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BY ERNEST THOMPSON
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Motor City Pride: The old and new educate, celebrate

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT – A double rainbow appeared Sunday night over Detroit, with its beauty matching the radiant amount of love shared by those at this weekend's Motor City Pride.

"Bless the heart of the City of Detroit," said 72-year-old Brent Tenney. "This is the second year they have welcomed us. Other cities say no, but I don't care if you're black, white or purple everyone is welcome here."

After 20 years of living in a Ferndale apartment, and a lifetime of never being in the closet, the flamboyantly gay senior has moved to downtown Detroit where he helps other seniors have access to resources. "There is so much to love in this city. Look at all this," he said. "We didn't have this growing up. I never thought I would see it in my lifetime."

Tenney said he's never come out. "I've always just been myself. I don't have to explain myself to anybody."

Because he was never hidden, Tenney knows what it is like to experience the discrimination and hatred that events like Pride are an answer to.

"In the 70s and 80s we could go to Chicago or New York and feel comfortable, but that was it. Then all of a sudden in the 90s it just opened up in lots of places, and I didn't have to leave Michigan." Tenney was among the first to volunteer at Affirmations, working the Help Line and laying the foundation for acceptance, and access to information in the Detroit area. "I remember when we'd go into restaurants and people would refuse to serve us. Or if we were out in public people would call us names. Police wanted to arrest you for any reason they could think of. People would throw eggs at us or worse. It's not all better, but these days, young people don't seem to know what it's like being treated like a second-class citizen.

Tenney spoke with Jerome Mann of Ann Arbor, who was collecting donations on behalf of Human Rights Campaign.

"I donate to HRC twice a year," Tenney said. "They're the best thing we've got going for us in Washington. I give to local organizations too. We need to teach people even though it's hard if you care about a cause you need to give."

Mann said collecting donations is hard, but important work. "We're facing groups like the American Family Association that are spending millions of dollars trying to take away our rights. The only way we counter that is if people are willing to contribute."

Dozens of groups and gay friendly businesses had booths at the giant annual event. Motor City Pride had its origins in a 1986 Pride Parade in Detroit. Over the years, it's had locations in Royal Oak and Ferndale, but in 2011 - and again this year - Motor City Pride has found its home in Hart Plaza.

As gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender individuals, and allies

See Motor City Pride, page 7



Ronn Reeder and Khalil hold onto Dubwrae during pride festivities Saturday. BTL photo: Crystal A. Proxmire



Wade Davis working the Motor City Pride booth Saturday in Hart Plaza recruiting volunteers for the Obama campaign. BTL photo: Kate Opalewski

Wade Davis out for Obama

Former out NFL player on paying it forward in Detroit

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Michiganders are one step closer to equality since President Obama affirmed his support for same-sex marriage in May. The goal now for many, is to get him re-elected for a second term.

"We have to make sure he's back in office because Romney wants to write discrimination into our constitution which will take people's rights away from them. I don't understand how anyone can think that's positive. Our constitution is built on equality for all," said former NFL player Wade Davis, an official surrogate and speaker for President Obama's re-election as of three months ago.

The president's statement "I think same-sex couples should be able to get married" set the celebratory tone for Pride Month despite the 2004 amendment to Michigan's constitution which bans same-sex marriage. Feeling energized, thousands of LGBT people and their supporters attended Motor City Pride at Hart Plaza last weekend.

Davis was in the crowd with local Organizing for America (<http://www.barackobama.com/mi>) volunteers, a grassroots advocacy group within the Democratic National Committee that works to advance the Obama agenda.

"To come on this day is great because I get a really good chance to experience Detroit. It's amazing to see the excitement. The booth was packed the entire day," said Davis, who took action to register new voters, collect signatures from interested volunteers, and provide the community with information about what President Obama has been doing for LGBT people since 2008.

Davis was born in Arkansas, spent

"To be perfectly honest with you, because I was so afraid of my own gender identity and orientation growing up I was in fact an actual bully. I was an athlete. I was popular. I was so afraid to be who I was, that I poked fun at a lot of others."

- Wade Davis, former NFL player

most of his childhood in Louisiana and spent his teenage years in Colorado, hiding the truth about who he is. "To be perfectly honest with you, because I was so afraid of my own gender identity and orientation growing up I was in fact an

See Wade Davis, page 17

► Motor City Pride

Continued from p. 6

enjoyed three stages of entertainment, an abundance of resources and shopping, and plenty of festival food, couples like Kara from Clarkston and Alicia from Shelby Township found plenty of places to relax and enjoy both nature and community. The teens, too shy to share their last names, found bliss in being able to hold each other publicly and sharing a waterfront kiss. "It's amazing," Kara said. "I've never seen so many people together like this before. I am just really, really happy."

"Me too," Alicia said before giving her sweetie another kiss.

Another couple made the rounds in Hart Plaza, among friends for their first Pride ever. "We've been engaged over a year," Nikki Bies of New Baltimore of her partner Nikki Wilkinson of Wayne. "We are waiting until 2015 and if it's not legal to get married in Michigan we will go elsewhere for the certificate and have our ceremony here."

Others found their bliss by showing off their dance moves.

Drag shows rocked one stage, with MTFs and FTMs strutting their stuff and collecting dollar bills from the people packed into the riverfront stage. Admirers filled the stone levels of seating while others sat above on all sides of the stage cheering on performers like Mary Jane and Gage Gatlin from Stilletos. After just 15 months of training as a performer, Mary Jane wowed the crowd with her Lady Gaga like entrance. Then kept them hooting and hollering with sexy moves and poses, endlessly long eyelashes, and her hot pink body suit. Following Mary Jane, Gatlin came onstage with his black western shirt, ample belt buckle and a cowboy hat that matched the color of his perfectly-trimmed goatee, singing "I may be a real bad boy, but baby I'm a real good man."

Another stage had a J'Sette dance



Equality Michigan volunteers work the front gate at Hart Plaza. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire

competition where teams danced off to win a gigantic trophy. The teams of three or more dancers were judged based on uniformity, march and creativity as they stepped, flipped, kicked, shimmied, strutted, stomped, split and moved in sync as they faced off against an opposing team. Here, surrounded by thousands of cheering

"Seeing how it builds up the community like that is one of the best things about Motor City Pride."

- Dave Wait, MCP organizer and
Equality Michigan Board Member

fans, their months of hard work, practice and teamwork came together. The youth, many from places like Ruth Ellis Center and Affirmations, not only moved the crowd with the music, but by showing that young people are indeed capable of working together and accomplishing things when given the opportunities to do it.

Beyond the entertainment and fun, Motor City Pride had a message of unity. Throughout the weekend, a legion of volunteers with neon pink shirts and clipboards collected signatures for the BTL Voter Education Project, a plan to unite voters across the state and have a more educated electorate.

Judy Lewis led the signature gathering, "We had about 50 volunteers each day - and they were amazing," she said. "We probably got over 2,500 signatures, and everyone seemed very interested in finding out more about the election, the candidates and issues, and their record on LGBT issues."

"In addition to the volunteers we had from BTL, the Unity partners - Equality Michigan, Affirmations, ACLU, Ruth Ellis Center, KICK and Michigan Roundtable - were also collecting signatures at their tables - so there was a good deal of educating going on."

Dave Wait of Equality Michigan chairs Motor City Pride, which he said is essentially a break-even event. Equality Michigan fights for human rights on many levels, including providing victim services and working to create change in Lansing. "The festival paid for itself and we look at it as a way to bring the community together. Any extra money we bring, it would go towards keeping Equality Michigan moving forward," he said. The revenue totals are not yet in, but Wait is excited to report that attendance was on par with what it was last year at about 44,000.

"The diversity we had, the entertainment, it was all very packed. I'm pleased to see how many people came together around the fountain and around the river deck and talked," Wait said. "The other neat thing was after we ended the festival, about 300 people hung out over an hour after it closed and just stood around talking out on the sidewalk. Seeing how it builds up the community like that is one of the best things about Motor City Pride."

**Find more Motor City Pride
photos on pg. 18 and online**

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Affirmations to host first LGBT Job Expo June 21

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE – Who wants to hire gay people? Living in a state where people can be fired or discriminated against just for being gay or transgender, this question is on the minds of the thousands of out-of-work and underemployed people as they ponder whether Michigan is right for them.

But even though the legislature has a long way to go, Affirmations Community Center wants people to know that LGBT workers are valued and sought after by companies that do work in the state. Up to twenty such employers are coming together for Michigan's first LGBT Job Expo at Affirmations on June 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Recruiters from companies like MetLife, GM, Chrysler, Comerica, Flagstar Bank, Deloitte and Merrill Lynch are among those who are actively seeking LGBT team members. They and others will be interviewing jobseekers and hopefully hiring directly from the LGBT community.

Affirmations has also partnered with the Ferndale Career Center and Michigan Works office to provide training to applicants before the expo, and support for people the day of the expo.

"On June 12 at the Career Center they will have workshops that are 45 minutes each, one on "Resume Essentials" and the other is called "The Two Minute Interview," said Events and Sponsorship Coordinator Mark McMillan. "Then on the day of the event they will do 'First Aid for the Job Seeker' here at Affirmations, so people that come can sit down with a professional for a couple of minutes before they go out and start talking with employers. They can get last minute feedback on how they look, maybe get some lint off their shirts, the stuff out of their teeth or whatever. And they can do a practice interview or answer any last minute questions, so they can feel confident and ready to go get that job!"

McMillan said attendees should come prepared with their resumes and a confident attitude.

Another feature of the LGBTQ Expo is that companies will be taking a class in the morning themselves before the event. The training has been designed in house with volunteer and staff input.

"Trans 101 for the Employer" will make sure employers are comfortable meeting and talking with transgender people. We want to make sure they know to use preferred pronouns, and that they understand how things like name changes can affect someone's applying for a job."

Spots are still available for potential employers. Affirmation hopes to have between 15-20 companies represented. For more information about having a booth, contact McMillan at mmcmillan@goaffirmations.org.

The Job Expo is free and registration is not required, but Affirmations is asking that people RSVP so they can estimate how many will be coming.

Find out more and sign up at www.goaffirmations.org



When Gardner White included Ruth Ellis Center as one of its featured charities, Janet and Rick Glasgow found a place to volunteer their cookies and time every Monday night. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire

Between Ourselves: Meet Rick and Janet Glasgow

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

Rick and Janet Glasgow bring more than fresh baked cookies and a home cooked meal when they come to the Ruth Ellis Center on Monday evenings. They bring a sense of stability for the LGBT teens who use the drop-in center.

The at-risk youth, often homeless or runaways, find safety and resources at Ruth Ellis. But it's the steady staff and regular volunteers that help the youth feel comfortable enough to use the center's services.

The Glasgows come from Sterling Heights every Monday to share both food and support to an average of 30 teens each week. When the weather is warm there are fewer, and on cold wintery days it can double.

Janet first learned about the Ruth Ellis Center in November 2011 when she saw that Gardner White, the furniture store, had included Ruth Ellis as one of their featured charities. Having grown up in an affirming home with three gay brothers, Janet had no problem being comfortable in the LGBT community. It wasn't until recently that the pain of rejection hit home.

"My brother's partner was diagnosed with end stage lymphoma. Even as he was dying his family didn't accept him. I knew I needed to be more active and involved. When I heard about Ruth Ellis, what a unique place it is, I knew."

She started in November and Rick joined

"My brother's partner was diagnosed with end stage lymphoma. Even as he was dying his family didn't accept him. I knew I needed to be more active and involved. When I heard about Ruth Ellis, what a unique place it is, I knew."

- Janet Glasgow

her a few months later after recovering from back surgery.

Rick has built bonds with the teens also, and he takes his volunteering seriously. "Being gay, they're not accepted at home. We didn't have that problem. The kids need somewhere to be accepted. They need an older person to look up to and want to act like that gives them respect."

While there, the Glasgows assist in preparing meals and snacks, help staff clean the

kitchen after dinner, help the youth in the Cyber Center, assist with laundry and in general be good listeners and set a good example.

The Glasgows give to the community in other ways too. Janet, who works in an elder care facility, has done a 60 mile breast cancer walk, and the couple helps put on a Polish dinner benefit for their church, St. Daniel's Parish in Clarkston.

"This is the most I've ever volunteered for one place, and that says a lot. I'm here to stay for the kids," Janet said. "We really see the difference and we're consistent factor in their lives. When I leave here at night I know I'm giving something to the kids."

Rick is hooked too. "I feel guilty sometimes coming here, I feel like I get more out of it than the kids do," he said.

Ruth Ellis Center has programs to assist youth, including a street outreach program called Second Stories, the Drop-In Center, and transitional living programs – all focused on LGBT youth. They are always looking for volunteers, particularly those who are able to make regular commitments. Volunteers undergo a background check and training.

Volunteers are expected to accept young adults as they are and where they are, commit to the youth and not "drop out" after a short time, value the team, be a good role model, demonstrate maturity, responsibility and caring and to be available to help

Find out more at www.ruthelliscenter.org.

Bully Chronicles: Film project seeks answers

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Local filmmaker Amy Weber believes the only way we'll save the victim of bullying is to save the bully. And while every single victim of bullying deserves to share their story, Weber wants to shift our focus from the victim to the bully.

"Until we get to the heart of the issue, which is the bully, him or herself, we will not solve this problem," she said. "Have we ever had the opportunity to know a bully and learn from them? Have we seen the experience of bullying through their eyes?"

We will now.

Through her most true-to-life fictional documentary, *The Bully Chronicles*, Weber will give bullying a face. For the 100 percent Michigan-made project, Weber will work with youth producers, including 17-year-old anti-bullying activist Katy Butler, who started the petition that changed the rating of the controversial movie *Bully* from R to PG-13. Together, they will develop script and story content, and will cast real high school students in each role.

The *Bully Chronicles* begins as a documentary investigation into the story of 16-year-old Jessica Burns, who lies in a coma after a nearly successful suicide attempt. The filmmakers examine Jessica's life to uncover the reasons why. Confessional tapes recorded in secret by Jessica and her best friend Brian surface. The recordings show an unblinking look into the world of bullying through the victim's eyes. As she languishes in a coma, her story unfolds in the "found footage" style through self-recorded interviews and actual confrontations with her bullies. Jessica's primary bully, Avery, initially denies that she's been tormenting Jessica. But once given the opportunity to film her own thoughts and experiences, we see the other side of the story for the first time – the bully's side.

"It is absolutely impossible not to know these multi-layered characters inside and out who show us their world. It will lead to emotions that many people aren't expecting to feel for a bully," she said.

A subject near and dear to her heart, Weber has made it her personal quest to discover what's really happening inside the mind of a bully. "I was bullied and turned into a bully. I did not have the courage back then to admit it. There is no safe place for a bully to come forward and explain their behavior. I was not happy and didn't have a lot of friends. I realized that if I am really going to make a difference, I have to give these kids an opportunity to use their own voices and their past experiences to teach us," said Weber, a Birmingham resident who has developed, written and produced more than 40 award-winning educational documentaries dealing with youth

issues and education. She was honored as the 2011 Michigan Filmmaker of the Year for her first feature film, *Annabelle and Bear*. She is a former university educator, and the founder and owner of production company Radish Creative Group, Inc. in Royal Oak where she is holding open casting calls for hundreds of roles in the film.

"This is an unpaid, great experience for kids that really want to come out and make a difference and be a part of a historical story

are free to play it out in their own words. A lot of it will unfold and develop as it goes on. The kids are going to be awesome. I can just feel it."

When asked how this film will help to combat the issue of bullying, Weber said she understands it will take time, but hopes to lead us in the right direction with education and awareness.

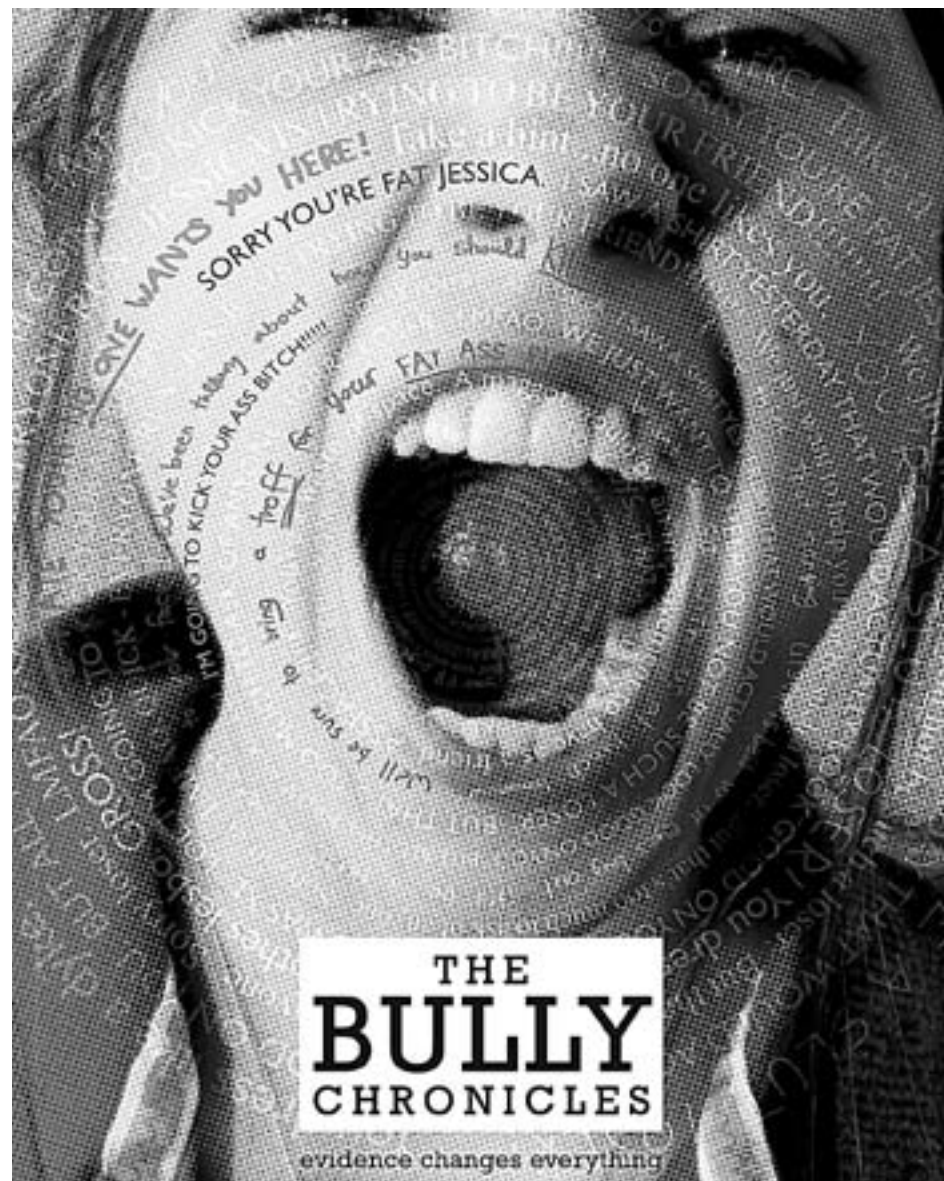
"It starts with the way we speak to and treat each other. It's so easy to let our feelings roll off

two young daughters, spoke up against Troy Mayor Janice Daniels at a December Troy City Council meeting. In light of past events involving Mayor Daniels and her anti-gay comments, Weber was moved to create this film in a society where bullying has become a hot topic and social behaviors need to be redefined.

"When we allow public leaders and prominent figures to use their position of power and 'popularity' in any negative way toward a person or group of people, we are sending a message loud and clear to our kids...bullying is okay as long as it is justified and the views are shared by the majority," she said.

Weber is prepared to deal with the type of emotions this film may conjure up. She is building relationships with counselors and organizations like NOH8, Stop Bullying Now, and HIBhub to provide connections and resources for kids

For the 100 percent Michigan-made project, Amy Weber will work with youth producers, including 17-year-old anti-bullying activist Katy Butler, who started the petition that changed the rating of the controversial movie *Bully* from R to PG-13.



that is going to offer true solutions. Teachers, administrators and parents who have an open heart and a willingness to work with young people are also invited," said Weber. Many of the roles will be for teens under 18 years of age and parental permission will be mandatory. The *Bully Chronicles*, LLC will be abiding by the child labor laws of Michigan. "No experience is necessary. This is not scripted. I will set the actors up with a scenario, tell them what the scene is and what the motive for the scene is and they

our tongues without thinking about what this will do and how it will impact a child's life. As adults, we truly need to think before we speak. Everyone is allowed to have their personal beliefs, but as leaders, we are being listened to and watched. The manifestation of cruelty in our world has fallen upon our kids. It's not an innate thing. Kids are not conscious of what they're doing at a young age. They are mimicking behavior," she said.

That's why Weber, with her wife Tina and

who need support and encouragement. Locally, youth advocate and national youth speaker Jim Tuman is also on board. Tuman of Royal Oak is the founder and director of Jimmy's Kids charity, started in 1989.

"He is the greatest, most knowledgeable gentleman I know. I absolutely welcome anybody that wants to help. We are just starting and my plan is to have places online and within the community where these kids will have access to people who can help," she said.

"This is a true example of a grassroots effort. We need supporters and we have to pull together as a community in order to make this happen," she said. So far, supporters have donated more than \$20,000 toward making the film at Indiegogo (<http://www.indiegogo.com/TheBullyChronicles>), the world's largest global funding platform. Weber said she hopes to raise a total of \$100,000 before filming starts at Seaholm High School in Birmingham by the middle of July, beginning of August.

To audition, select the character that you are interested in at www.thebullychronicles.com, and email *The Bully Chronicles* at bullychronicles@gmail.com to make an appointment.

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Thinking Out Loud



IN PRAISE OF FREAKS AND WEIRDOS!

America needs you now more than ever.

BY ABBY DEES

For the last month or so I've been riding my bike up the entire length of the Mississippi river. This has not been a trip about amazing scenery – though there have been moments of breathtaking beauty – nor does my journey have any official theme or purpose. I'd been wanting to see the “real” America for a while now, and riding slowly up the middle bits seemed like a good way to do it.

Not that I haven't lived in the U.S. my entire life, but you know what I mean. The real America is “normal” America, the one politicians pander to, Fox News tries to frighten, and the one that comes to mind when I (perhaps you) think of the idea, rather than the place, *America*.

I'm getting a lesson in my own culture. Mostly, I've been deeply moved by our goodness and unhesitating willingness to come to the aid of a sweaty, middle-aged woman in tight, garish Lycra, clackety cycling shoes, and covered in bruises and chain grease. It's a deep part of our national character that I'd like to see our leaders appeal to so much more.

That said, I've also been bored silly much of the time by the unrelenting sameness despite having traveled nearly 2,000 miles so far. In the middle of Middle America, the aesthetic rarely changes. From the capri-panted women, to men surgically attached to their baseball caps and trucks, to the country- quaint decorations, to the criminally random apostrophes and tortured puns of every craft store name (“I'll Bee Sewin' You”), to the ubiquitous (and quite tasty at the end of a long, hot cycling day) Dairy Queens -- well, at times I've felt stuck in a space/time loop.

I think this is what “normal” looks like here. And I've wondered more and more if I was also seeing the American Way of Life that I've heard so much about, whether it's being threatened by terrorists or gays, or just the crappy economy. If so, it's the cultural equivalent of a grilled cheese sandwich with the crust cut off. Sometimes it's just what you're in the mood for, but you'll soon be desperate for a microgreens salad with goat cheese and rosemary. I am, in any case.

Amid this sameness, occasionally something unusual springs up, usually in a fabulously out-of-scale way (this problem with appropriate scale also seems to be part of our American-ness).

My fellow riders and I screech to a halt to snap pictures of each of us posing in front of whatever proud expression of individuality has appeared upon the landscape, such as the fellow with the antique outhouse collection in his yard, or the enormous church made entirely of scrap, or most recently, the improbably serious and well funded Farm Toy Museum in Dyersville, Iowa. Each time something loudly breaks up the monotony I quietly sing the *Sesame Street* jingle, “One of these things is not like the others...” and smile.

Thank God for whatever guts it takes to express oneself so joyfully, without any apparent concern about the irony or absurdity of it. Honestly. As long as folks feel free to express themselves this way, then all the normalcy becomes like a pleasant canvas to paint on. But without the weirdness, tedium sets in fast, and despite how nice everyone is, I start to feel like a freak. The bad kind of freak.

When those proud weirdos *do* appear, I feel like I belong too. I don't just mean the ones with the oversized yard sculptures either. I mean the boy who puts pink food coloring in his hair and lip-syncs Lady Gaga tunes in the mirror, or the cashier at the Family Dollar store with the nose

ring and butch swagger (thanks for the knowing nod last week). They make me feel like the right kind of freak.

To anyone who can't seem to relate to what's “normal,” or who dreams about going somewhere else one day -- sure, do it, but remember that you are a beautiful part of the landscape today. You are saving us from ourselves, even if the neighbors don't get it at all.

When those proud weirdos *do* appear, I feel like I belong too. I don't just mean the ones with the oversized yard sculptures either. I mean the boy who puts pink food coloring in his hair and lip-syncs Lady Gaga tunes ...



"DARLENE! 19 YEARS OF UNDERCOVER WORK AT THESE 'PRIDE FESTIVALS' HAS PAID OFF! I'VE FINALLY CAUGHT THE HOMOSEXUALS RECRUITING!"

A Proclamation from the President of The United States of America

From generation to generation, ordinary Americans have led a proud and inexorable march toward freedom, fairness, and full equality under the law - not just for some, but for all. Ours is a heritage forged by those who organized, agitated, and advocated for change; who wielded love stronger than hate and hope more powerful than insult or injury; who fought to build for themselves and their families a Nation where no one is a second-class citizen, no one is denied basic rights, and all of us are free to live and love as we see fit.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community has written a proud chapter in this fundamentally American story. From brave men and women who came out and spoke out, to union and faith leaders who rallied for equality, to activists and advocates who challenged unjust laws and marched on Washington, LGBT Americans and allies have achieved what once seemed inconceivable. This month, we reflect on their enduring legacy, celebrate the movement that has made progress possible, and recommit to securing the fullest blessings of freedom for all Americans.

Since I took office, my Administration has worked to broaden opportunity, advance equality, and level the playing field for LGBT people and communities. We have fought to secure justice for all under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and we have taken action to end housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We expanded hospital visitation rights for LGBT patients and their loved ones, and under the Affordable Care Act, we ensured that insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage to someone just because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Because we understand that LGBT rights are human rights, we continue to engage with the international community in promoting and protecting the rights of LGBT persons around the world. Because we repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans can serve their country openly, honestly, and without fear of losing their jobs because of whom they love. And because we must treat others the way we want to be treated, I personally believe in marriage equality for same-sex couples.

More remains to be done to ensure every single American is treated equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Moving forward, my Administration will continue its work to advance the rights of LGBT Americans. This month, as we reflect on how far we have come and how far we have yet to go, let us recall that the progress we have made is built on the words and deeds of ordinary Americans. Let us pay tribute to those who came before us, and those who continue their work today; and let us rededicate ourselves to a task that is unending - the pursuit of a Nation where all are equal, and all have the full and unfettered opportunity to pursue happiness and live openly and freely.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2012 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. I call upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA
June 2012

SIGN THE PLEDGE AT PRIDE

PLEDGE: TO THE MICHIGAN

SUPREME COURT: We stand for fairness

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educate ourselves on the candidates and

issues important to the LGBT community,

and to vote accordingly this November.

2012 Voter Education Project

Between THE Lines TM

BTL is organizing a huge petition campaign, collecting as many names and addresses as possible at all the pride celebrations around the state. We're working in collaboration with Unity Michigan partners, local community centers and other groups to identify LGBT positive voters and we are asking each of them to sign a Pledge to educate themselves on the issues and candidates that are most supportive of our issues. We ask everyone to SIGN THE PLEDGE, pay attention to the BTL Voter Guide coming out this fall and to VOTE on Nov. 6.

SIGN THE PLEDGE online

Visit: dontchangeyourself.com

Heard on Facebook

What did you think of Motor City Pride last weekend?

Other than the rain on Saturday it was fun! Next year I'll make sure to be off that weekend so I can enjoy it.

—Nicholas Bachu

It was great.

—George Jonte

I attended from Cleveland and I thought it was well organized, the location allowed more space and the line up was good. I had a wonderful time at Motor City Pride this year. I actually prefer Hart Plaza over Ferndale as the space was just amazing – not to mention the view!

—Melissa Duchon

I love Pride being downtown, but I thought the bad carnival food options were particularly disappointing considering all the great local food we have here in Detroit. We've been able to get local food vendors for all sorts of other events, why not pride?

—Katherine D Maurer

I was not impressed with the food options at all. Food trucks would have been awesome! There was lots of room to move around, though.

—Colleen A. Sondgerath

Need more Pride-themed merch vendors. Other than that it was fun.

—Laura Sawgle

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

S/he Said

American perception, continuing struggles

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Garance Franke-Ruta

“Such a misunderstanding of the basic demographics of sexual behavior and identity in America has potentially profound implications for the acceptance of the gay-rights agenda. On the one hand, people who overestimate the percent of gay Americans by a factor of 12 seem likely to also wildly overestimate the cultural impact of same-sex marriage. On the other hand, the extraordinary confusion over the percentage of gay people may reflect a triumph of the gay and lesbian movement’s decades-long fight against invisibility and the closet. In recent years, as homosexuality has become less stigmatized, pro-gay rights groups have come around to acknowledging that a smaller percent of people identify themselves as gay than some of the early gay rights rhetoric claimed.”

—Garance Franke-Ruta, in her article titled “Americans Have No Idea How Few Gay People There Are,” about a recent Gallup poll conducted May 5-8, 2011, that found that Americans perceive there is a large U.S. gay population, one far larger than is likely reality. www.theatlantic.com, May 31.



Stuard Gaffney

“My first reaction to that, aside from a little chuckle, is that it’s actually a sign of the success of the movement for LGBT rights. We are a small minority, and we will never have full equality without the support of the majority, and a poll like that suggests the majority is extremely aware of their gay neighbors, coworkers, and friends.”

—Stuard Gaffney in an article titled “Americans Have No Idea How Few Gay People There Are,” about a recent Gallup poll that found that Americans perceive there is a large U.S. gay population, one far larger than is likely reality. www.theatlantic.com, May 31.



D. Gregory Smith

“The fight for LGBT Equality is not going to be won in the cities. It’s already mostly won there. It’s going to be won in small-town America, where people need to see gay people as human, normal and neighbors - not just some characters on television. It’s going to be won when the lady who runs the local Holiday Inn meets real-live lesbians and finds them to be just like any other guests. When the casual onlooker comes to the parade to see ‘freaks’ and walks away disappointed, when he sees families and friends laughing and cheering. When a bi kid is accepted and loved instead of encouraged to ‘get off the fence’. When our rural and small-town legislators, see us simply as citizens with the same rights as every other constituent. When kids don’t say ‘gay’ as an epithet of scorn and derision. When we are seen as part of a larger community. That’s when full equality will happen.”

—D. Gregory Smith, blogger, in his posting titled “Why You Should Attend A Rural Pride Event This Year,” <http://dgsmith.org>, May 31.



Chai Jindasurat

“I think that hate violence against these communities has been going on for a very long time and the reports that we’re seeing may not even be a reflection on the true pervasiveness of the violence. I think we’re really just getting the tip of the iceberg. Only a little over half of the survivors reported their attacks to the police. This sheds some light on why it is so difficult to track true levels of hate crimes: many victims simply never report the crime. We feel that it’s not an actual increase in violence but that there are reasons this kind of violence is being recognized for what it is. One big reason is that now it’s more acceptable to talk about LGBT communities in general.”

—Chai Jindasurat, one of the authors of a new report titled “Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2011,” released by The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), www.avp.org, May 31.

Parting Glances



A thing of Beauty

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

"You may drink my wine. You may eat my food. You may command my servants. But you must respect my dog!"

So read the bronze plaque affixed to the door of the palatial London home of Sigmund Neuberger (1872-1911) – The Great Lafayette – the highest paid magician and quick change artist of the Edwardian Era.

Mostly forgotten today, he was undoubtedly as gay as a pink (vanishing) elephant.

The pampered object of The Great Lafayette's affection was Beauty, a perky terrier once given to him as a pup by fellow conjurer and admirer Harry Houdini. Beauty had a suite of brocaded rooms, ate five course meals, wore a diamond studded collar.

"The more I see of people, the more I adore my dog," confessed TGL, who carefully avoided romantic entanglements, treated most people with disdain, lived a life of sybaritic luxury on a salary of 40,000 British pounds sterling per year.

"If Beauty should die, I'm sure I shan't live much longer," he predicted – a prophesy that surreally came true.

According to William Goldston, 19th/20th Century historian of magic, "Lafayette was the most hated magician that ever lived. He was so intensely unpopular that he was greeted everywhere with the most utter and open contempt."

This may reflect sour grapes on Goldston's part, as TGL was on cordial terms with fellow big-name magicians Houdini, Harry Kellar, Howard Thurston, Chung Ling Soo (aka William Robinson). There was, of course, no complaint from Beauty. She, or was it he? was TGL's wag-tail inspiration.

Beauty lived like a king (or queen?), chauffeured about London in TGL's silver-gray Mercedes, the radiator ornament of which was the little dog's likeness. Beauty also had a private railway carriage, dog-sized settees, porcelain baths.

TGL was more quick change artist than magician. He had campy flair. Exuberant panache! Audiences adored him. He entered to a trumpet fanfare, dressed in a close-fitting satin costume of pastel shades. Shake dozens of birds from a sequined cloth, then a bejeweled goat from its folds. Bow graciously and wave.

His magic was laced together with switcheroo routines, in which he skillfully traded identities again and again with a staff of well-disciplined (well paid) assistants. The end of his career began May 1st, 1911 at the Empire Theater in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Four days before opening Beauty died of apoplexy -- too, too much over feeding. TGL was grief stricken (but the show must go on). Beauty was laid out in his hotel room, surrounded by hundreds of lilies. The treasured pet was embalmed, and TGL bought side-by-side burial plots at nearby Piershill Cemetery.

On May 9, 3000 people packed the Empire Theater. The finale was "The Lion's Bride," a popular audience pleaser, at the end of which TGL "magically" changed places with the lion. Suddenly scenery caught fire. The theater was hastily evacuated.

Among three staff who perished was The Great Lafayette, identified only by his many rings. He had tried to rescue his animal menagerie. His funeral was "one of the most extraordinary interments of modern times". That it must have been ...

... as Beauty's coffin was opened, and The Great Lafayette's ashes were lovingly enfolded by his beloved, faithful, diamond-collared terrier. One hundred-and-one years ago last month.

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Creep of the Week



Bryan Fischer

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Anti-gay stalwart Bryan Fischer got out a copy of Webster's Dictionary so that he could remind any and all who have not yet fallen under the spell of the "Homosexual Agenda" that discrimination is actually a good thing. According to a June 1 column by Fischer, liberals have gone and messed up a perfectly good term by not allowing upstanding moral citizens like himself to single out and treat LGBT folks unfairly.

Fischer is right when he says that discrimination isn't always bad. People have to be discriminating when, say, it comes to whether or not to buy and eat a loaf of bread covered in green fuzz or when a man dripping with blood and reeking of alcohol knocks on the door in the middle of the night and asks to use the bathroom.

But when it comes to Fischer's defense of discrimination against gays and lesbians, well, he's not talking about the kinds of decisions people make every day. He's talking about oppressing

The idea that gays are born that way is a load of hooey in Fischer's opinion

an entire group of people based solely on the fact that he doesn't like them. In addition to "rightly discriminating against homosexuals," Fischer says it's the same as discriminating against "people who rip off convenience stores, burgle houses, drive while drunk, eat the faces off homeless people, gun down servicemen on military bases, embezzle funds from employers or clients, or beat their wives."

To Fischer, there's no distinction to that guy in Florida who was shot because he wouldn't stop gnawing on another man's face, and a man or a woman who wants to have sex with a person of his or her own gender.

That's not to say Fischer has no compassion for gays. "We should not ... discriminate against a man for his sexual inclinations, only for his sexual conduct," Fischer writes. "We don't punish people for what they think about doing, or even for what they want to do, but only for their actions, only for the times when they yield to socially destructive impulses."

Got that? Only homos who are getting some action will be subjected to discrimination in Fischer's fantasy police state. All the other gays, just get into one of those "pray the gay away" programs and marry someone of the opposite sex and your life will be just fine.

The idea that gays are born that way is a load of hooey in Fischer's opinion. He writes, "Regardless of one's sexual 'orientation,' which might even be to have sex with children, sexual behavior is always a matter of choice. You can ask Tiger Woods about what happens to an individual who yields to every sexual impulse that comes along."

Okay, wait, did Fischer just disclose that Tiger Woods is gay and/or that he had sex with kids? I mean, I get that Fischer is trying to link the roundly disproven notion of homosexuality=pedophilia, but what does Woods have to do with this? Perhaps Fischer is just confusing being gay with being a whore.

Actually, Fischer doesn't know the difference. He is firmly wedded to the idea that homosexuality=rampant unstoppable sex urges that, with God's help, just need to be reined in so that gays can stop being such lonely, disease-ridden, non-human beings.

But don't worry, it comes from the goodness of his heart. "We should discriminate against this kind of behavior not because we hate people but because we love them," he writes.

My goodness, if this is how Fischer says, "I love you," I'd hate to get on his bad side.

Court rules DOMA unconstitutional

BY LISA KEEN

A unanimous three-judge panel of the First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled May 31, that the core part of the Defense of Marriage Act, barring federal recognition of marriages of same-sex couples, is unconstitutional. An appeal of that decision is expected to be filed fairly quickly with the U.S. Supreme Court and is likely to be before the high court this fall.

The First Circuit panel said that, under simple rational review of the law, the same-sex couples seeking to overturn DOMA "cannot prevail." But, importantly, the panel also said that, because DOMA implicates both equal protection and federalism, the law requires "a closer than usual review based in part on discrepant impact among married couples and in part on the importance of state interests in regulating marriage."

In its 33-page decision, the judges affirmed the U.S. District Court ruling that DOMA violates the equal protection rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. It did not agree that DOMA also violates the spending clause or Tenth Amendment rights of states. While DOMA does "intrude" into a realm of law "primarily confided to state regulations," said the panel, "Nevertheless, Congress surely has an interest in who counts as married."

"That Congress has traditionally looked to state law to determine the answer [to what defines marriage] does not mean that the Tenth Amendment or Spending Clause require it to do so."

"However," said the panel, "the denial of federal benefits to same-sex couples lawfully married does burden the choice of states like Massachusetts to regulate the rules and incidents of marriage.... These consequences do not violate the Tenth Amendment or Spending Clause, but Congress' effort to put a thumb on the scales and influence a state's decision as to how to shape its own marriage laws does bear on how the justifications are assessed."

It then proceeded to reject--using an "intensified scrutiny" -- each of the arguments put forth by the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG), a Republican-dominated Congressional committee that authorized an outside attorney to defend DOMA in federal lawsuits around the country. Those arguments included such things as "preserving scarce government resources," "support child rearing," and to preserve the traditional definition of marriage.

"For 150 years, this desire to maintain tradition would alone have been justification enough for almost any statute," said the panel. "... But Supreme Court decisions in the last fifty years call for closer scrutiny of government action touching upon minority group interests and of federal action in areas of traditional

In its 33-page decision, the judges affirmed the U.S. District Court ruling that DOMA violates the equal protection rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

state concern."

"To conclude, many Americans believe that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, and most Americans live in states where that is the law today," said the panel. "One virtue of federalism is that it permits this diversity of governance based on local choice, but this applies as well to the states that have chosen to legalize same-sex marriage. Under current Supreme Court authority, Congress' denial of federal benefits to same-sex couples lawfully married in Massachusetts has not been adequately supported by any permissible federal interest."

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) said the ruling "vindicates the decision by the Obama administration not to defend the 'Defense of Marriage Act,' which denies rights to millions of Americans. It is also a tribute to the thoughtful, principled legal strategy by Mary Bonauto and her associates at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders."

"We think that this is a fantastic decision that is crisp and solid and well-reasoned," said GLAD's Bonauto. "And it's really rooted in the last 50 years of equal protection jurisprudence and federalism jurisprudence."

"I am confident that the U.S. Supreme Court will add its support for this decision which is so firmly grounded in long-standing American constitutional principles," said Frank.

The universal reaction among LGBT civil rights groups was similar.

"Whether it is California's Proposition 8 or the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, court after court has affirmed that marriage discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans is unfair, unjust, and unconstitutional," said Adam Umhoefer, executive director of the American Foundation for Equal Rights which has been pressing the challenge to California's same-sex marriage ban. That challenge has succeeded at the U.S. district court and Ninth Circuit panel levels. It is now awaiting word on whether the full Ninth Circuit will hear an appeal of those lower court decisions.

In coming to its decision, the panel decided that an earlier First Circuit decision on a case challenging "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" "has already declined" to grant

"suspect classification" to laws based on "sexual preference." And the panel said it was neither empowered nor willing to "create such a new suspect classification for same-sex relationships."

It also ruled that, while a 1972 U.S. Supreme Court dismissal of Baker v. Nelson is "precedent binding on us," subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, in such cases as Romer v. Evans and Lawrence v. Texas, make its usefulness in the current cases limited. In Baker, a gay couple in Minnesota appealed a ruling of their state's supreme court that held the state could deny them a marriage license. The U.S. Supreme Court, in 1972, dismissed the couple's appeal. BLAG attorney Paul Clement had argued the First Circuit was bound to do the same with the DOMA challenge.

The panel stayed its decision, meaning the federal government is not obliged to immediately begin recognizing same-sex marriages. But Mary Bonauto, lead attorney for same-sex couples on the case, said she expects the decision will be appealed in short order.

The decision was written by Judge Michael Boudin and joined by Chief Judge Sandra Lynch and Judge Juan Torruella. The panel heard oral arguments in the two cases -- Gill v. Office of Personnel Management and Massachusetts v. Health and Human Services -- on April 4.

The "case" before the panel was a consolidation of three cases, brought by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) and by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They are generally referred to as Gill v. Office of Personnel Management.

In Gill, GLAD argued that DOMA's ban on federal recognition of same-sex marriages violates the equal protection of same-sex couples. In Massachusetts v. HHS, the state argued that it interfered with the state's authority to regulate marriage. In Hara v. OPM, GLAD argued a very narrow case involving the benefits due to one plaintiff, Dean Hara, the widow of the late U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds.

U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Tauro ruled in July 2010 that Section 3 of DOMA violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection, its Spending Clause, and the Tenth Amendment right of states to sovereignty.

Section 3 of the federal law, passed in 1996, states that, for federal government purposes, "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife." None of the First Circuit lawsuits challenged the section of DOMA that enables any state to ignore valid marriage licenses issued to a same-sex couple in other states.

Illinois lawsuits seek right to marry for same-sex couples

BY LISA KEEN

Lambda Legal Defense and the ACLU filed separate lawsuits Wednesday, seeking the right to marry for same-sex couples in Illinois.

In *Darby v. Orr* in the circuit court for Cook County, Lambda argues that a state law banning same-sex marriages violates the state constitution's guarantee of due process and equal protection. The lawsuit also says the ban violates the state constitution's prohibition against creating laws that affect just one group when a law "is or can be made" that applies generally to everyone, such as marriage laws.

In *Lazro v. Orr* in that same court, the ACLU made those arguments and more, saying the marriage ban law violated the right to equal protection based on sexual orientation and based on gender, as well as the right to privacy of same-sex couples.

Lambda's lawsuit is the second marriage lawsuit the group has filed in less than two months. In April, Lambda filed a federal lawsuit in Nevada, *Sevcik vs. Sandoval*, arguing that the state's denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples violates their U.S. Constitutional right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment. But, unlike Nevada, which bans same-sex marriage through a state constitutional amendment, Illinois bars same-sex marriage through a state law only. Lambda also led the successful lawsuit, *Varnum v. Brien*, in Iowa that led to a state supreme court ruling in 2009 that said the state constitution guarantees equal treatment of same-sex couples under the state's marriage laws.

The Lambda lawsuit in Illinois involves 16 same-sex couples, including 80-year-old Korean War veteran James Darby and his companion of 48 years Patrick Bova, 73, who live in Chicago. David Orr is the Cook County Clerk, who is authorized to issue marriage licenses.

The ACLU lawsuit in Illinois involves nine same-sex couples, including Chicago police detective Tanya Lazro and her partner of 15 years, Elizabeth Matos.

The two lawsuits were apparently developed separately, but the groups are coordinating the announcement of them.

The Illinois legislature passed a law permitting same-sex

couples to obtain civil union licenses and that law went into effect in June 2011, but *Windy City Times*, the state's gay newspaper, has documented a number of instances in which "government entities, hospitals, organizations and employers either failed or struggled" to afford due recognition to civil unions. A bill in the state legislature seeking to repeal the same-sex marriage ban, reports *Windy City Times*, has not moved this session.

The two lawsuits in Illinois now join many others around the country, in state and federal courts, seeking to undo laws that block same-sex couples from equal treatment under marriage laws. In addition to Nevada, Lambda has a third marriage lawsuit, *Garden State Equality v. Dow*, pending in New Jersey state court, and that case includes some federal law issues. The ACLU has a lawsuit challenging the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), pending in federal court in New York. That lawsuit, *Windsor v. U.S.*, and two by Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), challenges Section 3 of DOMA, which bans, for any federal purpose, the recognition of a legal marriage from any state or other jurisdiction. One of the GLAD lawsuits, *Gill v. OPM*, is consolidated with a lawsuit from the state of Massachusetts, *Commonwealth v. HHS*, and is awaiting a decision from the First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. The other, *Pedersen v. OPM*, is pending in Connecticut federal district court.

And in California, a high-profile case, *Perry v. Brown*, challenging the Proposition 8 ban on same-sex marriages, has succeeded in federal district court and before a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. The panel decision has been appealed but the full circuit has not yet indicated whether it will hear the case.



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Prop 8 case will not be reheard by Ninth Circuit

BY LISA KEEN

A glimmer of politics showed through Tuesday (June 5) when the full Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals declined a request from supporters of California's ban on same-sex marriage to review a circuit panel's decision that Proposition 8 is unconstitutional.

In a dissent from the order refusing to have the full Ninth Circuit hear the landmark *Perry v. Brown* case, three judges signed onto a dissent, noting that just a few weeks ago, President Obama had "ignited a media firestorm by announcing that he supports same-sex marriage as a policy matter." The three said the refusal to review the circuit panel's decision "silenced" President Obama's suggestion that the nation continue its "conversation" about same-sex marriage "in a respectful way."

All three dissenters were appointees of Republican presidents.

But politics or not, the refusal to give *Perry v. Brown* full circuit court review is a major victory for supporters of marriage equality and means almost certainly that the "final chapter" in the historic litigation can now begin, says Chad Griffin, co-founder of the American Foundation for Equal Rights which organized and funded the lawsuit.

Attorneys for Proposition 8 supporters said

they will now file a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Ninth Circuit decisions. Ted Olson, a lead attorney for the gay couples in *Perry*, said that, even if the Supreme Court refuses to hear that appeal, the litigation would be a "complete victory" for the plaintiff couples.

One looming question for the *Perry* case is whether the Supreme Court, if it accepts the case, would review the Ninth Circuit panel's very narrow reasoning to strike down Proposition 8 or the federal district court's more sweeping reasoning concerning equal protection, due process, and the fundamental right to marry. While Olson said upholding a narrow reasoning might still affect same-sex marriage in some states beyond California, upholding the broader reasoning could affect every state.

With last week's First Circuit decision striking a core section of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) also heading to the nation's highest court, it is now likely the Supreme Court will have two major same-sex marriage cases on its docket in October.

The Ninth Circuit case, if accepted, could ask whether states can take away the right to marry from same-sex couples or whether same-sex couples have a fundamental right to marriage and to be treated equally under marriage laws. The First Circuit case, if accepted, would ask whether the federal government can refuse to

recognize marriages licensed by states to same-sex couples.

David Boies, the other lead attorney for the *Perry* couples, said that, while the questions in each case are very "distinct," the issues are closely related and could – if both are accepted – be heard very close together.

The three-paragraph order June 5 stated that the request for a full court review "failed to receive a majority of the votes" of active judges. It also noted that the order would be stayed for 90 days to enable proponents of Proposition 8 to file an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The dissenting judges did not mince words in their three-paragraph dissent. They said the circuit panel's 2 to 1 decision striking Proposition 8 was a "gross misapplication" of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Romer v. Evans*. In that 1996 case, the Supreme Court said states could not pass laws that excluded gays from protection based on animus against the group.

The dissenters said refusing to give full Ninth Circuit review to *Perry v. Brown* means the Ninth Circuit judges "have now declared that animus must have been the only conceivable motivation for a sovereign state to have remained committed to a definition of marriage that has existed for millennia."

Proponents of Proposition 8, known as Yes on 8, filed the Ninth Circuit full court appeal, asking it to overturn a decision by the panel last February. That panel decision found that California's ban on same-sex marriage violates the federal constitution by stripping from same-sex couples a right they had (to marry) prior to passage of Proposition 8. In order for a limited full court review to have been granted, at least 14 of the circuit's 26 active judges would have had to say another review is warranted.

The *Perry v. Brown* lawsuit is led by famed conservative attorney Ted Olson and preeminent liberal attorney David Boies and organized and funded by the American Foundation for Equal Rights.

In the case, two same-sex couples sued the state after being denied marriage licenses after the voter-approved constitutional ban on same-sex marriage went into effect in November 2008.

U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker ruled, in August 2010, that banning same-sex couples from obtaining marriage licenses violates the federal constitution's guarantees of equal protection and due process. He agreed to delay enforcement of the decision, pending an appeal by Yes on 8 attorneys to the Ninth Circuit.

In February 2012, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit, in a 2 to 1 vote, upheld Walker's decision but on much more narrow grounds. The panel majority - Judges Stephen Reinhardt and Michael Hawkins - said Proposition 8 improperly removed from a group of citizens (gays) a right they already enjoyed (marriage) without sufficient justification.

Reinhardt and Hawkins submitted a paragraph with the June 5 refusal order, saying they were "puzzled" by their dissenting colleagues' "unusual reliance on the President's

views regarding the Constitution, especially as the President did not discuss the narrow issue that we decided in our opinion."

"We," said Reinhardt and Hawkins, "held only that under the particular circumstances

"A decision concluding that same-sex couples have the same fundamental right as different-sex couples would call into question all the marriage restrictions states currently impose."

- Williams Institute legal scholar Jenny Pizer, "

relating to California's Proposition 8, that measure was invalid. In line with the rules governing judicial resolution of constitutional issues, we did not resolve the fundamental question that both sides asked us to: whether the Constitution prohibits the states from banning same-sex marriage. That question," they said, "may be decided in the near future, but if so, it should be in some other case, at some other time."

The "particular circumstances" they referred to were that the California Supreme Court had ruled, in May 2008, that the state constitution required that same-sex couples be able to obtain marriage licenses the same as straight couples. Thousands of couples did begin obtaining marriage licenses, but, in November of that year, voters approved Proposition 8, amending the state constitution to explicitly ban the recognition of same-sex marriage.

While attorneys and activists uniformly called the February 7 panel decision a major victory, they acknowledged that the decision did stop short of saying that same-sex partners, like straight partners, have a "fundamental right to marry." Instead, it said Proposition 8 deprived same-sex partners only of the "right to use the designation of 'marriage.'" If it had ruled same-sex couples had a fundamental right to marry, said Lambda Legal Defense's legal director Jon Davidson, "the marriage laws of 44 states would have been cast into doubt...." And by rendering such a relatively narrow ruling, said Davidson and others, the panel reduced the likelihood the U.S. Supreme Court would take the case.

"The fundamental right to marry, as protected by the US Constitution," said Williams Institute legal scholar Jenny Pizer, "has to have the same contours throughout the country. So a decision concluding that same-sex couples have the same fundamental right as different-sex couples would call into question all the marriage restrictions states currently impose."

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Continued from p. 6

actual bully. I was an athlete. I was popular. I was so afraid to be who I was, that I poked fun at a lot of others. By me having a chance to work for the Obama campaign and work with LGBT youth everyday, it's a chance for me to really give back and really pay it forward," he said.

"We are really trying to get the word out. Because the president's statement is a hot button, people may forget that our president is for everyone, not just for black, white, rich, poor, gay straight, for everyone. That's what his platform is about, moving this country forward. So equality is not just for sexual orientation and gender identity," he said.

Davis played with the Tennessee Titans, Seattle Seahawks and eventually the Washington Redskins from 2000 to 2004 before coming out as gay. He won an NFL Europe championship with the Berlin Thunder as well. He presently serves as the Director of Player Development for the New York Gay Football League. His public announcement coincided with his participation on the sports advisory board through the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network's Changing the Game (<http://sports.glsen.org/>) program, which is designed to fight homophobia in K-12 athletics by starting a dialogue about the issue.



Through GLSEN, Davis found his second dream job as the Assistant Director of Job Readiness and Career Exploration at the Hetrick-Martin Institute (www.hmi.org) in New York where he resides. He works everyday with LGBT youth. "One of my biggest goals is to teach our youth how to think. Not tell them what to think, but teach them how to think and think critically. And to challenge assumptions and perceptions that are out there. Also to understand how important what the president did is for their lives. Yes, they may be 12, 13 and 14 years old now, but in 10 years they will see the impact," said Davis, who wakes up excited every morning to go to work.

Davis said he believes President Obama is changing a lot of the public perceptions around LGBT people and the issues faced by the community. While he felt the pressure to hide his sexuality in the NFL, and to avoid those who were suspected of being gay or bisexual, he encourages young LGBT athletes to be proud of who they are.

"I think the great part about what the president did is that people really understand that gay and lesbian people are just like

them. There is no difference and there are conversations that are happening now on high school teams, on college teams, and on pro teams," said Davis. "Leaving my NFL career is definitely worth it. I never thought I would say that. People often ask if I could go back, would I, and I can't give an honest answer because I really love what I do now."

And he's getting results. During a recent trip to the Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference, Davis took a group of kids to run a workshop on how to be an ally. "After the workshop, one of the youth said to me 'you've been one of my biggest allies for as long as I can remember and you've helped to change my life.' This let's me know that I'm doing this for the right reasons," he said, adding that because he is viewed as a celebrity, it's important for him to be authentic and consistent, and to make sure that our youth know there's someone in their corner who's an actual ally, who's not afraid to be truthful to them and to allow them to grow.

Davis has a few allies of his own, including his great friend

Darnell Moore and his partner of five and a half years. "I call him my little hero. He's taught me to stop wishing and start dreaming and there's a big difference between those two." He is also obsessed with James Baldwin. "I spent the entire Memorial Day weekend listening to his speeches and reading some of his books and writing. I'm just so inspired by him."

At 34 years old, Davis has to pinch himself sometimes when he thinks about the work he is doing.

"To be able to work for the president in the capacity that I do is surreal," said Davis. "I want to do as much as I can and do more and work my fingers to the bone. I'll fly here and fly there. I just don't care. Whether I get to meet him one day or not doesn't matter. The work that I'm allowed to do for him makes me feel as if I already know him because of the way he carries himself. Just to be able to talk about a man who I respect, who I look at as so relatable, who could be me, who has so many things that I admire and aspire to be is just one of the most amazing things in the world."

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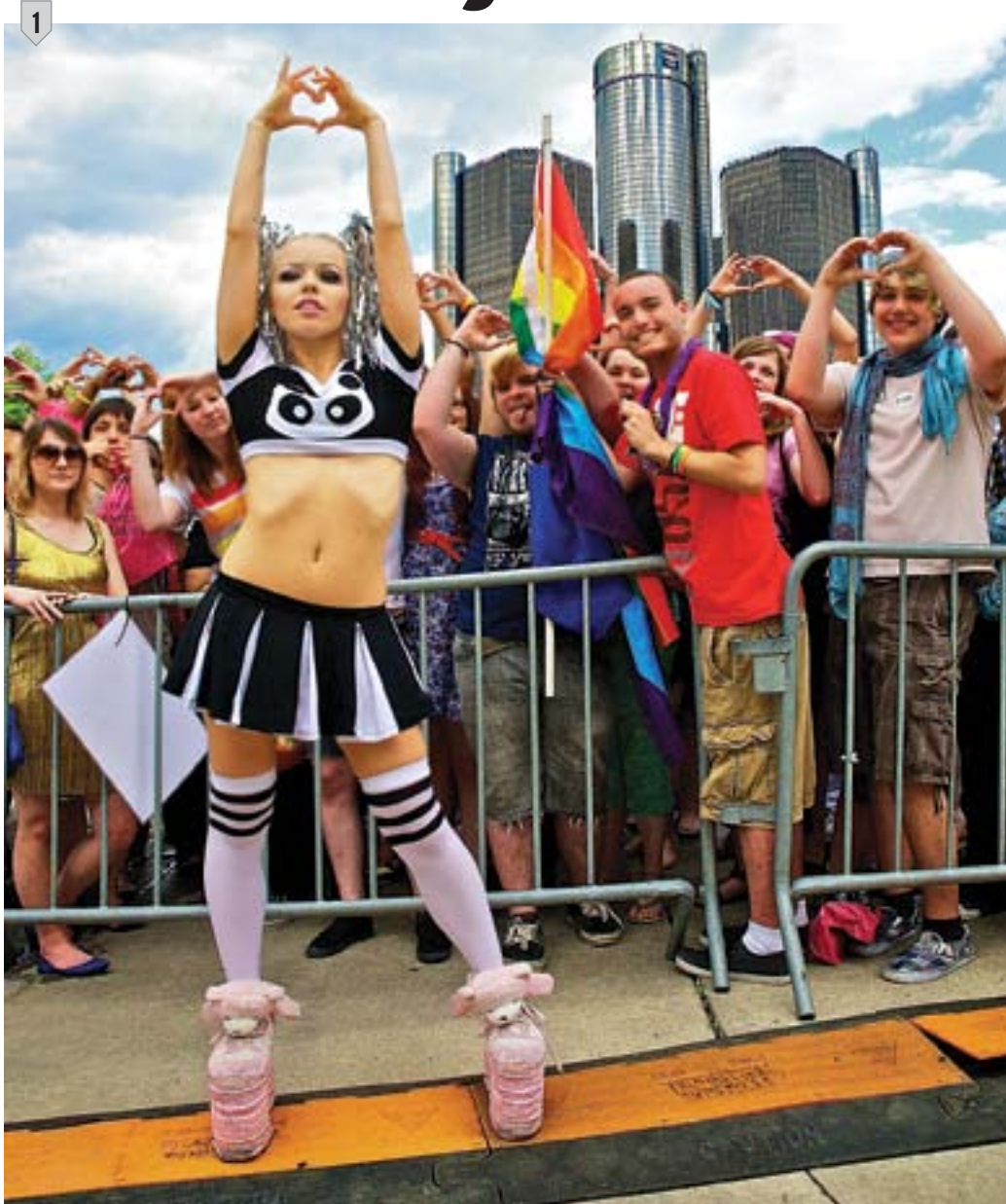
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Motor City Pride returns to Hart Plaza



BTL Photos: Andrew Potter (1-4), Tih Penfil (5) and Crystal Proxmire (6-7)



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K'zoo Pride to feature Pandora Boxx, Kimi Hayes



Pandora Boxx (Left), Kimi Hayes (Upper Right) and Funktion (Bottom Right) perform June 9 at Kalamazoo Pride.

KALAMAZOO — An entertainment lineup including drag queen Pandora Boxx and Kimi Hayes' rock band will be featured at the fifth annual Kalamazoo Pride June 9 at Arcadia Creek Festival Place.

Live entertainment will feature Pandora Boxx from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Pandora is best known as a contestant on the smash hit RuPaul's Drag Race (Season 2) on Logo and VH1. Despite not winning, Pandora proved to be the breakout star and was named by Entertainment Weekly "as their America's Next Drag Superstar."

The Kimi Hayes Band will take the stage at 9 p.m. playing an exciting blend of current and classic rock, and loads of crowd-pleasing favorites from the 70s, 80s and 90s. The Kimi Hayes Band is a high energy, rockin' four piece unit, featuring power-house vocals, sizzling guitars, and a rock solid rhythm section. Kimi Hayes and her band have opened for Sugarland, Willie Nelson, Gavin DeGraw, Sarah Evans, Lucinda Williams, Blues Traveler, and many more.

Kalamazoo Pride will also offer more entertainment during the day, including a performance by Kalamazoo-based R&B band Funktion. This popular seven-man band

showcases all aspects of funk: silky smooth R&B, cool island dub rhythms, rowdy hip-hop or the unhinged, guitar-fueled fireball of funk. Additional afternoon entertainment includes DJ Matt House and the Neon Tetras, an original acoustic soul quartet from Kalamazoo. "Vendor Alley" will feature local affirming and inclusive organizations and business goods vendors as well as various food and beverage establishments from Southwest Michigan. Additionally, family friendly-activities will take place in and near the youth tent area.

Kalamazoo Pride is the biggest fundraiser for the Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center. Last year's Kalamazoo Pride attracted over 5,000 people. "Kalamazoo Pride is a time for this community to rally around equality and inclusiveness," said Zachary Bauer, executive director at KLRC. "The event is open to everyone, and our goal is to create a welcoming and affirming event for the LGBTQ and ally communities. With over 100 local volunteers, this is truly a community event focused on diversity and civil engagement."

Gates open at 2 p.m. and admission is \$5. Entertainment is on the main stage from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. For more information, visit www.kglrc.org/pride.



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Won't you be my neighbor?

Make your heart happy with Dixie Longate to benefit Affirmations

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

There is something endearing about a person who insists that you are “sweeter than poop.”

Maybe not the kind of endearing that makes it onto “Father Knows Best,” but little that Dixie Longate, one of the top-selling Tupperware ladies in the country, does would. She loves to talk about creative food storage, and calling their uses she promotes creative is a little like calling Rush Limbaugh somewhat conservative.

Longate, a character whom actor Kris Andersson created, uses toy sorters as sobriety testers and spill-proof tumblers with lids for taking martinis in the car on the morning drive to school. She shot to the top of Tupperware’s sales lists by throwing her unconventional parties which are part drag show, part stand-up comedy and part female-empowerment, audience-participation theater.

And now, Dixie is coming to Detroit for her second time ever. She’ll be performing up to six shows as a fundraiser for Affirmations at Five15 in downtown Royal Oak. Her first visit to the Motor City was last August when she won a Wilde Award for her Tupperware party performance at Mason Street Warehouse in Saugatuck.

“I had so much fun and everyone was so neighborly,” she says. “There was such an amazing feeling of community. How fun it must be to be a part of that community. It made my heart happy.”

The Wilde Awards made her put Detroit on the list of places she wanted to perform. She’s still looking for a venue to do her full show after doing the fundraiser at Five15.

“These people need creative food storage. I can’t shirk my responsibility and not come,” she says, adding that the pre-award show dinner sealed the deal when she tasted a peanut butter and jelly martini for the first time. “I never had anything like that in my life. It’s like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich but it makes you take your pants off, and there’s no crust.”

Working on her own, she said she doesn’t often get to participate in a community like the one found among Michigan’s theater folk. She does, though, get to participate in a global community, the one of Tupperware users ready for a different take



See Dixie Longate, page 28

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► Dixie Longate

Continued from p. 25

on their mothers' oh-so-polite home parties.

Dixie is just returning from a tour of Australia and Great Britain, two of the 10 countries where Tupperware is sold through home parties.

"People know exactly what it is. It is huge in Australia," Dixie says, talking about the excitement that greeted her with every show. "There are different things I would talk about in the show and different pieces of Tupperware. (People in the audience would say) 'I love that,' 'My momma had that.' Different people had different connections and relationships to the Tupperware in every city, but everyone knows what it is."

It was the first time she'd taken her show international, and she said that despite the differences in culture, her reception was the same everywhere.

"For the most part, the sort of comedy I do is fairly universal," she says. "People are much more similar than you think. It isn't that much of a stretch going from place to place. That's what made it fun."

While her shows could double for a sex toy party, she said she's had nothing but support from the corporate folks at Tupperware, and many of them have come out to see her show.

"They've been real neighborly, saying they'd get whatever I need to get going, and



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they always put smiles on when people ask about it. They are so supportive."

It's that support and the products themselves that has Dixie committed to the brand, saying she can't imagine leaving them as other products simply wouldn't be as much fun.

"Half the stuff, I didn't even know belonged in the kitchen. My reverend came in and said, 'What's that under the bed?' It was so sweet. He showed me: 'That's something to put your cereal in.' I was like,

'That's something you put your condoms in for a weekend.' He showed me how to use a colander. I thought it was the big round thing with a stick on it for doing something unneighborly."

She also doesn't think other home party products would have the same international appeal.

"So many people around the world know what (Tupperware) is. If I had to go in to Russia and say, 'Let's talk about Mary Kay and how beautiful you can be,' and I'm working with a lot of Russian ladies? Sometimes they're not pretty – they're real good in sports, but they probably don't understand lip liners."

Besides, the Tupperware products have served Dixie well both professionally and personally.

"Sometimes when I'm doing a party I end up having sex with people. It's never intentional. You know what it's like when you're so neighborly. You never go seeking it out. You know what it's like when you are so pretty and people throw themselves on you. It's like, 'Time out, senator, there's enough to go around.' You know, you've been there."

For all those who have been there, and even those who haven't, they can experience Dixie's shows on Father's Day weekend in Royal Oak. The number of shows will depend on ticket pre-sales, with a total of six possible shows at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Friday, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday.

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Hear Me Out

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Regina Spektor's best album yet. Plus: Scissor Sisters at their most inspiring



Regina Spektor, 'What We Saw from the Cheap Seats'

With 2006's "Begin to Hope," Regina Spektor stepped out from the shadows of the hipster underground for some pop-world reach. That career opus struck a fine balance that its follow-up, "Far," overworked into vanilla mediocrity. Her sixth disc, "What We Saw from the Cheap Seats," is not only a significant upswing on "Far" for the Soviet-born singer – and much more comfortable in being straight-up strange – but it shows that "Hope" wasn't a one-time fluke: Spektor doesn't repress her idiosyncrasies (she beat boxes, speaks in an Italian tongue and lips a marching band) and finds ways to work them more naturally into the handsomely stitched fabric without neutering herself. Of course, it helps having straighter-edged sentiments of endearing candor, like those of "The Party" or "How," to break up the queerness of her ode to a mass murderer on "Oh Marcello" and the eerie museum narrative "All the Rowboats." Even without "Firewood," a beautiful ballad bringing her back down to earth that warmly concludes "there's still no cure for crying," there's no second-guessing it: This is Regina Spektor's best album ever. *Grade: A-*



Scissor Sisters, 'Magic Hour'

Songs about eternal solitude in the sky, horses as our only escape from the apocalypse and a tropical getaway with "the backpack full of Captain Jack": Not since the quartet's first album, released nearly a decade ago, have they been this wholeheartedly inspiring. And not inspiring in the make-sexytime way. Their last LP, "Night Work," was all hyper-horny, like some pre-teen who just discovered what a hand and mouth can *really* do. Hormones aren't raging on "Magic Hour," but, naturally, they're still there: "Self Control" is a musical oxymoron (how can anyone get ahold of themselves with Jake Shears telling them to "feel the push"?), and the delightfully raunchy "Let's Have a Kiki" camps up its drag queen romp like some long-lost song from "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." It's clear the Sisters want to be about more than just sex; there's also darkness, loneliness and obvious signs of maturity threaded throughout. Through the classic-rock aura of Elton John comes "San Luis

Obispo," swimming in island rhythms that beseech you to throw on a grass skirt, grab a mai tai and listen closely to the introspection brimming beneath. And who can blame them for "Only the Horses," a Calvin Harris-produced shot at mainstream fame? With this album, they've earned it. *Grade: B+*

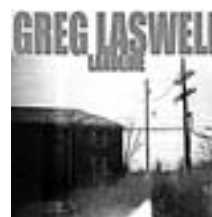
Also Out



Sigur Rós, 'Valtari'

Sigur Rós still hasn't lost touch with its atmospheric washes of melancholy –

even four years after releasing their last studio album. And so "Valtari" comes with few surprises. Not that there isn't profound sound in the instrumental flamboyancy of the Icelandic quartet, but it's a little like looking at the same starry night: Their defining orchestral whimsy, children's choirs and unmatched ability at creating serenity all come into play. Fans of Jónsi Birgisson's fantastic full-of-life solo album will be surprised at how little the frontman is utilized: Often letting the ambience speak for itself, he opens the album's best track, Varúð, with his dreamy falsetto, and then lets it fall into a sonic fire. This is Sigur Rós doing their thing, and doing it as lovely as ever.



Greg Laswell, 'Landline'

Greg Laswell's biggest fault has always been writing songs like he has TV network execs in mind: They're so very "Dawson's Creek." More of the same finds the San Diego singer-songwriter fumbling through a series of overwrought emotions that don't translate to memorable music despite a fuller sound and a few ladies. Sara Bareilles cameos on album-opener "Come Back Down," a back-and-forth between two exes that's a refreshing breakup change-up; "Dragging You Around" has Sia in chirpy-voiced pop mode; and Laswell's wife, Ingrid Michaelson, shows up for the chillingly stunning extended metaphor of emotional support on the title track. Too bad the rest of the album can't live up to it.

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Greta Gerwig

The New Gay-Loved Girl



Greta Gerwig in "Damsels in Distress." Photo: Sony Classics (Bottom right) Gerwig with co-star Joel Kinnaman in "Lola Versus." Photo: Fox Searchlight

Actress talks new film, gay boyfriends and filling Liza's shoes

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

It was only a matter of time before Greta Gerwig would enter gay consciousness. Roles in the "Arthur" remake, with Ben Stiller in "Greenberg" and as Natalie Portman's bestie in "No Strings Attached" made her a bona fide movie star, but it was "Damsels in Distress" – gleefully riffing on the power of dance in suicide prevention – that earned her queer cred. Why? Just ask her. "It's like an absurdist college version of 'Mean Girls,'" the actress says.

Now Gerwig, 28, stars in Fox Searchlight's "Lola Versus," a post-breakup dramedy about one woman's (reckless, slutty and drunken) journey to self-fulfillment that opens June 15. The actress will also appear alongside Penélope Cruz, Ellen Page and Alec Baldwin in Woody Allen's summer release "To Rome With Love."

Charming and upbeat, Gerwig spoke to us about the gay best friend she should've had in "Lola Versus," how even straight guys can like Ani DiFranco and the best era to be lesbian.

You're really put through the wringer in "Lola Versus." Where's a gay best friend when you need him?

I know! What's sad is that a lot of people who saw the trailer assume that Hamish Linklater is my gay friend, and he's actually not gay in the movie. They just assume because he makes that Rupert Everett joke. I don't know what kind of New York girl I am that I don't have a gay BFF. There's something wrong with that.

Are we past having the gay guy be the proverbial shoulder to lean on for the damsel in distress?

It's very stereotypical of that kind of movie. I think we're ready to have just a full-on mainstream rom-com that's just guys. Someone should make a rom-com about two guys falling in love and then they can have a sidekick straight girl best friend.

Would you star in it?

I would play the sidekick, and Bradley Cooper would star in it. (Laughs)

That means no sex scenes with Bradley.

I know. It would just be platonic. We'd make milkshakes together in my cute apartment with my cat.

Tell me what you learned from having a gay first boyfriend.

It's a very good thing to have a gay boyfriend as your first boyfriend. We really liked each other, and we liked all of the same things – he loved musicals; I loved musicals. We had so much fun together. He didn't want to have sex with me, which then – at 14, 15 – you don't really want to be having sex anyway. We used to go to dances together and, regardless of the theme of the dance, we would create our own theme and go as whatever we had decided the theme was, so we went to dances as people from the Roaring Twenties – not the theme of the dance, but very fun. We just had a great time. It was much better than dating some

meathead who just wants to touch your breasts.

So what's your call on the one-night-stand rebound who was an incubator baby and has a thing for Ani DiFranco, who he plays during your sex scene with him in "Lola Versus." Gay or not?

Yeah, no. I think he just really likes Ani DiFranco! (Laughs) One of my high school boyfriends loved Ani DiFranco. He did! He learned how to play Ani DiFranco songs on the guitar, and he's fully straight. It's a real thing.

There's the scene where you wander drunk into a strip club. Was that your first time in one?

It was, actually. We didn't have full-on strippers, though. I have been to places where there are naked people, but I've never been to a strip club. I always expect that to happen to me one day, but it's never happened to me. I have only been in the fictitious world.

Where else do you find naked people?

The Box in New York; it's a club, and there were lots of naked people and I was working there. But it wasn't, like, proper strippers. Just naked people. (Laughs)

What interested you in "Damsels in Distress"?

I love Whit Stillman and the crazy universes he constructs. I just think he's totally unique as a voice; there's no one else like him. He's almost like the Oscar Wilde of now, in a way. I don't think there's another person who writes quite like he does and has this strange, absurdist, satirical sensibility that is also somehow totally sincere.

How cool was it to exercise some of your musical-theater background in it?

I feel like I've oversold my actual credentials in musical-theater. A lot of my credentials in musical-theater is just singing along to them in the car. (Laughs) I'm not like Lea Michele; I was not in "Spring Awakening." I just loved musicals.

Adam Brody had a great line in "Damsels in Distress" that suggests he may have been homosexual in a different era, before it became so trendy. If you were lesbian, which era would you be lesbian in?

Obviously 1992-1997. Sinead O' Connor, Lilith Fair – that was a super good time to be lesbian, right? And Melissa Etheridge, baby doll dresses with combat boots – awesome!

What was it like going to an all-girls college?

I love Barnard. While I was at Barnard, they changed the policy – my RA was transgender and was starting the process of changing from being a girl to being a boy. Barnard officially came out and said that's totally cool and our students can do that and we support it, which was pretty awesome.

You played opposite Russell Brand in "Arthur," in the part Liza Minnelli originated in 1981. How did it feel stepping into Liza's shoes? And did your gay friends approve of your performance?

They did. Although everybody was really sad that I didn't get to wear this one pantsuit that she wears in the original: this giant pink pantsuit that's shiny and crazy. It's insane. They were sad I didn't get to wear her outfits.

My favorite Liza movie is definitely "Cabaret" – the ultimate. She's so great in that, and I used to watch that movie and wonder if my legs were as long as hers. (Laughs) I just thought she was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I used to do that with Cyd Charisse with "Singin' in the Rain" and Ann Reinking. All of those saucy girls that could get their legs way up there, I wanted to be like them.





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Third time's a charm for Epicenter

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

I suspect that in the days of the caveman, people used to sit around the campfire entertaining one another with stories about the foibles of love. Not much has changed over the millennia, as storytellers in every culture have spun countless tales of love and the pursuit of love – and for good reason: People in love do crazy, weird, or wonderful things.

If you don't believe me, just ask Aldo Scalicki, the storyteller of John Patrick Shanley's "Italian American Reconciliation," who sums it up quite succinctly in the comedy's second act: "We're all crazy." And he's pretty much right. Except in the finely executed production courtesy of Epicenter Theatre Group, they're also thoroughly identifiable and likable, no matter which culture or ethnic group you belong to.

Set in New York's Little Italy, Aldo (Marco Zaccagnini) and Huey Maximilian Bonfigliano (Michael Lopetrone) have been best friends since childhood. Aldo is what was once known as "a confirmed bachelor," while Huey – divorced three years earlier – has been dating Teresa (Lauren Knox), an adorable waitress who works at Pop's Soup House. Huey has been MIA in recent days, so Aldo goes to his house and finds his friend sitting at his desk, oddly dressed, listening to classical music on a music box and writing bad poetry. The problem, it seems, is this: Huey has come to believe his manhood was stolen three years ago by his ex-wife, Janice (Erin Edgerton), and he can't move forward with his life until he woos Janice and gets her back. And he needs Aldo's help with the conquest.

This scares the bejesus out of Aldo, who has been intimidated by the universally disliked Janice since they were children – and rightfully so: Her villainy includes shooting Huey's dog and taking a shot at her then-husband with a zip gun. But best friends do what a best friend has to do – and he agrees to help Huey with his crazy plan – although with a twist he believes is for Huey's own good.

As you can imagine, even the best-laid plans don't always work out the way they're supposed to.

Shanley – best known for the movie "Moonstruck" and the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama "Doubt" – once again crafts a script filled with characters you can identify with, relate to, and root for. Subtitled "A Comic Folktale," "Italian American Reconciliation" is just that: a delightful lesson about relationships, taught by Aldo, who explains to the audience (in the play's unusual, stand-up-like opening) that he's there "to teach you something." We're his class, he says, and he keeps us thoroughly engaged as he steps into the story and weaves his tale.

That wouldn't happen, however, if not for the excellent direction of Karen Sheridan. For Epicenter's initial two productions, fellow critic John Quinn and I pointed out



Huey (Michael Lopetrone) gets lectured by his best friend Aldo (Marco Zaccagnini) on the nature of women in America in Epicenter Theatre Group's production of "Italian American Reconciliation" by John Patrick Shanley. Photo: Rachel Hull

REVIEW

Italian American Reconciliation

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conceptual and directorial problems that marred the otherwise hard work this young and energetic company had put into their shows. But tough lessons have been learned, and the result is a slick and heartwarming production that had me in the palm of its hand right from the very beginning.

What struck me most on opening night was the attention Sheridan paid to the emotional beats of the script. Each was carefully dissected to discern the truth behind each character's thoughts and motivations, and as a result, each actor's portrayal was as honest and as complete as it could possibly be.

Also noticeable was Sheridan's fine integration of sound into the story – from the perfectly timed bell that rings every time someone enters the diner to the music that underscores the story. And the lights by Kerro Knox 3 offer the perfect emotional touch to the play's pivotal moments.

But what stood out most of all were the accomplishments of the actors, each of whom sports a perfect and never-wavering Italian accent, and who paint with their words and actions a vivid portrait of men and women who, like all of us, are struggling to overcome their fears and flaws

while striving to make connections and bonds with those around them. Most of all, however, all of them are totally believable from start to finish.

Zaccagnini sets the tone at the beginning of the show. Aldo works the audience with a sense of charm, self confidence and a bit of cockiness, all of which hide the fact he's really a mama's boy afraid of commitment.

Edgerton allows us to briefly see through Janice's tough-as-steel exterior, while Knox gives us the perfect girlfriend: beautiful and understanding – but only up to a certain point.

There's a fifth character in the play, Aunt May, who serves as its "raisonneur" or voice of the playwright. It's a delicious role, and played deliciously by Elizabeth DeWulf. (Her costume, like all the others by Christa Koerner, fits the character perfectly.)

The heart of the production, though, is Lopetrone. Sweet, passionate, meek and a bit crazy, Huey rides a rollercoaster of emotions throughout the production, and Lopetrone jumps into the role and finds every nuance he can to bring it to life. Watch how he relates to – and plays off of – each of the other actors: It's masterful – and by the end of the first act, he'll have you glued to your seat in anticipation of the second.

That was my reaction at intermission – and the rest of the performance delivered the promise of the first. All in all, Epicenter has shaken off the shackles of inexperience and proven it has what it takes to become a force to be reckoned with in Metro Detroit's professional theater community. I suspect it will be a fun and fascinating journey.



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Comedy-drama hits home at the Rep

BY JOHN QUINN

Art encourages thought. Art invites exploration of the uncomfortable. Art allows an individual audience member to share personal emotions and experiences with others similarly touched. Art is hard at work in Marilyn Barner Anselmi's provocative comedy-drama "Taking Care of Mimi," opening this week at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. The plot is driven by the devastating effect of Alzheimer's disease, both on its victim and on his or her family. For this writer, the emotion and experience are all too real.

The subtitle of "Taking Care of Mimi" is "A morality murder mystery." Mimi (Barbara Jacobs-Smith) may have been a vibrant, caring soul, but soon after the loss of her husband, she began the dark fall into dementia. Daughters Susan (Angela King) and Harriet (Nicole Michelle Haskins) have "split the caretaking." Susan handles the finances and Harriet, assisted by Susan's son Hal (Scott Norman), handle Mimi. And Mimi is a handful.

Mimi dies in her sleep and foul play is indicated. Detective Helms (David Glover) tries to determine which suspect had the best motive and opportunity to end the misery. Was it Susan, a real estate success story who becomes appalled at her mother's extreme condition? Was it compassionate, patient Harriet, long suffering primary caregiver who sacrificed her independence for her mother? Or was it young Hal, who gave up an education and social life for insults and dirty diapers? Was it an outsider, like veterinarian Luis Ferraro (Harold Uriah Hogan), who employs both Harriet and Hal part time? He regrets the emotional toll on his employees, and has access to the very drugs found in the autopsy.

Anselmi's script is long on plot and character, yet short on dialogue. It doesn't distract with side plots; and the play, only some 90 minutes, never lags. It helps to read the program before the houselights dim (an oversight I'm going to correct), since that's where we're told the time is "The present and a few weeks in the past." Detective Helms is investigating the death in the "now;" scenes leading up to Mimi's death are flashbacks. In this play, as in life itself, there are no pat resolutions, not even a conclusive conclusion. So subtle is the playwright's touch that a major element of plot only fell into place for me as I drove home. Even though I have to write this later, to be deeply mulling what I experienced while driving is rare – and dangerous.

Barbara Busby's direction keeps us engaged and questioning; her cast turns in fine performances all around. If Barbara Jacobs-Smith commands extra attention, it's



"Taking Care of Mimi" closes the Detroit Repertory Theatre's 2011-12 season. Photo: Bruce Millan

REVIEW

Taking Care of Mimi

Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Thursday-Sunday through June 24. 96 minutes. \$17-20. 313-868-1347.

www.detroitreptheatre.com

due to her impish turn as "mean old Momma" Mimi. The script gives her a wealth of funny lines; I find myself uncomfortable laughing at a character when humor derives from mental illness. But from personal experience, I know some situations are so tragic that the only sane response is laughter through the tears.

My mother and paternal aunts cared for my Alzheimer's afflicted grandmother. I saw my sophisticated, loving Grandma reduced to communicating in gibberish, a panic in her eyes. I can relate to Harriet's observation that "she's still in there," trying to get out. My mother cared for her mother, who did not have Alzheimer's, but in old age became eccentric and manipulative. While no one in my family would ever think euthanasia is "the good death," I know the thought "they'd be better off dead" often crossed my mind. Lately my mother has experienced such severe short-term memory loss I have begun, as the child who lives nearest her, to assume cooking duties. Will I eventually live to be so dependent? If I do, I hope I have the fortitude of my forbearers and take inspiration from poet Dylan Thomas:

"Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

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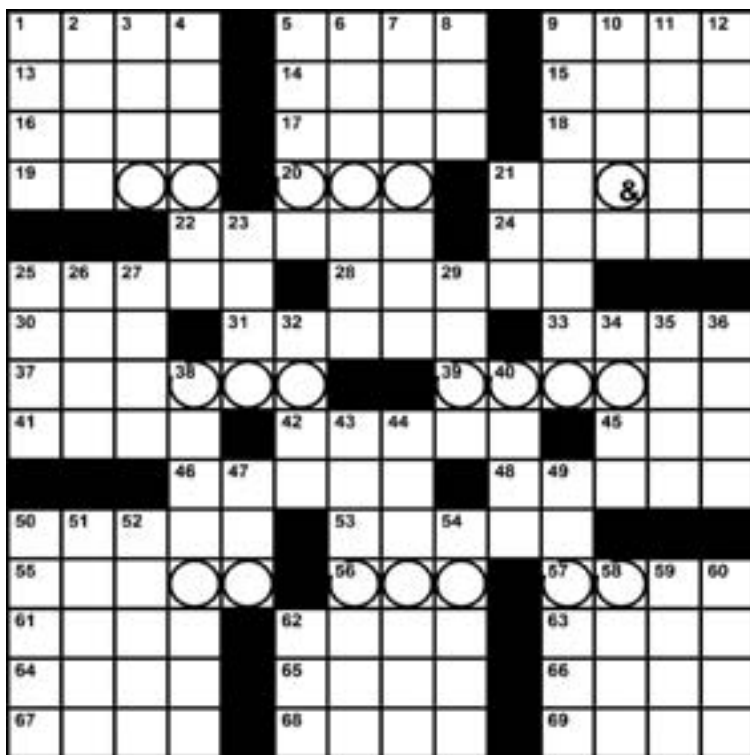


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A Boy Named Sues



Across

- 1 Home, to Glenn Burke
- 5 Result of a sexually active Woody
- 9 In the center of
- 13 Piercing rebuke from Caesar?
- 14 Stink up the place
- 15 Barcelona boy
- 16 Bahrain biggie
- 17 Some actors have big ones
- 18 Bond foe
- 19 Peter on the piano
- 20 White as a ghost
- 21 Come slowly
- 22 Mother-and-son piece
- 24 Common stain
- 25 Two-footer?
- 28 Coal porter's vehicles
- 30 Great service from Mauresmo
- 31 "Great balls of fire!"
- 33 Rowers pull them
- 37 Julie of "To Wong Foo ..." fame
- 39 Prefix with town
- 41 Bygone pump name
- 42 Chance to get a hit
- 45 Randy's skating partner
- 46 Difference between a slut and a whore?
- 48 Seattle's WNBA team

- 50 Darrin Stevens, for one
- 53 Saudi Arabia neighbor
- 55 "Bear" that's not a bear
- 56 "I'm not touching that!"
- 57 Not a stat to brag about
- 61 Icon letters
- 62 Taylor of "I Shot Andy Warhol"
- 63 Gay nightlife district London
- 64 McKuen and his package?
- 65 Shake it or break it
- 66 Survivor, sometimes
- 67 Sills' solo
- 68 "A Boy Named Sue" singer Johnny
- 69 The late comedian Sues who was a regular on the show that appears in the circles

Down

- 1 "It's ___ real!"
- 2 Melissa Etheridge's "Don't Look ___"
- 3 Create a solution
- 4 The Continent, to Britten
- 5 Question about one's group
- 6 Breezy competition
- 7 Composer Bernstein
- 8 Brief endorsements
- 9 Hans Christian of fairy tales
- 10 Moon of Uranus

- 11 Laura of "ER"
- 12 Some swingers
- 21 "The Wizard of Oz" studio
- 23 Think of it!
- 25 Cause of harm
- 26 Tops a cupcake
- 27 They touch the bottoms of believers
- 29 Early movie dog
- 32 Steffi of tennis
- 34 Concerning
- 35 Word before admiral, in the navy
- 36 Like a Muscle Mary who does sit-ups
- 38 Da Vinci signature piece
- 40 Words said with shame
- 43 Type of mockingbird?
- 44 Snoopy and others
- 47 "Cat ___ Hot Tin Roof"
- 49 "How Do I Live" singer Yearwood
- 50 "The Seven Samurai" director Kurosawa
- 51 Word that may follow sperm or organ
- 52 Tuesday, in Tours
- 54 Chicken cut
- 58 Coward of "Blithe Spirit"
- 59 Pet plant
- 60 One to blow on
- 62 Lake, to fifty million Frenchmen

Solution on pg 37



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Horoscopes

Do not flirt, Aries!

BY JACK FERTIG

Venus retrograding across the Sun in Gemini triggers bold flirtations that will probably go awry. Keep a sense of humor. As Mercury enters Cancer protective moods can shade your thinking. Ask older relatives for family recipes or share some new ones.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Do not flirt at work. The gym maybe, but neither now. You seem to be mixing up flirtation with argument. Instead of trying to pick someone up you might rather pick a fight. Feistiness has its charm, if you can get the right balance.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): You are cute, charming and wonderful, but working it is going to draw unwanted attention and costs. Just be yourself without the self-conscious effort. If your usual “divertissements” just annoy you, try out some new amusements.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): A new relationship may be in the offing, or an old one is just off. Keeping your home together can require hard work (the easy part) and diplomacy (not so easy). Focus your criticisms on yourself.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): A new exercise program can do you a world of good, but start out easy! Learning a new skill can help you take advantage of changes at work. Your insights to team dynamics can also secure your position, but you don't have to share them.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): A binge with your friends can get mighty expensive and lead to arguments. Before going out, think hard about whose company you value and why. Sometimes it's best to “have previous plans.” Political action is good. Criticizing your comrades, not so much.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): You're good with the boss. Don't do anything that could look like you're kissing up. Tips from experts can make your work more effective and less stressful. Some adventurous fun with your family can also turn things around for you.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Temptation to argue comes out of your own anxieties. Give yourself and everyone else a break by focusing on your own problems

and unburden yourself with a therapist, a favorite aunt, or a good stand-in.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): You can be a fierce advocate for the queer community or your own part of that. Be careful not to overplay your hand. Speak up for universal rights and equality over privilege and you're sure to make your case.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Your partner or other connections can help you find a new job; move quickly. You may be a bit selfish in appraising your relationship, but if you're not good for each other move on.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Focus on foresight and good behavior. Rash actions and outspokenness can undermine your work and get you into trouble with your boss or clients. Remember your colleagues are on your team. Approach problems as a healer, not as a critic.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): You're itching for a good fight, but can too easily land in a bad one. To fix economic problems be a healer, not a warrior. You can get more flies with honey instead of vinegar without compromising your principles.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Where has your life been heading and where do you want it to grow? Reexamine your priorities and goals. Domestic comforts and lessons are a basis for growing in new directions, not a cozy nest to hide in.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 36

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E	T	T	U	R	E	E	K	N	I	N	O		
E	M	I	R	E	G	O	S	D	R	N	O		
N	E	R	O	W	A	N	M	E	E	R			
				P	I	E	T	A	G	R	A	S	
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R	O	D	S	A	L	E	G	H	E	I	R		
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- 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**
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Cocktail Chatter

One for the flammers

BY ED SIKOV

It was inevitable. How could I not flambé something?

What's more dramatic than strolling mock-casually into the dining room with a platter of something on fire? Flames catch guests' attention better than anything, with the exception of Brad Pitt showing up at your party with no clothes on.

I caution you: flaming cocktails are dangerous, because you can broil your nose if you're too eager, and a trip to the emergency room is no fun. Flaming drinks turn out to be dull as well, since most if not all of the alcohol burns away. You create a beautiful display but a drink with no kick. What's the point?

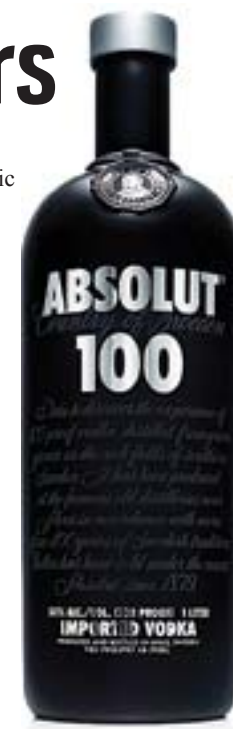
This is as good a time as any to announce an expansion of Cocktail Chatter's mission statement. I still vow to help the mixologically needy, those wretched souls who panic when tending bar, but I'll be writing a bit more about entertainment in general for Season 3. This isn't a hard and fast rule, but I'll be more like Martha Stewart, only gay and male and without the money and the rap sheet.

We opened the beach house a few weeks ago, and last Saturday, Dan and I and our housemates decided we should get better acquainted with our new neighbors. Sure, they don't even nod when they walk past us on the boardwalk. But they're all right out of central casting's flat-stomach-round-rump department. So I succumbed to my housemates' entreaties (some of which were downright embarrassing — picture Craig on the floor licking my toes), and we invited them.

I prepared something I'd thought up out of the blue: a combination of *ceviche*, sashimi and seared salmon. It would be sashimi like in that it wouldn't be cooked. It would resemble ceviche in that it would be preserved in a liquid for a day or two before being served, and the liquid would perform the "cooking" function; mine would soak for a day in vodka. And it would be lightly

seared by its own dramatic presentation: I would set my masterpiece ablaze.

I don't mean to be sexist here, but to employ a well-used folk myth to describe my decision to create this specially for the boys next door: It took balls to try this dish for company without doing a dry run first. Had the dish been anything less than a complete success, we could kiss our hot neighbors' asses on their way out the door and be the subjects of ridicule for the rest of the summer. *But it worked.* Try it the next time you're having some folks over for drinks and dinner. Either serve Drunken Flaming Salmon with the drinks (with toothpicks) or as a first course (with knives and forks).

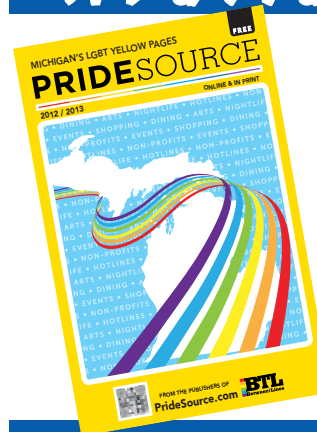


Drunken Flaming Salmon

- 1 salmon filet (not a steak!)
- Absolut Premium vodka
- Fennel seeds – 1 TBS
- Salt-packed capers, unrinsed – 1 TBS

A day before serving, place the salmon in a container just large enough to hold it, cover with vodka, add fennel and capers, and seal it. Just before serving, remove salmon from vodka, slice sharply on the bias (leaving skin), and place on a fireproof serving plate along with fennel and capers. Heat ¼ cup vodka in a small saucepan until warm. Bring the salmon into the living or dining room, turn off the lights, return to the kitchen for the warm vodka, ignite it in front of your guests, pour it over the salmon. Add salt, pepper and lemon juice to taste.

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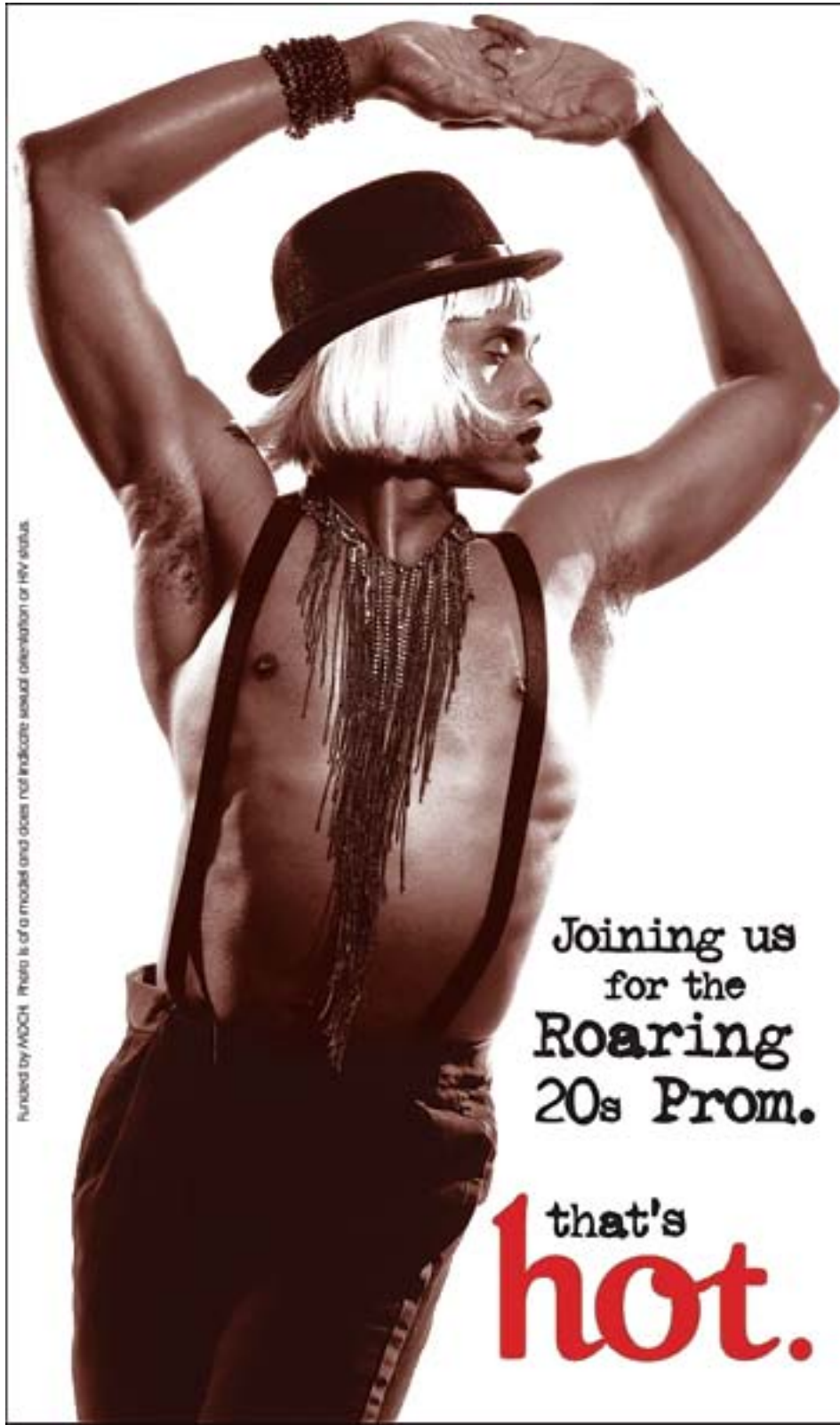


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