

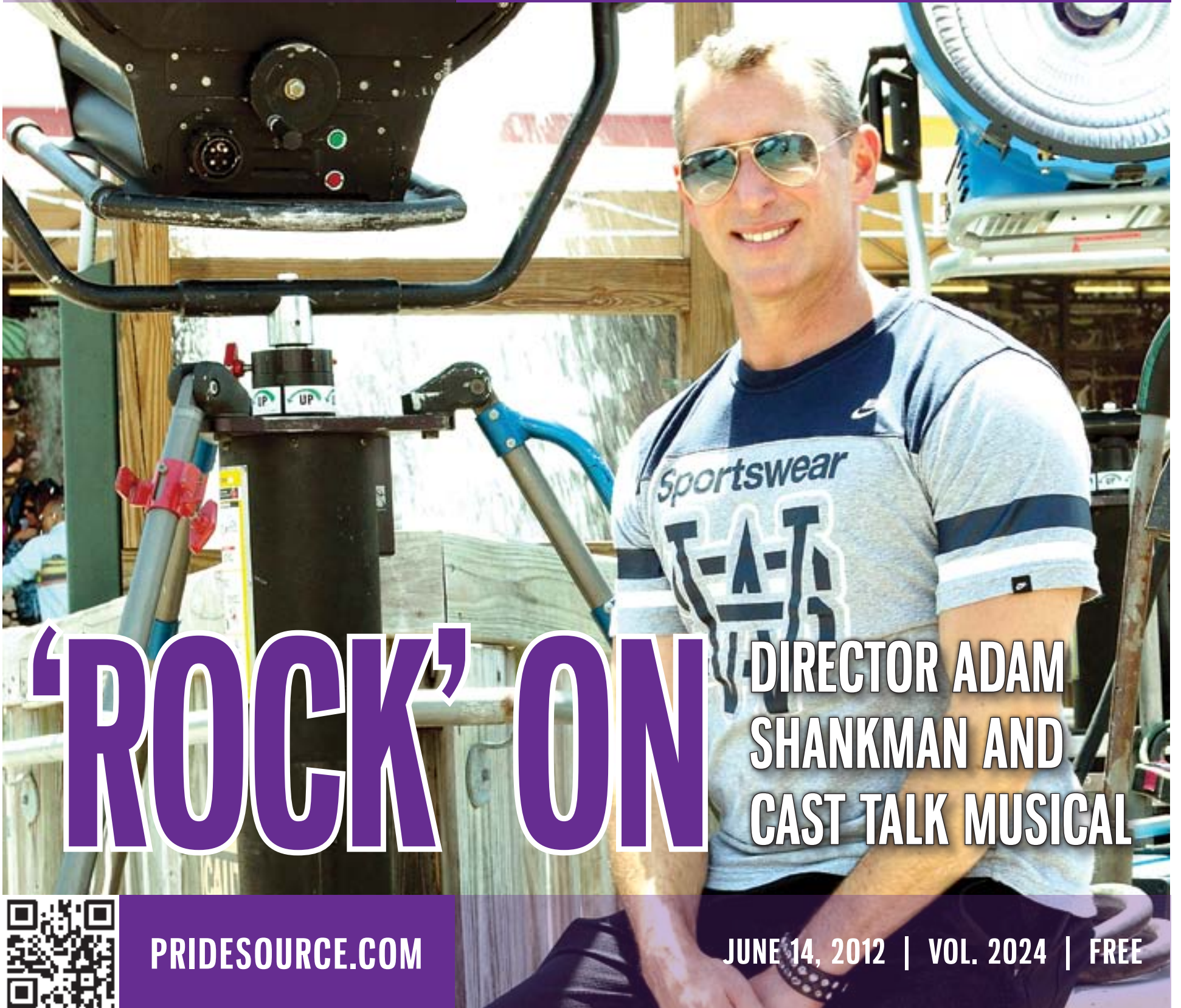
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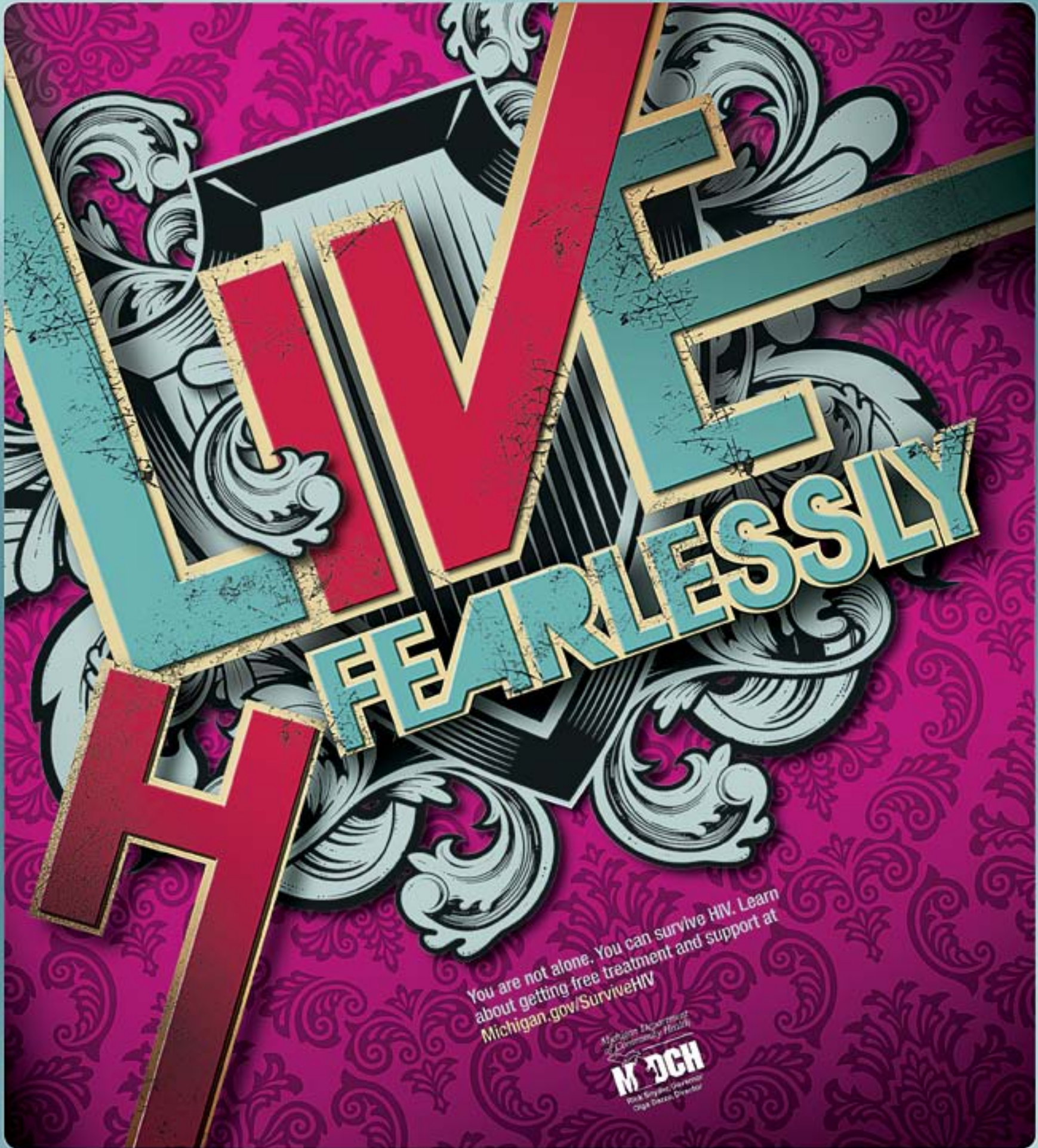
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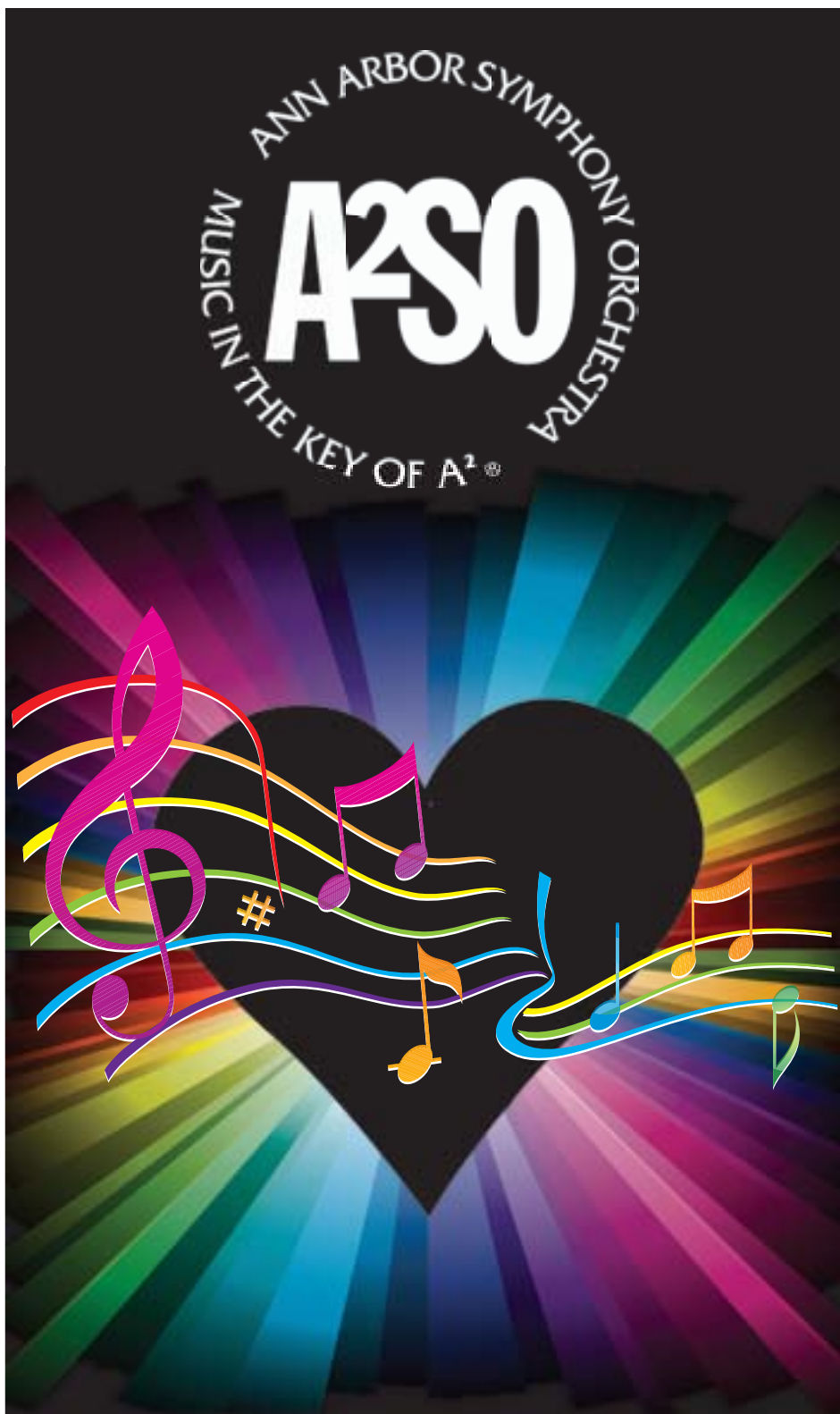
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Director Adam Shankman and cast talk musical...and gay kiss. Photo: Warner Bros.

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XBTJL

LGBT leaders and the revitalization of Detroit

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT - "There are individuals who can really make a difference and if they don't feel welcome they won't be here to help," said WDET Corporate Underwriting Director Michael Perkins.

Perkins was part of a panel discussion at the Inclusivity & Revitalization Discussion June 6 at the Scarab Club in Detroit. The discussion centered on the role of LGBT people in the revitalization of Detroit, and over 150 people packed the gallery to have the dialogue.

Perkins was joined by Detroit Institute of Arts Vice President of Museum Operations Elliot Broom, Entertainment Manager Adriel Thornton, and Peacock Room boutique owner and Equality Michigan Board Member Rachel Lutz. The panel was moderated by Desiree Cooper, who authored the LGBT Leaders of Color Visibility Series featured in *Between The Lines* and paired with video interviews produced by Model D.

The question of Detroit "making a comeback" did not sit well with the panelists, who were quick to defend their city. "Detroit is not coming back. Detroit is moving forward and looking at what's next," Lutz said. The young ally said that young people don't see Detroit in relation to some grand history.

"We don't have that baggage of comparing Detroit to how it was in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. I don't have any memories of going to shop at Hudsons with my mother. I don't have those memories because none of this was here in my life. A lot of those things that older generations turn to, we just do not remember. So for young people in Detroit it really is about potential and opportunities."

The discussion touched on the predictable issues of race and economic disparity. While aware of the problems that led to the city losing half its population in the last half century, most who came to the Scarab Club that evening brought positivity to the table. However, the obvious issues could not be ignored.

Broom gave some historical perspective, explaining that the Palmer Park area, and particularly the area around Woodward between Six and Seven Mile and Woodward might have remained the center for gay life in Michigan were it not for the dangers gays faced due to the lack of police protection, and even harassment

by police themselves.

"Police turned a blind eye," he said. "The owners of businesses left because they didn't feel safe." Thoughts of clubs that closed, businesses that got torched, and people that got hurt or killed leave a sting in the hearts of those who can remember what it was like to be young, full of hope and vigor, and connecting in the freshly liberated gay community of the 60s and 70s.



A panel discussion led by author Desiree Cooper engaged an audience of 150 people June 6 at the Detroit Scarab Club. Panelists and audience members discussed the key issues of diversity and inclusion in the rebuilding of Detroit. BTL photos: Crystal Proxmire.

"In 1959 when I came out there was a very good young people group," said Charles Alexander who attended the event as a Scarab Club Board Member and well-known gay artist from Detroit. "We were closeted, but we connected... and it dawned on us that the gay and lesbian community is bigger than we imagined, but we have always been here. Detroit has always supported its LGBT youth."

But again those memories mean little to the 20 and 30 year olds who see Detroit as somewhat uncharted territory.

The perception among the young leaders at the table seemed to be that racism and fear drove the gay community north to the suburbs in the

past, and that the Eight Mile divide is a barrier to re-connecting today.

"I have a lot of friends in the suburbs and I invite them into the city," Perkins said. "Some say no, but we need to keep inviting them down to parties, to the Opera House, to the DIA, to see what Detroit has to offer."

"There have always been people who stayed who have made it cool," Thornton said.



"I don't want to be a 'gay spokesperson' or a 'Detroit spokesperson,' but I'd rather it be me that what the mainstream media portrays." He, like others in the city, admits wondering where the leaders are.

While groups like AIDS Partnership Michigan, Ruth Ellis Center and KICK work to train young leaders, it's less often talked about what happened to the generation that came before them.

In defense of what she called "the middle generation," Barbara Murray, executive director of AIDS Partnership Michigan reminded the youth that absence of older role models isn't solely out of neglect or flight. "Of that middle generation, a lot of those people died. ... We don't often recognize our roots. But we need to recognize what AIDS did to us and to our community, it tore us apart."

With pockets of LGBT communities popping up throughout the city, and grassroots projects of all types that are inclusive of diverse people, the question for today's emerging leaders seems to be the debate between gentrification and assimilation. Should the community foster neighborhood building in one place, or should people live throughout the city, unafraid of being themselves no matter who their neighbors are?

Broom pointed to examples of gay communities developing inside of larger urban communities, with places like West Hollywood in California, Miami Shores in Florida, Boys Town in Chicago and the Gayborhood of New York. "The LGBT community moves in to neighborhoods people don't want and what happens, they make them better," he said.

Each individual on stage, and many in the audience, are doing their part to make their communities more welcoming and inclusive. "On a small level we can make change," Lutz said. "If a man comes into my store and wants to try on a dress, I can create a welcoming environment for him... There are things like that you can do... It's not enough to like a page [on Facebook]. If you want to see change, you can join a board, chair an event, and get involved."

Broom gets it too, summing up the fundamental catalyst for change saying, "I can have an impact just by being who I am. ... At the end of the day it's about making people feel like they're a part of something bigger than ourselves."

To find out more about the LGBT Leaders of Color Visibility Project, go to www.pridesource.com/section.html?section=news-leadership.

Gay and transgender inclusive hate crimes bill introduced

LANSING - On June 6, Michigan Sen. Bert Johnson (D-Detroit) introduced a bill to amend Michigan's Ethnic Intimidation Act. If passed, the bill would add sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression to the list of classes of Michiganders that would be protected against hate crimes.

"Most Michiganders value fundamental fairness for all residents and agree that no community of persons should be singled

out and left vulnerable by lack of equal protections," said Emily Dievendorf, Equality Michigan's director of policy. "The Ethnic Intimidation Act's current lack of protection for the gay and transgender community has done more than insult the value system that Michiganders share, it has allowed for actual and heinous - often gruesome harm to be done to Michigan citizens without any path to swift and appropriate recourse."

The legislation was introduced just a week after release of new hate crime data that showed a big increase in violent crimes against LGBT people in Michigan.

Equality Michigan's Victim Services Director, Nusrat Ventimiglia, announced the release of new data on hate crimes. "Shockingly, the report highlights the highest rate of homicides recorded since the report's history. Michigan had the highest homicides

of any reporting state. While national reports of hate violence decreased slightly, Michigan saw a slight increase in overall reports, and a drastic increase in rates of severe violence."

Senate Bill 1174 was referred to the Senate Committee on Government Operations. The legislation is co-sponsored by 10 of Sen. Johnson's Democratic colleagues. No Republicans have signed on to the bill.

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Pride banquet winners announced

FERNDALE – The 26th Annual Pride Banquet & Awards Ceremony will take place June 21, recognizing those individuals who have provided outstanding service and leadership in Michigan's LGBT and ally community.

The Award winners are:

Ally Award: Pat Horton; Diversity & Inclusion Award: Antonio David Garcia; Lifetime Achievement: David Halperin; Media Award: Stephanie Loveless; Political Award: David Coulter; Unity Award: Zachary Bauer; Rising Star Award: Ryan Oliver; Community Spirit Award: Dave Wait; Sports Award: Brian Laneand Volunteer Award: Judy Lewis.

The Annual Pride Banquet & Awards Ceremony will be at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren. Tickets are \$43 in commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion and are available by visiting www.GoAffirmations.org/pridebanquet2012, or by calling 248-398-7105, or can be purchased at Affirmations or Just4Us in Ferndale. The 26th Annual Pride Banquet & Awards Ceremony is a collaborative effort between Affirmations, the Forum Foundation, Equality Michigan, The Ruth Ellis Center, Dignity Detroit, the Older Adult Coalition, Transgender Michigan, Renaissance Unity, Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit and AI Gamea.

Perceptions' Pride Awards return

Activist Michelle E. Brown to speak

Saginaw - Perceptions' LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet returns to Saginaw's Andersen Enrichment Center for the fourth time this June 26, honoring the area's most outstanding individuals and organizations working towards equality. The event's keynote speaker will be Michelle E. Brown. Brown, a Detroit African-American speaker, author, activist and BTL contributor, will deliver her talk entitled "The Road to Equality begins at the intersection of social justice and LGBT equality." Brown has a reputation in the communities she serves for fearlessly tackling difficult issues and finding common ground.

"By shedding light on our ability to appreciate and respect each other," she says, "we can move forward as a civilization."

This year, the non-profit will honor individuals with political awards, lifetime achievement awards and pride awards. One business will also be honored for its contribution to the Tri-City LGBT community.

Honored businesses and individuals will be selected from a pool of nominees recommended by members of the Tri-City community.

The 4th Annual LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet is 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 26 at the Andersen Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust, Saginaw. Admission to the event is \$25 per person or \$15 for students or those of limited income. For tickets, sponsorship and information visit www.perceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1429.

K'zoo Pride both edgy and fun



KGLRC executive director Zach Bauer reports over 11,000 people came to Arcadia Park for Kalamazoo Pride – 3,500 more than last year. BTL Photos: Kendall Casey (1-2) and Benjamin Jenkins (3)



BY JAN STEVENSON

KALAMAZOO - Rainbow bunting and beautiful blue skies greeted thousands of festival goers at Kalamazoo Pride June 9, organized by the Kalamazoo Gay & Lesbian Resource Center. In addition to the vendors, food, music, fun and entertainment, the festival had an activist intensity as dozens of volunteers collected signatures in preparation for the elections this fall.

Zach Bauer, executive director of the KGLRC, reported that over 11,000 people attended the festival at Arcadia Park in downtown Kalamazoo, up from the 7,500 that attended last year. There were 180 vendors, 175 volunteers and the festival raised over \$80,000 for KGLRC.

"People walked away from Kalamazoo Pride 2012 with the understanding that engaging in this year's election and supporting progressive candidates is more important than ever," said Bauer. "The straight community can't just show up to pride once a year and call themselves an ally, because while we were all living life, our state government was stripping hard-working LGBTQ citizens of their rights. Pride 2012 was about having fun, but it was also about bringing community together and moving towards equality together."

Kellogg's and PNC Bank were two large, corporate participants and sponsors. The Kellogg's booth was busy all day handing

out treats and engaging people to learn more about K-Pride, the LGBT employee group at Kellogg's.

Two local activists were honored on stage.

"People walked away from Kalamazoo Pride 2012 with the understanding that engaging in this year's election and supporting progressive candidates is more important than ever,"

- Zach Bauer, executive director of the KGLRC

The Terry Kuseske Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Mariah Isaac, an annual award given to a graduating high school senior who plans to attend college in Michigan. Isaac is an active member of the GSA at her high school. Sara Stangl was also recognized for her work with LGBT students at Western Michigan University's campus and their effort to have the Michigan Legislature issue a Pride Proclamation. When House Speaker Jase Bolger (R-Marshall) and Rep.

Margaret O'Brien (R-Portage) and Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Kalamazoo County) would not sign her proclamation she led a petition effort with over 1,000 signatures.

The day started out with a politically themed Pride Brunch with speakers Emily Dievendorf, policy director of Equality Michigan, and Amy Hunter, chair of the Kalamazoo Alliance for Equality and president of the Equality Michigan Pride PAC. Attendees included Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell, several city commissioners, and Trevor Thomas, openly gay Democratic candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, District 3.

"We need to drill down – past the symptoms and obvious signs of injustice to attack the problem at it's roots," said Hunter. "The unprecedented toxicity of the political, legislative and cultural climate we face today in Michigan requires that we draw upon the extraordinarily diverse strengths of a vast array of organizations, all of which have a stake in bringing about equality not just for their constituents, but for all Michiganders – no matter who we are, or who we love."

"Sometimes people need to know that they matter," said Dievendorf. "That their families matter, that they can grow up knowing that the majority of the country – and our President – would like them to be happy and secure - to be able to dream about being in love and/or having a family, and YES - not being fired for being gay."

Between Ourselves

Meet artist Daniel Cascardo

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Daniel Cascardo is a Royal Oak-based artist whose work murals are notable features of the downtown Ferndale landscape. Cascardo is also an ally to the LGBT community,



who recently worked with Affirmations Community Center to create a community work of art at their Spring Bash held at the DIA. The experience helped raise money for the community

center and it helped illustrate the idea that the big picture is made up of many people all doing a smaller part. The revealing of "Re-Creation" will be Friday, June 15 at 7 p.m. at Affirmations. Posters and limited edition signed prints will be available for purchase.

1 How would you describe your artwork?

I describe my artwork as abstract intuitive expressionism. I like to create from my imagination and use the energy and participation of people in the creation of art through my "Art Action Experience" program. In the Art Action Experience I create a black and white line painting and then have people add color, pattern, and shapes to the image. I then enhance the piece with depth and detail creating a work of art that captures the energy and enthusiasm of the moment. My inspiration comes from life and the energy of living in the moment with gratitude and trust in my Creator.

Summit for LGBT Older Adults coming

DETROIT - On June 23 over one hundred LGBT older residents of the metro Detroit region will gather for a day-long educational summit at the Michigan State University Detroit Center, 3408 Woodward Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Summit will feature a panel discussion on health, long term care and HIV/AIDS. Additional experts will conduct workshops on managing healthcare, protecting finances, employment and volunteer opportunities, and older adult/youth networking. Key supporters of the event are the Coalition for LGBT Older Adults in Michigan and the Detroit Elder Project of KICK.

On top of the more common challenges facing Michigan's seniors, LGBT older adults face additional and sometimes extreme barriers to resources and care. Ninety percent of LGBT older adults have no children to help care

2 What can you tell us about the art project for Affirmations?

The project is one of my Art Action Experiences done at the DIA for their "Spring Bash" fundraiser this year. People attending the event had the opportunity to experience being a part of the painting process for a \$20 donation.

3 Why are you an ally of the LGBT community?

I am an ally for humanity. I use my art as a vehicle to engage people in the art making process, inspire creativity and bring awareness to their cause. In addition to the Affirmations Spring Bash, I was involved with an organization in Chicago that supported AIDS research and the use of art as a means to raise money and awareness to find a cure. I also did another Art Action Experience with a group from Affirmations that will be a part of a future exhibition

4 What does art do for society?

Art entertains, inspires, transforms, beautifies and communicates in a universal language that is accessible to all people. Art stimulates the imagination and is a vehicle for change, awareness, and growth.

5 Where might people see your work?

My art is on a couple of walls in Ferndale or visit my website www.danielcascardo.com and like me on Facebook. I sell my art online and through the Bluarth Collection in Birmingham. People can also contact me about the Art Action Experience Program. I am always looking for corporate, philanthropic, and personal donors that would fund my program to make it available to other diverse and non-profit organizations around the globe.

for them as compared to just 20 percent of heterosexual older adults. More than twice as many LGBT older adults live alone as compared to heterosexual older adults. LGBT older adults are nearly 3 times as likely to live in poverty as heterosexual adults.

Based on 2010 Michigan Census Bureau statistics, there are an estimated 68,076 LGBT persons aged 65 and older living in Michigan. Approximately 20,000 of these individuals reside in southeastern Michigan. Another 62,600 are currently age 55-64 and will join the 65+ population statewide by the year 2020.

The 2012 LGBT Older Adult Summit aims to provide support and resources for LGBT older adults and aging service providers about the disparities facing this vulnerable population within Michigan's aging community.

For more information about the event, or to register, please visit www.LGBTOlderAdults.com.



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Vol. 2024 • Issue 768

June 14, 2012

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Viewpoint We're not in Kansas anymore



It's all about the Benjamins

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

We'll the numbers are out, confirming once again the impact of the Supreme Court's

"Citizens United" ruling - money can't buy you love but it sure as hell can buy you an election. At least that is what GOP backers are hoping.

Following Governor Scott Walker's defeat of a recall effort with help from financial infusions of over \$8 million from the Republican Governor's Association (RGA) and at least another million from the Koch brothers for negative attack ads, it begs the question can our vote be bought by these massive influxes of money to sway our opinion.

Folks were not in Kansas anymore where Mr. Smith can go to Washington and stand up to graft and corruption.

We're living in the world of double-speak, sound bites, cut and paste image/story weaving. Its partisan politics at its worst where media - television, radio, twitter, blogs, etc. - preach a gospel of persuasion not necessarily based on reality or the truth.

Have you seen the one where the computer generated female voter and her kids remarkably age over the course of the commercial ultimately blaming the Obama administration for her suddenly grown children being back at home, out of work with a bleak future. It's the New Majority Agenda - Seriously!

In this battle for the hearts, minds and most importantly votes of America, he/she who has the deepest pockets wins. And right now those pockets appear to have a very deep red lining.

Republican Governor Walker raised more campaign cash than any candidate in Wisconsin history. His war chest grew by a whopping \$5.9 million in the last weeks before the election.

On the heels of the Walker win, it was announced that the Romney campaign and Republican Party out-fundraised President Obama and the Democratic Party for the first time in this campaign - Romney/Republican \$77 million to Obama/Democrats \$60 million.

Both camps boasted receiving significant contributions from small donors giving \$250 or less. Sounds like a referendum from the "people" at first glance supporting Romney and the Republican party - well not actually.

According to the Romney camp, only \$12 million or approximately 16 percent of its record breaking fundraising contributions came from these small donors.

To be fair, the Obama campaign didn't provide a similar percentage when the information was initially released, but stood behind its 98 percent of contributions coming from small donors.

So where did the remaining \$65 million

donated to the Republicans come from? We may never know.

Anonymous donors and secret money has become the real growth area in campaign politics and they're plan is to buy YOUR VOTE!

Need proof? Here's what anonymous donors can do.

Tax records show that Karl Rove's organization, "Crossroads GPS," includes between one and two dozen contributors of at least \$1 million each. It has a few others giving as much as \$10 million. This handful of anonymous donors reportedly accounted for nearly 90 percent of all money raised by Crossroads GPS in 2010 and 2011.

And what did they do? Rove along with other conservative organizations spent over \$30 million on attack ads.

It gives a whole new twist to "Don't Ask. Don't Tell." Politicians and their parties don't have to ask where the money is coming from and these organizations can tell us pretty much whatever they want to win - by any means necessary.

The "Citizens United" ruling held that the First Amendment prohibited the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations and unions, in effect giving these entities the same protections provided individuals in the "Bill of Rights" in the U.S. Constitution.

It did not however give corporations, unions or other entities the right to skip disclosure regulations that, in Justice Kennedy's words, "... provide information to the electorate. The resulting transparency enables the electorate to make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers and different messages."

So how do we the people, fight these deep-

pocketed political juggernauts?

By now you've probably received emails, texts and phone calls asking for donations. Money will help but the answer is more than raising more money.

We have to combat the incessant, viral messaging being paid for by anonymous donors whose motives are far from transparent, hardly inclusive and pushing an agenda to enrich a minority at the expense of the majority - the poor, women, minorities, immigrants, gay, - the 99 percent.

Double-speak has to be replaced with facts, critical analysis and open discourse. Sound bites must be replaced with one-on-one discussions between neighbors, in congregations, at town hall meetings.

We have to play a strong offensive ground-game in the media - television, radio, twitter, blogs, and print. Leaders - not politicians - in our communities, neighborhoods, organizations, etc. must preach a gospel of reason, inclusion and diversity based founding principles of this country.

Just being nice people, hoping, wishing, dreaming that one day we will all be equal isn't going to get it. It's time to take off the rose colored glasses, to get off the couch and get busy - like yesterday.

And remember what your mama told you "Beware of strangers bearing gifts" especially anonymous strangers with deep pockets. Or it will be all about the Benjamins!

Michelle E. Brown is a Public Speaker, Activist and Author follow her activities at www.mychangeiam.com www.twitter.com/mychangeiam www.youtube.com/mychangeiam





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Joyce

Heard on Facebook Urvashi Vaid's "The Limits of Equality"

In Urvashi Vaid's article, she claims that "Today's mainstream LGBT movement is strangely silent on the broader social-justice challenges facing the world, oddly complacent in its acceptance of racial, gender, and economic inequalities ..." What do you think?

See *S/he Said* for full quote.

Until we have achieved full legal equality everywhere in the United States, it's foolish to shift focus. The powers-that-be in the LGBT movement are largely white, upper class and politically connected, and therefore at times out of touch. I think we need to be honest about what is what in this country, and stay singularly focused on fostering the equality movement. This does not mean we stay silent on other outrages, but to devote our *limited* resources for other fights is a mistake.

—Jason Vorva

I feel like the "mainstream" LGBT-Rights movement advocates for a very specific set of rights, for a very specific set of queers and cares very little for the rest. We talk about hate crimes, but never mention that trans women of color bear the overwhelming brunt of them. We talk about discrimination, but have to be fought tooth and nail to include transgender protections in ENDA. We fight for marriage equality before housing protections, and how frequently do we talk about the systemic problem of queer youth homelessness?

—Kiefer Paterson

I think YES, indeed we are too silent and too complacent. We need to remember that "everyone does better when everyone does better" means going to bat for other vulnerable communities as well as asking for help and proceeding as a unified front.

—Emily Dievendorf

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: "Between The Lines Newspaper"

S/he Said

African Americans, superheroes, inaction

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Keith Boykin

"In 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued its groundbreaking decision making it the first state to allow same-sex marriage. The decision prompted outrage from critics, including some vocal black ministers. Suddenly, black gays and lesbians were under attack within their own community on an issue they hadn't necessarily chosen. But they began to organize to fight back. Now we're starting to see the fruit of their labor. Long before President Obama's announcement on marriage equality, LGBT people of color were laying the groundwork for broader support in their own communities. They were coming out, getting married, challenging their churches, defining their own identities, and creating institutions to support and sustain them. Those actions helped to make it easier for heterosexual African Americans to see same-gender-loving couples and individuals in a new light. So it's not surprising that virtually every prominent African American, except for a few vocal preachers, has come out in support of the president's position in recent weeks."

—Keith Boykin, in his column titled "Why Blacks Evolved So 'Quickly' on Gay Marriage," www.huffingtonpost.com, June 05.



Chad Griffin

"No one would say that growing up LGBT is easy, but this survey is a stark wake-up call to the daily toll that discrimination takes on vulnerable young people. We have a responsibility to change that, because we know all too well that there are real life consequences to inaction."

—Chad Griffin, the new HRC President, in a press release titled "HRC Releases Landmark Survey of LGBT Youth," about the groundbreaking Human Rights Campaign study of LGBT-identified young people titled "Growing Up LGBT in America" and a corollary study of straight teens that shows tremendous disparities between the two groups, with more than 10,000 respondents ages 13-17, www.hrc.org, June 07.



Urvashi Vaid

"Today's mainstream LGBT movement is strangely silent on the broader social-justice challenges facing the world, oddly complacent in its acceptance of racial, gender, and economic inequalities, and vocal only in its challenge to the conditions facing a white, middle-class conception of the 'status queer.' This impoverishment of ambition and idealism is a strategic error. It misunderstands the challenge queer people pose to the status quo. It shamefully avoids the responsibility that a queer movement must take to advocate for all segments of LGBT communities ... Without a broader definition of equality, the LGBT politics currently pursued will yield only a conditional equality, one that will always be contingent upon 'good behavior.'"

—Urvashi Vaid, director of the Engaging Tradition Project at Columbia Law School's Center for Gender and Sexuality Law, in her article titled "Still Ain't Satisfied: The Limits of Equality," <http://prospect.org>, April 30.



George Shunick

"What's so wrong with gays in comics? Are gays somehow incapable of heroism? In reality - and good writing - sexuality is a component of a character, but it does not solely define them. A gay superhero isn't somehow less virtuous just because they like dudes. In comics, being gay, just like being female or a minority, is an ancillary quality that fleshes out a character and helps give them a distinguishing identity. It allows them to connect to readers who are women or gays, who desire to relate to a character that seems to embody some aspect of what they are. Gay superheroes help appeal to a gay audience, they don't brainwash straight kids into being gay. Just like in real life, homosexuality is not an impediment to virtue, selflessness, or any other quality that makes superheroes 'super.'"

—George Shunick, in his column "Sexuality & Superheroes: One Million Moms vs. Gays in Comics," about One Million Moms and their condemnation of DC Comics and Marvel Comics for introducing gay characters and same-sex marriage into their popular comic book titles, www.policycomic.com, May 22.

Parting Glances



Pages past tense #13

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

During my ride back from my first gay party – a closeted affair of mostly University of Michigan profs and grad students – Jack Jacobs (aka Miss Liberties) talks nonstop, ending his paragraphs of chit-chatty conversation with rapid pats on my (surely black-and-blue) knee.

“I’ve read every gay book I can put my hands on, from Oscar Wilde to Donald Webster Cory,” says Jack, nearly running a red light in his footnoting exuberance. “You just must read Cory’s ‘The Homosexual in America.’ It’s every bit as ground breaking as Kinsey’s male sex study. Really revealing!”

“I’ve read only one gay novel,” I venture, not wanting to appear too just out of high school. “I think it’s called ‘Finestre.’ It’s rather sad. About a young student who falls in love with his gay teacher, commits suicide in the end by walking into the ocean.”

During a lull in Jack’s monologues he switches on the radio. A classical music selection. Soft. Soothing. Romantic. Maybe Tchaikovsky. (The only composer whose music I know. The ‘1812 Overture’.) “Sorta makes me want to hold hands.” Jack winks and hums along.

“I’d like to Jack, but my hay fever’s acting up something fierce. Maybe next time.” I sneeze. Says he, out of the blue. “Did you know my aunt Dottie works at the Ten-Eleven as a hostess? She adores gay guys. They’re generous with tips. Keeps her in babbles, bangles, beads, so to speak.” He giggles.

(Looking back these many, many years at the role of hostess Dottie, she was one of many who worked in gay bars that were straight owned. In the late 50s and early 60s, “known homosexuals” could not own Michigan State Liquor Licenses.

These Dotties were a buffer between gay customers and bartenders, most of whom were straight. The most famous of these hostesses was Bessy, who worked for 30 years at Detroit’s famous Woodward Bar. Night after night. Year after year. Decade after drink-up-guys decade, she’d call out – surely a million times – “Anybody wanna? Drink that is.”)

It’s with a sense of relief for me when Jack drops me off at my folk’s house. “May I take the liberty of a little kiss-face good night?” he asks hopefully. Making sure there’s no one around to see, I grant a quickie on the cheek. The following week I receive a hand-drawn card in the mail. It reads simply, “Thanks for a swell time, Al. You’re OK in my book. Your friend for life, Jack.”

A month later I see Jack again. He’s coming out of the Ten Eleven and I’m standing on the curb. (We gay teens like to see who might just be available before and/or after the bars close.) Jack’s with a stunning guy, whose head just measures up to his shoulder.

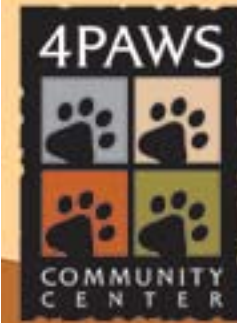
“Al, old buddy. Great to see you! This is one of my most recent, er, ‘affairs’. His name’s Ernie. Living in Miami ‘til fall. Then he just might move back to cultural city Detroit. Among other things, Ernie’s a ballet dancer, a classical piano player, a writer, and, if I may say so, four stars in the schlafzimmer.”

Ernie and I chat (as Jack conveniently goes for the car); perhaps a little awkwardly on my part, and Ernie slips me his phone number. “Call me, Al. I’m here for another week. And very, well, schlafzimmer free.”

My life was about to change in ways I couldn’t envision then, but looking back at that star-spangled summer night, I’m grateful for Miss Liberties (bless his now long, long departed loquacious soul) for that extra-special introduction.

It truly changed everything for me, an average, just coming out, slightly streetwise kid of 19 who needed a mentor.

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Conservative Royal Oak church set to make historic donation to LGBT group

BY BTL STAFF

ROYAL OAK - Funds raised from production of the successful new play "Masks" that debuted in early June at Royal Oak Missionary Church will be donated to a national LGBT organization.

The two-hour play, which was written by the church's lead pastor and local playwright Bill Barnwell, attracted nearly 600 people over three performances. Eighty percent of the show's proceeds will be donated to the Trevor Project, the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBT and questioning youth.

Barnwell said this is an unprecedented donation for an evangelical church like his. "I have been unable to find any evangelical church anywhere in America that has given financially to The Trevor Project or put on an event like this. A small number of non-evangelical churches have, but I can't find anyone else from the conservative Protestant tradition that has done so."

The amount of the donation is significant: Over \$6,500. "The check will be in the mail next week," says Barnwell.

The donation to the Trevor Project has sparked controversy. Barnwell has been harshly criticized for giving to a "liberal" organization and "caving into the homosexual agenda." Barnwell claims these assertions are ridiculous.

"The question should not be, 'why would a pro-life church give to The Trevor Project?' The better question should be, 'why wouldn't they want to?' It's very hard to show Christian love to somebody who is already dead. Numerous studies and statistics consistently demonstrate that LGBT teens face much higher rates of suicide. Very few evangelical churches anywhere in the nation have taken this issue very seriously, and shame on them."

The show itself, Barnwell said, was a great success.

"Had we done an already well-known dramatic show as a community play and brought in 150 a night, that would have been very respectable. We exceeded that and brought in over 200 on our closing night. This is quite

remarkable for a play that was just written months ago, that nobody had previously ever heard of, which was a non-musical, and a PG-13 play that dealt with such heavy subject matter. I've already received so many letters and emails from complete strangers about how this show has given them hope."

The show tackled issues few other evangelical churches have addressed, such as compassion towards the gay community, suicide, infidelity and religious faith's sometimes destructive power.

Barnwell is already planning his next theatrical project.

"In 2013, I will be debuting a show called 'Choice' which will explore the complexities of our national abortion wars along with the heartache of an infertile couple. All my shows are based on real life people and events. My goal is that the quality of the script will exceed what we did with 'Masks'."

Barnwell also plans to make the script for "Masks" available for outside groups to use for their own productions, as well as the distribution of a DVD from the debut performance.

Gay, lesbian supporters cheer Obama at fundraiser

BY JULIE PACE

LOS ANGELES (AP) - President Barack Obama basked in the support of his gay and lesbian backers June 6, revving up an enthusiastic crowd with a pledge to block any attempt to roll back rights that gay Americans have gained under his administration.

With his public embrace of same-sex marriage just weeks old, a standing ovation with sustained applause greeted the president at a 600-person campaign fundraiser in Los Angeles for gay and lesbian supporters.

The president, nearing the end of a lengthy day of West Coast fundraising, appeared to feed off the energy of a crowd that included a handful of celebrities, including comedian Ellen DeGeneres and the singer Cher.

Making the case for his re-election, Obama said he would refuse to allow anyone to attempt to reinstate the military's ban on openly gay service members, a measure the president had fought to repeal.

"That's not something I will tolerate," he said.

Some Republicans have said

they would back the reinstatement of the "don't ask, don't tell" law. Mitt Romney, Obama's Republican rival in the presidential race, is not among them.

Obama ticked through what he called his presidential "to-do" list, saying "we've gotten some stuff done over the last three-and-a-half years." After launching into a passionate defense of his contested health care overhaul, he referred back to the to-do list. "Check," he said.

The president expected to raise more than \$5 million for his re-election campaign and the Democratic Party during fundraisers in San Francisco and Los Angeles on Wednesday and Thursday.

Earlier Wednesday during an event in San Francisco, Obama conceded that people around the country are wondering if he can keep his promise to build an economy designed for the long term. But he blasted opponents as offering nothing more than finger-pointing as a platform.

Obama told donors at the \$5,000 per person fundraiser that "the other side" doesn't have any new ideas.

"And because they don't have any new ideas, what they will do is spend 500, 700, a billion dollars in negative ads

and their simple message will be: This is someone else's fault and that's enough reason for you to vote for us," he said.

"And," he added, "if we don't answer them, that can work."

In "Virginia or Iowa or North Carolina or California, all across the country," Obama said, "there are a lot of folks who are still wondering - are we going to be able to fully deliver on that promise of a country that is thriving and has an economy that is built to last?"

Obama offered no new prescriptions for how he would answer Americans' economic questions. He said he's pushing a number of bills in Congress aimed at boosting jobs and growth but has gotten little help from Republican lawmakers.

The president was introduced by Hall of Fame baseball player Willie Mays, a former outfielder for the New York Giants and San Francisco Giants.

Following his fundraising drive in California, Obama was heading to Nevada on Thursday for a speech at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The president planned to announce new steps to help college students repay their loans and his efforts to jumpstart the economy.



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NY judge: Anti-gay marriage law unconstitutional

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER

NEW YORK (AP)—A federal judge in Manhattan joined a growing chorus of judges across the country June 6 by striking down a key component of a federal law denying benefits to partners in a gay marriage.

U.S. District Judge Barbara Jones said the federal Defense of Marriage Act's efforts to define marriage "intrude upon the states' business of regulating domestic relations."

She said, "That incursion skirts important principles of federalism and therefore cannot be legitimate, in this court's view."

The judge said the law fails because it tries to re-examine states' decisions concerning same-sex marriage. She said such a sweeping review interferes with a system of government that places matters at the core of the domestic relations law exclusively within the province of the states.

The ruling came in a case brought by Edith Windsor, a woman whose partner died in 2009, two years after they married in Canada. Because of the federal law, Windsor didn't qualify for the unlimited marital deduction on her late spouse's estate and was required to pay \$363,053 in federal estate tax. Windsor sued the government in November 2010.

As part of her ruling, Jones ordered the government to reimburse Windsor the money she had paid in estate tax.

The government declined to comment through Ellen Davis, a spokeswoman for government attorneys in Manhattan.

Civil rights groups praised the ruling. The American Civil Liberties Union included comments from Windsor in its release.

"It's thrilling to have a court

finally recognize how unfair it is for the government to have treated us as though we were strangers," Windsor said of her 44-year relationship with Thea Spyer.

The ruling came just days after a federal appeals court in Boston found the law's denial of federal benefits to same-sex couples unconstitutional. The decision by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a federal judge's 2010 ruling. In California, two federal judges found this year that the law violates the due-process rights of legally married same-sex couples. The issue is likely to reach the Supreme Court.

The law was passed in 1996 after a 1993 decision by the Hawaii Supreme Court made it appear Hawaii might legalize gay marriage. Since then, many states have instituted their own bans on gay marriage, while eight states have approved it, led by Massachusetts in 2004 and continuing with Connecticut, New York, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maryland, Washington state and the District of Columbia. Maryland and Washington's laws aren't yet in effect and might be subject to referendums.

James Esseks, director of the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Project, said the ruling "adds to what has become an avalanche of decisions that DOMA can't survive even the lowest level of scrutiny by the courts."

Brian Silva, executive director of Marriage Equality USA, called the ruling "another example of the trend of the judiciary continuing to see that treating same-sex couples differently than their heterosexual counterparts is not only wrong but goes against the laws of equality and justice here in the United States."

State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman called the decision "a major step forward in the fight for equality."

In court papers filed last August, a lawyer for the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group of the U.S. House of Representatives defended the role of the federal government in defining marriage.

"While it is true that regulating the details of traditional marriage historically has been left to the states, it also is true that the federal government has been involved with and injected itself into marriage law when states have deviated from the traditional definition. Thus, for instance, the United States Congress banned polygamy in United States territories when faced with widespread plural marriage in the Utah Territory," wrote attorney Paul D. Clement on the group's behalf.

In another point in his papers, Clement noted that multiple studies concluded that a high number of people who experience sexual attraction to members of the same sex early in their adult lives later cease to experience such attraction. In a footnote, he pointed out that Windsor had once been married to a man, a fact that she responded to in an affidavit of her own in August, saying that her brief 1951 marriage didn't indicate she had a choice about her sexual orientation.

"Although I tried to make a 'choice' about my sexual orientation by getting married to a man, I was simply unable to do so. Thus, as a matter of fact, I really had no choice at all," she wrote.

She added that in the "context of the homophobia that was so prevalent in the 1950s, I certainly did not want to be a 'queer.' Instead, I wanted to live a 'normal' life."

She noted that she parted on good terms with her ex-husband, who married another woman and had a family.

"He telephoned me on my 70th birthday in 1999 to wish me well," Windsor said.

Gay rights groups to join NYPD street stop protest

NEW YORK (AP) — Gay rights groups are speaking out in support of a silent march being held later this month to protest the New York Police Department's street stop policy.

Representatives from groups including Empire State Pride Agenda and Human Rights Campaign joined the Rev. Al Sharpton and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People president Benjamin Todd Jealous at an event June 5 announcing they'd take part in the June 17 march.

The June 5 event was held at the

Stonewall Inn, a bar where patrons' defiance of police in a 1969 raid was a watershed moment in the gay rights movement.

The police department last year stopped more than 600,000 people, mostly black and Hispanic men. Half were frisked, and about 80 percent were never arrested.

The police department says it's necessary. Critics say it's racial profiling.

Poll: Ravi sentence too lenient

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — A new poll finds a narrow majority of New Jersey residents believe a former Rutgers student who used a webcam to spy on his gay roommate got a lenient sentence.

Dharun Ravi (dah-ROON' RAH'-vee) was sentenced last month to 30 days in jail, community service and three years' probation, and ordered to pay \$10,000 toward a program to help victims of hate crimes.

A Rutgers-Eagleton poll released Thursday found 51 percent of respondents said Ravi's sentence for bias intimidation and invasion of privacy in the Tyler Clementi case was "not tough enough."

Thirty-nine percent think Ravi got "the sentence he deserve." Seven percent believe it was "too tough."

The poll question did not mention the \$10,000 payment. It surveyed 1,191 adults from May 31-June 4, with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

Much ado about marriage



BY JAY KAPLAN

There is a lot to celebrate this year – we've made tremendous progress toward marriage equality in both the traditional courts and the court of public opinion. Despite a few setbacks, the long legal road to equality is clearer than it has ever been.

Professor Art Leonard of New York University Law School recently observed that a consensus is emerging in our federal courts that the justifications to deny civil marriage to same-sex couples don't pass constitutional muster. He also said that the momentum in support for allowing same-sex couples to marry and to enjoy all the state and federal benefits of marriage is accelerating. Although the timeline is unclear, one thing is certain – the United States Supreme Court will likely settle the question.

Prop 8: This Thing of Darkness

We're all still flying high from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision striking down Proposition 8, the California voter approved constitutional amendment that denies same-sex couples the right to marry. Earlier this month, we celebrated another victory in the case as a panel of judges declined to reconsider the decision, bringing us one step closer to marriage equality in California. While the case was specifically designed, if successful, to win same-sex couples the right to marry in all 50 states by eventually reaching the U.S. Supreme Court, the appeals court handed down a more limited victory by applying a constitutional analysis to the specific circumstances of California where for six months gay couples had the right to legally marry before that right was taken away through a ballot initiative. Because of the limited scope of the appeals decision, the question now is whether the Supreme Court will take this case on appeal and, if it does, would the decision apply to only similar situations or would it have a broader impact on the rest of the country.

DOMA: What's in a Name?

The so-called Defense of Marriage Act has been getting a thrashing in our federal courts as of late. DOMA, as you may recall, was enacted in 1996 and excludes married same-sex couples from all federal rights and benefits accorded to heterosexual couples. DOMA doesn't legislate the right to marry; however, it prohibits the federal government from recognizing tens of thousands of existing legal marriages of same-sex couples from states like Massachusetts and New York that have legalized marriage. Although DOMA litigation hasn't received as much press, these cases are likely to pave the road to marriage equality through the Supreme Court.

On May 30, the First Circuit Court of

Appeals ruled that Section 3 of DOMA denies equal protection rights under the constitution to same-sex couples who marry under state law. This is the first appellate court decision affirming DOMA as unconstitutional. The decision will most certainly be appealed by the United States House of Representatives to the Supreme Court since President Barack Obama's Justice Department has declined to defend DOMA in federal court, calling for its repeal.

In addition to this appeals court victory, five federal district court judges around the country have already found Section 3 of DOMA to be unconstitutional, including a decision where the New York District Court sided with our client Edie Windsor. Thanks to a previous ACLU lawsuit, New York State recognizes marriages of same-sex couples validly entered into in other states, therefore New York considered Edie and Thea, who were married in Canada, to be lawfully married in the state. After decades together, and finally realizing their dream of getting married, it was devastating to Edie for the federal government to disrespect their marriage and pretend that they were not family after Thea's death.

Because of DOMA, the federal government taxed Edie's inheritance from Thea as though they were strangers. Under federal tax law, a spouse who dies can leave her estate, including the family home, to her spouse without incurring taxes - but Edie had to sell off some of their assets in order to pay the hefty federal estate tax bill.

Equality: To Be or Not To Be

Whether it's Prop 8, DOMA or both, the Supreme Court will soon have its say. It's likely that the Court may be more comfortable taking incremental steps by considering the DOMA decisions before its willingness to consider the issue of marriage equality as a whole. In the recent past, the Court has been reluctant to weigh in on issues where there isn't an obvious consensus of public opinion. For instance, at when the Court struck down Texas' same-sex sodomy law in the 2003, nearly all states had repealed similar criminal laws. Although public opinion seems to be moving fast – a recent CNN poll shows that a majority of Americans, 54 percent, favor marriage equality for same-sex couples – 40 states have laws or amendments on the books that prohibit same-sex couples from marrying.

While the U.S. Supreme Court may not be ready to commit fully to marriage equality, striking down DOMA may be the much needed step in the right direction. After all, some of our country's biggest civil rights triumphs have historically been incremental victories.

This is an exciting, if not daunting, time in the world of jurisprudence and LGBT equality. It's always difficult predicting what our courts may do, however, regardless of how sweeping or limited a decision may be, we can't deny that the momentum for marriage equality continues to build.

Jay Kaplan is the ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project staff attorney

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Creep of the Week



Tony Perkins

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Hello everyone, are you enjoying your officially sanctioned Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month? Having a gay old time ruining life for straight people everywhere, especially the traditionally married ones?

Because Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council is very Pride-curious. He's got some ideas about Pride that are bound to disappoint him once he realizes they are wildly inaccurate, but you've got to let a man have his fantasies, right?

As Right Wing Watch reported, Perkins took to the anti-gay radio airwaves earlier this month (and there certainly seem to be no shortage of anti-gay radio shows) to wax polemic about the scourge that is a bunch of gays in a parade.

In no short order he equated being gay with being an adulterer and an alcoholic.

"The month of June is Gay Pride Month. Now, I have not yet seen where they have declared Adultery Pride Month, I have not seen where they have declared the Drunkenness Pride Month. Here's the issue," Perkins said, "it's not a matter of whether or not someone can do what they want to do with their lives, God gave Adam and Eve a choice, but that's not what we're talking about here."

Ah, yes. The Great Gay Takeover. Where homos invade all aspects of life and make it fabulous.

He's right, of course. God did give Adam and Eve a choice about whether or not they wanted to march in the official Garden of Eden Pride Parade, but they were talked out of it by a homophobic snake. And we all know how that story ends.

Being gay is, of course, very different from being an adulterer or an alcoholic. To Perkins sin is sin is sin, but many rational people would argue that being gay is not a sin or a choice. And while there isn't an Adultery Pride Month, there is an Adultery Pride Parade that happens year round. It's called Congress.

So if Pride isn't about Adam and Eve, what is it about and why does it have Perkins so hot under the collar? "We're talking about redefining the rest of culture and making others both embrace, celebrate and subsidize. We're talking about changing the laws that will influence what our children are taught in schools," he lamented. "We're talking about religious organizations losing their religious freedom."

Ah, yes. The Great Gay Takeover. Where homos invade all aspects of life and make it fabulous.

I am tired of the whole "religious freedom" argument. Folks like Perkins love to cry that the sky is falling when, really, lawmakers often bend over backwards to give religious organizations exemptions so that they don't have to make nice-nice with the gays. But to Perkins, "religious freedom" means an unfettered right to discriminate. Religious orgs have so much unchecked political power and we've seen repeatedly that power wielded against gay and lesbian families.

Perhaps the best part of Perkins's radio address was when he played Mr. Innocent and acted like his livelihood doesn't depend on being publicly and virulently anti-gay.

"We never asked for this debate, I entered into public office workings on marriage policies to promote marriage but it was the homosexual community that wanted to have this discussion on redefining marriage," he said with a presumably straight face.

Ah, yes, poor Perkins, forced into demonizing the evil gays every chance he gets. It's brazen claims like this that remind us that while June may be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, every month is anti-gay pride month, because these people have no shame.

FDA delays decision on first drug to prevent HIV

BY MATTHEW PERRONE

WASHINGTON (AP) – Federal health regulators have delayed a decision on whether to approve the first pill shown to prevent HIV infection, the drug's manufacturer says.

Gilead Sciences disclosed Friday that the Food and Drug Administration will take three more months to review its application for Truvada, after the company submitted additional materials to the agency earlier this month.

In May, a panel of experts recommended approval of the daily pill for healthy people who are at high risk of contracting HIV, including gay and bisexual men. The vote was nonbinding, though the FDA often follows the group's advice.

Gilead said it submitted updated information on its planned safety materials for patients and doctors using the drug. The FDA typically extends its reviews after receiving such information.

The FDA is now expected to rule by Sept. 14, the company said in a statement.

Gilead Sciences Inc., based in Foster City, Calif., has marketed Truvada since 2004 as a treatment for people who are infected with the virus. The medication is a combination of two older HIV drugs, Emtriva and Viread.

In May, a panel of experts recommended approval of the daily pill for healthy people who are at high risk of contracting HIV, including gay and bisexual men. The vote was nonbinding, though the FDA often follows the group's advice.

Truvada made headlines in 2010, when government researchers showed it could actually prevent people from contracting HIV when used as a precautionary measure. A three-year study found that daily doses cut the risk of infection in healthy gay and bisexual men by 42 percent, when accompanied by condoms and counseling. Last year another study found that Truvada reduced infection by 75 percent in heterosexual couples in which one partner was infected with HIV and the other was not.

An estimated 1.2 million Americans have HIV, which develops into AIDS

unless treated with antiviral drugs. AIDS causes the body's immune system to break down, leading to infections which are eventually fatal. Gay and bisexual men account for the majority of cases – nearly two-thirds.

Because Truvada is on the market to manage HIV, some doctors already prescribe it as a preventive measure. FDA approval would allow Gilead Sciences to formally market its drug for that use.

But Truvada's groundbreaking preventive ability has exposed stark disagreements on prevention among those in the HIV community. While Truvada's supporters say the drug is an important new option to stop the spread of AIDS, critics worry that the drug could give users a false sense of security and encourage risky behavior.

Groups including the AIDS Healthcare Foundation have asked the FDA to reject the new indication, saying it could reduce use of condoms, the most consistently reliable prevention against HIV.

The number of new HIV infections in the U.S. has held steady for 15 years at about 50,000 per year. With no vaccine in sight and an estimated 240,000 HIV carriers unaware of their status, most doctors and patients say new methods are needed to fight the spread of the virus.

Scouts to review ban on gays; no change imminent

BY DAVID CRARY

NEW YORK (AP) – The Boy Scouts of America will review a resolution that would allow individual units to accept gays as adult leaders, but a spokesman says there's no expectation that the ban on gay leaders will in fact be lifted any time soon.

The resolution was submitted by a Scout leader from the Northeast in April and presented last week at the Scouts' national meeting in Orlando, Fla., according to BSA spokesman Deron Smith.

Smith said June 6 it would be referred to a subcommittee, which will then make a recommendation to the

national executive board. The process would likely be completed by May 2013, according to Smith, who said there were no plans at this time to change the policy.

During last week's meeting, the Scouts were presented with a petition, bearing more than 275,000 names, protesting the ouster of a lesbian mother, Jennifer Tyrrell, who'd been serving as a Scout den mother near Bridgeport, Ohio.

Among those who presented the Change.org petition, and met with Scout officials, was Eagle Scout Zach Wahls, an Iowa college student who was raised by lesbian mothers.

Wahls, in a telephone interview, said he and his allies planned a campaign to mobilize opposition to the gay-exclusion policy from within Scout ranks, with

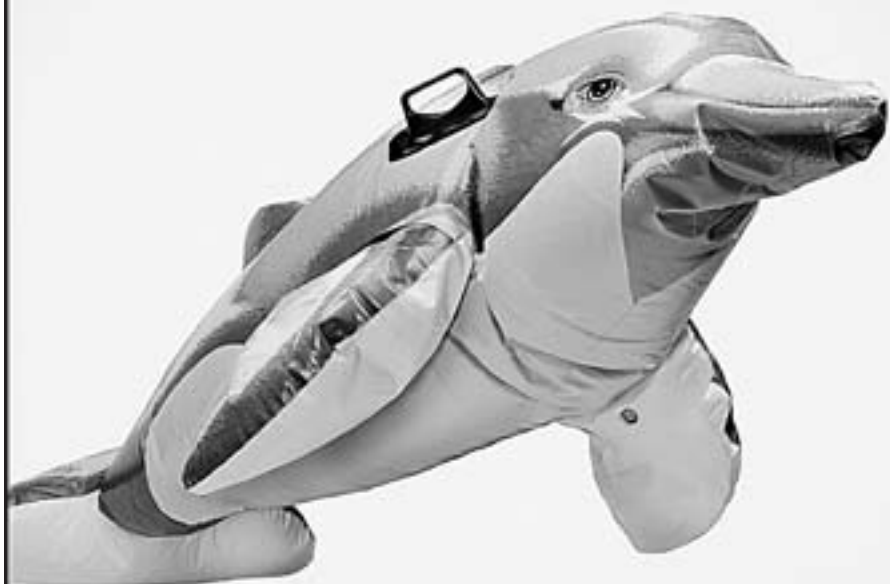
the goal of building pressure for the resolution to be approved.

"Up to the day they end this policy, they'll be saying they have no plans to do so," Wahls said. "But there's no question it's costing the Boy Scouts in terms of membership and public support."

The Scouts, who celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2010, have had a long-standing policy of excluding gays and atheists. Controversy over the policy intensified in 2000 when the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Scouts to maintain the policy in the face of a legal challenge.

Leaders of several regional scouting councils have asked for the policy to be scrapped or modified, to no avail.

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'ROCK' ON



Photo: Warner Bros.

Director Adam Shankman and cast talk musical ... and the gay kiss

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

How do you come off a musical that has John Travolta doing drag? You make sure the next one, "Rock of Ages," gets Tom Cruise in butt-baring chaps.

"I thought we would cover it up with mesh or underwear," recalls director Adam Shankman, "and I was like, 'You do know that when I'm shooting, we're gonna see your ass?' He said, 'Well, how is it?' And I go, 'It's fantastic.'"

Tom's response? "Then let's shoot it."

The all-star cast of Alec Baldwin, Russell Brand, Catherine Zeta-Jones and romantic leads Julianne Hough and newcomer Diego Boneta, already a famed heartthrob in Mexico, had a similar no-holds-barred attitude for the big-screen adaptation of the Broadway musical homage to the crazy '80s. From a suite at The London West Hollywood, close to the Sunset Strip where the film takes place, Shankman told us why: "It's my conviction that it's all good, clean fun. You can't tell a joke halfway and get away with it — you have to go for it. You can't be afraid. Go big or go home."

"Rock of Ages," opening June 15, goes big every chance it has: Cruise, in grunge-rocker mode as Stacey Jaxx, and co-star Malin Akerman, the nosy Rolling Stone reporter, have a cheeky rendezvous to "I Want to Know What Love Is"; Zeta-Jones, a closeted rocker who tries to take down the demoralizing genre, goes back to her musical roots for her hammed-up take on "Hit Me with Your Best Shot." And then there's the lovey-dovey Baldwin-Brand montage ... that ends in a kiss.

"It's sweet," Shankman says of the scene, set to REO Speedwagon's "Can't Fight This Feeling." "People want them to get together. People are proud that we live in a world where that can happen, and I'm not trying to sell anything. I'm just expressing this relationship; in their dark moment they find each other, and that bolsters them as characters. I wouldn't know how to tell that story without it going to that place."

The creators of the original musical didn't see their bond the same as Shankman. To them, it was just two dudes who really, really like each other. A lot.

"Interestingly, on the surface, it actually does not veer from the play — but I was told by the creators of the play that they, in fact, never saw them as falling in love," Shankman says. "They just said it was the ultimate bromance and I said, 'That is the ultimate bromance — them falling in love.' Alec Baldwin and Russell Brand are singing '... I can't fight this feeling anymore.' I don't think guys fight the feeling of being friends."

The mini-golf flashback, though? That was all Shankman.

See *Rock of Ages*, page 22

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► Rock of Ages

Continued from p. 21

“Standing behind the other and teaching him how to putt and sinking a ball into a hole is ... *something*,” he laughs. “All puns intended.”

Casting a diva

Though Tom Cruise is getting the most buzz for his rock-god role, Shankman started with a musician who has, oh, just nine Grammys to her name: Mary J. Blige. The soul diva was approached nearly two years ago at a housewarming party for Jennifer Lopez that both were attending. Shankman said he wanted her in his movie; Blige thought he was full of crap.

“People say things,” she says, “but they don’t deliver. Six months later he showed up with this script. He believed in me.”

His other reasons? “Because I’m a gay man and she’s Mary J.”

Blige plays nurturing strip club owner Justice, the mother hen of the movie that has a bigger wardrobe – and more wigs – than an episode of “RuPaul’s Drag Race.” “The giant hair, the braids, the beads, just the freedom and expression,” Blige says of why gays will dig her role. “The gay community is about freedom and expression. They hold nothing back; they just are what they are, and that’s what I believe they will take away from seeing Justice.”

For the role, she threw on a Mississippi accent and completely reimagined her character so she could get outside herself. As someone who’s overcome plenty of drama in her own life, Blige had a lot to work from already.

“I didn’t want her to be Mary, but I used Mary’s life experiences and who Mary is in real life to build her character, which is this woman who always encourages other women to feel better, be better and just be an example and kind of mother the younger women.”

On set, that “example” was Shankman, who was so dedicated to his work that he was always working from a choreography warehouse with no air conditioning – just a table and a folding chair. Boneta doesn’t recall ever seeing him at the swanky production office.

“That’s how involved he was,” Boneta says. “He was in the trenches, working, just as much as any one else was. When you have someone like that directing you, you can see that onscreen.”

Somehow, too, Shankman does it all with an infectious smile. On this morning, after an emotional night at a Trevor Project screening of the film, it’s surprising to see Shankman so chirpy. “He looks like a bird when he walks, and I love it,” says Hough, looking at Diego and laughing. “He’s so happy, though, and he really loves what he does and that just translates to his work – but also to us. Everybody has to be around him every single day, and to have that kind of energy is pretty great.”



Russell Brand, Adam Shankman and Alec Baldwin in “Rock of Ages.” Photo: Warner Bros.

The crazy ’80s

Acid wash, mullets, parachute pants – the jokes in “Rock of Ages” write themselves. “The period makes fun of itself, for god’s sake,” Shankman says. “You don’t have to go out and try to make fun of the period. Shoulder pads – come on!”

That was his advice to Baldwin and Brand, who were told to acknowledge their relationship not as a joke but as if they actually were falling madly for each other.

“What am I gonna have them do? Hug at the end of that (scene)? That would be so anti-climatic,” he says. “It’s one of the most innocent kisses ever seen – certainly the most innocent gay kiss ever seen in a movie.”

Part of the reason he went all the way with it – further than the original musical, anyway – is because of John Waters. In fact, many of the liberties Shankman took with “Rock of Ages” are because of the iconic filmmaker.

When Shankman was originally commissioned to do “Hairspray,” casting John Travolta in the role of Edna Turnblad for the 2007 movie, he asked for Waters’ blessing. After some email correspondence, the two met up in Waters’ hometown of Baltimore, where Shankman was filming “Step Up,” and Shankman remembers his advice: “You have to tell the story through your own filter, otherwise it will be a disaster. You can change anything as long as you make a good movie.”

“The courage to do it all came from John Waters,” says Shankman, noting that both “Hairspray” and “Rock of Ages” beat from the same heart. “What the movies share at their fundamental core are a couple of things: nothing is worth anything without love; not comprising yourself, and consequences to comprising yourself; and you can’t stop the beat – no matter what, you can’t stop people from expressing themselves creatively. They’re strangely kindred.”

But “Rock of Ages” doesn’t stop there: It’s also about reckless abandon,

and the music of that time is a nostalgic reminder of how hang-loose people were. The 47-year-old director, who grew up in L.A., graduated in 1982 and, though this generation will find it hard to believe, couldn’t escape MTV’s constant looping of actual music videos: “Hot for Teacher,” “Pour Some Sugar on Me” and Whitesnake songs among them.

“Whether or not you had them in your Walkman, they were everywhere,” he recalls. “I watched MTV News; that was my go-to news channel. This music is so entrenched in our lives that I wanted to honor that.”

Not just the music, but also the fact that people were so blithely unconcerned about ... everything. Talk about an age that rocked. “That period was the last time this friggin’ country was innocent,” he continues, “because you had all the sex you wanted, there was no AIDS; you could do all the drugs you wanted, there was no rehab; you could throw TVs out of windows of hotels and people loved it.”

Shankman’s upcoming projects won’t be so happy-go-lucky: The novel-based “This Is Where I Leave You” reteams the director with Zac Efron, who starred in “Hairspray,” as a deceptive bad guy. The director said the film, also featuring Jason Bateman and Goldie Hawn, was his calling. “It’s the most beautiful script I’ve ever gotten,” he says. “I had to wrestle it out of another director’s hand, literally. I needed to make this movie.” The “So You Think You Can Dance” guest judge is also adapting “The Nutcracker” into a journey of self-discovery seen through the dark-fantasy lens of Tim Burton.

His other project might not ever surface: “I’ve outlined and started to write a movie on all my gay experiences in a 48-hour period. If it never sees the light of day, so be it, but I’m feeling the need to write it. It’s me continuing to wrestle with whatever gay demons I have and needing to explore them and put them on the page.”

If it does, the big question is: Who can top Tom Cruise?

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Idina Menzel

Defies ... Everything



Theater icon talks queer crushes, hubby's gay tendency and her 'Wicked' nightmares

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Idina Menzel doesn't do anything halfway – even when she's deciding on her gay faves. "It's so silly," says the homo-hearted theater queen, surfing Google for "hot gay male celebrities." Her assistant even gets involved. "This is very important stuff," Menzel giggles, fully immersed in her search to name her current gay crush.

Neil Patrick Harris? Too typical. George Michael? Maybe 20 years ago.

"Oh, I could do a woman" she realizes, before catching the unintentional humor in that: "I mean, not *do* a woman."

And on she goes, scouring the web relentlessly. Again, she laughs. "(My assistant) just went onto a gay porn site. That's helpful!"

Ten minutes later, she's got it: Jane Lynch, Wanda Sykes and Anderson Cooper, because "that makes me sound really smart." Not that she has to sound anything but beautiful, and that she already does – as demonstrated in her 20 years on stage, from "Rent" to "Wicked" (originating the roles of Maureen and Elphaba, respectively), and as a cradle-robbing club leader on "Glee."

Now the ever-sweet Broadway diva has a recently released live album, "Idina Menzel Live: Barefoot at the Symphony," and will stop on June 27 at the Detroit Opera House. Menzel caught up with us recently to talk toes, hubby Taye Diggs' gay tendency and learning the real definition of "white party."

"Barefoot at the Symphony" is the name of the

new album – do you have nice feet?

They're all right. My toes are pretty in proportion to each other. No weird toes.

Is the second toe longer than the big toe?

No, they're actually nice like that. It's just that – from working out and stuff – my heels are always dry. But the toes are nice!

Will your Detroit show be a lot like this album?

The album is a culmination of a year and a half of touring and playing with these amazing symphonies. So, I obviously need to retain some of the songs that I know people would shoot me for if I didn't sing them, but I am going to clean the slate and freshen up the show and explore some brand-new material.

Do people expect you to fly when you do "Defying Gravity"?

No, I don't think they do. (Laughs) But I'm sure they expect me to hit very high notes, which isn't always an easy thing to do.

How did it go over when you covered "Poker Face" with the symphony?

It's funny: The audience was everyone from theater people to symphony people to just your regular audience coming to see some entertainment for the evening. But "Poker Face" was great. I did it because I knew people would like to see something from "Glee" and I thought the juxtaposition of the song with the orchestra

could be really cool, but I didn't realize it would become a comic piece for me. The first couple of times I did it, I realized these stories and I stopped the full-on symphony in the middle of the song, which you never do, to tell people the story behind it. Then it just started becoming this little creature that I used every night as a way of singing that song but also having fun with the audience and being really spontaneous.

On the album you recall a crush you had on a gay professor during your freshman year in college. What was it about him that you were so into?

Well, first, I didn't realize he was gay until later in life, but he was just so intense and he was the kind of teacher that you know you trusted and respected so much that also could make you cry in a second, because he saw right through you and challenged you and expected the most of you. For me, when I got in front of class and felt like I was disappointing a teacher, I would just get so demoralized. That feeling never goes away. Whether you're standing up in front of 10 people in a class or 5,000 people in an audience, the idea of opening your soul and making yourself really vulnerable is quite terrifying and sometimes, if you're not prepared, you get really thrown.

Since you have a history of falling for gay men, did Taye have to pass some kind of test?

No. Please. He went to the School of the Arts in Rochester and majored in theater in Syracuse, and so many of his friends were gay before we even met.

Oh, Idina, these are all red flags.

(Laughs) Yeah, he'll even engage in "runway" at parties at the house if we pull out the carpet and it's late at night, he has a couple of drinks and Taye will even do runway... if you give him enough alcohol.

Who has the bigger gay following?

I think I do! (Laughs)

You know, you take everything from the gays: Taye Diggs. Kissing Puck on "Glee." Waking up with Patrick Dempsey in "Enchanted." What do you have to say for yourself?

That's some good stuff, huh? In my defense, I'm a mom of a 2-year-old and – like, right now I'm in the ugliest outfit, practically pj's, and my hair hasn't been washed in two days – and if I didn't have those opportunities, I'd never feel like a woman again.

What was your recent gay cruise experience on Atlantis' Allure of the Seas like?

I learned the white party doesn't necessarily mean you wear white suits; it means you wear as little as possible and maybe some white Hanes underwear and angel wings. (Laughs) I learned that I will never go on a cruise ship again unless it's a gay cruise because I am now ruined forever. The creativity and the passion and the fun will be unmatched. The best audiences of my life. It was just a blast. There are a bunch of

See Idina Menzel, page 26

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► **Idina Menzel**

Continued from p. 24

sides to yourself, but it's nice to just let 'er rip. And sing some duets with some drag queens!

What would you tell your son, Walker, if he came out to you?

Hopefully I wouldn't have to say much by then. Hopefully he'll grow up in an environment where he won't think much of it and it will be very commonplace and yet, if for some reason that discussion did arise, Taye and I would say, if we were to have a son or daughter who were gay, they wouldn't meet any resistance with us. We always take five steps forward and two steps back, but in our house, in our family and with our friends, he already is in the company of – and loved by – all sorts of people.

(Taye and I) have very supportive parents, and so it's more the outside world that tends to put some stigma on it, even in this day and age. I'd probably say Taye has more responsibility to African-American people, not feeling like he's let them down in some way. I think it's just about raising a son that's going to be mixed race and how to tackle that and what that means – even religiously and spirituality, we have a lot of stuff ahead of us. I want to be really clear and defined so that it's not confusing.

Is your character on "Glee," Shelby, done for?

You know, I don't know. They're saying I'm coming back, but you never know. Maybe they'll go with another storyline. But I love being there. I love the energy on set, and I certainly did enjoy being hot for teacher and having the 17-year-old man with the Mohawk to kiss on. But they keep things really close to the vest, so it's hard to tell.

Are you looking at being a part of a musical again?

Yeah, but nothing that I really can speak of yet. I'm trying to give people their space to create and do their thing, but that's my goal. I'm putting my energy toward trying to get back to New York City in an original piece, just because that's where I've had the most success and where I feel the most fulfilled. That process of standing at the piano with a composer and a writer as they're creating from scratch and using you as inspiration – there's nothing like that.

Any word on a "Wicked" movie?

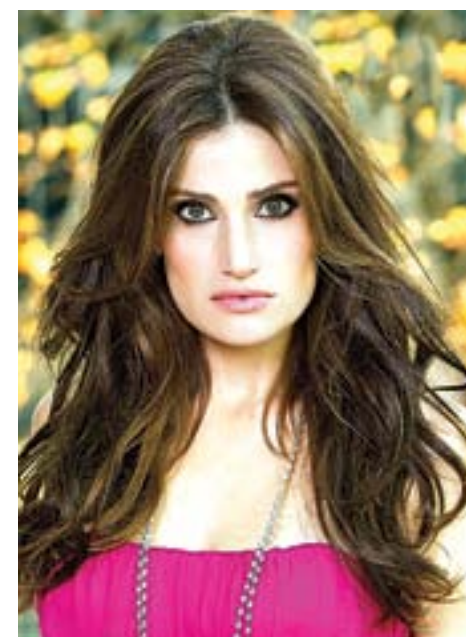


Photo: Robin Wong

No. I just always hear that if it came about Kristin (Chenoweth) and I would probably be too old, which is really annoying considering all the CGI you can do these days. I called them and told them, "What about 'Avatar'?! You never know, but I kind of don't hold my breath on that one. And I feel lucky enough that I got to do the "Rent" movie 10 years after I actually originated the role. So we'll see about "Wicked."

So much has happened in your career since playing Maureen in "Rent." Is that still a part of you?

Yes, because I put it in my show all the time in some capacity, so it actually forces me to get back in touch with that time in my life and what it represented and how I've grown since then.

What about "Wicked"? Do you have nightmares about going green?

Yes! I actually have those recurring theater nightmares. It's not always just "Wicked"; it could be "Rent," and they just desperately need me. The girl playing the role at the time can't get in and there's no one around. They call me and I'm like, "Of course I remember how to do it!" and I get on a dark and dreary stage that looks nothing like any set I've ever been on before and I can't remember a single line and I don't know how to put the green makeup on and I start having a meltdown.

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Rapping for the fame



BY ANDREA POTEET

Hip-hop may no longer be a boys' club, but from Lil' Kim to Nicki Minaj, most female artists have relied on revealing fashion and man-eating lyrics for chart success.

Keyon La Don is ready to change that.

The 28-year-old Detroit rapper hopes to make the move from Internet sensation to radio mainstay with her forthcoming album, "Radio Ready."

"I would like to be the first openly gay female rapper," La Don says, her soft lilting voice an unexpected juxtaposition to her hardcore image. "I think it's something the world could really open up to."

But La Don, who will perform at Ferndale

Pride at 3:30 p.m. on June 17, didn't start off with the intention of blazing a trail for gay artists in rap. After looking up to two older brothers, rappers Famine and Black Chemical, she started writing her own music in 2002 as a way to get dates.

"It wasn't until I came out of the closet that I started writing," she says. "I would try to meet women on chat lines because that's the only way I knew how to meet other lesbians. Instead of just talking about myself normally, I would write a rap about myself and that would actually get a lot of responses."

A flood of inbox messages spurred her on and she continued writing, eventually recording her raps for download on her website, www.datstud.com. Songs about her sexuality, like "Strap-on Magic,"

which she performed for her first live show in 2007, earned her Internet buzz and tour dates in LGBT venues throughout Detroit.

There, she said her music has been well received, though on the Internet she sometimes got hurtful comments about her sexuality.

"Most of the time, I just try to block out that negativity," she says.

She released two mix tapes, "Unclaimed Stud" in 2009 and "Unlikelihood" in 2006, featuring "Chat Line Love," an ode to her rap beginnings.

Her rise from chat room troll to Internet artist has had some unexpected consequences, she said, like when she gave out a phone number at one of her shows for fans to leave messages with feedback.

"A female left a message and she was saying she liked my music and she remembered me from a chat line and she actually rapped most of what it was about," La Don says of her pickup line. "I couldn't believe she remembered that."

And the recognition is all the more surreal when she remembers that she never actually planned on rapping as a career. Originally, she went to Davenport University with the hope of starting her own music-related business and is now attending Henry Ford Community College. Though it never got off the ground, she's keeping the idea hush-hush and in the hopper for the future and focusing on her own record company, Hitstree Entertainment, where she hopes to write for and produce other artists. Though she has performed outside of the area, she also said she would like to concentrate on performing in Detroit as a way to market herself and other artists.

"I would definitely like to perform in Detroit more too because I'm from here," she says. "I believe there's some talented people here, and all we need is a chance."

For the most part, La Don says she finds inspiration for her music through everyday events and relationships.

"Songs come to me sometimes," she says. "Usually I rhyme beats and listen to them for a while before lyrics come to me. It's not like I can just go, 'I'm gonna write a song,' and it happens. Something inside of me has to ignite. Sometimes it happens with experience; I'll go through something with friendships or family or relationships, and just writing about it helps me get over that person and move on."

And next, La Don is moving onto other genres, writing songs ranging from alternative rock to R&B and pop for "Radio" (the release date of which has yet to be determined), with one goal: getting mainstream radio play.

"It's eventually going to be songs that I feel should be played on the radio," she says. "Despite my sexuality, I would really like to release some songs and get them played and see what people are ready for."

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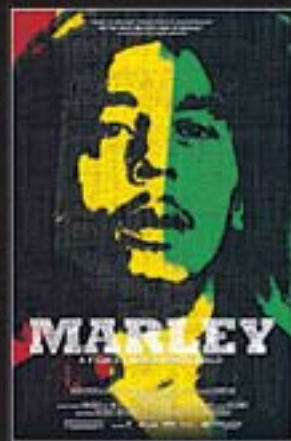
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Alex Eggerson, Eric Folkmire, Audrey Long and Julia Music head Dyke March.

Dyke March gears up for year three

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

FERNDALE - Project XYZ is hosting the SE Michigan Dyke March for the third year in a row June 16. The march is one of dozens of Dyke Marches taking place throughout the country during the month of June, a tradition which started in 1993.

The march steps off at 2 p.m. from the Withington Parking lot near the northwest corner of Nine Mile and Woodward, proceeds west on Nine Mile, and ends with a rally at Geary Park at 2:30 p.m., which includes music and speeches.

Of the multiple events taking part over Ferndale Pride Weekend (including Light the Night, Rainbow Run, and many others), Dyke March is unique in that it started a year before as a completely independent project put on by a group of young people apart from any larger organization.

The oldest of the founders, Audrey Long was only 25 at the time. She and four friends were so impressed with a similar event in Chicago they decided to have one here in Ferndale.

"We saw the Chicago and Toronto Dyke March and after trying to find the Michigan one we realized that we needed to step up and create it so others could experience it here too. On top of our march we do number of other events throughout the year. It is an incredible amount of work but every year it is all worth the months of hard work and dedication," Long said.

Long, Alex Eggerson, Eric Folkmire and Julia Lebrell make up the Project XYZ Board, and

they have gone from meeting every two weeks, to meeting every week as the event draws near. "We have been able to develop this event a lot over the last three years. I don't think any of us would have thought it would be such a huge amount of behind-the-scenes work. Pulling permits, booking speakers and talent, promotions, security and coordinating volunteers are just a few things that we quickly became familiar with," Long said.

Last year there were 600 participants, double from the year before. The group hopes that turnout will double again this year. They even bought a booth at Motor City Pride last weekend to support the event and to invite more people out to Ferndale for theirs.

It's not just a march for lesbians, but for all people who believe in equality. Many LGBTQ people march alongside allies, including children, family members and neighbors.

"Our event is all about feeling safe in a community that welcomes all people regardless of who they are. Our event is all ages, family friendly, and all inclusive. One of our main goals is to continue to offer an event in the southeast Michigan area that promotes and celebrates the inclusion of lesbians, transgendered individuals, bisexuals, and others in the queer community. We hope that people go back into their daily lives with a greater sense of the community that understands and accepts whomever they may be," Long said.

Find out more about the SE Michigan Dyke March at semidykemarch.org/events.html.

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Ferndale Pride set for June 14-17

FERNDALE - The LGBT community once again celebrates its heritage and pride across Ferndale next week as thousands are expected for the annual street festival, "Light the Night Against Hate" educational event, Dyke March and 5K run.

Last week, Ferndale City Council declared June "Gay Pride Month" for the 13th year in a row, and the Oakland County Commission will proclaim the same at its June meeting.

The festivities begin 8 p.m. June 14 with "Dino's Back Alley," a pre-glow kickoff party in the newly renovated alley and patio/garden behind Dino's Bar and Grill.

June 15 is the "Light the Night Against Hate" walk through downtown Ferndale. Up to 16 ethnic and advocacy groups will

provide speakers with educational presentations about bullying, hate crimes and cultural tolerance in the strolling, family-friendly event. Organizations representing youth, LGBT groups, Latino, Asian, Arabic and African-American groups, along with women's and civil liberties groups, will share their experiences and educate attendees about their cultures at locations throughout the city. People will gather at the city park at W. Nine Mile Road and Planavon Street between 8:30-10 p.m. for the walk.

June 16 is the third annual Southeast Michigan Dyke March, which begins at 2 p.m. near Woodward and W. Nine Mile Road. The march will travel to Geary Park for a 2:30 p.m. rally and concert.

June 17 is the first annual Rainbow Run. This event features

a 5K and 2K run or walk through neighborhood streets put on by the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce. Volunteers will be stationed along the course to throw a natural powdered paint at the runners in the colors of the rainbow.

Ferndale Pride's finale is the street festival on W. Troy, following the run and beginning at noon. The festival consists of 60 organization and vendor booth, food trucks, beer gardens and concerts all day long.

Multiple elected officials, including area mayors, commissioners and representatives will help begin the festival with the release of 1,000 balloons in colors of the rainbow on stage at noon.

Other colorful events include the annual "Bears Car Wash," church dinners, bar parties and concerts.

For more information, go to www.ferndalepride.com, or see the BTL June Pride Calendar below.

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This weekend's Pride festivities:

FERNDALE PRIDE

Thursday, June 14

Beyond The Bar 2012: Opening Reception

Presenting Organization: Affirmations

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale

Contact: 248-398-7105, GoAffirmations.org

Join Affirmations in celebrating a unique collection of applied arts, during the opening reception at the Affirmations center. Appetizers, wine and beer will accompany this showcase; along with musical selections from some of the area's finest DJs.

Dino's Back Alley

Presenting Organization: Dino's Bar and Grill

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Dino's Lounge, 22740 Woodward Ave., Ferndale

Contact: FerndalePride.com

Official pre-glow kickoff party in the newly renovated alley and patio/garden behind Dino's Bar and Grill.

Friday, June 15

Cruise for a FUNdraiser

Presenting Organization: The Forum Foundation

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Diamond Jack's River Tours, Detroit

Contact: TheForumFoundation.org

Join the Forum Foundation for the annual river cruise to support their LGBT scholarship mission. Tickets are \$40 each and include hor d'oeuvres, a cash bar, a 50/50 raffle and dance music by DoublePlay DJ Services. Tickets available at Just 4 Us and Five15.

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Saturday June 16th



God-Des & She
Main Stage 2pm



Commitment Ceremony on
Capitol Steps



Chris Willis
Main Stage 5pm



Rally on Capitol Steps



Pride March @ 11am!

The 2012 Michigan Pride
March, Rally & Diversity Festival
March staging at 10:00 am
March kickoff at 11:00 am
Commitment Ceremonies & and Rally at Capitol
Steps Beginning after the March.
Festival in Old Town beginning at 1:00 pm
God-des & She on the Main Stage at 2:00 pm
Chris Willis on the Main Stage at 5:00 pm
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Michigan author fights hopelessness with humor at Pride book reading

Ferndale author Charlotte Fisher will read excerpts from her new book, "Mackinac Bridge Jesus," at State of the Art Framing & Gallery on June 21 at 6 p.m.

Fisher calls the book a collection of "twisted, tender, tragic and comedic" essays of self-awakening.

"I was going to title the book 'Gay, Alcoholic, Spiritually Bankrupt Unemployed Auto Worker: A Love Story,'" she says, "but I assumed that was taken. Instead, I named it after a character in the book."

Fisher's essays are set in Michigan, beginning with her childhood in the early '60s through today. The collection's wide ranging subject matter includes embalming relatives, bra shopping, Sandra Bullock, drinking too much and praying too little; and – of course – worrying about the ever-increasing size of her butt.

Fisher doesn't want people to be put off by the "J" word.

"There are those who might see the name 'Jesus' and think the book is about religion," she said. "Instead it's a story of my spiritual awakening, recovery and learning to live life on life's terms."

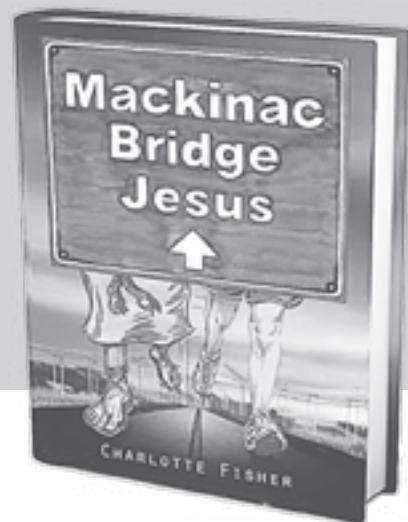
She believes the stories touch people regardless of age or gender, because the essays reflect the universal topics of hope, healing and forgiveness.

State of the Art Framing & Gallery

owners Veronica Lujic and Nicole Rafail frequently host events supporting local artists and the downtown Ferndale business district.

"Ferndale's culture is rich with curiosity," said Rafail. "People have a keen interest in all things creative and diverse. We celebrate self expression in all forms and are honored to help share it with the community."

State of the Art is located at 918 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. Fisher will read from her new book June 21 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at State of the Art, 918 W. Nine Mile Road. "Mackinac Bridge Jesus" is available at www.cmyword.com and on Amazon.com for Kindle and other eReaders. State of the Art can be contacted at 248-582-9999 or online at www.StateOfTheArtOnline.net.



Light the Night Against Hate

Presenting Organization: Ferndale Pride

Time: 8:30 p.m.

Location: Downtown Ferndale

Re-designed for 2012 as a self-directed walking tour through downtown Ferndale and its adjoining neighborhoods. Walkers will visit welcome stations along the way where they can learn more about historical and contemporary issues surrounding hate in our schools and communities, including hateful speech in social media and online bullying. Walkers may also participate in a candle lighting ceremony and carry colorful glow sticks to visibly unite against hate.

Motor City Bears Charity Dinner

Presenting Organization: Motor City Bears

Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Zion Lutheran, 143 Albany St., Ferndale

Contact: 248-470-4449, MotorCityBears.com

Motor City Bears' 6th Annual Fundraiser for Affirmations and Ruth Ellis Center. Menu includes roasted pork loin and chicken pasta primavera. Tickets: \$15 adults, \$7.50 children. Accompanied by a silent auction of gift cards and donated arts and services.

Tupperware Party with Dixie Longate

Presenting Organization: Equality for A Cause, Inc. and Five15

Time: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Location: Above Five15, 215 W. Fifth Avenue, Royal Oak

Contact: Five15.net/Dixie

Join America's No. 1 tupperware lady Dixie Longate for a limited engagement. All proceeds will benefit Affirmations. VIP Tickets: \$100. General Admission: \$25.

Saturday, June 16

Bears in Speedos Car Wash

Presenting Organization: Motor City Bears

Time: 12 p.m.

Location: Level One Bank, 22635 Woodward Ave., Ferndale

Contact: 248-470-4449, MotorCityBears.com

Motor City Bears' popular speedo car wash. Fundraiser for the Affirmations community

Continued on page 39




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WHITE PARTY

2012

Friday June 15th

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Festival Tent
226 East Grand River



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2012

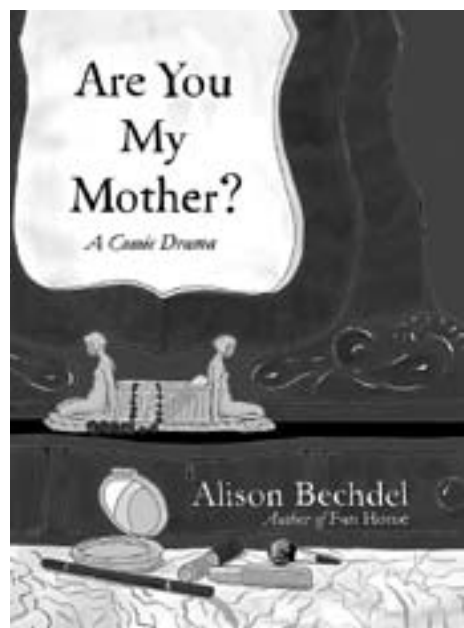






Book Marks

BY RICHARD LABONTE



"Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama," by Alison Bechdel. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 304 pages, \$22 hardcover.

Bechdel's first graphic memoir, "Fun Home," focused with dark humor and candid introspection on the twin topics of her own coming-out and her father's closeted life. Now it's Mom's turn to be the focus, but this second memoir-in-art-and-words is something quite different. For starters, Bechdel's Dad was dead when she plumbed her early years, but the cartoonist's mother is still quite alive – and her potential reaction to her daughter's revelations is woven through the book. So, too, are Bechdel's years of analysis – her therapists are characters – as are her dreams, along with a textual immersion in the words of a pair of shrinks, Alice Miller ("The Drama of the Gifted Child") and Donald Winnicott, whose writing focused on children and the concept of the "good enough mother." Throw in a bunch of lengthy quotes from Virginia Woolf, and the book's surface look is intimidating. But there's magic in Bechdel's fluid artwork, panel after panel that demands and deserves both a careful reading and a profound gaze, all the better to embrace this book's affirmative complexity.

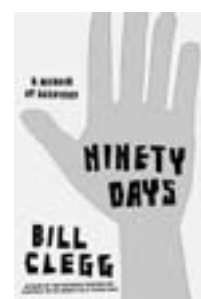
"III Will," by J.M. Redmann. Bold Strokes Books, 306 pages, \$16.95 paper.

Maladies are the motif of Redmann's seventh Mickey Knight series, set again in the ongoing malaise of post-Katrina New Orleans. On the sleuthing side, Knight is drawn into the deadly scam of "natural" immune-boosting and disease-destroying cure-alls. On the personal side, her still-fragile relationship with lover (and medical doctor) Cordelia – unfaithful earlier in the ongoing saga of their lives together – is further fraught when Cordeila is diagnosed with cancer. As is the norm

with the series, Redmann's hard-boiled PI tackles the twists and turns of her case and its attendant violence with dogged determination and a sometimes foolish and defiant denial of danger, which makes for a fast-paced story. Also the norm: the intimate details of Mickey and Cordelia's domestic travails, as two busy women try to find time for the basics of a relationship – shopping for groceries, cooking for each other, holding hands while dining out, fumbling back to a fulfilling sexual intimacy. It's this blend of professional and personal lives that renders Redmann's series so engrossingly well rounded.

"The Song of Achilles," by Madeline Miller. Ecco Press, 384 pages, \$26.99 hardcover.

There's a double-barreled delight to this romantic, and even sometimes erotic, retelling of the "Iliad." Readers familiar with the world of Achilles, Odysseus and Apollo, and the rest of Homer's panoply of gods and mortals, will be enthralled by Miller's debut novel, a page-turning rendition of a classic tale. Better yet, readers who snoozed through their Ancient Greek seminars will be immersed in a glorious blend of commercial fiction and impassioned history – a fabulously fun way to engage one of literature's masterworks. What sets Miller's captivating reworking of Homer apart from other versions – there have been dozens – is that it's narrated (even after his death) by awkward one-time prince Patroclus, selected by golden boy Achilles to be his companion and, as this telling makes clear, his lover. This ravishing novel, with its depictions of battlefield savagery and its recounting of a sensuous connection, honors the tradition of lesbian author Mary Renault, whose trilogy based on the life of Alexander the Great similarly made clear that queers are a classic motif.



"Ninety Days," by Bill Clegg. Little, Brown, 208 pages, \$24.99 hardcover.

Staying clean for ninety days is one of the thresholds on the road to recovery. Clegg's minimalist, mesmerizing follow-up to "Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man" opens as the author leaves rehab to confront an addict's haunting triggers and destructive temptations. Successful Manhattan literary-agent career, deep-pocket bank account, long-suffering boyfriend, posh Fifth Avenue apartment – all have been devoured by the demons of primarily of crack but also of cocaine and alcohol. Clegg's first book recounted the before-rehab days. Clegg's impressionistic sketches of his sponsor, and of several of the recovering addicts with whom he intersects at the meetings he attends – including

Featured Excerpt



– from "Are You My Mother?," by Alison Bechdel

cute, young redhead Asa, who develops a crush on him – are an illuminative reflection of the author's own hellish descent and hard-fought recovery. This depiction of after-rehab horrors, of craving and crash, is harrowing, as the author frantically reconnects with dealers just days after leaving rehab, skips in and out of AA meetings, loses himself in a hedonistic sexual threesome – and relapses just a few days shy of his 90.

Footnotes

TWO QUEER-INTEREST BOOKS TO WATCH OUT FOR: There's a long history of LGBT characters anchoring straight-authored fiction, from Annie Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" to Andre Aciman's novel "Call Me By Your Name." Two recent, riveting novels (in addition to Madeline Miller's) honor the tradition with flair. Audrey Schulman's "Three Weeks in December" (Europa Editions, 364 pages, \$16 paper) tells the parallel tales of two outcasts, American ethnobotanist Max, who in 2000 finds that her Asperger's (a mild form of autism) connects her with gorillas in Rwanda; and of a young

American engineer, Jeremy, who in 1899 – after an indiscretion with another man – leaves small-town Maine to oversee a perilous railroad construction project across British East Africa, where he is drawn to the lithe body of his native companion, Otombe: "Mesmerized, Jeremy took a half step forward, perhaps to trace this delicate pulse with one finger, perhaps to pull this man's whole body against his chest." Even more "out" is Herta Muller's "The Hunger Angel" (Metropolitan Books, 304 pages, \$26 hardcover), the German author's first English-translated novel, narrated by closeted Leo, a teenager when he's imprisoned after the Second World War in a Soviet labor camp, where he knows that to survive he must suppress memories of the "strange, filthy, shameless and beautiful" sex he sought before his detention: "Discreetly, after work, I look at the young Russians on duty taking a shower. I'm so discreet I forgot why I'm looking. They would kill me if I remembered.

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

center and Ruth Ellis Center. Suggested Donation: \$5.

Summer Bash Pride Afterparty

Presenting Organization: Splash Night Club

Time: 10 p.m.

Location: Splash Night Club, 9819 Conant, Hamtramck

Contact: Facebook search "2012 Summer Bash--Pride Afterparty!"

\$5 cover until 11:30, valet available. Drink specials, VIP booths and music by DJ Chico.

Third Annual Southeast Michigan Dyke March

Presenting Organization: Southeast Michigan Dyke March

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: Withington Lot Alley and marching along Nine Mile Road

Contact: SEMIDykeMarch.org

Marching to promote visibility, inclusion and equality for lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. Rally at Geary Park at 2:30 p.m.

Tupperware Party with Dixie Longate

Presenting Organization: Equality for A Cause, Inc. and Five15

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Above Five15, 215 W. Fifth Avenue, Royal Oak

Contact: Five15.net/Dixie

Sunday, June 17

Ferndale Pride

Presenting Organization: Ferndale Pride

Time: 12-7 p.m.

Location: Along W. Troy Street, Ferndale
Booths and entertainment. Ferndale Pride strives to recognize and promote pride for the LGBT and ally communities, working with residents, businesses, community groups, and all segments of the community to welcome and promote the celebration of diversity.

The Rainbow Run 5K

Presenting Organization: Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Along W. Troy St., Ferndale

The Rainbow Run is a 5K run/walk for acceptance and diversity. Spearheaded by the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce and presented by Comerica Bank, the run will weave through the streets of downtown Ferndale the morning of the Ferndale Pride Market Days as one of the many events taking place throughout the Ferndale Pride weekend.

Michigan Pride's Family Zone

Join Michigan Pride and LBGT families in celebrating Pride with a family-oriented zone filled with children's games and entertainment as well as resources for family networking and advocacy.

Michigan Pride's "Family Zone" will include face painting, Pride-themed arts and crafts (make your own rainbow beaded necklace, rainbow paper chain, coloring books, sidewalk chalk and more), beanbag tosses, Frisbee throws, and other playground park activities.

The Family Zone offers a safe space for children to play and show off their own pride. Pack a picnic, and join Michigan Pride for a fun-filled afternoon of festivities.

The Family Zone will run 1-4 p.m. Saturday at the south end of Burchard Park in Old Town Lansing during Michigan Pride. If you are interested in volunteering for set-up or safe space supervision, email volunteer@michiganpride.org.

Tupperware Party with Dixie Longate

Presenting Organization: Equality for A Cause, Inc. and Five15

Time: 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Location: Above Five15, 215 W. Fifth Avenue, Royal Oak

Contact: Five15.net/Dixie

Contact: Michiganpride.org

Staging at 10 a.m. and kickoff at 11 a.m.

WEST MICHIGAN PRIDE

Wednesday, June 13

Pride at Eve

Presenting Organization: Eve at The B.O.B.

Time: 9 p.m.

Location: 20 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids

Contact: WestMIPride.org

Presented by West Michigan Pride and The Matthew Agency, hosted by The Princess of "RuPaul's Drag Race" Season 4. Progressive drink specials, masks capes and tights encouraged for the sexiest superhero costume contest. Cover: \$10.

MICHIGAN PRIDE

Friday, June 15

White Party

Presenting Organization: Michigan Pride

Location: Festival Tent, Esquire, Grand Cafe and Spiral Dance Bar

Contact: Michiganpride.org

One ticket for four venues throughout the Lansing area. Michigan's largest white attire event.

Saturday, June 16

Commitment Ceremony

Presenting Organization: Michigan Pride

Time: 12 p.m.

Location: Capitol steps, Lansing

Contact: Michiganpride.org

Annual commitment ceremony at the steps of Lansing's capitol building.

Michigan Pride

Presenting Organization: Michigan Pride

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Burchard Park, Old Town, Lansing

Contact: MichiganPride.org

Vendors and performances from God-des & She and Chris Willis.

State Pride March

Presenting Organization: Michigan Pride

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Adado Riverfront Park, Lansing to State Capitol

Friday, June 15

Pride Premiere Movie Night

Presenting Organization: West Michigan Pride

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: The Wealthy Theater, 1130 Wealthy St. SE, Grand Rapids

Contact: WestMIPride.org

World Premiere of the upcoming LGBT movie "Jamie and Jessie are Not Together," to be preceded by refreshments and a reception.

Saturday, June 16

West Michigan Pride Festival

Presenting Organization: West Michigan Pride

Time: 1-9 p.m.

Location: Riverside Park, Grand Rapids

Contact: WestMIPride.org

Vendors, food, refreshments, games and entertainment.

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Ringwald holds third Gay Play Series Festival returns in June with new one-act plays

FERNDALE - The Ringwald Theatre will present its third installment of its wildly popular Gay Play Series from June 15-22. Last year's outing was attended by hundreds of people over a 10-day festival period. This year the program will run over two consecutive weekends that will feature a one-time only event, music shows and, at the centerpiece, performances of 11 new, one-act LGBT plays.

"I am so pleased to be doing GPS for the third year in a row," said artistic director Joe Bailey. "The response has been so positive, and after receiving 17 one-act submissions in our first year and 44 last year, this year we received 175 submissions from around the world from places as far flung as Australia and the UK! This year we have enough fun stuff on deck to wet everyone's whistle."

The 2012 GPS will kick off at 8 p.m. Friday, June 15 with a special one-night only performance of Ronnie Larsen's classic play "Making Porn." The rollicking, side-splittingly funny comedy roared onto the scene in 1995 and took off-Broadway by storm and has starred such renowned gay porn stars Matthew Rush, Blake Harper, Chris Steele and many others. Shortly after its New York production, it's played around the world (including stints in Boston,

The original One Act Festival will commence on Saturday, June 16 with Block A and continue on Sunday, June 17 with Block B. Audience members will then vote for their favorite script. The winning script receives an additional performance at the closing ceremonies and will receive a full production at The Ringwald.

Block A features:

- "Defrost" by Tony Foster; directed by PJ Jacones
- "Queer/Trek" by Brian Walker; directed by Gary Lehman
- "Turnaround" by Joe Bailey; directed by Jamie Richards
- "Mate Trade" by Laura Witkowski & Cara Trautman; directed by Topher Payne
- "Fanny Packs & Hanky Codes" by Kristian O'Hare; directed by Matthew Turner Shelton
- "Homochondria" by Brad Baron; directed by Michelle Leroy

Block B features:

- "Ask Me! Tell Me!" by Andrew Charles Lark; directed by Nancy Arnfield
- "Pocket Universe" by Duncan Pflaster; directed by Lisa Melinn
- "Ten Picnics" by Mark Harvey Levine; directed by Joe Plambeck
- "A Streetcar Named Viagra" by Daniel Curzon; directed by Sean McClellan
- "Break Your Face on My Hand" by Daniel Talbott; directed by Joe Bailey

Atlanta, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and San Diego starring Ringwald artistic director Joe Bailey). The Ringwald production will feature Bailey, Michael Lopetrone (Southern Baptist Sissies), Lisa Melinn, Richard Payton, Joe Plambeck, and Jamie Richards.


A full-lineup and tickets are available at www.TheRingwald.com or at the theater box office. The Ringwald box office opens 45 minutes before performances and tickets can be purchased with cash or Visa/Mastercard. The Ringwald Theatre is located at 22742 Woodward Ave. in the Times Square of downtown Ferndale.



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Robert Schefman



Robert Schefman
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West Michigan Pride Festival

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1pm-9pm



WESTMIPRIDE.ORG

The OutField

Akil Patterson's project

BY DAN WOOG

When University of Nebraska assistant football coach Ron Brown made anti-gay comments recently – among other things, he threatened the Omaha city council with eternal damnation if it passed a bill prohibiting businesses from firing workers because they're gay – many people were outraged.

Akil Patterson was too. But he understood better than many others where Brown was coming from. Patterson is a former Division I football player. Like Brown, he's African American.

But Patterson's life path has been very different. A gay man, Patterson is dedicating his life to making sure that young athletes do not get bullied or harassed for any reason. Particularly for being gay.

Patterson began his collegiate football career at the University of Maryland. He "adored" the school. Yet he did not feel the same warmth toward the people he was around – primarily football players and coaches. "It was a dark period," he recalls. "I was always on the defensive."

Deeply closeted – feeling estranged from other gay men and women, and with no black gay role models – he became a binge drinker. He transferred to California University of Pennsylvania, where he continued to party but earned a degree.

He played briefly with the United Indoor Football League's semipro Billings Outlaws in Montana. He'd already started to come to terms with himself, thanks to an eye-opening trip to Europe. Yet not until he returned to his real love – he'd been a state high school wrestling champion – did he feel confident enough to come out, and truly begin to live.

"I've made a lot of mistakes," Patterson says. "That weighs heavily on your soul. I want to be at peace, be around people who uplift me."

He found that place, surprisingly, back in College Park, Md. Now an assistant wrestling coach there, he's surrounded by people – coaches and athletes – who understand and embrace him. They're like a family to him. Around them, Patterson talks about his life and his relationships. It's an openness he never felt before. That openness has enabled him to reach out to others, through something he calls The Patterson Project.

"It's a mission of love," he says. Through it – by blogging, speaking and serving as a role model – Patterson educates whoever will listen,

from elementary school youth through college students, about the importance of being true to yourself.

"The Patterson Project offers a different spin on the life of LGBT athletes, because it doesn't just focus on sexuality," he says. He emphasizes the mental, physical, social and psychological aspects of living life with integrity. He learned many of those skills while working in youth detention centers and courts. With his imposing size (he's 6-foot-3-inches) and athletic accomplishments (he's still a highly ranked Greco-Roman grappler), Patterson has vowed to counter the destructive influences of people like Ron Brown.

As a big, strong athlete, he knows he does not fit the stereotype of a gay man. He could easily "pass" as a straight jock – he did for years, all through college. But Patterson says that would not serve anyone well. Not him, and not young athletes who need role models.

"It's like years ago, during a previous era, when light-skinned black people could pass as white," he explains. "But that wouldn't achieve equality. If gay people want to be equal, we have to show who we are. We're coaches, teachers, lawyers, doctors. We're people."

In his second stint at Maryland, he says, he's now seen as "a person." In part, that's because 2012 is a different time than just 10 years ago. In part, it's a reflection of the difference between the wrestling and football cultures.

Though wrestling demands mental and physical toughness, Patterson calls it a

"humbling" sport. "You're not going to make a million dollars" as a wrestler or coach, he says.

Because they compete individually, Patterson says, wrestlers – like gymnasts and swimmers – must have incredible fortitude to succeed. Wrestling helped give him the confidence and fortitude to come out.

But all gay athletes, whether participating in an individual or team sport, must contend with something others don't: the conflict between their identity as an athlete, and as an LGBT person.


Patterson walks the walk of an athlete. He talks the talk. He's grown up in the black community, and understands the culture that allows Ron Brown to say it would be an "honor" to be fired for his stance.

That's why it's so important for Akil Patterson to speak not about religion or politics, but about humanity, whenever he talks about his life journey as a black gay athlete.

Or simply, his life journey as a human being.

Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach, gay activist, and author of the "Jocks" series of books on gay male athletes. Visit his website at www.danwoog.com. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.

Through The Patterson Project – by blogging, speaking and serving as a role model – Patterson educates whoever will listen, from elementary school youth through college students, about the importance of being true to yourself.



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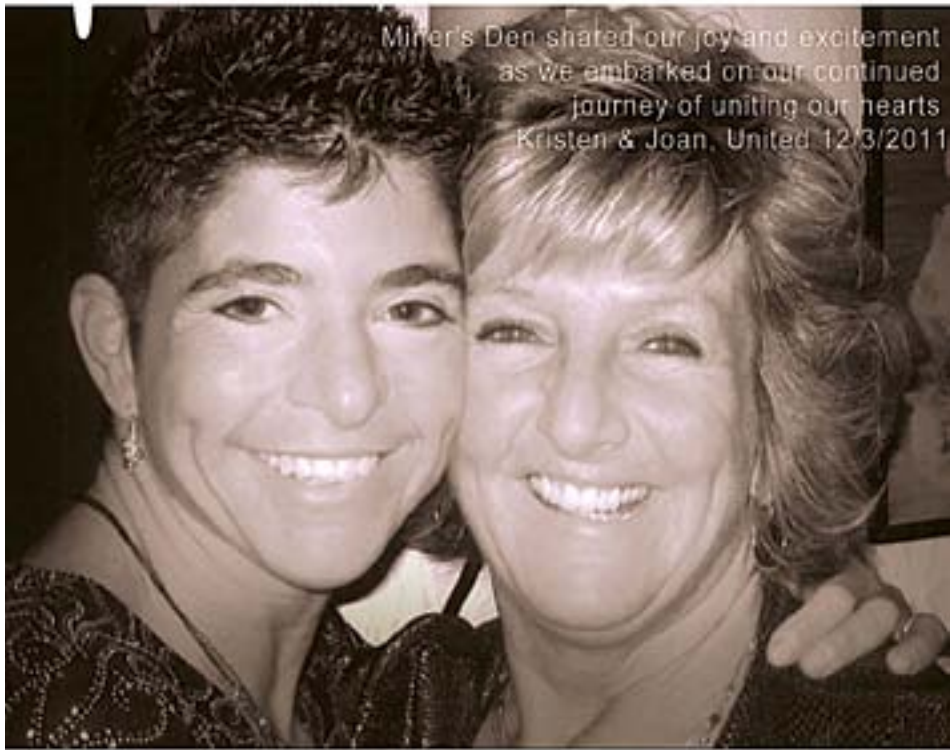
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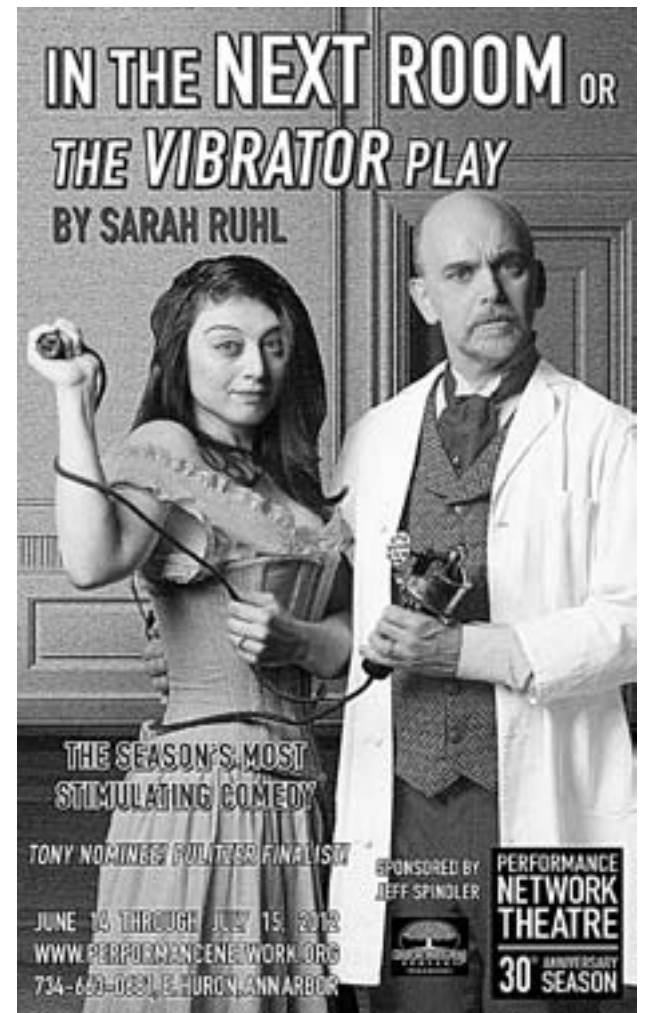
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Barbie Weisserman plays Sylvia the dog who looks lovingly at her new adoptive parent played by John DeMerell (Greg) in "Sylvia," a Two Muses Theatre production partnering with the Michigan Humane Society. Photo: Steve Hill



'Sylvia': a doggone good time

BY JOHN QUINN

The truly creative artist can take a shop-worn theme and turn it into something new and wonderful. A. R. Gurney did just that with his 1995 hit, "Sylvia," the current rousing production of Two Muses Theatre in West Bloomfield. Gurney takes on the male mid-life crisis, but instead of furnishing his character with a little red sports car, the playwright gives him a little red-headed enchantress - Sylvia. The twist? Sylvia isn't your run-of-the-mill mistress. She's a dog.

Empty-nesters Greg and Kate are apparently settling into their Manhattan apartment, but Greg is feeling the angst of middle age. His relationship with Kate is in flux; she's exploring a new career. His job is empty and unfulfilling. Greg finds a stray in Central Park; her only identification is a tag marked "Sylvia." On the spur of the moment, he takes her home - much to the chagrin of Kate, who after half a lifetime of childrearing is not pleased with a new dependent. Ah, how little she knows! Greg's fascination with Sylvia makes the pooch the "other woman" in an unlikely love triangle.

Talking animals aren't a new literary phenomenon - it's older than Aesop. But in this modern fable Gurney returns to the

REVIEW

Sylvia

Two Muses Theatre at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Friday-Sunday through July 1. \$15-18. 118 minutes. 248-850-9919. www.TwoMusesTheatre.org

roots. In "Sylvia," Greg and Kate can "talk to the animals," and - oh, my! - can Sylvia talk back. Unlike Jason Gann in the FX Network series "Wilfred," Barbie Amann Weisserman plays Sylvia without the cheap dog suit or character make-up. It's an extraordinarily physical role, which she pulls off with grace and charm. Understand, most of the time Sylvia walks (and runs and bounces) on two legs, yet Weisserman never lets us forget Sylvia's essential doggy character. Just as soon as we're comfortable with an "illicit" affair - long walks at night, dinner for two, serious emotional conversations - Sylvia spots a cat and unleashes the profane, scatological tirade you just KNOW every dog has used against felines. We just never had the opportunity to hear it in English.

As her adopted family, John DeMerell and Nancy Cooper deftly play a couple on the cusp of change, each partner relying

on different, conflicting coping skills. The trio is a delight together - so much so that scenes are less effective when Sylvia isn't on stage. It's as if Gurney is saying that Greg and Kate are better at communicating through the dog than face to face.

"Sylvia" is one of the most intelligent scripts in the catalogue. It is light, witty and yet probes the complex emotional bond between people and pets. But that's only a narrative device, and one need not be a dog lover to enjoy the plot. The theme explores the universal fear of change, of growing older, of renewing relationships. It is no surprise that director Diane Hill brings out all the nuances of a marvelous piece and renders its fantasy so believably.

Set designer Bill Mandt, lighting designer Lucy Meyo and their crews deserve special notice for their solid workmanship in the less than ideal conditions of the performance space.

And while on that subject, I sat in the third row, and was able to hear every juicy line. The couple next to me spent the first scene grousing that they couldn't hear - hey, I thought I was the deaf one. I don't think that poor projection the problem - but I'm wondering if this big box of a room has some inevitable dead spots.

That being said, I think "Sylvia" is a howlin' success.



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Happenings

OUTINGS



For all Pride month-related events, see the *Pride Calendar* on p. 32.

Friday, June 15

Bisexual Peer Group 7 p.m. Meets monthly on the third Friday of each month. Discuss relating to bisexuality, pansexuality, and/or omnisexuality. Allies are encouraged and welcomed to attend. Meeting usually followed by dinner at aut Bar, two doors down. Bisexual Peer Group, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. Bipriedeanarbor@gmail.com Facebook.com/groups/110918256984/

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

Tupperware Party with Dixie Longate 9 p.m. America's #1 Tupperware Lady Dixie Longate for a limited engagement. All proceeds will benefit Affirmations. VIP Tickets: \$100. General Admission: \$25. [CLICK HERE](#) for complete show information Equality for a Cause Inc., 215 W. Fifth Ave., **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. Five15.net/Dixie

Saturday, June 16

XXX Cabaret 7:30 p.m. 30th annual Spring Concert featuring songs celebrating the chorus' 30 years of bringing music to metro Detroit along with some special guests. Tickets sold at Just 4 Us and Five 15 Royal Oak. Detroit Together Men's Chorus, 610 W. 13 Mile Road, **Madison Heights**. 248-544-3872. [See our ad on page 57.](#)

Sunday, June 17

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

PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting 2 p.m. PFLAG offers support, education and advocacy for equality. PFLAG Tri-Cities, 2525 Hemmeter Rd., **Saginaw**. 989-941-1458. Pflag@pflag-mbs.org Pflag-mbs.org

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Topic: Violence in films - does it affect the viewer? (Does it affect children?) Does it give people ideas or cause them to become violent? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, June 18

Commemorating Edwin Rowe 6 p.m. Commemorating Edwin Rowe's 40th anniversary of his ordination to ministry in the United Methodist Church. An opportunity to say thanks you to an LGBT affirming Metro Detroit leader. United Methodist Church, 4800 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**.

Mysterious, Marvelous Monday 6 p.m. Mysterious, Marvelous Monday is the metamorphosis of Wild Wednesday. Youth group for ages 13-18. Fostering a kind and supportive environment. Dedicated to Make a Change, L3C, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-657-1792. Gailwolkoff@gmail.com Dedicatedtomakeachange.com

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous 7 p.m. A weekly anonymous 12-step group for those who are facing sexually compulsive behaviors. Affirmations, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Tuesday, June 19

PFLAG Family Reunion Meeting 6:30 p.m. Third Tuesday of every month at the Fellowship Chapel. All LGTBTA and parents of LGTBTA invited to attend and share support. PFLAG Family Reunion, 7707 W. Outer Dr., **Detroit**. 313-286-8572.

Gay-Straight Alliance in Faith 7 p.m. A group of LGBTQ and allied young adults ages 14-23 welcoming those of all faith backgrounds or no faith background, honoring and respecting each person's faith and spirituality. Alternate between topical discussions and guest speakers

on relevant topics for LGBTQ youth. Meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. G-SAIF, 207 E. Fulton St., **Grand Rapids**. GaysinFaithTogether.org

Transgender Life Support 7 p.m. Offering support, education, resources and a social structure for Transgender individuals. Facilitated by Arlene Kish, Lorraine Brown, Jessica Manko, Tracy Hoover, Helena Blakemore, Marty Howland and Colt Stacer. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Transgenderlifesupport.org

Wednesday, June 20

LGBT Older Adult Coalition 9:30 a.m. Collaboration of people and organizations in Southeastern Michigan who are working to establish effective programs and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults, hosted by the ACLU of Michigan and is supported by a grant from the HOPE Fund. Meets third Wednesday of every month. ACLU of Michigan, 2966 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-578-6812. jkaplan@aclumich.org

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

Thursday, June 21

LGBT Midwest Job Expo 11 a.m. The first of its kind in Michigan, Affirmations will host over 20 companies from all over the Midwest region. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. MMcMillan@GoAffirmations.org GoAffirmations.org

26th Annual Pride Banquet & Awards Ceremony 6:30 p.m. On its 26th anniversary the banquet will honor people who have made outstanding contributions of time and talent to the LGBT community. Nominations are solicited from all over Michigan, but only a select will be chosen to receive awards. 26601 Ryan Road, **Warren**. GoAffirmations.org

Monsters, Madmen & The Whimsically Twisted 7:30 p.m. Come, hear tenors Jay Kaplan, Jeffrey Willets, Soprano Carla Margolis and accompanist Elisabeth Wagner as they serenade you down the musical path of the Monsterous, Mad and

Whimsically twisted Broadway characters through song. Aut Bar, 315 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. AutBar.com

Friday, June 22

Flint Gay Pride 10 p.m. Flint's first annual gay pride event, this year at the UM-Flint Riverfront. Flint Gay Pride Society, Wellness Aids Services, UM-Flint Riverfront Pavilion, **Flint**. 810-232-0888 ex. 204. Facebook.com/pages/Flint-Gay-Pride-Society/154585004603937

MUSIC & MORE

CONCERTS

Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival White Nights: A musical journey through Russia, presenting music by Russia's greatest composers including Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, and Shostakovich, among others. Venues throughout metro Detroit, Various Venues, **Detroit**. June 9 - June 24. 248-559-2097. GreatLakesChamberMusic.org

Magic Bag "Grease: Sing-A-Long" A "Grease" Sing-A-Long for the Thursday night brew and view. Tickets: \$2. Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 8 p.m. June 14. 248-544-1991. TheMagicBag.com. [See our ad on page 29.](#)

Max M. Fisher Music Center Neil Sedaka is rock 'n roll royalty. His string of smash hits including "Calendar Girl," "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do," "Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen," "Oh! Carol," and "Next Door to an Angel" dominated the radio airwaves in the early 1960s and defined a generation. Tickets: \$19. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. June 15 - June 17. 313-576-5111. DSO.org

Olympia Entertainment "Summer Block Party Tour" Grammy Award-winning R&B singer and actress Jill Scott brings her summer block party to Fox Theatre, performing songs from her new album, "The Light of the Sun." Tickets: \$50-100. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 7:30 p.m. June 17. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "Unity Tour 2012" The most legendary family in music history is returning to the stage and to Motown this summer: the Jacksons. A worldwide sensation since the 1970s, the Jacksons will reunite in the Fox Theatre. Tickets: \$35-115. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. June 23. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment "An Evening with Aretha Franklin" The Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, will perform at Detroit's historic Fox Theatre. Franklin is a cultural icon and multi-award winning artist with dozens of chart-topping records and timeless classics hits such as "Respect", "Chain Of Fools", "Think", "Daydreaming" and "Free Of Love." Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. June 22. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Sound Board Theatre "An Evening with John Pinette" Named Stand-Up Comedian of the Year by the American Comedy Awards in 1999 with numerous TV and movie appearances. Tickets: \$35-43. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave, **Detroit**. 8 p.m. June 14. 866-752-9622. Olympiaentertainment.com

Stiletto's God-Des & She; This hip-hop/pop/soul duo's energy and talent have caught the attention of industry and listeners alike, ever since they appeared on Showtime's hit series "The L Word." Stiletto's, 1641 Middlebelt Road, Inkster. 9 p.m. June 15. God-DesandShe.com

The Ark The Farewell Drifters Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor**. 8 p.m. June 21. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

FESTIVALS

Green Living Festival One of the largest green/wellness events on the planet,

bringing together tens of thousands of people to discover and enjoy earth-friendly and healthy living products, services and programs. Third St. and Water St., **Rochester**. June 22 - June 24. MiGreenTeam.com

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum \$22. St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild at the outdoor Cranbrook Greek Theatre, 400 Lone Pine Rd., Bloomfield Hills. Through June 16. 888-71TICKETS. www.stdunstanstheatre.com

Legally Blonde-The Musical \$25-29. The Crosswell, 129 E. Maumee St., **Adrian**. June 15-24. 517-264-SHOW. www.crosswell.org

The Bad Seed \$16-18. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., **Royal Oak**. Through June 17. 248-541-6430. www.Stagecrafters.org

The Mandrake Mature content; pay what you can. Korda Artistic Productions at Pelee Island Winery, 455 Seaciff Drive, **Kingston**. June 16. 519-562-3394. www.kordazone.com

The Play's the Thing Free. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., **Ann Arbor**. June 15-17. 734-971-2228. www.A2CT.org

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown Free. Lansing Community College Performing Arts at LCC Outdoor Amphitheatre, N. Washington behind Dart Auditorium, **Lansing**. June 20 - 24. 517-483-1488. www.LCC.edu/showinfo. [See our ad on page 46.](#)

PROFESSIONAL

Chaps! \$12-28. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at Knickerbocker Theatre, 86 E. 8th Street, **Holland**. June 15-Aug. 10. 616-395-7890. www.hope.edu/HRST

Cirque D'Or \$17-22. Meadow Brook Music Festival, 3554 Walton Blvd., **Rochester Hills**. June 23. 248-377-0100. www.palacenet.com

In the Next Room or the vibrator play Previews June 14-17 & 21 (\$15-\$32). \$25-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., **Ann Arbor**. June 14 - July 15. 734-663-0681. www.PerformanceNetwork.org. [See our ad on page 46.](#)

Ernie \$20-25. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. Through July 29. 1-800-745-3000. www.olympiaentertainment.com

Gay Play Series \$10-25 per event. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. June 15-25. 248-545-5545. www.TheRingwald.com. [See our ad on page 47.](#)

La Boheme \$22+. Arbor Opera Theater at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, **Ann Arbor**. June 14-17. 734-763-8587. www.arboropera.com

Love's Labour's Lost \$6-12. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company at Dog Story Theatre, 7 Jefferson Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. June 21-July 1. www.dogstorytheater.com

Macbeth \$10-15. Blackbird Theatre at West Park Band Shell, 300 N. Seventh Ave., **Ann Arbor**. June 15-30.

On Golden Pond Previews June 21-24 & 27-28 (\$20-\$30). \$17.50-40. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., **Chelsea**. June 21-Sep. 1. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

Sleeping Beauty \$10 adult, \$5 children. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River, **Detroit**. Through June 30. 313-961-7777. www.puppetart.org

Sylvia \$15-18. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, **West Bloomfield**. Through July 1. 248-850-9919. www.TwoMusesTheatre.org

The Cemetery Club \$26-30. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., **Northville**. Through June 17. 248-347-0003. www.tippingpointtheatre.com

The Fox on the Fairway \$34. Barn Theatre, 13351 W. M-96, **Augusta**. Through June 17. 269-731-4121. www.barntheatre.com

The Understudy \$20-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., **Williamston**. Through June 17. 517-655-7469. www.williamstontheatre.org

Tupperware Party with Dixie Longate Proceeds will benefit Affirmations. \$25 general admission, \$100 VIP. Equality for a Cause Inc. & FIVE15 at Fifth Avenue, 215 W. Fifth Ave., **Royal Oak**. June 15-17. 248-515-2551. www.five15.net/dixie

ART 'N' AROUND

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History "Great American Artists - Part II: The Branches" 315 E. Warren, **Detroit**. May 3 - Sep. 1. 313-494-5853. TheWright.org

Cranbrook Art Museum "George Nelson: Architect / Writer / Designer / Teacher" 39221 Woodward Ave., **Bloomfield Hills**. June 16 - Oct. 14. 877-462-7262. CranbrookArtMuseum.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Abstract Expressionism" 1120 E. Kearsley, **Flint**. May 5 - Aug. 19. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Cities in Transition" 101 Monroe Center, **Grand Rapids**. June 1 - Aug. 26. 616-831-2904. Artmuseumgr.org

Heidelberg Project Gallery "Wall Flowers" 42 Watson, **Detroit**. June 3 - June 30. 313-974-6894. Heidelberg.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "A Conversation between Money and Sochi: Video Art" 314 S. Park, **Kalamazoo**. May 1 - Aug. 18. 269-349-7775. Klarts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Lit from Within" 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, **Ferndale**. May 31 - June 30. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

Michigan State University Museum "Echoes of Silent Spring: 50 Years of Environmental Awareness" 409 W. Circle Dr., **East Lansing**. June 1 - Nov. 30. Museum.msu.edu/?q=node/527

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Post-Industrial Complex" 4454 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. May 11 - July 29. 313-832-6622. MOCADetroit.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Vertical Urban Factory" 4454 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. May 11 - July 29. 313-832-6622. MOCADetroit.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Fine Spanish Masterpieces" 2100 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. June 21 - Aug. 19. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Flip Your Field: Abstract Art from the Collection" 525 S. State St., **Ann Arbor**. June 9 - Sep. 2. 734-647-0524. Umma.umich.edu

Editor's Pick

Even if you've seen "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" before, you've probably never seen it like this. Because you can't get any closer to the play's setting of ancient Rome and Greece than the outdoor Cranbrook Greek Theatre.

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook is proud to present "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" in one of only a few Greek-style amphitheatres in the country. The concludes its run June 15-16 at 8:30 p.m.

With music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Larry Gelbart & Burt Shevelove, "Forum" tells the story of a wily Roman slave named Pseudolus, who tries to win his freedom by matching up his young master with the beautiful but slow-witted girl next door. Hilarious complications ensue, accompanied by one of Sondheim's most memorable scores.

Tickets are \$22. Seating is general admission. For more information or to order tickets, call 888-71-TICKETS.



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About the Gay & Lesbian Community Survey: Tremendous strides toward full equality have been achieved by our communities over the past decade. There's Power in Our Pride. Power to make a difference!

Gay and lesbian survey studies have opened doors (and minds) in housing, corporations and organizations, which in turn have recognized the value of their LGBT employees through the establishment of equal hiring policies and domestic partner benefits. This has been a catalyst, leading to sweeping changes in political and social inclusivity.

Demographic reports also influence marketing investment. Virtually absent until recently, we now see a growing variety of products and services represented in gay media, celebrating our diversity. Ads reach LGBT publications and websites in business, serving their communities with independent news and information.

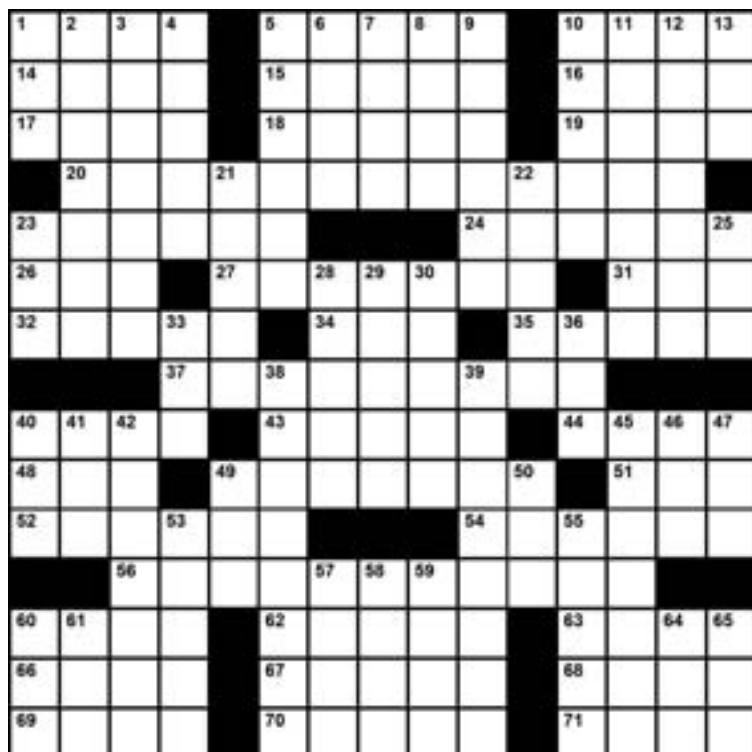
Beyond simply advertising, though, these companies support us in many ways, including sponsoring community events and funding community-based charities in order to earn our loyalty.

Taking an annual pulse on market trends through surveys helps demonstrate the LGBT community's growing power, and influence positive change.

We request your privacy. All personal survey data is held securely by Community Marketing, Inc., a gay-owned and operated, independent market research and communications firm based in San Francisco, and will not be used to build profiles or used for marketing purposes. CMF was founded in 1992 and is proudly NGLCC-Certified. Thank you!



End of Summer



Across

- 1 Barrie buccaneer
- 5 Crawled out of bed
- 10 Rainbow shape
- 14 Short term employee
- 15 Nuts
- 16 Rupert Everett's "Ready to ____"
- 17 Platform at an HRC gala
- 18 Part of "NIMBY"
- 19 Alpo alternative
- 20 Summer ____ (Donna's typical answer?)
- 23 Grated spice
- 24 Zambia neighbor
- 26 Threesome for Da Vinci
- 27 On a city-by-city basis
- 31 Head movement
- 32 Beginning to come?
- 34 Overseas mil. address
- 35 Gives a pink slip to
- 37 Summer ____ (headline about Donna vamping?)
- 40 Bride and bride's vehicle
- 43 Gladiator area
- 44 Good buddy on a radio
- 48 Olympics chant word
- 49 Reputedly well-endowed Ari
- 51 Genetic info carrier
- 52 What you would say for Mapplethorpe

- 54 It's for skin
- 56 Summer ____ (where the Queen of Disco would veg out?)
- 60 Russian singing duo
- 62 "Coffee, ____ Me?"
- 63 Slightly
- 66 Letters over Mary's son
- 67 "Dirty Dancing" director Ardolino
- 68 Cafeteria list
- 69 k.d. lang's "____, Look, and Listen"
- 70 Rubbed the wrong way
- 71 Problem for a drag queen's hosiery

Down

- 1 Possible result of love with no glove
- 2 Word before and after "for" in a Shakespeare play title
- 3 One that puts out
- 4 Coarse salt variety
- 5 Shade tree from China
- 6 "You want the light ____ off?"
- 7 Jodie Foster's "Little Man ____"
- 8 United, to Colette
- 9 Prison friend?
- 10 Causing wonder
- 11 Whys and wherefores
- 12 Robert Goulet musical
- 13 Fourbaggers, for short

- 21 Elizabeth Perkins' role in "Weeds"
- 22 "The joke's ____!"
- 23 Unknown degree
- 25 TV spots
- 28 Frank behind the scenes
- 29 Recesses for Rev. Perry
- 30 Meat that may be tender
- 33 "The Name of the Rose" writer
- 36 Merchandise ID
- 38 Hall & Oates song about a fellator?
- 39 Groomed to personal specs
- 40 "The Messenger" director Besson
- 41 "Sort of" suffix
- 42 Copland, for example
- 45 Pears' favorite fruit?
- 46 Rocker Brian
- 47 Went lickety-split
- 49 The Buckeyes coll.
- 50 Meaningless amount
- 53 Fit out
- 55 Coal haulers
- 57 Top Four matchup
- 58 Icy pellets
- 59 Songwriter Porter
- 60 "____ the season to be jolly"
- 61 Queen of the hill
- 64 Writer Castillo
- 65 Made a hole

Solution on pg 49



Meet Kellogg!

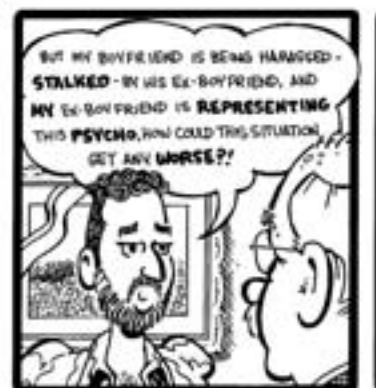
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Horoscopes

Pace yourself, Scorpio!

BY JACK FERTIG

Jupiter entering Gemini brings a year of new ideas and communications and short travels. Sign up for a class and/or find a better way to commute. Improve relationships with siblings and neighbors.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): As your energy improves, you're more eager to get things done. That eagerness could put you at odds with co-workers. Even if they seem hidebound in their approach at least make an effort to see it their way.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): A year of financial good luck begins. Easy come, easy go? Resolve to save money – and for now, try saving your breath. Your brain races into great challenges, but your tongue can get too far ahead.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Refuse friendly invitations to "retail therapy." Focus on career goals that might need changing. Know who you are and what you're worth. Jupiter entering your sign brings a year of good luck, but you need discipline to make the best of it.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Outspokenness can be your best or worst trait this week. It's all about when and where. Infuriating the authorities is rarely a good strategy. Subtlety and subversion is usually better. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Pushing yourself too hard can make you very cranky, perhaps even sick. Apparently brilliant observations will probably lead to disaster. Run them by a well-trusted friend before acting on them. Don't mistake good sense for pessimism.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Falling out with some friends could prove to your advantage. Jupiter is kicking off a great year for your work and reputation. Let folks know what you have to offer, but gently! It's too easy to get pushy and oversell yourself.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): You won't win any arguments this week, but could get credit for thoughtfulness and dedication. Open up to big new ideas. Take a class or go abroad

in the coming year. Plans made now will need reevaluation, but start planning anyway.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): You can win friends or arguments, but not both. Overwork can cause illness, but you can forge ahead as long as you're clear on your purpose, pace yourself and rest as needed. Medical surprises are better learned sooner than later.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): A year of improving your relationship status is just starting. Whether you're looking at marriage, divorce, counseling, or just extending the honeymoon, current plans and ideals should be reconsidered so you can aim higher. Talking with your partner, as always, is essential.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Domestic disputes can get especially nasty. There are hidden agendas on all sides, even yours. Slow down, be clear on what your frustrations are really about and try to empathize. This can become a healing experience.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): A few of your many new ideas are brilliant. Share them with a friend before you present them at work. You can't prove your abilities to amuse and inspire, but just let it flow and the evidence will be there.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Dreading the future can translate into good art or terrible money decisions. Reconsider priorities and remember you're tending to worst case scenarios. Things are tough all over, but not that bad. Let it all out and your outlook will soon improve.

Jack Fertig, a professional astrologer since 1977, is available for personal and business consultations He can be reached through his website at www.starjack.com, and by email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.

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Solution to puzzle from page 48

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T	E	M	P	I	N	A	N	E	W	E	A	R		
D	A	I	S	N	O	T	I	N	I	A	M	S		
S	T	O	C	K	R	E	S	P	O	N	S	E		
N	U	T	M	E	G	A	N	G	O	L	A			
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S	T	O	P	R	I	L	E	D	S	N	A	G		

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Classifieds

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday
7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.

Bloomfield Hills-Thursday
7:00 pm, Sobriety in The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday
8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).

Farmington Hills-Monday
8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday
11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Wednesday
8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Saturday
1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday
8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday
8 p.m., Pontiac Gay AA, Shrine of St. Joseph, 400 West South Blvd. Closed/Discussion.

Warren-Monday
7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay AA, Faith-Trinity United Church of Christ, 12221 Martin Rd. East of Hoover. Closed/Discussion.

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Dating Diet

All Eyes On You



BY ANTHONY PAULL

My father's new thing is he has absolutely no boundaries. I don't know when we've come to this point in our relationship but I believe it started somewhere around the time he hit 65 and

stopped giving a shit.

I slowly became aware of the phenomenon through a long series of poorly timed dinner conversations regarding his girlfriend. Apparently nobody informed him that gay men don't like to talk about vaginas when lifting forks to their mouths. So tonight, when I join him for spaghetti dinner, he insists she has a great "hoo-hoo" for a 55-year-old. Oh, and she's still able to give birth. "Did you hear that? I can get her pregnant. You can have a li'l brother," he says.

I choke. "At 55? Please. Who are you dating? Veruca Salt? Is she clutching her last golden egg?"

"It's true. She's ovulating." His eyes sparkle. "I saw a string up there."

"Yeah, left behind from 1992. Tell her to get a new line," I state, trying to keep my pasta down. "You know, conversations like this during dinner is why I have food aversions."

Aggravated, he twitches his head. "No, you're just too good for food. You and your writer friends, living on coffee, all sleeping together."

Bidding him goodnight, I fail to remind him that I've been monogamous with the same man for a number of years. It's not worth it. So I go to bed hungry, thinking of all the food I've eliminated from my diet. Pork. Beef. Eggs. Milk....

"Good thing penis is still on the menu," my bud Jake comments the next day. I grunt in agreement, continuing to be clouded by the dinner chat. "What's wrong?" he asks.

"Apparently my father thinks I'm sleeping with my friends."

"That's because he wants to sleep with your friends. At least, the girls."

"That's true."

"But he is kinda on to something," Jake suggests. "I mean, most of us do sleep with our friends. At least, at some point...in between boyfriends."

"Really?"

"C'mon Anthony. Where have you been?" he laughs. Joining me for a drink at a downtown bistro he tells me that he's actually getting propositioned by one of our friends now. "It's normal," he says, nonchalantly.

"Normal? I don't know if I would call that normal."

"It's no big deal. He found me on Grindr."

The story goes that Jake began receiving pic requests from some random guy with no profile

Did I miss the memo when it became "normal" to manipulate friends into showing them your dick? I don't recall that component of taking on a friendship.

pic. The guy wanted penis shots and maybe an ass shot or three. Jake found this to be normal except it started getting weird when the guy seemed to have more information on Jake than shared. He figured the guy was a Facebook stalker or something like that so he let it go until the guy began referring to Jake by a pet name that only really close friends would know. It seems Jake's friend had created a fake profile to get some jack material of Jake.

"You don't think that's odd?" I ask.

"No. I think it's flattering that he'd go to such lengths to see my dick."

"So did you send him a pic?"

"Of course not. I'm going to tease him."

In sum, Jake plans to have a close friendship with him in the real world while simultaneously having a voyeuristic, pornographic relationship in cyberspace. Yet he won't admit to knowing that both worlds coexist. It will be his dirty, little secret. He claims to get off on it even though he has no attraction to the guy. It grants him control. He likes being in the position seeing as he's single and not interested in exclusively dating anyone.

Is this common in the current singles scene? Have apps like Grindr or Scruff thinned the line between friends and lovers? I recall a time when dating or hooking up was more personal, when friends weren't able to follow your every slutty move on the Internet. They'd just gossip about it behind your back, like they should. Now, not only are they watching but being active participants. Did I miss the memo when it became "normal" to manipulate friends into showing them your dick? I don't recall that component of taking on a friendship. I thought friendship was more sacred than that.

Still, dad thinks I should take it where I can get it because the majority of my friends have hot bodies. Of course, he's talking about the women.

"So they show you some tit now and then. What's wrong with that? Everyone wins," he says. But he doesn't see the other side of Grindr, the time when my friends turn the app off and feel empty, longing for something more, something real – a love that everyone can witness. As of now, I don't think they've created an app to satisfy that.

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE



Photo: Dustin Lance Black

'Bomb Girls' blowing up soon

Sexy lesbians working in a World War II-era bomb factory? Yes, it happened, there just haven't been a lot of Steven Spielberg movies made about the subject. Because while the heroism of those who served during World War II is the subject of countless movies, books and TV shows, there are simply fewer stories told about the courage of those on the home front. "Bomb Girls" looks to fill in a bit of that gap. A Canadian TV drama that already aired there earlier this year, "Bomb Girls" tells the stories of a group of women who work in a munitions factory during the war and co-stars Academy Award nominee Meg Tilly ("Agnes of God"). Meanwhile, in keeping with the real social upheaval caused by the mass influx of women into the American wartime workforce, the series will indeed feature a lesbian character (played by Canadian TV star Ali Liebert) and her relationship with a co-worker (Charlotte Hegele). Already picked up for a 12-episode second season in Canada, the six-episode first season will debut this fall on cable's ReelzChannel.

Much ado about Sean Maher

Hey everybody, guess what Sean Maher's doing next? That's right, he's going to co-star in the new Joss Whedon ("The Avengers") movie, a modern-day adaptation of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." Oh, wait, you have no idea who Sean Maher is? Well, that's your own fault, but here's a quick recap: he's the cool, openly gay character actor, already a household name in nerdy, Whedon-following, "Firefly" and "Serenity"-obsessed households, who's been off the radar for a bit thanks to two years of stay-at-home Dad detail. So a return to work is welcome for both him and audiences who appreciate the everyday working actors out there who don't let their sexuality turn into an endless tabloid-based wild goose chase (*cough* Latifah-Travolta). Most importantly, though, it'll be refreshing to see what the witty Whedon does with Shakespeare, "and" the film will also star "Firefly" colleague Nathan Fillion, so the news on this one just keeps getting better.

Dustin Lance Black's '8' gets bigger

"8," Dustin Lance Black's all-star benefit stage play (George Clooney! Brad Pitt!) about the successful court battle against California's Proposition 8, the law that repealed marriage equality in that state, is moving closer to a big screen adaptation thanks to director Rob Reiner ("When Harry Met Sally"). Reiner's production company, Castle Rock, is working with Black on the script phase, which, according to Black, will expand the courtroom drama to include more personal information about the plaintiffs. Smart move, because sitting 20 feet away from a live benefit performance featuring Clooney as he reads courtroom transcripts might be exciting for the privileged attendees, but multiplex audiences need a little more to grab onto besides their popcorn. When it all finally comes together, expect "Milk" and "Brokeback Mountain" levels of attention from a political climate where same-sex marriage makes the daily news almost as often as the weather forecast. The iron's hotter than it's ever been. Time to strike, Hollywood!

The best rumor of right now: a 'Downton Abbey' movie

As the third season of "Downton Abbey" shoots, gearing up for a fall telecast in the U.K. and a January bow on America's PBS, the hottest Emmy-hoarding British import on television is now the subject of rumor after rumor, most of them false. The most frightening one, of course, was the cruel idea that one-liner machine Maggie Smith would soon depart the series (untrue, says Smith and creator Julian Fellowes). But here's the best one: a theatrical film, probably capping the series' eventual end on TV (those Brit shows never wear out their welcome with too many seasons, a lesson American series could stand to learn). Fellowes, of course, isn't confirming but he's also not denying, choosing instead to address the issue with vague talk of "talks." In other words, it could happen. So where's the Facebook petition? We'll sign it.

Romeo San Vicente understands that Mr. Bates is the sweetest, most gentle convicted murderer on TV, but, truth be told, it's really all about Lord Grantham. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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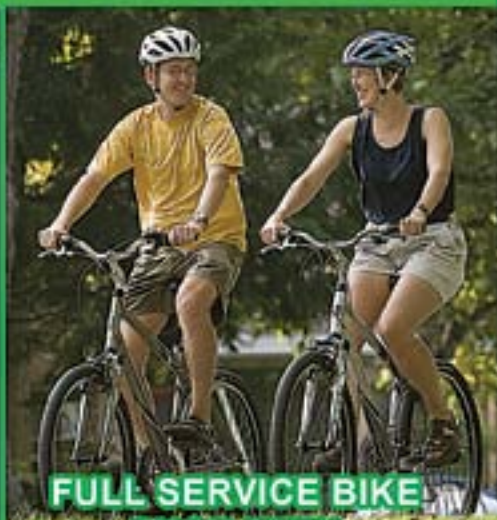
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