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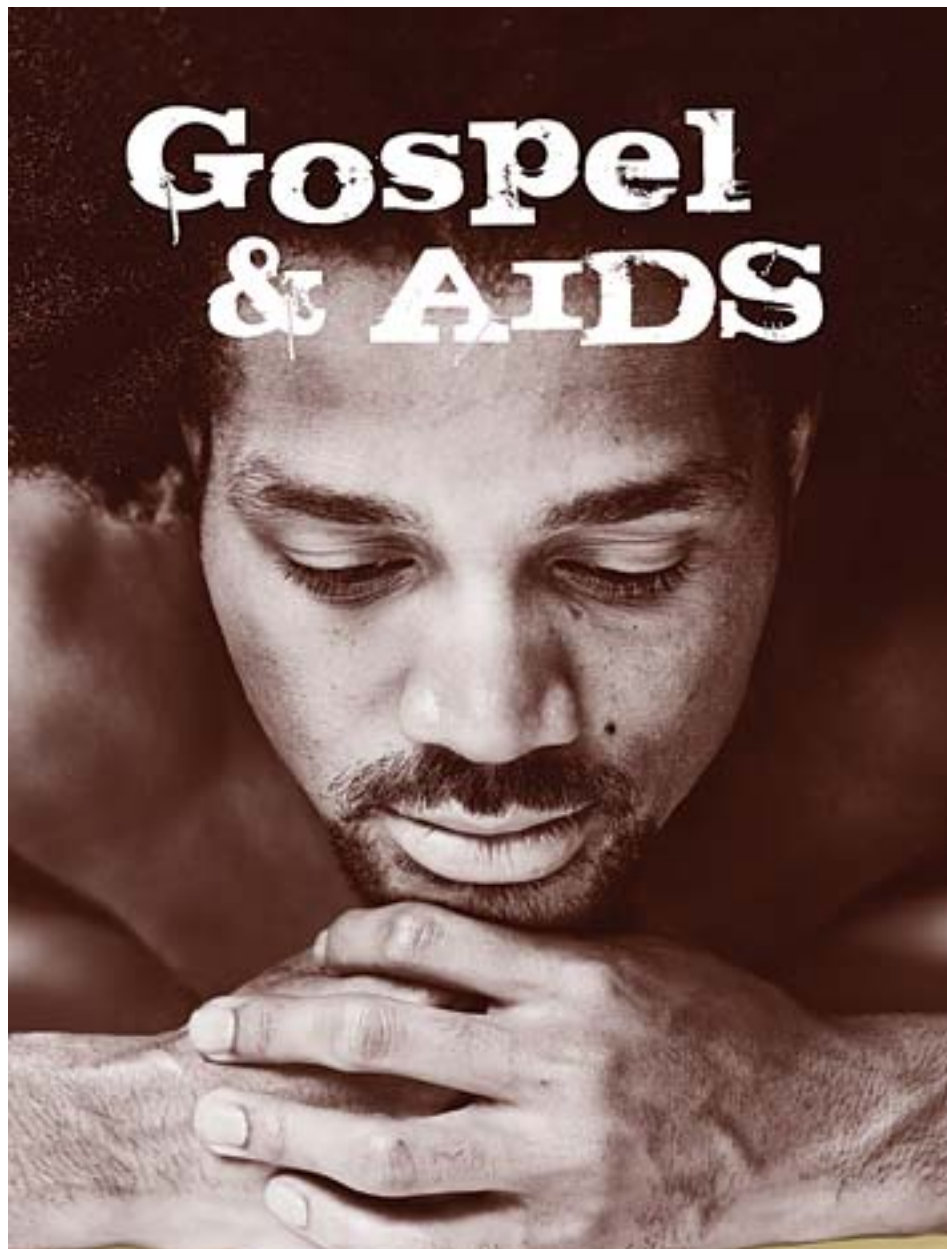


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Speak Out Playing with fear

BY ERIC W. RADER

This year, the chasm between Democratic and Republican ideals is as large as it has ever been. In the race for president, the Republicans have put forward a field of candidates who are at the far right edge of the political spectrum. The four candidates remaining in the race — Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum and Ron Paul — would all represent a giant step backward for women, minorities, the poor, middle-class people and most certainly LGBTs. All of these candidates have adopted positions on the issues that would reward the wealthiest in our society and marginalize almost everyone else. The candidates are all seeking to “out-conservative” each other in an effort to secure the nomination of their party.

Meanwhile, issues that should unify Americans have suddenly been turned into political footballs. The vast majority of Americans support reasonable medical services for women, including full and equal access to reproductive health options. Two weeks ago, Susan G. Komen for the Cure announced that it would withdraw its breast cancer screening grants to the Planned Parenthood Federation, because the family planning organization was under “investigation.” However, this inquiry is actually a political witch-hunt being conducted by a right-wing Republican congressman who objects to Planned Parenthood’s provision of abortion services. After an intense public outcry, Komen reversed its decision and announced that Planned Parenthood would not lose its existing grants and would remain eligible for future grant funding.

Michigan Senate race

The Republicans’ cynical efforts to divide people is occurring right here in our own state. During last week’s Super Bowl broadcast, Michigan U.S. Senate candidate Pete Hoekstra ran a racist and exploitive ad against incumbent Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow featuring a woman of Asian descent speaking in broken English. While Hoekstra and Stabenow have plenty of legitimate differences over the issues, Hoekstra used ethnic bigotry to criticize his opponent. Instead of having an honest debate, Hoekstra wants to play into the fears some people in Michigan’s battered economy have

regarding China.

Unfortunately, the Party of Lincoln does not have a moderate wing any more. The Democratic Party is quite diverse, and includes strongly liberal members as well as more centrist adherents. Up until about 30 years ago, the two major parties had enough sensible members that it was possible for them to compromise on issues and reach common ground. Republicans and Democrats were able to agree that politics stopped at the “water’s edge,” and advanced the foreign policy strategies and policies that preserved the peace (for the most part) during the 45-year Cold War. Liberal Democrats and moderate Republicans were at the forefront of the successful efforts to pass the civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

Today, Democrats and Republicans can achieve consensus on almost nothing. While usually in such stalemates both sides are at least partially at fault, today the reality is that the Republicans bear most of the blame. For many in the Republican

Party today, every issue has become a litmus test for candidates. If they fail one test, they’re drummed out of the party, and their opponents become mortal enemies.

In the aftermath of last week’s appeals court ruling striking down an anti-gay marriage initiative in California, and Washington State’s approval of equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians, Republicans will once again find an excuse to demonize LGBT citizens. This year’s elections for president and Congress will set the course for this nation for the next generation, through the policies put forward by elected office holders and the judicial appointments made by the president. Those of us who care about equality need to be aware of the sharp differences between the two parties and work as hard as we can to educate our fellow citizens on what can happen if political radicals are elected to office. Reasonable people need to be part of the political process this year—the stakes have never been greater.

Online

Statement by Washington Governor Christine Gregoire (D) on the passage of equal marriage rights in her state:

www.governor.wa.gov/news/news-view.asp?pressRelease=1852&newsType=1

9th Circuit Court of Appeals Ruling on California Proposition 8: www.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/general/2012/02/07/1016696com.pdf

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LGBT scholarship celebrates 20 years of giving

DETROIT – The year 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the Michael P. LaGatella Memorial Scholarship at Wayne State University. Established in 1992, the scholarship honors the memory of Michael LaGatella who committed suicide as a student at Wayne State in 1991.

LaGatella's friends and family created the scholarship to promote a positive gay identity and provide tuition support for gay students and other individuals. Groundbreaking at the time, the LaGatella Scholarship was the first of its kind in the state of Michigan and one of only a handful in the United States.

Michael Laber, one of the scholarship's founding donors said, "I am proud to be involved in one of the first scholarships in the nation for gay and lesbian students. David Coulter, John Burchett, Tim Mahoney and I started this effort more than 20 years ago as a memorial to Mike LaGatella. We are thrilled that the scholarship is still vital, with a long history of assistance to Wayne State students. Most of all, we remain committed to this memorial and its legacy to current and future students at the university."

Coulter, now the mayor of Ferndale said, "A lot has changed since the scholarship was established in 1992, but it continues to play an important role. With this scholarship, we are helping to support future leaders of the LGBT community and recognize their efforts to promote a positive identity."

Last year, Laber, Coulter and others worked with WSU officials to update the scholarship criteria to include support for bisexual and transgender students and LGBT allies.

Nine students have received the LaGatella Scholarship since it was established. Susan Minard, a graduate of the School of Social Work, College of Education, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was the first recipient.

"Receiving the scholarship was meaningful in that a characteristic of mine, which had mostly been a liability, was now an asset," she said. "It was validating to know that someone – and an institution like Wayne State – understood that people who are gay, lesbian and/or transgendered need recognition and they provided it."

Minard is now a middle school social worker and at-risk student advisor. She said that the progress we have made with our youth around sexual orientation and gender identification gives her great hope. "Our world really is changing," she added.

Students can apply for the Michael P. LaGatella LGBT Endowed Scholarship by submitting an application and essay to the LaGatella Scholarship Committee, care of the Office of Student Financial Aid at Wayne State University. To learn about how to contribute to the LaGatella Scholarship, visit giving.wayne.edu or contact Kathryn Rusak, director of development, at 313- 577-9933.

Petitioning for change

Student ally wants Hope College to welcome LGBT students

BY JIM LARKIN

HOLLAND – An 18-year-old Hope College freshman is trying to accomplish what groups of influential alumni, students and community leaders could not: Convince Hope College officials to become more accepting and supportive of its LGBT students.

And Bridget McCarthy, a theatre major at Hope, already has more than 1,000 people who support her petition on change.org, which asks the Hope College Board of Trustees and president to recognize LGBTQ groups on campus, just days after starting it.

McCarthy is making the request for the same reason that Hope College leaders have refused to recognize such groups – she says it's the Christian thing to do.

"I came here and was absolutely appalled by the things that were done to homosexuals in the name of Christianity," said McCarthy, a Grand Haven High School graduate. "I am a Christian, and I freaking love Jesus and what he stands for. I also know for a fact that what is happening at Hope is so contrary to what He wants. I need some help to change it."

Mary Bauman, chairperson of the Hope College Board of Trustees said, "it's premature for me to respond" to McCarthy's efforts because she hadn't been formally informed of the petition or been given a chance to study it.

McCarthy isn't the first to try to make the college administration change its stance about gay issues. After Hope College refused to allow screenwriter Dustin Lance Black to discuss his Academy Award-winning film "Milk" on campus, a group of influential alumni petitioned the college board, asking that it change its policy on human sexuality because it discriminated against homosexual students.

A newly formed group of Hope students, called Hope is Ready, also sought the change, as did a group of Holland community leaders called Holland is Ready.

The policy, which college leaders said prohibited discussions promoting homosexuality, was amended, but opponents said it still discriminated against the LGBT community while also making it possible to punish those who advocate for LGBT students. It states, "Hope College will not recognize or support campus groups whose aim by statement, practice, or intimidation is to promote a vision of human sexuality that is contrary to this understanding of biblical teaching."

McCarthy, a straight student who said her background in theatre has introduced her to "lots and lots of friends who are LGBT," said she has seen the results of such a policy. She said a female-to-male transgender student was placed in a female dorm for a year and

"I got angry when I realized how Hope College – a college I absolutely love – has failed its



LGBT students. I want LGBT students to be able to have the same amazing experience here I have and we can start to make that possible by having the administration recognize LGBT groups."

18-year-old Hope College freshman Bridget McCarthy

that a student who sought help because students called him a "nigger fag" received only a passive response. A friend, she added, returns home to his dorm to see Bible verses that condemn his lifestyle and tell him he is destined to Hell.

"Those are just a couple of incidents. People are hurting all over," McCarthy said. "They've set an atmosphere here where it's OK to be intolerant. I've been hearing story after story about how LGBT students have been mistreated."

"I got angry when I realized how Hope College – a college I absolutely love – has failed its LGBT students. I want LGBT students to be able to have the same amazing experience here I have and we can start to make that possible by having the administration recognize LGBT groups."

Holland ready efforts

The Rev. Don Van Hoeven, a member of the alumni group that petitioned the school to change its policy, stated earlier that the amended policy has also impacted Hope's faculty. He said because the new policy does not define "promotion" or "advocacy" of homosexuality, professors are hesitant to discuss the issue because they could be vulnerable to repercussions if they don't discuss homosexuality in a negative way.

"This creates a slippery slope for teachers ... what is to stop a student from turning in a teacher for 'advocacy' if the teacher talks about homosexuality and the student does not agree with the 'tone' of the lecture?" Van Hoeven said.

While Hope administrators have said its stance is based on its Christian background and foundation, McCarthy said it is her Christian

upbringing that leads her to seek change.

"I feel as a Christian I can't stand by and allow this to happen. That's how I was raised," McCarthy said. "There are so many who are loud about making LGBT people feel so unwelcome, but I want us to be louder in saying you are welcome and appreciated. I want this to go national."

Emily West, one of the founders of Hope is Ready and an organizer for Holland is Ready, praised McCarthy for her courage and said she will not be alone in her efforts. West said McCarthy already has

a "sea of support" from supportive students, faculty, staff, community members, alumni, Reformed clergy persons and others.

"That's who is behind this movement. It was true when I was working with Hope is Ready and it is true today," West said.

"What is sad, and somewhat embarrassing, is that when this amazing group of people comes together, sharing their time and talent to try and make Hope a more welcoming and safe place, they are demonized, being named 'enemies of the college,' or 'outside forces.' The reality is that this is a passionate, faithful group of people who love the college and see a great opportunity for growth and continued excellence.

"It is not one person, or even one group of people, it is a movement, an idea, something that will continue to emerge through different people, as we have seen over the past 30 years at Hope. Love and freedom are persistent!"

Want to help? Then just sign the petition...

Those wanting to sign the petition started by Hope College freshman Bridget McCarthy can do so by going to: www.change.org/petitions/president-hope-college-amend-the-official-statement-on-human-sexuality-to-recognize-lgbtq-groups

Washington governor signs law; NJ Senate passes marriage bill

BY LISA KEEN

In a sometimes emotional ceremony Monday morning, Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire signed the freshly passed marriage equality bill, telling a crowded gathering at the State House that same-sex couples “will no longer be separate but equal” in Washington but simply equal.

The ceremony took place just hours after the New Jersey Senate voted 24 to 16 to pass a marriage equality law there. The New Jersey bill now goes to the Assembly, which is expected to pass it on Thursday. New Jersey Gov. Chris

Christie, a Republican, has made it well-known he intends to veto the bill. The legislature is not expected to muster the 27 votes in the Senate and 54 in the Assembly to overcome that veto.

The Washington State bill also has its hurdles ahead, too. Opponents are expected to mount an effort to force the bill into a referendum, an action that, if successful, could either kill or delay implementation of the new law until December.

But during Monday’s signing ceremony, the mood was determined and upbeat. Gregoire told the audience a story of a 16-year-old lesbian who

See Washington, page 13

A Valentine’s Day gift: same-sex marriage ban ruled unconstitutional



JAY KAPLAN, LGBT PROJECT STAFF ATTORNEY

Just in time for Valentine’s Day, a historic gift to all who value equality, dignity and love. Better than a box of chocolates or a dozen roses!

On Feb. 8 a federal appeals court in California ruled that the state’s notorious ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. This ruling overturns Proposition 8, a ballot initiative passed in 2008 that disappointed many.

After the passage of Prop. 8, the ACLU, Lambda Legal and the National Center for Lesbian Rights signed on to friend-of-the-court briefs in support of a legal challenge of the discriminatory ban.

In the latest decision, the court ruled that there was no legitimate reason to deprive same-sex couples of the formal right to marry and made it clear that the Constitution should decide who is afforded such privileges, not religious doctrines or the personal views of individuals. This affirms a lower court’s ruling.

As the head of the LGBT Project here in Michigan, I am so proud to be a part of this victory. The ACLU of Michigan is still deeply involved in work for equal marriage rights here

in our state. Though it can seem like an uphill battle, with each ruling we know that we are on the side of the future.

Currently, 21 states and Washington D.C. recognize same-sex families, either through marriage or domestic partnership rights. Unfortunately, Michigan is among the states with the worst record for affording protections and benefits to LGBT couples.

Not only does our state have a ban on marriage equality, the law which protects against workplace discrimination doesn’t extend any protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. That’s why we’ve joined the Don’t Change Yourself: Change The Law campaign to urge legislators to prevent Michiganders from being fired for being gay.

So what does today’s ruling in California mean to us in Michigan? It means that we cannot lose hope. We must continue to fight for our future and our loved ones. By forging ahead, we are creating a roadmap to marriage equality that will lead us to repeal Michigan’s ban on same-sex marriage and obtain civil rights protections for our community.

We all understand the desire to make a solemn commitment to our partners, to protect our families and be with the one we love. This Valentine’s Day, let’s hope that everyone will be afforded that right soon.

Learn more about Don’t Change Yourself online: <http://dontchangeyourself.com/i-can-be-fired>

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Heard on Facebook

A video of Washington Rep. Maureen Walsh giving an argument for why gay marriage should be legal went viral last week. Do Walsh's words give you any hope that more Republicans will become pro-gay marriage?

It'd be amazing if more people could vote with their conscience and heart and not just act as a puppet. Thank you, Rep. Walsh.

—Tracy Davis

I'd vote for her! If she were in Michigan, that is.

—Aimee Loubert

Interestingly enough, she actually represents a conservative corner of the state.

—Meghan Eagen-Torkko

There is hope and there is the question "how would she have voted if she didn't have a lesbian daughter?" People need to be able to see the need for equality even when it doesn't directly effect them.

—Bob Bond

Does it matter? Isn't it about people opening their hearts precisely because their life experiences change them? ... In the New York vote and now in Washington, it was a few fair-minded and brave Republican state senators that pushed the vote over the top. Our community has to be way more open to allies of equality that are not necessarily big time liberals on other issues. This has held our cause back in many respects, in my opinion. Equality is a human issue, and allies can be found in many places.

—Jason Vorva

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



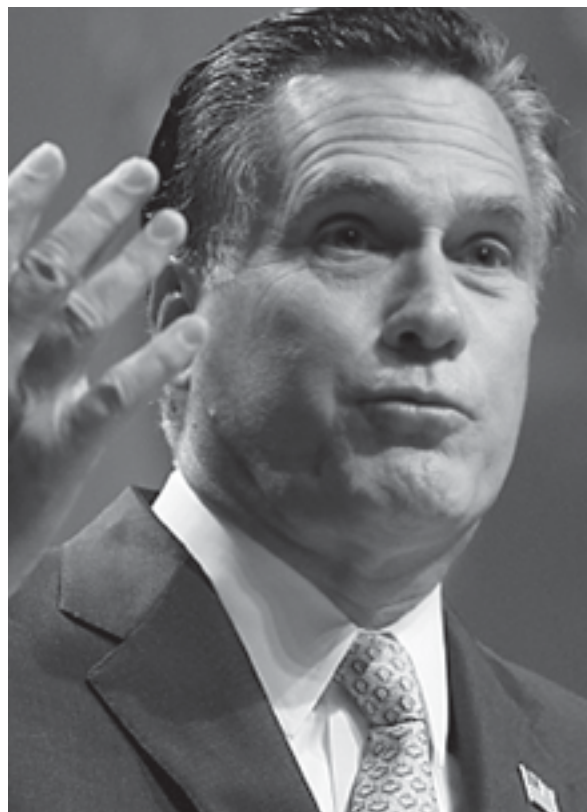
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S/he Said

Marriage Equality and Proposition 8

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Mitt Romney

"Today, unelected judges cast aside the will of the people of California who voted to protect traditional marriage. This decision does not end this fight, and I expect it to go to the Supreme Court. That prospect underscores the vital importance of this election and the movement to preserve our values. I believe marriage is between a man and a woman and, as president, I will protect traditional marriage and appoint judges who interpret the Constitution as it is written and not according to their own politics and prejudices."

—Mitt Romney, Republican presidential candidate, about the 2-1 decision by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upholding a federal judge's decision that Proposition 8 violates the U.S. Constitution, Associated Press, www.mittromney.com, Feb. 07. Prop 8, passed by CA voters in November 2008, placed a specific prohibition in the California State Constitution against marriage between two people of the same sex.



Stephen Reinhardt

"Although the Constitution permits communities to enact most laws they believe to be desirable, it requires that there be at least a legitimate reason for the passage of a law that treats different people differently. There was no such reason that Proposition 8 could have been enacted. All that Proposition 8 accomplished was to take away from same-sex couples the right to be granted marriage licenses and thus legally to use the designation 'marriage.' Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gay men and lesbians in California."

—Judge Stephen Reinhardt, in the 2-1 decision, www.nytimes.com, Feb. 7. Prop 8, passed by CA voters in November 2008, placed a specific prohibition in the California State Constitution against marriage between two people of the same sex.



Salvatore Cordileone

"Our society does not operate in an amoral or value-less vacuum. To flourish, it must be infused with moral direction that is grounded in the truth. Of course, the true meaning of marriage, like the gift of human life, is ultimately not subject to a vote or court ruling. But in California, as in every other state where marriage has been put to a vote, the people justly upheld the truth of marriage. How tragic for California, for the nation, and especially for children, that this correctly-informed judgment has now been set aside."

—Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, of Oakland, CA, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, www.usccb.org, Feb. 07.



Barry W. Lynn

"No American's right to marry should be subjected to a veto from aggressive and well-funded religious groups. Our nation is a democracy, not a theocracy. Our laws should reflect equality and fairness, not discrimination and intolerance. Opponents of same-sex marriage have been unable to muster any arguments other than it offends their theology. We have a secular government, and dogma should not and cannot be transformed into law."

—Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, www.au.org, Feb. 07. Prop 8, passed by CA voters in November 2008, placed a specific prohibition in the California State Constitution against marriage between two people of the same sex.

AIDS Walk hopes to grow under new management

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

ROYAL OAK – AIDS Walk Detroit is under new management and kicking off 2012 with some big resolutions for the year. Their goals are to have 3,500 walkers and to raise \$200,000 to help funding for organizations that deal with HIV/AIDS related issues.

Going forward Steppin' Out will be managed by HELP (Health Emergency Lifeline Program), a non-profit, community-based organization that provides essential services for people who are at-risk, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C. HELP works with over 1,200 clients each year to provide food and nutrition assistance, housing services, case management, utility assistance, mental health counseling and other resources. HELP has had AIDS Walk Teams in the past, and offered to step in to consolidate management efforts.

Maxwell Cameron, program coordinator at HELP is administering Steppin' Out fundraisers including AIDS Walk Detroit. Cameron said the arrangement will help Steppin' Out maximize resources like time and money. "As a direct care provider since 1986, HELP is competent to manage this organization, and has that direct contact with individuals in the community we are working to help," he said. "This will save money on administrative costs, and we can spend our time and resources helping the event grow."

The goals this year are big ones. Last year AIDS Walk Detroit hosted 2,500 walkers, and raised over \$165,000. This year Cameron says they hope to attract an additional 1,000 walkers and bring the proceeds up to \$200,000.

"It's a big goal, but I think we can do it.



Last year's AIDS Walk Detroit had thousands participate. U.S. Rep. Sander Levin watches as walkers get ready to walk through downtown Royal Oak. BTL file photo: Andrew Potter

We're bringing in new agencies this year, including Ruth Ellis Center," Cameron said. "With funding for HIV/AIDS services declining, it is now more important than ever that we remain committed to making this event successful for all the groups involved."

Though there is new leadership, the premise of AIDS Walk Detroit remains the same. Organizations form teams and collect pledges for the walk. They each keep 97 percent of the money they raise. The remainder goes towards a fund for specific grant requests.

AIDS Walk Detroit will take place on Sun-

day, Sept. 16 at the Farmers Market in Royal Oak.

How to get involved

There are three ways to help the organization achieve their goals for the year. One option is to become a sponsor. It helps towards fundraising and gives exposure to the businesses and groups that are lending a hand. Corporate sponsorships start at \$1000.

Another way to get involved is to volunteer. They are currently looking for dedicated supporters that would be able to give 4-6 hours

per month helping to plan AIDS Walk Detroit 2012 and associated events. There are openings on the Event Planning Committee, Participation Committee, Media and Marketing Committee, and Corporate Sponsorship Committee. They are also looking for volunteers to help plan other events including the 3rd annual Step Inside the Box silent auction gala and the Strike Out AIDS Bowl-A-Thon. On the day of the walk, volunteers are needed to help with registration, set up and take down, security, and other tasks.

And of course they need teams and individuals to walk. Go to aidswalkdetroit.org and click "register" to sign up for AIDS Walk Detroit 2012 and start fundraising. Consider also starting your own Walk Team by signing up as a walk team captain.

Last year's funds

Last year's teams went home with over \$83,000 in total raised, broken down as follows: Access \$735; Affirmations Community Center, \$13,849.92; ANAC, \$670; Beaumont Health System, \$1,859.99; DEAF Can, \$1,781; DMC-WSU Project Challenge, \$1,114.99; Health Emergency Lifeline Programs (HELP), \$41,368.55; Higher Ground, \$5,045.01; Michigan AIDS Coalition, 5,747.93; Moms in Motion, \$315; OLHSA, \$2,269.74; Ruth Ellis Center, \$915; Stitches Doll Project, \$2,132; Visiting Nurses Association, \$2,182; WINGS, \$2,520.01; WSU-DMC Clinic, \$575.

To find out more about getting involved, contact Steppin' Out at 248-399-WALK (9255) or by email at info@aidswalkdetroit.org.

First training held for LGBT healthcare competency

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

Training has begun in southeast Michigan for healthcare professionals who work with the elderly and want to offer LGBT inclusive and welcoming services.

Natalie Pearce is the program manager at Social Services for the Area Agency on Aging 1-B in Southfield, which serves Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair and Washtenaw Counties. Since she began with the agency two years ago, Pearce has been pushing for gay-inclusive resources for the elderly that the agency serves.

"This work is my passion. It affects me personally, as a member of the LGBT community, as well as me as a social worker working towards empowerment and social justice," said Pearce.

Now, she is the first certified trainer through the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging working with Oakland Family Services. In a Jan. 6 training, she taught the first batch of healthcare providers how to give proper care to their older LGBT clients.

The four-hour introduction class teaches LGBT terminology, history and methods of inclusion for LGBT patients in an aging-care setting.

Pearce is qualified to train on this issue from two perspectives. There are classes for elderly care providers who want to be more inclusive, and there are classes for LGBT service providers who need to learn more about the issues associated with aging.

Pearce said that the dos and don'ts of LGBT older adult care can't be summed up quickly, but there are basics that care providers and observers in any situation can do to make patients feel safe and comfortable. "I could put it in a nutshell, I would say DO anything that includes people more; DO ask respectful questions, such as how someone would like to be referred to in terms of pronouns; DO speak up when people gay bash," she said.

For some care facilities, LGBT care is a matter of simply being more aware and welcoming. But for others, prejudice and abuse may be an issue. "I also do work in the area of prevention and awareness regarding elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, which goes hand-and-hand with this work. These things are prevalent amongst our LGBT older adults' experiences. Many folks feel forced to go back into the closet in order to feel safe in nursing homes and assisted living settings. Many LGBT folks have been denied



Natalie Pearce is program manager at Social Services for the Area Agency on Aging 1-B in Southfield. Pearce has advocated for gay-inclusive resources.

treatment due to their LGBT status. We cannot sit by and watch as those who fought for our rights to come out of the closet fear being out of the closet themselves and lock themselves back in it. With exponential growth happening in the older adult population, it is essential we remain vigilant about human rights," she said.

Kat LaTosch, one of the organizers for the LGBT Older Adult Coalition, was thrilled to see

the first class take place. "By the end of the four hours, there wasn't a single person in the room who wasn't thinking about the ways in which to make their agency or practice more culturally appropriate for LGBT older adults," LaTosch said.

The coalition is working towards bringing a SAGE chapter to Michigan, and offering a certification program for gay-friendly elder care facilities. The coalition's work is funded through a grant from the HOPE fund and operated by the ACLU of Michigan. Affirmations Community Center is one of several location organizations participating in the coalition and helping in the coordination of the SAGE Chapter. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Kathleen LaTosch of Affirmations at 248-398-7105.

Training opportunities

On April 17 and April 24 there will be training opportunities for Levels I and II for aging providers at the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. If care providers are interested in the April training, they should contact Natalie Pearce at npearce@aaa1b.com or Kristin Wilson, Program Manager/Training Specialist, at kwilson@aaa1b.com.

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Viewpoint



A perfect February mix: History, equality and love

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Each year when February rolls around two things always come to mind, Black History and love. With the recent ruling by California's 9th Circuit Court finding Prop. 8 unconstitutional and the state of Washington becoming the seventh state to enact legislation for same-sex marriage, this year marriage equality has joined the February mix.

Love by far is the greatest portion of the mix. It drives, sustains, motivates, inspires and is the common thread that makes each of us more human.

Love of family and community is a thread woven throughout the history of the African American community. Although the shortest month of the year has been set aside to celebrate Black history, it's oddly appropriate that it's also the month society celebrates the holiday of love – Valentine's Day. No other community in the history of this country has had to fight so hard to have their love of family and community recognized and afforded the full rights and protections enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

Amidst all the atrocities of slavery: the hatred, violence and bigotry experienced post slavery and through the civil rights movement and beyond, you can find a story of love – a basic civil right denied, fought for and still under attack.

Marriage equality has been a part of the African American struggle with historic parallels, emotionally and constitutionally, to the challenges LGBT people experience in obtaining recognition of our love, our families and our relationships.

If you have any doubts about the importance of marriage/family in African American history you have only to visit the slavery auction blocks in Charleston, South Carolina. There you will learn about how destruction of familial connections was used as one of the first tools of oppression.

Blindfolded slaves, both men and women, were forced to breed unaware and unable to form any family bonds. The thought being

that not allowing families would weaken not only the spirit, but also the resolve of slaves. But despite these attempts to destroy families, men and women bound in slavery developed traditions and ceremonies (without the benefit of clergy) to celebrate their love, establish families even though the next day they could be torn apart.

In 1866 former slaves Benjamin Mason and Sarah White received an official marriage certificate from the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen Bureau). The couple had lived as man and wife for over twenty years before receiving this legal recognition.

In 1963 Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple, took on the state of Virginia in another step for marriage equality. The Lovings had married in Washington, D.C. to evade Virginia's "Racial Integrity Act" banning interracial marriages. Upon returning to Virginia the couple was arrested in their home for miscegenation. They

Marriage equality has been a part of the African American struggle with historic parallels, emotionally and constitutionally, to the challenges LGBT people experience in obtaining recognition of our love, our families and our relationships.

were found sleeping in their bed by a group of police officers who invaded their home in the hopes of finding them in the act of sex (another crime). As part of a guilty plea, the Lovings were forced to leave the state to avoid a 25-year prison sentence.

In a landmark civil rights case the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously declared Virginia's "Racial Integrity Act of 1924" unconstitutional. In his decision, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote that

"Marriage is one of the basic civil rights of man" affirming what African Americans had known in their hearts and fought for since slavery.

In a struggle much like that of the African American community, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has been fighting for the recognition, protections and rights of marriage equality.

LGBT couples have developed traditions and ceremonies (without the benefit of clergy) to celebrate their love. And although no one is literally breaking into our bedrooms any longer with the passage of Lawrence v. Texas in 2003, what goes on in our bedroom (who and how we love) continually comes under attack in the right wing's campaign against our right to marriage.

It seems only right that in this month where we celebrate Black History and love that the 9th Circuit Court would uphold the decision finding California's Prop 8 unconstitutional. Never before has a federal appellate court affirmed that denying a ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional; it cannot base the marriage ban on any rationale that denigrates gay parents; that domestic partnerships are unequal to marriage; and, as a matter of law, marriage rights do not hinge on natural procreative ability.

It seems only right that in this month where we celebrate Black History and love that the governor of a seventh state, Washington, signs a marriage equality bill. Chief Warren's words are as true today as they were in 1967 "Marriage is one of the basic civil rights of man."

So let's celebrate February with more than hearts and flowers. Let's celebrate this perfect mix of history and equality with hopes that LOVE will conquer all.



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Parting Glances



Pages Past Tense #1

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I keep on my laptop desk a corner of chalky red brick. It's all that's left of Cassboro Apartments, 444 Peterboro, Detroit. I found this memento among broken boards, shattered glass of the recently razed building. It anchors childhood memories ...

In 1941, I was five when we moved into apartment 114. My father, a factory worker, was 35; my mother, a laundry helper, 30. We lived in four small rooms, which might have provided family warmth and privacy, but my father's mother, matriarchal, southern-born Granny Lottie Lee Alexander came to stay.

She was related to Robert E. Lee. I was 18 when she died.

The Cassboro was built in 1920. (I remember a pre-refrigerator ice box, gas stove, a milkman with horse-drawn van.) There were 60 apartments, owned by a Mr. Burston. Each month he drove up in his black sedan, collected rents, chatted with landlords Mr. and Mrs. Hoag. He rarely noticed us kids.

I liked Mr. Hoag. He laughed a lot, showed me a basement storage room filled with furniture and toys. His wife was cranky. She caught me talking to Japhus, the building janitor, who was washing front porch windows.

Japhus told me he had seen a dead cat brought back to life after being stuffed with sand. "You're not to speak to him," Mrs. Hoag squinted. "Do you understand, Alexander?"

I carefully avoided her, though once I hid under a staircase listening to her gossip with sedate Mrs. Barnes who lived on the fourth floor. It was a scary thing to do.

The Cassboro was filled with kids. I didn't mind being an only child. There was Betty Rennie, whose ailing mother could sleep nights only by sitting upright. There was blond Patsy Katja, who had the best comic books to trade. Tomboy Joan McGonagle, who did "things" with Tommy Tudman in his unmarried mom's bedroom.

There was Danny who lived across the hall. His clubfoot mom caught us, each age 8, showing our unbuttoned trophies in an abandoned car parked outside her window. There was Tommy Black, at 116. From my bedroom window one summer evening I saw his mother's breasts when she left the bathroom light on.

There was red-haired Deanie, 13, who asked me, age 9, just for fun when his parents were gone to take off my clothes. For my silence, he gave me his Captain Midnight ring.

There was teenager Bobby Hendrix. At Christmas time his mother invited neighbor kids in for Dickens' "Christmas Carol." She smoked with a cigarette holder, acted like screen-star Betty Grable.

When I was 12, Bobby got us kids to play draw-a-dare. He wrote dares on paper scraps. You got points for each challenge accepted. I wanted to do more than kiss the living room fish bowl, but I wasn't sure just quite what.

One day Bobby popped naked into the hallway. He had just showered, answering to a friend's knock. To this day I can still see his soapy, suntanned skin, flashy teenage smile, muscular body shake and shiver. It was a daredevil moment – just as I was conveniently passing by.

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Scott C. Morrow

Creep of the Week

Mitt Romney

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

It makes me sad that there are LGBT people in America who will vote for Mitt Romney should he get the wet bar of soap that is the Republican nomination. I mean, I understand it. There are



Mitt Romney

some folks who feel like Romney meets their needs. These people are mostly rich. Or dumb. Or both.

Mind you, Presi-

dent Obama hasn't exactly been perfect on LGBT issues. I don't blame anyone for feeling disappointed. Especially about his weak stance on marriage equality. But that doesn't mean voting Republican is the answer.

Especially since Romney's stance on marriage equality is not weak. In that he is very vocal about his opposition to it. Because you may remember that Romney was the governor of Massachusetts when it became the first state in the country to let gays and lesbians get legally married. And man does Romney want to get that rainbow stain off of his shirt.

Which is why he went out of his way to make clear that he has no love for gay-marrying homos or the people who support them when addressing the fervently anti-gay crowd at the Conservative Political Action Conference on Feb. 10.

"[D]uring my term in office our conservative values also came under attack. Less than a year after I took office the state's supreme court inexplicably found a right to same-sex marriage in the constitution written by John Adams," he said, pausing for comedic effect. "I presumed he'd be surprised." The crowd laughs heartily at Romney's stand-up routine. He's killing! (Although to be clear, CPAC attendees prefer their killing done not with laughter but with guns because of the Second Amendment and Obama's desire to steal all of their firearms so that they may be power-

less to fight against his plans to turn America into a Socialist nightmare where all kids get insurance and rich people pay taxes.)

On a roll, Romney continues: "I fought to have a stay on that decision, then pushed for a marriage amendment to our Constitution. We lost by only one vote in the legislature."

One vote! My goodness. I am not a politician or a campaign manager or a CPACer, but I wonder if it's a good idea for Romney to be emphasizing the fact that this anti-gay amendment that he pushed for was foiled by so slim a margin. I mean, doesn't that make him seem, well, ineffective to say the least?

But Romney also reminds folks that he managed to use a rare 1913 anti-interracial marriage law to keep homos from flocking to, and further sully, Massachusetts. "And I successfully prohibited out-of-state couples from coming to our state to get married and then going home. On my watch, we fought

Romney went out of his way to make clear that he has no love for gay-marrying homos or the people who support them.

hard and prevented Massachusetts from becoming the Las Vegas of gay marriage." This receives a lot of applause from the CPAC crowd. Though I have to point out what a disappointment it was to all of the drive through Elvis-themed wedding chapels that began to spring up everywhere to cash in on all of those Boston marriages becoming official. So much wasted capital. And to think Romney says he supports business.

"When I am president, I will defend the Defense of Marriage Act," he continues while the crowd cheers, "and I will fight for an amendment to our Constitution that defines marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman."

Mind you, Romney is promising to do on a national level what he failed to do on a state level. But this makes perfect sense. I mean, if you can't walk a block then it's probably time to run a marathon. Anything to increase the distance between himself and the queers.

Homophobes (Internal and External) for Romney 2012.

HealthCare.gov helps same-sex couples find coverage

Website expands information on plan benefits

Americans are now able to use HealthCare.gov to search specifically for insurance plans that include coverage for domestic partners, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced Feb. 7.

The Health Plan Finder tool on HealthCare.gov allows consumers to compare the cost sharing and benefit choices of health plans and choose the best option to meet their needs. As a part of the plan finder update, domestic partners, including same-sex couples, can now filter plans that offer coverage for all members of their family.

"Last year, as part of our commitment to work with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and be more responsive to the needs of these populations, we promised to improve the Health Plan Finder tool to give these individuals the ability to search for health plans that provide same-sex partner benefits," said Secretary Sebelius. "Today we have delivered on that promise."

Consumers looking for information on same-sex partner coverage can also access HealthCare.gov's regular features, such as sorting based on enrollment, out-of-pocket expenses or other key categories. The same-sex partner filter is also available for small businesses looking for coverage for their employees.

Studies have shown that a portion of the LGBT community are dispropor-

tionately uninsured, including those without access to coverage through a spouse, domestic partner or employer. This new filter helps address that issue by linking same-sex couples to carriers that provide benefits for their partners.

"In the past, many same-sex couples have faced challenges searching for health coverage that suited their needs," said Steve Larsen, director of the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight. "This tool will eliminate the guesswork, providing an enhanced resource for exploring insurance coverage."

Affordable Care Act

HealthCare.gov, created by the Affordable Care Act, is the first of its kind to bring information and links to health insurance plans to one place, and to make it easy for consumers to learn about and compare their insurance options. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services worked to define and collect detailed benefits and premium rating information from insurers across the country to develop the site. The site has also expanded its information on plan benefits. Previously, the website gave consumers information on a variety of benefits, including primary care office visits, specialist visits, X-ray/lab work, hospitalization, emergency room visits, prescription coverage, mental

health and substance abuse coverage, and maternity coverage.

With this new update, consumers will have access to a more comprehensive list of benefits each plan offers along with the level of coverage provided. The benefits will be listed as covered, not covered, covered with limitations, or available for an additional premium. The new benefits include such things as home health services, in- and out-patient rehabilitation services, skilled nursing facilities, hospice services, dental care, infertility treatments and weight loss programs.

In addition, HealthCare.gov provides extensive information about consumer rights, tips for how to navigate the market's complexities, and details on how the Affordable Care Act provides new protections for beneficiaries.

To access the Insurance Finder, go to the home page of www.HealthCare.gov and click on the blue tab "Find Insurance Options" at the top of the page.

For more information on how the Affordable Care helps LGBT Americans have better access to stable, affordable health insurance and high quality health care, visit www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/2011/01/new-options-for-lgbt-americans.html

Foundation to host annual 'Taste of Ferndale'

FERNDALE – On Feb. 21 the Ferndale Community Foundation will host its annual "Taste of Ferndale" at Boogie Fever, from 6 - 9 p.m. at 22901 Woodward Ave. More than fifteen restaurants will participate in the city's strolling dinner event held annually on "Mardi Gras." Tickets for the benefit are \$32 and support the Ferndale Community Foundation.

The concept of the Mardi Gras-themed fundraiser is to showcase some of Ferndale's most popular and diverse restaurants in one location, allowing attendees to sample selections from each venue.

"There are restaurants of many types and styles in Ferndale, and this

event allows folks to sample all kinds of great fare from a variety of these popular destinations," said Dan Martin, newly elected Ferndale Councilman and past foundation chair.

"This is one of the most popular events in Ferndale now," said Greg Pawlica, the foundation's chair. "Holding it this year at Boogie Fever with live music by the Metro Jazz Voices will allow it to continue to grow," he added.

The event will also feature a silent auction and a giving tree. An afterglow party will be held at Howe's Bayou, 22848 Woodward Ave., beginning at 9 p.m.

The Ferndale Community Foundation promotes and funds a variety

of programs and organizations in the area of education, health, youth programming, and public art within the city. It has enabled groups to develop and complete projects that enrich the lives of area residents. Over the past eight years the foundation has contributed over \$40,000 to projects including FernCare Free Medical Clinic and Ferndale Youth Assistance.

For a complete list of their charitable giving, please check out their website at www.ferndalecommunityfoundation.org. Tickets are being sold by foundation members, at the DDA, Just For Us, via the web site, and a limited number will be available at the door.

► Washington

Continued from p. 7

wrote to her recently saying she had considered suicide but had been given renewed hope by passage of the marriage equality bill.

She said she had been overwhelmed with response to the bill, both from young people and couples who had been together for many years.

"I am so proud of our young people, including my two wonderful daughters," said Gregoire, her voice choking with emotion. Gregoire said her daughters, ages 27 and 32, told her "this is the civil rights issue of their time."

The Washington State legislature was the ninth state to approve marriage equality - either through the legislature (five states), the courts (two), or both (two). Two of those states (California and Maine) had their laws reversed by voters, so Washington - if it rejects the expected repeal effort - will become the seventh state, plus the District of Columbia, to provide marriage equality. (California's law was reversed after being in effect only six months. Enactment of Maine's law was delayed pending the referendum vote.)

The marriage equality bill passed the Washington House Feb. 8 on a 55 to 43 vote, overturning an existing law to ban same-sex marriage. It passed the Senate 28 to 21 on Fe. 1.

According to the Washington Secretary of State's office, the law is due to take effect June 7, but opponents of the law have until June 6 to turn in more than 120,000 signatures. If they do turn in signatures, the law will be suspended until either voters can weigh in on the measure in November or until the Secretary of State certifies that too few signatures passed the validation process. If the latter occurs, the law would take effect immediately (probably sometime in July).

State Rep. Jamie Pederson, sponsor of the bill in the House, thanked the governor for taking "a significant risk" to support the legislation and for being the governor to do "the most in U.S. history" to advance the cause of equal rights for LGBT people. Gregoire also signed a state law in 2006 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. She also signed a bill in 2007 establishing domestic partnerships and a bill in 2009 giving same-sex couples "everything but marriage."

State Sen. Ed Murray, who sponsored the marriage equality bill in the Senate, welcomed the gathered audience to the "other side of the rainbow." He thanked "courageous legislators, Democrat and Republican" who supported the bill despite the potential for backlash. And he, like Pederson, gave the lion's share of credit for the bill's passage to Governor Gregoire, who received prolonged applause and the chanting of "Thank you," from the crowd.

Referendum possible

A local pastor, Ken Hutcherson of the Antioch Bible Church in Redmond, has already vowed a referendum on the measure, as has the National Organization for Marriage.

NOM leader Brian Brown told CBN "we're going to be able to get the signatures very quickly."

State law requires that more than 120,000



Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire signed the freshly passed marriage equality bill Feb. 13.

signatures be gathered to put an issue on the ballot. And while Brown and many others believe a referendum is likely this November, marriage equality supporters believe Washington voters will reject it.

But proponents of the law expressed confidence that voters would sustain the measure, if put to a vote this November.

"The wide margins by which the marriage equality bill passed both the House and the Senate demonstrates the rapidly growing support in the state of Washington for ending state sanctioned discrimination in the issuance of marriage licenses," said Josh Friedes, Marriage Equality Director for the statewide gay political group, Equal Rights Washington. ERW is part of a large coalition of groups seeking marriage equality in the state, including the Human Rights Campaign, the ACLU, Planned Parenthood Northwest, NARAL, the National Organization for Women, and numerous unions, Jewish and religious groups, and groups working for the rights of minorities.

Gregoire, a Democrat, began her second term as governor in 2009 and would be up for re-election this year. But she announced last June that she would not seek re-election. She survived breast cancer (diagnosed in 2003) and said her decision was a personal one, but she added that her retirement was motivated by a desire to focus her remaining months in office on addressing the state's recession.

The Washington bill, like marriage equality bills in other states, includes generous exceptions for religious institutions to refuse to accommodate services to same-sex couples that marry.

The Washington state marriage bill calls for "ending discrimination in marriage based on gender and sexual orientation to ensure that all persons in this state may enjoy the freedom to marry on equal terms, while also respecting the religious freedom of clergy and religious institutions to determine for whom to perform marriage ceremonies and to determine which marriages to recognize for religious purposes."

The religious protection language in the bill stipulates that "no official of a religious denomination or non-profit institution...may be required to solemnize any marriage in violation of his or her right to free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or by the Washington state Constitution." It also enables religious institutions to bar use of their facilities to same-sex couples for marriage ceremonies.

BTL Cool Cities Royal Oak

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The Kate Clinton Q&A

Comedian talks election, pissing off ring-wingers and her responsibility to be political

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Times like this – election years, when politics are a comedian’s punching-bag – were made for Kate Clinton, who has hilariously riffed on 30 years of stupid presidents and right-winged morons. She’s at it again on her All Fracked Up Tour, hitting Ann Arbor’s The Ark at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 19.

“I’m not there enough,” Clinton told us in a recent chat. “A year doesn’t feel complete unless I get there.”

We caught up with Clinton to talk about the presidential race, progress made in the LGBT community and whether she agrees with Cynthia Nixon’s “choice” to be lesbian.

What’s the focus of the All Fracked Up Tour?

Isn’t that a great title? It’s not easy to be thinking in November what will work in February, because everything changes so fast. My topics are always political and I’m barely keeping up with what’s going on. (Laughs) I can’t believe that anyone ever said, “What will we do without George Bush?” Like, are you kidding me? That

got very boring because it was always the same: He’s bad. Oh, yep. He’s bad.

Now you have Santorum.

Ah, it’s a comedy gift. People drop off. Michele Bachmann drops off, but Rick Santorum for some bizarre reason is rising to the top. A friend of mine says, “Cream rises but scum floats.”

What are your thoughts on the changes and progress within the LGBT community?

For a 40-year movement, we’ve made incredible changes. And it’s state-by-state levels, so that means there’s conversation about LGBT rights in all the states – and that’s great. The great Mae West said, “It’s better to be looked over than to be overlooked, and we’ve been really looked over. But you can see the poll number changes on America’s belief about marriage equality, so I think we’ve done our work. I think we still have a lot of work to do. I sometimes worry that people will just kick back and go, “Well, excellent, we got that,” but we still have a lot of work to do about race in our community and poverty issues and violence and bullying.

Does that mean you have to work harder to be even more political?

Oh yes, absolutely. I feel like the longer I’ve performed, the more political I’ve gotten. The difference is that when I began the mainstream community was really quite homo ignorant, but now, whether they like it or not, they know there are gay people – they’ve met gay people – so that’s a big change.

I used to have to do a lot of explaining. (Laughs) If I said Michigan, which for lesbians meant where you go during the summer for a crazy week or two (for the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival), I’d have to say, “That’s where the festival happens. It’s a music festival.” Then I’d explain the importance of the music and cultural festivals and the incredibly important work that producers did. Now you don’t really have to explain it and it still goes on, but what I feel my job is now is – because everybody gets information so quickly and daily on the Internet – to sort of make sense of it or put it in a context.

How does comedy help you get your point across?

People let their guard down and become more

Kate Clinton

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open when they’re laughing. They let things in I don’t think they ordinarily would. I love my shows when a straight couple comes out and goes, “We’re Republicans but we laughed.” I’ve done my job then.

What are your thoughts on the One Million Moms who rallied against J.C. Penney because they chose an out lesbian, Ellen DeGeneres, as their spokesperson? And what do you think of Ellen’s reaction?

I’m always happy when she speaks out because I love to hear her take on anything, whether it’s toilet paper or it’s to give her take on what J.C.

See Kate Clinton, page 21

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It's true, Whitney: I will *always* love you

A personal tribute to a fallen diva gone too soon



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Where do broken hearts go? Whitney Houston asked that very question in the midst of a career-high, in the '80s when she secured her spot as

a premier pop diva for her inimitable voice and beguiling spirit. Three decades later,

on Feb. 11, 2012, I was asking myself the same when Whitney's death was reported.

"Whitney Houston just died." My friend's shocking announcement at a weekend get-together sent me into a tailspin of disbelief that a woman so close to my heart growing up – and, at one point in my childhood, seemed so abundantly talented that she could defy death – was gone. I saw flashes of the kinship that I, and many gay people who admire their divas, felt in the moments that not only defined Whitney's life but my own.

The drive home was harder. Songs from the legend's heyday as a benchmark vocalist reminded me of good friends, my mother and just simply being a kid. And then they eerily took on a different life. "Bittersweet memories." Yes, there are certainly those. "I'm realizing that you're not coming back, and it finally hit me all

at once." That happened. "(If) the Lord asks me what I did with my life, I'll say I spent it with you." And she did.

I was an '80s baby, and my mom's sublime taste in music would naturally rub off on me. When "The Bodyguard," Whitney's film debut, was released in 1992, we saw it together (and we cried together). That scene where co-star Kevin Costner is watching Whitney in all her stunningness while singing "Run to You"? I had it on repeat, admiring her much like he does, once I got the VHS for Christmas.

I was so obsessed with Whitney's signature song – and I'll always love it – that I tussled with a cousin of mine to do it at a talent show, regularly held in my grandma's basement for my family. She had the advantage: even my pre-puberty

See **Whitney Houston**, page 23

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Hear Me Out

Why we love Lana Del Rey. Plus: 'Idol' contestant goes full-on country



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lana Del Rey, 'Born to Die'

Focus on Lana Del Rey's enigmatic image and you miss the point: Her major-label debut, "Born to Die," is an intoxicating hit of theatrical trip-hop from the seductress of song. Unfairly trashed for a one-off "SNL" blunder and controversially questioned for her authenticity, the New York chick-turned-polarizing pop star – and self-proclaimed "gangster Nancy Sinatra" – casts a hypnotic spell on the album, a thrilling, death-obsessed sound fever that's maddening and masochistic. That chill was first realized on throwback "Video Games," turning her boyfriend's Nintendo habits into a haunting, and painfully sad, portrait of unrequited love. Darkness doesn't let up as "Born to Die" shakes out: The title track, a favorite, uses morality as an excuse for reckless abandon while her American Dream is crushed on "Blue Jeans," moving from the art-chic edginess of David Lynch melodramatics to a frantic spin-out climax. Ironically now, she relishes in newfound acceptance ("Radio"), and then has a weakness for a bad boy ("Million Dollar Man"), throws caution to the wind ("Summertime Sadness") and dreams of a lost love ("Dark Paradise"). The voice that carries them all, a retro lounge sound that cradles an alluring lower register, is like ear ecstasy. As for Lana Del Rey herself? The 25-year-old's been called "fake" and "manufactured," but the insecurities and fears and heartache she exposes are all very real. *Grade: A-*



Kellie Pickler, '100 Proof'

For how strong Kellie Pickler comes on with the traditionalist country of her third album, the "100 Proof" title does more than befit the switch. Effectively capable of lingering like a potent liquor, the word-challenged reality star ditches her Shania Twain post-"Idol" roots for Tammy Wynette (Pickler's not making that serious face on the cover for nothing). And that's not just because she name-drops her – to wonderful effect, in fact, on a feisty homage to the legendary lady, who plays her spiritual guide of sorts – but Pickler has never sounded so in her zone as the anti-Carrie Underwood of country. Pseudo-genre songs never fit the North Carolina native's obvious accent, so she's right at home channeling Wynonna grit on "Tough" and doing a classic-sounding porch-song, "Rockaway (The Rockin' Chair Song)." On her career best, Pickler has a hand from producers Frank Liddell and Luke Wooten, pulling together an impressive balance of hard-hitters ("Unlock the Honky Tonk," doing just that) and earnest ballads. One of them, "Mother's Day," is a sad rumination on Pickler's own real-life mom who abandoned her as a kid (for dad: "The Letter"); another, "Long as I Never See You Again," is emoted with great sensitivity in her pinched vocal style, as a song about post-breakup healing should be. Her greatest vocal turn, however, is on the love-by-comparison title track, further proof that Pickler isn't just another reality show write-off. She's done Tammy proud. *Grade: B+*

Also Out



Ingrid Michaelson, 'Human Again'

Boy drama fuels Ingrid Michaelson's fifth album with references to relationships as a

blazing abyss and a battle of hearts. "I won't surrender," declares the 32-year-old modern-day Lilith lady. And she doesn't, giving it her all on 15 tracks – released independently on her own record label – of chin-up mantras ("Do It Now"), being universally human ("Blood Brothers") and the faceted feelings of romance ("How We Love"). Rarely does Michaelson, who goes for a grander sound of walloping pop melodies and a refined finish, fall into the coffeehouse vibe she built her career on. Still, she manages to capture that intimacy even when her songs are bursting at the seams.



Elizaveta, 'Beatrix Runs'

She's tagged "opera pop," but Elizaveta Khrpounova's Bach-meets-Bjork sound on her accomplished

full-length debut is in line with Tori Amos and Regina Spektor, her vocal twin. "Odi Et Amo" is rooted in that classical training, and her century-spanning brand of art-pop extends to "Dreamer" and "Armies of Your Heart," an enchanting radio-baited power ballad with an electro intro and hyper-string lining. "Goodbye Song," on just piano, is a touching display of affection for the end of a relationship; "Snow in Venice" has a dainty theatrical slant and "Orion" leans on contemporary tropes. Elizaveta has the makings of a new hipster goddess.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com.



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► **Kate Clinton**

Continued from p. 15

Penney did and her sly humor that (One Million Moms) only has 48,000 people on their Facebook site. That's a great example to people.

By now most people must know what they're in for when they go to a Kate Clinton show. But have you had angry right-wingers at your shows?

People have gotten up to leave and I just pretend they're going to the bathroom. One time I was doing a show and these two couples just huffed out and made a big stink in the lobby and security said they wanted to go back there and teach me a lesson. I said, "Thank you for protecting me." And they were like, "We weren't protecting you. We were protecting them. We knew you'd turn the audience on them." (Laughs)

What are your thoughts and predictions on the presidential race this year?

It's going to get uglier, and it's going to be a fight, but I think that President Obama is getting his message out and reenergizing people. I think it'll be four more years, which I'm very excited about.

LGBT people are placed everywhere in agencies across the

government and they've really just started to crank it out, and it's good news. I hope we get four more years of being able to move things forward.

Do you think that once he secures four more years he'll be more open to discussing LGBT issues?

Absolutely. It's politics. But I think that he's got plenty of sort of surrogates who are speaking up for him. I don't get the sense that LGBT people are as impatient as they were. I do think with the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the justice department's commitment not to defend DOMA because parts of it are unconstitutional – and states like Washington and New York with marriage equality – the LGBT community, while still impatient, and that's good, are getting more of the real politic of what he's up against. Republicans are just the opposing-only party – everything's no, now. If you don't like government, go golfing. That's what I think.

Tell me about your cameo on "Smash."

Wasn't that great? Apparently NBC was showing trailers on American Airlines and people were screaming on the plane, "Kaaate!"

Lesbians like to fly American Airlines, huh?

Oh, they do.

What was that like?

Just a complete pleasure. The scene that I'm in, I had to act very non-impressed and not at all excited by this incredible girl singing in front of me, just belting out "Over the Rainbow" time after time – and it was staggering – but I had to act like it wasn't that great.

That was a challenge?

Yeah. It's wonderful to be around such talented young people and to know that – hello! – Angelica Houston is anywhere on the set.

Would you like to do more TV?

I hope so. It's so much fun and you reach so many people without having to go to their town! (Laughs)

How do you feel about your friend Cynthia Nixon's brouhaha, where she told a reporter she "chose" to be lesbian?

I'm profoundly pro-choice. I love what she said. I thought it was great. And she's very thoughtful and very outspoken, and she was probably talking along and having a little piece of celery and the whole room blew up. But she's the real deal.

It could be that we were born this way, but that really shouldn't be our question. Our question should be, "Why is it so stigmatized?" "Why are we still fighting for LGBT rights?" "What is your problem?"

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'Spring Awakening' warms up dull winter

BY JOHN QUINN

The creative minds in musical theater have drawn inspiration from many odd sources. But in a realm of *Demon Barbers* and *Jellicle Cats*, "Spring Awakening" is one of the oddest. German playwright Frank Wedekind's 1891 play by the same name was a rage against the machine. Working in the broad context of teenagers discovering their sexuality in a sea of ignorance, Wedekind crafted an Expressionist exploration of rape and abortion; homosexuality; child abuse; and, ultimately, suicide. It was too controversial for the prevailing mores and was for a time banned.

Enter playwright Steven Sater and composer Duncan Sheik. Their reimagined "Spring Awakening" won eight Tony Awards in 2007. It also launched the careers of "Glee" favorites Lea Michele and Jonathan Groff, who originated the pivotal roles of Wendla and Melchoir.

The plots and sub-plots are convoluted and interwoven, but all stem from the fact that a thinking man is a stultified society's worst enemy. The thinker in question is young Melchoir Gabor (Jeff Bobick); what he isn't learning from his narrow-minded schooling, he's finding out for himself. His rather nerdy classmate Moritz (Alan Neuwirth) confides in Melchoir that he's been having impure dreams. Melchoir assures him that that's what adolescent boys are all about and puts the facts of life in writing – complete with illustrations. When things in town go wrong – and they go horribly wrong – Melchoir's paper trail is evidence enough for Authority to name him as the scapegoat.

If the book for "Spring Awakening" follows its original author's intent closely, Wedekind's most damning accusation is leveled at parents and teachers unwilling to hold frank discussions with their children concerning sex. The

REVIEW

Spring Awakening

The Box Theater at The Emerald Theatre, 51 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens. Feb. 12, 16-Feb. 17. \$25. 586-954-2311.

www.theboxtheater.com

consequences for Wendla Bergmann (Kryssy Becker) are devastating. Her mother's assurance that conceiving a child involves loving her husband with all her heart is no substitute for a mother-daughter understanding of the consequences of unprotected sexual activity. There is also a recurring theme of parents throwing "defective" children out of the house as if one is trashing an old shoe. This musical is grim, graphic and often vulgar. Yet, hard to believe, it holds out the poignant hope that there is redemption in the future.

For this show What's That Smell? Productions has left the cozy confines of the walk-in closet they call The Box Theater for a stroll down Walnut Street to the spacious – some would say cavernous – Emerald Theatre. Having had the pleasure of reviewing the company's production of "bare," another large musical about teenage angst, I was startled by the similarities between that and "Spring Awakening." Both musicals have achieved a startling intimacy: "bare," performed at the Box, effectively employed the space to the maximum, with actors literally working the aisles; "Awakening" allows the same focus in a larger playing area through thoughtful direction and creative design.

Under the direction of Rodel Salazar, a very young, enthusiastic cast tackles some very edgy material. The principals are strong, engaging and in great voice, suitably ranging high soprano and tenor. If there is a standout among them, it's Lauren Fuller as Isle, a



Kryssy Becker, Jeff Bobick and Alan Neuwirth in "Spring Awakening." Photo: The Box Theater

waif who has been cast out of her home who has found refuge in an artist colony. Her rendition of "Blue Wind" is utterly captivating. Also of note is the lush, full sound musical director Eleonore Ellro-Groth coaxes out of the band.

I'm not in the habit of leaving the theater humming the tech, but a serendipitous blend between disciplines is notable here. Gannon Styles and Mandy Logsdon have taken advantage of the Emerald's soaring "fly space" above the stage to create a unique lighting design, more reminiscent of rock concert than rock opera. Heavy use of backlighting in saturated colors seems to pop the performers off the stage and into our laps. For this production, sound designer John Forlini has brought in a new amplification system to deal with the venue's multitude of reverberant surfaces. While there's an echo, it doesn't interfere with sound quality; every word and note rings loud and clear. Put lights and sound together and who needs 3D TV?

So, how does one sum up "Spring Awakening?" I'm getting off easy this time, since director Salazar says it better than I can: "The story may come from 1891, but this show is 100 percent today. The music, the subject matter, the language ... it all reflects today's world."

And so it does. We need to do better.

► Whitney Houston

Continued from p.17

voice didn't quite pass as a female. And my aunt made me do Michael Bolton instead. No fair.

A message to me on Facebook the other day reminded me of the incredible bond between a performer's music and our lives. Though we don't talk often, a neighborhood girlfriend who I grew up with reached out to me. She remembered hanging in my bedroom and watching "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," excited whenever it'd come on VH1.

That was the case with a lot of Whitney's music. Hers gave me a tingly

feeling that few performers could. Many of them were hits, of course, but to me they were more than just chart-topping singles. "The Greatest Love of All" taught me to follow my own heart and ultimately gave me the courage to come out; "When You Believe," her duet with Mariah Carey, did something similar – it was the lifeline I needed during that time.

Whitney, despite her challenges in the years before her death, had a way of evoking raw emotion and leaving an everlasting impression on the music business with her natural talent.

Whitney, despite her challenges in the years before her death, had a way of evoking raw emotion and leaving an everlasting impression on the music business with her natural talent. I felt every note, every diva pause and every smile. And because of that, I grieve not only the loss of Whitney Houston, but the loss of her life as it relates to my own. Our own.

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Editor's Picks

Outings



KICK, the metro Detroit non-profit agency for LGBT African-Americans, celebrates its winter Tea Party Saturday, Feb. 18 at the Woodward Cocktail Bar & Grill in Detroit's historical automobile industry district, Milwaukee Junction.

The Tea Party is a quarterly fundraiser that benefits our family, friends and community. This quarterly event provides funds for the free programs and services offered by KICK. Event organizers chose the Sunday afternoon Tea Party as a fundraising theme for it's historical significance: "In LGBT culture tea dances were a common activity in the late '60s and '70s as a place for safe love and expression," says executive director Curtis Lipscomb. "Most were held in private homes and allied nightclubs. And, most commonly occurred during Sunday afternoons."

KICK's Tea Party begins 3 p.m. Feb. 18 at Woodward Cocktail Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave., in Detroit. For more information, call 313-285-9733 or go to E-kick.org.

Theater



Two buddies take a golf trip without their wives, but the new boss shows up and ruins their fun. "Whose Wives Are They Anyway?" is a play loaded with comic high jinks that are "par for the course" on the Farmington Players' stage. The show runs Feb. 17 through March 3 at the Barn Theatre, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, in Farmington Hills.

The fun tees off with John Baker and David McGachen, who unexpectedly encounter their new boss on a golf outing. The golfers are vacationing without their wives, and they learn the boss frowns on men leaving their spouses behind. They find themselves in sort of a sand trap when the boss invites their wives to dinner and refuses to take "no" for an answer. So the pals scramble to rustle up some "better halves," before they lose their jobs.

Tickets are available at the box office at 248-553-2955.

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 16

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

Friday, Feb. 17

Riot Youth Weekly Meeting 4 p.m. 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

Memories: An Appreciation Celebration 6 p.m. A Benefit for the AIDS Committee of Windsor. Keynote Speaker: Four-Time Olympic Gold Medalist and Health Advocate Greg Louganis. AIDS Committee of Windsor, 201 Riverside Dr. W., Downtown **Windsor**. 519-973-0222 ext. 230. Aids Windsor.org

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

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Precious: Based on the novel Push, by Sapphire. 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, Feb. 18

Tea Party 3 p.m. The Tea Party is a quarterly fundraiser that benefits our family, friends and community. This quarterly event provides funds for the free programs and services offered by KICK, 6426 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-285-9733. E-kick.org

Sunday, Feb. 19

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

PFLAG Lenawee Social and Support

Group Meeting 3 p.m. PFLAG Lenawee, 1247 E Siena Heights Dr., **Adrian**. 517-605-4827. Sites.google.com/site/pflaglenawee

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Meet every Sunday for good conversation and food. LGBTQI and allies. New topic for discussion each week. Topic: What makes you laugh? Get Out And Live!, 714 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. GetOutAndLive.me

Tuesday, Feb. 21

GEN Silent Film Screening 5 p.m. Tickets: \$10 donation to the local GLSEN chapter's Anti-Bullying Campaign. The event will be broadcast at all three MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine locations-East Lansing, Detroit Medical Center, and Macomb University Center. MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine LGBTQI in Medicine with funding by the MSU Council of Graduate Students, E105 Fee Hall, **East Lansing**. Lgbtamedcom@gmail.com stumaddux.com/GEN_SILENT.html

Wednesday, Feb. 22

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**. Kglrc.org

Wild Wednesday 5 p.m. A supportive LGBTQ youth group that meets every Wednesday. All youth are welcome. Dedicated to Make a Change, L3C, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-657-1792. Wrap-up.org

Friday, Feb. 24

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: The Help; Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Feb. 25

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. GoAffirmations.org

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

Mitten Mavens Roller Derby Double Header 5 p.m. Lansing's Mitten Mavens Roller Derby is proud to have their junior team, the Cap City Wild Childs, play in their very first bout in a double-header with the Mavens. Prices: \$10 general, children under 10 free with paying adult. Mitten Mavens Lansing Roller Derby, 7977 Centerline Dr., **Dimondale**. Mittenmavens@gmail.com Mittenmavens.net

Art and Wine Night 6:30 p.m. The Network and Roots present this no-cost (though donations are greatly appreciated), open-to-all, evening of fantastic art, entertainment, food, wine and networking. The Network, 343 Atlas St., **Grand Rapids**. 616-458-3511. thenetwork@grlgbt.org

Xpress Yourself A Dance Party 8 p.m. Tickets: \$10 online, \$15 at the door. Downtown Publications, 100 Marquette Dr., **Detroit**. Xpressparty.eventbrite.com

Sunday, Feb. 26

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

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Meet every Sunday for good conversation and food. LGBTQI and allies. New topic for discussion each week. Topic: Does pornography influence or cause sex crimes? Get Out And Live!, 714 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Ax & Mozart/Slatkin & Mahler" Emanuel Ax performs the eloquent Piano Concerto No. 22 of Mozart and Leonard Slatkin conducts Gustav Mahler's savage and sublime Fifth Symphony, with its heart-wrenching Adagio. Tickets: \$15. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. Feb. 17-Feb. 18. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Classical Roots" This season's Classical Roots concert features a new work by Haitian-American composer and violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain. His "Dancers, Dreamers, & Presidents", commissioned for this concert, is the latest statement of this imaginative young master. Tickets: \$15. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. Feb. 16-March 17. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

University Musical Society "Hagen Quartet" Regarded internationally as one of the foremost string quartets of the day. Performing string quartets of Beethoven. Ticket information available at ums.org. Rackham Auditorium, 825 N. University, **Ann Arbor**. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

CONCERTS

Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings "Love Your Brass" fall in love with brass works spanning four centuries, including a new work by young composer-in-residence, Paul Dooley. Tickets: \$25 regular, \$22 senior, \$10 students. Concert preview begins at 2:15 pm. First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, 529 Hendrie Blvd, Royal Oak, MI 48067, Royal Oak. 2 p.m. Feb. 19. 248-559-2095. Detroitchamberwinds.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Chroma Piano Trio" Nurit Pacht, Robert deMaine, Priya Mayadas. Tickets: \$15-30 general, \$10 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 17. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Olympia Entertainment "The Manhattan Transfer" Tickets: \$33 and 36. Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. Feb. 16. 866-782-9622. Motorcitycasino.com

Olympia Entertainment "Musiq Soulchild" Tickets: \$45, 48 and 53. Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. Feb. 23. 866-782-9622. Motorcitycasino.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Big Gigantic" With special guest K@Dog and Paper Diamond. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St. Royal Oak. 8 p.m. Feb. 24. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Susan Werner and Rosebud" Contemporary songwriter, Susan Werner. Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor**. 8 p.m. Feb. 25. 734-761-1818. Theark.org

University Musical Society "Sweet Honey in the Rock" Ticket information available at ums.org. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 8 p.m. Feb. 17. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

OTHER

Detroit Opera House "An Evening with Anthony Bourdain and Eric Ripert" Good Vs. Evil: An Evening with Bourdain and Ripert. Tickets begin at \$46. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. Feb. 17. 313-237-SING. Michiganopera.org

Detroit Passport to the Arts (DP2A) "DP2A Oscar-Nominated Short Films & After-party" Tickets: \$25 for pass to event. Purchase a pass to join all remaining DP2A events for \$99. Detroit Film Theatre, 5200 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 5 p.m. Feb. 16. 248-559-2095. Dp2a.org

Static Network "The Erotic Poetry & Music Festival 25th Anniversary Show!" \$10 with a portion of the proceeds to benefit Paws with a Cause. The Corktown Tavern, 1716 Michigan Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. Feb. 25. 313-964-5103. Facebook.com/EroticPoetryAndMusicFestival

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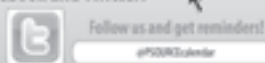
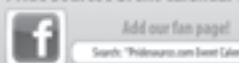
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THEATER

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Dead Man's Cell Phone \$15. EMU Theatre at Sponberg Theatre in the Quirk Dramatic Arts Bldg., Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. Through Feb. 16. 734-487-2282. emich.edu/emutheatre

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change \$10. LCC Performing Arts at LCC Black Box Theatre, room 168 Gannon Building, 411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. Through Feb. 18. 517-483-1488. lcc.edu/cma/events

Intimate Apparel \$12-15. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 19. 313-577-2960. bonstelle.com

Noises Off \$20-\$26. U-M Dept. of Theatre & Drama at Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. Feb. 16 - 19. 734-764-2538. tickets.music.umich.edu

PROFESSIONAL

A Stone Carver \$17.50-\$40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through March 10. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

Amber Waves \$12-14. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Through March 4. 810-237-1530. FlintYouthTheatre.org

Bard on the Run \$15. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare at Dog Story Theatre, 7 Jefferson Ave., Grand Rapids. Feb. 17 - 19. 616-850-0916. DogStoryTheater.com

Blast! \$20-40. Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23. 269-387-2312. millerauditorium.com

Burn the Red Banner: By donation. Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. Through Feb. 25. 313-454-1542. theabreact.com

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

Dead Man's Shoes \$20-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through Feb. 26. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

Drum! \$29-39. Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 8 p.m. Feb. 25. 313-934-2354. dearborntheater.com

Elizabeth the Beautiful \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Feb. 17 - March 12. 248-545-5545. TheRingwald.com

God of Carnage \$22-41. Performance Network, Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Feb. 26. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

Home Water A workshop production. \$10. Matrix Theatre, 2730 Bagley St., Detroit. Through Feb. 19. 313-967-0999. matrixtheatre.org

If You Start a Fire [Be Prepared to Burn] \$15. The New Theatre Project at Mix Studio Theatre, 130 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. Through March 4. 734-645-9776. thenewtheatreproject.org

Love, Loss, and What I Wore \$49.50. Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave., Detroit. Through March 4. 313-963-9800. BroadwayinDetroit.com

Mary Stuart \$30-39. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through March 4. 248-370-3316. mbtheatre.com

Over the River and Through the Woods \$16. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Feb. 24 - March 24. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

Race \$36-\$43. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company, Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Rd., West Bloomfield. Through Feb. 19. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

Romantic Fools \$18-\$24. Stormfield Theatre, 201 Morgan Lane, Lansing. Through Feb. 19. 517-488-8450. stormfieldtheatre.org

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

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

Spencers Theatre of Illusion \$12-\$29.

The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 18. 810-237-8689. thewhiting.com

Spring Awakening \$25 reserved, \$20 general. The Box Theatre at The Emerald Theatre, 51 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens. Through Feb. 17. 586-954-2311. theboxtheater.com

Summer and Smoke \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Feb. 24 - April 21. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

Superior Donuts \$21-25. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 26. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

The Love List \$28-30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through Feb. 19. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

Under the Poppy Free with museum admission. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Feb. 17. 3138337900. dia.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Art Center "Artini 2012" 4th Annual Artini, a fundraiser. Tickets: \$45. Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. Feb. 17. 734-994-8004. AnnArborartcenter.org

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

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

Lawrence Street Gallery "The Body Eclectic" Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Feb. 1-Feb. 29. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Joshua White and Gary Panter's Light Show" Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 10-April 29. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Gift of a Lifetime: The James Pearson Duffy Collection" Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Sep. 15-Feb. 29. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life" Fluxus emerged in the early 1960s as a loose, international network of artists, composers, and designers "led" by Lithuanian-born American artist George Maciunas (1931-1978) that was noted for blurring the boundaries between art and life. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 25 - May 20. 734-764-0395. Umma.umich.edu

Wyandotte Arts Center "The Games We Play" A series of large scale oil paintings by Judy Enright, inspired by playing cards. Each card has a game or sport incorporated in the work. Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. Jan. 19 - March 3. 734-720-0671. Downriverarts.org

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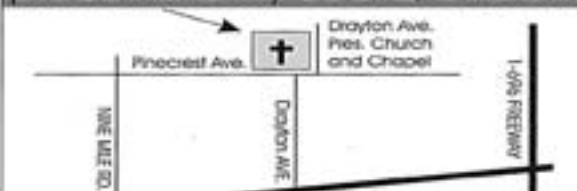
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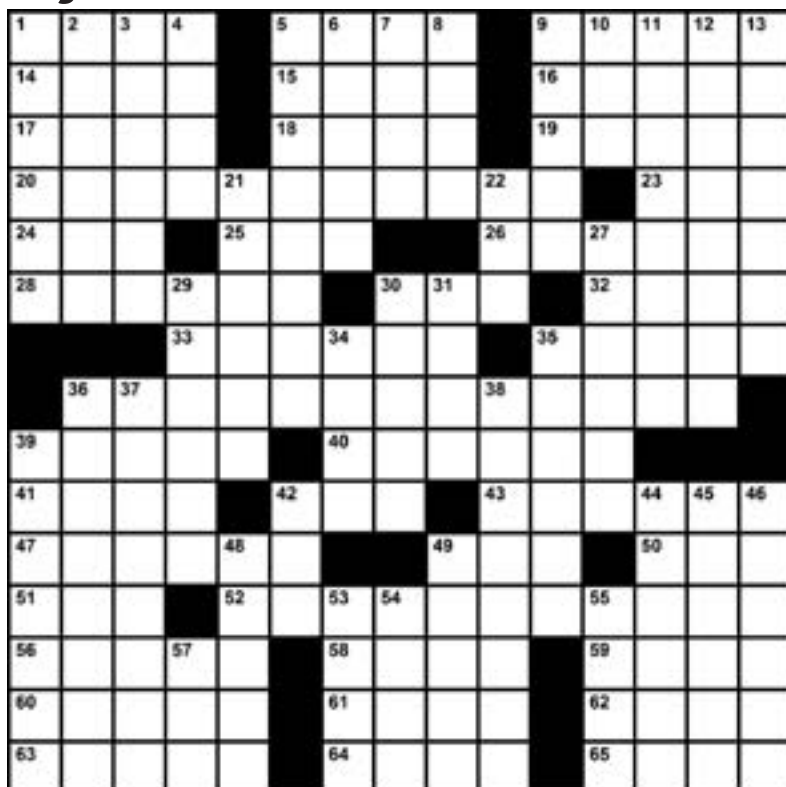
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Taylor-Made Advice



Across

- 1 One that may be beaten
- 5 Demonstrated heterosexuality
- 9 Answer to "Who's there?"
- 14 Coin on the Continent
- 15 It was gauche, for Debussy
- 16 Henri's boyfriends
- 17 St. Patrick's land
- 18 Tight-assed
- 19 Taco topping
- 20 Start of a quote from Tate Taylor's "The Help"
- 23 Thousandth of an angry inch?
- 24 Poet's before
- 25 S&L assets, maybe
- 26 Accuse of wrongdoing
- 28 Old car brand name
- 30 Takes too much GHB, e.g.
- 32 Bottom's offer to pay?
- 33 Relates with
- 35 Literate boast?
- 36 More of the quote
- 39 Type of hole
- 40 Weatherspoon of the WNBA
- 41 Soothing agent
- 42 Edvard Grieg's land (abbr.)
- 43 Swallowed hard

- 47 At the top
- 49 BB propellant
- 50 Vein filler
- 51 Head of the bd.
- 52 End of the quote
- 56 Word before "ho!"
- 58 Minute opening
- 59 Charger, to a Cockney
- 60 Joe of "The Ruffian on the Stair"
- 61 Resolve, with "out"
- 62 Poetic adverb
- 63 "... ___ evil"
- 64 Relief of Lincoln
- 65 Blows it

Down

- 1 Took it off
- 2 Shirley's "Terms of Endearment" role
- 3 Hot dish holder
- 4 Fine-tune
- 5 Just out
- 6 Fruit refuse
- 7 Cole Porter's "Well, Did You ___"
- 8 Penn. neighbor
- 9 "Hedda Gabler" playwright
- 10 Leaves for a drink
- 11 "Giant" actor

- 12 Robert Preston Broadway role
- 13 Lifted up
- 21 Sharpness
- 22 Scale notes
- 27 Along the back
- 29 It won't give you mono
- 30 Multiple-choice answer
- 31 Closet opening
- 34 "And ___ bed"
- 35 Get a policy on
- 36 Playing with a full deck
- 37 "Daddy's ___" (gay-positive kids' book)
- 38 Privates standing at attention, perhaps
- 39 Pampas cowboys
- 42 Last in a series
- 44 Wedding vow word
- 45 Rubber
- 46 Tries to put a restraint on
- 48 One ruled by a dictator?
- 49 Composer Copland
- 53 "Spartacus" or "Ben-Hur"
- 54 In need of BenGay
- 55 Outta here
- 57 Maria ___ Trapp

Solution on page 27

Pet of the Week

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At 10 months old and 34 pounds, this precocious pup still has a bit of growing to do! As a Beagle, Blackberry has a very active nose and loves to explore. She also loves going outside and would do best with an active family. Come meet her today! The adoption fee includes microchipping, sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations and much more! For more information, please

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Horoscopes

Meditate, Pisces!

BY JACK FERTIG

The planet of dreams and mystery, Neptune, fresh into his own sign Pisces, will take a year or two to get used to. Logic's no help here; trust your intuitions and open up to the magic.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): There's nothing wrong with ambition "per se," but trying too hard, especially when you're not thinking ahead very clearly, is only a sure route to disaster. Don't be scared of guidance and limits – or the people who suggest them.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): This should be your lucky year, but luck serves the well-prepared. Take time out to think carefully of what work is necessary to nurture the projects that may bring you fortune.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): The wit and logic that have been so dazzling lately are leaving you, but don't fret. Just be ready to shift gears to whimsy and sensitivity. Your sympathetic support can prove helpful. Often it's best just to be a good listener.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Your gifts of erotic seduction are more evident than usual. Put them to good use and draw in the one you desire. Trying to be cleverer than you feel will undermine your efforts, personally and professionally. Just be yourself!

LEO (July 23 – August 22): If you share your darkest secret fantasy with one person, you're probably sharing it with at least a few more. Don't talk; do. Confidantes can't always be trusted, but partners in crime usually can.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Worries that you don't measure up will exacerbate relationship problems. Relax. Have confidence in yourself and your ability to solve problems. Your brain and your mouth probably got you into this fix. Let your ears and your heart find the way out.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Fights at home can get pretty fierce. Is it worth it? You may need to make a deep change and sacrifice something to make your relationship work.

Some time out can help, but don't use that as an excuse to avoid the problems.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): No matter who is causing problems at work, you can only be responsible for yourself. If your own recent brainstorming and innovations are a part of it, own up and learn from whatever mistakes were made, especially your own.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Pushing too hard to get ahead can ruffle the feathers of your superiors. Make sure the rung you want to step up to isn't already occupied. Put down the horn and let your best work speak for itself.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): The confusion won't go away soon, but its purpose can become clearer. Never mind logic and facts. They're just not making sense. Open yourself up to mystery, myth, magic and music. Look at life as art, not science.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Economic uncertainty brings opportunities for those with vision and intuition. Yours are especially sharp right now. Discuss your inspirations with a bright, innovative friend. A recent spontaneous tryst could bring recriminations or insights. Focus on insights.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Meditation and spiritual discipline will be more important than ever in the next 14 years. Unusual clarity now can show you how best to proceed. Talking about your craziest dreams can lead you from inspiration to practical application.

Jack Fertig is available for personal and business consultations at www.starjack.com, and by email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.

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-Thursdays 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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Solution to puzzle from page 26

P	A	T	H	B	R	E	D	I	T	S	M	E
E	U	R	O	R	I	V	E	B	E	A	U	X
E	R	I	N	A	N	A	L	S	A	L	S	A
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C	H	M	T	H	E	S	A	M	E	G	O	A
H	E	A	V	E	P	O	R	E	O	R	S	E
O	R	T	O	N	I	R	O	N	N	E	E	R
S	E	E	N	O	C	E	N	T	E	R	R	S

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'Downton Abbey' matriarch cage match!

The only thing that could possibly be better than watching "Downton Abbey"'s Maggie Smith, as the Dowager Countess, stop the rest of the cast dead in their tracks with withering glances and haughty comments would be watching her spar with another matriarch of her own caliber. And that's why it was time for Julian Fellowes's addictive smash hit upstairs-downstairs drama to cast the visiting mother of Downton's American-born Lady Grantham (Elizabeth McGovern) with... Shirley MacLaine. MacLaine will join the cast for season three, which begins shooting next month. Obviously, no story lines have been leaked yet but it's safe to say that, even in a grand home of more than a hundred rooms, the place isn't going to be big enough for the both of them. And OK, maybe it won't reach the hair-pulling heights of Joan Collins and Linda Evans duking it out in a fountain on "Dynasty," but this is going to be good. So good.

Ryan Murphy's 'New Normal': song-less and horror-free

It's official: Ryan Murphy is taking over all of television as we know it. He's already got "Glee" and "American Horror Story" on the air, and now NBC has ordered a pilot for "The New Normal," a half-hour comedy project Murphy co-created with Allison Adler. It's set to star "The Book of Mormon"'s Andrew Rannells and its plot concerns a blended family of a gay couple and the woman who becomes a surrogate to help the men make a baby. Its prospects are good, too: there was already a bidding war over the project. So if it goes to series, it'll be for the TV and cultural critics to sort out what the impact will be of the kind of gay parenting show we'll all ultimately get from Murphy. He is, after all, a man whose screenwriting approach to gay men leans heavily toward the old-school "fabulous" end of the spectrum, but at least those guys on "Modern Family" and Lea Michele's invisible gay dads won't be alone now.

When Kylie Minogue met the French art film director

If you're gay then it's fairly certain you're aware of pop diva Kylie Minogue, but how up are you on your Leos Carax? Not much? Not at all? OK, crash course: He's one of the bad boys of French cinema and his last feature was the dark, difficult 1999 film "Pola X," which starred the late Guillaume Depardieu (having real sex on camera) and Catherine Deneuve (not with her). And now, finally, Carax is back with a feature titled "Holly Motors," about a man who can leap into the consciousness of other people and who becomes, over the course of the action, both men and women and at least one "monstrous creature." It'll star French character actor Denis

Lavant (from Carax's "The Lovers Under The Bridge," with Juliette Binoche), Eva Mendes and Minogue. Now, given that Minogue's acting output since her teenage years on the Aussie soap "Neighbours" hasn't included much more than "Bio-Dome," "Street Fighter" and a magical absinthe fairy in "Moulin Rouge!" it's a little shocking – and sort of thrilling, too – to see her dive back in by working with one of cinema's crazier cats, but it should be something to see. Can't wait.



James Deen. Photo: Glenn Francis / www.PacificProDigital.com

Porn star James Deen recruited by Bret Easton Ellis

It doesn't get crazier than this combination: "American Psycho" author Bret Easton Ellis, alt-porn star James Deen and "Taxi Driver" screenwriter/"Cat People" director Paul Schrader. All are possibly-maybe working together. Recently, Ellis got on Twitter (where his wildest work's been appearing lately) and talked about an "L.A. noir micro budget Paul Schrader movie" he's got cooking that would star Deen. Apparently the role will require the adult film star, who's built a reputation as the approachable guy-next-door porn star, to be fully naked and having sex with "girls and guys realistically," so he's already qualified. And as an actor, he can't be any more monotone than fellow adult performer Sasha Grey was in Steven Soderbergh's "The Girlfriend Experience," right? More news as this one develops.

Romeo San Vicente can't get you out of his head. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.



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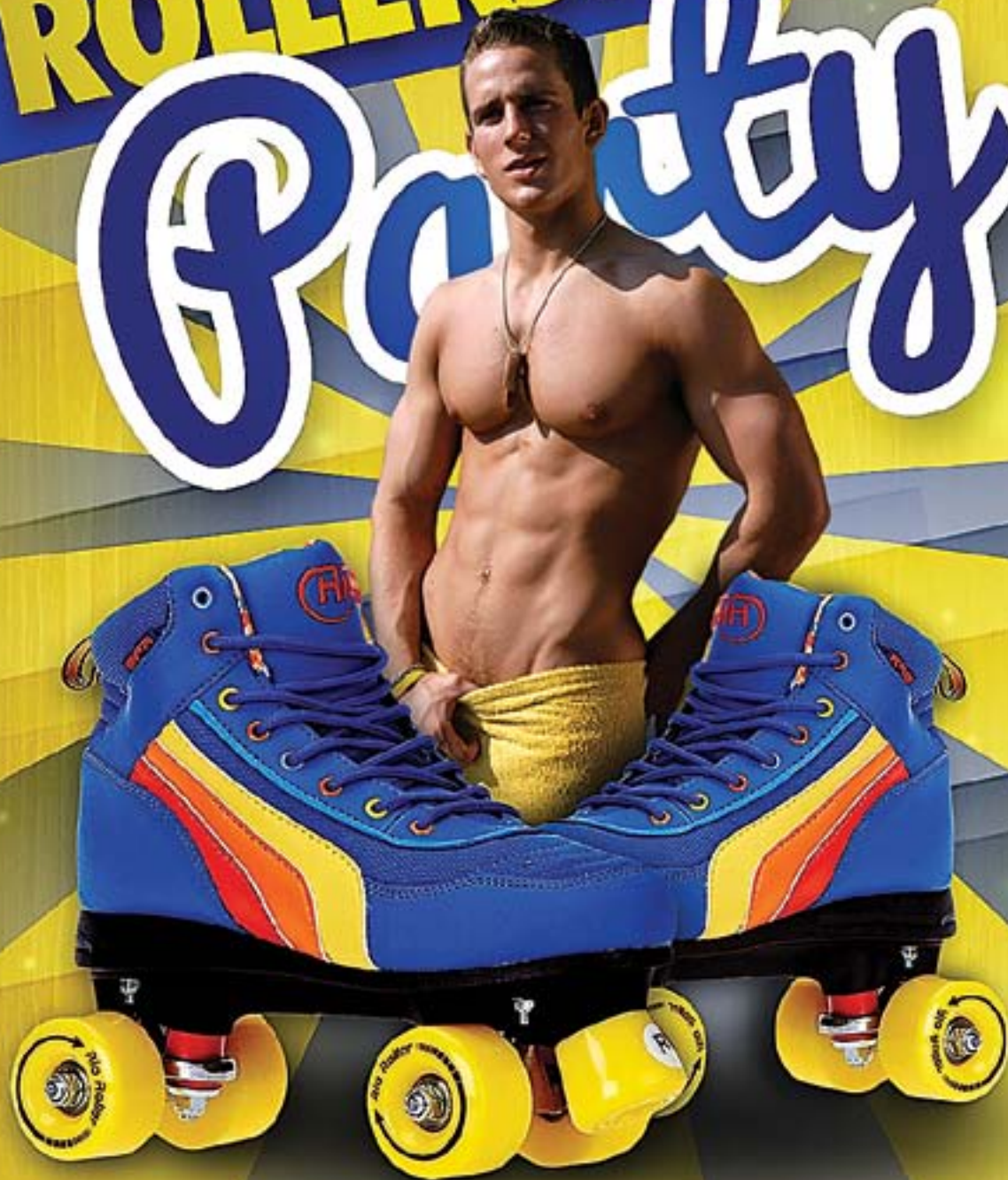


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'The Vow': a forgettable movie about memory

Channing Tatum and Rachel McAdams can't mask filmmakers' shoddy instincts

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

A moment of impact. Channing Tatum, as loving hubby Leo, has many of them – relayed in philosophizing, Hallmark-regurgitated voiceovers – through the course of the emotionally flat, love-conquers-all rom-com “The Vow.”

Some are in the casual exchanges between friends, or serenading his girlfriend Paige (Rachel McAdams, as endearing as always) with a Meatloaf song on a snowy night, or marrying her and then, not long after, losing her mentally to amnesia in a tragic car wreck. That's how “The Vow” begins – with a moment of impact (get it?). And then they're gone, resulting in a remarkably unsentimental but exhaustingly blank movie about memory that's not very memorable at all.

With McAdams, milking her girl-next-door success from “The Notebook,” the true-story-inspired Valentine's Day cash-grab (no kidding: the film broke records with its \$41.2 million opening weekend) had a real shot at being a resonant romance that's not some self-aware bit of superficiality. But no, it blows that chance shortly after the startling, right-footed setup, as Paige crashes headfirst through the windshield in slo-mo. I cried just once (which is nothing for me during a movie like this): After waking up from

a coma, she sees Leo and thinks he's the doctor. The trauma for her is remembering who she and the people around her are; for him, it's reclaiming his wife and proving that their love is real.

But first he must fight off the egocentric parents and a desperate old flame who use Paige's cognitive challenges to their advantage: Mom and Dad (Jessica Lange and Sam Neill, both barely registering) aren't interested in helping her rediscover who she is but who they want her to be (lawyer instead of artist), and the dumped boyfriend thinks amnesia means another shot for him. Both subplots are so ridiculous in their soap-opera sensibility.

Then there are the obvious genre platitudes: the wedding brawl between boys and Tatum's sad guitar ditty before the predictable, though thankfully not-so-melodramatic, ending. Also bothersome: awkward humor that feels unnatural in a real-life amnesia drama, stilted gag-me dialogue (“How do you look at the girl you love and tell yourself it's time to walk away?”) and filmmakers' incessant beating on moviegoers should they, too, forget what's right in front of them. Cafe Mnemonic? Ha-ha. Good one.

And perhaps they underestimated the gay appeal of “The Vow” when they used this Robyn song: “Get Myself Together” is blaring overhead



Rachel McAdams and Channing Tatum in “The Vow.” Photo: Kerry Hayes / SMPSP


during a bar scene, as post-hospital Paige meets some girlfriends for drinks. “Just can't make sense of the bits/It's like my mind is gone.” How meta.

“The Vow” is an empty promise that asks you to feel something but doesn't give you any reason to. Kudos to Tatum and McAdams for defying the odds against them and at least having

an easy rapport that translates in their intimate one-on-ones. For every cringe-worthy moment of insight from Leo, there's an undeniably adorable off-setter like an after-dinner chocolate binge. And Tatum getting in naked practice for his upcoming stripper movie. But when one of the only redeemers is seeing Tatum's bare butt, you have to ask yourself: Is that worth \$10?

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