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Vaginas take back the Capitol

Politicians, playwright, actresses unite on the Capitol steps for 'The Vagina Monologues'

BY BRIDGETTE M. REDMAN

LANSING – Thousands showed up to the Capitol Monday night protesting the silencing of Rep. Lisa Brown, D-West Bloomfield, and Rep. Barb Byrum, D-Onondaga. In an event titled “Vaginas Take Back the Capitol,” female Democratic lawmakers and professional actresses from around the state were led by Tony Award-winning playwright Eve Ensler in a rally and a performance of Ensler’s “Vagina Monologues.”

Nor did it seem to make much difference to protesters whether Michigan House Speaker Jase Bolger, R-Marshall, instituted the one-day speaking ban because Brown used the word “vagina” or whether it was because her saying “no means no” likened the bill to date rape.

“I was really unbelievably disgusted by their First Amendment rights being violated,” said Andy Adamson, Ann Arbor, who attended the rally with his wife. “That’s why I have this sign: First aMENDment includes WOMEN.”

Brown said she felt compelled to speak against a bill that she described as overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

“I decided I needed to speak in opposition to this bill, because we’re not going to let legislators turn the clock back to the ‘60s where women didn’t have a right to abortion and weren’t insured they were going to have access to safe health care,” Brown explained. “In my speech, I made a few points, but I dared utter the word ‘vagina.’ We shouldn’t be legislating vaginas if you can’t say vaginas.”

Byrum’s ban came after she objected to the Speaker not allowing her to speak to an amendment she had proposed to the abortion bill being debated.

“I was denied the right to speak to my amendment,” Byrum told the crowds Monday evening. “(The Speaker) gavelled my amendment down. Then, being the daughter my mother raised me – hi, Mommy! – I said ‘vasectomy,’ there I said it, and I was gavelled that I was out of order.”

A speaker for Bolger, Ari Adler, said Byrum’s ban the next day came not for saying ‘vasectomy,’ but “for marching through the chamber and shouting like a small child throwing a temper tantrum.”

Amy Geishert from Lansing, who carried a sign at the protest Monday stating, “Male Reps Have Opinions. Female Reps Have Temper Tantrums,” was offended by such characterization. “It is sexist, plain and simple. (The democratic representatives) were making respectful opinions. It is just a double standard. I’m very proud of them for standing up and having a press conference and (this event).”

Lance Enderle, a candidate for U.S. Congress in the 8th District, agreed.

“What happened – that was uncalled for. I



Over three thousand people attended the rally and performance of the Vagina Monologues on the state capitol steps June 15. BTL photos Bridgette Redman.

know Speaker Bolger has probably used worse language at his country club than what he heard on that floor.”

Not everyone was angry with Bolger, however. Penny Gardner, president of the Lansing Association of Human Rights, saw the ban having at least one positive outcome, “If it mobilizes this many people to get here, I want to thank Jase Bolger. I want to send him a thank-you note and tell him I think this is incredible. We haven’t had this many people at the Capitol for any of the things I support until now, and it came in a heartbeat.”

‘Vagina’ heard everywhere

While ‘vagina’ may have been banned on the House floor, the word was in widespread use Monday evening, from attendees chanting the word, to the signs being carried and by the 30-some performers of Ensler’s “Vagina Monologues,” directed by Performance Network’s associate artistic director Carla Milarch.

Ensler, who followed Brown and Byrum on the steps, was quick to praise all who came out and the two legislators. “I am so proud of Michigan. I am so proud you came out. You have heroes here. You have heroes in your midst.”

Ensler is currently rehearsing a new play, “Emotional Creature,” at Berkeley Repertory

Theater in California and had but a single day off which she spent flying to Michigan for the performance of “The Vagina Monologues.”

“I had to be here. Know why? Because these women stood up for our rights...and they were shut down. No one can put the genie back in the bottle. The vaginas are out and we are here to stay,” Ensler said.

Monologues ranging from comic to tragic to reflective – but all involving the vagina – were performed by both female legislators and many of the theater industry’s most recognized actresses.

Clara Leopard, whose step-mother, Emily Sutton-Smith, was performing a monologue about a Bosnian woman who was assaulted repeatedly in a rape camp, was out supporting the performance because of the speaking ban.

“I think it is ridiculous, and I’m glad to see so many people are out here and making a fuss because it deserves that sort of response,” Leopard said.

In an impassioned speech at the end of the “Monologues,” Ensler listed all of the things she was over – focusing primarily on the violence against women and those who value the life of a fetus over the life of a woman. She said those who are truly pro-life would have an entirely different attitude toward women.

“You will honor them and even worship their vaginas,” she said. “And there is nothing dirty or disgusting about the place that all life

comes from. I am over the Michigan state legislature refusing to let Lisa Brown speak because they find the word vagina contemptible or out of bounds or lacking in decorum. My vagina’s got decorum.”

On the Tuesday following the performance, Byrum said she would be speaking at an Obama rally and that she was fairly certain she would be allowed to say ‘vagina’ during it.

“In fact,” she said, “I think they might be upset if I don’t say it. I’m energized and I am so thankful my mom taught me to be an outspoken woman.”

The protest drew people of all ages, from toddlers wearing onesies stating “Viva Vagina” and “I’m grateful for my mom’s vagina” to veterans of the feminist battles.

“I am so tired of this fight, and I say it is time for the young people to stand up,” said Sandra Ducklow, 68, of Waterford. “Where are the Gloria Steinems? Tell me. Bring them on.”

Other signs expressed disbelief that this battle was still happening. “I can’t believe we still have to deal with this S—T” was a sign carried by a woman dressed in turn-of-the-century emancipation style dress while another sign asked, “Didn’t we do this already?”

“It’s outrageous,” said Kathleen Herrick of Okemos. “We fought this fight, I thought 40

Petitions filed to recall Troy Mayor

Daniels makes more antigay remarks on talk radio show

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

PONTIAC – In an effort to remove the Mayor of Troy from office, members of the Recall Janice Daniels (www.recalljanicedaniels.com) campaign filed nearly 9,300 signatures on 909 petition sheets of paper last week at the Oakland County Courthouse. This is 15 percent more than the 7,985 signatures required by law.

“We feel good. We’re very pleased and really happy with the tremendous outpouring of support,” said Troy resident and campaign organizer Matthew Binkowski about turning the petitions in to the Elections Division of the Oakland County Clerk and Register of Deeds office.

The petitions were collected by 125 “dedicated and tireless” volunteers over the past three months.

“Most people we approached didn’t need education on the issues surrounding Janice Daniels.

About three-fourths of them signed the petition when asked. Her supporters, about one-fourth, were usually quiet and they just declined to sign,” said Binkowski. “However, a few got vocal. Some got upset when you refuse to debate them for hours on end on their porch. We actually had one guy heckle a volunteer at the library. Another guy followed a volunteer on his bike. Other than that, they were relatively harmless.”

For those who weren’t aware of the issues, the volunteers carried postcards which explained some of the reasons for the recall efforts, as well as providing the campaign website address for more information. “Our volunteers can usually summarize the situation in a minute or so. After hearing the facts, most people signed the petition,” said Binkowski.

Mayor Daniels has been the center of controversy, both in Troy and nationwide, since December of last year. Binkowski said her conduct provides an overwhelming case for her recall.

In a recent press release, he reiterated the reasons why. “By referring to the City Charter as a ‘whimsical’ document, the Mayor demonstrated her lack of respect for the city’s own Constitution. By repeatedly voting against

the Troy Transit Center, Mayor Daniels put her ideology over the best interests of Troy residents and business community. By attacking city employees with false and irresponsible accusations, Mayor Daniels has driven out John Szerlag, the former City Manager, described by L. Brooks Patterson as ‘one of the best.’ Finally, with her controversial remarks, Mayor Daniels has brought embarrassment and shame to the entire community.”

She faces further criticism following her radio interview last week with Talk Radio 1270 host Charlie Langton. Mayor Daniels once again compared the dangers of the homosexual lifestyle to the dangers of cigarette smoking.

“What I said while I was mayor...I was in a business meeting, I come from a business perspective...I said that I would bring a doctor into a meeting that would say that the homosexual lifestyle is dangerous,” said Mayor Daniels on the air. “Had I been with a group of smokers, I might have said I would like to bring a doctor into this meeting to say that smoking is dangerous.”

After Langton asked whether the mayor felt it was dangerous to be gay, the Troy Patch reported, Mayor Daniels said she had no opinion, but noted, “I think that doctors can make a case for it, certainly.”

Mayor Daniels told the Troy Patch she does not agree with the reasons she is being recalled. “The recall process is part of the representative republican form of government that we have, so we let the process work the way it was intended to,” she said. “I think it’s designed for when elected officials commit a crime, and I’ve committed no crime.” Mayor Daniels said she believes the failed recall of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is proof that citizens do not like recalls. “I hope people will go to my website, janicetroymayor.com, to find out more about me,” she said.

Crime or not, Binkowski pointed out that Michigan’s Constitution and subsequent legislation (MCL §§ 168.951-168.976) permits recall for any objectionable conduct during the elected official’s term in office. “In contrast,



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A performance of the Vagina Monologues on the Capitol steps drew thousands.

► Vagina

Continued from p. 6

years ago. Why are we here? I'm a mother and a grandmother. I don't want my grandchildren to have to continue to fight this fight."

Sixteen-year-old Roman Collins from Lansing, dressed sharply in a dress shirt and tie carried a sign saying, "Stop Pussyfooting Around the Word Vagina." After the "Vagina Monologues" were over, he approached Rep. Byrum and asked for her autograph on the sign — a request she said she was flattered to fulfill.

The performers

Those performing the monologues were:

- Introduction — (Rep. Lisa Brown, D-West Bloomfield; Sen. Democratic Leader Gretchen Whitmer, D-East Lansing; Rep. Barb Byrum, D-Onondaga)
- Intro — Hair (Rep. Dian Slavens, D-Canton Township)
- Hair (Jan Blixt)
- "Wear and Say" Lists (Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Detroit; Rep. Vicki Barnett, D-Farmington Hills; Rep. Stacy Erwin Oakes, D-Saginaw)
- Intro — The Flood (Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton, D-MI 27th District)
- The Flood (Ruth Crawford)
- The Vagina Workshop (Courtney Jo Dempsey-Burkett, Lynn Lammers, Lindsey Ford)
- Vagina Happy Fact (Sen. Rebekah Warren, D-Ann Arbor)
- Intro — Because He Liked To Look At It (Rep. Maureen Stapleton, D-Detroit)
- Because He Liked to Look At It (Jennifer Graham)
- Intro — My Vagina Was My Village (Rana Elmir)
- My Vagina Was My Village (Chelsea Sadler, Emily Sutton-Smith)
- My Angry Vagina (Q'Amara Black, Mary Jo Cuppone, Eva Rosenwald)
- Intro — Reclaiming Cunt (Renee Cheliana)
- Reclaiming Cunt (Suzi Regan)
- Intro — The Woman Who Loved To Make Vaginas Happy (Madison Deadman)
- The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy (Julia Glander, Dana Sutton, Elitza Nicolaou)
- Intro — I Was There In The Room (Rep. Joan Bauer, D-Lansing)
- I Was There In The Room (Sally Pesetsky, Barb Christine, Naz Edwards)
- Over It — (Eve Enslar)



Ferndale Pride Weekend included the SE Michigan Dyke March, the Rainbow Run and dozens of volunteers that helped out over 7M attendees. BTL photos: Crystal Proxmire. Find these and many other photos online at www.pridesource.com



Sunny Rainbow Run, then rain for Ferndale Pride weekend

7,000 converge on Ferndale, new faces attend festivities

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE — When asked if the layers of rainbow paint slowed her down, Hillary Herring of Southfield laughed and said "No, not at all. Actually it was kind of inspiring."

By the end of the 5k Rainbow Run in Ferndale June 18, she was covered in red, orange, yellow, blue, green and purple-dyed corn starch which was thrown as she ran past. She wasn't the only one. Five hundred runners took part, some choosing the 5k and others doing just two.

"This was not like other runs," Herring said. "It was more fun and it inspired me to not do races that don't help causes." She explained that seeing the way all the community organizations, volunteers and sponsors came together, combined with the Pride booths and concert stage gave the Rainbow Run "a totally different feel."

"I have done the American Heart Foundation Run, the Free Press Marathon, and runs in Ann Arbor and Dexter, but from now on I'm only going to do it if the profits go to charity. This one is perfect because it suits my beliefs and what I think is important, and I'd rather have my money go to that."

The Rainbow Run and other Ferndale Pride

events had various organizations involved, and multiple beneficiaries including Affirmations, Michigan AIDS Coalition, and The Ferndale Community Foundation which gives grants to other community projects. Over 30 volunteers took part in the planning process and over 100 volunteers came out to help. The Rainbow Run was an endeavor taken on by the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce, and Project XYZ that organized Saturday's Dyke March.

Herring finished the Rainbow Run in 26 minutes and 30 seconds, with plenty of time to rest before the grand ceremony: the closing of Rainbow Run and the official start of Ferndale Pride.

Here hundreds of rainbow-covered runners met with another hundred or so Pride attendees in front of the stage for speeches and a balloon release salute to the LGBT community. One-thousand bio-degradable balloons in all the colors of the rainbow were released by a line of elected officials including Oakland County Commissioners Craig Covey, Helaine Zack, Marsha Gershenson, and Jim Nash who is giving up his Commission seat in hopes of being elected Water Resource Director for Oakland County. Kevin Howley, who is currently running

against L. Brooks Patterson for Oakland County Executive, was also there along with Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter and Oak Park Mayor Marian McClellan. State Representative Lisa Brown, who is now known as the State Representative who was censored by the state house Republicans for using the word "vagina" also attended.

The balloons were released and the festivities began, including the beer tent, multiple booths from organizations and vendors, a kids' area, and music from the main stage and from the newly remodeled back patio of Orchid, one of Ferndale's many mixed-company clubs.

New to Pride

Of course there was the usual attractive young people enjoying the opportunity to mingle attending the festivities. Merchants with rainbow necklaces, tank tops and caramel corn was everywhere. Politicians and activists speaking up for equality could be found amid a sea of colorful outfits and cheering, dancing people. But also among the hundreds of Pride-goers were

LANSING: Thousands gather for party, 1M for political rally

BY TODD A. HEYWOOD

LANSING – Nearly 1,000 people showed up on the steps of the Michigan Capitol Saturday as part of the annual pride march and rally event, while 3,000 showed up in Lansing's hip Old Town to drink, dance and be merry as part of the annual pride festival.

At the capitol, ralliers were greeted by a mass union ceremony conducted by Rev. Kent Lederer of Unity of Greater Lansing.

Among the speakers at the rally were Diane Goddeeris, mayor of East Lansing; Joe MacDonald, a representative from Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero's office; Emily Dievendorf, policy director at Equality Michigan; R. Cole Bouck, president of the Michigan Gay Officers Action League (MI-GOAL); Kevin Epling, co-director of Bully Police USA; and actor James Duke Mason, who was brought in by the Obama campaign as a surrogate to address the gathering.

Goddeeris reminded participants the city of East Lansing earlier this year, celebrated the 40th anniversary of the nation's first ever law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but noted not enough communities had followed suit.

"Today, 21 states, the District of Columbia and over 141 cities prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation" she said. "But 18 cities in Michigan? C'mon!"



Emily Dievendorf, policy director at Equality Michigan addresses the rally Saturday. Later, dozens of couples are seen during the Commitment Ceremony on the steps of the Capitol lead by Rev. Kent Lederer of Unity of Greater Lansing. BTL photos: Todd Heywood

For Bouck, the rally was one of noting history. As he spoke, he told the rally how in the 80s and 90s exiting the gay bars on Michigan Avenue often meant having members of the Lansing Police Department "toy" with you.

"That's the historical context of what you saw coming up Michigan Avenue today," Bouck told the rally, referring to the contingent of officers and vehicles from Lansing Police, Ingham County Sheriff Department and East Lansing Police, as well as the Lansing Fire department. "That's big."



Introducing herself as "your big bi lobbyist," Emily Dievendorf, policy director at Equality Michigan laid out the last year in Michigan politics. It was a year of antigay legislative moves, punctuated with legislation that banned domestic partner benefits for public employees and passage of a bill to allow counseling students to refuse to counsel persons with whom they hold significant religious differences.

But Dievendorf sounded a note of optimism,

in a year punctuated with such loses.

"We are on the cusp of equality," she said. "But the closer we come, the taller the walls and the thicker the walls are they make on our way to equality." Dievendorf asked rally participants to vow to each other to register and to vote in the coming elections.

"A voice is progress. Many voices is many votes, coming together," she said, "it's a game changer."

several new faces to the Pride experience. There were a noticeable number of presumably straight parents with their gay teens and youth, getting to know their children's peers and showing their love and support.

Eileen Long wore a Dyke March shirt when she left her home in the Auburn Hills area to join her daughter Audrey as a volunteer for the Ferndale Pride event. She admitted that it was a challenge accepting her beloved little girl as a lesbian. "When I was Audrey's age I worked in the floral business and I had tons of gay friends. I was always so accepting. I didn't think I had a homophobic bone in my body. But when she told me, it was like, different. It's different when it's your own child. Not like hate or anger, but I wanted to save her from a hard road. It struck me. And it took a while to get over that fear. But I love my daughter. I don't want to miss out on her life and being there for her when there are those struggles. I don't understand why some of these parents can cut off their children. We know people whose parents just took their stuff and threw it out on the lawn and said 'get out.'"

On the way to Ferndale, Eileen stopped at a gas station. Like any other day she got out to pump her gas, and went inside to pay. But just wearing the Dyke March shirt made the experience much different. "For the first time ever in my life I got that horrible judgmental look from others. I felt it for the first time and it made me feel so bad. These kids," she said choking up a bit. "There are people that feel that judgment everywhere they go."

"We had so much diversity on the planning committee that when everything came together we had a unique event that none of us could have imagined on our own."

- Ferndale Pride organizer
and Oakland County
Commissioner Craig Covey

Audrey not only came out, but she blossomed into what Eileen calls "a little dynamic powerhouse." The 27-year-old Ferndale resident is on the board of the Dyke March and also one of the main organizers for Ferndale Pride. "I came with her the first year...and this year I came to volunteer for her. When she was growing up I would clean houses and I would bring her with me. She was always my right arm, always very helpful. And now I get to assist her. It makes me so proud."

Her advice to other parents is just to

See Ferndale Pride, page 14

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BTL Editorial

Thank you, Mr. President

BY JAN STEVENSON

“Welcome to The White House,” said President Barack Obama to me and about 350 other activists at the Third Annual LGBT Pride Reception June 15. Those simple words opened a floodgate of emotions for me. Prior to that moment, the only other times I had been at The White House I was outside protesting, and here I was inside being welcomed by our nation’s leader.

“For every person who lost a loved one at the hand of hate, we ended a decade of delay and finally made the Matthew Shepard Act the law of the land,” he said, and I was thrown back into the moment in 1992 when I got the phone call telling me that Sue Pittman and Christine Puckett had been murdered by their homophobic neighbor. They had been my friends and fellow board members at Affirmations.

“For every American diagnosed with HIV who couldn’t get access to treatment, we put forward a National HIV/AIDS strategy - because who you are should never affect whether you get life-extending care,” said the President. I said a silent prayer for James Drain, my dear friend and co-worker who died of AIDS in 1994 just months before the release of protease inhibitors that could have saved his life. And I felt a wave of anger at the ghost of former President Ronald Reagan who had refused to even say the word AIDS for six years as the epidemic raged like wild fire.

“For every partner or spouse denied the chance to comfort a loved one in the hospital, to be by their side at their greatest hour of need, we said, enough. Hospitals that accept Medicare or Medicaid - and that is most of them - now have to treat LGBT patients just like any other patient,” said Obama. I wished I could share that moment with my friend, David. In 1998, I had held his hand through an excruciating funeral ceremony for his lifelong partner, a ceremony in which the family excluded him and refused to even mention him in the eulogy - as if the love of his life never existed. David died shortly thereafter, I believe of a broken heart.

“And, of course, last year we finally put an end to ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ - (applause) - so that nobody would ever have to ever again hide who they love in order to serve the country they love,” and my thoughts jumped to Ken Warnock who was the first person I ever met who was thrown out of the Navy for being gay. By all accounts an excellent sailor, Warnock had been subjected to a humiliating interrogation while serving on a ship overseas, something no American servicemember will ever have to endure again.

“Now, we know we’ve got more to do. Americans may feel more comfortable bringing their partners to the office barbecue - (laughter) - but we’re still waiting for a fully inclusive employment non-discrimination act. (Applause.) Congress needs to pass that legislation, so that no American is ever fired simply for being gay or transgender,” said the President, and I gave a silent nod to Jim



The 2012 Presidential LGBT Pride Reception June 15 brought about 350 people into The White House. Pictured here in front of the Lincoln portrait are (left) Jonathan Capehart of the Washington Post, BTL’s publishers Susan Horowitz and Jan Stevenson, and Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of Detroit’s Kick. Photo courtesy of Curtis Lipscomb. Below is President Obama addressing attendees at the White House June Pride gathering on June 15.

here today who are making such a big difference in their classrooms and in their communities,” said Obama. At the reception after his speech I was able to thank Katy Butler in person who was there with her mother. Earlier this year, Butler, just 17, led a national campaign to get the rating agency to change the rating on “Bully” from R to PG13 so teenagers can see this important documentary.

“And as long as I have the privilege of being your President, I promise you, you won’t just have a friend in the White House, you will have a fellow advocate - (applause) - for an America where no matter what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can dream big dreams and dream as openly as you want.”

Thank you Mr. President, on behalf of Sue, Chris, James, David, Ken, Jim, Katy and all LGBT people who now have reason to hope for a more inclusive America.

Domanski who was fired from his job at Hudson’s Department Store in the late 1980s because he is gay. Though painful and difficult for Jim, it turned out to be Hudson’s loss and our community’s gain as he went on to create Pronto! in Royal Oak, led the creation of Steppin’ Out’s AIDS Walk and so many other LGBT projects.

“I want to acknowledge all the young leaders

“And, of course, last year we finally put an end to ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ - (applause) - so that nobody would ever have to ever again hide who they love in order to serve the country they love,” and my thoughts jumped to Ken Warnock who was the first person I ever met who was thrown out of the Navy for being gay.

Viewpoint

Taking care of 'Family': Exploring the needs of our LGBT elders

BY CURTIS LIPSCOMB AND KATHLEEN LATOSCH

Since the mid-2000s there's been a lot of buzz in metro Detroit's LGBT community about what's happening to and for our lesbian, gay, bi and transgender older adults. And there's good reason for it. There are an estimated 22,000 LGBT elders, ages 65 and better, living in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties right now. Another 20,000 will hit the 65-year-old mark by 2020. This tidal wave of aging baby boomers, known by mainstream aging service providers as the "Silver Tsunami," also comes in lavender and teal.

LGBT older adults are three times as likely to live in poverty due to inequalities related to a lifetime of workplace discrimination and a lack of marriage benefits like social security survivor payments and tax-free inheritances.

In the spring of last year, Healing Detroit and the LGBT Older Adult Coalition both simultaneously hosted dialogues about this emerging issue. The findings were similar to what national experts are seeing around the country – LGBT older adults are living in fear and isolation. Only 10 percent of LGBT elders have children to help care for them – as compared to 80 percent of heterosexual elders. Seventy percent of LGBT seniors live alone, as compared to just 30 percent of straight seniors. LGBT older adults are three times as likely to live in poverty due to inequalities related to a lifetime of workplace discrimination and a lack of marriage benefits like social security survivor payments and tax-free inheritances.

Both summits revealed that metro Detroit's LGBT elders faced significant isolation. Today's LGBT elders find mainstream aging services in metro Detroit unwelcoming to LGBT people – both direct care workers/staff and other service recipients who came of age at a time when you could be jailed or institutionalized for being gay. They also find a lack of aging services available through local LGBT organizations. Socially, many older gay men feel isolated and left out of

See **Taking care**, page 11

National group's work for older LGBT adults to be focus of upcoming Detroit gathering

Older Adult Coalition moves closer to forming SAGE chapter

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

DETROIT – The gay rights movement is getting older and getting bolder, and on June 23 LGBT older adults will come together for a daylong conference on aging. The free event will have workshops on topics that are important to people as they age, and folks will be invited to get involved in the Older Adult Coalition, which is well on the way to becoming a SAGE Chapter (SAGE stands for Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders.)

As the Older Adult Coalition moves closer to becoming an official chapter of this national organization, they're pleased to welcome Aaron Tax, the director of federal government relations for services and advocacy for GLBT elders. Tax will be talking about the problems facing older adults and sharing what his agency is doing in Washington to get as much recognition and funding for serving the vulnerable older gay community.

"I'm going to speak with them and also want to learn from them," Tax said about his upcoming visit. "We need people to be educated and involved and we need people who will speak up for older adults even though they're not there yet... I think people just don't want to face growing old, so they ignore the problems and they don't get involved. It's like denial, if they don't see it, it won't happen to them."

SAGE has been serving LGBT older adults since 1978 and has grown to 21 affiliates in 15 states. While helping affiliates organize locally, they also do political advocacy.

"There are two primary areas we are working on right now," Tax said. "One is the Older Americans act. This is the primary vehicle for the organization and delivery of nutrition to older adults. It was part of Pres. Lyndon Johnson's great society program, and was created the same year as Medicare and Medicaid in 1965.

"The primary purpose is to enable older Americans to stay at home in their communities and not have to be placed in care. That's what most people want and it's better for the system to make it so people can stay at home as long

as possible," said Tax. "The act provides for chore assistance, transportation, meals through programs like Meals on Wheels and home nutrition programs. There are a slew of programs to older communities. What we're doing with this is that the Act has no mention of LGBT older adults."

Tax explained the three primary goals SAGE has in regard to the Older Americans Act.

The first is to have older LGBT adults listed as group of greatest economic and social needs, like other demographic groups are. "Funds come from the federal government and are funneled through Area Agencies on Aging,

which is a critical piece of SAGE outreach. The Center is run with collaborations with a dozen partner organizations and gives them a hub to provide information to three key target audiences: LGBT Older Adults, Aging Networks that serve all senior citizens, and to share information with the LGBT community about the needs of their eldest members.

Tax is the keynote speaker for the Planning For The Future event. Other workshops will share information about health and wellness, managing health care, protecting finances, employment and volunteer opportunities and older adult/youth networking. The event is free



Aaron Tax currently serves as the Director of Federal Government Relations for Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE), where he advocates for LGBT-inclusive federal aging policies that account for the unique needs of LGBT older adults.

"I think people just don't want to face growing old, so they ignore the problems and they don't get involved. It's like denial, if they don't see it, it won't happen to them."

- Aaron Tax, the director of federal government relations for services and advocacy for GLBT elders

We want to make sure when folks receive this money that they reach out to the LGBT community and work with LGBT groups," Tax said.

"Many LGBT adults are afraid to engage with the programs. This will say you have to make efforts to reach out to LGBT community. They have to know what is available and they have to be able to access these services." Tax said there are 600 areas on aging, 20,000 service providers spread throughout the country. "This little change of the law will have a big impact," he said.

The second change to the Older Americans Act would be to require funding for data collection of LGBTs as a group. "Data drives funding," he said. "Plus how can you know if you are meeting the needs of a community if you don't ask them?"

The third is to renew funding for the National Resource Center for LGBT Aging,

and includes continental breakfast and lunch.

Planning For The Future takes place June 23 at The Michigan State University Detroit Campus is located , 3408 Woodward Avenue just south of Mack Avenue in Detroit. The facility is completely wheelchair accessible with ample free parking adjacent to the building.

The event is brought to you by a collaboration of LGBT and aging service organizations in the Metro Detroit Region, including: ACLU, Adult Wellbeing Services, Affirmations, Area Agency on Aging 1-B, KICK, Citizens for Better Care, The Jim Toy Community Center, Oakland Family Services, and The Village of Redford. This event is made possible by a grant from the HOPE Fund.

For more information or to register: Call Affirmations: 248-398-7105 Visit www.LGBTolderadults.com

Heard on Facebook

A new study from the University of Padova, Italy claims mothers and maternal aunts of gay men tend to have significantly more offspring. Scientists participating in the research claim this may explain how genetic homosexuality is passed on to the next generation. What do you think?

Why do they have to do studies to see why people are gay? We're gay and we love it! Find out why people are assholes instead.

-Kyle Durkin

This study is fundamentally flawed from its very theoretical bases. It assumes, for one, that there is one type of "gay" according to their population sample that they then extend to generalize for humanity broadly speaking. Along these same lines, although I am still waiting for the actual study to be published so I can examine it further, it seems that there is no account for historical or cross-cultural variation in same-sex sexualities ... something that would absolutely change the results of this study if taken into account. I'll be writing up a more detailed response to this piece once I get a copy of the study. There's much more to say.

-Greg Storms

I often thought there was a reason why homosexuality wasn't eliminated by evolution. Now I know the reason: another great trade off by Mother Nature!

-Manus Nemeth

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



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S/he Said Bigotry and the Boy Scouts

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Janice Daniels

"What I said while I was mayor ... I was in a business meeting, I come from a business perspective ... I said that I would bring a doctor into a meeting that would say that the homosexual lifestyle is dangerous. Had I been with a group of smokers I might have said I would like to bring a doctor into this meeting to say that smoking is dangerous. I think that doctors can make a case for it certainly. (Asked whether it is dangerous to be gay) I have no opinion, but I think that doctors can make a case for it, certainly."

-Mayor Janice Daniels, Troy, Michigan, in an interview on local Talk Radio 1270, <http://detroit.cbslocal.com/>, June 13.



Tony Perkins

"The month of June is Gay Pride Month. 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, it's not a matter of whether or not someone can do what they want to do with their lives. 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... We're talking about religious organizations losing their religious freedom... We never asked for this debate... It was the homosexual community that wanted to have this discussion on redefining marriage. Whether it's adultery, whether it's any type of sexual immorality it's a problem, but we're not celebrating those other forms as a society, we're not promoting it and teaching it as normal in our schools."

-Tony Perkins, president of the anti-gay Family Research Council, on the American Family Association's radio network, www.rightwingwatch.org, June 11.



James Turley

"Ernst & Young is proud to have such a strong record in LGBT inclusiveness. As CEO, I know that having an inclusive culture produces the best results, is the right thing for our people and makes us a better organization. My experience has led me to believe that an inclusive environment is important throughout our society and I am proud to be a leader on this issue. I support the meaningful work of the Boy Scouts in preparing young people for adventure, leadership, learning and service, however the membership policy is not one I would personally endorse."

-James Turley, CEO, Ernst & Young accounting firm, in a statement, the first member of the Boy Scouts of America's Executive Board to publicly disapprove of the nationwide policy excluding gays, www.huffingtonpost.com, June 13.

"I regret to say that I and others like me have been alienated by the modern Boy Scout organization I used to admire. It would be wonderful to have an organization that provides all the opportunity for learning and adventure without all the religious bigotry and homophobic garbage. I support the mission of the advocacy group Scouting for All that wishes to make BSA more inclusive. I would like to see an organization that does all the cool things that the BSA does and includes girls too as I question the extent to which single sex environments are a positive thing."

-Jim Wilson, in his blog posting titled "My beef with Boy Scouts of America," posted on the blog Freethought Arizona, <http://tucsoncitizen.com>, May 31.



Kat LaTosch and
Curtis Lipscomb

► Taking care

Continued from p. 9

a community which can place a strong emphasis on image and youthfulness. Participants from both summits talked about facing significant financial instability – from concerns about healthcare to housing affordability.

But there were some significant differences between the two summits.

The most significant difference identified between these two groups – one targeted an African American Detroit-resident audience while the other attracted a mainly Caucasian, suburban audience, was that black Detroiters had concerns specifically revolving around living in the city as an LGBT elder, whereas white suburbanites rarely mentioned their town or city as a significant issue – beyond a concern of general isolation. Our African American LGBT community members living in the city, already facing tremendous isolation and heightened financial concerns, also have to deal with the same city issues facing all residents. Of those issues, unemployment and public safety topped the list (for a complete report, visit www.e-kick.org or www.lgbtolderadults.com).

Research shows, and it certainly doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out, that as you compound layers of adversity, risk dramatically increases. The outlook for a white 70-year-old lesbian who's a retired gym teacher living in the suburbs is considerably different from the black 70-year-old lesbian who worked as a blue collar manufacturer for her entire life, is now disabled and living in an unsafe neighborhood with inadequate public transportation and an extremely low public safety response time. And her concerns are very different from the suburban lesbian.

And yet we are all in this together – we are family.

This year – June 23 – the Elder Project at KICK (a spinoff program from last year's Healing Detroit Summit) is partnering with the LGBT Older Adult Coalition to co-host one unified summit – The 2012 LGBT Older Adult Summit. It takes place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the MSU Detroit Center, 3408 Woodward Avenue (next to the WSU's Bonstelle Theater) in Detroit and features workshops and panels addressing isolation, healthcare, finances, and employment. The conference is free to attend, but you must RSVP in advance at www.LGBTolderadults.com.

Frequently, the unspoken definition of “the LGBT community” defaults to the dominant or majority culture, and as is common in the Metro Detroit region, this all too often means white and suburban. We are working hard together, to ensure that as we move forward to plan services for LGBT elders and that they are sensitive to the needs of a wide range of people.

Further, we challenge readers to think about the whole LGBT community as a broad and diverse cross-section of our Metro Detroit region's population. For a community that is often isolated from biological family members, turning to our chosen “family” – our whole family – is a strength we can and should count on.

Curtis Lipscomb is executive director of KICK. He can be reached at curtislipscomb@e-kick.org or www.e-kick.org and Kathleen LaTosch is co-chair of the LGBT Older Adult Coalition. She can be reached at klatosch@gmail.com or www.lgbtolderadults.com

Saginaw LGBT banquet to honor local activists, businesses, politicians

BTL STAFF REPORT

Outstanding members of Saginaw and Bay City's gay community will be honored at the Perceptions-sponsored 4th annual Saginaw Valley LGBT Pride Awards Banquet at 6 p.m. on June 26 at Saginaw's Andersen Enrichment Center. Perceptions Saginaw Valley is a Tri-City LGBT organization.

The event will include a reception with wine and appetizers, followed by dinner and the award presentations.

Michelle Brown, a Detroit based speaker, author and activist will be the keynote speaker for the evening. Brown will deliver a speech entitled, “The Road to Equality Begins at the Intersection of Social Justice and LGBT Equality.”

Several honorees will be recognized for their service to the LGBT community in the Saginaw area.

The Lifetime Achievement Award has been earned by Barbara Klimaszewski, a Saginaw Criminal and Civil Rights Attorney, who has been active in the community for over 35 years. When members of the LGBT community had no one to stand up for them, Klimaszewski provided representation. In 1976 she began the Underground Railroad, a place where battered women and their children could escape. Its formation marked the first free standing, emergency women's shelter in Michigan. She serves as an advisor on Perceptions' board. She is also a member of ACLU and the Criminal Defense Association of Michigan. She has worked hard throughout her career for equality and civil rights.

Leo Romo will be honored with a Pride Award. Romo is a tireless activist, often visiting Lansing and other areas to champion LGBT causes. He's an organizer, advisor, educator and friend to many in the community. He is the current chairman of PFLAG Tri-Cities and belongs to countless other LGBT organizations. Romo served on the board of Perceptions Saginaw Valley for many years where he remains an advisor. He was the creator of the Pride Awards banquet and served as its chairman for 3 years.

Tana Michaels will also be given a Pride Award for her contributions in music and journalism. Michaels, a singer/guitar player and journalist, has donated her time and talent to many LGBT causes including 2009 Respect Fest, 2011 & 2012 Saginaw Pride Fests, Perceptions Wine Tasting event and others. She is the former editor of Perceptions Newsletter, and a regular contributor to *Between The Lines*.

The 2012 Class of Mt Pleasant's Sacred Heart Academy will receive a Pride Award for launching a campaign to let gay alumnus, Dominic Sheahan-Stahl, speak at graduation. Unsuccessful in their campaign, they organized an inclusive graduation event, “Live Through Love,” where Sheahan-Stahl delivered his speech to the graduating class and approximately 800 community members.

The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe owner (locations in Saginaw and Midland,) Carrie Fischer, will take home one of the two business awards presented this year for her sweet donation of cupcakes and cookies to community events including,

Saginaw Valley LGBT Pride Awards Banquet

6 p.m. June 26

Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw

www.perceptionssv.org

but not limited to, the Chocolate Party and Friday night dinners. Carrie's blog features pro-equality promotions of “The Laramie Project” at MCFTA and photos of same-sex wedding cake toppers.

The second business award will be presented to Eric Philips, owner of The Court Street Café, for his unending support of the LGBT community by donating restaurant space for meetings and Friday night dinners. The Court Street Café will also be a vendor at this year's Pride Fest.

The 2012 Political Award will be awarded to Kyle Bostwick who, from his post as treasurer for the Saginaw Democratic Party and as the Legislative Aide for Rep. Charlie Brunner, works to further equality and civil rights for all people. He is a great example and role model to other young individuals who aspire to a career in politics.

Seating is limited. Tickets, \$25 per person, \$15 for students and low income, can be purchased at <http://www.perceptionssv.org>, or by calling 989-891-1429.

Tana Michaels contributed to this report.

Holland Pride events planned for June 28

A community choir, award-winning documentary, and a discussion of discrimination in the workplace and housing are all on tap for Holland's 8th annual Gay & Lesbian Pride event on June 28 at the Park Theater, 248 S. River Ave.

The activities will begin at 7 p.m. with a performance by “In Harmony,” an all inclusive community choir started by Marty Kiefer, who also founded and directed the West Michigan Gay Men's Chorus. The choir features people of various ages and sexual orientation and its goal is to bring about change and understanding through “beautiful,

meaningful and life-changing music,” said Kiefer.

At 8 p.m., the award-winning documentary “Out at Work” will be shown. The film follows a cook who was fired for “failing to demonstrate normal heterosexual values” and also includes the stories of an auto worker and librarian who seek workplace safety and job security. It was the winner of the GLAAD Award for outstanding documentary of the year and the Golden Apple Award from the National Educational Media Network.

The one-hour documentary will be followed by a discussion led by Jay

Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project. Kaplan will speak about the current status of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the workplace and housing in Michigan and field questions from the audience.

Dessert will be served and refreshments will be available. All of the events are free, with good will offerings accepted.

The event is sponsored by the PFLAG Holland/Lakeshore chapter and Holland is Ready.

Parting Glances



No believe it or why not?

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

It's 5:30 Friday afternoon. Thinking of BTL co-publishers Jan and Susan in Washington, D.C., I iPhone text a simple message of sharing: "Hugs!" Seconds later Jan cellphone hugs me back.

Jan's comment: "It's totally awesome!" Her accompanying picture is a shot of invitees meeting President Obama at the ongoing White House LGBT reception. A stunning moment shared.

Jan is visible in the lower left-hand corner, looking stylish, well dressed for an auspicious, who'd-ever-believe-it-could-happen? (For someone who came out in 1956 like myself, this is truly mind boggling. Pie in the Sky with red-white-and-blue sparkler candles!)

I email back. "I'm in awe – even with this tiny rainbow souvenir." Incidentally, my last iota of White House contact occurred some 20 years ago. A friend was there for some sort of military honors during Bill Clinton's administration, and he quietly pocketed sugar packets.

I shan't mention my friend's name – just in case having done so might occasion an investigation by the FBI, CIA, or Michigan Republicans – but I treasured that little packet of calories. It carried the White House seal. I've been tempted to put it up for e-Bay bid, if only I could locate it among all my studio art.

(If a pastry simulacra of Mother Teresa can earn several eBay thousands, surely a sugar packet from a sticky-fingers Democratic presidency can get high-digit bid response. Monica Lewinsky, who?)

This is the second time in 12 hours that I've been high tech zapped. On Thursday night I was sitting next to an architect friend, John, dim-suming in a favorite chinese restaurant when he showed me China photos taken two years ago on a business trip.

He had dozens, and as he highlighted them on his iPad he explained how well he was treated in that remote, little known city. People went out of their way to literally open doors for him. A total stranger, he was treated like visiting royalty.

Then, to my delight and surprise, John brought up a map of China, zeroed in on the province and city where he had stayed, and then the neighborhood where he lived – the apartment building – and also the eight-story architectural center he temporarily worked in. All thousands of miles away. Details clear; and John traced how he walked everywhere in the area. Just like being there. A miraculous techno visit.

I'm also in awe of American-made GPS units with voice overs that give sweet-or-sour commanding directions to wherever one wants to go. I know that satellites are somehow involved in street-by-street pinpointing, but it all seems like magic to me. (Two hundred years ago, it would be condemned as witchcraft.)

Wherever we look, wherever we listen, our modern world is a wonderment of astounding, taken for granted, high tech. What was only dreamed about perhaps in times long, long gone – things that only the fabled walk-on-water gods could perform – is now fact.

And, if far-fetched truth, turned pleasing reality be known, it's pretty hard to top a gathering of gays, lesbians, T-persons (not T-baggers) shaking hands with the President of the United States. Hugs, Obama! (Yea, verily: Mitt was inconspicuous by his absence.)

Charles@pridesource.com

Novi arson latest in life of challenges for Stacy Barker

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

NOVI – When ten year old Dimani went to live with a lesbian couple in Novi, she got As and Bs for the first time in her life.

"She was doing really well here," said Stacey Barker, one of the women who took her in earlier this year. "Just a couple of weeks ago she helped me do a Girl's Group event. I hired her to help. She took the responsibility so serious! She helped me tie balloons and we put together little gift bags. I paid her \$10 an hour and she was so proud of herself for doing a good job. You should have seen her being so helpful!"

The Girls' Group event, which helps connect young women in an empowering and supportive environment, was just one of the many ways Barker has given back to the community after overcoming unbelievable obstacles in her own life. Barker has been working with the Girl's Group in Ann Arbor, and having Dimani as part of the family had also been a light in her life, and a way to give back.

But then an arsonist's fire destroyed their home and Dimani went back to live with her biological mother in Detroit.

On May 12, while Barker and her partner Tawana Williams were in Las Vegas celebrating their honeymoon, someone broke into their Novi Meadows home, scrawled racist and homophobic comments on the walls, and used an accelerant to set the home on fire.

"All we have left are the clothes we took with us to Vegas," Barker said. "We lost everything. All our wedding presents, all our stuff, everything."

While Dimani still had belongings at her mother's house in Detroit, she also lost clothing and toys in the fire. "The worst thing is losing our daughter," Barker said. "After the fire we had to take her home because her mother didn't feel like it was safe. Kids at school were making fun of Dimani and one boy told her that we should have died in the fire."

Barker said that the home in Detroit is also a loving one, and that Dimani is in good hands. But she worries about her education. "She moved out here with us so she could go to Novi schools, but now she is too scared."

Dimani had been with her mother

when the fire occurred, since Barker and Williams were in Nevada. When they returned they stayed in a hotel for sixteen days before their insurance relocated them to a one-bedroom apartment. They will not be returning to Novi Meadows.

"We never had any problems there," Barker said. "We've never been disrespected. That's what makes it so horrible, not knowing who did it or why." She said she remains close to her neighbors,

without the professional business clothes she wears when she hosts events and does public speaking.

"Me and my partner just support each other. We don't want to ask for help. We're the ones who help other people overcome. I know we're going to get our blessings, because we have our health and we have each other."

She said this isn't the worst thing that has happened to her. Barker's life has been fraught with struggle, not just as a lesbian, but as a woman trying to make it in a society where violence and degradation of women is still all too common. When she was 18 years old she was hospitalized after being gang-raped by three men. And when she was 22 she was sentenced to life in prison after using deadly force to stop another sexual assault.

She was locked up for 22 years, half her life at the time. In 2000 a Federal court ruled that the judge in her trial was wrong for not explaining to the jury that a woman is allowed to use deadly force to prevent a sexual assault. It took a full ten years after that for the parole board to finally approve her release.

While she was incarcerated, Barker was repeatedly raped and assaulted by prison guards. Barker won settlements in 1995, 2000 and 2010 as a result of being sexually assaulted in prison. The most recent suit uncovered widespread abuse of prisoners and resulted in over 800 women coming forward in a class action lawsuit against the state. Thirty prison guards being convicted of various related crimes as a result.

The torture she endured behind bars drove her to do better for herself. She earned a degree and made connections to the outside world. One connection is Williams, who she's dated off and on since 1994 before living together and ultimately having a commitment ceremony. Other connections helped her find work in the non-profit world and as a public speaker.

"Through Girls Group I get to help young women stay in school, don't be a teen mom, don't get in abusive relationships. We also send them on trips and to conferences to learn how to be independent leaders."

With a life full of experience and a heart full of love, Barker said she's going to keep moving forward. "A lot of people would say 'why me?' But I say 'why not me?' I'd rather have it be me than someone who isn't as emotionally strong who would really be hurt by it."



Stacy Barker, right, with her partner and daughter earlier this year. Photo courtesy of Stacy Barker.

"All we have left are the clothes we took with us to Vegas. We lost everything. All our wedding presents, all our stuff, everything."

including the neighbor to her right that made the centerpiece for her wedding.

Barker said the Novi Police have been "very honest and nice," and that the FBI is also looking into the fire as a potential hate crime. In Michigan anti-gay remarks are not considered a hate crime, but anti-black remarks are. Barker said that her house contained both, though it's not clear yet how the crime will be prosecuted or if a suspect will be arrested.

Equality Michigan support

Equality Michigan is helping the family through their victim services program. In addition to providing educational resources and a supportive ear, they are collecting department store gift cards to help them replace household items and clothing they lost.

Barker is on medical leave from work where she helps empower women. She worries about how she will return to work

NC couples sue federally for second parent adoption

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Six couples in North Carolina are taking second parent adoption to the Federal level. The ACLU of North Carolina has filed a lawsuit on behalf of the gay and lesbian couples contending that denying second parent adoption deprives Americans of equal rights and the right to due process.

A second parent adoption occurs when one partner in an unmarried couple adopts the other partner's biological or adoptive child. This can occur in both gay and straight relationships. In December 2010, the North Carolina Supreme Court banned second parent adoptions for same-sex couples.

Elizabeth Gill, staff attorney for the ACLU LGBT Project stressed the harm that is caused by "not allowing lesbian and gay couples the ability to create the same parent-child relationships as heterosexual families."

"Harms are an incredibly important part of this case," Gill said. "Kids are left vulnerable in a number of different ways. Children are harmed by not having access to health care benefits and the harm from the real fact that a child could be taken away."

Currently 20 states plus Washington, D.C., have clear protection for second parent adoptions either through statute or by case law. Five states expressly prohibit it and the remainder – including Michigan – are ambiguous, with many states having counties that will do it while others won't.

Though two other cases – one in Michigan – have been filed in Federal courts, none have been heard yet, Gill said. "The process can take years, but if



Marcie and Chantelle Fisher-Borne. Courtesy of ACLU.

we start now it will be all those many years closer," she said.

The families

Chantelle Fisher-Borne and her partner Marcie have been in a committed relationship for 15 years. A recent vote in North Carolina solidified their inability to get married, and a 2010 vote banned second-parent adoptions completely in the state. They hope that justice can be done for the sake of their children by attacking this law at a Federal level.

The couple has two children, and each is the biological mother of one. When their daughter was born, the couple was treated rudely by a hospital staff member who demanded their legal paperwork. If both women were able to be fully recognized legal parents to their children, such encounters could be avoided.

"We were treated as if our family was less than other families, during what should have been one of the happiest

occasions of our lives," said Marcie. "We don't ever want there to be any question as to who should care for our children. If something were to happen to either one of us, it could tear our family apart."

Some of the protections that come with a second parent adoption include ensuring that all children in the family are covered if one partner lacks health insurance; ensuring that families will stay together and children will not be torn from the only home they've known if something should happen

to the biological parent; ensuring that either parent will be allowed to make medical decisions or be able to be by their child's bedside if one their children is hospitalized.

The law doesn't just affect same-gender-loving partners and their kids. Examples of other situations where second parent adoption would give essential protections to a child include if a single dad also wants his sister or his mother to have parental rights, or if a straight couple who is unmarried wants to jointly adopt. Essentially it would remove marriage as a barrier to parenthood.

Michigan

In Michigan the second-parent adoption case filed federally has stalled because the State of Michigan has filed for a summary dismissal, contending that adoption is a state right and not a federal one. Hazel Park women April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse have been together for ten years, and have lived together for six. Rowse is the legal parent of one child and DeBoer is the legal parent of another. Each of the children was taken in by DeBoer and Rowse after being abandoned or surrendered at birth by their mothers. The women served as guardians and licensed foster parents to the children before adopting them as individuals. Each child could only legally be adopted by one of the women, so they face the same fears as the couples in North Carolina. (Read more at www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=52468)

To help the general public understand the issue and to help supporters mobilize their friends, co-workers and neighbors, the ACLU has put together an "Allies Guide to Talking about Adoption by LGBT Parents" which can be downloaded at www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights/allies-guide-talking-about-adoption-lgbt-parents.

Creep of the Week



Joe Haveman

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

You know, if you would have asked me a year ago what the most terrible state in the nation for lesbians or gays I would not have said Michigan. I mean, yes, Michigan would have made the list, but not at the coveted #1 spot.

Well, apparently Michigan Rep. Joe Haveman (R-Holland) has a competitive streak and didn't like Michigan being anything less than the worst. And so in March he introduced House Bill 5040, a.k.a. the "Julea Ward freedom of conscience act." This odious bill according to Emily Dievendorf, director of policy at Equality Michigan, "would prohibit public colleges and universities from disciplining students participating in counseling, social work and psychology programs who refuse treatment to a patient based on the patient's sexual orientation or gender identity, if the discrimination is motivated by a 'sincerely held religious belief.'"

In other words, if you're gay or lesbian and you want mental health care and your counselor or therapist thinks homos are yucky, they don't have to help you.

A little backstory here: Julea Ward was a student at Eastern Michigan University who got booted from the counseling program there because she refused to help a gay student because it offended her because of Jesus or whatever. Afterwards she became a hero to anti-gay folks everywhere, obviously.

"Every individual is entitled to religious beliefs and should not be reprimanded for those beliefs," Haveman stated.

Um, yes, we're all entitled to believe whatever we want, batshit crazy or otherwise, and nobody denied Ward that. However, being gay is not a belief, it's a real thing. And gay people are human beings, which, presumably, someone in a counseling program has a desire to help.

"Ms. Ward did not deny counseling to the client," Haveman continued. "She requested to refer the client to another counselor, and by being responsible to make sure the client received the best counseling available, she was punished."

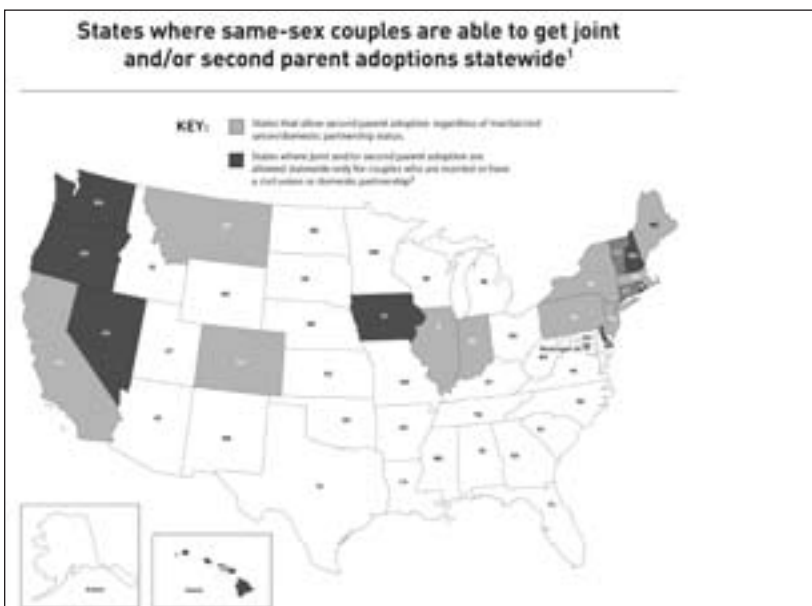
In other words, Ward was not capable of providing the best counseling available. So why should she get a counseling degree? Oh, yeah. Because she didn't want to help a gay person and that's a matter of "conscience." Now, if she had refused to help someone because they were Hispanic or because they were confined to a wheelchair then everyone would call that blatant discrimination.

According to Dievendorf, "Discrimination based on various categories, including age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, language preference, and socioeconomic status is prohibited by national counseling standards."

So by saying, "Hey, I don't want to treat gay people," Ward essentially said, "Hey, I am not qualified for this program." Just like if you want to be a doctor and you say, "Oh, by the way I don't believe in medicine and science and will just pray to Jesus on behalf of my sick patients," you should be shown the door not given a diploma.

I have heard the argument made again and again that this bill actually benefits gay clients because who wants to be counseled by a homophobe? And, yes, that is true. But not everyone has the luxury of shopping around when it comes to care providers. Some people are limited by insurance or lack thereof. Nor do kids who see school social workers have many options. And the last thing an LGBT kid struggling with his or her sexuality needs is a counselor who says, "You're too broken to help."

But for Haveman and the others who supported this bill, religious rights (and let's be clear, that really means "Christian rights") trump LGBT civil rights every time.



► **Ferndale Pride**

Continued from p. 7

love. "No matter what you face with your child, love them. Be sweet and patient and hope that things will work themselves out," she said. "Your child needs and deserves your love."

The theme of family love was evident in the Ferndale Pride planning. The kids' tent was run by local moms and dads, and the Rainbow Run had a short family "run" where kids could join their parents and get paint thrown on them too. And in the afternoon a local family spoke about their experience adopting a gay teenager.

The afternoon Market Daze suffered a loss of attendees as heavy rains poured on downtown Ferndale, sending many of the families home and pushing the rest of the crowds into the bars, coffee shops and boutiques along 9 Mile and Woodward, giving the businesses – many of which are gay-owned or employ LGBT staff – an even

bigger boost in sales than expected. Fortunately the sun came back out in the late afternoon and the Drag Show and after parties, another boost for business, carried on as scheduled.

Ferndale Pride Weekend had many individual events including the SE Michigan Dyke March and a Light the Night Walk where visitors heard from multiple groups about how they are affected by hate.

Covey said 7,000 people came out in total and there were no injuries or incidents. He said over 125 volunteers helped out the day of the festival and a core group of 20-30 on the planning committee. "One thing that makes this event so neat is that we had all sorts of folks come together with their own ideas to make one big festival. We had so much diversity on the planning committee that when everything came together we had a unique event that none of us could have imagined on our own."

'Bully Chronicles' fundraising deadline approaches

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Local filmmaker Amy Weber is nearing the final fundraising days for her true-to-life fictional documentary, *The Bully Chronicles*. She remains hopeful that she will reach her goal of \$100,000 by June 23.

"Every penny counts in this game changing project that will help bring understanding and healing to an epidemic that has plagued our youth for far too long," said Weber about the 100 percent Michigan-made project.

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

other side of the story for the first time – the bully's side.

So far, supporters have donated more than \$20,000 toward making the film at Indiegogo (www.indiegogo.com/TheBullyChronicles), the world's largest global funding platform. Every dollar raised will go toward the making of the film. "This is a true example of a grassroots effort. We need supporters and we have to pull together as a community in order to make this happen," said Weber.

Leslee Blatnikoff, co-owner of Real Ryder Revolution in West Bloomfield, is doing anything she can to help with fundraising efforts for the film while introducing a brand new workout to the community at her indoor cycling studio, the first of its kind in Michigan.

"Amy and Tina are our riders and they're also good friends of mine. They are two very hip, young, successful women. I love what they stand for. I respect them so much and I care for them as individuals. I want to support the film, which they are so dedicated and passionate about," said Blatnikoff.

She and her business partners, Traci Raitt and Dan Barish, take cycling to a new level and actually simulate an outdoor ride. The Real Ryder bikes offer a total body workout allowing riders to turn, lean, steer, race, climb, and strengthen their core while

generating an increased calorie burn.

"Spinning has been around for a long time. This is the next level of exercise...an intense, exhilarating and motivating 45 to 60 minute workout primed to inspiring, hot music," said Blatnikoff. "It's my pleasure to promote good health and raise awareness."

Visitors are encouraged to come and work hard, but to do things at their own pace. "Any level can take a class. Have something light to eat before, bring water and a towel. People will be amazed at what a great workout they will get," said Blatnikoff, a hardworking mother who is philanthropic in her community.

"This bullying thing has become such a big to-do with people judging and hurting each other. I'm not about that anymore in my life, which is why I want to be a part of this and see this grow. This film is so important," said Blatnikoff, adding that donations are accepted at the studio whether people take a class or not.

"We are very honored that Real Ryder Revolution is making efforts to raise money for *The Bully Chronicles*," said Weber. "What a wonderful opportunity to exercise, have a great time and contribute to a much-needed cause."

Real Ryder Revolution is located at 6716 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield. 248-737-645, www.realryderrevolution.com



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Between Ourselves

Meet Tyler Bradley

T Tyler Bradley a third year student at Saginaw Valley State University studying graphic design and Spanish. He is the A&E Section Editor of The Valley Vanguard and Social Activities Coordinator of Living Proud, the on-campus affinity group.

1 How big of an LGBT presence is there at Saginaw Valley?

While the LGBT presence at Saginaw Valley might be a bit smaller than at other Universities, our presence is definitely growing. The University has started Ally Training sessions, which more than 100 have completed.

Up until recently, there was an LGBT literature course offered at the University.



on an LGBT program. We've had programs for anorexia, alcohol, drugs, and texting and driving, but nothing was ever mentioned about LGBT issues in our school unless it was forcibly brought up by a student.

As for college, I view being out in a whole new way. While you're constantly meeting new people, you're constantly going through a coming out process with each individual person. So it's hard to say if you are out or not.

2 What type of events do you have?

Our registered student organization, Living Proud, holds bonding get togethers so that those who aren't on the whole social activist side of things can get to know people like them and just have fun. We do the program "How Good is Your Gaydar?" in which the audience asks a series of volunteer panelists questions to determine their sexuality. We organize a group to participate in an AIDS Walk. Our charity drag show is entering its sixth year. Word on the street is that we have one of the best college drag shows hosted at a University.

We also usually organize a group of students to go to the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally Collegiate Conference that's filled with tons of LGBT-themed programming and LGBTQA leaders from other college campuses.

3 How is being out and active in college different than your high school experience?

I was the only one in my high school that identified as something other than heterosexual in the whole school. It was very disheartening! In fact, I had attempted to contact some old high school teachers some months ago about putting

4 Are other students supportive of the LGBT students?

This is a little harder of a question. While we do have a growing ally population at the University, there will always be a select number of students who aren't supportive. My freshman year, I had a roommate who was against the idea of homosexuality. After he had gotten to know me, he was completely okay with it. In fact, he said his views on it had changed a lot because of meeting me.

5 Do you see people who are coming out while at college, and what do you do to help them?

I just try to be available if they have any questions, concerns or just need someone to talk to. A couple weeks ago, a professor had talked to me and had thanked me for writing newspaper articles about LGBT events. He had told me he is in the process of coming out himself, and is very appreciative for all that I've done. Knowing things like that are helping support not only students, but professors too is a very rewarding feeling.

A longer version of this interview can be found online at www.pridesource.com

► Troy Mayor

Continued from p. 5

when an elected official has committed an illegal act, the officer can be removed in accordance with MCL § 168.327, a completely separate and distinct procedure," he said.

Binkowski said an in-house verification of signatures was conducted to make sure the names and addresses match the registered voter database. The Elections Division has seven days to inform them whether or not they have enough "facially valid" signatures and within

22 days must verify that each signer is properly registered. Mayor Daniels has 30 days after the date of filing to challenge any signatures, according to the clerk's office, and a final review by the Elections Division must occur within 35 days after filing. Once the signatures are certified, the issue will put to Troy voters in the Nov. 6 ballot, alongside the presidential election. No special election will be required and thus, no extra cost to the taxpayers.

As far as the Recall Janice Daniels group is concerned, their next project is fundraising and getting the message out to the voters.

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Photos: Neil Krug

Jake and Ana talk 10 years together, who's gayer and disco idols

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Never ones to take themselves too seriously – their new video, “Baby Come Home,” has them camping it up in nun gear – Jake Shears and Ana Matronic of Scissor Sisters let loose in our recent interview. Who’s gayer? Jake has the worst table manners? The band thought Ana was murdered and tossed in the trunk of a car? Check out what the Sisters – who just released their fourth album, “Magic Hour,” and will play on June 27 at the Royal Oak Music Theatre – revealed about life on the road, and life with each other.

Does this album have as high of a libido as “Night Work”?

Jake Shears: There’s sexy music on it, but it’s not sexually aggressive. The last record was very aggressive in a certain way; this one is much more romantic – about relationships and friendships.

Scissor Sisters

8 p.m. June 27
Royal Oak Music Theatre
318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak
www.royaloakmusictheatre.com

The stuff that’s sexual is pretty funny; this record definitely has a pretty strong sense of humor.

Ana Matronic: “Night Work,” in addition to being really sexual, was about Jake finding his creative footholds again. Sex and creativity come from the same place; they’re instincts that you can hone but they are intrinsic to you. You can really only control them. You can’t pick who you fall in love with or are attracted to, and you can’t pick aesthetically what you’re attracted to or into. You can only develop it. That’s why I think it was not only a desire to talk about desire

but a real tapping into that creative force.

The last album, “Night Work,” took nearly four years to release; this one only took two. How were you able to get this album out so quickly?

Jake: This one we made in six months. It was a pretty laid-back process, and I wasn’t feeling wound up or stressed out and wanted to make music that wasn’t over-thought. I just wanted to make a happy record that was fun to write that meant something. It was super natural and the creativity was definitely flowing, which you can never take for granted. It came really easy.

Ana: For me, songwriting is never very laid-back; that’s the thing that I really fret about. When I get to relax is when the show is together and we’re performing. But from my perspective, and watching Jake in the studio, this is his most confident moment in the studio, I believe. He

had a really clear sense of what he wanted and where he wanted to go with things.

What’s the weirdest inspiration for a song off “Magic Hour”?

Jake: There’s a song called “The Secret Life of Letters” about creative block. I don’t know if that’s the weirdest inspiration, but it’s weird, because the song itself is about not being able to write a song. When I wrote that, it was the only way I could write a song, so that’s a special and interesting song to me.

Ana: “Let’s Have a Kiki” was directly inspired by an experience I had of going to a party; it was raining and the cops had busted it and it was in a loft downtown. It was partly inspired by that and it was partly inspired by the fact that Jake and I love to have house parties. That

See Scissor Sisters, page 25

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Hear Me Out BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Kylie Minogue keeps the compilations coming. Plus: 'Rock of Ages' surprises



Kylie Minogue, 'The Best of Kylie Minogue'

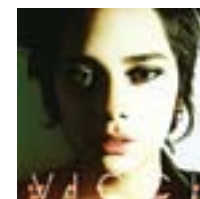
After two decades of niche fame, Kylie Minogue's camp isn't giving up on demonstrating to the non-gay public the awesomeness of the Aussie, recycling her hits into remixes, live releases and past hit collections. The strategy? Drop a new album, and then get those hits on another album – any album – stat. “The Best of Kylie Minogue” makes its case: The underrated diva's catalog is a bank of irresistible dance-music goodies, from her classic '80s-released fame-maker “The Loco-Motion” to 2002's crossover hit “Love at First Sight.” Those, of course, show up here (the former as the 7” mix), as do 19 other tracks, and their music videos on an accompanying DVD, from the last 25 years: “I Should Be So Lucky,” a bubblegum standout from her 1988 debut that begs you to get out the boom box, and disco-influenced gems like “Spinning Around” and “Can't Get You Out of My Head.” The latest additions, “All the Lovers” and “Get Outta My Way,” come from Minogue's reinvigorating “Aphrodite,” but that hardly warrants another cobbled LP after 2004's two-disc set, “Ultimate Kylie” – even if this is her 25th year since making the shift from soap star to dance queen. “Timebomb,” her new single commemorating this milestone, would've been a nice incentive on an album that's a hard-to-justify buy. At least there's the cool cover art. Kylie buttons from different eras? Oh hell yeah. *Grade: B-*



'Rock of Ages' soundtrack

Naysayers who thought it was risky business having Tom Cruise take on the hair-metal classics of the rock era might be surprised at the gusto he gives in “Rock of Ages,” the big-screen adaptation of the big-timing Broadway musical. As any good actor will tell you, losing yourself in the role is key – and Cruise, as Stacey Jaxx, does exactly that with his numbers on the jukebox soundtrack. “Pour Some Sugar on Me” is probably too clean-cut for the Gen Xers who can't see Jerry Maguire blasting testosterone into a Def Leppard sex song, but Cruise is convincing – and completely unrecognizable – as a grunge-rocker that can, yes, sing. Even better, vocally, is the way he reaches for some high notes on “Paradise City” like someone kicked him in the balls. Catherine Zeta-Jones has a darn good time doing her best Pat Benatar on “Hit Me With Your Best Shot,” and her energy is infectious. Less appealing is Julianne Hough on ... just about all her songs. Hough's not a bad singer, but she's no Lea Michele – no matter how hard she tries. So when Mary J. Blige drops in halfway through “Harden My Heart” like a drama-defeating Jesus to a down-and-out Hough – Hail Mary, full of grace! – she's saving more than she knows: With her soulful “Shadows of the Night” and sassy “Any Way You Want It,” she shows everyone how it's done. *Grade: B*

Also Out



Vicci Martinez, 'Vicci'

Before Vicci Martinez was the last standing on Team Cee Lo during “The Voice,” the out lesbian was an independent recording artist, releasing her first album all the way back in 2000. Now on a major label, Universal Republic, she's getting the platform she deserves. Alternating between power pop and bluesy rock, she resembles Joss Stone on “I Want Your Kiss,” and “Stop Pretending” could easily be a Kelly Clarkson hit. When she scales back on “Let Go,” an introspective piano ballad, Martinez proves her glory on “The Voice” was no accident.



Usher, 'Looking 4 Myself'

Despite his lost-boy album title, finding Usher shouldn't be hard. He's always somewhere between horny and heartfelt. That's the case again with the hottie's seventh album, his best since 2004's “Confessions.” Forget about the first single, “Scream,” a radio recyclable. Mid-tempos “Climax” and “Say the Words” (via the Deluxe Edition), with its old-school MJ feel, cast us under his falsetto spell. As good as they are, it's the genius tracks produced by Klas Ahlund (aka the Robyn dynamo) – “Numb” and “Euphoria,” both suiting the Euro-synth sounds – that really give Usher the edge he hasn't had in years.



John Mayer, 'Born and Raised'

His douche days are over, and now John Mayer's ready for redemption. He does that not just by asking for it on his latest rootsy release, but with the music itself – though not his deepest, it's by far some of his most genuine work, heart running off sleeve. He admits to having a “rough start” on “Shadow Days,” and “If I Ever Get Around to Living” is an endearing letter to himself. His guitar playing, as always, is smooth and drenched in his current-career bluesiness, offering strong sentiments on walking the walk (“Love is a Verb”) and living carefree (“The Age of Worry”). You're forgiven, John.

General Gayety

Puzzling out the Phelpsians



BY LESLIE ROBINSON

Some people argue that the best way to handle the ever-present, ever-protesting members of the Westboro Baptist Church is to ignore them.

That sounds sensible. I just can't do it.

The truth is I find Fred Phelps and his congregation fascinating. I get that they're among the world's biggest media whores – they could even give Donald Trump pointers – and will push any boundary for

attention. Yet they still manage to surprise me.

Like just recently, when they journeyed to North Carolina. Since Westboro's religious creed is God Hates Fags, and since North Carolina passed the anti-gay Amendment One, a person might assume the Phelpsians visited the Tar Heel State simply to sniff the heady air of bigotry victorious.

That's not the Westboro way. North Carolinians don't want gays to marry; Westboro members don't want gays to live.

So they went to North Carolina to do what they always do, stage a protest. Their target was obvious, a man famous for supporting gay rights, a man who practically bleeds rainbow colors.

Billy Graham.

See, fascinating.

The elder statesman of Christian evangelism a friend of gays? Right. And Billy's son and heir Franklin is a part-time imam.

While Graham has taken fewer political stances in his career than, say, Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson, he jumped into the Amendment One battle.

"At 93, I never thought we would have to debate the definition of marriage," Graham wrote in an ad that ran in newspapers around North Carolina. "The Bible is clear – God's definition of marriage is between a man and a woman. I want to urge my fellow North Carolinians to vote FOR the marriage amendment on Tuesday, May 8."

Yup, he's on our side, all right. Downright ready to head up a PFLAG chapter.

So why, if Westboro and Graham are anti-gay bedfellows, did the Phelpsians protest Graham? Because the reverend isn't anti-gay enough. Westboro has high standards.

About a dozen church members picketed the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte and other Graham-centric locations. On Westboro's website, according to WBTV, the church said Graham should use his influence to tell the world "it's not okay to be a fag, it's not okay to divorce and remarry, it's not okay to fornicate, it's not okay to kill your babies."

The man is 93. How can he be expected to remember all that?

Protester Paulette Phelps told the Asheville Citizen-Times that Graham cares more for money and power than preaching God's truth. "The true Gospel says if you don't obey, you're going to perish. There are consequences for not obeying. Homosexuality is all bad, all day."

She makes it sound like a radio format.

Either Paulette or another Phelps – because most church

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Jim Toy Pride Dinner to award scholar, advocate Sandra Cole

CNN and ESPN journalist LZ Granderson to keynote

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

ANN ARBOR—Award-winning CNN and ESPN online gay journalist LZ Granderson will keynote the Jim Toy Community Center's Pride Dinner, honoring the advocate and scholar Dr. Sandra Cole June 25.

Granderson was named the 2011 Journalist of the Year by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. He is also a 2009 GLAAD Award winner for his digital journalism. In his weekly CNN opinion column, Granderson often tackles the topics of race, sexuality and gender in both society and sports.

Granderson will also serve as the National Black Justice Coalition's Third Annual OUT on the Hill's National Chairman this year. OOTH is a Black LGBT Leadership Summit meant to foster strategy, discussion and organization while educating public officials about black LGBT public policy concerns.

JTCC's Pride Dinner will award Dr. Cole with the Jim Toy Lifetime Achievement Award

and honor her career as a noted sexologist and longtime advocate of equality for transgender individuals. In 1999, Toy and Dr. Cole co-authored new language for Ann Arbor's non-discrimination policy to include gender identity/expression. Pioneering LGBT advocate Jim Toy himself will present Cole with the award.

Dr. Cole began her scholarly career on the faculty of the University of Minnesota Medical School alongside her late husband Ted Cole. The two of them conducted groundbreaking research on topics such as sexuality and physical disability. In 1977, the Coles moved to Ann Arbor and joined the faculty of the University of Michigan.

Dr. Cole also founded the University of Michigan Health System Comprehensive Gender Services Program in 1993, an academic program providing health care services to transgendered individuals in need of gender-related care, including encrinological, surgical, mental and general health care services.

"Sandra has served many communities," said Toy. "In particular the medical schools

at the University of Minnesota and the University of Michigan, the transgender community in all its diversity, the UM's Spectrum Center, and the Jim Toy Community Center.

"She has presented at countless national conferences on transgender concerns. She has counseled innumerable couples, families and individuals. We are all incapable of sufficiently honoring that work, but we will do our best to recognize Sandra's vocation."

After retiring from seven years of service as the health services program's director, Cole continues to advocate for transgendered individuals and their families' equality and social justice.

"I cannot imagine a world without the many changes that Sandra Cole has brought to us all on behalf of freedom and justice," says Toy. "She has been a pioneer, a teacher, an advocate, an ally and a friend to more people than I can begin to count."



The Jim Toy Community Center Pride Dinner begins at 6 p.m., June 25 at the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$85 per person or \$150 for two. Tickets are available online via PayPal, at Common Language Bookstore, or by sending a check to Jim Toy Center, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor, MI 48104. For more information, go to www.JimToyCenter.org or call 734-834-0598.

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► **General Gayety**

Continued from p. 19

members are related—held a sign reading “God H8S Billy’s Cow.”

I was baffled as to why God would hate dairy products, unless he’s lactose intolerant, but it turned out that a “talking” cow offers stories and songs to young library visitors.

All part of Graham’s money-grubbing, claimed the Phelpsians, who asked, “How many children can you lead to Satan through Bessie the talking cow?”

I guess that depends on the quality of Bessie’s stories and songs.


Only after I’d ruminated over Westboro’s attack on Billy Graham did I remember that this isn’t the first time the cult has targeted a prominent evangelical. In 2007, these folks protested at Jerry Falwell’s funeral, in part because of Falwell’s warmth toward gays.

That’s not the Westboro way. North Carolinians don’t want gays to marry; Westboro members don’t want gays to live.

Yes, Falwell adored us.


How could I forget they protested him? Because their reasoning is so bizarre I can barely wrap my mind around it. But I won’t forget again. When Pat Robertson dies, I’ll expect the Phelpsians to picket his funeral. Since Robertson has always overflowed with love for gay people.

Leslie Robinson wants to meet Bessie the talking cow. Email Leslie at lesarobinson@gmail.com, and read more LGBT funnies at www.generalgayety.com.

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► Scissor Sisters

Continued from p. 17

really is our favorite way to have fun. Put on a mix, get our friends together and have what we refer to as a “Micro Rave” at my house.

Do you have hotel parties on the road?

Ana: Sometimes. More often than not we have them in the bus. We have what we call “Back Lounge Raves” or “Front Lounge Raves” and, since we’re almost always traveling with Sammy Jo (their touring DJ), we just put him to work and dance on the bus.

What’s your favorite line on this album?

Jake: One of my favorite lines on this album is, “Love your mama’s Cadillac / Had it since the dawn of crack.”

Where did that come from?

Jake: Out of my ass. Look, all these songs just come out of my ass. I seriously make it up as I go along. (Laughs)

You’ve said people in your life inspired this album. Does that include your husband, Chris?

Jake: Chris always plays into it. I wrote him a song when we started dating and he told me it sounded like it had been written by a 12-year-old girl, and I told him, “I’m never writing you a song ever again.” (Laughs) I never stuck to that.

But yeah, of course: There’s “Best in Me.” We’re going on our ninth year, and I don’t know how he has the patience. It amazes me and I really feel like the luckiest man in the world to have him. I don’t think it could be anybody else.

Are you saying you’re a difficult person?

Jake: Yeah. To be with and to be a partner with, I think I’m probably very difficult because I’m never home, and it does get really hard. It can really bum me out sometimes – I know it bums him out sometimes – and it’s tough to live apart for extended periods, but then you also don’t take for granted the time you have together when you are together. On the other hand, I don’t think I’d be in a relationship with somebody that I’d have to live with 365 days a year. I don’t think I could be that. It’s about striking a balance.

What’s a song of yours that turns you on?

Jake: Ew, none of them! Gross. I can’t even imagine. No, no. There’s not one that exists.

You’ve never had sex to any of your music?

Jake: No! Years ago I remember I was making out with some guy – this was, like, 10 years ago – and one of my songs came on shuffle and it was awful. It ruined the mood.

How did the passing of Donna Summer and Robin Gibb, who’ve been very influential on Scissor Sisters, affect you?

Jake: I feel bad for the families and their loved ones, but I don’t get as sad about death when it’s someone who has experienced and had such an incredible life as Robin Gibb and Donna Summer, who have gifted the world with so much outrageously incredible work. I just get reflective. The band’s been talking about this a lot, and Babydaddy and I have always been massive fans



of Donna Summer and Robin Gibb and the Bee Gees and the crazy direct influence it had on us – it’s just something to celebrate.

Ana: It’s not often that I get teary over the passing of celebrities, but Donna did make me shed a few tears because she did mean a lot to the gay community. The day she died we played a show in London, so I took some time to pay tribute to her. In New York City it was illegal in the ’60s for men to dance alone together in a space, so men had to be with women dancing. That was one of the many laws that inspired the Stonewall riots. The ’70s were the first time that men could be on a dance floor with other men, and the soundtrack to freedom was Donna Summer. We’re talking people who couldn’t be out at work, walk down the street feeling safe and hold the hand of the person they love, and they’re rejected by religion. The one place they can be free is the nightclub, and Donna Summer’s voice was the voice of gospel. She made dance music spiritual.

What’s your idea of a magic hour?

Jake: The best hour that I’ve ever had in my life is always that hour before sunrise – that’s kind of what the album is named after. There’s nothing that makes me happier than having been out all night with my friends or with my husband and then the sun’s about to come up and you’re at someplace really beautiful. Those are my favorite moments. It could be the hour after sunset, like right when the sun is setting or right before sunrise. It’s the time when there are no shadows.

What are your tour essentials?

Jake: Usually my Kindle, which I don’t have on this trip; I’m actually reading real books. I’m a book lover, but the Kindle is a fucking godsend for me when I’m running around. My

PlayStation Vita is always with me. I’m a pretty light traveler. I can exist off very little. I’ve been living out of a suitcase for so long that I don’t really bring a ton. I’m a bit of a hippie like that.

Ana: Oh, I have about 50 pounds of tour essentials. (Laughs) I am not a low-maintenance gal by any means. I do my own makeup and hair and the whole nine, so I have to carry around a lot of stuff. If we have one show, I have two bags. And I’ll show up and people are like, “You know, we’re only gone for a week.” And I’ll go, “Do we have a show?” “Yes, we have a show.” Then I have two bags. That is the rule.

Who’s gayer?

Jake: We’re both pretty gay. I think I’m probably gayer than Ana. I couldn’t exactly put my finger on why. Maybe because I’m gay. (Laughs)

Ana: Good question. It’s a tie, to be honest. His sex is a lot gayer than mine.

Tell me about the best prank you’ve pulled on each other.

Jake: Oh god. She was in Florida and she called me and Babydaddy and said there was a stalker that had been showing up at the gigs and she was really freaked out, and then she forgot to finish the prank for some reason and didn’t call us again for a week. We couldn’t get ahold of her. We thought she was dead in the back of somebody’s trunk.

Ana: And they got me back for it. Because they were really concerned and they were going to file a police report, they in turn had our manager write an email to me and say, “Oh, by the way, we’re sending cops by the person’s house.” And I was like, “Oh my god, no! Don’t do that!” I’m making frantic phone calls and nobody’s picking up. They fucking got me back. And that cured me

of wanting to play any pranks. But he’s way better at this shit than I am. I don’t really tease people that often because it makes me feel really guilty.

Something we don’t know about the other?

Jake: God, that’s hard. Ana has the craziest memory of anyone that I’ve ever come into contact with. She can remember dates, or something you were wearing one afternoon before some concert in, like, Russia. She has a really crazy memory.

Ana: Do you know that he writes just about one piece of fiction a year? He studied creative writing, and every year he writes something other than a song.

What’s your biggest pet peeve about the other?

Jake: Of course there’s a gazillion, because we live on top of each other and we’ve literally lived on top of each other for 10 years now. You learn to take the pet peeves and laugh at them – and laugh at them when the other person’s not listening. (Laughs)

We don’t fight that much anymore. We used to bicker much more than we do now. We’re a lot happier now on the road with each other. It’s not so intense.

Ana: Oh yeah, totally. We’ve grown up a lot. And touring with him and being confronted with people on a daily basis in a very small space – i.e. the tour bus – will get you dealing with things in a very direct and quick way. We’re very good at arguing now.

But that doesn’t answer the question.

Ana: Do I really have to say this? You’re stirring a pot. He has horrible table manners. Just terrible. That’s all I’m gonna say. (Laughs)

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Ringwald's Gay Play Series fills the bill with talent

BY JOHN QUINN

While by no means the smallest venue in Metro Detroit, Ferndale's Ringwald Theatre is bustin' at the seams this month with 11 one-act plays and scads of your favorite actors and directors. The occasion is the third installment of the Gay Play Series, which has proven so popular that the number of scripts submitted for production has burgeoned from 17 the first year to 175 this season. Presumably we're seeing the best of the best. Some of them are sketches or vignettes; others are fully realized, but very short, plays. GPS is like a box of chocolates: Not everything is going to be to your taste, but the offerings are so good you'll be glad you sampled every one.

The plays are split into blocks, played as two separate performances. In Block A, we find Tony Foster's wildly original "Defrost," directed by PJ Jacokes. The bliss of new couple Jeremy St. Martin and Travis Peltó is threatened by a possible menage a trois, which includes the mysterious Chef Colette (Michelle Giorlando). "Defrost" is a bright bit of comedy, intelligently played.

"Turnaround," by Ringwald's artistic director, Joe Bailey, turns the magnifying glass on the repulsive specimens who lurk in the underbelly of the film industry. Jamie Richards, Melissa Beckwith and Heidi Bennett ably portray some of the most vapid, unpleasant characters in memory - no one could you take home to mother.

"Queer/Trek" by Brian Walker takes a predictable plot and stands it on its ear. We find coming out as gay to the folks may not be as hard as coming out as a Trekkie (or is "Trekkie" more P.C.?). As directed by Gary Lehman, the comic build to an unexpected climax is perfect.

"Mate Trade" by Laura Witkowski & Cara Trautman mocks the "Wife Swap" genre of TV reality series. Matios Simonian hosts one half of a lesbian couple, Laura Heikkinen, in his Ann Arbor home. Director Topher Payne follows the playwrights' lead in deftly managing stereotype for comedy without cliché.

Kristian O'Hare crafted a beautifully insightful piece in "Fanny Packs & Hanky Codes," directed by Matthew Turner Shelton. Identifying what someone else needs is a lot harder than identifying the color of a kerchief in the dim lighting of a leather bar.

"Homochondria" by Brad Baron and directed by Michelle Leroy is an over-the-top burlesque concerning the cursed Casey Hibbert, his long-suffering partner, Joe Plambeck, and a Ghost of Divas Past and Present (Heidi Bennett). The result is good, silly fun.

Block B consists of five plays, beginning with "Ask Me! Tell Me!" by Andrew Charles Lark. This vignette would have benefitted with a less literal interpretation. Caryn Hottel-Malion spontaneously plays a Cyrano-like stand in at the airport where Curtis Younce is meeting his e-mail pal, Casey, as the G.I.



Josh Campos from "Fanny Packs and Hanky Codes" by Kristian O'Hare, one of 11 plays in the 2012 Gay Play Series at The Ringwald Theatre. Photo: Matthew Turner Shelton

REVIEW

Gay Play Series

The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Block A: 8 p.m. June 22 & 1 p.m. June 24; Block B: 8 p.m. June 23 & 5 p.m. June 24; Closing ceremonies: 8 p.m. June 25. Running time: About 100 minutes each block. \$10 per event. 248-545-5545.

www.TheRingwald.com

returns from deployment overseas. "Ask Me! Tell Me!" is directed by Nancy Arnfield.

Directed by Lisa Melinn, "Pocket Universe" by Duncan Pflaster is a subtle, layered fantasy of unrequited love. Richard Payton and Brian Papandrea play on a bare stage, accompanied by fine lighting and sound effects. This bittersweet script is a totally original spin on an old theme.

"Ten Picnics" by Mark Harvey Levine is a tender homage to the family and the circle of life that drives it. Director Joe Plambeck allows Cal Schwartz to unleash his inner child; Genevieve Jona and Melissa Beckwith play not only his mothers, but all the other women in his life. This is an intelligent script, gracefully handled.

"A Streetcar Named Viagra" by Daniel Curzon is another screwball comedy, concerning the work-in-progress "A Streetcar Named Desire" that, thank the Muses, never got to Broadway. We meet the fiery redhead, Desiree Viagra, (the towering, high-heel-shod

Nick Gnagi) who is auditioning for the role of Lance Dubois. Yes, you read that right; there's a whole lot of gender-bending goin' on. Directed by Sean McClellan and featuring Pete Podolski and Brad Stephens, "Streetcar" will cause a bad case of the giggles once you accept the preposterous plot.

Joe Bailey tackles the most difficult script in the collection. The others are full of humor and affection, but there's nothing funny in "Break Your Face on My Hand" by Daniel Talbott. There's nothing funny in bullying. Jeffrey Vincent Howson and Christopher Burns play a high school bully and his victim. Avoiding suspension by spending time with his victim, the bully nevertheless continues harassment. There is a structural problem with the script that, while the plot moves efficiently from Point A to Point B, the characters, as written, lack the emotional nuances one would expect in that progress.

Audience members for GPS will be voting for their favorite script. The winner will receive an additional performance at the closing ceremonies on Monday, June 25 at 8 p.m. and will subsequently receive a full production at The Ringwald Theatre. Audience members will also be asked to vote for a favorite actor and director. Imagine that: You little people having the opportunity to be critics for a day, possessing the demi-godlike power that goes with our exalted profession! Wield it if you dare!

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Diary of a Worm, a Spider, and a Fly \$12. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at Studio Theatre in the DeWitt Center, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. June 18-Aug. 10. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Fireside Festival of New Works Pay-what-you-can (Suggested donation \$10). Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. June 24-27. 734-763-8587. performancenetwork.org

Gay Play Series \$10-25 per event. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through June 25. 248-545-5545. TheRingwald.com. **See our ad on page 7.**

Hot Dog Mondays \$5. Planet Art Theatre, 2357 Caniff Ave., Hamtramck. 313-365-4948. planetart.com

Idina Menzel \$35.50-\$110.95. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 7 p.m. June 27. 313-237-7464. michiganopera.org

In the Next Room or the vibrator play Previews June 21 (\$15-\$32). \$25-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through July 15. 734-663-0681. PerformanceNetwork.org

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. dogstorytheater.com

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

Taking Care of Mimi \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through June 24. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

The Light in the Piazza \$25-29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through July 1. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

The Mute Quire \$10-15. The New Theatre Project & Fratellanza at Mix Studio Theater, 130 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. June 17-July 1. 734-645-9776. thenewtheatreproject.org

Wicked \$38 and up. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University, East Lansing. June 27-July 8. 800-WHARTON. WhartonCenter.com

ART'N'AROUND

Box Factory for the Arts "Michigan 10th Annual Art Competition" 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph. June 15-July 28. 269-983-

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Bird of a Feather" 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. May 1-June 24. 269-349-7775. Klarts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Lit from Within" Featuring the work of Jennifer Hatcher of Burton. 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" The MSU Museum revisits the publication of the landmark book, Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, credited with launching the modern environmental movement. 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. June 1-Nov. 30. Museum.msu.edu/?q=node/527

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Vertical Urban Factory" The innovative design of factory buildings that are both urban and vertical. 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. May 11-July 29. 313-832-6622. MOCADetroit.org

Preservation Detroit "Pewabic Bus Tour of Detroit" Admission: \$50. Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit. 10 a.m. June 23. 248-884-5993. Preservationdetroit.org



Editor's Pick

While many theaters close for the summer months, Ann Arbor's Performance Network is full steam ahead, offering audiences an array of entertainment options, including the upcoming Fireside Festival of New Works. As part of the theater's continued dedication to support and provide a voice for playwrights, the series will be held June 24-27, 2012 and will feature staged readings of new plays by four playwrights, including Network regulars Joseph Zettelmaier and Kim Carney.

Each reading will be followed by a post-show discussion with the playwright and director, during which audience members are encouraged to share their thoughts on the pieces that they have seen. The schedule includes "The Queen of Spades" by Joel Gross (Sunday, June 24, 7:30 p.m.), "Hungry" by Lia Romeo (Monday, June 25, 7 p.m.), "The Renaissance Man" by Joseph Zettelmaier (Tuesday, June 26, 7 p.m.), and "Catbird" by Kim Carney (Wednesday, June 27, 7 p.m.).

Tickets are pay-what-you-can (suggested donation \$10); call 734-663-0681 for details.

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

On Broadway 1956 \$24-\$27. Tibbits Summer Theatre, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. June 28-July 7. 517-278-6029. tibbits.org

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. purplerosetheatre.org

Pal Joey \$34. Barn Theatre, 13351 W. M-96, Augusta. June 19-July 1. 269-731-4121. barntheatre.com

Pride and Prejudice \$12-21. Hope Summer Repertory Theatre at Dewitt Theatre, 141 E. 12th St., Holland. June 22-July 28. 616-395-7890. hope.edu/hsrt

Sandbox Play Festival \$10. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 Cady St., Northville. June 22-24. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

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

Super Sweat \$20. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. June 29-30. 269-756-3879. acorntheater.com

3688. BoxFactoryfortheArts.org

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" The first comprehensive retrospective of Nelson's work. 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" Quilts by Hilda Vest. 42 Watson, Detroit. June 3-June 30. 313-974-6894. Heidelberg.org

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

The Gallery Project "Nature As Spirit" A multimedia exhibit in which 30 local, regional, and national artists explore Nature as a source of spirituality in contemporary life. 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. June 7-July 15. 734-997-7012. TheGalleryProject.com

The New Territory Arts Association and Krasl Art Center "Swinging for Sculpture" Golf Club at Harbor Shores, 400 Klock Road, Benton Harbor. 11 a.m. June 25. 269-983-0271. KRASL.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Judith Turner: The Flatness of Ambiguity" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. June 9-Sep. 2. 734-647-0524. Umma.umich.edu

Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts "Urbanity" 2 West Fulton, Grand Rapids. May 3-July 5. 616-454-7000. UICA.org

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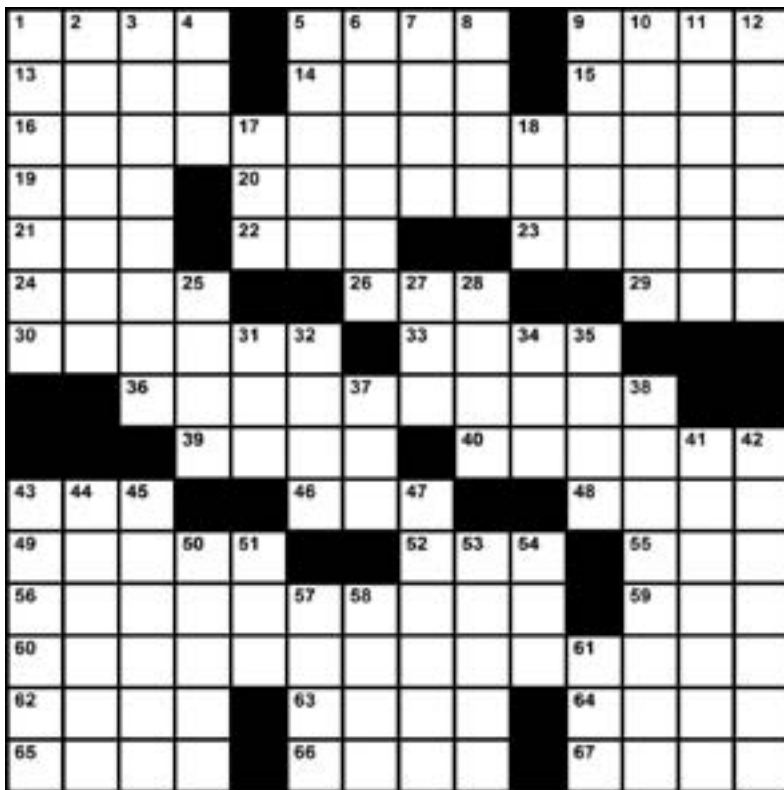
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What's a Matzo



Across

- 1 Hazard for Sheehan
- 5 Like some division
- 9 "Ed Wood" role
- 13 Gauche side, for Debussy
- 14 New Age music superstar
- 15 "Phantom" scar source
- 16 Start of a Fay Jacobs saying about matzo
- 19 F.D.R. or J.F.K., e.g.
- 20 City of Capote's birth
- 21 Sked info
- 22 Home state of J. Nabors
- 23 "... farewell, auf Wiedersehen, ____"
- 24 Uncool sort
- 26 Chat rm. exaggeration?
- 29 Muscle Mary's weight training unit
- 30 Disaster sorting
- 33 Appear to be
- 36 More of the saying
- 39 Responder to "Bite me!"?
- 40 The "former next president"
- 43 Present mo.?
- 46 "____-hoo! Fellas!"
- 48 Clay Aiken was almost one
- 49 Flee to a same-sex marriage state
- 52 Neighbor of Mex.

- 55 Verb ending
- 56 Church member named for a member?
- 59 "Culpa" starter
- 60 End of the saying
- 62 A little behind
- 63 Lickety-split (abbr.)
- 64 Sgt. Snorkel's pooch
- 65 Marvel Comics superhero
- 66 ____ guys (Robin Hood's men?)
- 67 One with a foamy head

Down

- 1 Neptune's tool
- 2 Rosie's WWII job
- 3 Prayer to the Queen of Heaven
- 4 White House souvenir
- 5 Fair kind of playing field
- 6 Like unrequited loved
- 7 "Eli's Coming" songwriter Laura
- 8 Teri of "Tootsie"
- 9 Worked the hayfields
- 10 It may cream your face when you bite it
- 11 Mortgage holder
- 12 Comes out correctly

- 17 Bambi character that wasn't horny?
- 18 Slangy intensifier
- 25 Mild oath
- 27 Data transmission letters
- 28 Ward of "Once and Again"
- 31 MD for women
- 32 Auction web site
- 34 Subj. for those of a different tongue
- 35 Threesome who went to see Mary
- 37 From ____ Z (the whole shebang)
- 38 Anal type?
- 41 Tinged with pink
- 42 She loved Franklin and Lorena
- 43 Treat, as seawater
- 44 Christian name of the half-brother of Chaz
- 45 Open one's eyes
- 47 One who's wanted
- 50 Juice, so to speak
- 51 Bowie collaborator
- 53 Oozes through
- 54 Caligula's arts
- 57 Ask for it while kneeling
- 58 Cushiness
- 61 Choreographer Fosse

Solution on pg 31



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bitter girl



Horoscopes

Don't fuss, Taurus!

BY JACK FERTIG

Pride festivities peak annually when the Sun enters Cancer, the sign of family and community. This year, issues of spirituality and religion come up to help affirm LGBT spirituality, leading to deeper questions about our individual and collective identities.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Avoid any games of verbal one-upmanship. You'll just hurt feelings and have to eat your words. If you're really so clever, you can figure out what needs work in your relationship. Listening to your partner will help.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Arguments over money arise too easily, especially over silly details like splitting a lunch check. Don't fuss over pennies. There are more important things than money. Think long and hard about what really matters. You may surprise yourself.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Try a new look, go shopping for clothes. If money is tight, hit the thrift shops. Your imagination and an open mind are better than any amount of money. Good as your own queer eye is, a friend's encouragement will help.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): New insights can be a little scary, but best to look deeper and find out what they're really about. Irritation with other people, awful and annoying though they are, is more about you than them.

LEO (July 23–August 22): You need some private down time. Plans with friends may need canceling, but that's OK. Your real friends will understand, and the rest don't matter. New creative efforts can cure social ennui, but the real answers are deep inside you.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Stay calm, measure your words carefully, and just keep putting one foot in front of the other. Read the myth of Cassandra. Let people take or leave what you have to tell them. They'll eventually realize you were right.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Your efforts to smooth out problems at home will only backfire. If you really want things to be nice, be a good listener and get a sense of how you can improve your own self and your actions.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Being responsible for a problem does not mean being at fault and solution is more important than blame. How much responsibility you should take is hard to judge. Take on what you can, but overdoing it is self-sabotage. Gauge your capacities carefully.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Eagerness to explore new sexual techniques can improve your relationship or your chances for getting into one. If your baby balks, let it be "just a suggestion." Even without pursuing new pleasures the suggestion can open up conversations that build greater intimacy.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Your ability to shut up and listen to job critiques determines your ability to profit from them. There's always room for improvement. You don't have to agree with every criticism, but listen and think carefully before responding.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Efforts at having fun are likely to get you into trouble. Unless you're considering skydiving, that doesn't have to stop you. How much trouble can you handle? You might find arguments fun, but your opponent is probably not amused.

PISCES (February 19–March 19): "Family fun" doesn't have to be an oxymoron, although efforts may seem easily muddled and misunderstood. Listening rather than pushing can help. Or leave them alone and try out some new recipes or restaurants with adventurous friends.

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

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Solution to puzzle from page 30

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- 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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Dear Jody

Feeling trapped



Q. Almost two years ago I met “Jerry” and fell in love. I knew then – or at least thought – that I had met the man of my dreams and that life would be wonderful. I am still in love with him but life doesn’t feel wonderful, like I thought it would. It’s

beginning to feel like a cage.

The problem is that Jerry wants me to himself, all to himself. That is exactly how he puts it every time I want to go out with friends or just do something without him. So, I really don’t see much of my friends anymore. I know that this is pretty normal for new relationships but I’m feeling lonely and needing to see other friends, not just Jerry. In other relationships that I’ve had, my boyfriend and I would finally roll out from under the covers and start being social again, but this doesn’t seem to be a possibility or the plan in Jerry’s mind.

In fact, he has actually said that we don’t need anyone else in our lives, and that we are “complete” in and of ourselves. However, that does not seem to prevent him from stopping off after work and having a few drinks with people he knows. I can’t stop off after work because I don’t “work” anymore. A year ago Jerry wanted me to quit my job and stay home and take care of things, because he has to work a lot and doesn’t have time to take care of all the daily stuff. I’m his stay-at-home wife. At the time I thought that that was a good idea and have actually enjoyed it, but now I’m feeling so lonely.

I tried to tell Jerry all this but he keeps going back to saying that we don’t need others and that his stopping off to have a drink with people is part of having to network, and networking is important to his job.

Last night I told him about a Fourth of July party that I’d like for us to go to – not just me but both of us. There will be a lot of my old friends there that I haven’t seen for a long time. There will also be lots of people that he knows as well, so I thought he’d really like that idea and be for it. Besides it’s the Fourth

and I sure don’t want to sit home on that day and do nothing!

Well, guess what? He said that he had plans for us on that day: To have a cozy dinner on the patio that he was going to prepare for me, and then we’d go to a movie, together. I came unglued with that. We had a fight, verbally not physically, but I really thought he was going to hit me. I went to bed and we didn’t talk to each other at breakfast this morning.

I don’t know what to do next or how to get it across to him that I’m not happy being so alone all the time.

In a Cage

A. For starters, you tell him how you are feeling, why you are feeling it, and what needs to happen for you to be happy in a relationship with him. His behavior is controlling, and even more to the point, it is emotionally abusive – that’s the bad news. The good news is that you can do something about it. You can leave if he’s not willing to change his attitude and behavior. Abusers isolate and control their partners, and that’s what’s happening to you. In these situations, things tend to get worse, not better.

I am concerned that his emotional abuse will turn into physical abuse as well – maybe not that far away, given you felt he was going to hit you this last time.

I strongly recommend that you both get into couple’s counseling – and if he won’t go, you go anyway. You need to learn what’s going on in this relationship and how you can deal with it.

For more about abusive, controlling relationships go to Dear Jody Valley on Facebook.

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

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Cocktail Chatter

Whose dumb idea was this beach house?

BY ED SIKOV

It was well into June before Dan and I came to the distressing realization that we'd be short on housemates this season and would consequently take a big financial hit. Jack Fogg had broken up with Sammy; Sammy was rooming with the volleyball boys and Jack Fogg was doing the Hamptons. (Figures.) Phil Levine found us too boring and declared his intention to find someplace else to spend the summer; it turned out to be Malaysia. There was nothing to do about it at this point. Some of the old gang would return, but all as quarter shares, not half shares.

Dan was taking it more in stride than I was, but then he's a corporate guy and I'm a writer, so he can afford to be relaxed about money and I can't. For reasons known only to God, I talked him into taking in a one-time-only boarder named – I am not kidding – Thor. Thor (it's hard even to type it with a straight face) wanted to stay for a weekend only, so I said sure and Dan said

(to me) "Are you out of your mind?" and I said "Yes" and Thor arrived and said, "Hallo. Jeg er en utmerket kokk. Jeg vil lage middag," which apparently is Norwegian for "Hello, I am going to take over your kitchen immediately," because that is what he did.

Friday night's dinner demanded the use of nearly every pot and skillet in the house. Dan got so upset at the mess we were expected to clean up – the house rule is the cook gets to cook and the rest get to clean up afterward – that he stomped upstairs to our room in a huff and wouldn't come down until Thor cried "Kom, barn! Spis middag!" which is Norwegian for "Admire my pecc while you eat." Yes, I failed to mention that Thor had been next to naked the entire time he was in our house, having stripped down to a pair of hot pants and nothing else within minutes of arriving. He had a spectacular body, I have to admit, but it was *too* perfect, and his armpit hair was so blonde it looked like he'd used peroxide.

Dan glumly made his way to the table just



as Thor presented the single dish he'd made; why he'd had to use all the pots and pans is anyone's guess. "Penne alla Vodka" he proudly announced as Dan and I took our seats. That's when I stole a glance at my bottle of Absolut and gasped – it was empty! The louse had either poured it all into the sauce or used half and drank the rest. What a total waste of fine vodka. Thor will not be invited back.

Penne alla Vodka

There's no mystery whatsoever to Penne

alla Vodka. You simply make a tomato sauce from minced garlic and salt and plum tomatoes from a can (which you have roughly chopped in a food processor). Add some crushed pepper and 1/4 cup of vodka and let it cook. Boil a box of penne. Before the penne is done, add about half a cup of cream to the sauce. When the penne is al dente, drain it and dump it in a very large bowl. Add the sauce, stir in some chopped parsley if you have any, stir it well, and put two slabs of butter on top, just for the hell of it. Serve with grated Parmigiano cheese.

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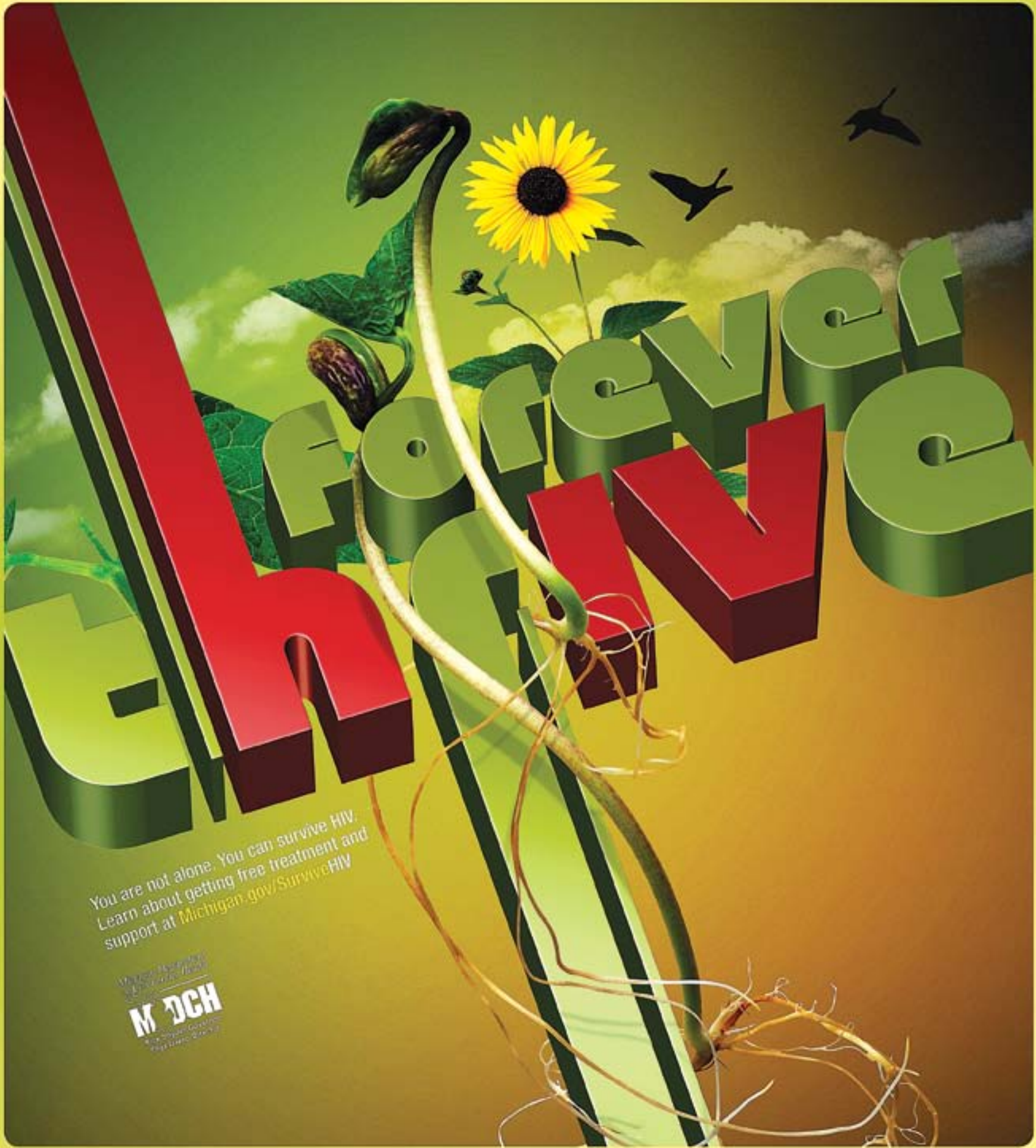
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