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CATCHING UP WITH COMIC LEGEND JOAN RIVERS

TROY MAYOR CAUSES ANOTHER GAY CONTROVERSY

'GAY FAMILIES MATTER'



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Lawmakers hear 'Gay families matter'

Michiganders protest anti-LGBT legislation passed and proposed by their state lawmakers, Gov. Snyder smiled and waved

BY TODD HEYWOOD

More than 150 people from across Michigan had a message for Gov. Rick Snyder and the state legislature Wednesday: "Gay families matter." The message they hoped their state lawmakers would hear and act on after a year that saw the most anti-gay legislative action in Michigan history.

The rally was organized by a coalition of LGBT community centers from across the state. People from centers in Ann Arbor, Benton Harbor, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Saginaw and Detroit were present at the event.

"We are homeowners. We're taxpayers and we're residents of the state of Michigan," Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of the group KICK, told the crowd. "We deserve the same rights as heterosexual families."

Zachary Bauer, executive director of the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, said lawmakers are trying to undermine democracy.

"They took away your voice," he said. "They took away your vote."

David Garcia, executive director of Affirmations, the LGBT community center in Ferndale, blasted sponsors of anti-gay legislation as "moral hypocrites."

"Anytime that someone works to deny the rights of group - rights that they enjoy - they are a moral hypocrite," Garcia said. "The gay agenda is not so tough. I can sum it up in two points. One, equality. Two, see number one."

But Garcia also pleaded for heterosexuals who support equality for the LGBT community to "come out of the closet."

"The straight community must get off the sidelines and act," he said.

State Rep. Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo) stopped by the rally.

"To take these rights away is a great step backwards, I think," he told the crowd. "We are together and we are mighty."

Meanwhile, Gov. Snyder, who is under growing pressure and criticism from the LGBT community, did not make an appearance, at least not intentionally.

As the rally was getting under way, Snyder exited the state Capitol. He was greeted by boos and chants of "Gay families matter!" He smiled and waved at the crowd; a Michigan State Police security escort stood between the governor and the protesters.

Snyder has come under fire for signing legislation that prohibits public employers from offering health benefits to the unmarried partners of public employees. Snyder claims he made the decision to sign the bill based on economic



Protestors angry with attacks on LGBT citizens, gathered in Lansing Jan. 18 to let legislators know how angry they are chanting "Gay families matter" as legislators arrived for the State of the State. Photos courtesy of Affirmations

concerns for the state's budget.

On Tuesday, The American Independent reported that Snyder's office has repeatedly denied requests for an interview about LGBT issues in the state. Interview requests have similarly been denied to TAI media partners Between The Lines Newspapers and Lansing Online News. Communications officials from the governor's office have yet to provide possible dates for such an interview.

Shortly after Snyder passed the rally,

State Rep. Dave Agema (R-Grandville) - who sponsored the legislation denying partner benefits - exited the building. He too was greeted with boos and "Gay families matters!" Protesters followed Agema a block down Michigan Avenue from the Capitol, chanting and waving signs.

Later, Agema posted the following on his Facebook page, "It was an interesting day today. When I left the Capitol I was swarmed with gay men screaming hate at me for the elimination of same sex/unmarried benefits. It seems the hate

they hate they have."

Agema has been hostile not only to the LGBT community, but also to undocumented residents. Last fall he spoke at a rally featuring an alleged former terrorist. Agema has introduced legislation that requires employers and contractors to use the federal E-Verify system, which immigration activists say is riddled with problems. He has also introduced legislation modeled after Arizona's controversial immigration law.

The state legislature currently has three pieces of legislation targeting the LGBT community, according to a press release from Equality Michigan.

First is HB 5039, introduced by Rep. Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills). If passed, this law would force local communities that have passed inclusive local human rights ordinances on discrimination to strip those laws down to the state's less inclusive law. It would also prohibit local communities from adding any other protected category not included in the state law.

Second is SB 518, introduced by Sen. Tupac Hunter (D-Detroit). This legislation would force counseling and psychology programs at state universities from discriminating against any student who objects to counseling LGBT students because of moral convictions. This law would supersede the codes of professional conduct to which these university programs adhere. In an earlier interview the Michigan Messenger, Hunter said he would not support a white nationalist using his or her sincerely held religious beliefs to discriminate against a person of color, even though the legislation would in fact allow that to happen.

Third is HB 4889, introduced by Rep. Tom Hooker (R-Byron Center). This legislation would prohibit medically necessary sex reassignment surgery for people in some state programs, including prisons. Gender reassignment surgery is not an option in the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Not mentioned in the Equality Michigan release was new legislation introduced by Agema, a former pilot, which would eliminate the state's Healthy Michigan Fund Initiative. The fund provides the state's matching dollars for HIV prevention and care dollars, and without it, the state would be unable to receive federal cash for HIV care. Agema's bill would move the funding to airport care.

Troy mayor causes yet another gay controversy

GSA plans 'major event' to help all involved

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

TROY – Mayor of Troy Janice Daniels is under scrutiny once more for making more anti-gay statements. This time, her words have been recorded on tape, but Mayor Daniels has refused to release the tape for the public to hear.

Mayor Daniels' anti-gay statements were recorded by herself when she invited members of the Troy High School Gay-Straight Alliance to the Troy Community Center on Jan. 9. The purpose of this particular meeting was to try and reach an understanding following last month's controversy when Mayor Daniels made use of the word "queer" in an anti-gay marriage Facebook post. The meeting was also supposed to allow for Mayor Daniels to hold up her end of an agreement previously made with GSA members to organize an anti-bullying awareness event.

Things did not go as planned. According to Skye Curtis, GSA co-founder and Troy High School senior, Mayor Daniels told students she wanted to invite to an event, "a panel of psychologists who would testify that homosexuality is a mental disease."

By 1975, homosexuality was declassified as a mental disorder by both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association Council of Representatives.

"This statement garnered an immediate, visceral reaction from everyone in the room, and in the ensuing chaos, I didn't ask for clarification about the statement's actual wording, and posted a Facebook status when I got home reflecting what I'd understood," said Curtis in a recent blog with the Troy Patch online.

In a Detroit Free Press article, Mayor Daniels denied making that comment and clarified her statement. "What I said was, there's a higher incidence of (overall) disease in the homosexual community," said Mayor Daniels.

"I'm very sorry that this instantly went viral before I checked the actual wording of the Mayor's statement. In case you all were wondering what the Mayor honestly did say, I've been informed that she in fact told us that the psychiatrists would testify that the homosexual lifestyle is dangerous. Even though she may not have used the exact term 'mental disease,' I'm still pretty disturbed by her words, especially in light of last month's events. While I take responsibility for my status, and am very hopeful that the Mayor will soon release the audio recording she made of our meeting to the public

in keeping with her policy of full disclosure, I'd like to bring the underlying issue to light," said Curtis.

Elected officials want tape

According to Troy City Councilmen Dane Slater and Jim Campbell the Mayor should produce the tape if she has nothing to hide and let the public hear the truth and decide what they believe.

Troy Mayor Pro-tem and Councilwoman Maureen McGinnis briefly commented on the challenge faced by council members during this time.

"Whatever comments were made to the students that attended, (it) did not seem to do anything to mend the pain that her Facebook post caused them, and many others in our

"Whatever comments were made to the students that attended, (it) did not seem to do anything to mend the pain that her (Mayor Daniels) Facebook post caused them, and many others in our community, and for that reason, the continuing controversy has made it difficult for council to deal with policy and financial decisions that we are tasked with making as council members."

- Troy Mayor Pro-tem and Councilwoman Maureen McGinnis

community, and for that reason, the continuing controversy has made it difficult for council to deal with policy and financial decisions that we are tasked with making as council members. I am very proud of the diversity we have achieved in the city of Troy and hope that we continue to be recognized in this way. I do not think that the Mayor's personal opinions should represent us as a community or a city council and am hopeful that the Mayor recognizes this as well so that we can continue to move forward as a community," said McGinnis.

"I don't have advice regarding the tape or whether or not she owes people a copy of the tape, but she does owe the citizens of Troy a full and honest explanation of what her thoughts and her beliefs are about the LGBT community and what the issue is. If she wanted advice from me about that, I'd be happy to meet with her

anytime," said Mayor of Ferndale Dave Coulter.

In response to Mayor Daniels comments that she is the victim, suffering from bullying and disrespect, Coulter said, "It is not a fair comparison with the type of bullying that takes place in schools. When in a political job like ours, a person expressing their displeasure with you comes with the territory and is fair game. You have to have thick skin. There is nothing unfair about the way the students are reacting."

And it's not just GSA members and supporters who are anti-Mayor Daniels. On the "I Want Troy Mayor Janice Daniels to Resign" Facebook page, there are 222 likes, including the big thumbs up from the City of Troy, the Troy Public Library, Troy Parks and Recreation, the Troy Police Department, and the Troy Community Coalition.

Oakland County Commissioner and former



Mayors John Hieftje of Ann Arbor, George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Karen Majewski of Hamtramck and Bobby Hopewell of Kalamazoo have signed on to marriage equality.

Four Michigan mayors sign on to marriage equality

National campaign launches at U.S. Conference of Mayors

BY SUSAN HOROWITZ

Freedom to Marry, a national organization founded in 2003 to win marriage nationwide, officially announced a new initiative Friday – Mayors for the Freedom to Marry. The effort includes a bipartisan coalition with over 75 mayors pledging to support marriage for gay and lesbian couples. The announcement came at the 80th annual U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C.

The initial list includes cities large and small, with four of those located in Michigan. They include Mayors John Hieftje of Ann Arbor, George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Bobby Hopewell of Kalamazoo and Karen Majewski of Hamtramck.

"We're launching this effort at a time when more Americans than ever support the freedom to marry. When New York ended its exclusion of gay couples from marriage this summer, the number of people living in states that treat all committed couples equally more than doubled – from 16 million to 35 million Americans. Marriage is on the march in towns and cities across the nation and these mayors will play an important role in advancing the cause," said Marc Solomon, the national campaign director.

San Diego's Republican Mayor Jerry Sanders, a chair of Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, explained why he has signed on to the effort. "Allowing loving and committed couples to join in marriage has benefits not just for couples and their families – but also for society. Marriage encourages people to take responsibility for each other, provides greater security for children, and helps our country live up to its promises set forth in our founding documents. These are important values for a strong society, and we should encourage them."

To view a full list of mayors click on to freedomtomarry.org. The campaign will be working to grow this list in the coming year. Mayors can sign-up anytime online.

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Viewpoint



BY ROLAND LEGGETT

I can hardly believe that it's already 2012. It seems that just the other day I was

standing on the stage at Motor City Pride on a beautiful afternoon in June.

While summer may be the season for fun in the sun, winter affords us the opportunity to hunker down and get to work. The beginning of the year is often a great time for planning, and here at Equality Michigan that is exactly what we're doing. As I write this I'm up to my elbows in annual strategic planning. As many of you know, proper planning requires you to examine what it takes to accomplish specific goals. This year my planning sessions are a little different than in the past. I've started my planning process with a bit of nostalgia. After all, it was around this time last year that we were asking ourselves a few very important questions. What does 2011 have in store for our community? How will the new legislature and governor respond to the complex challenges that our state faces?

Many of us were very disappointed by the way in which our governor and legislature decided to answer those questions this past year. However, there were resounding pro-equality advocates here in the state that perhaps we didn't account enough for: the residents of Michigan!

While we were focused on the happenings in Lansing throughout the year, I also had the privilege of meeting some of the great leaders working all around the state. While Gov. Rick Snyder and conservatives in the legislature were working to eliminate health care coverage for domestic partners, the residents of Traverse City were rallying to keep the non-discrimination ordinance that the city had passed the year before. While the anti-gay American Family Association was trying to block a robust anti-bullying law, students from across the state were going to Lansing to demand safe schools. The year ended with a roar as the residents of Troy demanded that their mayor respect all residents, not just those that she agrees with.

While 2011 began with a lot of questions about how elected officials would respond to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, it was the residents of Michigan who answered the call to action. Now I find myself at the very beginning of 2012 both remembering the questions I had last year and

On the road again

reflecting on the answers that the community has given us. It's clear to me that this next year must be about the residents of Michigan finding the answers to these challenges ourselves.

Rather than hoping for the best from our elected officials, it's up to us to make

new faces. Organizers in cities like Mt. Pleasant and Holland are working hard to pass their own non-discrimination ordinances and I look forward to joining their efforts. Families from across the state are demanding that the unfair and harmful domestic partner health care ban

While Gov. Rick Snyder and conservatives in the legislature were working to eliminate health care coverage for domestic partners, the residents of Traverse City were rallying to keep the non-discrimination ordinance that the city had passed the year before. While the anti-gay American Family Association was trying to block a robust anti-bullying law, students from across the state were going to Lansing to demand safe schools.

our voices heard at the ballot box. Instead of waiting for Washington or Lansing to pass pro-equality legislation, we need to demand that the communities that we call home are welcoming places to live and do business.

The non-discrimination ordinances that have passed across the state are strong evidence that Michigan can be a welcoming community. So it's with the answers that you and others in the community have given that I find myself on the road again. I'll be travelling even more this year and I can't wait to see old friends and some

that Governor Snyder signed be struck down.

All of this is just the beginning. I believe that 2012 can be a year of tremendous strides forward here in Michigan. However, it will be the residents of the state, not our legislature, who will be leading the charge.

Roland Leggett is the Director of Field Organizing at Equality Michigan, which works to achieve full equality. Find out more at www.equalitymi.org.



King of nonprofit turn-around takes on Brooks Patterson

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

ROYAL OAK—Between The Lines readers will recognize Kevin Howley as the energetic whiz Interim Executive Director of Affirmations, Ruth Ellis Center and Friends Schools of Detroit when those organizations needed transitional leadership. But he's also a seasoned private sector business administrator who, among other successes, was the second-in-command of the largest envelope producer in the world. But one thing that Kevin Howley is not, is a politician

Yet at 52 years old, he is jumping in with both feet and executing a full-time campaign against the man who has been running Oakland County for the past 20 years. L. Brooks Patterson was about Howley's age when he gave up being Oakland County Prosecutor to run for the top Oakland County Executive job two decades ago, and Howley thinks it's time for a change.



Kevin Howley

"What really struck me was this matter of redistricting," he said referring to PA 280 which, unless it is overturned by the courts, will have Oakland County reduced from 25 districts to 21 and gives the body as a whole authority to draw its own districts. "The redistricting situation just floored me. We've gone through a process that we have done for years. The court system said the plan is fine, let's move on. But instead Brooks (Patterson) decides he doesn't like the plan and they have a lobbyist that is paid for by the taxpayers up in Lansing lobbying for this partisan bill for partisan purposes. This kind of partisan politics is appalling."

Howley said the spirit of politics in general is changing in Michigan and at the County level. "Until recently we have had a reputation for trying to encourage people to vote and for working together. And out in the private sector, in the factories and on the job, you couldn't tell the difference between a Republican and a Democrat. At the end of the day we are not a partisan county. I don't want politics. I want good government."

Apart from the political impetus that motivated Howley to run for County Executive, he believes he has what it takes to run Oakland County with the same skills and tools he's used to help nonprofits and major corporations fortify themselves in times of transition.

Before devoting himself to nonprofit management, he steered an envelope company

towards diversification and efficiency just as the market was on the verge of change. "Talk about a business that was affected by outside circumstances," he said. "Times changed and people just weren't using envelopes as much as they used to be. We were able to spot that trend coming and to prepare the company for it so they could run more efficiently and focus on growth by capturing market share, minimize losses and remain viable."

He left the private sector in 2003 when his son Langston was four. He and his partner Jason are now fathers of two; thirteen-year-old Langston, and Lily who is almost six. "I was traveling a lot for work and I thought that my family was more important. I also wanted to do the kind of work I was doing in a way that had more impact in helping people."

Howley has consulted for, or come on board with, over a dozen nonprofits in the past eight years including Affirmations, Ruth Ellis Center, Friends School of Detroit, Prevention Point Philadelphia and Centro Nuevo Creacion in Philadelphia. For most projects he came on for a matter of months and gave the organizations a fresh look at their budgets and other circumstances, while also giving them peace of mind that someone experienced was at the helm while they took the time to search for longer-term leadership.

Howley said that every situation is different, and more complicated than can be explained in a quick talking point. Though, essentially, there are three things he does when he assumes leadership of an organization:

1. Realign the organization's operating budget to make sure expenses match revenues
2. Evaluate the organization's ongoing business model by program to address issues of sustainability
3. Strengthen the organization's balance sheet

These same principles can be applied to Oakland County to give a fresh look at where taxpayer's money is being spent. "It's easy to balance the budget, but how do you do it? That's the question. Effectiveness is not being evaluated. It's not just about cutting programs, but about making strategic investments that work. Whatever we've been doing for 20 years is not working. Maybe we need to look at things like Automation Alley, and move beyond the automotive industry."

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Heard on Facebook

Readers respond: Another gay teen, Phillip of Tennessee, commits suicide over anti-gay bullying.

Not another; It's so heartbreaking! What is wrong with people?

—Linda Parr

Bless his heart. It's so sad that Phillip felt that suicide was his only option.

—Cyndy McNew

Kids in the middle of Nowheresville need to stay in the closet. They read and hear that coming out is a wonderful thing when in fact it can be an invitation to hell on earth if there is no support system for them. It's irresponsible and dangerous to encourage these kids to come out. They're getting mixed-messages.

—Todd Erickson

Parents: Do not count on school officials or authorities to protect your children. If they are being victimized without relief, take them out of the damn school. You are the parent and you need to protect your kids. Stop at nothing to protect those you love.

—Jason Vorva

Why are we still putting up with this kind of shit?

—Toni Tripp

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



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S/he Said

LGBT youth and Mayors for Freedom

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Lady Gaga

"My daughter's foundation was born out of her passion to create a better world where people are kinder and nicer to one another and are accepted for who they are, regardless of how different they may be. She has experienced many of the struggles that our youth encounter today, and identifies with the lasting effects they can have without proper support. Together, we look forward to creating a new movement that will engage and empower youth and accept them as valuable members of our society."

—Cynthia Germanotta, Lady Gaga's mother, in a press release titled "Lady Gaga to Officially Launch Born This Way Foundation at Harvard on February 29," about the Born This Way Foundation (BTWF) that will explore the best ways to reach youth and create a new culture of kindness, bravery, acceptance and empowerment, and address issues like self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, mentoring and career development and advocacy, <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu>, Jan. 19.



Eliza Byard

"On behalf of advocates for LGBT youth everywhere, let me be the first to say 'thank you.' The importance of an accepting home cannot be overstated. The damage that can be done by a hostile family also cannot be overstated: LGBT youth whose families are hostile are eight times likelier to commit suicide than their straight peers. Hostile parents can't make their gay kids straight, but they can make them dead. The bad news is that school can be a miserable place for LGBT youth. The good news is that engaged parents can make a huge difference. It's admirable that you want your son to understand that you 'don't care about his sexuality,' you also have to make your son understand that you care about him and that you're aware of the challenges he faces."

—Eliza Byard, executive director, GLSEN, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, responding to a question from the father of a 13-year-old son who came out to his parents and has already made the news public at school, in Dan Savage's advice column, www.thestranger.com, Jan. 17.



Caitlin

"My name is Caitlin, I've been wanting a more gender neutral name, Riley is my top one. I've identified as genderqueer for about three years now, before that I was 'bisexual', and before that I was just fucking confused. I've pushed myself to explore if I might be trans, and I am not. I love when people openly need to clarify how I identify not because they're nice, but because they're honest to glob confused."

—Caitlin, in a posting on "genderqueer – beyond the binaries" blog site, images of gender-bending, trans and queer people of all sorts, meant to empower and celebrate the beauty within all gender expressions, <http://genderqueer.tumblr.com>, Jan. 21.



Tom Menino

"It was nearly eight years ago that my city was the first large city in the country to marry same-sex couples. Back then, it was a big deal. People were protesting everywhere, and we were the focus of international news. Well, eight years later, I'm here to tell you that marriage for gay couples has made my city of Boston a much better place."

—Boston Mayor Tom Menino, in the blog titled "Launch of Mayors for the Freedom to Marry," about a new initiative titled Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, initiated by Freedom to Marry to demonstrate the wide, non-partisan support for marriage equality across the country, www.freedomtomarry.org, Jan. 20. Freedom to Marry is the national organization working to expand public support for ending marriage discrimination.

ACLU: Michigan domestic partners can't wait

Injunction sought to stop enforcement

BY MARY ANNE MEYERS

Michigan News Connection

DETROIT – When Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder signed the ban on public employee domestic partner benefits last month, the law took effect immediately and people started losing coverage. While activists have been protesting in Lansing, the ACLU has sued.

However, many people with serious health issues say they can't wait for the year or so it may take for the issue to make its way through the court. So, the ACLU plans to seek an injunction to stop enforcement of the law until a final decision is made.

Michigan ACLU attorney Jay Kaplan says he's hopeful the law will be overturned because it singles out domestic partners while allowing all kinds of family members to keep coverage.

"A brother, a sister, a cousin, an aunt, an uncle, you know, a sixth cousin. The only people who can't qualify under this criteria are same-sex partners."

Gov. Snyder has said he signed the bill because the Civil Service Commission shouldn't have added the benefits while Michigan was in a financial crisis.

Kaplan says it could be costly to defend the law in court.

However, he says, he's not sure the



ACLU LGBT Project Attorney Jay Kaplan addressing the press Jan. 4. BTL photo: Andrew Potter

state will really save much money by denying domestic partner benefits.

"We're talking about three employees here, six employees there. It's a very, very small population."

Even though the law bans public employee benefits for any domestic partner, Maxine Thome, executive director of the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, sees it as discriminating against homosexual couples because in Michigan they can't legally marry to get insurance for their partners.

"Heterosexual couples that, for

whatever reason, may not want to marry, it forces them to do that. For LGBT people, LGBT people can't marry. So there's no answer."

State universities are exempt from the law, but it does cover community colleges, public schools, cities and counties.

A U.S. Court of Appeals has struck down a similar law in Arizona.

Editor's note: The Ann Arbor City Council voted unanimously Jan. 23 in favor of a resolution directing the city administrator and city attorney to assist the ACLU in the lawsuit.

College gets \$23 million for social justice

KALAMAZOO – Kalamazoo College has received a \$23 million grant to endow the work of its Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership. The grant, made by the Arcus Foundation, will support a broad array of activities including: student scholarships and two endowed professorships, student internships and leadership development programming, faculty and staff fellowships, public lectures and conferences, local and global partnerships, and residencies for social justice scholars and practitioners.

"The breadth of the grant makes it exceptional," said Kalamazoo College President Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran. "The entire Kalamazoo College community is extremely grateful to the Arcus Foundation and its founder, Jon Stryker, for their belief in the mission of the

College and the Arcus Center."

The mission of the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership is to support the pursuit of human rights and social justice by developing emerging leaders and sustaining existing leaders in the field of human rights and social justice, creating a pivotal role for liberal arts education in engendering a more just world.

The Arcus Foundation grant is the largest grant in the College's 179-year history, and one of the largest given for a social justice purpose to an undergraduate institution in the United States.

"I know from my own experience the emphasis that 'K' College places on developing global citizens who can be effective agents of transformational change," said Jon Stryker, a Kalamazoo College alumnus and trustee, who

founded the Arcus Foundation in 2000.

"Our intent in making this grant is to foster diverse leaders who advance social justice in all its dimensions – from anti-racism to economic justice to equality for all sexual orientations and gender identities. We envision 'K' College becoming the place to be for young people who aspire to develop the strategies and lead the work that will make our world more just and humane. This ambition maps directly to the values shared by the Foundation and the College."

The Arcus Foundation is a leading global foundation advancing social justice and conservation issues. Specifically, Arcus works to advance LGBT equality, as well as to conserve and protect the great apes.

Parting Glances



My rainbow visitor

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I've lost three friends in three months. LaMarr Fields, Rev. Mark Bidwell, my Cass Tech High School classmate Gordon Barnard.

Each lives inwardly as long as I will live; and at 75 that may be of short duration or, hopefully, until age 86 when my England-born grandmother on my mother's side passed. (I tell myself longevity is gifted through a grandmother's gene. That precious bit of Anglo Saxon DNA, and my art and writing – among other things! – keeps me going.)

It was a joy to know Dearborn theater director LaMarr, whom I met at MCC-Detroit, and discovered we had friends in common dating back to the mid-1950s. I knew Rev. Bidwell for 25 years. He was supportive and caring of me and my spiritual needs, as he was for so many, many others.

Gordon got in touch with me ten years ago, calling BTL to reestablish a friendship that began when we were in our newly out twenties. For these rekindled years we spoke daily without fail. If only I had hugged him when I visited him in the hospital. If only. If only. Then. This e-mail I shared with BTL co-publishers Susan and Jan.

"I had headaches and tensions late Monday afternoon and evening. I wondered if I'd be able to get a good night's sleep. But it proved a reasonably sound sleep, no tossing, no turning, no getting up to go to the bathroom, waking at 6:15 a.m.

"I decided it was too early to face a gloomy day, so I cushioned myself between my two pillows as I usually do to drown out distracting sounds outside, again fell asleep, and this scenario took place in dream land:

"I found myself in another city. It was pleasant, warm. Sunny. I wandered comfortably there. Eventually I stopped in what may have been a gay club or gathering place and observed, seeing someone there whom I found attractive, and I thought had noticed me.

"Continuing my looking around I caught a glimpse of someone I did know – happy to see a familiar face – and made my way through the crowd to him. It was Gordon! He looked years and years younger. Mid-thirties. Instant bonding once more. He was with someone I didn't know, but I got the impression they were together.

"Gordon's outfit was different, but it was impeccable, stylish, the kind of attire he so often took pride in wearing. His old self. We were happy to see each other. Like old times. Smiling. His old campy self. As though he had not died at all. Just relocated. In good health. No frailty. No pain. The life of the party. Still a Hollywood legend in his own mind.

"For a few days now, Susan and Jan, I've been wanting to send you this short poem by Emily Dickinson that I long ago committed to memory:

"Our share in night to bear/ Our share in morning/ Our blank in bliss to fill/ Our blank in scorning/ Here a star. There a star./ Some lose their way/ Here a mist. There a mist./ Afterwards day."

Charles@pridesource.com

Creep of the Week

Patrick Wooden

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Holy shit. And I mean that literally. Because Patrick Wooden is both a pastor and a man whose imagination is wildly scatological, at least when it comes to the gays.



Patrick Wooden

Wooden is a North Carolina pastor and an outspoken, to say the least, critic of LGBT rights. The American Family Association, National Organization for Marriage, and the Family Research Council all consider Wooden a good pal.

In an interview with anti-gay chattering heads Peter LaBarbera and Matt Barber on their Americans for Truth Hour radio show, Wooden made clear that he thinks gays are basically full of it.

“The God of the Bible made the human sperm, the God of the Bible designed it and it was not designed to be emptied into an area that is filled with feces, there is nothing for it to germinate with, it will most certainly mean the extinction of the human race,” Wooden said.

Hope you weren't eating when you read that. But don't worry. It gets worse.

“My belief is that if the medical community would just step forward and just would share with the American people what happens to the male anus, the problems that homosexuals have with their rectums, the damage that is done, the operations that are needed to

sew up their bodies if you will, and how many of the men don't even give these stitches time to heal before they are back out there practicing that wicked behavior,” he continued. “Some are bleeders, men who are not turned off by ingesting the feces of other men.”

Woah. Where to even start? First of all, the claim that anal sex will bring about the extinction of the human race is a little hyperbolic. Just a tad. I mean, if somehow people all over the world, gay and straight and everything in between, stopped any other form of sex then, sure, that might be an issue. But to even suggest that is going to happen takes a really big leap of faith and imagination. Then again, I think it's pretty clear that Wooden's imagination is very, well, active. “Bleeders” eating poo? Dude.

I also really think that the key words in Wooden's comments are “my belief.” It is his belief that the medical community should “step forward” and “share” this anal

First of all, the claim that anal sex will bring about the extinction of the human race is a little hyperbolic. Just a tad.

fiction with America. As if there's some huge underground anus operation cabal no one is talking about.

And speaking of truth, Wooden had more to spew: “If the truth was told, people would literally gag and no one would want to be in a lifestyle like that. Who wants to practice anything that is going to ultimately lead a grown man to about the time he's in his 40s or 50s, or what not, having to wear a diaper or a butt plug just to be able to contain their bowels?”

Wow, how do you even respond to that? I mean, besides having gay men with healthy butts send photographic evidence to Wooden.



Holland is Ready recognized

HOLLAND - Holland is Ready, the group that sought to have an inclusive civil rights ordinance passed last year, was the recipient of the City of Holland Social Justice Award presented at the Jan. 15 meeting of the city council. Accepting the award was Rev. Jennifer Adams, who said it was ironic that they received this award even

though they were unsuccessful in getting the ordinance passed. “We might in fact be the only group ever – who in one sixth-month time period were first denied the rights we requested and were then celebrated by the City for our efforts in seeking those rights,” she said.

► Troy mayor

Continued from p. 5

With more than 30 members so far, the group in collaboration with local filmmaker and youth mentor Amy Weber, will host what Kilgore calls a “major multimedia event” featuring video presentations, live music, and guest speakers that will celebrate peace, respect, and love. “The event will be non-political, and it will focus solely on helping parties in the community reach a mutual understanding. We will change this unfortunate, negative episode into a positive campaign that promotes unity and respect amongst the city of Troy and the surrounding region. More information will be released soon,” said Kilgore.



Troy residents Jeff Williams and Kristen Douglas protesting Mayor Daniels on Dec. 5. BTL photo: Andrew Potter

GOP candidates head to Florida, none support equal rights

BY LISA KEEN

Three different contests, three different winners, and none of the remaining four major candidates for the Republican presidential nomination has a record of supporting equal rights for gays.

But the candidate who described laws banning sexual orientation discrimination as “religious bigotry” - Newt Gingrich - won Saturday’s South Carolina primary. Now, he must slug it out in Florida against Iowa caucus winner Rick Santorum and New Hampshire primary winner Mitt Romney.

Gingrich won 40 percent of the vote in South Carolina’s primary, a primary in which 65 percent of voters identified themselves as evangelicals or born-again Christians. Romney took second place with 28 percent of the vote, followed by Santorum with 17 percent, Ron Paul with 13 percent. Two percent went to other candidates.

In his victory speech Saturday night, Gingrich hammered home his contention that “elites” and activist judges are threatening America with “religious bigotry.” He belittled President Obama’s opposition to a pipeline through the mid-section of the U.S. as “taking care of his extremist, left-wing friends in San Francisco.”

Many political analysts are attributing Gingrich’s success in South Carolina to his pugilistic performance in debates, his having served as a member of Congress from neighboring Georgia, and the fact that Romney has been stubbornly reluctant to release his tax returns to the public for scrutiny. And exit polling has shown that 65 percent of Republicans voting Saturday said the debates were an important factor in making their decisions. Of those who said that, 50 percent voted for Gingrich.

In debate Thursday night, Gingrich berated CNN moderator John King for asking Gingrich if he wanted to address his ex-wife’s widely



Republican candidates Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney at the Jan. 23 CNN debate.

publicized accusation that Gingrich had asked her to either agree to let him have a mistress or a divorce. While a highly conservative audience might normally be expected to scrutinize an allegation that a thrice-married candidate may not respect the “sanctity” of marriage, it, instead, seemed to embrace Gingrich’s attack against the “media elite.”

LGBT voters were likely more interested in examining the allegation against Gingrich because Gingrich has been opposed to marriages of same-sex couples. He told a debate audience in New Hampshire Jan. 8 that he did not support allowing same-sex couples to marry because it was “a huge jump from being understanding and considerate” of the pains of discrimination against same-sex couples and “saying we’re therefore going to institute the sacrament of marriage as though it has no basis.” Marriage, said Gingrich, was “between a man and a woman.”

Coming out of South Carolina, Gingrich now has 23 delegates toward the GOP nomination, which requires 1,144 to secure. Romney has 19

delegates, Santorum has 12, Ron Paul has 3, and Jon Huntsman (who pulled out of the race Monday) has 2.

Gingrich has already been campaigning in Florida, which holds its primary Jan. 31 and 50 delegates to offer. While in Miami campaigning this month, Gingrich claimed that Romney appointed the judges who delivered the decision that led to same-sex couples obtaining marriage licenses in Massachusetts. Romney did not. Three of the four justices who voted with the majority in that decision were appointed by other Republican governors; the fourth justice was a Democratic appointee.

It’s not clear how big an issue same-sex marriage, adoption, or other civil rights issues for LGBT people might be in Florida, but the Sunshine State - unlike the previous three states - has a significant gay Republican presence. There are Log Cabin Republican chapters in Miami, Broward County and Tampa Bay. And gay-related issues have been in the news regularly in Florida.

Lesbian couple files legal challenge of state adoption law

HAZEL PARK – Committed parents April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse, of Oakland County, filed a federal lawsuit Jan. 23 to overturn the state’s practice of preventing unmarried couples from jointly adopting children.

The women are state-certified foster parents who are trying to jointly adopt three newborns that they began raising two years ago. They filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Detroit. Attorney General Bill Schuette and Gov. Rick Snyder were named as defendants because of their offices.

Michigan does not allow unmarried couples to adopt together, and since same-sex couples cannot marry in Michigan, they therefore cannot adopt as a couple. They can adopt, but only as single parents. DeBoer adopted their daughter; Rowse adopted their two sons. Rowse’s two boys, ages 2 and 3, were abandoned by their mothers. DeBoer adopted a 23-month-old girl who was surrendered by her biological mother. DeBoer, a neonatal intensive care nurse, and Rowse, an emergency room nurse, have been in a committed relationship for 10 years, the suit said.

“Children are at risk when two loving parents are prevented from jointly adopting them,” said Emily Dievendorf, director of policy at Equality Michigan. “Michigan has had ample time to commit to caring for our state’s children in the way that psychologists and social workers have always promoted - by ensuring that kids have two loving parents who have the resources to best support their family.”

The suit states there are major benefits for children to have two legal parents rather than one, including the right to have a parent if the first parent dies, the right to dependency benefits such as Social Security, workers compensation, pensions, insurance, and the right to have at least one parent available to make decisions if the other parent is unavailable or incapacitated.

Currently there are two bills working their way through the Michigan legislature that would allow for second-parent adoption. The Senate version (SB 167) was introduced by Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) and the House version (HB 4249) by Rep. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor).

Detroit community mourns the loss of Leon Smith

DETROIT – Leon Smith, an elder in Detroit’s LGBT community died Jan. 12.

Smith has been an active member of Detroit’s LGBT movement since the 1980s. He was an original steering committee member and a key participant in the development of Men of Color Motivational Group, a support for black men. Smith was also an original planning committee member of Detroit’s black LGBT pride event Hotter Than July, the statesman for Help & Heal and KICK’s faith-based action and support group for HIV men.

“As we prepare for Black History Month let’s take a moment to reflect on the life of a man who was a friend, brother, son, mentor, patron, prankster and an inspiration to us all,” KICK commented in an official press release this week.

“KICK sincerely offers heartfelt prayer and continued condolences to Leon’s family and all those who have been touched by him throughout the years.”

Services were held Jan. 21.

Leon Smith seen here at Hotter Than July. Photo courtesy of KICK-Detroit



For further information on children and LGBT families, see the new 2011 report: All Children Matter: How Legal and Social Inequalities Hurt LGBT Families. Additional resources are available at www.children-matter.org.

WITNESS: The Art of JERRY PINKNEY

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Illustrator Jerry Pinkney is the recipient of numerous Caldecott Honor Medals and Coretta Scott King Honor Awards.

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Mozart	Divertimento No. 1 for Three Bassoon Horns, K. 439b (1783)
C.P.E. Bach	Duo for Two Clarinets in C Major, Wq. 142 (b.1714)
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Glenn, Close Up



Photo: Patrick Redmond

Actress talks gender-bending role in 'Albert Nobbs,' unexpected bisexual turn and the possibility of going lesbian – in real life

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Man, Glenn Close feels like a woman, but she sure doesn't look like one in her new gender-bending movie. In "Albert Nobbs," the actress—known especially to gay audiences for her role in the 1995 film "Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story," about a real-life lesbian soldier—drops her voice a few notches, wears a top hat and wraps her torso in a girdle, all to keep her job while living in late-19th-century Ireland.

Recently nominated for an Oscar, the role—originated by Close on stage nearly 30 years ago—also earned her a Golden Globe nomination. Nods also went to costar Janet McTeer for playing Hubert, a cross-dressing lesbian who's living the life that Albert so desperately wants.

In a recent one-on-one, Close revealed her proudest part of the film, how she thinks Albert identifies sexually and looked back at her unexpected bisexual role on "Will & Grace."

How was it getting in touch with your masculine side?

(Laughs) It's funny, because I never think of Albert as a man. I always thought of her, even as Albert, as a woman, kind of wearing a mask. As far as getting in touch with her movement and her voice and all that, I would think back on the reality of what she must have gone through when she first had the idea to disappear as a waiter. The shoes would've been too heavy and too big, the pants would've been too long. Waiters in Victorian times who were very formal weren't supposed to look anybody in the eye—they were seen, not heard—and so she couldn't have chosen a better way to disappear.

People aren't sure how to define Albert Nobbs. I've heard both transgender and lesbian used to describe her. What do you think?

I don't think she is either, and that's what fascinates me about this character. She disappeared when she was 14 and she emerges 30 years later. She's never been in a home,

she's never had any intimate human contact, and she's never been loved by someone. Everything, in a way, is new and unexplored. She does not have, when you first see her, a hugely active regretful longing in her life. She counts her money, she wants to be left alone, she wants to have the security of her job so that she won't end up on the street—and that's fine with her. She's lower-class and working, and it's only when Hubert comes into her life and she's revealed that—first of all, she fears her life as she knows it ending, but when she hears Hubert's story, naturally, she thinks, "Can I do that?" But she doesn't have the tools; she just doesn't. Hubert's one mistake is that she thinks Albert is much more capable of forging a life, but she just isn't.

One of the best lines in the film comes from Hubert, who tells Albert that "you can be whoever you are." That's such a powerful mantra for all of us, but the gay community can definitely relate. What effect do you hope that line, and this film, has on the LGBT community?

I hope that line makes them really happy. You're absolutely right to pick out that line, because it comes after a scene where Albert, in the dress, realizes that's not who she is either—and that's when Hubert says, "Albert, you can be whoever you are. Look what you've done." It's a wonderful moment.

What about the film, and the role of Albert Nobbs, makes you most proud?

Moments in the movie when I think people honestly forget what they're looking at. It's not two gay men and one confused other woman; it's two people in a loving and passionate relationship, being kind to a third person. And gender really, at that point, doesn't matter. I know that it does matter, but in some ways, if you look at it from some angles, gender should be irrelevant. People should be able to love whoever they have that safety and connection with. That's a basic human need. And that's what Albert takes on. What she longs for is that sitting room. Those two chairs in front of the fire

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BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Gorgeous, talented and British – of course Jamie Scott has a gay following. The 27-year-old dreamboat fronts U.K. group Graffiti6, a folktronica hybrid rooted in Motown and trippy art-pop that dropped their full-length debut, “Colours,” this week.

Before a stop at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor as openers for Augustana, Scott rang to talk gay influences, sex on the road and the importance of looking good.

When did you know you had a gay following?

Right from the onset, actually. I didn't really notice a sudden change in it. It's just always been. I think ever since my first shows when I was 20. The support from them has been amazing.

When did you move to L.A.? And did your gay friend quotient go up?

Just under a year ago. Actually, when I first moved to L.A., I had four friends – and they were all gay.

My only issue with you looking as dapper as you do is that this whole metrosexual/hipster thing that straight guys have going on is throwing off our gaydar.

I don't think anyone's ever told me that I dress well.

Are you conscious of your style?

Not that conscious of it, actually. I put on the closest thing that's to the bed.

You must have a gay man helping you out, then?

No, I don't. You know what, I always go for comfort. I like clothes that I feel good in.

Some straight male musicians don't feel comfortable doing gay press, assuming people will think they're gay. Why do you do it, though?

(Laughs) Rather than saying, “Why do you do gay press?” I'd say, “Why not?”

Are British men just more secure with their sexualities?

I don't know, man. You'd have to do a survey. I'd be quite interested in the answer.

How important do you think sex appeal is in this business?

I'm not gonna lie: I've been signed to two different labels since I was 20 and I think it's obvious what that can add to a project. For me, it's something I've always been conscious of, though I always wanted my music to be out there first and foremost.

And it's not like you're totally naked in your videos.

You haven't seen the video for the next one, man. (Laughs)

One of your earliest introductions to music



Graffiti6 frontman Jamie Scott talks 'amazing' gay following

Graffiti6

8 p.m. Jan. 30
Blind Pig
208 N. First St.
Ann Arbor (\$15-\$20)

was Joni Mitchell. What was it about her?

Well, she's obviously amazing and the guitar work on “Blue,” which I listened to when I was younger, was really the main thing. My mom listened to it, and that's really where that came from.

And what about the soulful side of you?

That's my dad. My dad is really into Motown and Stax Records and Donny Hathaway and Stevie Wonder. Just amazing soul musicians and singers.

What was the first album you owned?

The vinyl of “Innervisions” by Stevie Wonder.

Embarrassing music guilty pleasures?

ABBA. I love “Dancing Queen.”

Are you a good dancer?

I'm in “Step Up” – check it out and you can tell if I'm a good dancer, because I was trying to do it in there. (Laughs)

Who are your gay musician influences?

I'm a massive fan of Rufus Wainwright. Obviously, Elton John is amazing. And, actually, we do a cover of Freddie Mercury's “You're My Best Friend.”

Would you ever bring a fan back to your hotel room? Are there band rules on that?

I don't really get to capitalize much on fans that hit on me after, because I normally have to go to bed really early to get up the next morning to do promo, but the band doesn't have any rules. You know, it's quite hard to do lots of things when everyone is concentrating on the gig and getting the stuff off stage. It normally takes priority.

Right. You're there to work.

Yeah, exactly.

Was “This Man” meant to be a sex song?

No, but I've had quite a few people who have said they've made love to “This Man.”

What else do you have going on?

I do quite a bit of writing for other artists, which I'm doing probably more of than anything else at the moment. I've been doing quite a bit of writing for other people as well as Graffiti6: Enrique Iglesias, a lot of “The X Factor” stuff, Ron Sexsmith. I love it.

What would you be doing if it weren't music?

If I weren't doing music, I'd be a gardener. I like trees and I like being outdoors. I don't like being inside much.

Do you have a garden?

I... wait, I forgot where my place is. (Laughs) Oh yeah, we do have a garden.



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Comedian on 'gay humor' and reality show's second season

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Joan Rivers has never been one to question her actions. But today, she's doing just that: "I'm listening to Katy Perry and I don't know why."

Besides being a firework herself, Rivers has little in common with the ubiquitous pop tart. There's this, though: They've both kissed a girl and – as the legendary queen of snark (and facial reconfigurations) admits in our recent chat – liked it. So much, in fact, that she'd be up for some more lez loving. But for now Rivers is focused on promoting her wacky reality show, "Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best," now in its second season on WE tv.

In our interview, Rivers dished on the new installment (what if her daughter Melissa actually were a gay man?), how her humor's always been "gay," and her face – before she redid it.

I'm a big fan – but I'm sure every gay man tells you that.

No, no. No gay men tell me that.

I don't believe you.

Well, every now and again.

You know, I'm glad this isn't a face-to-face interview because, since you're a member of the "Fashion Police," you wouldn't approve of my outfit today.

You wouldn't approve of what I'm wearing right now, either! I'm wearing a stolen hotel bathrobe. One of those white bathrobes that say, "Don't take these." Somewhere along the line I did.

Do you always take things from hotels?

Yes. Always those little shampoos, little soaps, all those cute little things. Sewing kits – you can't get enough of those! (Laughs)

Which celebrity needs a little more gay fashion influence, and a little less?

Oh, I don't know. Every week it changes so much and Melissa (Rivers), the exec producer, throws a hundred pictures on the table and you start from scratch again, so it's always changing.

You've been doing press interviews for a long time. You must get the same questions. What are you sick of talking about?

No, you get different questions because they come from different people. It's like an audience: always different every night. That sounds funny, but it's true.

What are we in for with the second season of "Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best"?

There's an uber-WASP friend of ours who turns Jewish; Melissa breaking up with the boyfriend; taking (my grandson) Cooper to New York, and he gets lost. All of which is true. Things happen that are just fabulous. If you liked the first season of "Joan Knows Best," you're going to love the second season.

You get more plastic surgery during the first episode, "Skintervention." And Melissa does not approve.

No, she totally doesn't. But you know, it's a business where we all have to look good. You look at anybody – I mean, Jane Fonda running around with a whole new face and body and pretending she's done that through eating apples? You wanna go, "Oh stop it!"

You didn't get that face from eating apples?

I got this face from eating artichokes and apples and having a great diet. Yeah, right. All the above – plus a great doctor!

And the freebies you take from hotels.

That helps, too. That makes you happy.

What do you think you'd look like without plastic surgery?

I imagine I'd look a lot like my sister, and that worries me – because she looks good! (Laughs)

You've wasted all that money, Joan.

It could well be. I could have myself really nice outfits.

What don't they tell you about plastic surgery?

Oh, I don't know. I don't listen. I have a friend who wanted to know everything the doctor was going to do. I don't want to know. He doesn't ask me how I write jokes and I don't ask him how he operates. The less I know, the better.

Right. That's with a lot of things. Like Katy Perry.

I'm trying like hell. She's very pretty but I don't get the music.

You're not in a teenage dream?

No, not in a teenage dream. (Laughs)

What do you listen to?

I hate to tell you: show tunes. You could sing it and I could tell you where it's from. Yeah, show tunes my whole life. My

► Glenn Close

Continued from p. 13

represent everything that she wants. And it's basically a safe place with someone across the room. It's as simple as that.

The film, though it's set in a different time period, is still very relevant to how people nowadays are resisting labels and gender identity. People no longer want to be called gay and lesbian. Queer is now being embraced. Do you see parallels between the film's resistance of labels and the LGBT community?

Absolutely. I always have. I think it's why this simple story is so powerful. What Janet brought to the part of Hubert is absolutely fantastic, because Hubert defies labels. She doesn't care about labels. She's happy with being Hubert, and it's a great thing to see. No big deals made out of it. But here's somebody who, even though she has to masquerade as a man, is actually who she is. She's comfortable with that. Like Janet has said, Hubert doesn't want to be in a dress, but she'll do it for Albert. But nah, she's happy if she never gets in a dress.

Let's talk about all the gay cred you have – and not just with “Albert Nobbs.” You played a lesbian soldier, and kissed Judy Davis, in “Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story.” But you also dry humped Debra Messing on “Will & Grace.”

(Laughs) Oh my god, that was so funny!

I didn't forget about that, Glenn.

Too funny. I went out there thinking I was going to be a marriage counselor. They said, “No, no – you're going to be this bisexual international photographer.” And I go, “Oh, OK!”

You know, many consider you a dykon. When did you first feel embraced by the gay community?

Oh, that's so nice. I'm so flattered. Well, you can't be in my profession and not have wonderful, important gay friends. I guess you can't be anywhere in life now and not have wonderful, important gay friends. So it's just a no-brainer.

I started this organization to fight stigma around mental illness, and that's one kind of frontier – are you saying “queer community” now? What are you saying?

Sure, queer works.

You've all come a long way as far as rights, and I think mentally ill people, many of them, lead secret lives. I don't know how I got on that.

With the repeal of “Don't Ask, Don't Tell,” how do you reflect on your role in “Serving in Silence” and the progress gay people have made in the military?

Incredible. I was in touch with Margarethe Cammermeyer when it happened, and we saw it back, what the situation was when we made that movie, and it was amazing. It didn't ruin her life but it certainly stopped her life on a trajectory that she wanted it to go on – she wanted to be a general and that's a loss. She was a great soldier. She was remarkable. So I'm very proud of that. I was honored to try to walk a little bit in her shoes, which was impossible. But I'm very proud.

And that kiss: I remember you saying that for 30 seconds you felt what it was like to be attracted to the same sex.

Yeah, absolutely.

If you weren't an actress, do you think you would've ever been inclined to see what that felt like?

Oh lord. I don't know. That's hard. Obviously it depends on the individual. I can't answer that. If I wasn't an actress, I don't know what kind of life I'd have.



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► Joan Rivers

Continued from p. 16

housekeeper goes, "Ew, here comes the score of 'Bells Are Ringing.' Err!"

"Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best" is in its second season and –

It's done. Thank god! But things never stop happening, that's the trouble.

With you they don't, because you're a workaholic.

Yeah, you're right. I just went down to Williamsburg, Va. with Judge Judy and I thought, "Where are the cameras?" It might be in the third season. Things are always happening.

You recently joked about wishing you could replace Melissa with a gay son. How would the reality show be different if that were true?

Well, it'd be a lot of different. We'd have a whole episode devoted to Judy Garland. There'd be nothing to discuss here.

Maybe even a whole season.

A whole season on, "Was Judy happy?"

What does Joan know best?

Being a good grandma. (Cooper) will appreciate me after I'm dead a lot more. Right now I'm grandma, but later on when he's in college with his friends, he'll get how fun grandma was. She was... not cool – that's the wrong word – but

she was crazy.

Is anything off limits when the cameras are rolling?

No. If you're going to do a reality show, you have to show your real reality, otherwise it's gonna be stupid. And they know, people are not that – well, I shouldn't say that, because look at the Kardashians. So people are not, usually, that stupid.

Anyone you won't make fun of?

No. If you're in the public eye, you're in the public eye. And you have no right to say "I'm off limits." Nonsense. Then you're in the wrong business. Go work at Kmart and no one will care and you can have the most private life of anyone in the world.

In the '80s you became the permanent guest host on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." Why don't we have a woman hosting a late-night talk show on a major network currently?

Because there just isn't anyone good enough. Somebody that was great would be on. I don't know what that means, but that's what it means.

How about Kathy Griffin or Chelsea Handler?

Chelsea: I've never seen so I have nothing to say about her. Never watched the show but once and I thought, "This sucks." And I don't know if Kathy would want to do it, or even has the right equipment for it. It's a very different hat to put on.

So you're saying it has nothing to do with gender but rather talent?

It's the talent. That's why I think Jimmy Fallon is genius. He's got what Carson had. He's a fan, he lets his people be funny; he doesn't compete with his guests, and he just sits back and lets the guest do it. He's amazing.

What about Ellen DeGeneres?

Ellen is the most boring white woman in the world.

But the most exciting lesbian in the world?

Oh, that's right. I forgot about that. One of the funniest episodes of her sitcom was when she announced it by mistake over the microphone.

When I saw your 2010 documentary, "A Piece of Work," I was really surprised by how much of a softie you can be.

Everybody is. You show so many different things on stage. My act is one kind of talk. In real life, I can be something else. We're all so different in different ways.

So what's Joan like off-camera?

I like to cry a lot.

What makes you cry?

What doesn't? Christmas carols make me cry.

In "Driftwood," you played Barbra Streisand's – Lesbian lover!

Would you go lesbian again?

If Babs is available. She was an amazing kisser! We still both laugh because that was our first scene – for both of us. She was still in high school.

You were aware of your gay following early on, while performing at clubs in Greenwich Village. Why did you connect with gay people so instantly?

I didn't purposefully connect with them. It was always there. I worked all through college decorating Lord & Taylor windows, and all the window display men were gay. We loved each other.

I think my humor has always been a gay kind of humor. Gay humor is the smartest humor in the world. And gay audiences make a show. If I look out in an audience and there are six gay men in the front row, I know we're going to have fun tonight.

You used to get a lot of flack for some of your jokes – especially ones about AIDS. Is it easier to joke about taboo topics like that now?

Oh, of course. But that's the way you get people to pay attention. You know, I did the first AIDS benefit when it was still called "gay pneumonia." We were in such danger that we had men on stage carrying guns because we got death threats.

You ruffled some feathers recently when you told the Advocate that gay actors should stay in the closet because they were committing career suicide.

You are. If I knew Tom Cruise was gay when I was a 7-year-old girl, that would've been it. I would've put my fantasies on somebody else.

Tom Cruise is gay?

Oh, I don't think so. Do you?

You tell me. You're the celeb guru.

I don't know. You hear so many rumors circulating. But I think in certain professions you can't come out and be America's romantic idol. Ricky Martin was brilliant in how he handled his career.

But with the social climate changing, do you still believe that to be true?

You're not talking about that. You're talking about somebody that young girls are going to pay money to see and fantasize about. I think it's a very difficult position for somebody to be put in. It's unfortunate, but it's life.

When I was a child, I was madly in love with an actor named Van Johnson – mad about him, had his picture up. In third grade I did a whole notebook on Van Johnson. Then I grew up, he was still adorable but he was gay and he was wearing mascara and I thought to myself, "If I had known then, I wouldn't have loved Van Johnson. I would've fallen for John Wayne."

So I think it's a very difficult choice for an actor to make if he's going to make his living as a romantic lead for young girls to adore. Or women. Well, men like to challenge women. Men love to challenge a lesbian: "Oh, I could turn her around." That's a good challenge for a man.

As someone who's had a gay following for years, what do you think of people claiming that Lady Gaga and Kathy Griffin pander to gay audiences and aren't actually genuine?

I don't know and I don't care. How about that? Couldn't care less. I worry about myself. I love my gay audiences. They've been with me forever, they'll stay with me forever, and I'm very happy. It's that simple.

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Stagecrafters gambles with serious, moving musical 'Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical' explores love, longing and liberation

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

ROYAL OAK – There are some shows that community theaters aren't eager to take risks on in hard economic times. Terrence McNally, John Kander and Fred Ebb's musical "Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical" is one such show.

It can be a hard sell to those looking for a night of light entertainment. For starters, it takes place in a Latin American prison and centers around the relationship of a gay man serving a sentence for corrupting a minor and a Marxist revolutionary who is slowly being tortured to death. Not the stuff of a light musical.

"There is a distinction between musical comedy and musical theater. This is definitely musical theater," said John Luther, the director of a local production of this musical. "It is a stunning story. No matter how difficult it is to watch some of the prison sequences, in the end there is redemption, revolution, love and acceptance."

Stagecrafters in Royal Oak is taking the economic risk this week when it opens the show Luther has been pitching to them for years. He first presented it to

PREVIEW

Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical

Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Jan. 20 - Feb. 12.
\$18-\$20. 248-541-5430.

www.stagecrafters.org

their board seven years ago for their 50th anniversary season and has suggested it every year since. When he was told last year that they'd finally agreed to do it, he was shocked.

"I literally didn't believe it for the first 24 hours," Luther said. "The subject matter is quite difficult, and community theaters...are looking at the bottom line. We have to choose a season that will make money. You can't bring your kids (to this musical). You can't sell it as a family show. You have to sell it as a show for adults and hopefully attract adults who want to not only be entertained, but challenged at the same time."

Luther first saw the show during its

See Spider Woman, page 21



As a means of coping with prison life, Molina (John Nowaczuk of Ferndale) dramatically recounts to his cellmate, Valentin (Gary Castaneda of Warren), his favorite movie musical numbers performed by the alluring Aurora (Maria Tilmos of Novi). Photo: Lance Luce and Colleen Muench

Tipping Point lists lots of reasons to laugh

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

Looking a gift horse in the mouth can have dangerous consequences.

In "The Love List," Bill gets himself the perfect girlfriend – until he starts trying to tweak perfection. Then things go seriously awry for both him and his best friend, Leon.

Tipping Point Theatre's production of Norm Foster's play is charming and fun with just a touch of spookiness. Dave Davies creates the statistician Bill who is likeable and naive, the type of guy who can be deadly dull one minute and adorable as a teddy bear the next. Meanwhile Wayne David Parker plays Leon, the novelist who would like to believe he is suave, debonair and a connoisseur of the female gender. He's slightly arrogant and admittedly shallow, a man who has done little to make himself a good partner while being overeager to describe in detail what the perfect female match should be. Together, the two balance the tension and comfort that simultaneously exists in the long-standing friendship between these two men.

It is Tina Gloss-Finnell as Justine who mixes things up between these best friends, blowing out the comfort zone in which both live, and forcing them to question what they really want out of life. She is a delight to watch as she waltzes through their life, the only one completely assured about everything she does and who she is – even as her personality undergoes major changes when the men start playing with her traits.

REVIEW

The Love List

Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Thursday-Sunday through Feb. 19. \$28-30. 248-347-0003.

www.tippingpointtheatre.com

The play opens on Bill's 50th birthday, and Leon has bought him the services of a gypsy matchmaker who requires only that he list the 10 requirements he has for a woman, in order of importance. The two friends quickly reveal the differences in their values as they discuss what should be on the list and in what sequence. Shortly after Leon leaves for the night, Justine shows up at Bill's apartment, acting as though she has been in a long-term relationship with him and displaying all the characteristics that the two men put on the list.

Bill, who has gone seven years without a date and who had been in a pretty lonely marriage before that, doesn't take long to simply accept this gift, first as a joke and then as fate. If it's a trick, he's not too eager to get to the bottom of it. Then the two men learn that when they change the list, Justine also changes.

Gloss-Finnell does a fantastic job of quickly adapting these changes and forcefully demonstrating the best and worst of each trait the men come up with. She's so convincing that it's easy to see why Bill can't question



Dave Davies and Wayne David Parker in "The Love List" at Northville's Tipping Point Theatre. Photo: Howard and Charlotte Meyer

Justine's presence for long.

Lynn Lammers has fun with the direction of this show, keeping the actors moving so that audiences on all sides of the thrust stage get their turn at viewing the expressiveness of her three actors. She also works with Lighting Designer Joel Klain and Sound Designer Julia Garlotte to create a handful of clever effects to make the audience wonder exactly what Justine is and where she comes from.

Properties Designer Natividad Salgado has a huge task in filling Bill's cluttered apartment, a set built by Dennis Crawley, with Bill's research materials, a fully stocked bar and kitchen that is realistic and functional.

"The Love List" is a fun show that asks a lot of "what if?" questions about male friendships, marriages and dating.

GOD OF CARNAGE
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Editor's Picks

Art 'n' Around



Gallery Project will present American Dream, a multimedia exhibit in which 29 local, regional and national artists explore how hopeful narratives of the American experience are changing.

As a national ethos, the American Dream can be interpreted as a better life of opportunity for all, or a quest for material wealth, leading to the overindulgence in personal possessions for the assertion of a perceived identity.

Regardless, this "dream" can act as a façade cloaking the reality of the American experience for many individuals. The American Dream investigates this reality, as well as asking for visions of a new ideal.

The exhibit runs through March 4. The opening reception is 6 p.m. Jan. 27. The Gallery Project is located at 215 S. Fourth Ave. in Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-997-7012 or go to www.thegalleryproject.com.

Theater



Plowshares Theatre Company kicks off 2012 with a revival of the fall's hit drama "The Whipping Man." The production concludes its run Jan. 29 at The Music Box Theatre at the Max M. Fisher Music Center.

April 1865. The Civil War is over. Into the chaos of war-ravaged Richmond, Virginia comes Caleb DeLeon, a severely wounded Confederate officer who is Jewish. He finds his family's home in ruins and abandoned. The only familiar faces left are Simon and John, two former slaves, waiting for the family to return. While they look out for signs of a return to normality, the three men struggle with their shared past and the reality of the new world they now live in.

Performances are 8 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, and 3 p.m. Sunday. Tickets range from \$27.50 to \$32.

The Max M. Fisher Music Center is located at 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For information, call 313-593-0926.

OUTINGS

Friday, Jan. 27

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

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: The Four-Faced Liar. The story of a group of New York 20-somethings. Bridget is a hip, womanizing lesbian who loves Emily Bronte, and who lives with her guy pal Trip. One night, they meet straight-laced New York newbies Greg and Molly at their favorite hangout, The Four-Faced Liar. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Drag Queen Bingo 8 p.m. "This ain't your grandma's bingo." Hosts Sabin, Trixie Deluxe or September Murphy. Open to all 18+. Refreshments and bingo food fare. Reservations available by phone. Five15, 515 S. Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. Five15.net

Saturday, Jan. 28

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

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

Sunday, Jan. 29

The Conversation Station 5 p.m. LGBTQI 25 and over, join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. Topic: When is art considered pornographic? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciLWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, Jan. 30

Following Their Sex Drive: Detroit's Urban Gay Space and the Queer Sexual Commute: 1945-1965 4 p.m. Tim Retzlaff, of the Yale University Doctoral Program with an emphasis on History, will speak about Detroit's LGBT history during 1945-1965. University of Michigan, 204 S. State St., **Ann Arbor**. 734-647-6394. Umich.edu

New Member Night 7 p.m. For the spring concert season. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. All are welcome--LGBT & allies. No sight-reading skills are required! We are Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Out Loud Chorus, 1400 West Stadium Boulevard, **Ann Arbor**. 734-265-0740. Outloudchorus@gmail.com olconline.org

Wednesday, Feb. 1

Ladies Who Lunch 11 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**. kgllrc.org

Thursday, Feb. 2

Euchre Tournament 7 p.m. Euchre tournament fundraiser to benefit Out Loud Chorus, Washtenaw County's original

GLBT chorus. \$10 entry, cash prizes. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 South Industrial Hwy, **Ann Arbor**. 734-265-0740. Outloudchorus@gmail.com olconline.org

Friday, Feb. 3

2012 Michigan SOGI Education Conference 7 a.m. Addressing sexual orientation and gender identity issues in education. Registration fee: \$60.00 participants, \$25 students, and \$25 information tables for organizations. Dr. Eliza Byard, CEO of GLSEN, will be the keynote speaker. Online registration is open through Feb. 1, onsite registration also available. Oakland University School of Education and Human Services, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, **Rochester**. 248-370-4614. Oakland.edu/sogi

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

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Drop Dead Gorgeous. Chicago-born comedienne Alex Borstein, creator of a string of hilarious characters on "Mad TV" and the voice of Lois Griffin on "Family Guy," lets loose in a Sybil Dorsett kind of way in this raucous one-woman show. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Saturday, Feb. 4

Wintergreen Euchre 6 p.m. A friendly card game and a social outing for Womyn of all ages, meeting the first Saturday. No RSVP or partner is needed. There is a \$5 donation. Arrive a little early to get settled in and registered for a seat. Wintergreen Euchre, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. Home.comcast.net/~vern909/site/

Sunday, Feb. 5

Pronto! Super Bowl Extravaganza 10 a.m. Free gourmet hot dog buffet at Half Time. \$4 Calls, \$2 Domestic Bottles, \$3 Drafts and \$3 Shots during the game. Pronto!, 608 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak**. 248-544-7900.

MUSIC & MORE

The Ark "35th Ann Arbor Folk Festival" The annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival, a fundraiser for The Ark, returns to Hill Auditorium for two dynamic and different nights of folk and roots music. Tickets range from \$80-290. Hill Auditorium, Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor. Jan. 27-Jan. 28. 734-647-3327. Theark.org

Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Celebration of Life: Edgar Hagogopian" Celebrate the life of Edgar Hagogopian, one of Detroit's greatest music lovers and philanthropists. Tickets: \$22 regular, \$10 students. Reception to follow. Hagogopian World of Rugs, 850 S Old Woodward Ave, Birmingham, MI 48009, Birmingham. 7 p.m. Feb. 3. 248-559-2095. detroitchamberwinds.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Invitation to the Dance" DSO Principal Horn Karl Pituch performs Mozart's delightful Fourth Horn Concerto while Hans Graf leads favorites by Carl Maria von Weber and Schumann's stirring Second Symphony. Tickets: \$15. Detroit Symphony Orchestra, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Jan. 28. 313-576-5100. Dso.org

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

Kerrytown Concert House "WWS X: The Retrospective" 10th Anniversary Gala Celebrating the KCH Tradition Wine, Women and Song. Creator/director Wendy Bloom has prepared a special 10th anniversary program featuring the best-loved numbers from over the last nine years of WWS. True to tradition, complimentary wine will be served as well as alcohol-free options. Tickets: \$20-50. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Jan. 27. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

MSU College of Music "Symphony Orchestra" Guest artist Philip Sinder on tuba with Leon Gregorian performing Stravinsky, Newman, Debussy, and Ravel. Cobb Great Hall, West Circle Drive, East Lansing. 8 p.m. Jan. 27. 517-432-2000. Music.msu.edu

University Musical Society "Hamburg Symphony Orchestra" Messiaen's From the Canyons to the Stars, inspired by the natural wonder found in the landscapes of the American West. Ticket information available at ums.org. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Jan. 29. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Apocalypse? HOW?! \$10. Fancy Pants Theater at Studio 246, 246 N. Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo. Jan. 27-29. www.fancypantstheater.webs.com

Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical \$18-20. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through Feb. 12. 248-541-5430. www.stagecrafters.org

The Boy in the Bathroom \$15. Peppermint Creek Theatre Company at Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing. Through Jan. 29. 517-927-3016. www.peppermintcreek.org

PROFESSIONAL

A Body of Water \$18. Threefold Productions at Mix Studio Theater, 8 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti. Through Feb. 4. 734-778-0627. www.threefoldproductions.org

Burn the Red Banner: Or, Let the Rebels Have Their Fun By donation. Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. Feb. 2-25. 313-454-1542. www.theabreact.com

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

Dead Man's Shoes Previews Jan. 26-29 & Feb. 2 (\$15). \$20-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Jan. 26-Feb. 26. 517-655-7469. www.williamstontheatre.org

God of Carnage \$22-41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Feb. 19. 734-663-0681. www.performance-network.org

Same Time Next Year \$18. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes and Noble Bookellers Theatre, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Feb. 1-19. 248-850-9919. www.TwoMusesTheatre.org

Smokey Joe's Cafe \$18-32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Feb. 2-26. 734-268-6200. www.theencoretheatre.org

The Addams Family \$30-70. Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing. Jan. 31-Feb. 5. 517-432-2000. www.whartoncenter.com

The Whipping Man \$10-\$32. Plowshares Theatre Company at The Music Box Theatre at the Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Jan. 29. 313-593-0926. www.plowsharetheatre.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Cass Cafe Gallery "New Work" Featuring the art of two Detroit based artists, M. Saffell Gardner and Tylonn J. Sawyer. Cass Cafe, 4260 Cass Ave., Detroit Midtown. Jan. 14-March 17. 313-831-1400. Casscafe.com

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

Epiphany Glass Studio "Open Studio" Artist April Wagner will open her state of the art glass studio with glass blowing demonstrations throughout the evening. Work with Wagner to create a glass blown flower for \$50. Epiphany Glass Studio, 770 Orchard Lake Road, Pontiac. 3 p.m. Feb. 2. 248-745-3786. Epiphanyglass.com

Gallery Project "American Dream" A multimedia exhibit in which 29 local, regional, and national artists explore how hopeful narratives of the American experience is changing. Gallery Project, 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Jan. 25-March 4. 734-997-7012. Thegalleryproject.com

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 "The Body Eclectic" This juried competition and exhibition celebrates the figure in all forms and media, both two and three-dimensional. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Feb. 1-Feb. 29. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Once Upon a Time: Prints and Drawings that Tell Stories" 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

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Face of Our Time" Examines more than 100 works by five photographers 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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► Spider Woman

Continued from p. 19

original run on Broadway in 1993 and again in 1994. He was a professional dancer in New York and had many friends who were sick or dying of AIDS. "Kiss of the Spider Woman" presented a gay character who was more than just comic relief.

"There is a real dimensionality to this particular character," Luther said. "He generated a lot of pathos. It was very transformative to see this story unfold at a time when I was dealing with so many people dead and dying. It gave me a lot of insights into the relationships we form, how we think about love, how we think about reality and how we create our own realities."

Another challenge with this musical is finding the right people. It calls for 13 men and three women. All the men have to be able to act, sing, and dance – something that can be difficult to find outside of the professional realm. While praising his leads, Luther said he is especially thrilled with the cast's ensemble.

"The ensemble have worked so hard to make this show look and feel the way this show needs to look and feel. I really have to say hats off to the ensemble in this show. They're the glue that holds everything together."

John Nowaczyk plays Molina, the gay man who fantasizes about movie musicals featuring Aurora in her multiple roles. Gary Castaneda is Valentin, the macho revolutionary who slowly comes to accept his cellmate. Playing the fantasy actress Aurora in her many roles is Maria Tilmos.

"Nowaczyk has so much depth to the character Molina," Luther said. "He goes from being campy and over the top to pathetic to triumphant to heroic. It's just amazing to watch how John transforms the character over the course of the show. It's the same with Gary who plays Valentin. He starts out as an angry revolutionary. We see his character, against his will, become so much more accepting of Molina. In the Latin macho culture, you would never form a positive relationship with a gay person. Over time you watch him transform because of Molina and (Gary) does a great job with that transformation."

Tilmos has the demanding title role, an actress playing an actress who appears in different roles every time she appears. She's clothed in different costumes and performs in a variety of styles, both acting and musical.

With its sweeping set and hauntingly beautiful music featuring Latin beats, viola and oboe, Luther strongly believes this is a show that deserves to be seen – by both the gay and straight communities.

"I would love for people to just come to the show because it is a good show and one of the characters happens to be gay," said Luther. "That's my philosophy on being gay. It doesn't define the entirety of who I am. Yes, being gay is part of who I am, but it isn't everything. (Molina) is a gay man in the beginning, but in the end, he has absorbed so much that he is a man who happens to be gay."

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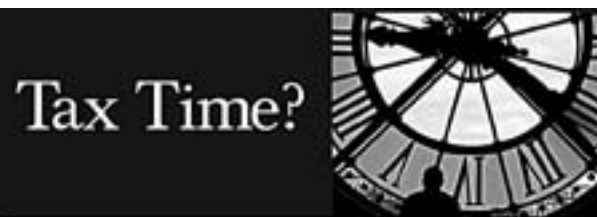
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An MCC Detroit Sponsored Memorial Service will be held on January 28th at 2 p.m. We will be meeting in the Presbyterian sanctuary so that we are certain to have enough space for all who wish to attend. We are inviting the entire community to join us for the celebration of Rev. Mark's Life. Rev. Wes Mullins, who served with Mark on the UFMCC Board of Pensions, will travel here to speak at the memorial service. Coffee and light refreshments will be served in the social hall on the MCCD side of the church.

attend. We are inviting the entire community to join us for the celebration of Rev. Mark's Life. Rev. Wes Mullins, who served with Mark on the UFMCC Board of Pensions, will travel here to speak at the memorial service. Coffee and light refreshments will be served in the social hall on the MCCD side of the church.



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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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Horoscopes

Brush up on skills, Sagittarius!

BY JACK FERTIG

Mars is turning retrograde and will backtrack through Virgo until April 13. In this period, recent pet peeves, critical arguments, bitchy outbursts and intestinal inflammations will come back to haunt you. Keep an eye on self-improvement without beating yourself up.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Your ruler, Mars, turning retrograde in Virgo is likely to make you cranky, even aggressive, especially with colleagues, in the next few weeks. Obsessing over details can distract you from bigger issues and dangers. But do heed details that concern your health!

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Being “too” nice can come off as saccharine and manipulative. Use your overactive charms to deal with problems in a straightforward fashion. Resist the urge to gloss over them. Flirtations can lead a lot further than intended.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Disagreements at home are likely to get out of hand, and especially when you thought you’d just settled the problem. Be as patient and diplomatic as you can. Your attention will soon turn to more interesting problems.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): A new passionate fling probably seems a lot more serious than it really is. Or less. Either way it’s sure to surprise you – and probably a lot more people than you’d like to have know about it.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): It’s too easy to react to others. Your natural instinct is to be a control queen, but more productively, try to see why your nerves are so raw. Vigorous exercise will help your balance and insight.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): A conservative, cautious approach to a creative problem will provide a key to much more imaginative possibilities. Take that inspiration to work and you’ll find more ideas pointing to new methods. With a solid grounding, dare to advance bold new techniques.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Hitting a plateau in whatever you’re working on is a natural stage. Don’t let it discourage you! Keep at whatever you’re doing, although if you can figure out why you’re

stuck you may find better ways of doing it.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Frustration with co-workers has more to do with your expectations than with them. Brace yourself for recent problems to come back at you. You need to mouth off. Save it for your friends who can help you develop a better perspective.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Talk with relatives about family health issues. Better to get rude surprises from your family to prepare your doctor than the other way around! Brush up on skills and get updated on technology that will help you at work.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Recurrence of old arguments may highlight your need to reconsider ideals and tenets you’ve long taken for granted. Be careful that shrewd insight doesn’t push you to disillusion friends. You can be realistic and respectful.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): The impulse to demonstrate your debonair wit could easily backfire. The line between incisive epigrams and rude bitchiness is too easy to stumble over. If you need to be naughty, find an appropriate partner and a room.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Venus is in Pisces boosting your charm and seductiveness. It’s very easy to talk your way into a hot little affair, but you may soon find it harder to get out of. Be sure of where the exits are before you step into anything!

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 <http://www.starjack.com>, and by email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.



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Joyce

Solution to puzzle from page 24

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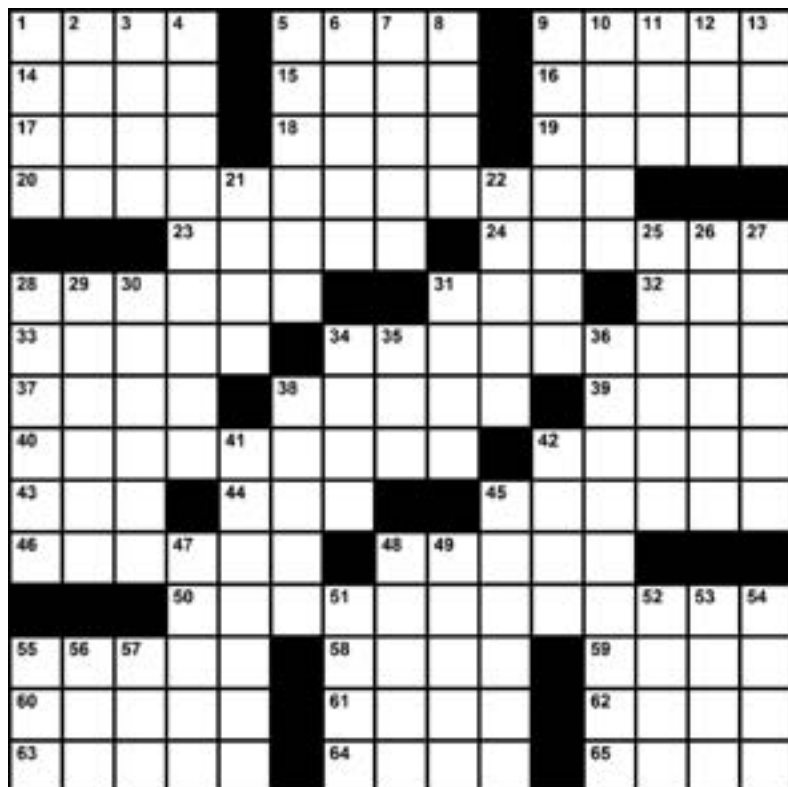
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Across

- 1 Inedible Apple
- 5 Thailand neighbor
- 9 He gives gifts in stocking
- 14 "Safe!" or "Out!"
- 15 Heterogeneous mixture
- 16 George, who was Mary Ann
- 17 "The African Queen" author
- 18 Middle of Caesar's boast
- 19 Drummer managed by Brian Epstein
- 20 She admitted a crush on Sophia Loren
- 23 Gay city
- 24 What male impersonators do?
- 28 Augusten Burroughs' works
- 31 LBJ's veep
- 32 Bullring bravo
- 33 Boston ball handlers, briefly
- 34 She admitted a crush on Christina Hendricks
- 37 Bear's den
- 38 Spit that didn't get swallowed
- 39 Porter's regretful miss
- 40 She admitted a crush on Charlize Theron
- 42 Trial figure
- 43 "Eew!"
- 44 They could come from Uranus
- 45 Completely faithful

- 46 What livers do
- 48 Spacey's "The ___ Suspects"
- 50 She admitted a crush on Angelina Jolie
- 55 Frock wearer
- 58 Susan Feniger preparation
- 59 Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
- 60 "One of Ours" novelist Cather
- 61 Like a virgin
- 62 The number of people who like it hot
- 63 Raggedy Ann and others
- 64 Went lickety-split
- 65 Slant unfairly

Down

- 1 Optimist's phrase
- 2 Three guys who went to see Mary
- 3 "___ Baldwin Doesn't Love Me"
- 4 Elizabeth Taylor movie
- 5 Brooks and Barney, for two
- 6 Quite similar
- 7 Nostalgic song
- 8 Came out with
- 9 Top angels
- 10 Dress with a flared bottom
- 11 Henry and June's Anais
- 12 Dress (up)
- 13 From ___ Z (completely)

- 21 One-night-stand partners
- 22 Taj ___
- 25 Made purely academic
- 26 Current event?
- 27 Liam of "Kinsey"
- 28 Cream-filled pastry
- 29 Medium meeting
- 30 Moves like Mae West
- 31 Med. care groups
- 34 Screws up
- 35 François Ozon, to himself
- 36 Huge flop
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- 41 Felt around the head?
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- 48 Finish off
- 49 You might pick one up in an alley
- 51 Little fairies
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- 53 "Zami: A New Spelling of My ___"
- 54 Shot up
- 55 WNBA position
- 56 Carnival locale
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Solution on page 23

Pet of the Week



Meet Mr. Squeakers!

A 2-year-old Fox Terrier mix, this lively and energetic little guy is quite the handful at only 8 pounds! A lover of all toys and tennis balls, Mr. Squeakers loves attention and would do best with an active family that can give him lots of love. Come meet him today! The adoption fee includes sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations and much more! Visit or call the Michigan Humane Society's off-site adoption location at the Sterling Heights Petco at (586) 533-9110 and provide the pet ID number, 707377. Photo by Heidi Waeschle-Gabel.

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Dear Jody



Cheater looks for answers

Q: I was drinking one day with my best friend "Nancy." I had several mixed drinks. Nancy was not drunk. So, I don't know how it all happened, but one thing led to another and Nancy and I had sex.

I've been in a relationship for four years now with my girlfriend, "Allison." The awful thing about all this is that she lives in another country. We have been working out our long-distance relationship for a year now. I have to say that I didn't have any intentions of having sex with my straight friend because I love Allison to death. I'm literally dying with what happened with Nancy.

Should I tell Allison what happened with Nancy?

Guilty Conscience

A: Why would you want to do that? I suppose it might make you feel better, like lessen your feeling of guilt, but unburdening yourself won't help her or make her feel good. And it won't change anything that you and your "straight" friend did together.

I think you'd do better turning your attention to what happened with Nancy and why, and if a long-distance relationship will work for you. It's not about why you and a "straight" friend had sex. It's about why you had sex with another person other than the woman you are in a relationship with. I'm assuming your relationship is meant to be monogamous, or you wouldn't be upset about this and writing to me.

I'm not who he thinks

Q: I lost my head or had too many drinks – or both – on New Year's Eve. I met this guy, "Damon," at a party and was blown out of the water by him. He's a real hottie and a very successful person. He is someone I didn't ever think I could get. So, when he asked me about myself, well, I sort of embellished. In other

words, I told him things about myself that aren't true. I told him that I was an architect, that I lived in a part of town that is ritzy, that I belong to clubs that are very exclusive, and so on. You probably wonder why I said all this. I've been wondering that myself. The only thing that I can come up with is that I had too much to drink and because I really thought that I would only have a one-night stand with this guy, and that would be that. I figured that if I didn't build myself up like I did, I would soon be dismissed by him, and he'd be onto someone else. Well, I was successful in my quest; he wanted me. And I have to say, I had one great New Year's Eve. It was the greatest, sexist night of my life!

I know that I am a fraud. I guess I wanted to live out a fantasy, and I was willing to do whatever it took. I didn't realize or believe that he would want to see me again. I didn't mention it earlier, but I am not in his league when it comes to looks or accomplishments. That's why I was counting on all my made-up attributes to attract him. Well, it did. The problem is – as I'm sure you can determine – my made-up attributes are just that: made up!

I got a call from this guy. He wants us to meet up again. What could I say but yes. I know that I can't keep up this charade for long. Frankly, I wish he'd never called again, and that I was left with just a fantasy that was fulfilled.

So, how do I get out of this mess?

Queen for a Night

A: It seems to me that you either have to tell him that you are not interested in dating or a relationship with him, or tell him the truth – who knows, maybe, for him, it's not about all your made-up attributes. I see no other choices. Your predicament reminds me of the old adage: "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."

Jody Valley spent 12 years as a clinical social worker. She worked with the LGBT community both as a counselor and a workshop leader in the areas of coming out, self-esteem and relationship issues. The "Dear Jody" column appears weekly. Reach Jody via Facebook (Dear Jody Valley) or at DearJodyValley@hotmail.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.



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Cocktail Chatter

The Faux de Vie

BY ED SIKOV

From the mailbag comes this gem-like nugget: "You're a really great writer, Ed. You're also a mess." I say: True on both counts! I don't think I'm bragging when I agree with the first part. I'm sure most of you have something you know you're good at, whether it's managing staff, making ceramic bowls, salesmanship or cooking. It's good for your state of mind; it builds confidence to *have* confidence. As for the second point, I acknowledge that, too. I used to be more of a mess than I am now, but I'm still neurotic. Hey, I'm a gay Jew from a cruddy little town in western Pennsylvania. I got called vicious names every damned day until I escaped to college. What do you expect?

The message writer was referring to a specific column – the "Yankee Mint Julep" one, in which I respond to Kyle and Robbie's acoustically vibrant and (to me) demoralizing sex romp upstairs at the beach house by swigging from a magnum of Jack Daniels. It was a pretty good column, I think, but the response brought up a fact

I've not made a point of stating directly. As I near the end of my second season as "Cocktail Chatter" columnist, it's time to set the record straight (so to speak):

Except for the recipes, "Cocktail Chatter" is pure fiction. I make this stuff up, people. There is no Kyle, no Robbie, no Craig, no Jack Fogg.... There's sort of a Dan, but that's not his real name, and he doesn't work for a pharmaceutical company. Some of the characters were originally based on people I know, and some are purely my own creation. But their origins are irrelevant because they all grew into different, fully formed (albeit fictional) people the more I wrote about them. These nonexistent folks don't let me put words in their mouth they don't think they'd really say. It's like I'm channeling them, and when I add a word they don't like they make me delete it. A novelist friend of mine was not at all surprised when I mentioned this bizarre situation to him. He can't force his characters to do or say what he wants them to do or say either. They, too, have their own voices and personalities, and he can't control them either.

In that spirit, or perhaps in those spirits – or maybe even in the spirit of those spirits who drink spirits – I created

an original cocktail: "The Faux de Vie." As you may know, *Eau de Vie* is a clear, double-distilled brandy that has the flavor of the fruit from which it is distilled. Varieties include pear, raspberry, plum and peach. *Eau de Vie* translates as Water of Life, but a fine *Eau de Vie* is pricier than even the most expensive bottled water. It can run you \$120 or more.

So forget the real stuff and make yourself a *Faux de Vie*! Get yourself a copy of the extraordinarily gorgeous and superbly entertaining "Imitation of Life," the 1959 tearjerker directed by the great Douglas Sirk and starring the inimitable Lana Turner, and you've got yourself a perfectly "faux" evening.

Making the Faux de Vie

1 jigger Absolut vodka
A couple drops of the liqueur of your choice

Get a small glass and carefully pour just a few drops of Chambord, Cointreau, or any fruit liqueur into it. Add vodka. Sip. Don't overwhelm the vodka with liqueur; the drink should have just a hint of fruit to it.

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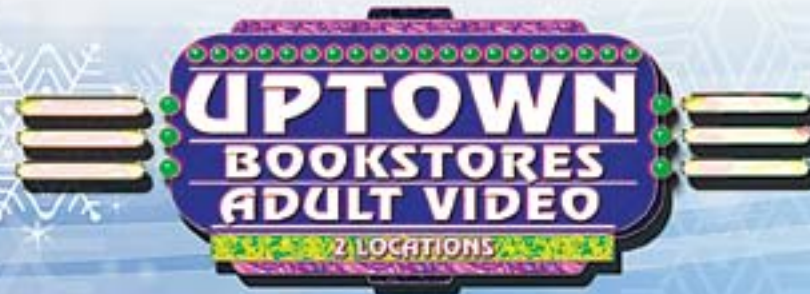
The Michigan HIV/STD Hotline. Live weekdays, 10 am - 6 pm.

The info you find on the web about STDs can be overwhelming and confusing. So talk to a live human being instead. Our experts will take the time to answer all your questions, and every call is handled anonymously. Learn how to protect yourself and others, what the symptoms are, and where you can get tested. The Michigan HIV/STD hotline. Here to help.



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