character of Alike?

Dee Rees: It's just, of course, a story about identity. Alike's a woman who knows she loves women, and is sure in that, but her struggle is how to be. Her struggle is a more nuanced struggle of gender identity within the queer community. She's not the same person that (her friend) Laura is, neither is she this pink princess that her mother wants her to be. She falls somewhere in between. Finding the courage to carve out that space is her journey. It's a story that people will be able to relate to.

Adepero Oduye: It's a very specific story, but it's so universal. You don't have to be young, black or gay to get something from this film, and, since Sundance, that's what we've been seeing from these screenings and Q&As. For people who are either black or gay, I think they're excited to see themselves reflected up on the screen. That's always powerful and exciting.

What's your advice to young people who, like Alike, are struggling with their sexuality?

DR: That it's OK to be yourself; that people can change. When I went through my coming out process, even though I was an adult – I was paying my own bills, I was independent – but my parents weren't accepting, and we had a tough time for a couple of years. I never thought they would turn around, but they saw this film and said they loved me and that they were proud of me.

So people can actually change, and in the interim, find other people who love you. During that time is when I found the closest friends in my life now. Maybe I wouldn't have been open to those friendships if I hadn't been going through such a tough time. It was an experience that transformed me.

AO: Yeah, the process of accepting and loving yourself is the most important thing. If you can do that and find people who support that, it's amazing what will happen when you get to a place where you truly do love and accept yourself. People will turn around and things – they might be challenging and the road might be a bit rocky – but they will get better.

Dee, the hardest part of coming out for you was finding acceptance within the gay community. You struggled with finding your place, right?

DR: Yeah, when I first came out it was weird. I would go to the clubs and have on a turtle neck and jeans, and I felt like I wasn't hard enough to be butch, and then I wasn't soft enough to be femme. So I'd go and felt ignored – and like I needed to identify a certain way. Other women I met who were like me were different on the gender identity spectrum, too.

I think the community is more open to this idea that we don't have to check a box, we don't have to create these binary roles from hetero culture, and so that for me was an opening experience. I've met a lot of women along the way who feel free to express themselves however is authentic for them, and that's what I had to discover and what Alike, in this movie, comes to discover.

So you don't believe in labels, and neither does Alike.

DR: No, no. This film is about not checking a box and not having a label. To the extent that someone identifies and feels a certain way, absolutely feel free to call yourself whatever is true for you, but it's also OK not to.

How did Dee's coming out experience inform your character, Adepero?

AO: We just talked. She made it very clear that anything I had on my mind I could ask her. I asked a whole bunch of questions and she was

very awesome at answering and talking about things that, I don't know, might not have been super comfortable (both laugh). But I never got that sense, because I just kept on asking! Doing that developed this relationship based on trust, which allowed me to go to places that aren't necessarily the most comfortable as an actor and just as a person.

What question made you most uncomfortable, Dee?

DR: (Both laugh) I don't remember. Oh god. I think, you know, we talked about Alike's level of sexual experience and that Alike is a virgin and how she might be feeling and I don't know – there was nothing that was totally uncomfortable. I mean, as an actress I'm asking her to do something that's very uncomfortable. It's probably more uncomfortable to do it on camera, to really expose herself, so I had no right to be uncomfortable because I'm asking so much more. You can't ask your actors to open up if you can't open up with them.

How did you find those feelings of pain and isolation, and that journey to self-acceptance, in the character of Alike?

AO: That process of accepting and loving yourself and not fitting in and just wanting to break away from all the expectations that people put on you, I wanted to clear up all of that and really figure out who I am and what I want to be. I really just related to all of that. I felt like I didn't belong, so that's what I

Book Marks

BY RICHARD LABONTE



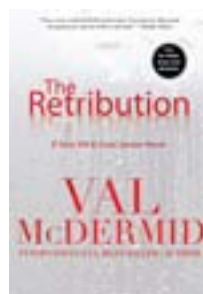
"98 Wounds," by Justin Chin. Manic D Press, 122 pages, \$14.95 paper.

Fierce. Funny. Filthy. Chin's fiction debut – after memoirs, poetry collections and performance scripts, six books in all – is a mesmerizing mashup, in 11 interconnected stories, of sex and excess, drug highs and emotional lows, heartache and hilarity. All in maybe 40,000 words, a marvel of compression, a short novel packed with wit, defiance and desperation. On the surface, Chin is a jokester, his narrator dropping flawless gems of absurdist imagery. Like: Being clawed to death by pandas could be the cutest death ever. And: Cum has the consistency of "the unnamed white stuff that you might find on tables in vegetarian restaurants." But, beneath the humor, beyond the irony, Chin's narrator is a man baffled by love, striving for connection, learning how to evade demons and to appreciate, oh, two-ply toilet paper, the nature of cats and "time of my own." At his most depraved, the narrator exults in excreta – "Snow" may be too much for readers with over-refined sensibilities.

At his most elegiac, he transforms a monstrous world into something lustrous and vulnerable.

"Fit to Serve: Reflections on a Secret Life, Private Struggle, and Public Battle to Become the First Openly Gay U.S. Ambassador," by Ambassador James C. Hormel and Erin Martin. Skyhorse Publishing, 288 pages, \$24.95 hardcover.

The title almost says it all: Hormel's memoir is indeed about closeted life, ending a marriage and a seven-year battle with Republican homophobes on the way to representing the United States in the tiny nation of Luxembourg. But there's much more to the man from SPAM (the lunch meat that made the Hormel clan wealthy, always capitalized in the book). After coming out, the father of five (he remained close to his ex-wife and kids) plunged into 1970s antiwar activism and the push for gay rights. It's a passionate, activist side to the man's life that most readers might not know about, overshadowed as it has been by his philanthropic endeavors. These include the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library, an affiliation with which his opponents pilloried him when his diplomatic appointment was announced by President Clinton, accusing him of perversion on the basis of images culled from the library's collection. Now nearing 80, Hormel caps a spirited, affecting life story with an account of how he came to love a man who is more than 50 years younger.



"The Retribution," by Val McDermid. Atlantic Monthly Press, 416 pages, \$25 hardcover.

Serial killers don't get any nastier than sociopath Jacko Vance, "killer of 17 teenage girls...and once voted the sexiest man in British TV." He committed his crimes in

McDermid's 1997 novel "The Wire in the Blood," where clinical psychologist Tony Hill and Detective Chief Inspector Carol Jordan hunted him down. Twelve years later he has escaped from prison, ready to wreak sadistic havoc on the people who put him away – including his ex-wife, now in a loving relationship with a woman. Vance, whose ruthless venality knows no bounds, is on a killing spree that for most of this chilling thriller confounds Hill and Jordan. At the same time, Jordan is investigating the deaths of several prostitutes, even as a cost-cutting superior sets out to dismantle her special squad, the Major Incident Team, and as her fragile relationship with Hill – both personal and professional – begins to unravel. McDermid juggles these several plotlines with cold-blooded, relentless brilliance in this seventh novel featuring the investigative duo (and her twenty-fifth novel in 25 years).

"Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader," by Gayle S. Rubin. Duke University Press, 480 pages, \$27.95 paper.

Over almost four decades, pioneering theorist

and activist Rubin has challenged feminist orthodoxy, laid new foundations for critical thinking about gender and sexuality, and galvanized the early years of an emerging academic discipline, queer theory. This reader collects several of her seminal essays, including 1975's "The Traffic in Women," broadly about the sexual and economic subordination of women, and 1984's "Thinking Sex," an exploration of how some sexual behaviors are seen as natural and others are considered unnatural, with added value to the reprints – Rubin includes fresh "afterthoughts" and "reflections" following both pieces. Much of the writing is seriously scholarly, but Rubin opens with a sprightly introduction that mixes the personal with the professorial. And she doesn't shy away from settling feminist-war scores – in "Blood Under the Bridge," published in 2010, she focuses on the infamous Barnard Sex Conference of 1982, where strident anti-pornography activists protested Rubin's presence, based on distortions of her writing about S/M, butch/femme relationships and porn. This reader is an exemplary introduction, for younger queers, to an influential and accessible intellect.

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Richard Labonte has been reading, editing, selling, and writing about queer literature since the mid-'70s. He can be reached in care of this publication, or at BookMarks@qsyndicate.com.

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More venues, more concerts, more volunteers and more participating cities are on tap for this year's Blues & Music Festival. All proceeds go toward two local

charities: Ferndale Youth Assistance (www.ferndaleyouthassistance.org) and Michigan AIDS Coalition (www.michiganaidcoalition.org). Venues include bars, nightclubs, restaurants, comedy clubs, coffeehouses, churches, schools and community centers. More than 25,000 people are expected to attend the events.

All contributions, donations and sponsorships are tax deductible under federal IRS regulations. The Blues & Music Festival is supported by the City of Ferndale, the Ferndale DDA, Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, Oakland County Youth Assistance, MAC, elected officials, and numerous community organizations and media outlets.

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Local queens face-off in "Battle of the Dragons." Photo: Eye Daring Photography

Drag face-off to benefit LGBT community

BY ANDREA POTEET

Like many young girls, Kelly Garcia grew up with an interest in makeup.

But for Garcia, the interest developed into a passion in an unlikely way – when the Detroit-area dancer was approached by friends who were in need of a third drag queen for their monthly drag show, Fiebra Latina.

“They said, ‘How about we teach you the choreography and you do this show with us? We’ll dress you up like a drag queen, we’ll do your hair and makeup; you’ll lip-synch and dance,’” Garcia says. “And that’s where it started.”

What began as a single gig turned into a passion, she says, and Garcia’s performed with the group for the past eight months.

“It stuck with me since then,” she says. “I love the hair, I love the makeup. I love the illusion and the choreography.”

But when Garcia injured her knee during a performance with the group several months ago, she feared her dancing

career was over. Instead of moping, Garcia said she used the injury as a catalyst to give back to the LGBT community that had given her so much. She began pooling her excess energy into creating a cosmetics line geared toward LGBTs.

“Whether it’s a man, whether it’s a woman – whether it’s a half woman, half man – it doesn’t matter who you are, what you are,” Garcia says. “If you want to be creative, if you want to enhance your beauty, we should be able to provide something for them.”

And to kick off her line, Top Secret Cosmetics, she’s going back to her roots with a drag show and competition christened “Battle of the Dragons.” She said she was inspired by the competitive spirit she sees among drag queens, the same spirit she sees in other mythological creatures.

“When I think of drag, I think of extravagance, I think ‘fierce,’” Garcia says. “When you look at drag queens, everything is over the top, and they are

very competitive. I want to take the whole typical pageant to another level. Let’s make it a battle, let’s make it a little more aggressive. Let’s have a battle of the dragons.”

The event, scheduled for 8 p.m. Jan 20 at the Majestic Theater in Detroit, will feature six drag queens battling it out for the chance to be the cosmetic line’s new face and \$1,000 in cash and prizes.

Four judges will pick from the contestants, scouted through two Detroit casting calls, as they model looks from Ivy’s Corsets and their own designs.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the American Foundation for Children with AIDS, a cause the single mother says is close to her heart.

“I believe in my dream and I work hard to make my dreams come true,” Garcia says, “but at the same time, I don’t forget about the others. I want to help the LGBT community, and I want to help children that are in need. And I believe it’s about time someone did that.”



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Focus Features

► Pariah

Continued from p. 15

brought to the table.

What was going to a lesbian club for research like?

AO: We just had to show up to this club in character, so me and Pernell (Walker), who plays Laura, met up at this club. Dee was watching us, not interacting with us at all, and just dropped me into this world, specifically Alike's world. And how uncomfortable! I didn't fit in, and no one paid attention to me because I wasn't butch or super femme. I felt invisible. I felt like I was on the outside looking in. I felt like I was pressing my nose against this bubble.

Tell me, Dee, about the song you chose for that opening scene in the club, Khia's "My Neck, My Back (Lick It)."

DR: My first time at a lesbian club, when I first came out, I was like, "Oh my god, I'm going to hell." And so for this film, it was very important that the first song be very provocative. Just as Alike is pushed into this hypersexual environment, so are we. So she's uncomfortable, we're uncomfortable and we're immersed in her perspective and feelings.

Do you think Alike's mom, Audrey, is a bully?

DR: Audrey (Kim Wayans) doesn't intend to be. From her perspective, she's just trying to do what's right by her daughter. She's just misguided. She really wants to connect with Alike and buy her dresses, but there's this growing distance and she's not sure how to connect, so she doesn't mean to be. She's just a lonely, vulnerable person who wants love, and with everything she does she ends up bringing about the very thing she's trying to avoid. So she doesn't mean to bully Alike. She's trying to love her, and sometimes love can be misguided. People are flawed.

One choice she makes, to separate her from Laura and unite her with a colleague's daughter, actually works against her. The girl fosters Alike's sexual becoming.

DR: Yes, I thought it would be ironic. I think that in life we sometimes bring about the very things we try to avoid. So by steering Alike from Laura, whom she feels is not the kind of friend she wants

her daughter to hang out with, and turning her to Bina, she actually brings about Alike's sexual consummation and the experience she's been trying to steer her away from. That's the irony.

Before the feature film, "Pariah" was a short in 2007. What initially drew you to Alike?

AO: I just felt it was going to be this really awesome experience, so I wanted to be part of it. I submitted myself to be an extra, not to be the lead, and I got the call from Dee to read for Alike. Call backs and call backs later, I got the role. It was just so exciting to sink my teeth into a character that was very meaty.

You've done extra roles before: You were the "Crack Smoker," as listed on IMDB, in Ryan Gosling's "Half Nelson."

AO: (Laughs) Yeah! That's not what my role was called when I got it, but I was like, "Oh, they changed it... to 'Crack Smoker.' Thanks!"

What's next for you, Dee?

DR: I finished a script called "Bolo," set in the South. It's more a thriller but still a chance to explore interesting characters and worlds. And another spec script called "Large Print," about a 50-something interest investor who's recently divorced and living in another continent and having to redefine happiness for himself. I just want to tell stories that are meaningful and get people to think about themselves and the world differently.

How about the HBO project with Viola Davis? Can you say anything about that?

DR: I can't! I'm just excited about it and thrilled to be working with this amazing actress and, again, I think this is going to be another character people are going to be interested in.

Adepero, I imagine this character isn't going away any time soon. What parts of Alike will stay with you?

AO: Oh, no, no. It will always be an absolute pleasure to be associated with that character. I think it's Alike's resilience. She just never gave up; she tries, gets knocked down and tries again. She, at a young age, makes the choice to live the life that she wants to live. That will always stay with me.

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Out of Town

Maui, Lanai and Molokai

BY ANDREW COLLINS

Arguably the most glamorous of Hawaii's islands, Maui is home to some of the state's swankiest resorts and acclaimed restaurants. It's a favorite with visitors in search of lazy beach naps, leisurely laps in the pool and soothing spa treatments. But don't let the island's cushy reputation fool you into thinking it lacks history, culture and an impressive variety of rugged outdoor adventures. Maui vacations can be as unhurried or as thrilling as you choose.

Home to the largest gay and lesbian resort in Hawaii (the Maui Sunseeker) as well as dozens of welcoming B&Bs, inns, condos and full-service resorts, Maui is often the first island visitors experience after Oahu. Although lacking Honolulu's nightlife, this easy-going, moderately developed island is well suited to couples, families and groups of friends.

Plenty of visitors stay at one resort and visit Maui for five to seven days. But if you're hoping to get to know the island's diverse elements, split your time among two or three areas, and spend at least 10 days, perhaps tacking on a day or two on the quiet, underrated and remarkable neighbor islands of Lanai and Molokai.

Maui

Geographically made up of two soaring volcanic peaks connected by a largely agricultural valley, Maui (www.gohawaii.com/maui) is the second largest of the Hawaiian islands, home to about 145,000 permanent residents. The majority of the 2.5 million visitors who arrive annually stay on the sunny and comparatively arid leeward coasts of Maui's two halves, which include the historic fishing port of Lahaina, the modern Kaanapali and Kapalua resort areas, the ritzy Wailea resorts, and the more reasonably priced town of Kihei.

You'll find a good mix of mid-priced to high-end resorts up around Kaanapali and Kapalua – good picks include the Hyatt Regency (maui.hyatt.com), Westin Maui (www.westinmaui.com), Outrigger Maui Eldorado (www.outrigger.com), and Ritz-Carlton Kapalua (www.ritzcarlton.com).

In Wailea, which is close to the famously gay-popular clothing-optional Little Beach at Makena, you'll find such sumptuous accommodations as the Four Seasons Maui (www.fourseasons.com/maui), Grand Wailea (www.grandwailea.com), and Fairmont Kea Lani (www.fairmont.com/kealani). Just a few miles north, Kihei contains several gay-oriented lodging, including the aforementioned Maui Sunseeker (www.mauisunseeker.com), a stylish boutique resort catering mostly to gay men and lesbians. Other good GLBT bets in Kihei include the elegant Pineapple Inn (www.pineappleinnmaui.com) and the affordable, whimsically furnished Two Mermaids (www.twomermaids.com).

Strike out beyond Maui's leeward shores to



Maui's Makena Beach is a favorite haunt of the island's gay community. Photo: Andrew Collins

discover some of the most diverse and dramatic scenery in all of Hawaii, including the Upcountry, situated along the slopes of 10,023-foot Mt. Haleakala, and home to the quirky ranching and farming towns of Kula and Makawao. Be sure to budget a few hours to drive to the peak of Haleakala's summit, which lies within the national park of the same name.

Along the breezy windward coast, you can drive the famously curvy and narrow road to Hana, which passes through verdant rainforests and beside gushing waterfalls. Return by way of the rugged Piilani Highway from Hana around West Maui's "back side," and the road hugs sheer sea cliffs and cuts across sweeping plains strewn with jagged lava-rock formations. If at all possible, plan for an overnight in Hana. Here you can stay at the historic, unpretentious, and wonderfully charming Travaasa Hana Hotel (www.travaasa.com/hana) – if it's a special occasion, splurge for a room in this boutique resort's secluded, adult-oriented Sea Cottages section. You'll also find a handful of B&Bs in this laid-back village blessed with spectacular beaches, including the affordable, gay-owned Hana Accommodations (www.hana-maui.com).

Even Maui's main untouristy administrative center and county seat, Wailuku, has a cool historical museum, the Bailey House; and some great little hole-in-the-wall restaurants (Tiffany's, Tokyo Tei, Ba-Le Sandwiches); and it's the gateway to the breathtaking Iao Valley. For an insider's perspective on local dining, book a half-day trip through Tour da Food, whose knowledgeable guides Bonnie and Jill lead delicious culinary tours in Wailuku and Upcountry Maui.

Maui has several businesses with strong GLBT ties. You can book a massage, either in your hotel room or at a lovely on-site studio overlooking the ocean, from Relax Therapeutic Massage, whose owner Marty Guerriero is one of the most talented massage therapists on the island. Gay-owned No Ka Oi Adventures leads exceptionally fun and engaging custom half- and full-day tours around

Maui – including trips around West Maui, along the road to Hana, and snorkeling off of Makena's lava-fringed shores. Acclaimed local Chef Raja, who competed on TV's "Extreme Chef" in 2011, is your go-to for planning a romantic meal or small dinner party. He's especially popular with those planning gay weddings or commitment ceremonies. On that note, Hawaii's new same-sex civil union law went into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, and long-running Gay Hawaii Wedding can help couples plan their nuptials on Maui.

The island abounds with terrific restaurants, many of them at the big resorts, such as Ko at Fairmont Kea Lani, Spago at the Four Seasons, and Gannon's at Grand Wailea. Locally renowned chef Peter Merriman's hip Monkeypod Kitchen, in a shopping center at the Wailea Resort, is one of the hottest new spots on the island, as is Star Noodle, the stylish Pan-Asian eatery up in Lahaina, which is also home to the first-rate Lahaina Grill and I'o Restaurant. A few other culinary highlights on Maui include Market Fresh Bistro in Makawao, Cafe Mambo in Paia, and Izakaya Matsu in Kihei. For nightlife, the sophisticated but friendly Ambrosia lounge is popular with GLBT patrons, especially on Sunday nights.

Lanai

The gently sloping, conical island of Lanai (www.gohawaii.com/lanai) is clearly visible from the western shores of Maui, especially from Kaanapali and Lahaina – passenger ferries run regularly from the pier in Lahaina to Lanai, and the island also has regularly scheduled flights from Maui and Oahu. Just 140 square miles, this is the smallest of Hawaii's primary islands, and historically it was known for its massive pineapple plantation industry.

Although it's still a low-keyed, mostly undeveloped island, Lanai has become increasingly popular with jetsetters thanks to its pair of stunning Four Seasons resorts, the historic

Lodge at Koele (www.fourseasons.com/koele), which is nestled beneath groves of Cook pine trees in the cool upcountry, and the seaside Manele Bay Hotel (www.fourseasons.com/manelebay), which fringes spectacular beaches and is renowned for snorkeling, golf, spa treatments, and relaxation.

Take some time to stroll around tiny Lanai City, which has a few intriguing galleries and shops and is also home to a less pricey and quite special boutique inn and restaurant, the Hotel Lanai (www.hotellanai.com).

Molokai

Although it's significantly larger than Lanai (about a third the size of Maui), the tranquil island of Molokai (www.gohawaii.com/Molokai) receives very few visitors and is sparsely populated, with just 7,400 residents. But it's also home to one of the most remarkable cultural attractions in the country, the colony of Kalaupapa, a peninsula physically cut off from the rest of Molokai by a wall of sheer sea cliffs, among the highest in the world. Hawaiians afflicted with Hansen's Disease (leprosy) were tragically exiled to Kalaupapa from the 1860s through the 1960s. Although a handful of survivors still reside in this community, much of it is now a national historic site, and visitors can tour the two villages. The exciting part is getting there: you must either hike or ride mules down (and later back up) a daunting, 1,700-foot trail of muddy steps and switchbacks.

Even beyond Kalaupapa, Molokai is rich in spectacular scenery. There's a scenic drive around the eastern half of the island, from which trails lead into the stunning Halawa Valley. And on the island's dry, sunny western side, you'll find some beautiful beaches. The airport in Molokai is served by several flights a day from neighbor islands. Once you get here, it's best to rent a car, as distances are considerable.

The island has just one major hotel, the very gay-welcoming Aqua Hotel Molokai (www.hotelmolokai.com/), a fairly basic complex of '70s A-frame bungalows, although the rooms have been comfortably updated. The hotel is also home to one of the only full-service restaurants on the island, an open-air space overlooking the small beach. The Hotel Molokai acts as one of the island's main social hubs, as there's live music in the evening. The easy pace and friendly mix of locals and visitors makes for a striking contrast with hotels on the other islands.

Elsewhere, your best bets for dining are Kamuela Cookhouse, which serves up tasty grilled seafood and prime rib, and Molokai Drive-in for burgers. The Molokai Coffee Plantation serves rich and robust brews using beans grown on the island. And for breakfast or lunch, don't miss Kanemitsu Bakery. Each evening, after the bakery has officially closed, hungry diners line up at a takeout window in the back alley to procure "hot bread." The disturbingly enormous loaves of chewy, rich bread are doused with butter, cinnamon, jams, and other toppings. It's the sort of offbeat tradition that captures Molokai's quirky, small-town vibe.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website GayTravel.About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

'Nunset Boulevard' is habit-ual fun



Stephanie Wahl, Jeanne Tinker and Bambi Jones in "Nunset Boulevard" at Meadow Brook Theatre. Photo: Dan Goggin

BY JOHN QUINN

My college literature professor, Theophilus Punoval, related that author Samuel Johnson considered the pun the "lowest form of humor." Clearly neither the good doctor nor the professor ever caught an episode of "Two and a Half Men," but I digress. Puns can not only be funny (punny?), they can be satisfyingly descriptive. I mean, what can be more apt than a Muppet-inspired character named Sister Mary Annette? (Say it out loud. You'll catch on.)

Consider also the title of Dan Goggin's 1985 hit, "Nunsense." The musical is silly, superficial and a strain on your suspension of disbelief. But all this nonsense rolled up impressive box office numbers, and "Nunsense" is the second-longest running off-Broadway production, surpassed only by "The Fantastiks." It's spawned a number of sequels; the latest, "Nunset Boulevard," leads off the New Year at Meadow Brook Theatre.

In "Nunsense," the surviving members of the Little Sisters of Hoboken Convent at Mount St. Helen's Parish staged a variety show to raise funds. Since then, the stage-struck quintet is in the habit of treading the boards whenever the offering plate runs dry. This time they've been coerced into a trip to L.A., thinking they were booked for the Hollywood Bowl. Their venue is actually

REVIEW

Nunset Boulevard

Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. Wednesday-Sunday through Jan. 29. \$24-39. 248-370-3300.

www.mbttheatre.com

the seedy Hollywood Bowl-a-Rama and Cabaret Lounge. Unshaken, our plucky band proceeds in the finest "show must go on" tradition.

An unlikely source (the aforementioned Sr. Mary Annette) drops the hint that auditions are being held for "Nunset Boulevard," the bio-pic of actress Dolores Hart ("Where the Boys Are"), who left film and took the veil at the Benedictine Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut. With more stars in their eyes than on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the sisters think they're naturals for the film. After all, they don't have to ACT like nuns; they ARE nuns.

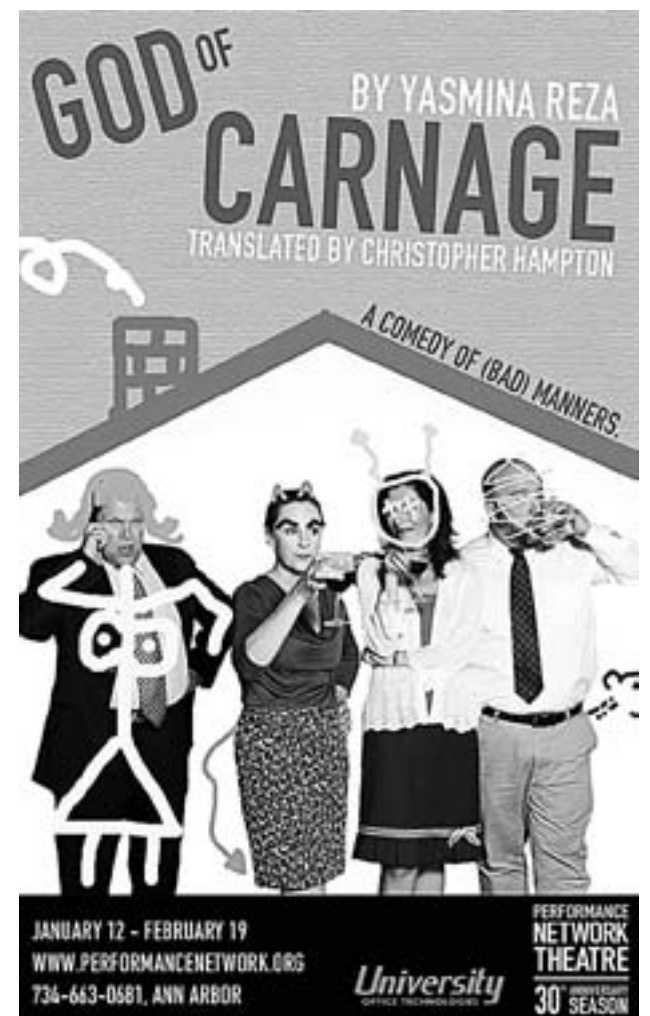
Granted, that plot is about as solid as a Kardashian marriage vow, but it only needs to provide an excuse for musical numbers and two awful audience participation games, "Sisters in Cinema" and "The Price is Righteous." In all, the humor in "Nunset Boulevard" is derived less from the Church and more from Babylon on the Pacific. Of course, there is whimsy in watching a be-wimpled chorus line kick up their heels in sensible black

shoes. But the charm of "Boulevard" is in the performances rather than the material. We aren't disappointed.

Playwright Dan Goggin revives his characters: Sister Robert Anne (Teri Gibson), a Brooklyn-born wiseacre; Mother Superior Mary Regina (Laurie Birmingham), a former circus performer fond of recalling her past; her competitive Number One, Sister Mary Hubert (Bambi Jones); Sister Mary Leo (Stephanie Wahl), the Dancing Nun; and Sister Mary Paul (Jeanne Tinker), who lost her memory when a crucifix fell on her head. Since she has regained her memory, she is no longer Sister Amnesia, but still retains a childlike wonder and innocence. Bonnie Lee will be stepping into the role of Mother Superior after the 18th.

All five women are in great voice, capable of big belt and soft quaver alike. Conductor "Brother" Michael Rice fronts a quartet of musicians; Mike Duncan's sound design provides a beautiful balance between words and music. Teri Gibson does double duty as choreographer; the dance numbers are a little madcap but entertaining. In sum, a hint of classic vaudeville pervades this show.

"Nunset Boulevard" doesn't pretend to be "The Song of Bernadette," so it would not be a nun sequitur if I suggest that a light dose of harmless humor might be the antidote to dark January nights.



Editor's Picks

Outings

Join Affirmations in celebrating and understanding the relationship between faith and the LGBT community through an evening of film and discussion.

Faith and the LGBT Community begins with the film "Fences," which follows present-day Affirmations Executive Director Dave Garcia through his childhood, his 60-mile march to Lansing, up to a 2005 trip to Portland. During this trip, Garcia asks members of the religious right for their opinions on the LGBT community.

The documentary will be followed by a panel discussion with Bishop Gumbleton, Darlene Franklin of Agape Spirit Life Ministries and Linda Karle-Nelson and Tom Nelson of Fortunate Families and Garcia. Light refreshments will be provided.

Faith and the LGBT Community is 7 p.m. Jan. 12 at Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road. For more information, go to www.goaffirmations.org or call Director of Programs Johnny Jenkins at 248-398-7105.



Dave Garcia

Art 'n' Around

For the month of January, Kerrytown Concert House's art gallery presents Oil Paintings by Denis Lee. Lee, a professor of the University of Michigan, has served on the faculty for over 30 years as a Professor of Art and Design as well as Postgraduate Medicine. His degree in Zoology and a love for art led him to a Master's in Medical Illustration. Now retired, Lee has produced unique sculptures and paintings using the vibrant colors of insects, plants and, particularly, sea life as inspiration.

Lee has won numerous awards for his artwork and sculpture. He has appeared on the "Today Show," "The Donahue Show" and has been featured in People, Newsweek and National Geographic. One of the many prosthetic eyes he sculpted for his patients appeared in the National Geographic 100 Best Photos.

Lee's oil paintings are displayed in the Kerrytown Concert House's art gallery until Jan. 29. For more information, go to www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com. For more information on Denis Lee, visit his website at denisleec.com.



Theater

"Lost in Yonkers," which opens at the Village Players Playhouse on Friday, Jan. 13, is the only play by Neil Simon to win both a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize.

If there has ever been a play that meets the description of "giving its audience both laughter and tears," this is it. Two teenage boys are forced to live with their tyrannical grandmother in her emotionally dysfunctional household at the beginning of World War II. Set in their home over their candy store, the play introduces the audience to the rest of the dysfunctional family: a small-time



gangster, a mentally challenged daughter, and two other children who live in fear of grandma. Performances are 8 p.m. Jan. 13, 14, 20, 21 and 2 p.m. Jan. 15 and 22 at the Village Players Playhouse, 34660 Woodward, in Birmingham. Tickets are \$17. For more information, call 248-644-2075.

OUTINGS

Wednesday, Jan. 11

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

Trans-Masculine Trauma Recovery Group 4:30 p.m. This free recovery group is by registration only. It will last for 8 weeks and will be led by an experienced trauma counselor and facilitator. Please call 734-998-2150 if you are interested. The location has lots of free parking and is wheelchair accessible. University of Michigan Comprehensive Gender Services Program, 2025 Traverwood, Suite A1, **Ann Arbor**. 734-998-2150. Nquay@umich.edu med.umich.edu/transgender

GOAL Writing Group 7 p.m. An LGBTQ and allied writing club. Discussion surrounds favorite authors, challenging projects, assistance from peers, goals and all things writing-related. Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. getoutandlive.me

Thursday, Jan. 12

Faith and the LGBT Community 7 p.m. Join Affirmations for an evening featuring a screening of the documentary "Fences," and a panel discussion with faith leaders and laypersons. The event will be facilitated by Affirmations Executive Director, Antonio David Garcia and panelists include Bishop Gumbleton; Darlene Franklin, Founding Minister of Agape Spirit Life Ministries; and special guests Linda Karle-Nelson and Tom Nelson with Fortunate Families. Light refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact Johnny Jenkins, Director of Programs, Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Feast of St. Aelred 7 p.m. The feast of the Patron Saint of Integrity USA, St. Aelred. Fellowship and refreshments will follow the service. Integrity USA is a nonprofit organization of LGBT Episcopalians and their straight allies. Since their founding by Dr. Louie Crew in rural Georgia in 1974, Integrity has been the leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Episcopal Church and equal access to its rites. Integrity USA, 4252 Breton Rd. SE, **Kentwood**. 616-949-7034. rectorpastor@comcast.net

Meet 'n Greet 7 p.m. Meet new people, socialize and discuss age-relevant issues. Dinner at local restaurant afterwards. Ages 18-33. Metro Detroit LGBT 20Somethings, 222 E. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. Det20somethings@gmail.com the20somethings.org 2nd Annual Big Ethical Question Slam 8 p.m. Once again, the Slam will shine a spotlight on some of the big questions of our time. And once again Ann Arbor Ethics invites community groups to form teams and tackle some big, vexing questions in convivial surroundings. Winning team will receive \$600. Ann Arbor Ethics, 318 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor**. A2ethics.org

Friday, Jan. 13

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

Dinner and a Show at Joey's Comedy Club 6:15 p.m. Tickets: \$30 per person.

RSVP on Meetup site before Jan. 1. Plymouth Lesbian Supper Group, 36071 Plymouth Road, **Livonia**. 734-261-0555.

Ozone House's QueerZone 6:30 p.m. QueerZone is an Ypsilanti-based program that provides a safe space for LGBTQ youth to congregate, socialize, build community and access support services as needed. LGBTQ youth ages 13-20 are also encouraged to join Queerzone's private, confidential Facebook group to keep in touch with other queer youth. Ozone House, 1705 Washtenaw, **Ann Arbor**. 734-662-2265. Ozonehouse.org

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

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Red Doors. Recently retired, Ed Wong longs to break away from the monotony of his daily life, but the outlandish dramas of his daughters Samantha, Julie and Katie make escape difficult for this father of three. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Jan. 14

Pancake Breakfast 10 a.m. Breakfast followed by AA meeting with open speaker: Bill R. from Grand Rapids. Cost: \$8. Together We Can, 2441 Pinecrest, **Ferndale**. 248.838.9905. twc@detroit.com

Mitten Mavens Roller Derby Snowpocalypse 5 p.m. Lansing's Mitten Mavens Roller Derby takes on the Chemical City Derby Girls from Midland. Doors open 6 p.m.. Game begins at 7. Admission: \$10. Mitten Mavens, Kalamazoo St, **East Lansing**. Mittenmavens@gmail.com MittenMavens.net

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

Sunday, Jan. 15

GOAL Bowling Night 12:15 p.m. GOAL is teaming up with a bowling group that started up in early fall 2010. This is a nonleague-bowling group. Their goal is to get the community together. GOAL bowls every third Sunday of the month. Get Out And Live!, 600 E. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. Getoutandlive.me

Coffee with the Guys 2 p.m. New gay men's group. No dues. No requirements. Opportunity to expand social circles in a safe non-bar atmosphere. The coffee and conversation are free. West Michigan Pride, 211 Logan St. SW, **Grand Rapids**. Westmipride.org

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

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

A Diamond Celebration of Henry Messer & Carl House 5 p.m. Join Equality Michigan in celebrating Henry and Carl's 60th Anniversary. Dr. Henry Messer has been a crucial supporter of Equality Michigan for many years and was a co-founder of the Triangle Foundation. This event will benefit Equality Michigan. Tickets are \$120 and may be purchased

by phone. Equality Michigan, 25228 W. 12 Mile Road, **Southfield**. 313-537-7000 Ex. 102. Equalityymi.org

The Conversation Station 5 p.m. LGBTQI 25 and over, join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. Topic: Pretend you are writing an ad for the Personals. What would it say (can be serious or funny)? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarcilWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Wednesday, Jan. 18

Gay Families Matter - Lansing Rally 12 p.m. Recently, MichiganXXs congress passed a law banning public employers from offering domestic partnership benefits, which Governor Snyder then signed into law. Join the LGBT community center on the capital steps in Lansing on Wednesday, January 18, at noon. Let congress know that gay families matter and deserve to be treated equally! For more information, contact the local community center nearest you: Affirmations, Jim Toy Community Center, Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Community Center, KICK, Out Center, Ruth Ellis Center, the LGBT Network of Western Michigan. Affirmations, Jim Toy Community Center, Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Community Center, KICK, Out Center, Ruth Ellis Center, the LGBT Network of Western Michigan., The Capitol Building, Lansing. 248-398-7105. <https://www.facebook.com/events/218246958259113>

Thursday, Jan. 19

Polyamory Network 7:30 p.m. Open and inclusive community of people living polyamorously, people interested in polyamory and people of, friendly to and curious about polyamory. Welcomes diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. Polyamory Network, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734 6782478. Jimtoycenter.org

Friday, Jan. 20

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

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Affinity = When wealthy 19th-century socialite Margaret Prior tries to find purpose in her life by volunteering at a women's prison, she becomes obsessed with one inmate whose gifts for the paranormal hold a special attraction. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Jan. 21

GLSEN Bowl-a-thon 5 p.m. A fundraiser to support our work creating safe school environments for LGBT students. Tickets are \$25 if ordered online, \$35 at the door. Ticket includes food, soft drink, shoe rental, and two games of bowling. Cash bar. GLSEN Southeast Michigan, 4120 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 248-716-0106. Glsensem@gmail.com brownpapertickets.com/event/213647

MCCD Euchre Tournament 7 p.m. Prize for the winning team. Desserts and coffee served. A \$10 donation is asked of participants. Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, 2441 Pinecrest, **Ferndale**. 248-399-7741. Mccdetroit.org/

Perceptions' Facility Open House 7 p.m. LGBT service network Perceptions hosts an open house for their new facility. Perceptions' open house is also a fundraiser to encourage donations to the facility fund, which supports the purchase

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

of furnishings, equipment, and supplies for Perceptions new facility. In lieu of a financial donation, donors can also choose to gift an item from a "wish list" which Perceptions features on its website. This free includes complimentary hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Perceptions Saginaw Valley, 301 Cass St., Old Town **Saginaw**. 989-891-1429. PerceptionsSV.org

Confessions on a Choir Stage 8 p.m. A retrospective of Out Loud's favorites performed by Washtenaw County's original, mixed LGBT chorus. Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$13 at door, \$5 students. Director Dan Gerics leads the chorus. Out Loud Chorus, 4800 E Huron, **Ann Arbor**. 734-265-0740. olconline.org

MUSIC & MORE

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase "Myq Kaplan" Made his network television debut on the Tonight Show with Conan. Self-identified as Jewy-ish atheistic vegan who spells his name weird. Tickets: \$11-14. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 19 - Jan. 21. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Nightnotes The Next Generation" Enjoy works performed by Mosaic Youth Theatre and DCWS young ensemble-in-residence, Amusia, from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Hagopian World of Rugs, 850 Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI 48009, Birmingham. 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13. 810-577-6888. Detroitchamberwinds.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Gershwin and the American Songbook" The "Fascinatin' Rhythms" of George Gershwin will fill the Orchestra Hall as Ann Hampton Callaway sings the very best from the Gershwin songbook. Tickets: \$19. Detroit Symphony Orchestra, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 13 - Jan. 15. 313-576-5100. Dso.org

Kerrytown Concert House "American Art Song - Album Release Recital" Join soprano Alissa Deeter, baritone Robert Peavler and pianist Arlene Shrut to celebrate the release of the recording American Art Song. Tickets: \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Jan. 15. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Majestic Theatre "Battle of the Dragons" Fashion and Drag Show competition; a benefit for the American Foundation for children with AIDS. Divas battle it out to be the next drag face of Top Secret Cosmetics. Show also includes our Sexy Dragon Dancers, and dragon themed models. Tickets: \$10-20. The Majestic Theatre, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Jan. 20. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

Michigan Philharmonic "Miniature Masterpieces" Featuring "big" music for small orchestra with works by Debussy, Rossini, Myers and Mahler with mezzo-soprano Melody Racine. Individual Concert tickets: \$22 general, \$18 senior and \$10 student. Full subscriptions available online. St. John's Seminary Chapel, 44045 Five Mile Road, Plymouth. 2 p.m. Jan. 15, 2 p.m. Jan. 15. 734-453-0870. Michiganphil.org

Olympia Entertainment "Young Jeezy" With special guests Travis Porter and 2 Chainz. Tickets: \$59, 69, 79, and 89. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Jan. 14. 800-745-3000. Olympiaentertainment.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre "In Flames" With special guests Trivium, Veil of Maya and Kyng. Tickets: \$20. Royal Oak

Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St., Royal Oak. 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Keb Mo" With special guest Anders Osborne. Keb' Mo' is the musician who reinvented the blues for modern times. Born Kevin Moore and a native of the same South Los Angeles streets that spawned hip-hop's most aggressive strand, he grew up with the blues and turned to the acoustic blues of the Mississippi Delta after playing a bluesman in a Los Angeles stage production. Tickets: \$39.50. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 10:30 a.m. Dec. 7, 8 p.m. Jan. 20. 734-761-1818. Theark.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A New Brain \$19-\$23. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Parish Theatre, 426 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Jan. 13 - 29. 269-343-1313. www.kazoocivic.com

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat \$16. Sky's the Limit Productions at The Berman Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Jan. 12 - 22. 248-661-1900. www.TheBerman.org

Lost in Yonkers \$17. Village Players, 24660 Woodward Ave., Birmingham. Jan. 13 - 22. 248-644-2075. www.birminghamvillageplayers.com

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead \$12-14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Jan. 12 - 22. 482-5700. www.riverwalktheatre.com

Sunday Night \$17. Motor City Musical Theatre at Grantland Street Playhouse, 27555 Grantland, Livonia. Through Jan. 15. 313-535-8962.

PROFESSIONAL

A Bright Room Called Day \$10-\$20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Jan. 14 - 30. 248-545-5545. whowantscaketheatre.com

Bernhardt on Broadway: The Musical \$25. Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Building, Ann Arbor. Jan. 14. 734-864-3244. www.BernhardtOnBroadway.com

Burying the Bones \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Jan. 12 - March 18. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

God of Carnage Previews Jan. 12-15 & 19 (\$15-\$21). \$22-41. Performance Network, Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 13 - Feb. 19. 734-663-0681. www.performancenetwork.org

It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play Happen Stance Productions at Andiamo Novi Theatre, 42705 Grand River Ave., Novi. Through Jan. 15. 248-348-4448. www.ticketmaster.com

Monday Night Improv \$5. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. Through Jan. 23. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Nunset Boulevard \$24-39. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. Through Jan. 29. 248-370-3300. www.ticketmaster.com

Redenbacher 3D \$10. Crawlspace Eviction at Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Jan. 13 - 14. 269-599-7390. www.

crawlspace.com

Tearful Release \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Through Jan. 21. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

The Cripple of Inishmaan Plays in rotating repertory. \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, Detroit. Through Feb. 4. 313-577-2972. www.hilberry.com

The Tempest \$40. Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Through Jan. 21. 313-444-2294. www.parkbardetroit.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Downriver Council for the Arts "The Colors of Winter" Winter Mixed Media Fine Art Show at the Wyandotte Arts Center. Work inspired by winter and activities that relate to the season. Downriver Council for the Arts, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. Dec. 1 - Jan. 13. Downriverarts.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Oil Paintings by Denis Lee" Visual artist Denis Lee's work combines the vibrant colors of insects plants and particularly sea life. Denis Lee is Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Jan. 4 - Jan. 27. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lawrence Street Gallery "Best of the Best" Twelve prizewinning artists from the Gallery's four annual juried shows (invitational, figurative, photography and small works) will be given space to exhibit a larger selection of their work. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Jan. 11 - Jan. 28. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

Michigan State University Museum

"POW-erful Design: Adaptation as Inspiration for Technology" The inspiration for da Vinci's Ornithopter flying machine may have come from Greek mythology's Icarus and his constructed wings. Circle Drive, East Lansing. Jan. 1 - June 24. 517-355-2370. Museum.msu.edu

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Once Upon a Time: Prints and Drawings that Tell Stories" Telling stories through prints and drawings. Includes selections from familiar series, portfolios and books, as well as several examples that have rarely or never been seen. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Dec. 18 - Jan. 29. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

The Gallery Project "Post Apocalypse" Exposes all the doomsday scenarios that are out there, everything from the end of the world to the Rapture. The Gallery Project, 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Dec. 14 - Jan. 21. 734-997-7012. Thegalleryproject.com

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

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Classifieds

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday
7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.
Bloomfield Hills-Thursday
7:00 pm, Sobriety in The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.
Detroit-Tuesday / Friday
8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).
Farmington Hills-Monday
8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.
Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday
11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.
Ferndale-Wednesday
8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.
Ferndale-Saturday
1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.
8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.
Livonia-Friday
8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.
Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday
8 p.m., Pontiac Gay AA, Shrine of St. Joseph, 400 West South Blvd. Closed/Discussion.
Warren-Monday
7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay AA, Faith-Trinity United Church of Christ, 12221 Martin Rd. East of Hoover. Closed/Discussion.

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Dating Diet



House of Love

BY ANTHONY PAULL

Did I miss the memo? Since when is it all

right to solicit someone for sex in the middle of the day without offering food or money?

I mean, I know that I look hot and virginal in my skinny jeans but come on. I'm not going to sleep with you just because you're homeless and shake your nuts at me when I'm walking on Main Street. I mean, I might sleep with you if you had a sleigh bed or a spiffy shopping cart, but a bicycle? How am I supposed to get off on a bicycle?

"Remove the seat," says my friend Matt. Walking beside me, he laughs as a homeless guy flags me down, boasting about his penis. For some reason, the guy thinks I give a hoot. Like I'm an amateur who gets off on measurements. I mean, big is fine but I don't need to be murdered by it.

"Is this really happening?" I question aloud. Avoiding eye contact, I cross the street. Still, the homeless man circles me with his bike. "Did I do something wrong?"

"Just...keep...walking," Matt replies. "Do not engage."

I fill with anxiety, pulling my hoodie over my head. "Good lord, am I so gay that some dude thinks it's OK to tell me he's going to screw me in pure daylight?"

We take the long route to my car, through the library, making a pit stop at the local coffee shop. I have a meltdown over peppermint tea. "Just relax. The guy's crazy," Matt states.

"Probably," I agree. Still I'm upset. "I mean, it wouldn't be a huge deal but it's the holidays," I explain. "I'm having a hard enough time with all of my friends having babies and my dad telling everyone that I inherited the gay gene from my mother. I'm lost enough. I don't need this shit."

"You're just feeling what everyone feels around the holidays."

"What's that?"

"Completely fucked," he says. "I mean, you'll be OK. Everyone gets sad this time of year. We're all in the same boat."

I nod. However, I don't think all of my friends are being propositioned by homeless men and puking at police stations at the stroke of midnight. Yeah, that happened too. But this is the life of a socialite. I try to wear my crown with pride, but I'm beginning to wonder if being superficial is really worth the headache. I mean, shouldn't I be having a Hallmark moment sometime soon? I thought that I would turn 30 and give a shit about something other than being a total heathen. I guess not. Oops.

Maybe Dad's right. Being gay is just

I'm not going to sleep with you just because you're homeless and shake your nuts at me when I'm walking on Main Street.

one party 'til the next. But it's not my fault. Remember, I inherited it from mom. Therefore, I roll with the punches, refusing to bat an eye when Matt receives a text, stating there's an orgy at his house. I kind of expect it. On vacation, he left his place, two hours away, in the hands of a loser "friend." Thankfully, he had another friend advise him of the situation. The Craigslist ad indicates his gate code and address.

"Is this part of the holidays too?" I ask him.

Bolting, he tells me he has to drive home. He left his dogs at his house, and what if they're involved in this? I mean, at this point, how low can it go? I join him to see.

"The ad says to take off our clothes at the door," Matt winks, as we drive to his place. "Someone is supposed to escort us to the master suite."

"You mean, your room?" I reply.

"Yeah," he says, making a joke of it.

"You think this is funny?"

"Kind of," he says. "It's not a big deal. We'll just kick them out."

I strain a laugh, trying to make sense of it. Here we are, battling holiday traffic, where Christmas trees are neatly tied to car roofs, where families head to unite with loved ones. Meanwhile, we're en route to see lovemaking strangers. It's going to be a white Christmas, yes, but splashed on some random guy's back. The image makes me feel faint. "I just want to be normal," I admit.

"No you don't," Matt returns, refusing to feed my drama. "You'd be bored with normal. With having a baby and sitting home every night. That's ok for other people. Not for you."

"Why not?"

"Because you're a writer. You need a story," he says. "That's all this is, just a story. Can't you enjoy it?" We pull into his perfect green subdivision, everything manicured, and I let out a breath. I don't feel right, engulfed by such perfection. I feel bored, excited only about what waits beyond the bend. "I could take you to your dad's house," Matt says. "You can spend the whole day blaming your mom for this. Is that what you want?"

I grin, telling him to go straight or gaily forward and together we laugh as he presses on the gas.

MICHIGAN'S LGBT YELLOW PAGES

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Horoscopes

Keep your eyes open, Libra!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mars in Virgo quincunx to Eris can make people bitchy and competitive. As the Sun aspects those two you can see better how to turn that energy to constructive self-criticism. Mercury conjoining Pluto in Capricorn focuses that energy and raises the stakes.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Getting ahead depends on self-discipline, attention to details and questions of skill. Subtle hints from superiors can save you a lot of grief. The Golden Rule may not alleviate confusion in your relationships, but it will make it more manageable.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Worrying about your career doesn't help, but list real concerns and look for practical answers. "Helpful" friends will offer hundreds of ideas. A few of those are actually very good. A relaxing time out would help you restore clarity.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Sexual frustration is about quality, not quantity. The need for emotional depth and commitment may surprise you. If partnered, you're overdue for a good talk. If single, discuss it with someone whose wisdom you respect or write your feelings down.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): It's too easy to obsess on minutiae. Better to clear out garbage and clutter. Your partner or another good friend will be glad to help you decide what needs to go. Let a sibling get saddled with the family keepsakes.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Being sensitive to others will help you get ahead, but don't give away the store; keep terms and boundaries clear. Confusion too easily feeds into arguments. Keeping a critical eye on your own human and material resources can fend off trouble.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22): A mad, passionate fling may leave you spinning and wanting more. It's not love, so keep your expectations in check. Your wicked tongue is a potent weapon. Be careful where you aim that thing!

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Would a fleeting, tawdry affair make you feel cheap and used? That could be half the fun. Keep your eyes

open and your mind clear. If you do get swept off your feet, you will have to pick up the mess.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Pressure at work is largely in your own head. Largely. Plan long-term strategies, and remember that they will have to be flexible. Burning off energy with some friends will help you from being a pain to your colleagues.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Do your best work and let it speak for itself. You don't need to prove anything, especially to family members. When those nagging voices fill your brain, identify where they come from and you can get rid of them.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Even if things have been going well lately, be very careful with your money. A deal that sounds too good to be true is. Set aside a little for an impulsive indulgence. If you can't say anything nice, go chat with Virgo.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Check out an art show with something very new and different, or rent the most outré movie you can find. It could inspire a new look, but test it with a very trusted friend before you take it public!

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Be careful that the only secrets you reveal are your own. Even then the deep personal insights you're gaining should be kept private. Well, mostly. You may find earning power in skills you haven't appreciated.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 28

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Pet of the Week



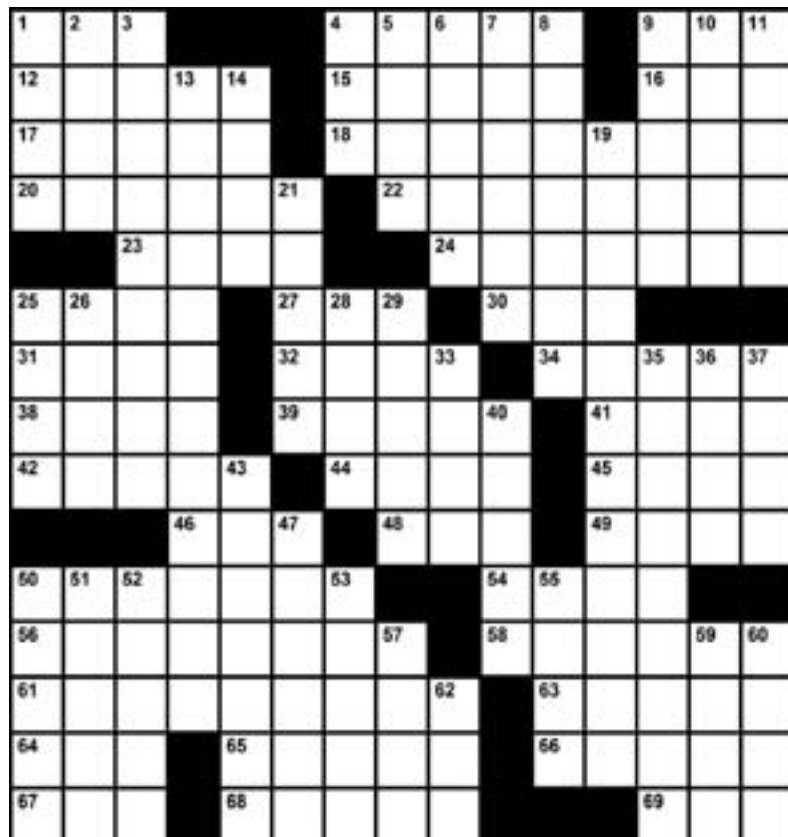
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Work It!



Across

- 1 Posed for Annie Leibovitz
- 4 President without a first lady Buchanan
- 9 With it
- 12 Uncomfortable threesome
- 15 Hersey's bell town
- 16 Crack fighter pilot
- 17 Male type
- 18 Big Easy festival
- 20 Photog Mapplethorpe
- 22 Amelie of tennis
- 23 Word used in dating
- 24 Cuts canines
- 25 Big top, e.g.
- 27 Dave Pallone, once
- 30 Chef Traci ___ Jardins
- 31 State where once two women could be in a marriage
- 32 Joint problem
- 34 Token taker
- 38 Erection, in slang
- 39 Survivor Richard
- 41 ___ about
- 42 Hose woes for drag queens
- 44 Choice for Hamlet
- 45 Bring down
- 46 Eclectic family mag

- 48 "Men Behaving Badly" writer Simon
- 49 Cries of surprise
- 50 Lightweight recorder
- 54 "If I Were King of the Forest" singer
- 56 Like a good alibi
- 58 "Modern Family," e.g.
- 61 Thespian Miriam
- 63 Horny creature
- 64 Saucer pilots
- 65 Choir closet contents
- 66 Brief fight
- 67 "Look at Me, I'm Sandra ___"
- 68 Used brooms
- 69 In the distance

Down

- 1 Fey villain in "The Lion King"
- 2 Folk first name
- 3 Main comic into bottoms?
- 4 Fruity spread
- 5 Gay video directory name
- 6 French Revolution figure
- 7 Invested
- 8 Affairs in the evening
- 9 Like rough trade
- 10 Start of Caesar's boast

- 11 Cuban coins
- 13 Start of the motto of "Work It!"
- 14 "Nuts!"
- 19 More of the motto
- 21 More of the motto
- 25 Rubber ducky spots
- 26 Thames college
- 28 Zoo barrier
- 29 More of the motto
- 33 Frozen dessert chain
- 35 Old part of town
- 36 Valuable vein
- 37 He took a bow
- 40 End of the motto
- 43 Helps in a difficult situation
- 47 Candle material
- 50 Played charades
- 51 Fit to be tied
- 52 Viking-liking
- 53 "We'll see"
- 55 Brings to light
- 57 Bottomless
- 59 Atop
- 60 Show bottom
- 62 Atlantic crosser of old

Solution on page 27

Cocktail Chatter

The Kir Royale

BY ED SIKOV

Dan and I got married on Saturday. This news may be surprising, given my little peccadillo with Jack Fogg and the uproar when my stunned partner – now husband – found out. But it led to the talk we should have had years ago, a discussion too personal even for *me* to write about. Let's just say that we came to an understanding, then made up, then out, and finally came in a very different sense of the word.

We're beyond being best friends. My faults still register with Dan, but there's a trace of a smile on his face when I tell the same jokes I always tell. And I'm proud of being married to the world's greatest klutz. (Life with Dan: bang, crash, "shit!") We're genuinely intertwined in ways we weren't four years ago, when I....

Well, the fact is that I have Parkinson's disease. I haven't mentioned it before because it hasn't been part of any of the stories I've told. It's no fun, but I live with it, and if you saw me you'd never guess I had it unless you happened to catch me doing the last three reps of a weightlifting set. That's when I tremor.

Dan has been there for me throughout the whole bad trip, and I've been there for him, too. (The six months leading to his promotion to V.P. at CogniTech was practically as traumatic as my PD.) So when New York granted gay people marriage equality, we went for it. The scene: the beach house. The characters: our friends Gary and Heath, Dan and me. The state legislature was taking its time. I checked the news just after 11 p.m.

"It passed!" I yelled. We toasted with what was left of the dinner wine. Then:

Me: "We gettin' married?"

Dan: "Yeah."

Me: "When?"

Dan: "December."

We're clearly not into the top-of-the-Empire State Building stuff.

So we got married. There were eight guests, including the judge who married us, who happened to be Dan's father. We got the private dining room of a terrific restaurant in our neighborhood. The ceremony was one minute long. We said we loved each other, and Dan's father said, "I now pronounce you married." Then lunch.

We left immediately for the beach, arriving rather late. I brought a rack of lamb to grill, some vegetables and two cupcakes. But *yechhh*: the only champagne in the refrigerator was bad not very good. (We keep some in there all the time – like

Mary Richards and her can of artichoke hearts – "just in case".) "I hate that swill," Dan said. "There's no need to fear," I replied. "Underdog is here!"

We had Creme de Cassis, a blackcurrant liqueur. Undrinkably sweet on its own, it's the perfect solution to bad mediocre champagne. I grilled the rack of lamb, roasted some fingerling potatoes and sauteed Brussels sprouts in butter. We drank two bottles of bad bad champagne transformed into Kir Royales. The rest of the night I'll leave to your imagination.

The Kir Royale

1 bottle of bad champagne
Crème de Cassis

Add a few drops of Crème de Cassis to each glass, then fill with champagne. Use cheap champagne. Don't ruin a good bottle of bubbly by adding anything at all.



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General Gayety

Perry and Lawrence v. Texas: Oops!



BY LESLIE ROBINSON

Rick Perry jumped into the Republican presidential race in August, and a spate of verbal blunders followed. The Texas governor is on gaffe-ing gas.

He flubbed the voting age, the date of the 2012 election, the number of justices on the Supreme Court and the name of Justice Sotomayor. Perry infamously blundered during a Republican debate that he would do away with three cabinet agencies, then couldn't remember the third. On that occasion, Gov. Goodhair, as the late columnist Molly Ivins called the impeccably coiffed Perry, went flat and lifeless.

Recently Perry explained to Iowans the need for the Keystone XI pipeline, saying, "Every barrel of oil that comes out of those sands in Canada is a barrel of oil we don't have to buy from a foreign source."

I hear a line of beavers has taken up a defensive position on the Canadian side of the border.

Now we can add to Perry's record

another sinkhole where knowledge should be, this time concerning a matter of major importance to the LGBT community. In Cedar Rapids, an audience member at a campaign event asked Perry about Lawrence v. Texas, the 2003 landmark Supreme Court case that struck down the sodomy law in Texas and nullified such laws across the U.S.

As far as Perry was concerned, he might as well have been asked about Ali v. Frazier.

"I wish I could tell you I knew every Supreme Court case. I don't. I'm not a lawyer," Perry responded, according to National Journal. After the event, Perry told a reporter he didn't know what the case was.

That's incredible. Lawrence v. Texas began shortly before Perry became Texas's lieutenant governor, and the Supreme Court heard and decided the case while he was governor.

This case began in Texas, affected Texas law and concerned his cherished conservative social values. It gave us gays the right to diddle each other with impunity, for heaven's sake. Yet Perry couldn't remember it.

What will he forget next? The Alamo? ABC News blogged that in Perry's 2010 book, "Fed Up! Our Fight to Save America from Washington," he referred to Lawrence v. Texas as one of the cases in

which "Texans have a different view of the world than do the nine oligarchs in robes."

Apparently at one time Perry did remember the court case. And the number of justices on the Supreme Court. Or at least his ghostwriter did.

Maybe he has to learn so much these days - like the name of North Korea's late dictator is Kim Jong-il, not "Kim Jong the Second" as Perry dubbed him - that facts he previously knew are falling out of his head to make room. Anybody standing near him should look out for falling objects.

Back at the Blue Strawberry coffee shop, after being asked about the Lawrence case, Perry changed the subject: "We can sit here and, you know, play 'I gotcha' questions on what about this Supreme Court case or whatever, but let me tell you, you know and I know the problem in this country is spending in Washington, D.C. - it's not some court case."

Actually we have a number of problems in this country. One of them is a Texan who believes he should be president even though his brain shoots blanks.

As it happens, John G. Lawrence, one of the two plaintiffs in Lawrence v. Texas, passed away in November. I have every confidence that when someone mentioned to Perry that John Lawrence died, the governor responded, "Poor Eydie. Now who will she sing with?"

Leslie Robinson is grateful to John Lawrence for seeing the fight through. Email Leslie at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and visit her blog at www.generalgayety.com for daily LGBT humor.

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ACCOUNTING / TAX SERVICES

Ameritax Plus13
Co-Op Tax & Accounting.....7
Kuderik and Associates.....7
QJM Inc.....18

AIDS/HIV ORGANIZATIONS

AIDS Partnership Michigan..32
Detroit Department of Health & Wellness.....16

ART GALLERIES

Detroit Artists Market.....14

ATTORNEYS

Gittleman, Steven13
Razor Law Firm14
Pierce, Robert.....30

AUTO/COLLISION

Autometric Body Shops.....20

AUTO/DEALER

Hodges Imported Cars19

BAKERIES

Avalon International Breads ..3

BAR/CLUBS/DISCOS

aut Bar29

BARBER SHOP

Steven B's Barber Shop18

CARPET CLEANERS

Hagopian Cleaning Services17

COUNSELING

Cantrell, Christine,
Ph.D.,LLC17
Joe Kort and Associates.....16
Jozwiak, Rosemary,
MA, LPC, CCBT, DVCE.....27

DENTISTS

Williamson, Ron T., DDS3

EROTICA

Blue Moon Video/DVD29
Just 4 Us21

EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

Battle of The Dragons31

GARDEN CENTER

Green Thumb Garden
Center18

INTRODUCTION SERVICES

Mega Mates.....26

JEWELERS

Four Season Enterprises19
Miner's Den2

MASSAGE

Rosenberg, David.....27,29

Shop PrideSource / BTL advertisers

MUSIC CONCERT SERIES

University Musical Society2

PERSONAL TRAINER

Bodymorph19

PET SERVICES - VETERINARIAN

Patterson Dog
& Cat Hospital, Inc.....27

PHARMACY

Crown Pharmacy16
Direct Rx.....31

PHYSICIANS

Dr. Paul Benson, D.O.30
Partridge Creek OB Gyn11

RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL

Metropolitan Community
Church of Detroit20
Whosoever Ministry27

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Pete's Place Cafe18

SYMPHONY

Ann Arbor Symphony
Orchestra.....2
Detroit Symphony Orchestra ..9

THEATRES

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre32
Detroit Repertory Theater....25
Fisher Theatre.....32
Performance Network23
Purple Rose Theatre
Company17
Stagecrafters23
Wayne State University
Department of Theatre25

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