

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993



Mich. Dems Embrace Marriage Equality

Adoption Suit Includes Same-Sex Marriage

“ I was hoping the gay community would come up with a better idea than imitating heterosexual marriage. ”

- Lily Tomlin to BTL



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## COVER STORY

### 27 Wanda to the rescue

Comedian and actress Wanda Sykes pictured with residents, youth, alumni and employees of the Ruth Ellis Center, while touring in Detroit on June 12, 2010.

Photo by Jeremy Whiting

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# Obama And Gay Democrats Pitch Four More Years For The President

BY CHUCK COLBERT

The role of government and that of change are top priorities, come Election Day Nov. 6., for LGBT voters trekking the road to full LGBT equality. And President Barack Obama left little doubt on those two scores during his acceptance speech Sept. 6, in the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We don't think government can solve all our problems," the president told adoring delegates. "But we don't think that government is the source of all our problems - any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays, or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles."

There is a positive role for government in the lives of all Americans, Obama insisted. Sound government polices affect peoples lives for the better. And change is about the people who make it happen, said Obama.

"So you see, the election four years ago wasn't about me. It was about you. My fellow citizens - you were the change," the president explained.

"You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder in Phoenix who'll get the surgery she needs because an insurance company can't limit her coverage."

"You did that."

"You're the reason a young man in Colorado who never thought he'd be able to afford his dream of earning a medical degree is about to get that chance. You made that possible."

Sure enough, Obama highlighted the change that he, his administration, and Democratic Party have now fully embraced - and accomplished.

"You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home; why selfless soldiers won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; why thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely: 'Welcome home,'" said Obama.

The president spoke to marriage equality, which the Democrats have now endorsed in a historic first for a major U.S. political party.

"If you turn away now - if you buy into the cynicism that the change we fought for isn't possible...well, change will not happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices will fill the void: lobbyists and special interests; the people with the \$10 million checks who are trying to buy this election and those who are making it harder for you to vote; Washington politicians who want to decide who you can marry, or control health care choices that women should make for themselves," the president said.

"Only you can make sure that doesn't happen."



Clark Williams, left, with his husband, James Moore, and daughter, Caroline, was one of many LGBT delegates to this year's Democratic convention. Williams is also co-chair of the LGBT Caucus of the California Democratic Party. Photo: Courtesy Clark Williams

"Only you have the power to move us forward," Obama added.

Forward indeed. It was only eight years ago that California Sen. Dianne Feinstein said advocacy of same-sex marriage was "too much, too fast, too soon."

Eight years before that (1996), then President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law.

But that was then and this is now. The Department of Justice is no longer defending DOMA in federal court.

Earlier this spring, the president himself had fully "evolved."

Leaving Charlotte, LGBT delegates - nearly eight percent and a record high - to the Democratic National Convention could not be happier or more energized.

"The pursuit of LGBT equality was on full display on the last night of our 2012 Democratic National Convention," said Clark Williams of San Jose, Calif., a delegate and co-chair of the LGBT Caucus of the California Democratic Party.

"Speaker after speaker pledged their support for the freedom-to-marry plank in the party platform, praised the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and called for the end of the Defense of Marriage Act," he explained in email correspondence.

"For LGBT Americans, President Obama's enthralling and electric speech was the last and greatest show of support for LGBT equality," said Williams. "Our President highlighted his efforts

to end discrimination in our armed forces and cited the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' as one of his proudest legislative accomplishments."

Williams also spoke in personal terms about the effects of a toxic political climate where right-wing religious extremists and similarly predisposed GOP partisans rely on gay equality as a wedge issue.

"President Obama's appeals for a more cooperative and conciliatory political culture in Washington included chastising the GOP for unfairly marginalizing LGBT families," Williams explained.

"For me - a gay man and a father to a nine-year-old little girl - I was humbled and warmed by the President's understanding of how prejudice and scapegoating represents the very worst of America. The President and the First Lady are champions of our community and they are committed to furthering the cause of equality for all," said Williams.

"Without question, LGBT Americans have a committed and vigorous ally in the White House," he continued. "As [the president] framed what is at stake in this election, [Obama] made it crystal clear that Americans who believe in moving the nation forward cannot sit this election out."

Accordingly, Williams affirmed a commitment to get out the LGBT vote for Obama. "As LGBT families will continue to benefit tremendously from this president and his administration, LGBT Americans everywhere must become active participants in the 60 days remaining of

*"Without question, LGBT Americans have a committed and vigorous ally in the White House. As the president framed what is at stake in this election, Obama made it crystal clear that Americans who believe in moving the nation forward cannot sit this election out."*

- Clark Williams

this presidential campaign," Williams said. "A Romney-Ryan win would threaten all of our LGBT achievements and dramatically set back the march towards full LGBT equality."

National Stonewall Democrats' executive director Jerame Davis could not contain his enthusiasm for the Obama-Biden ticket. "I'm fired up and ready to go! Last night was the culmination of a week-long case for another term for President Obama and there is no doubt this president has more to offer America - LGBT Americans and otherwise - than the Romney-Ryan ticket," said Davis.

"I spent a lot of time with LGBT delegates throughout the convention. Last night, I ran into a number of them after the president's speech. They were energized, enthusiastic, and ready to go to the ends of the Earth to re-elect the most LGBT-inclusive President in history. Our community will be out in force between now and November, and we will turn out in droves at the ballot box, too," added Davis.

With all eyes on Election Day, he continued, "The Obama team has an amazing LGBT outreach program that has already launched in all 50 states. In addition, Stonewall Democrats will be knocking on doors, making phone calls, and raising money to ensure that we don't lose the momentum now. The energy of our community is electrifying and the next 60 days are going to be critical to continuing to build on the unprecedented progress we've accomplished under this President."

"This is our time. This is our election. And we cannot afford to go back now. Four more years!" exclaimed Davis.

As Democrats convened in convention for three days, speaker after speaker spoke out for gay rights, affirming full LGBT equality.

First Lady Michelle Obama went so far as to position same-sex civil marriage as all-American as apple pie.

See National Gay Democrats, page 7





AIDS Walk Detroit 2011. BTL Photo: Andrew Potter

# Get Your Walking Shoes On For Upcoming AIDS Walks

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

All across Michigan folks are gathering pledges and getting ready to lace up their sneakers for one of nine AIDS walks across the state. Eight of those walks are AIDS Walk Michigan events (with walks beginning Sept. 15 through the end of Sept.), while AIDS Walk Detroit runs independently in Royal Oak and is set to take place Sept. 16.

The walks raise money for agencies that provide HIV/AIDS prevention, advocacy and support services and for many organizations this is their biggest fundraiser of the year.

Last year over 700 people walked in the AIDS Walk Michigan Great Lakes Region walk, raising over \$50,000 for The Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center in Saginaw. The center serves clients from ten counties in mid-Michigan. In addition to helping patients, they do HIV testing and prevention.

Tom Brubaker, community relations coordinator of the Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center said that in the past eight years since his community has been involved, he has seen the event grow. "The past four years it has turned out very well," Brubaker said. "We have terrific sponsors and volunteers. Our donors and walkers are so generous. It's a wonderful collaborative effort and you should see all the people that come out to the park. It helps raise awareness and involvement." So far they have raised over \$30,000 online.

Their walk will be held on Sept. 22 at Wenonah Park in downtown Bay City, with local radio station 102.5 WIOG Radio DJ's giving the walkers encouragement, free samples from Starbucks, a variety of musical performances and fun for everyone. Their main sponsor, Dow Chemical, is known for their support of the LGBT and HIV positive community.

Each of the other eight walks has a similar premise, with a walk and extra entertainment, education and advocacy. Each walk raises money for organizations in their area and they all work

together for promotion and saving money where bulk purchases and collaborations are appropriate.

## AIDS Walk Michigan Detroit

Barbara Murray, executive director of AIDS Partnership Michigan, manages the AIDS Walk Michigan Detroit event and is the statewide chair.

This year the Detroit walk has a new location. In collaboration with the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, walkers will be able to enjoy the scenic Dequindre Cut as they walk to raise money to fight AIDS.

"I'm excited to be in an urban jewel that they worked so hard on developing," Murray said. The AIDS Partnership Michigan Detroit Walk also takes place Sept. 22 beginning at Rivard Riverfront Plaza (1340 Atwater Street, Detroit). It benefits several Detroit-based agencies: AIDS Partnership Michigan, Community Health Awareness Group, Detroit Department of Health & Wellness Promotion, Horizon Project of Wayne State University and Ruth Ellis Center.

Other AIDS Walk Michigan events take place in Ann Arbor/Jackson, Central Michigan, Flint, Lansing/East Lansing and Northern Michigan Saturday, Sept 15; Saturday and Sunday Sept 22-23; and Sept 29-30. To find out more go to [www.aidswalkmichigan.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1022805](http://www.aidswalkmichigan.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1022805)

## AIDS Walk Detroit in Royal Oak

In addition to the statewide walks there is AIDS Walk Detroit which will be held in downtown Royal Oak on Sept. 16. AIDS Walk Detroit is the longest running walk in Michigan, begun over 20 years ago. This year's goals are to have 3,500 walkers and to raise \$200,000 to help funding for organizations that deal with HIV/AIDS related issues. Last year's teams raised over \$83,000, the balance of which given out in the form of grants. To learn more check out [www.aidswalkdetroit.org](http://www.aidswalkdetroit.org).

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(Left) Mark Brewer, Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, seen here leading the Michigan delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. Photo by Jan Stevenson. (Top Right) Mark Brewer, Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, at a press conference outside the Lansing convention Center Sept. 8. He explained the party platform that includes a call for full LGBT rights and a resolution supporting same-sex marriage. Photo courtesy of the MDP. (Bottom Right) Jocelyn Benson chaired the Michigan Democratic Party convention proceedings in Lansing last weekend. She also led the Michigan delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. She is currently a law professor at Wayne State University and directs the Michigan Allies Project, an effort designed to track hate incidents throughout Michigan and provide legal support for victims. Photo by Jan Stevenson.

# Mich. Dems Embrace Marriage Equality, Full LGBT Rights

BY JAN STEVENSON

LANSING – The Michigan Democratic Party embraced full equality for LGBT people in the 2012 state party platform adopted this past weekend at the Michigan Democratic Party convention. In an unequivocal statement of support, the platform reads, “We will vigorously promote measures that ensure the full civil rights of Michigan’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens.”

The state’s Democratic Platform calls for the repeal of the 2004 Proposition 2 anti-marriage amendment, and goes on to state, “We support full inclusion of LGBT families in the life of our state and seek equal responsibilities, benefits and protections for those families, including the right to adopt and raise children.”

In a separate resolution, Michigan’s Democrats also gave full support for same-sex marriage equality, echoing similar language in the National Democratic platform approved last week in Charlotte. “BE IT RESOLVED that the Michigan Democratic Party supports marriage

equality and the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same-sex couples.”

Many of the speakers at the Democratic state convention voiced their support for LGBT people and their rights.

“Everybody deserves equal and fair treatment in the courts, regardless of their race, their gender, their age or who they love,” said Bridget McCormack, one of the three women nominated for the Michigan Supreme Court. All three, Sheila Johnson, Connie Marie Kelley and McCormack, voiced their full support for LGBT rights in their acceptance speeches.

The strong support from the Michigan’s Democrats starkly contrasts with the Michigan

Republicans’ antagonistic stand on LGBT rights. Michigan Republicans support the anti-marriage amendment passed by voters in 2004

and support a narrow definition of marriage that deprives same-sex couples of being eligible for medical insurance, visitation rights and many other employment benefits. Michigan’s Republicans are against second parent adoption, and do not support expanding the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and Michigan’s Ethnic Intimidation Act to include protections for LGBT people. Without expansion of these state laws, Michigan’s LGBT people have no state protections against discrimination in employment, public

accommodations and housing.

The Republican convention had one upset when Nancy Danhof, an incumbent State School Board member, lost her renomination bid to a far more conservative Tea Party candidate, Melanie Kurdys, from Portage. The other Republican nominee, Todd Courser, is also a Tea Party member.

Current School Board President John Austin is concerned that if these Tea Party candidates are elected, they will push a right-wing agenda that is not good for students, schools or teachers.

“It is tragic, but a sign of the simple-minded extremism taking over the Republican party, when their nominees not only object to common high learning standards for young people in a global economy, they think teachers and teachers unions are the enemy,” said Austin. “How do we educate kids and support those who do (teachers) with attitudes like that?”

The Democrats nominated Lupe Ramos-Montigny and Michelle Fecteau to run against Tea Partiers Kurdys and Courser Nov. 6.

“Everybody deserves equal and fair treatment in the courts, regardless of their race, their gender, their age or who they love”

– Bridget McCormack, nominated for Michigan Supreme Court



## ► National Gay Democrats

Continued from p. 4

"If proud Americans can be who they are and boldly stand at the altar with who they love, then surely, surely we can give everyone in this country a fair chance at that great American Dream," she said on Tuesday night during her prime-time, televised speech.

For his part, convention keynoter Julian Castro, the mayor of San Antonio, Texas - the first Latino in such a role - stuck it to the marriage-equality naysaying GOP and its nominee, "When it comes to letting people marry whomever they love, Mitt Romney says, 'No,'" Castro said.

And Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, convention chair, told the delegates, "For the first time, a major party platform recognizes marriage equality as a basic human right!"

A sixth generation Iowan Zach Wahls, an activist who was raised by two moms, put his same-sex marriage advocacy to the GOP nominee in no uncertain, heartfelt terms.

"Governor Romney says he's against same-sex marriage because every child deserves a mother and a father," Wahls told delegates last night.

"I think every child deserves a family as loving and committed as mine. Because the sense of family comes from the commitment we make to each other to work through the hard times so we can enjoy the good ones. It comes from the love that binds us; that's what makes a family. Mr. Romney, my family is just as real as yours," Wahls said.

Two nights earlier, an openly gay congressman spoke in equally eloquent terms about his love and life:

"My name is Jared Polis. My great-grandparents were immigrants. I am Jewish. I am gay. I am a father. I am a son. I am an entrepreneur. I am a congressman from Colorado. I am always an optimist. But first and foremost, I am an American."

Continuing, Polis made a pitch for common ground and mutual respect among a diversity of views and personal experiences.

"That is why we must continue bringing America together," he said.

There was no red-white-and-blue balloon drop - only tri-color confetti - as the curtain came down on the 2012 Democratic National Convention shortly before midnight.

And yet, just as he prayed over Republicans gathered in Tampa, Florida, a week ago, so New York's cardinal archbishop, the Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan, offer a benediction for the Democrats.

There were three main appeals he made - right to life, religious liberty, and an affirmation of traditional marriage.

"We praise and thank you for granting us the life and the liberty by which we can pursue happiness. Show us anew that happiness is found only in respecting the laws of nature and of nature's God. Empower us with your grace so that we might resist the temptation to replace the moral law with idols of our own making, or to remake those institutions you have given us for the nurturing of life and community," the cardinal said.

And just as his appearance in Tampa raised eyebrows, so Dolan's praying in Charlotte prompted sharp responses from gay Catholics and LGBT activists.

"Cardinal Dolan chose again to characterize

same-sex marriage equality as 'the temptation to replace the moral law with idols of our own,'" said Charles Martel, president of New England-based Catholics for Marriage Equality.

"[Dolan] further went on to pray, 'Or to remake those institutions you have given us for the nurturing of life and community,'" said Martel.

But, "same-sex marriage is not about remaking the institution of marriage, but rather as evidence that same sex couples also value it, and believe that it does nurture not only themselves, but also the community," Martel explained. "Civil same-sex marriage does not threaten the institution of marriage, but adds to it through loving couples, the kinds of couples Catholic laity know, but apparently the hierarchy has never met."

In offering his assessment, Wayne Besen, founding executive director of Burlington, Vermont-based Truth Wins Out, was more pointed.

"Cardinal Dolan unnecessarily and inappropriately politicized his remarks," said Besen. "He appeared more partisan than prayerful and more animated by wedge issues than worship. It was hard to tell whether he was a Republican member of the House of Representatives or a representative from a house of worship."

But Chicago's Joe Murray of the Rainbow Sash Movement noted a more nuanced political landscape among Catholic voters.

"Clearly," Dolan "is opposed to both gay marriage and abortion, and some would say that his coded language points to that in the closing prayer. So what's going on here?" said Murray.

"We can view this strictly from a political perspective or we can recognize it as more complex. The cardinal's presence at both conventions sends the message to those faithful Catholics that they can vote for either presidential candidate and remain faithful Catholics. In my opinion, this is why the Democrats revisited their original position not to let Dolan say the closing Benediction at their convention, and invite him."

Murray went on to say that while he doubts the cardinal will change his position on either same-sex marriage or abortion, "I do believe [Dolan] recognizes a change in strategy with 'the sky is falling' approach [towards marriage equality] requires reevaluation," said Murray.

"His closing benediction shows, in my opinion, his continuing effort to moderate his position by moving towards the middle," Murray explained.

"Many Obama administration policies have alienated faithful Catholics and their bishops. I think the Democrats recognized that, and I believe that promoted their wise response to invite Dolan to the Democratic National Convention," said Murray.

"In recent years, Catholics have emerged as an important swing vote. Long predominantly Democratic, Catholics have increasingly shifted to the Republican Party, drawn by conservative positions on social issues," Murray said.

Meanwhile, a May 2012 Gallup poll showed half of all Americans support legal same-sex marriage, affording gay couples the same status and benefits as traditionally married couples.

In addition, 65 percent of Democrats support gay marriage, with 57 percent of Independents and 22 percent of Republicans favoring it.

Gallup also found that 51 percent of Catholics support legal same-sex marriage, with 38 percent of Protestants and 88 percent of people with no religious affiliation favoring it.

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## BRIEFS

### FERNDALE

#### Transgender Health Fair Coming Up

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

As cultural acceptance grows for people across the transgender spectrum, so does the need for information and access to healthcare. That's why Transgender Michigan is hosting the third annual Transgender Health Fair on Sept. 22 at Affirmations Community Center from 1 to 4 pm.

The event features exhibits, vendors, speakers and a panel discussion with professionals who understand the unique healthcare needs of transgender people. Those in transition can learn about hormone options, surgeries, mental health care, and other health care topics. There will also be free health screenings, including HIV testing, testing for other STDs, blood pressure checks and more.

"The vendors will be really helpful and comfortable answering questions from people in the transgender community," said Jon Webber, program services coordinator at Transgender Michigan. "It's a great place to find resources that are trans friendly, and care that is accessible and welcoming."

Webber said over 150 people attended last year's event.

Rachel Crandall, co-founder of Transgender Michigan said the event helps a lot of people. "There are trans people who have not seen doctors in a while, or may not be happy with the doctor they have now. This is a chance to meet new doctors, counselors and service providers." Crandall will also be speaking on a panel at the end of the event along with others who are well-versed in transgender health issues.

There is still room for additional presenters and vendors as well as a need for volunteers. For more information go to <http://transgendermichigan.givezooks.com/events/hf2012>

For more information visit [www.transgendermichigan.com](http://www.transgendermichigan.com).

### ROCHESTER

#### Doctoral Student To Research LGBT In The Workplace

Paul Battle, a doctoral student in Counseling at Oakland University has begun work on a dissertation, compiling research on the work experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals. "I hope that learning more about the work experiences of LGBT individuals may help improve work experiences and counselor education," says Battle. "I am interested in how assessments measure the method one uses to disclose or not disclose sexual orientation."

Battle is conducting an online survey to further his research; Participants must identify as LGBT, be over 18 and currently employed. Participants do not have to have disclosed their sexual orientation in their workplace to take the survey.

For more information or to take the survey, go to [www.SurveyMonkey.com/S/Workplaceidentity](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com/S/Workplaceidentity).

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> [www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)

# Adoption Rights Suit Amended To Include Same-Sex Marriage



Dana Nessel and Carole Stanyar with their three children. Photo courtesy the family.

### BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

When a Hazel Park couple filed a lawsuit against the state for denying their family the right for second parent adoption, they hadn't expected to also sue for equal access to a marriage license. Yet because of remarks made by U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman, the couple amended their suit last week to include equal access to marriage. If successful, Michigan families could win both of these equality struggles with one suit.

Attorneys Dana M. Nessel and Carole M. Stanyar are representing a Hazel Park couple that wants to compel the state to recognize their parental rights. The couple has been together for ten years and has lived together for six. Rowse is the legal parent of 3-year-old N and 2-year-old J. DeBoer is the legal parent of 2-year-old R.

DeBoer and Rowse took each of the children in after being abandoned or surrendered at birth. 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 under current Michigan law. The current law states that only a single individual or a married couple has the right to adopt children

The State Attorney General's Office filed to have the case dismissed, arguing that adoption is not a right, but rather a statutory privilege. At the hearing on Sept. 5, Judge Friedman told the parties that the underlying issue is the state's ban on same-gender marriage, and he gave the couple an additional ten days to amend their complaint to address the issue.

"I was surprised when Judge Friedman brought it up," Nessel said. "Our case has always been about what is best for the children and their rights, and that has been at the forefront of our argument. But if we have a shot at it this way, how could we not?"

The amended lawsuit requests that "same-sex couples otherwise qualified to marry one another, including the adult Plaintiffs, may not be denied a marriage license application, a marriage license, a marriage certificate, or in any other way prevented from exercising the right to civil marriage by virtue of seeking to marry a partner of the same sex; and requiring Defendant (Oakland County Clerk Bill) Bullard immediately to issue a valid marriage license to adult Plaintiffs upon receipt of their completed application for a marriage license."

The lawsuit still calls for second parent adoption rights.

## Three Children Welcomed

DeBoer and Rowse both work in the medical field, and they have opened their home to the three children. In January 2009, N. was born to a biological mother who was homeless and had psychological impairments. The mother surrendered her legal rights at the hospital and Rowse adopted him, even though both take equal pride in his upbringing.

In November 2009, J. was born premature at just 25 weeks. His mother was a drug-addicted sex worker, and the newborn tested positive for

*"I was surprised when Judge Friedman brought it up. Our case has always been about what is best for the children and their rights, and that has been at the forefront of our argument. But if we have a shot at it this way, how could we not?"*

– Dana M. Nessel

marijuana, cocaine, opiates and methadone. After four months in the hospital, J was sent to live with DeBoer and Rowse and the state approved them to be co-foster parents. When it came time to legally adopt him however, DeBoer had to give up her guardianship rights so that Rowse could become J's single legal parent.

R came along in February 2010, when a 19 year old who had not received any prenatal care, gave birth at a friend's house and the baby was dropped off at Hutzel Hospital. DeBoer legally adopted R, and the couple has been working hard to help him overcome the delayed gross motor skills that are the result of his biological mother not receiving any medical care while she was carrying him.

The complaint lists reasons why second parent adoption and marriage are important rights. "Plaintiffs are denied protections relating to the incapacitation or death of a spouse, support for family finances and other public and private safety nets and responsibilities attaching to marriage."

The suit lists reasons why denying marriage to couples is discriminatory and causes harm, including rights that come along with an estate, rights to spousal benefits like health care, life insurance, survivor benefits, filing jointly for tax benefits, hospital visitation and the right to make care decisions or burial plans. The suit purports that couples like DeBoer and Rowse are protected under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which "provides that no state shall deny any person the equal protection of the laws."

See the original Hazel Park story here

>> [Pridesource.com/article.html?article=52468](http://Pridesource.com/article.html?article=52468)

Michigan Adoption Day Should Include LGBT Families

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# Stark Difference Part Two: DNC Convenes In Charlotte



## Viewpoint

OPINION BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

“So a Democrat, a Republican and Apathy walk into a bar...” Now that we’ve seen the “Better Future” offered at the Republican National Convention, it’s was the Democrats turn to pitch to American voters an alternative vision this past week.

America is changing, becoming more diverse and the Democratic National Convention, during its four days in Charlotte, NC showed voters it is more in tune with today’s America where, according to census statistics, women outnumber men by approximately five million (at age 85 and older, there were more than twice as many women as men); and where people under 20 years of age make up over a quarter of the U.S. population. It’s an America where Hispanic and Latino Americans account for almost half of the national population growth and for the first time in history, there are more minority children born in the United States than white.

It’s an America demanding a different vision from that of yesterday where the mores of a majority White Anglo-Saxon society defined separate and unequal reality for women, Blacks, poor and other minorities. Tampa brought us a vision of a “Better Future” clinging to that past, slow to embrace if not turning back time on many issues of social and economic justice.

While embracing the Romney/Ryan ticket (a Mormon and Catholic team), it held fast to the patriarchal doctrine that has in recent years disempowered women, African Americans, the poor, and other minorities while maintaining the gap between the haves and have nots.

The DNC offers a stark difference to the GOP’s “Better Future,” a different vision for America. You can tell it’s a different vision just by the people in attendance.

Nearly 6,000 delegates from every nook of America made up the 56 delegations – the largest and most diverse Democratic National Convention since Andrew Jackson’s “Kitchen Cabinet” at the first DNC convention 180 years ago.

They were white, Black, Latino, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Arab-Americans, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, straight, gay and transgender. It was a convention of as many women as men in comparison to the Republican National Convention’s 46 delegations with its lack of diversity and inclusion. But it’s more than the face of the delegates that highlighted the stark difference between the two parties.

Unlike the discordance between the RNC party platform and Mitt Romney’s platform, the DNC platform reflects the direction not only of the

party but its standard bearers – President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

This year’s Democratic Party platform is the most pro-LGBT in history, complete with support for both marriage equality and fully-inclusive employment nondiscrimination protections reflecting President Obama’s evolution on LGBT equality.

The DNC platform language connects LGBT rights to the larger issues facing all Americans reinforcing the reality that LGBT rights are not special rights merely equal rights.

As LGBT rights activist Waymon Hudson puts it, “Employment discrimination protections relate directly to the larger fiscal issue of job creation ... (It) shows a party that finally understands that for many in the LGBT community, social issues like equality are very much inexorably tied to fiscal and financial issues; many in the LGBT community get hit with the double struggle of a bad economy and still-legal employment discrimination against them.”

And it’s not just in the platform where the LGBTQ community is being welcomed. There were 541 openly LGBT delegates, 12 of whom sat on the National Committee. One of them is National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) board member and trans-activist Kylar Broadus, has been appointed to the Rules Committee for the DNC 2012 Convention Platform Committee – a real seat at the table.

In stark contrast, this year’s Republican Party platform includes some horrific anti-gay language influenced by Tony Perkins of the anti-LGBT Family Research Council, basically saying LGBT people are not among the Americans who deserve “dignity and respect.”

There’s a lot at stake this November.

For women it’s about stopping the attacks on abortion, birth control, reproductive rights, access to health care, equal pay and domestic violence.

For immigrants, it’s about broader comprehensive immigration reform legislation and protection from xenophobic attacks on civil liberties.

For millions of Americans it’s about access to affordable healthcare including continued coverage for the millions under age 26 now covered by their parents insurance; the 47 million women who now are guaranteed coverage of preventive services including contraceptive coverage without co-pays; or the 14.3 million seniors who have already received important preventive benefits under President Obama’s health care law.

Every vote will count this November. Unfortunately after record Democratic voter turnout in 2008, subsequent elections have seen a trend of apathy amongst progressive, Democratic voters the result being set backs on many social and economic justice issues and a dominance of conservative and far-right leaning legislatures at the state and federal congressional levels.

A 2010 study, released by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement showed only 20.9 percent of eligible voters ages 18-29 actually voted in 2010, down from a high of 49 percent in 2008. Recent elections reflect low voter turnout amongst other traditionally progressive voting groups as well.

The systematic attempts to suppress minority votes in a growing number of states is only another indication of how important it is for those of us who support a Democratic vision of a “Better Future” to not sit on the sidelines while others are investing and mobilizing their resources for November elections. Too much is at stake.

The conventions have provided a stark difference of a better future. The choice is yours. So what are you going to do?

A Democrat, A Republican and Apathy walk into a bar. Apathy tells the customers, “Your vote doesn’t matter” and orders another round. And the Republican marches into the White House.

This joke’s not funny!

Michelle E. Brown is a Public Speaker, Activist and Author. Follow her at [www.mychangeiam.com](http://www.mychangeiam.com) and [www.twitter.com/mychangeiam](http://www.twitter.com/mychangeiam)





# Shading The Seventh Oracle



## Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I've been bike riding pretty much daily from my art studio to the studio of my artist friend Jon Strand in Cork Town, a distance of about three miles one way.

My biking - I've been doing about ten to 15 miles every other day for the past few weeks - is in preparation for the annual bikeathon Tour DeTrois this Saturday, the 15th.

Some 4500 bikers are participating. It's my third tour, this time peddling on a 1982 Schwinn, thin-tire model purchased second hand \$150, fully reconditioned, at Third Avenue Hardware.

I did the 30 mile distance last year, including once around Belle Isle, for which I earned a tour T-shirt, plus the smug-ass pleasure that comes of knowing that at my advanced age I can indeed pump my peddles. (Good gay genes.) Jon, by the way, is pumping pedals too.

Whenever I buzz Jon's studio to announce my arrival, his five-year-old Labrador Retriever, Archie Whitetoe (black coat, one white toe), let's out a howl when he hears my voice over the intercom. Good dog, Arch!

For the past 1867 hours Jon, a pointillist painter has been dotting away on what he says may well be his masterpiece, "A Chorus of Oracles." It's no exaggeration to mention that his painting, measuring 4' x 6' consists of nearly two million - yes, two million! - tiny dots, meticulously applied by Rapidograph ink pen.

The painting has five or six layers, with seven shimmering masks of various sizes - one for each oracle - floating above a multihued ocean of undulating wave upon wave. On the horizon a small, silver-orb moon keeps eternal watch. The affect: transcendental.

Jon, who has been creating mythological art since the 1970s (when he was also waiting on tables at Tiffany's bar) has had two major DIA showings and a hugely successful retrospective exhibit six years ago at the Max Fisher Art/Music Complex.

I tell Jon that dot, dot, dot, dotting is a form of mental masturbation, to which he laughs, "There's no doubt I get off on my art. It's relaxing. It focuses my mind and senses. More importantly, it's a spiritual high, somewhat tempered by watching Lucy reruns, Jeopardy, and BBC lectures."

When visiting Jon I share my own iPhone gallery of art (over 1000 images). Of late I've been averaging one new expression every two days. (Interestingly enough, during all the time I spent in bars drinking - about 25 years - I never did a lick of art, until I got sober 30 years ago.) About creativity in general...

A recent article in Scientific American MIND magazine states that it takes about ten years of daily application to your gift - art, music, cooking, bowling, golf, whatever - for the creative process to become second nature. Intuitive. Free flowing into the alpha-mind zone.

"I like to think that our gifts are a legacy of being what Native Americans have long honored as 'two-spirited' people. For many being rainbow born has been a blessing meant to be shared with those, shall we say charitably, less creatively sensitive," muses Jon, adding final dots to oracle seven of his masterpiece, even as he speaks. I nod. Mr. Archie Whitetoe wags in approval.

Charles@pridesource.com

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Day 36



“ I think it's absurd that I can be the hardest working and most productive employee, yet still be fired based on my sexuality when it has absolutely nothing to do with my work or ability to do my work.”

- Dan Zelewski

Day 37



“ Simply life changing! ”

- Jeff Stutts

Day 38



“ It feels good to be doing something to make a bit of a statement for equality, in all honesty though this doesn't really feel like enough for me I feel like I should be doing so much more for equal rights for all people not just the LGBT community but for everyone.”

- Bo Skruggs

Day 39



“ This [marriage equality] is a civil matter. Not a religious one. Money that comes from organized religious institutions to fight against our right to marry should be using that money to feed the hungry, house the homeless and employ the jobless. They should lose their non-profit status when they promote hate.”

- Leslie Thompson

Day 40



“ This strike is about human rights for our community. We could be fired for being transgender or gay. Just last week at the Republican convention they mentioned all men are created equal. If that be the case why are we here fighting to be equal.

The right to work and not being fired, the right to marry, the right to adopt the right to live where we want.”

- Michelle Fox-Phillips

Day 41



“ So here I sit with the man that I plan on spending the rest of my life with. We are starting our life together and moving toward the future. These are very basic things that typical folks look forward to, however under current Michigan laws this can be taken away legally and there would be nothing I could do about it. If this is scary and makes you want to change the world, well, good.”

- Bill Korsak

Day 42



“ This is a cause I feel strongly about and I am very happy for the chance to show my support for the LGBT community. I was moved by all the passers-by that showed their support, and hopeful because so many people stopped to read the signs posted in the Affirmations

windows and learn about what we're doing.”

- Kim Kolaz

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# Getting LGBT Homeless Youth Off The Streets



## Viewpoint

OPINION BY LAURA HUGHES

As the Executive Director of the Detroit-based Ruth Ellis Center, one of a tiny handful of organizations in the country dedicated to working with runaway and homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth, I work every day with youth who live the reality of urban poverty. "Crystal," a resident in our transitional living program, has one such story. While she was out to her family as a lesbian, she was sleeping in a closet in a home she shared with 25 other family members. Most of Crystal's family is addicted to drugs and used them in front of her siblings -- and while they were normally somewhat tolerant of her relationship with her girlfriend, they regularly picked fights with her regarding her sexuality when high. Her family's poverty, combined with her sexuality, forced her to leave home.

In the run-up to the Republican and Democratic conventions, the official party platform's stance on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues was one of the hottest topics, whether in media coverage, in debates among party elites and delegates, or with politically-involved members of the LGBT community. The Democratic platform made history by backing same-sex marriage for the first time. By contrast, the Republican platform, predictably, strongly opposes same-sex marriage, but has drawn tepid praise from some quarters for a sentence affirming that the party "embrace[s] the principle that all Americans have the right to be treated with dignity and respect."

But for all the scrutiny, marriage has been the beginning and end of most discussions of either party's stance on LGBT issues. What has been overlooked is one reality, illustrated by Crystal's story: that throughout the country, and

particularly in my own city of Detroit, poverty is very much an LGBT issue itself. The high numbers of LGBT homeless youth are one of the harshest consequences.

In 2009, the Williams Institute issued a report, "Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community," that definitively proved that the stereotype of the upper-class, white gay couple is just that -- a stereotype. Even when controlling for other factors correlated with poverty across the board -- race, employment status, level of education -- gay and lesbian couples were found to be more likely to be in poverty than straight couples with the same attributes. Though data is still lacking on transgender poverty, the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey found, to cite just one statistic, that transgender people of color are four times as likely to be unemployed.

And in Detroit, the intersection of race (the city's population is 83 percent black), industrial decline and the current recession has already led to extreme poverty, even before factoring in sexual orientation. The median household income in the city is only \$28,357, a mere 54 percent of the national median in 2009. As of 2010, the city's child poverty rate was a staggering 47.7 percent, nearly two and a half times the national rate. Unemployment, meanwhile, is at 18.3 percent as of this June, also twice what it was nationally in the same month. And finally, homelessness in Detroit is by far the worst of any major U.S. city, at 216 per 10,000 residents. Many of these homeless are youth; with the city starved for funding, by some estimates, including one by the Senior Citizens and Homeless Coordination, as many as 2,000 homeless youth in the city go without services each day. And up to 800 of these youth may be LGBT.

These figures are appalling, but they cannot be understood or addressed as a mere series of bullet points. All these factors -- race, recession, unemployment, sexuality and more (including drug use and incarceration rates) are deeply intertwined. The result is a vicious cycle of perpetual poverty for far too many youth in this city. And a great many of these youth are LGBT. For out of everything mentioned above, LGBT youth in Detroit are possibly at the intersection of more risk factors for poverty than any other

group: race, child poverty, residing in a city mired in debt and able to afford little in the way of social services, and sexuality. On top of the aforementioned links between poverty and sexuality, homophobia remains far too prevalent within the African American community, with often brutal consequences for LGBT youth like Crystal who grow up in already impoverished homes.

Thus, many LGBT youth in the city are either forced onto the streets by family members unable to accept their sexuality, or run away to flee abuse. And once on the streets, they are at far greater risk of depression, suicide, substance abuse, violence and more. Many must turn to sex work in order to survive.

At the Ruth Ellis Center, we are doing everything we can to get these youth off the streets, operating a shelter, a drop-in center and a street outreach program. But there are far more homeless LGBT youth in the city than we can serve at any one time. And particularly in the winter, when temperatures regularly reach single digits here, youth must stay anywhere they can find shelter -- in abandoned houses filled with animal feces, and on the stairwells of apartment buildings, to name some examples. As a starting point, we've launched an "End the Chill" crowd-funding campaign, allowing anyone to donate toward an additional warming place for these youth.

We at the Ruth Ellis Center are on the front lines of the intersections of poverty, race and homophobia. In Detroit, and around the country, thousands of these youth, the victims of social and economic circumstance, must sleep on the streets every night. We cannot have a national conversation about poverty without including youth homelessness, and we cannot have a conversation about LGBT issues without addressing poverty and the terrible impact it has on many of our youth. The time has come to start a new conversation. And that will be an enormous step forward toward a future where no youth is forced to sleep on the street because of who he or she is.

For more information about the Ruth Ellis Center, go to [www.RuthEllisCenter.org](http://www.RuthEllisCenter.org).

## BRIEFS

### DETROIT

#### KICK To Send Five Youth To D.C., In Need Of Donations For Travel

KICK and the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) are partnering to empower and prepare our youth leaders by providing an opportunity for them to meet with other like-minded youth, political and civil rights leaders in Washington D.C. at this year's Out On The Hill, Sept. 19-22.

NBJC is picking up the conference expenses, but are still in need of contributions to cover the travel expenses for five youth leaders.

KICK and NBJC anticipate the cost for all five youth leaders to be \$3000 for the entire conference. Staff from KICK will be traveling with the young people and Curtis Lipscomb, Executive Director of KICK, will serve as co-moderator at this year's summit.

KICK hopes members of the community will consider supporting this exciting opportunity and will handle all travel arrangements. Checks are payable to KICK and can be mailed to KICK, 41 Burroughs St., Suite 109, Detroit, MI 48202.

For more information call 313-993-8423.

### YPSILANTI

#### Renowned Attorney To Discuss Legal Discrimination At EMU Student Center

Noted lawyer Dale Carpenter will discuss critical human rights case that halted decades of 'legal' discrimination against gay Americans at 3:30 p.m. Sept. 18 in Eastern Michigan University's Student Center auditorium.

When a false police report involving two gay men was filed in Texas, little did the participants know that their arrest in 1998 for sodomy would become a national issue, reaching the United States Supreme Court, where its decision in "Lawrence v. Texas" changed gay rights in the U.S.

Former Houston attorney Carpenter will offer insights into the decision's, history and ramifications during his presentation, "The Story of Lawrence v. Texas: How a Bedroom Arrest Decriminalized Gay Americans."

"This lecture is a timely look at an important human rights case that put a halt on decades of discrimination," said Kate Mehuron, Associate Dean of Programs and professor of philosophy at Eastern Michigan, who developed the program.

The ruling is considered a landmark decision by the Supreme Court that overturned a law prohibiting same-sex sexual activity, says Arnold Fleishmann, professor and head of EMU's political science department.

Carpenter received his bachelor's degree in history from Yale College in 1989 and received his law degree with honors from the University of Chicago in 1992. He clerked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and has worked for law firms in Houston and San Francisco.

The lecture is in honor of Constitution Day, also known as Citizenship Day, to commemorate the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787. For more information, contact Arnold Fleischmann at [affleisch@emich.edu](mailto:affleisch@emich.edu).

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> [www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)

## MCCD Collects Over \$3000 In School Supplies For Ruth Ellis Center

DETROIT – Members of the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit (MCCD) in Ferndale organized a fundraiser throughout August, "Backpacks for Ruth", and collected school supplies and backpacks for the residents of the Ruth Ellis Center, homeless and at-risk LGBT youth, just in time for school to begin.

The MCCD congregation managed to collect over 40 backpacks filled with school supplies such as pencils, notebooks, planners, etc., estimating the value of the donation to be around \$3000. Ruth Ellis Center still needs empty backpacks for their youth as many have no way to carry their belongings.

MCCD is always looking for new ways to help the metro area community. For more information about MCCD, go to [www.MCCDetroit.org](http://www.MCCDetroit.org).





## Bryan Fischer



**H**appy One Year Anniversary of the Don't Ask Don't Tell repeal, everybody. Well, not happy for everyone, I suppose. There are still plenty of anti-gay bigots out there unhappy about the whole thing. Remember how the letting gays and lesbians serve openly in the military was going to result in mass defections? Gropes in the showers? Devastated morale? A weak-wristed force unable to fight?

Well, surprise, surprise, none of that happened. In fact, a new study out of the Williams Institute at University of California Los Angeles Law School has found that, "Repealing DADT has had no overall negative impact on military readiness, including cohesion, recruitment, retention, assaults, harassment, or morale."

This must be a serious bummer for the American Family Association's Bryan Fischer who was convinced that gays in the military would usher in another Holocaust.

In a May 27, 2010 piece on the AFA website, Fischer wrote, "Homosexuality gave us Adolph Hitler, and homosexuals in the military gave us the Brown Shirts, the Nazi war machine and six million dead Jews. Gays in the military is an experiment that has been tried and found disastrously and tragically wanting. Maybe it's time for Congress to learn a lesson from history."

Wow. Equating homos with full-on Nazi's and the attempted extermination of the Jews is a pretty serious claim. It's also bat-shit crazy and completely untrue. Not like that's ever stopped Fischer before. Crazy lies are pretty much his forte.

So did the Palm study find gay Nazi's taking over the military waving swastika-embazoned rainbow flags? Uh, no. But they did find that, "Greater openness and honesty post-repeal may have actually increased understanding, respect, and acceptance." Oh, the horror!

Honestly, I don't know which outcome is considered worse from Fischer's perspective. I mean, the gay-Nazi thing was a long shot, but it certainly would be impressive to be the man able to say, "I told you so" as Hitler mustaches became the new must-have military trend (for men and women, obviously). So to be faced with "increased understanding, respect, and acceptance" must be a real let down. Especially since when people understand, respect, and accept gays and lesbians, they tend to not hate them. And they tend to write off guys who blame the holocaust on gays as insane and/or ignorant.

But then, Fischer isn't exactly an expert on military matters. Perhaps military leaders are seeing the kind of chaos Fischer and others like him predicted? Um, no.

In May Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said about the DADT repeal, "It's not impacting on morale. It's not impacting on unit cohesion. It is not impacting on readiness." He also said, "Very frankly, my view is that the military has kind of moved beyond it," he said. "It's become part and parcel of what they've accepted within the military."

There's that darn "accepted" word again. I strongly suspect that Fischer isn't about to roll over and admit defeat. If being wrong about DADT is wrong, then he doesn't want to be right. But as a country we can rest easier knowing that the only gay brown shirts lurking in the barracks exist in Fischer's twisted imagination.

# U.S. Transgender-Inmate Ruling Movement's Latest Win

BY MEGHAN BARR (AP)

Years ago, in a darkened parking lot in the middle of the night, Kathy Padilla would meet with fellow transgender people who sought support from one another in a society that treated them like outcasts.

How things have changed since then for transgender men and women in America, who have made great strides in recent years toward reaching their ultimate goal: to be treated like ordinary people. On Tuesday, they won another victory when a judge from the U.S. state of Massachusetts became the first to order prison officials to provide sex-reassignment surgery for a murder convict, saying it was the only way to treat her gender-identity disorder.

The ruling marked the latest milestone in the increasing visibility of a class of people once roundly derided as freaks or used as a punch line.

"Now there are transgender delegates at the Democratic National Convention," said Padilla, a 55-year-old transgender woman from Philadelphia who has been an advocate since 1984. "And a number of transgender people have been invited to the White House."

In recent years, more than a dozen states have revised anti-discrimination laws to include transgender people, giving them hate-crime protection and providing rights as basic as restroom access. Transgender officials have helped raise the movement's profile by winning elective office in city halls, landing coveted appointments in the White House and, yes, sending delegates to political conventions.

The Massachusetts court ruling, though, shines a light on what many advocates view as the worst form of discrimination still faced by transgender

people: lack of access to medical care.

"Transgender people are still denied health care access all the time," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "There's insufficient training, insufficient cultural competency, and insufficient humanity sometimes."

Transitioning from one sex to another can involve a variety of treatments, including hormone therapy, but the most expensive one is a sex-change operation, which can cost up to \$20,000. Even though the American Medical Association and other medical experts recommend coverage of services for transgender people, a small but growing number of companies that actually provide it - including Apple, Accenture and American Express - are still the exception.

Federal health care that covers treatment for gender-identity disorders is virtually nonexistent, with no services for federal employees, veterans or Medicare recipients.

U.S. Senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts, who as a state senator filed unsuccessful legislation in the late 2000s to ban the use of tax money to pay for the surgery for prison inmates, said surgery for the inmate at the center of Tuesday's ruling would be "an outrageous abuse of taxpayer dollars."

"We have many big challenges facing us as a nation, but nowhere among those issues would I include providing sex change surgery to convicted murderers," he said in a written statement. "I look forward to common sense prevailing and the ruling being overturned."

In July, Leon Rodriguez, director of the federal Department of Health and Human Services' office for civil rights, sent a letter to an advocate reaffirming that federal

health care funding extends to medical needs of transgender people. But the agency also said insurers are not required to cover "transition related surgery."

The nation as a whole has not yet embraced the idea that a gender reassignment surgery is a medically necessary procedure that could have dramatic health benefits, advocates say.

"If somebody doesn't receive treatment, it can lead to very serious incidents of self-harm," said Jennifer Levi, a professor of law at the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies at Western New England University in Springfield, Massachusetts. "One of the things that the judge recognized is that there's a lot of public misunderstanding about the experience of transsexualism. And there's a lot of bias and prejudice."

In the Massachusetts case, the judge noted that inmate Michelle Kosilek's gender-identity disorder has caused her such anguish that she has tried to castrate herself and twice tried to commit suicide. Kosilek was named Robert when married to Cheryl Kosilek and convicted of murdering her in 1990.

While courts around the United States have found that prisons must evaluate transgender inmates to determine their health care needs, most have ordered hormone treatments and psychotherapy. Wolf is the first judge to order sex-reassignment surgery as a remedy to gender-identity disorder.

"There are still people who believe that being a transgender person is a choice, or exotic or bad," Keisling said. "And you know, those people are becoming fewer and fewer all the time."

"More and more people in the public are recognizing that transgender people are people," Keisling said. "And that being a transsexual or having gender identity is an actual, real, core component of a person's identity."

## BTL Viewpoint: Living United For The LGBT Community

Many of our readers will be participating in workplace funding campaigns operated by Live United [www.liveunitedsem.org](http://www.liveunitedsem.org), known as the United Way for Southeastern Michigan. Former partner agencies Affirmations Community Center and AIDS Partnership Michigan are no longer "Partner Agencies," but you as a contributor can make donations to these strong LGBT supporting organizations by asking for a Donor Designation form during your workplace campaign.

United Way for Southeastern Michigan will still honor donor designations to these former Partner Agencies and YOU as a donor can enjoy the convenience of payroll deduction for your support.

You can find the Donor Designation list by going to {URL [www.liveunitedsem.org](http://www.liveunitedsem.org)}, click on About Us and then click on Community Partners and scroll down to the Donor Designation list. You can also find the Donor Designation Form by clicking on Resources, then click on Workforce Campaign Resources and then click on Designation Form. (Do you get the feeling these United Way folks are trying to make this difficult?)

This year's Campaign will kick off this Friday, Sept. 14, at 7 a.m. at Hart Plaza and the Spirit of Detroit. The Campaign slogan is "Let's Make Greater Detroit Greater" and the campaign theme is "Donate Today for Better Headlines Tomorrow."

Sergio Marchionne, chairman and CEO of the Chrysler Group, LLC, is serving as Campaign Chair.

United Way for Southeastern Michigan/Live United has totally transformed its workplace giving campaign over the past 5 years. We do have to ask why these two critical LGBT community agencies are no longer funded by Live United, as they were formerly under the Education and Basic Needs categories. We can't think of two more critical focuses for our LGBT community than Education and Basic Needs.

We in the LGBT community want to Live United with our place at the table in the "Let's Make Greater Detroit Greater."



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## BRIEFS

### BOSTON

#### Senate Hopeful Warren Opposed To Sex Change Ruling

(AP) - Democratic U.S. Senate hopeful Elizabeth Warren is joining a chorus of elected officials criticizing a federal court ruling ordering Massachusetts prison officials to provide sex-reassignment surgery to a transgender inmate serving a life sentence for murder.

During an interview Friday on WTKK-FM, Warren said she didn't think the ruling was "a good use of taxpayer dollars."

Warren's political rival, Republican U.S. Sen. Scott Brown has called the decision "an outrageous abuse of taxpayer dollars."

As a state senator, Brown filed unsuccessful legislation to ban the use of tax money to pay for the surgery for prison inmates.

A group of 50 Massachusetts legislators this week asked the state Department of Correction to appeal the ruling.

U.S. District Court Judge Mark Wolf ruled Tuesday that the state must provide the surgery.

### WORCESTER, MASS.

#### US Gay Couple Sues Catholic Church Over Nixed House Sale

(AP) - A gay couple has sued the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester for allegedly refusing to sell them a mansion because church officials were concerned they would host gay weddings at the site.

James Fairbanks and Alain Beret of Massachusetts filed their discrimination suit Monday in Worcester Superior Court.

They allege that they were in negotiations to buy Oakhurst, a former retreat center in Northbridge, when church officials suddenly pulled out.

They say they inadvertently received an email from the chancellor of the diocese to the church's broker saying the reason was because of the "potentiality of gay marriages" at the home.

Chancellor Thomas Sullivan says the church dropped out of negotiations because of concerns about Fairbanks' and Beret's ability to finance the purchase.

### PORTLAND, MAINE

#### Gay Marriage Supporters Hold Rally In Maine

(AP) - Gay marriage supporters are expecting hundreds of people at a campaign rally in Portland.

Mainers United for Marriage is holding a rally Monday at Portland City Hall to kick what it says is the next phase of its campaign ahead of the Nov. 6 election, when Mainers will vote on a ballot question asking if they want to legalize same-sex marriage.

Speakers include Mainers United for Marriage campaign manager Matt McTighe, Portland Mayor Michael Brennan and other gay marriage supporters.

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> [www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)

# Detroit Design Festival Returns Sept. 19-23

## 300 Designers Showcase Work In Over 60 Happenings Throughout Downtown

**DETROIT** - Detroit's top and emerging design talent will be put on display at the second annual Detroit Design Festival (DDF), Sept. 19-23, along downtown Detroit's Woodward and Creative Corridors and in select locations across the city.

This year's festival will have a greater influence and impact, with more than 300 designers showcasing their work in 60-plus design happenings. Fashion design, architecture, art, furniture design, interior design and illustration are just a selection of the design disciplines that will be featured at the Detroit Design Festival.

DDF is presented by Detroit Creative Corridor Center (DC3), which has a mission designed to support the growth of Detroit's creative economy, delivering services and developing programming tailored specifically to creative professionals.

"Before the Detroit Design Festival, the city's remarkable creative talent didn't have a regular platform through which they could collectively connect to the community, buyers and other designers," said Matthew Clayson, DC3 director. "Judging by the response from the first year of the Detroit Design Festival and the increase in designers this year, Detroit clearly had a demand for this platform and we are pleased to provide these talented designers with a platform to showcase their work."

DDF will kick-off with an opening party, blending sound and design, in the historic Fisher Building's grand lobby at 6 p.m., Sept. 19. The evening includes special performances from Nick Speed, Deastro and Stevie Soul, as well as a graphic design show curated by AIGA, the professional association for design, featuring 1x Run, a limited edition poster designed by Bethany Shorb of Cyperoptix TieLab.

The Fisher Building Lobby will feature a plush lounge designed by Patrick Thompson Design, a graduate of DC3's Creative Ventures program, using Knoll designs provided by American Interiors. Additionally, there will be a designer row featuring the work of College for Creative Studies Masters of Fine Arts students and the Diet Coke Pop-Up Lounge. The opening party will benefit the Detroit Waldorf School.

Also on Wednesday, the five-day Stick 'Em Up Post-it Competition will commence, where five teams will battle in downtown Detroit to transform vacant storefront windows into awe-inspiring designs using Post-it notes. The People's Choice winner will depend on viewers voting for their favorite designs at each window location via text message and a panel of judges will jury the windows for a



Photos courtesy of DDF and Peter Van Dyke

grand prize winner.

In the midst of thrilling design happenings on Saturday and Sunday, festival goers can check-in to the DDF HUB - open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. - located in the parking garage inside the MSU Detroit Center at 3408 Woodward Ave. The parking garage will be transformed - with design assistance from International Academy of Art and Design, the Detroit Neighborhood Arts Corp and a selection of designers - into the one-stop-shop for festival information and transportation.

The DDF HUB will also have activities for children, with a pop-up playground designed by coG-studio and KaBOOM with kid-focused design workshops with Arts & Scraps and the Heidelberg Project.

DDF closes Sept. 23 with a must-see event at Detroit City Airport's Executive Hangar, 11499 Conner Avenue, Detroit. The event will include jet planes, sports cars and video projections alongside a pop-up shop, fashion show and design exhibitions. Additionally, the winners of the Stick 'Em Up Post-it Competition will be announced,

with the People's Choice Award winner receiving \$500 and the Grand Prize of \$1000. Tickets to the closing party are \$35 for VIP, starting at 6:30 p.m., \$20 for the main event at 7:30 p.m. and \$10 for students. For ticket purchases, go to <http://nexttronix.com/runway.html>.

"The second Detroit Design Festival is truly a transformative event for the city," said Melinda Anderson, DC3 engagement manager. "We are programming some of Detroit's signature buildings and activating dormant spaces. Whether you work downtown, live in the city or are visiting, the presence of the Detroit Design Festival will be hard to miss."

### EDITOR'S PICK

#### Barbara Hammer

Barbara Hammer, known for her evocative films exploring LGBT content, screens her latest film at "cosmo(s)politan," 8 p.m. Sept. 21 at the Jam Handy Building, located at 2900 E Grand Blvd, Detroit.

>> <http://Cosmopolitan.Eventbrite.com>



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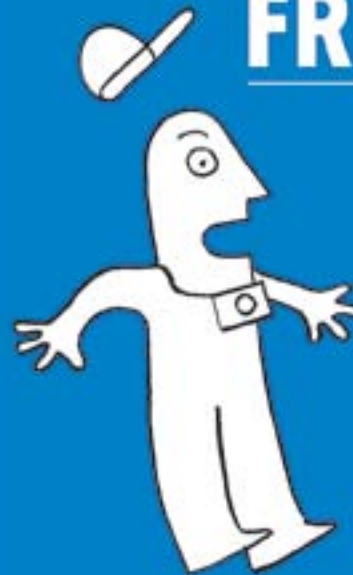
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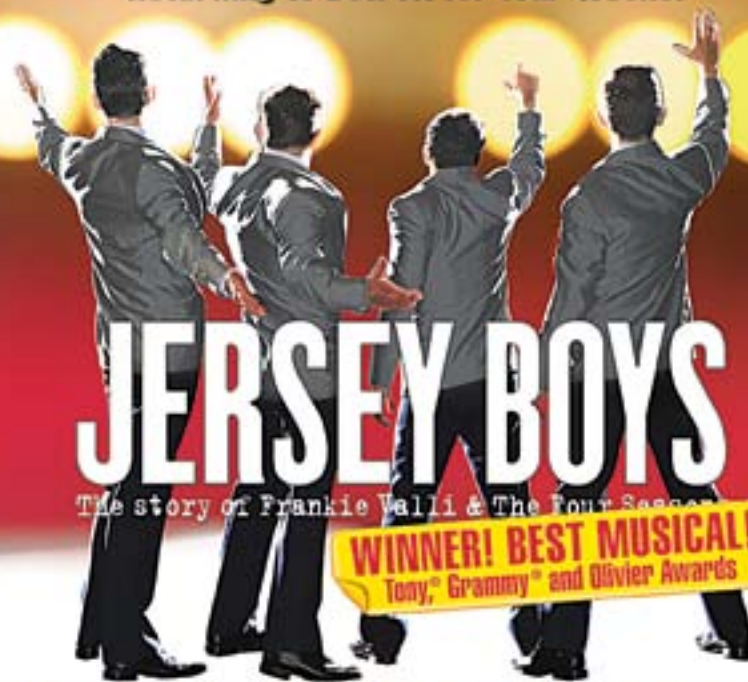
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# SILLY LILY

## Comedian Talks Career Revelation, Detroit Roots And Missing Gay Repression

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lily Tomlin launched her career over four decades ago with a timeless clan of wacky characters that she established on NBC's sketch comedy show "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In." But what if she had to be friends with Edith Ann, Ernestine or Susie the Sorority Girl?

It's something the veteran comedian – and actress, who's starred in "The West Wing" and "Desperate Housewives" – never considered until now, making Tomlin rethink her entire career. Tomlin, 73, also dished on her longtime relationship with Jane Wagner, missing the "the sneaking around" before gay liberation; and what we can expect from her progressive, pot-smoking part alongside Reba McEntire in her first major sitcom role since "Murphy Brown."

**Of all your iconic characters, do you have a favorite?**

They're like kids. You don't show partiality. It just seems wrong.

**Would you want to be friends with any of them?**

Let me think. You're right. Golly – they're bad news. (Laughs) I don't know if I want to be friends with any of them! This is a startling awakening. No one's ever asked me that question. I was running through them really quickly and I thought, "Well, that one would be a handful, and this is a high-maintenance relationship."

**Right! Could you imagine being friends with Edith Ann?**

Imagine having to be her mother! I had an Edith Ann puppet with eyes and a tongue – and everything was animatronics – and we never did anything with her, but I was so wanting a kids show starring Edith Ann. Anyway, so she sits in a big old box right now. Poor thing. She's probably all deteriorated. But they sculpted the puppet head after me – the way I perform her – and it had a vague resemblance to me. It was always sort of spooky. (Laughs)

**So, let me get this straight: Your characters are needy and they scare the hell out of you. You might want to rethink your career, Lily.**

INFO

### Lily Tomlin

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320 Wharton Center, East Lansing  
>> [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

(Laughs) Oh gosh. This has been revelatory. This one question is something I had never heard in my life and never even contemplated.

**You grew up in Detroit and went to school at Wayne State University, where you realized your knack for comedy and acting. What do you remember of that time?**

My parents are from the South, so I would go to Kentucky every summer all through my childhood, and then I'd be in inner city Detroit the rest of the time. It was just one of those great, gritty, working-class, political cities. I lived in an old apartment house, so I had tremendous exposure to a bunch of people. It was a petri dish of people.

**Have you been back since?**

Yeah, sure. I still have one aunt in Shelby Township, in the suburbs. That's all that's left of that generation – my dad's baby sister. And I've gone back to play different colleges around Detroit. The last time I played in Detroit was maybe '99 at the Fisher. Whenever I was in the vicinity, if I was playing Ypsilanti or someplace like that, I would go down to Detroit and spend the night just to hang out and go by my old grade school, my old high school and to go down to Greektown.

**You and your partner, Jane Wagner, have been together for more than 40 years, right?**

Yeah. It's been – what is this? 2012? I have to think back. It's 41 years, but it'll be 42 years in March.

**Back then, when you realized you were gay, people didn't even acknowledge it. Gay was taboo. Do you think that's part of the reason you and Jane have been together so long but haven't married? Because you never expected to?**



No, I don't think so. I guess it doesn't mean that much. With the concept of marriage, I've been a little too flippant and I've said things like, "I was hoping the gay community would come up with a better idea than imitating heterosexual marriage." (Laughs)

But no, I know plenty of people who married and who are pleased about it and are happy. I guess if we had any kids, it would mean something more. Neither of us is religious, so that means nothing to us. I'm proud and happy for it, for people who want to be married. I suppose symbolically it would've been nice if we had gotten married for anybody who's interested.

**You talk about Jane as your partner to the press often now. Was that always the case?**

I used to talk about her all the time. I just talked about it naturally, but in those days people just did not write that way. When I was on the cover of Time in '77, my publicist had almost pulled off the old two-cover coup where you get Newsweek and Time. It's not even important anymore. For both stories, Jane would be there. It was nothing.

One story, I can't remember which one, said, "Lily lives alone in the Hollywood Hills"; another one said that we shared a house – me and writer Jane Wagner. They knew we were a couple. They used to protect us. The journalists would protect us just like they would protect politicians in the old days.

**You probably never imagined you'd be talking to**

See Lily Tomlin, page 28



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# Hear Me Out BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

## Cat Power Gives Us The 'Sun.' Plus: Little Big Town Releases Breakthrough Album



### Cat Power, 'Sun'

The artist who “once wanted to be the greatest” isn’t just imagining it now; she’s living it. The confidence on Cat Power’s first album of original material in six years, self-produced and with beats from Beastie Boys’ producer Philippe Zdar, struts defiance and a life-affirming awakening, rather than the fragility and vulnerability she was living with when she released her 2006 breakthrough “The Greatest.” Now Chan Marshall, her official name, is the guiding light she probably could’ve used a few years back, when dealing with health troubles and the aftermath of a breakup. With a fresh outlook on life and some electro jolts shocking her trademark piano/guitar lushness (and lesbian hair!), she has “Sun,” an exhilarating flood of emotions that pulls from life experiences and a worldview of political-mindedness and social issues. “Ruin” rips into a passive nation of greed, while “Peace and Love,” which intros with an ethereal tone that’s a call-back to her earlier sound, spouts off angrily and triumphantly via a trip-hop beat. The real gem, however, is the youth-empowerment anthem “Nothin’ But Time,” a song that’s so good, so epic – especially as it reaches a liberating climax with Iggy Pop – it never feels as long as its 11 minutes. “It’s up to you

to be like nobody,” Power insists. In other words: follow her example. *Grade: A-*



### Little Big Town, 'Tornado'

One of country’s greatest contemporary bands is done with playing second fiddle to the big dogs: Their fifth album bids for merited mainstream acclaim, without sacrificing the signature sound the Grammy-nominated quartet has established since releasing 2005’s “The Road to Here.” “Pavement Ends,” a raucous rockabilly-fashioned song that kicks off “Tornado,” encourages folks to “let the good times roll.” That’s the plan on “Pontoon,” the lead single that’s become a summer staple with its lazy-day breeziness and sexy innuendo, conjuring up a day on the lake with a beer and some bikini-clad babes. The fun continues during “On Fire Tonight,” an earwormy party song doused in electric guitar and horns that shows the band to be more than just a down-home brand; they’ve got some rock running through them, as the bark of “Front Porch Thing” also demonstrates.

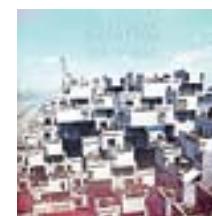
They don’t abandon their unrivaled four-part harmonies (how could they?), which have always given them the edge over lesser acts like Lady Antebellum, and “Can’t Go Back” takes full advantage of those. The song’s a standout, falling in line with other melancholy ballads like “Your Side of the Bed,” that reaffirms Little Big Town’s talent shouldn’t just be acknowledged within award-show circles – but everywhere, and by everyone. *Grade: B+*

### Also Out



### Blaq Audio, 'Bright Black Heaven'

Davey Havok and Jade Puget of punk-rock band AFI, vocalist and guitarist respectively, take a detour with their side project – a detour that takes them back to the ’80s. The goth-glam throwback comes five years after making their initial venture into synth-pop. “Bright Black Heaven” looks to David Bowie, Erasure and Depeche Mode for a decent run of songs that are casually listenable, but dated so far back that they probably found these tracks in the same closet as their fishnets and leather pants. And that’s not always a bad thing: “The Witness” has the swagger of an Adam Lambert song, and “Cold War” is as heartfelt as Andy Bell asking for a little respect.



### Stars, 'The North'

The hipster darlings known as Stars, a Montreal quintet with six albums to their name, lean heavily on the electro new-wave sound they’ve been toying with, especially on their 2010 album “The Five Ghosts.” “The Theory of Relativity” pops with a synthy effervescence that has Torquil Campbell and Amy Millan tag-teaming a la The Human League on this romantic charmer. Despite some remarkable moments – like “Hold On When You Get Love and Let Go When You Give It” and a solo from Milan, “Lights Changing Colour,” that bleeds ’80s nostalgia – the LP slogs in its schmaltzy final third, because, by then, this girl-guy drama is about as tired as they sound.

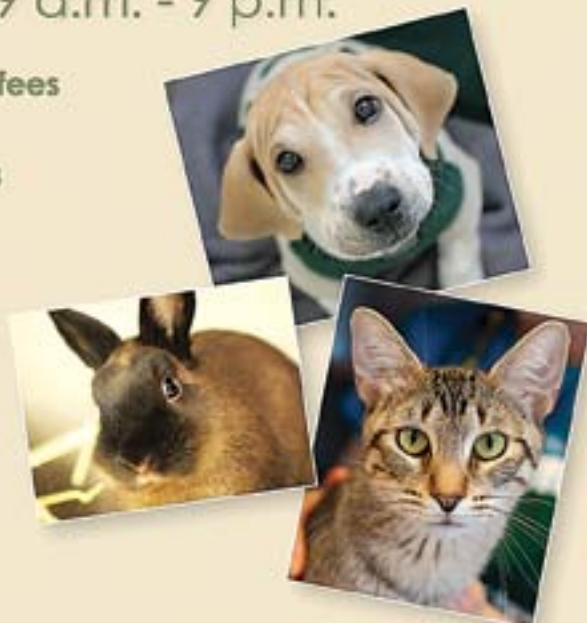


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# OUTFest Celebration Returns To Braun Court

**ANN ARBOR** - The 18th OUTFest returns to Ann Arbor's history Kerrytown District Saturday, Sept. 29 with a multiplicity of activities and entertainment for LGBT and allied community of Washtenaw.

This annual celebration begins in the evening at Braun Court, across from the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market. This year's event will spill into both the Braun Court parking lot as well as the block of N. Fourth Avenue between Catherine Street and E. Kingsley.

OUTFest is a longstanding tradition of Braun Court, in honor of National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11. Organizers decided to move the event into September to avoid October's often unforgiving weather.

But the goal of the festival remains unchanged: "National Coming Out Day is so important because it encourages people, young and old, to come out as LGBT, ally, queer or questioning" explains OUTFest Committee Co-Chair Ashley Schwedt. "But what is most vital about celebrations like OUTFest is that people are literally coming out into a community that already supports and affirms who they are."

The celebration includes music, dancing, entertainers, food, a beer tent, the Grassroots stage with local musicians, speakers, representatives of political campaigns, non-profit information tables, a children's play area, raffles and a Necto-sponsored Dance Pavilion with DJ Mark Johnson.



OUTFest 2011. BTL photo: Matthew Paquin

Ann Arbor's own Abigail Stauffer will perform on the festival's Grassroots Stage, bringing her unique sound, influenced by musicians such as Sufjan Stevens, Regina Spektor and Iron & Wine.

In addition to the restaurants within Braun Court, event sponsor Mark's Carts will be parking a number of food carts within the court, bringing a unique dining experience to the festival.

OUTFest began as a project of Jim Toy Community Center in 1995. The Jim Toy Community Center is a resource for the

LGBT residents of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and greater Washtenaw County seeking to provide information, education, social events and advocacy for the community. Previously the Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project, the center was renamed after Jim Toy in December 2011, in recognition of the renowned activist's enormous contribution to the city's LGBT community.

Since its conception, JTCC's OUTFest has been hosted and produced with the assistance of \aut\ BAR co-owners Martin Contreras and

Keith Orr, large supporters of the center. This year, a new batch of volunteers are organizing this annual community celebration.

"OUTFest 2012 has been put together by a dynamic mix of community members and allies from almost every generation," explains OUTFest Co-Chair Jeff May. "Whether you are an old stalwart of the community or someone who is just finding your voice, the diversity of ideas and activities featured this year are going to be a fantastic way for all of us to come together and celebrate who we are."

"This festival is a wonderful opportunity for the LGBT community to enhance its presence in this progressive city," says communications volunteer Benjamin Jenkins. "Ann Arbor has a fantastic legacy as a hub for the LGBT community; I can't imagine this event will be anything short of a blast!"

OUTFest 2012 is 5 p.m. to midnight, Sept. 29 at Braun Court in Ann Arbor. This event is free and open to the public, though a small fee is necessary for access to the celebration's beer tent. For more information, visit [www.JimToyCenter.org](http://www.JimToyCenter.org) or search Facebook for "Jim Toy Community Center".

For sponsorship information, email Terry McGinn at [TerryM@JimToyCenter.org](mailto:TerryM@JimToyCenter.org) or call 734-834-0598.

Volunteers are still needed to help with setup, decorating, check-in, etc. To sign up to volunteer, contact Ashley Schwedt at [Aschwedt@umich.edu](mailto:Aschwedt@umich.edu).

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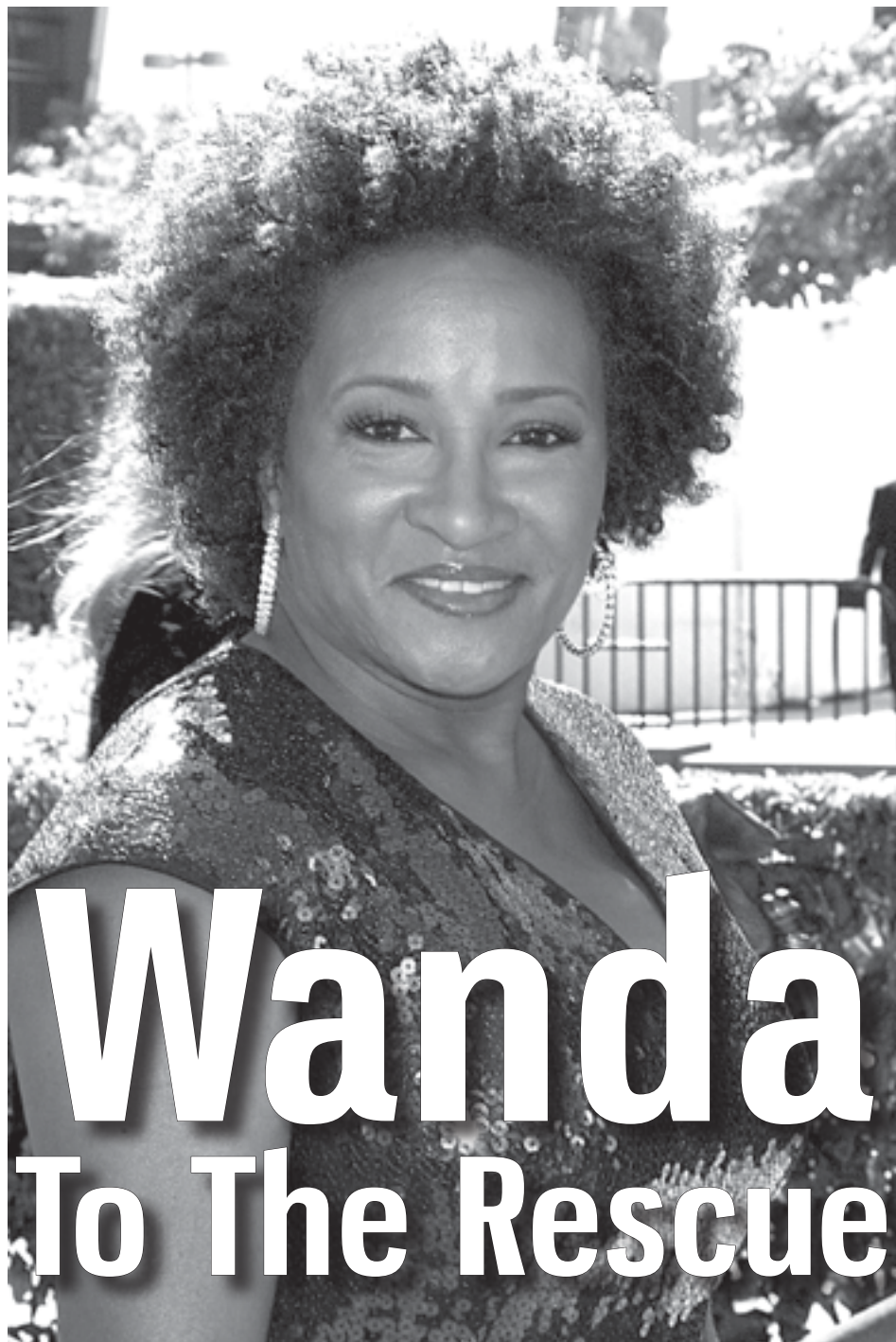
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# Wanda To The Rescue

## Comedian's Visit To Ruth Ellis Center Prompts Dedication To Homeless Youth

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Two and a half hours. That's all it took for Wanda Sykes, who spent that much time mingling with and encouraging the youth at the Ruth Ellis Center during a Detroit tour stop, to attach herself to the cause of curbing homelessness among LGBT youth. Now Sykes' dedication to the Highland Park homeless shelter is coming full circle on Sept. 20, when she returns to Detroit as host of Ruth Ellis Center's annual fundraising event, *Voices*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD).

She'll speak, of course – announcing the results of the End the Chill campaign, which looks to raise \$20,000 by the night of the event – but that's not

all. Sykes will visit the kids for a second time. “It did more for me than I did being there for the kids,” she recalls of her quiet visit to Ruth Ellis in the summer of 2010. “Just listening to their stories, I was so impressed with these young people who are in these horrible situations; they were sitting there, smiling. I was just happy to meet them.” It was then she knew that “whatever I can do to help the center I will gladly do, because it is an incredibly important place.”

Ruth Ellis Center, the only mission-specific agency in the entire Midwest dedicated to LGBT homeless youth, provides residential and drop-in programs in a safe place with full meals, gender-identity support groups and on-site mental health therapy. Last year, the center saw 4,309

“Whatever I can do to help the center I will gladly do, because it is an incredibly important place.”

– Wanda Sykes

### INFO

#### Voices with Wanda Sykes

MOCAD  
4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit  
5:30 p.m. Sept. 20  
>> <http://www.ruthelliscenter.org/>

youth, and more than 800 homeless youth walk the streets of Detroit daily. Sykes' involvement began after Laura Hughes, executive director of Ruth Ellis, sent a letter, knowing the comedian would be in the area for a gig at Sound Board at MotorCity Casino Hotel, to see if she'd stop by to meet the youth.

She obliged, and then went one step further: Sykes became an ally, speaking out on homeless LGBT youth, tweeting to her over 100,000 followers about the center and doing a PSA to acknowledge her commitment to Ruth Ellis.

“Places like the Ruth Ellis Center, I believe we need more of them all around the country,” she says. “It's a blessing we have a place like Ruth Ellis.”

When she popped into the center two years ago, she was awestruck by the disheartening stories of parents who tried to beat the gay out of their child. Others disowned them completely. Having Sykes involved with Ruth Ellis is “threefold,” says Hughes.

“Increasing recognition of the experience of LGBTQ runaway and homeless youth, (being a) role model for LGBTQ youth across this nation and especially to our youth, and her frankness around her own relationships with her family and what it meant to their relationships when she came out: All three of these contribute to her raising the profile of our youth's experience and the work we have to do to increase the permanency outcomes of LGBTQ youth and their families,” Hughes says.

Being gay (Sykes came out publicly in 2008) and raising a child with her wife of four years, Alex, makes the comedian more empathetic to the tragedies that brought these young people to the center in the first place – but even without both, she can't imagine not feeling the same way.

“I'm human,” she says. “I don't know how you cannot have compassion and feel for these kids. That's not the way it's supposed to be. Your parents are supposed to be your protectors, your guardians, your rock. Where you're supposed to feel the safest is in your home. When that's not the case, your whole world is turned upside down.”

Sykes had a different coming-out experience: She was in her late 40s, self-sufficient and

independent, when she told her parents she was a lesbian.

“They had a really hard time with it,” she remembers. “It's been about a little over eight years and they're in a good place. We're all in a good place. But it was hard, so I can't imagine going through that when you're a kid.”

Her message to young people who *are* experiencing homelessness: “There are people you don't even know, strangers, who care about you and love you and want to help.”

Her role as a humanitarian was a career move that couldn't have been foreseen by anyone who saw her in a 2001 movie called “Pootie Tang.” Of making the jump from silly-film actress to activist, she laughs: “That is a bit of a leap. It probably should've been ‘Pootie Tang’ to rehab.”

Her dual careers make balancing jokes with critical matters a challenge. How will she handle it at the benefit?

“It's hard because this is something that's heavy and serious, but I know people expect jokes when I show up – and I'm sure I'll have something funny to say,” she says. “But I really want to get the message out there as far as what the Ruth Ellis Center is doing and also to encourage people to continue to help.”

Becoming a political activist and a stalwart voice for the gay community wasn't ever part of the plan, she says, but it's important, for her anyway, to use her celebrity status for a good cause. “I enjoy doing it, and there are so many people who don't have a voice. If you can use yours to draw attention to a cause that needs some help – a worthy cause – then I say, ‘Why not?’”

Sykes is eager to help another cause, as well: getting Barack Obama elected for a second term.

“I'm feeling nervous for the country,” she says, laughing. “I really am. Man, when (New Jersey Gov.) Chris Christie said ‘respect over love,’ I'm like, ‘What? I have never heard that before in my life.’ Like, really? ‘Please don't ever start writing songs; you'd write the shittiest songs around.’ The Beatles didn't say all you need is respect.”

She also takes down Chick-fil-A (“Just sell your damn chicken!”), and promises more of those wisecracks when she hosts another political panel for “NewNowNext Vote with Wanda Sykes” on Nov. 5, the eve of the election. The first of a two-part series aired Monday.

“I think this is what Logo should be doing,” she says. “Use the channel to be more informative and to talk about issues that are important to the LGBT community. I'm very happy to be a part of it. What we're trying to do is to take both sides and just break it down.”

Break this down for us, Wanda: Is Mitt Romney or Paul Ryan easier to make fun of? Sykes laughs. “They're equally awful.”



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*Sunday, 9/23*

**Lansing/East Lansing, Valley Court Park, East Lansing**

**Northern Michigan, Medalie Park, Traverse City**

*Saturday, 9/29*

**Jackson, Riverwalk Amphitheatre**

*Sunday, 9/30*

**Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti, Detroit Edison Building, Ann Arbor**



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Lily Tomlin stars as Lillie Mae on ABC's "Malibu Country." Photo: ABC

### ► Lily Tomlin

Continued from p. 19

#### gay publications like you do so often now. Is that different for you?

Yeah, of course it is. We had *The Advocate*. Vito Russo, who was my good friend, did a piece on me in *The Advocate*. What year was that? Probably sometime in the '70s. And he didn't want to out me in a really big way that would bring any kind of repercussions on me at that time, because I was very, very popular from "Laugh-In." I said to him, "Look, I want to do the piece with *The Advocate* but I don't want to lie. It's too embarrassing and too awkward to do that." I said, "I'm leaving it up to you. I'm not going to try to influence whatever you do." So in the piece, I do say to him, "Look, if we don't talk about the gay issue it's going to look very strange." And he kept writing in that vein. But it was never explicit; of course, I'd get a lot of flack for it, a lot of heat. People weren't that — I want to say hip.

#### Isn't it amazing how much progress we've made since then?

It's been remarkable. I mean, it's not enough if it's still an issue, but yeah — I've been just really dazzled by the activism and the refusal to disappear and be invisible. But I'll tell you: You miss a little bit of repression, just on the sexy side. The sneaking around. Any kind of taboo is always a little more titillating.

**Your upcoming series, "Malibu Country," airing in November, features a flamboyant record executive played by Jai Rodriguez from "Queer Eye for a Straight Guy" and a next-door neighbor who's gay. Were you surprised that a show starring Reba McEntire, whose fan base tends to be ultra conservative, was so gay and progressive?**

Yeah, and I'm not sure where they're going to take the kid next door, but I hope Lillie Mae gets very political. I've sort of pitched that to them, to go in that direction with my character. She's just more enlightened than Reba, even though she's Reba's

mother. She's just more open and expansive, where Reba is a little more Nashville and shut down. She'll definitely be more progressive.

#### So your character's name isn't Shirley anymore?

I changed it. It's Lillie Mae. I changed it to my mother's name.

#### What about the character interested you? The gray wig?

(Laughs) I built that wig! I had that wig made. Wigs always interest me. Haven't you ever heard of Wigstock? I'm kidding. I have a wig room; I have at least 50 to 70 wigs. I'm kind of a wig queen.

You know, first of all, Reba. I'm not close friends with Reba or anything, but my brother lives in Nashville, and my mother and dad are both buried in Nashville, and so having those Southern roots, I know the culture very well. I've always liked Reba, but then I saw her in "Annie Get Your Gun" in '99 and she was drop-dead brilliant. People still talk about it. She was so alive in that role. I've never forgotten that. And because in the pilot Lillie Mae smokes dope, I thought this is a great chance to do an older person who's just really open to everything.

#### You come from a generation of female comedians that had a very family-oriented style of comedy. What's your take on this new wave of female comedians both in film and in stand-up who are just as vulgar and crass as men?

Guys have done it forever and so the girls just leveled the playing field. I like a much more cerebral kind of comedy. Well, sort of cerebral. But I still have no problem with it. I'm glad to see those girls make successful comedy. Because in the old days — I mean, Gilda (Radner) never got the chance to do the films that the boys did from "SNL." I'm glad that these girls break that taboo, that obstacle that people have put up in front of them for years.

Read the full interview online

>> [www.pridesource.com](http://www.pridesource.com)



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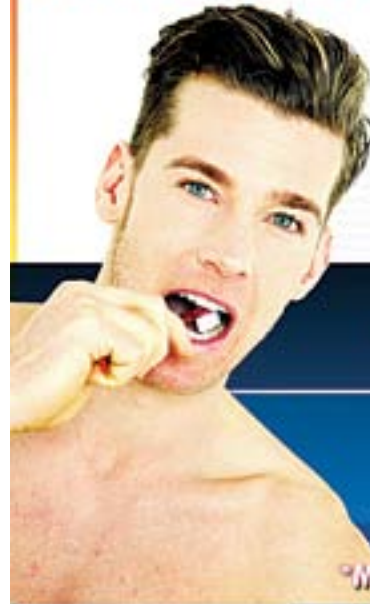


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# Happenings

## OUTINGS

### Thursday, Sept. 13

**Dining by Design** - Cocktails and Artworks 6 p.m. DINING BY DESIGN is a one-of-a-kind, spectacular event that showcases local talent in the design, artistic and architectural community, who are then paired with Table Sponsors or hosts to create three-dimensional dining installations that are works of art and wild beyond imagination. DIFFA, 1120 W. State Fair Ave., **Detroit**. 248-545-1435 Ext. 10. DIFFA.org

**KGLRC Youth Group** 7 p.m. The Resource Center Youth Group helps young people, ages 13 to 18, who are trying to come to terms with their sexuality in a sometimes-unaccepting society. Meets every Thursday from 7-9 p.m. at a confidential location. To attend, call or e-mail the resource center. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer, **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

### Friday, Sept. 14

**50 and Better Friday Group** 7 p.m. Designed for those 50 and better looking for an excuse to get out of the house. Goes out every other week or so for miniature golf, a movie, or other activity, per vote. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. PhoenixChurch.org

**Older Lesbians Organizing** 7 p.m. Provides older Lesbians with the chance to meet like minded women in their common struggles, to share mutual interests and to play and work together. Meets the 2nd Friday of every month. Older Lesbians Organizing, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. Jasmithers@sbcglobal.net

**Womyn's Film Night** 7 p.m. Film: Tea with Mussolini; Based on director Franco Zeffirelli's childhood in 1930s Italy, this film follows a group of Englishwomen living in Italy who believe that fascist leader Benito Mussolini will protect them from war's gathering storm clouds. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

**Arabian Nights** 10 p.m. Join AI GAMEA at Male Box II to celebrate 9th years' anniversary of Arabian Nights Guest DJ will be mixing Middle Eastern Dance Music favorites live. AI GAMEA, 23365 Hoover Rd, **Warren**. Info@algamea.org Facebook.com/AIGAMEA

### Saturday, Sept. 15

**AIDS Walk Michigan-Central Michigan** 9 a.m. AIDS Walk Michigan, Island Park, **Mt. Pleasant**. AIDSWalkMichigan.org

**The Voter Ask Event-Summer Tea Party** 3 p.m. Cover: \$10. Music by DJ Tone. A project to mobilize and register voters, amend Michigan's civil rights law and encourage residents to vote like your life depends on it. KICK-The Agency for LGBT African Americans, LGBT mobilization, 6426 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-285-9733. Johntrimble@e-kick.org E-kick.org

**Dining by Design-Gala Dinner** 6 p.m. Dinner and appetizers provided by Matt Prentice Restaurant Group, live entertainment, valet parking, and silent auction. Raising funds for HIV/AIDS services and education organizations. DIFFA, 1120 W. State Fair Ave., **Detroit**. 248-545-1435 Ext. 10. DIFFA.org

**Mitten Mavens Roller Derby Double Header** 6 p.m. Kicking off the derby season right with a doubleheader bout; Come cheer on your favorite adult and junior derby girls. Tickets: \$10. Mitten Mavens Lansing Roller Derby, 7977 Centerline Dr., **Dimondale**. Mittenmaven@gmail.com MittenMavens.net

### Sunday, Sept. 16

**AIDS Walk Detroit** 8 a.m. Help us raise \$200,000 for AIDS Walk Detroit in 2012 by signing up to walk today. You can register to walk, volunteer, or become a sponsor online or by calling. AIDS Walk Detroit, 316 E. 11 Mile Rd., **Royal Oak**. 248-399-WALK. AIDSWalkDetroit.org

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

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

**The Conversation Station** 5 p.m. Weekly discussion group for LGBTQA 25 and over. Week's topic: Who was your first crush? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

### Monday, Sept. 17

**Roller Derby Rainbow Bout** 5 p.m. Roller derby team Mavens open their second season playing against the Eastside Derby Girls. A fundraiser for The Red Cross of Michigan and the LGBT Resource Center of Michigan State University. Student Admission: \$6 presale from Mavens, \$8 at the door. Regular Admission: \$8 presale online or \$10 at the door. Buy tickets online after party at The Whiskey Barrel Saloon, 410 S. Clippert, Lansing. Mitten Mavens, Address, **East Lansing**. Mittenmaven@gmail.com mittenmavens.net

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

**New Member Night** 7 p.m. For the upcoming concert season. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. All are welcome--LGBT & allies. No sight-reading skills are required! We are Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Out Loud Chorus, 1400 West Stadium Boulevard, **Ann Arbor**. 734.265.0740. Outloudchorus@gmail.com olconline.org

### Tuesday, Sept. 18

**The Story of Lawrence v. Texas** 3:30 p.m. Free Constitution Day lecture by Professor Dale Carpenter of the University of Minnesota Law School. Q&A following the talk. Carpenter will also sign copies of his book, *Flagrant Conduct*. Eastern Michigan University, Oakwood Dr., **Ypsilanti**. Afleisch@emich.edu

**LGBT Grief Group** 6:30 p.m. It is often helpful especially if you have lost a partner to talk to people who are supportive and understanding, as many outside the LGBT community do not fully recognize the grief that comes from losing a partner. The Lesbian and Gay Community Network of West MI, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. 616-458-3511. Thetnetwork@grlgbt.org Grlgbt.org

**Gay-Straight Alliance in Faith** 7 p.m. A group of LGBTQ and allied young adults ages 14-23 welcoming those of all faith backgrounds or no faith background, honoring and respecting each person's faith and spirituality. Alternate between topical discussions and guest speakers on relevant topics for LGBTQ youth. Meets the first and third Tuesday of ever month. G-SAIF, 207 E. Fulton St., **Grand Rapids**. GaysinFaithTogether.org

**A2 TNG (Next Generation of Kinkster)** 7:45 p.m. A kink and fetish oriented group for younger kinksters. The group focuses on support, the sharing of information in the form of demonstrations or discussion groups and socializing. Open to all. A2 TNG, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. Jimtoycenter.org

### Wednesday, Sept. 19

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

**Senior Koffee Klatch** 1 p.m. A lively, discussion and social group for LGBT adults over 45. Group covers topics pertaining to aging and outside speakers. Potluck dinners at members homes, lunches out and holiday parties. Meets ever Wednesday on the upper level of the Affirmations building. Senior Koffee Klatch, 290 W. Road Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 586-573-9932. GoAffirmations.org

**Public Forum** 4 p.m. Anti-Discrimination Laws and their Impact on LGBT People. This event is open to all. If you'd like to submit written testimony, please send it to CalcagnoR@michigan.gov. Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Sneden Hall, Room 108, 415 Fulton St., **Grand Rapids**. 517-241-4319. CalcagnoR@michigan.gov Michigan.gov/mdcr

### Thursday, Sept. 20

**Know Us Project** 6:45 p.m. A dynamic program designed to teach effective ways to express our stories to change public opinion and public policy. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

**LAHR Town Hall Meeting** 7 p.m. LAHR and LAHR PAC are hosting a town hall meeting to allow the LGBT community and others concerned about the rights of LGBT people to meet the candidates who will be on the November ballot and to ask them important questions. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 350 Frandor Ave., **Lansing**. Vacafrank@gmail.com

**VOICES: Honoring LGBTQ homeless and Runaway Youth** A photography exhibit honoring LGBTQ homeless and runaway youth in partnership with the MOCAD with special guest Wanda Sykes. Ruth Ellis Center, 4454 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-832-6622. RuthEllisCenter.org

**Polyamory Network** 7:30 p.m. Open and inclusive community of people living polyamorously, people interested in polyamory and people of, friendly to and curious about polyamory. Welcomes diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. Polyamory Network, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. Jimtoycenter.org

### Friday, Sept. 21

**Gay Bowl XII** 9 a.m. Gay Bowl is the annual flag football championship tournament of the National Gay Flag Football League (NGFFL). Denver will host both men and women divisions. Metro Detroit Flag Football League, 6000 Victory Way, **Commerce City**. 248-910-7200. Info@MDFFL.org MDFFL.org

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

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

### Saturday, Sept. 22

**AIDS Walk Michigan-Detroit** 8:30 a.m. The annual AIDS Walk helps to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and simultaneously it helps to raise funds for local AIDS services. For many, these services are a lifeline to food, housing, transportation and support services that are designed for people and families living with HIV and AIDS. AIDS Walk Michigan, Riverfront, **Detroit**. AIDSWalkMichigan.org

**AIDS Walk Michigan-Great Lakes Bay Region** 9:30 a.m. AIDS Walk Michigan, Friendship Shell, **Bay City**. 888-791-9255. AIDSWalkMichigan.org



Kimiko Ishizaka at Kerrytown Concert House, Sept. 16

**Transgender Health Fair** 1 p.m. Transgender Michigan presents the 3rd Annual Transgender Health Fair. Discover health resources available to the transgender communities. Exhibits, vendors, speakers and panels. The largest health fair in the region dedicated to the transgender community. Transgender Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Info@transgendermichigan.org Transgendermichigan.org

**AIDS Walk Michigan-Genesee County** 2 p.m. AIDS Walk Michigan, University of Michigan-Flint, **Flint**. 810-232-0888. AIDSWalkMichigan.org

**ALIVE Youth Group Meeting** 2 p.m. All LGBT and allied youth 14-20 encouraged to join. 4th Saturday of every month is Social Justice Saturday. As some meetings are held around town, contact ALIVE prior to attending meetings. ALIVE Youth Group, 132 Water St., **Benton Harbor**. Youthgroup@outcenter.org

**Songs of Love, Hope, and Spirit** 7 p.m. An Oasis Benefit Concert featuring recording artist Tiana Marquez. Accompanying Ms. Marquez will be Ms. Lillian Fox, Mr. David Gitterman, and Dr. Doris Allen. Program includes an eclectic blend of show tunes and love songs (Sondheim, Gershwin, Bacharach, Rodgers & Hart) and Spirituals. Suggested donation: \$15-\$20. Oasis Ministry, 3257 Loehr Road, **Ann Arbor**. 734-846-3578. Jsummers@umich.edu Oasisministrymi.org.

**Sunday, Sept. 23**  
**AIDS Walk Michigan-Lansing/Eat Lansing** 10 a.m. AIDS Walk Michigan, Valley Court Park, **East Lansing**. 517-394-3560. AIDSWalkMichigan.org

### Sunday, Sept. 23

**AIDS Walk Michigan-Northern Michigan** 11 a.m. AIDS Walk Michigan, 1910 S. Airport Road, **Traverse City**. AIDSWalkMichigan.org

## MUSIC & MORE

**University Musical Society** "Kidd Pivot: The Tempest Replica" Integrating movement, original music, text, and rich visual design. Kidd Pivot's performance work is assembled with recklessness and rigor, balancing sharp exactitude with irreverence and risk. Kidd Pivot's distinct choreographic language, which fuses classical elements with the complexity and freedom of structured improvisation, is marked by a strong theatrical sensibility

and a keen sense of wit and invention. Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 N. Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 21. 734-764-2538. UMS.org

## CLASSICAL

**Kerrytown Concert House** "Quartet San Francisco" Non-traditional in their delivery, QSF redefines the sound of chamber music. "When the music says swing, we swing. When the music says groove, we groove." Tickets: \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 13. 734-769-2999. KerryTownConcertHouse.com

**Kerrytown Concert House** "Kimiko Ishizaka" A brilliant pianist of Japanese heritage born in Germany, Kimiko Ishizaka believes that music should be accessible to everybody, especially the works of the great masters such as Johann Sebastian Bach. Tickets: \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Sept. 16. 734-769-2999. KerryTownConcertHouse.com

**Lansing Symphony Orchestra** "MasterWorks 1: Opening Night with Beethoven & Prokofiev" Put's Millennium Canons, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3. Tickets: \$15-50. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. Sept. 14. 517-353-1982 ext. 14. LansingSymphony.org

## COMEDY

**Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase** Dwayne Gill; A Marine, A Cop and A Comic-Dwayne Gill is a triple threat! Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Sept. 14-Sept. 15. 734-996-9080. AACComedy.com

**Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase** Ahmed Ahmed was born in Helwan, Egypt on June 27, 1970. His parents immigrated to the U.S. when he was one month old and he grew up in Riverside, CA. He moved to Hollywood when he was 19 years old to pursue a career as an actor and stand-up comedian. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Sept. 20-Sept. 22. 734-996-9080. AACComedy.com

**Ford Community PAC** Paula Poundstone; Poundstone, of from NPR's news quiz show, Wait Wait Dont Tell Me. Armed with nothing but a stool, a microphone and a can of Diet Pepsi, Paula's ability to create humor on the spot has become the stuff of legend. Ford Community PAC, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 14. 313-943-2354. Dearborntheater.com

**Olympia Entertainment** "Clucked up Comedy" The Clucked Up Comedy series brings "Saturday Night Sizzle-The Hot 'Chicks' of Comedy" to Detroit's intimate City Theatre starring Vanessa Fraction, Ashima Franklin and Tiffany Haddish. Tickets \$23. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Sept. 15. 313-471-3200. Olympiaentertainment.com

**The Fillmore Detroit** Gabriel Iglesias; Comedy Central Live. Tickets: \$42. Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 14. TheFillmoreDetroit.com

**Wharton Center for the Performing Arts at Michigan State University** Lily Tomlin; Detroit native comedian Lily Tomlin returns to Wharton Center for one show. Throughout her extraordinary career, Tomlin has received numerous awards, including: six Emmys, two Tonys, two Drama Desk Awards, an Outer Critics Circle Award, two Peabodys and a Grammy, to name just a few. She was also recently elected as Governor of the Television Academy's Performers Peer Group. Tickets: \$28-63. Cobb Great Hall, 1 Wharton Center Dr., East Lansing. 7 p.m. Sept. 16. 517-432-2000. WhartonCenter.com

Continued on page 33



## Editor's Pick

Join the KGLRC and Michigan Partnership for Informed Public Policy (MPIPP) as they present the Know Us Project, a dynamic program designed to teach effective ways to express our stories to change public opinion and public policy.

KUP is intended to build support for equality at the grassroots level. Learn to share your story in a way that isn't adversarial, but will build bridges and create partnerships necessary to making Michigan a better place for LGBT people.

Join the KGLRC and MPIPP at 6:45 p.m. Sept. 20 for this workshop. It will be held at Dewing 103 at Kalamazoo College, 1200 Academy St. This program is completely free to all attendees. In order to register, email David at david@kgllrc.org with your name and phone number. For more information, go to www.KGLRC.org





Michigan's Kyland Hetherington is one of the young stars in the role of Billy Elliot at Detroit's Fisher Theatre. Photo: Kyle Froman

## Tough Times Are The Right Time For 'Billy Elliot'

BY JENN MCKEE

As I watched the opening night performance of the touring version of "Billy Elliot," now at the Fisher Theater, I thought more than once of yet another British film that made a splash when translated into a Broadway musical: "The Full Monty."

For the two films that are the basis for both shows are set in economically depressed, dead-end, working class British towns; both tackle issues of masculinity and gender with insight and humor; and in both, the act of dancing provides a kind of therapeutic, life-affirming escape hatch from the trap that seems to be closing in on the characters.

"Billy" is set at the time of the British National Union of Mineworkers strike of 1984, which ended with then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's conservative government breaking the union after a year-long standoff. Young Billy (Kyland Hetherington on opening night), whose mother died years before, lives with his gruff miner father (Rich Hebert), older brother Tony (Cullen R. Titmas), and feisty grandmother (Patti Perkins). When Billy lingers at his boxing lesson, he finds himself among a group of spastic girls in tutus, which turns out to be Mrs. Wilkinson's (Sasha Ely-Judkins) ballet class. Billy finds himself drawn to dancing, pursuing his passion in secret until Mrs. Wilkinson urges him to audition for the Royal Ballet School.

### REVIEW

#### Billy Elliot the Musical

Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit.  
Tuesday-Sunday through Sept. 16. \$39-89.  
313-872-1000.

[www.BroadwayinDetroit.com](http://www.BroadwayinDetroit.com)

At three hours, "Billy" isn't a longer-than-usual musical, but it feels a bit longer than it needs to be, particularly as the second act grows more unabashedly earnest and lingers to repeatedly showcase Billy's dancing talent. And while Elton John's score (with book writer Lee Hall's lyrics) offers several stirring, strong tunes – I'll have the "Merry Christmas, Maggie Thatcher" in my head for days to come – some (like "Born to Boogie") are less-than-satisfying.

But these are minor complaints about what is generally a likable and charming show. Michigan native Hetherington – who rotates in the role of Billy with two other young actors for different performances – solidly anchored Tuesday opening night performance. With impressive acting and singing skills, and dancing abilities on best display during the show's ballet numbers, Hetherington ably carried the show on his young, narrow shoulders.

The production's main standout, however, is Ely-Judkins, who charismatically

conveys that there's a tender, beating heart within Mrs. Wilkinson's hardened, cynical exterior – not to mention the fact that her vocals are a knockout.

And Peter Darling's groundbreaking choreography astounds in the first act particularly, as scenes of Wilkinson's dance class are mashed into those depicting the increasing tensions surrounding the miners' strike. The contrast that this odd marriage paints is both vivid and narratively useful, in that the audience sees, in an artful, intense display, the forces that are acting on Billy.

Ian MacNail's versatile, clever set design manages to evoke lots of locales, conveying the town's tough economic circumstances (along with costumes by Nicky Gillibrand), and the tone of the show allows characters to casually, matter-of-factly shove set pieces on and off stage like it was just another chore they perform while carrying on personal conversations.

And in times like these, when so many are out of work, "Billy Elliot" hits some unfortunately all-too-familiar notes while also gently breaking your heart. Indeed, the show's final moment, while pointing to a more hopeful future for Billy, is so tinged with melancholy that the curtain call acts as an emotional buoy, thus ensuring the crowd will leave the theater cheering and smiling.

But it's a testament to the show's darker tones that this deliberate shift to lightness isn't all that patrons will remember.



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## Editor's Pick

LCC Theatre welcomes film and television actor Timothy Busfield back to the Lansing area to direct and appear with local favorite Carmen Decker in the dark comedy "Vigil" by Morris Panych. Busfield graduated from East Lansing High School in 1975 and has appeared in numerous films such as "Field of Dreams," "Revenge of the Nerds," "Sneakers" and television series such as "West Wing" and "thirtysomething" (in his Emmy-winning role of Elliot).

"Vigil" asks the question: What happens when an extremely self-centered and shallow person (Busfield) finds himself, through his own errors and inattentiveness, in a life-and-death situation with profound and far-reaching consequences? A play of twisted circumstance, mistaken identity and surprising turns, it is deliciously absurd, incredibly funny and poignantly tender.

Performances are Friday-Sunday, Sept. 14-23 in the LCC Black Box Theatre, located in room 168 of the Gannon Building at 411 Grand Avenue, Lansing. Tickets are \$10-\$15. Call 517-372-0945 for tickets.

## ► Happenings

Continued from p. 30

### CONCERTS

**Fox Theatre** Gotye's most recent offering Making Mirrors has already sold nearly two millions copies globally. The recordings were created over the duration of more than two and a half years. Tickets: \$35-45. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Sept. 18. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

**Kerrytown Concert House** "All About The Trio" 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 2 p.m. Sept. 16. 734-769-2999. KerryTownConcertHouse.com

**Olympia Entertainment** Marsha Ambrosius; Tickets: \$33-45. Sound Board Theater, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Sept. 13. 866-752-9622. Olympiaentertainment.com

**The Ark** Glen Hansard and Iron & Wine; Hansard, best known for his work with The Frames, The Swell Season and in the feature film Once, for which he won an Academy Award and Iron & Wine's Sam Beam perform together at Michigan Theater in downtown Ann Arbor. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 15. 800-745-3000. TheArk.org

**The Fillmore Detroit** Dropkick Murphys; Tickets: \$26-36. Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 18. TheFillmoreDetroit.com

**The Palace** "An Evening with Smokey Robinson" Performing with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Tickets: \$25-85. DTE Energy Music Theatre, 7774 Sashabaw, Clarkston. 8 p.m. Sept. 15. 248-377-0100. ThePalace.net

**The Palace** Mary J Blige and D'Angelo; The Liberation Tour. Tickets: \$56-126. DTE Energy Music Theatre, 7774 Sashabaw, Clarkston. 7 p.m. Sept. 14. 248-377-0100. Palacenet.com

## THEATER

### CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

**A Man For All Seasons** \$17. Village Players, 34660 Woodward Ave., Birmingham. Through Sept. 16. 248-644-2075. Birminghamvillageplayers.com

**Anything Goes** \$13-25. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. Sept. 13-16. 734-971-2228. A2CT.org

**Legally Blonde-The Musical** \$18-20. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. Through Sept. 30. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org

**My Fair Lady** \$16-18. Spotlight Players at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Sept. 14-23. 734-394-5460. SpotlightPlayersML.org

**Spring Awakening** \$18-20. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Sept. 13-23. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com

### PROFESSIONAL

**A Little Work** \$18. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes and Noble Booksellers Theatre, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, Bloomfield. Through Sept. 30. 248-850-9919. TwoMusesTheatre.org

**A Skull in Connemara** Free; donations accepted. The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette, #113, Detroit. Through Sept. 29. 313-454-1542. theabreact.com

**Billy Elliot The Musical** \$39-89. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Through Sept. 16. 313-872-1000. BroadwayinDetroit.com

**boom** Previews Sept. 20-23 & 27 (\$15). \$20-22. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam, Williamston. Sept. 20-Oct. 21. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org

**Death and the Maiden** \$15-20. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. Sept. 21-Oct. 14. 313-967-0999. matrixtheatre.org

**Deathtrap** \$29-32. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 Cady St., Northville. Through Oct. 7. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

**Extroverted Olive Oil** \$10. Crawspace Theatre Productions at Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Sept. 14-15. 269-599-7390. crawspacetheatre.com

**Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy!** Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomedynet.com

**God of Carnage** \$15-18. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Oct. 6. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

**Hamtown Races** \$20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Sept. 21-Oct. 13. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

**Moonlight and Magnolias** \$38-45. Jewish Ensemble Theatre at Aaron DeRoy Theatre on the campus of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Sept. 19-Oct. 7. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

**Oh, Ananse** \$10 adult, \$5 child. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theatre, 25 E. Grand River, Detroit. Through Sept. 29. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

**Shopping & F\*\*\*ing** \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Sept. 24. 248-545-5545. TheRingwald.com

**Superior Donuts** Previews Sept. 20-23, 26-27 (\$22-\$32). \$18.50-42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Sept. 20-Dec. 15. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

**The Pillowman** \$15-18. Threefold Productions at Mix Studio Theater, 8 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti. Sept. 21-Oct. 13. threefoldproductions.org

## ART'N'AROUND

**Ann Arbor Art Center** "Annual: All Media Exhibition" 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Sept. 2-Oct. 21. 734-995-8004. AnnArborArtCenter.org

**Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History** "The Chris Webber Collection" 315 E. Warren, Detroit. May 1-Sept. 30. 313-494-5853. TheWright.org

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

**Kalamazoo Institute of Arts** "Elliot Erwit: Dog Dogs" 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. July 7-Sept. 23. 269-349-7775. Klarts.org

**Lawrence Street Gallery** "All Girls, No Boys" 22620 Woodward Ave., Suite A, Ferndale. Sept. 1-Sept. 30. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

**Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit** "Vision in a Cornfield" 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sept. 7-Dec. 30. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

**Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit** "Anri Sala" 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sept. 7-Dec. 30. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

**Riverside Arts Center** "The Pieces Fall Together" 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. Sept. 6-Sept. 29. 734-483-7345. Riversidearts.org

**The Detroit Institute of Arts** "Picasso and Matisse" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 11-Oct. 29. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

**The Gallery Project** "Quantified Self" 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Aug. 30-Oct. 7. 734-997-7102. TheGalleryProject.com

**The Scarab Club** "Nancy Mitchnick: Time Travel" 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. Sept. 5-Oct. 14. 313-831-1250. ScarabClub.org

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** "Jesper Just:" 525 South State Street, Ann Arbor. Aug. 21-Dec. 9. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

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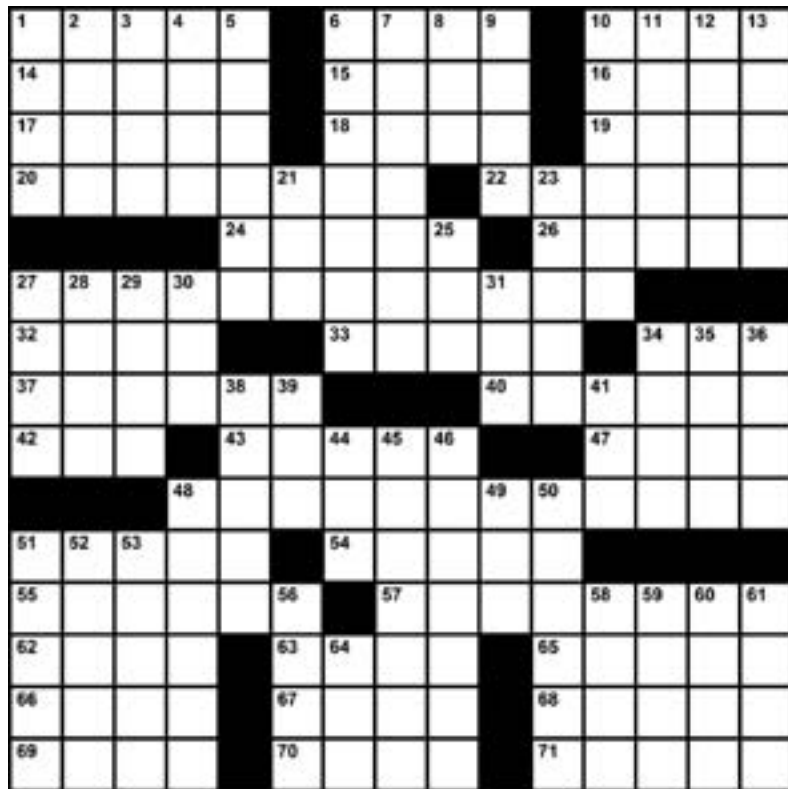
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# Famous Homophobes



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Solution on pg. 36



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# Horoscopes

## Trust erotic instincts, Virgo!

BY JACK FERTIG

*Mercury is lord of the zodiac now, but he's in bad aspect. Reign in ego and criticism. Venus in Leo aspecting the outer planets is challenging us all to innovative change. Heed your intuition and keep it sweet.*

**ARIES (March 20 – April 19):** When people disagree with you, it's not about you! That can be hard to remember at work, especially. Efforts to charm will probably backfire. Just keep your nose to the grindstone and do your own work the best you can.

**TAURUS (April 20 – May 20):** You want to make big changes at home, but are there others to consider? "Brilliant" surprises will not be appreciated. New recipes are a safer bet. Treat your creative efforts as experiments: There are no failures, only lessons.

**GEMINI (May 21- June 20):** Glib charm will not go down well. Make your words matter. Use your charm to convey challenging notions. Being nice helps get the message across, but by itself it's no message at all.

**CANCER (June 21- July 22):** You need to take care of yourself and get back to basics to care effectively for others. Reconsider your recent accomplishments and talk them over with a close friend. The new moon on the 15th will bring new ideas to explore.

**LEO (July 23 – August 22):** No matter how much charm you pour on your efforts to help others, they may not be much appreciated. Self-improvement is always a worthwhile effort. Working on yourself can open opportunities to play with others.

**VIRGO (August 23 – September 22):** Trust your creative and erotic instincts. Some rational discernment is necessary, but you should know within the count of 10 whether you are hearing the call of passionate brilliance or a sirens' song.

**LIBRA (September 23 – October 22):** Even without malicious intent, gossip can be very damaging. Your friends mean well, but do you need sloppy blabbermouths complicating your life? Trust your partner's advice on who your friends really are.

**SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21):** Challenges at work can bring out your best. It will take hard work, creativity and shrewd thinking, but you can win accolades. Your innovative instincts are good. It will take subtle persuasion to get others to go along.

**SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20):** Kindness and charity can take considerable effort. Some poor annoying fool probably has no idea that he or she is hitting your sensitive points. You don't have to put up with it, but you can be kind and gentle when stopping it.

**CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19):** As in a bad romantic comedy, a misunderstanding could lead to a passionate affair. More than that? Probably not, but it could still change your life. New ideas at work need some polish, but will help you push forward.

**AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18):** News from your partner could knock you for a loop and change the relationship. If you think of it as a battle, you will lose the war. Pay attention and adapt. Necessary changes won't be easy but will make things a lot better in the long run.

**PISCES (February 19 – March 19):** Confusion can lead you to friends for advice. Listen, but consider carefully how their suggestions conflict with your own values. Out of that clash of ideas you'll come up with something very useful. If your partner is being annoying, he or she really needs your support now.

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

### Bloomfield Hills-Thursday

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

### Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

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

### Farmington Hills-Monday

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

### Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

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

### Ferndale-Wednesday

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

### Ferndale-Saturday

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

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

### Livonia-Friday

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

### Warren-Monday

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

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### Solution to puzzle from page 34

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

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# Walking With A Ghost



## Dating Diet

BY ANTHONY PAULL

There's a time in every adult man's life when he realizes he's no longer a kid. For me, it occurred while hanging out at a theme park without a kid of my own, right when I realized I looked like a pedophile.

I know. I shouldn't say that. But that's what crossed my mind when my friend Pete asked me to take his pic while mounting a pink bunny on the merry-go-round at Dollywood. I kept asking myself, "Is this something that needs to be frozen in time?" Nevertheless, I snapped anyway, blaming my ill discretion on lack of sleep, food and the inability to shit. The night before, two friends and I set across the Southeast and somehow landed in the middle of Dolly Parton's tits or the Smoky Mountains or whatever you want to call it where the air is too thin to think. Luckily, we promised ourselves not to think anyway. The one rule of the trip was to be totally random, not having a clue where we'd end up. I suppose that's how we arrived in Dolly Parton's fancy tour trailer, marveling over her journal and wig collection after 13 hours of driving. The next day, after blacking out in a flea hotel, I wake to wonder what will happen next.

"I've always wanted to see Charleston," my chipper friend Hailey says. "I hear it's haunted. They have ghost tours."

A paranormal fanatic, that's all Pete needs to hear and we're in a car, winding down a mountain, headed to South Carolina. Later that night, Pete holds the lantern as the tour guide tells us the legend of the boo hag: a mythical creature that steals one's breath when sleeping. Single, Pete likes the idea of someone riding him in the night but he has sights on something more human. Later, after listening intently to the story of a ghost dog named Poogan that haunts a local restaurant, Pete tells me he needs someone to bone. At least I pretend that's what he says. Technically, Hailey and I decide that for him. To keep the night random, we figure it would be fun to set him up. En route to the gay bar, streetlights cast an eerie green glow on cobblestone streets, illuminating the fact that this is the first bad idea of the trip.

You see, it takes Hailey seven drinks before she's no longer lucid during her reign as matchmaker. "My brother think you're hot," she slurs, finding any cute guy who will listen. When Pete catches on he disappears in the crowd.

"Where is your brother?" one shrewd fellow asks.

"Uh, I don't know. He was here a minute ago," Hailey says. She eyeballs me to help, but I'm too

drunk to be a good wingman.

I shrug. "I don't know where he went."

She grits her teeth, and the guy turns to me with a wink. "You know, her 'bro' sounds pretty desperate. Maybe he ought to tell me I'm hot himself." He lingers for a response. "So are you going to tell me?"

"Tell you what? I'm not her brother. And I don't think you're hot."

Hailey laughs, pushing me on the dance floor. "He's lying! He *is* my brother, but I was talking about my other brother. My other brother thinks you're hot."

"OK. Now this is getting weird," the guy says, returning to his friends.

Snubbed, Hailey skips off in the crowd, and I drop my beer on the dance floor, where it smashes into a million pieces. Shooed by a drag queen, I later find Pete in a dark corner of the club. He stands by a short guy who seems equally uncomfortable. "Do I spy a romance in bloom?" I dizzily ask.

Pete turns red, brimming with anger. "No. This is Hailey's friend."

The short guy squirms, avoiding eye contact. So I get in the middle of the two, pulling them in with my arms. We sway to the music, but the short guy won't answer any of my questions. Agitated, he finally coughs out he's from Miami.

"Wow, Pete's from Florida too! You have so much in common," I state. "I think you should have sex."

With that, Pete bails to the bathroom, where he updates his Facebook status. Do not go to the club with your coupled friends! They will try to set you up. I've never been so mortified in my life!

I relay the message to Hailey, who's located the owner of the restaurant with the ghost dog. She thinks he'll be a great match for Pete. Unfortunately, Pete doesn't agree, racing over to tell us he's leaving.

"But he owns the restaurant with Poogan the ghost dog!" Hailey declares. "He wants to take us to lunch tomorrow. Isn't that nice? You should talk to him."

Enraged, Pete throws up his hands. "Why?"

"Because he has a ghost dog."

Pete gets right in the guy's face. "Big deal. So you own a ghost dog? You own a freaking ghost dog?"

"I...own...a restaurant where...the dog used to live," the guy calmly replies.

"Whatever!" Pete says, dashing outside. Returning to the hotel, he grabs some beer and heads downstairs, leaving Hailey and I alone.

"Uh, do you think we made a mistake in trying to set him up?" she asks.

"Maybe. But we were just trying to be good friends." Soon, we both close our eyes, falling asleep. Two hours later, I wake and Pete is still gone. The next morning I learn he'd fallen asleep watching TV in the lobby. In his absence I felt the presence of a ghost after all. Hailey felt it too, and we agreed when it comes to the supernatural world of dating Pete would need to float on his own.

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# Cocktail Chatter

## Dill-Infused Vodka

BY ED SIKOV

It began innocently enough. But like so many of life's little catastrophes, my attempt to serve something a bit unusual took a sudden and unexpected dive, and the whole evening went down in flames.

Dan and I had invited our friends Bill and Treighton out to the beach house late in the season, a beautiful time on Fire Island when the hoards of bubbleheaded bubblebutts had gone back to the city and the weather was still warm enough to sit on the deck in the still-warm late afternoon. Some leaves had turned, others hadn't, and the dappled effect of reds and oranges against green was simply but extraordinarily lovely. None of the housemates were there; it was just the four of us. A nice hunk of pork was slow-cooking and smoking in the grill. Dan had brought an array of scrumptious cheeses from a cheese shop near his office, and I was just setting them out on a plate when Treighton appeared in the kitchen and asked if there was anything he could do to help.

As you may have guessed, Treighton is a Southern boy; he comes from a genteel Nashville family in which most people's first names are actually the last names of generations long gone. Treighton was named after his great, great grandmother's family. His sister, Mackenzie, carried on their mother's maiden name.

In any case, I was happy to take Treighton up on his offer of assistance, so I asked him to pour four glasses of the dill-infused vodka I'd made earlier in the week.

"What did you say the f-flavor was?" he asked with a nervous stutter and a distinct edge of panic.

"Dill," I said, at which point Treighton rushed out of the room in tears. I could hear the hard sound of footsteps on the stairs and the

surprisingly soft closing of his bedroom door.

Then it hit me. "Dill!" I muttered. "Ed, you foo-el, you imbecile!" (I tend to turn into Cruella de Vil when berating myself.) I had forgotten all about the "dill problem."

Many years ago, Bill and I had had a discussion of Treighton's inability to tolerate the words "scout," "finch" and, worst of all, "dill." Recognize 'em? The literate reader will recall that these are names drawn from Harper Lee's marvelous novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" and Robert Mulligan's film adaptation of the same name. Amazingly (to me, anyway), Treighton had been a child actor and had auditioned for the role of Dill. Take one look at Treighton and you can still see exactly the type of boy Mulligan had in mind for Dill. The decision came down to Treighton and some other kid; the other kid got the role. Treighton has been bitterly mad about it ever since – mad in the sense of insane, loony, nuts).

After an hour of delicately tiptoeing around the first floor murmuring praise of Mulligan's film – a monologue by me, of course – Bill coaxed him downstairs for dinner with a glowing paean to the smoked pork delivered from outside their bedroom door. But the evening was still essentially ruined. The *shhhhh!*-infused vodka, however, was delicious. Here's how to make it:

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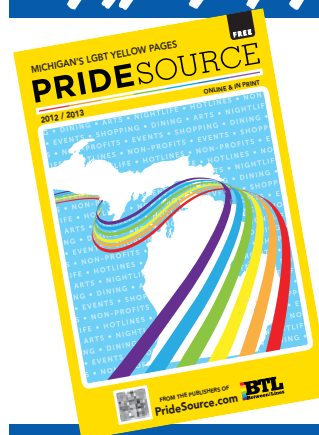
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