

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993



Memoirs Tackle Gays
And Christianity

Movies For Everyone
On Your Xmas List

“I told (my eighth
grade students)
nobody should have
hate like that for
each other.”

- Sue Johnson, South Lyon teacher



LISA LAMPANELLI
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(TO HATE)
YOU**

Talking Gays & God
With The Comedian

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PRESENTS

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DEC

6 pm - 9 pm / 7

10 am - 9 pm / 8

Noon - 5 pm / 9

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* At Schiffer Park, Saturday ONLY

SUNDAY, DEC. 9

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Ferris Wheel Rolls

Holiday Stage Entertainment

Strolling Santa



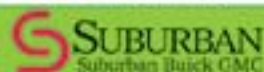
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Go to Pridesource.com or scan this QR code.

“I was asking a lot of questions and in the process I discovered two things almost simultaneously: I was queer and my church would kick me out if they discovered my secret.”

– Chris Stedman, author of "Faitheist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious." Pg. 14



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In The Welcoming Business

Kevin Hogan Works Toward More Inclusion in Michigan Faith Communities

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

“Church work is like government work, change is slow,” said Kevin Hogan of the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion Faith Alliance. But that doesn’t stop him from pushing onward for incremental change in the way congregations evolve towards acceptance.

Through the Faith Alliance, Hogan sets up meetings with pastors and other faith leaders and laypeople who want to learn more about how to have a welcoming congregation. Usually it’s because someone has called for more information or because they were recommended by someone with insight.

“There are congregations that want to welcome LGBT members, but they have no idea where to begin to do so,” Hogan said. “Sometimes the conversation is already taking place – among congregation members, or maybe someone has gone to the clergy. So we know there is an interest, but they may want someone from outside the congregation to talk about it. I’m sort of like a lightning rod. I go in and lead the discussion so that the pastor or other clergy don’t feel any negative feedback.”

He emphasized that negative feedback is rare. “Usually church leaders are surprised at how little feedback there is. We’re not going into churches where they teach against homosexuality and wouldn’t be open. These are congregations where someone has already expressed an interest, but they just need some guidance on how to make it happen.”

On a national or international level, creating affirmation in religious institutions takes years. There is often a government-like structure where members of the faith must vote to make changes. It has happened in Reformed Judaism, Presbyterian, Episcopal and United Church of Christ faiths. Metropolitan Community Church is one that was founded on LGBT acceptance. But there are many other denominations where same-sex relationships are not officially accepted, but where people can find welcoming congregations.

The change typically starts at the congregation level, and when Hogan comes in it’s usually not hard to get people talking and thinking about why love and acceptance is a Godly path. He’s also got a powerful tool. The Michigan Roundtable partnered with the Arcus Foundation to produce two short videos: *Come As You Are*, which features LGBT people of faith and parents of a gay man who tried to commit suicide; and *A Space for All: Leading*



Kevin Hogan of the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion Faith Alliance describes himself as a “lightning rod” when he leads discussions with congregations learning about how to be more welcoming of LGBT people.

Towards Inclusive Congregations, which features faith leaders talking about inclusion.

“Sometimes they just show the video and people get it,” Hogan said. Nearly 1,000 of the DVDs have been given to houses of worship throughout the state. In *A Space for All*, four church leaders talked about why it’s important for their congregation to be welcoming. Rev. Henrietta Stith-Andrews, a retired United Church of Christ Pastor, explained “the church should be about building community, it’s a place where everybody should be welcomed.” She also said, “What I often hear is the pain they (LGBT people) experience because of the messages from the pulpit.”

Rev. Dr. Susan McGarry of St. Aidan’s

Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor echoed the expression of fear and pain that some who have felt rejected by the church experience. “Many, many people in the LGBT community have really felt and had horrible experiences of exclusion from the religious organizations in their lives, and so just stepping into church is a monumental act of courage. God loves people who are different from you also. Who are we to say who should sit in the pew and who God is going to limit God’s love for or to?”

Rev. Matthew Bode of Spirit of Hope Detroit said that it is “easy to go along to get along” in the church. “The easiest thing to do is keep silent and receive our paycheck,” he said about clergy who avoid the topic of same-gender-

loving people. But Bode and members of his congregation have chosen the path towards acceptance. “Having a small sign or having a rainbow flag on our website has made a big difference in just letting people relax and being able to experience the actual congregation of the actual community rather than worrying about ‘Am I welcomed?’ first.”

Sometimes Hogan leaves the DVD for faith leaders to share at their own pace, but other times he comes along for the presentation to answer any questions. He said that generally the response is positive, with people wanting to know “Ok, so what’s next?”

In the past five years, 125 clergy have taken steps to move their congregations towards more inclusiveness in Michigan.

Culture of Inclusion

It doesn’t take much for a congregation to start a culture of inclusion. “We usually start with the Welcome Statement,” Hogan said. “Almost all (congregations) have a welcome statement and we look at that to see if it is inclusive. We give them an information packet that has sample welcoming statements in it, to give them ideas.”

Among the welcome statements, is one from the Northminster Presbyterian Church in Troy. “In recognizing Christ’s calling to treat others as we desire to be treated, Northminster Presbyterian Church welcomes all people, regardless of sexual orientation, color, gender, religion, social or economic class, ethnicity, nationality or disability. We value all members of the community. We consciously strive to create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth in which none are strangers and all may flourish.”

Hogan explains that congregations are at “different stages of a life cycle,” when it comes to being inclusive. And that while congregations may be limited by policy set at far off bureaucratic places, the first steps to inclusion are easy and can make a big difference.

For him, as a gay person of faith, knowing that he is accepted at church helps him find a balance

For more worship-related stories, see the
Worship Guide on pg. 14

See Welcoming, page 5



Volunteers of Ferndale Pride at this year's celebration.

Ferndale Pride Gives \$10,000 to Local Charities

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

In just its second year, Ferndale Pride was able to raise \$10,000 to give to local charities. Michigan AIDS Coalition, Affirmations, the Dyke March and the Ferndale Community Foundation each received part of the \$10,000 total.

County Commissioner and Ferndale Pride organizer Craig Covey announced the totals at the Nov. 26 Ferndale City Council meeting, praising everyone who was involved. The gross taken in for the event was \$26,000, with \$16,000 going to expenses such as tent rental, stage rental, and fees to the City which include permits and staff time for DPW, Police and Fire related to the weekend-long event.

This total was in addition to the Rainbow Run, a tie-in event created by the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce. It was the first year for this event, and it quickly sold out with

500 runners/walkers participating. According to Chamber Executive Director Jennifer Roosenberg, 90 percent of the runners came from outside Ferndale and that many brought friends and family with them to the event. The gross for the Rainbow Run was \$21,374. Expenses were \$10,478.

Three local charities each got \$1,040, for total gift of \$3,120 and the remaining profits went to the Chamber's general fund, helping them to hire an additional part-time staff person and begin new programming.

Ferndale Pride is a celebration of diversity that is organized by dozens of volunteers in partnership with a variety of local businesses. It takes place each June. The exact date for 2013 is not yet set.

For more information and updates visit www.ferndalepride.com.

► Welcoming

Continued from p. 4

in life that he lacked growing up Catholic. He said that "there are individual clergy and Catholics who are truly welcoming and trying to change the Catholic Church," but that for him the United Church of Christ was "a better fit." When he changed denominations he was eager to go out and spread the word of the UCC and its policy of acceptance. But instead he found a path to help change many faiths.

In the past five years, 125 clergy have taken steps to move their congregations towards more inclusiveness in Michigan, said Hogan. And on top of the work with individual churches, the

Faith Alliance has hosted events which further encourage the dialogue. They brought Soulforce Bus Tour founder Jacob Reitan to speak in 2011, and in 2012 they hosted the Sacred Conversation at the Ecumenical Theological Sanctuary that connected Detroit-based ministers on both sides of the gay marriage issue together for a peaceful and spiritual conversation.

Most recently the Shower of Stoles Exhibition at Affirmations served to connect the faith and the gay communities by recognizing religious leaders who left their posts due to not being accepted for who they love.

To find out more about the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion LGBT Faith Alliance Program go to www.miroundtable.org/lgbtfaith.htm.

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OU Students Rally for Gender Neutral Restrooms

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

What started out as a class project has grown into a movement to get gender neutral restrooms at Oakland University.

Margaret Leahy is a social work major in Dr. Dalton Connally's LGBT studies class. Students in Connally's class started learning about the issues transgender people face, including the discomfort, or even danger, faced when they might have to choose a restroom that others might consider "wrong."

One solution is "gender neutral" or "family" restrooms where any person is welcome. "We found out there aren't many on campus, and that's a problem," Leahy said. "It's important for safety and for everyone to be comfortable. Plus, there are health dangers of someone not being able to use the bathroom. We need to make this accessible for everyone."

The class decided to start a petition. "We've got a few hundred (signatures) so far. We're going until we get 600, then we'll turn them into the school board." The petition calls for more gender neutral restrooms, ideally in

every building.

Leahy said that some will be as easy as changing signs, but some buildings would require some construction. There are reportedly six gender neutral restrooms currently on campus.

In addition to the petition, students have been holding peaceful protests and a rally. On Nov. 26 the Gender Bender Rally was held with over 50 students attending and speakers from Ruth Ellis Center, Affirmations, Transgender Michigan and Gender Identity Network Alliance sharing information with the public. On campus organizations Transcend and the Gay Straight Alliance have also been helping get the word out.

"It's not any particular group that's behind the petition," Leahy said. "But we have started a Facebook page called Gender Safe at OU that can be found at www.facebook.com/SocialAdvocacyForLgbt?ref=stream, to help get the word out."

The rally helped them add signatures to the petition and also gave them a chance to talk with other students about the issues transgender



Rachel Crandal presenting. Photo courtesy of Transgender Michigan.

individuals face. There was an art display, tables from the various organizations along with the speakers.

Rachel Crandal of Transgender Michigan was one of the presenters.

"I wanted to help the student effort for several reasons," Crandal said. "I believe that there needs to be gender neutral bathrooms everywhere. Many people are gender queer or gender

"It felt great to see the students working on behalf of the community and it convinced me that Transgender Michigan needs to put an even greater focus on youth."

- Rachael Crandell

nonconformists and they deserve a safe place to pee. Also I am really proud of the students and I know that they are our future.

"I spoke about the need for activism and how Transgender Michigan did some of the first transgender activism in Michigan. It felt great to see the students working on behalf of the community and it convinced me

that Transgender Michigan needs to put an even greater focus on youth. In Michigan we need much more activism and it is the mission of our organization to work with groups and organizations in Michigan to make this happen."

Leahy pointed out that gender-neutral restrooms aren't just for transgender people. "There are a lot of people with families, and it can be hard for them taking their children into a restroom where they may not feel comfortable or welcome. And for people with disabilities, having access is important. We are trying to advocate for everyone in every building."

Anyone is welcome to visit the campus and advocate for more inclusive facilities. However, only Oakland University students and staff are able to sign the petition. Leahy and the other students hope to have 600 signatures by the end of the year.

Find out more by following Gender Safe OU on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SocialAdvocacyForLgbt?ref=stream>.

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South Lyon Teacher Suspended For Playing 'Controversial Video'

School Restores Pay For Suspension After ACLU, Media Scrutiny

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE
AND BENJAMIN JENKINS

South Lyon Centennial Middle School teacher Sue Johnson was suspended for three days Nov. 21 after presenting a YouTube clip of the hip-hop song "Same Love" by underground rapper Macklemore, which discusses struggles faced by gay individuals.

During her eighth grade performing arts class, Johnson selected a musical piece and facilitated a class discussion about it. She got the idea from an in-service training that encouraged teachers to start their classes with music.

Johnson told *Between The Lines* that a student approached her and asked if she could play Macklemore's "Same Love" music video for the class.

"I asked him if there were any swear words, any violence. He told me "no" and I said we could go ahead," Johnson said. "The little boy who brought it was so engaged. One boy raised his hand and said he had an uncle who was gay. Another girl said her aunts were."

Johnson told the students that she knew someone who was gay too. "One of my friends whose brother was gay went to Miami Beach. He and his friend went to dinner and a couple clubs, and he was attacked - and he died. I told them nobody should have hate like that for each other.

"We talked about what 'Same Love' means. We talked about social justice. We talked about how the Constitution says we are all created equal, but can all people use our Constitution equally?"

At about 1:45 p.m. she was called into the office and sent home with instructions to come to the school board meeting the following Wednesday, but not to return until then. Johnson learned that a student had left the classroom to complain to the principal about the video being "offensive."

"The Principal had the lyrics of the song up on a screen and had me bring in my union representative," she said.

South Lyon Schools would not discuss the private conversation; however, Johnson listed the concerns the Principal had with the video:

1. **The word "faggot."** Johnson said the principal told her that the "f" word is akin to the "n" word and should not be used in school.

2. **The word "damn."**
3. **Religious issues.** The song talks about the difference between God's love and a church that preaches hate.
4. **Politics.** The video encourages legalization of gay marriage, and the lyrics speak about "right-wing conservatives."

administrative leave - suspended - for three days, two of which were to go unpaid.

Assistant Superintendent Melissa Baker said that the concern is over the playing of videos without approval.

"While the District generally does not discuss employee issues with the media,



Photo: Fox 2 News

“One of my friends whose brother was gay went to Miami Beach. He and his friend went to dinner and a couple clubs, and he was attacked - and he died. I told them nobody should have hate like that for each other.”

-Sue Johnson

5. The concern that the video and the discussion did not pertain to the performance art curriculum and that the topic might better be handled in social studies or health.

6. That Johnson showed the video without first screening it herself or following the district's procedure of getting videos approved before playing them.

Johnson did not share these concerns, and told the school officials that she "did nothing wrong."

"These are eighth grade kids; these aren't words they haven't heard before," she said. "I said (to the administrators) that I never brought up politics or religion."

The 56-year-old teacher, who has been with the district 17 years, was put on

misinformation about this issue must be addressed. The District has an established practice (included in the Staff Handbook) that requires the instructor to first preview any taped material to be used in the classroom (including YouTube clips), then submit a completed form about the proposed clip to a building administrator for approval.

"Further, the instructor is to identify the curriculum benchmarks that students will complete as a result of watching the clip," Baker said.

Baker added that Johnson neither previewed the YouTube Clip, nor submitted the necessary paperwork for approval. "The clip had no relationship whatsoever

See Teacher, page 11

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The Religious Freedom Red Herring

Why People Of Faith Are Not The 'Real Victims' Of The Marriage Equality Fight



Viewpoint

OPINION BY ABBY DEES

By the time you read this, you'll probably know if the Supreme Court has decided to hear one of the three marriage equality cases knocking at its venerable doors. I'm willing to bet a hundred bucks that the Court will agree to hear one of those appeals, and in 2013 will decide this issue once and for all. If I'm right, then next year is going to be the loudest, most debated, most obnoxious – possibly the most important – year in our history till now with regard to LGBT rights.

The Court, like the lower courts before, will consider legal arguments on both sides. There will be careful examination of the history of equal protection law and much serious throwing around of such legal terms of art as “heightened scrutiny,” “rational basis review,” and “legislative history.” Meanwhile, average non-lawyer Americans will play right along at home, arguing each side just as intensely, only with a whole different set of facts and rules.

Right now, maybe the most bandied about argument against marriage equality is that it will violate people's religious freedom. If you believe the anti-marriage-equality folks, you might think that only they stand between the LGBT community and total secular chaos. But if you followed the courtroom action in any of the marriage cases, you might have noticed that the religious freedom argument doesn't get much play in front of a judge. That's because the lawyer's all know that marriage equality will never mean that priests and rabbis will be forced to perform a marriage ceremony against their beliefs.

Have you ever seen a divorcée get married in a Catholic church? How about a couple of Southern Baptists getting hitched in an Orthodox temple? Probably not. Our First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom means that the government can't tell people what to do in their own, private religious ceremonies – unless it's really dangerous, in which case, yeah, the fire marshal can shut down the part where the minister tries to swallow a flaming spear, or whatever. This is never, ever, going to change.

I once read a story posted by an anti-LGBT group about a priest who got fined for refusing to marry a lesbian couple, and so, scratching my head, I did a little source checking. Turns out they omitted one tiny part of the story: it happened in Sweden. It concerns me when I have to remind people that different countries have different laws, but why let facts get in the way?

This doesn't mean that religious institutions

are free to discriminate as much as they want, and then use the First Amendment like diplomatic license plates in a no-parking zone. There are plenty of examples of church-run businesses or secular social services being held to the same equal protection requirements as everyone else. The critical distinction is that these are not faith or worship activities. Opponents of marriage equality intentionally fudge this fact so as to convince well-intended religious folks that we want to destroy everything they, literally, hold sacred.

In practice, this could mean that if a church owns a park that's open to the general public, it can't discriminate against couples who want to use that park for a wedding on the basis of race, religion, or – if the park is in a place that recognizes LGBT

rights – sexual orientation. But the minister will never have to perform that wedding, nor will we be allowed to shove our way into a house of worship for a big ol' gay wedding.

I don't buy the religious freedom argument at all, whether based in law or common respect. I've met some pretty radical queers in my life and none of them has ever said anything like, “In my dream wedding, we're wearing matching Chanel suits and our priest will perform the ceremony under duress, in violation of his religious tenets.” I mean, is this romantic? We've got our own supportive places of worship anyway. And we, as much as anyone, understand the importance of letting people be free to make their own, most personal of choices without intrusion by the state, random strangers or anyone else's religious beliefs.

If you believe the anti-marriage-equality folks, you might think that only they stand between the LGBT community and total secular chaos. But if you followed the courtroom action in any of the marriage cases, you might have noticed that the religious freedom argument doesn't get much play in front of a judge.



THE LIFE OF LAMBDA

JWs Here, There, Everywhere?



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

The Great Jehovah, having nothing better to do than his eternal fuss-budging and macro-managing this beleaguered world, curiously has been getting on my case.

It's not the Big Guy, who in a divine snit once wiped out the world because of Sodom & Gomorrah – or was it Lot sleeping with his daughters? – it's his Watch Tower door-bell-ringing minions I've been encountering.

Case in point, #1. I'm shopping at Holiday Market when I'm stopped by a friendly middle-age black woman who starts speaking in French. Does she know me? I wonder. Is she one of the French-speaking Africans I chat with over breakfast coffee at my neighborhood deli?

My French is limited ("tho I've been told my accent is tres belle), required for my Wayne University B.A., and I answer, "D'ou venez-vous, madam?" "Arkansas," she says. Oddly it seems to me.

We Fr. 101 speak a bit, and just as I turn to go shop, she gives me a tract. It's in French, and carries the Watch Tower logo. "You've got to be kidding!" I mumble, looking heavenward. "Zoot alors!"

Case #2. I'm at the October Damned Show, where I have two art entries. A beautiful woman who might easily pass for a model smiles, "It seems we see you everywhere." I haven't a clue who she is, but we chat, and she introduces me to her artist husband, older and equally friendly.

Her husband's painting is of a near-naked black man hanging on a cross. A nail's driven into his penis. "Ouch!" I succinctly critique. They explain to me that they had been JW's for decades, but left three years ago because their faith was destroying them mentally, spiritually, physically.

Case #3. I'm at the Scarab Club's third-Thursday-of-the-month "Emerging Artist" series event. Who should show up but the same ex-JW couple. "Were you both disfellowshipped?" I ask as a follow-up question I didn't ask at the Damned Show.

"You've done your homework!" says the artist. "Yes, we were both 'erased' from our membership standing. I had been a privileged, males-only elder. So, for me it was a grueling interrogation and banishment. Might we sit and talk?"

He admires my gay openness, and tells me about two JW women who were very attracted to each other but were told to abandon their sinful lifestyle 'abhorrent to Jehovah'. He speaks movingly of a young gay JW who when congregationally denounced commits suicide. "I'm doing a series of paintings to expose the harm this religion inflicts."

Case #4: I receive in the mail an advance copy for BTL reviewing of Scott Terry's "Cowboys, Armageddon, and The Truth: How A Gay Child Was saved from Religion." (Letha Press 2012).

"A brave account of Terry's successful escape from a troubled past," reads the intro. "He overcame the hurdles of parental abuse, Jehovah Witness religious extremism, and homophobia, and learned that Truth is living openly as a gay man."

OK! Say something nice about JW's. Well, they don't celebrate Christmas, don't salute the flag, don't stand for the National Anthem, don't vote; but, thank God, they also don't get involved in Reiblican politics! (And they don't believe in Hell.)

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Marriage Debate Shifts To US Supreme Court

BY MARK SHERMAN

WASHINGTON (AP) – The running fight over gay marriage in the U.S. is shifting from the ballot box to the Supreme Court.

Three weeks after voters backed same-sex marriage in three states and defeated a ban in a fourth, the justices for the country's top court met Friday to discuss whether they should deal sooner rather than later with the claim that the Constitution gives people the right to marry regardless of sexual orientation.

The court also could duck the ultimate question and instead focus on a narrower but still important issue: whether Congress can prevent legally married gay Americans from receiving federal benefits otherwise available to married couples.

There was no announcement about the court's plans by Dec. 3, although the justices also could put off a decision until their next private meeting in a week's time. That will be their last meeting until January.

Any cases would be argued in March or April, with a decision expected by the end of June.

Gay marriage is legal, or will be soon, in nine states – Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Washington – and the District of Columbia. Federal courts in California have struck down the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, but that ruling has not taken effect while the issue is being appealed.

Voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington approved gay marriage earlier this month.

But 31 states have amended their constitutions to prohibit same-sex marriage. North Carolina was the most recent example in May. In Minnesota earlier this month, voters defeated a proposal to enshrine a ban on gay marriage in that state's constitution.

The biggest issue the court could decide to confront comes in the dispute over California's Proposition 8, the constitutional ban on gay marriage that voters adopted in 2008 after the state Supreme Court ruled that gay Californians could marry.

The case could allow the justices to decide whether the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection means that the right to marriage cannot be limited to heterosexuals.

A decision in favor of gay marriage could set a national rule and overturn every state constitutional provision and law banning same-sex marriages. A ruling that upholds California's ban would be a setback for gay marriage proponents in the nation's largest state, although it would leave open the state-by-state effort to allow gays and lesbians to marry.

In striking down Proposition 8, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals crafted a narrow ruling that said because gay Californians

No matter which case the court chooses, the same issue will be front and center – whether legally married gay Americans can be kept from the range of benefits that are otherwise extended to married couples.



Sacramento, California, Nov.22, 2008: Protest against the passage of Proposition 8 banning gay marriage. Photo by: Karin Hildebrand Lau / Shutterstock.com

already had been given the right to marry, the state could not later take it away. The ruling studiously avoided any sweeping pronouncements.

But if the Supreme Court ends up reviewing the case, both sides agree that the larger constitutional issue would be on the table, although the justices would not necessarily have to rule on it.

Throughout U.S. history, the court has tried to avoid getting too far ahead of public opinion. The high court waited until 1967 to strike down laws against interracial marriage in the 16 states that still had them.

Some court observers argue that the same caution will prevail in the California case.

"What do they have to gain by hearing this case? Either they impose same-sex marriage

on the whole country, which would create a political firestorm, or they say there's no right to same-sex marriage, in which case they are going to be reversed in 20 years and be badly remembered. They'll be the villains in the historical narrative," said Andrew Koppelman, a professor of law and political science at Northwestern University. Koppelman signed onto a legal brief urging the justices not to hear the California case.

Yet some opponents of gay marriage say the issue is too important, and California is too large a state, for the court to take a pass.

"The question is whether there's a civil right to redefine marriage, as the California Supreme Court did. We don't think there is," said Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage.

DOMA Challenge Likely

Regardless of the decision on hearing the California case, there is widespread agreement that the justices will agree to take up a challenge to a part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

The law was passed in 1996 by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate and signed by President Bill Clinton. It defines marriage for all purposes under federal law as between a man and a woman and has been used to justify excluding gay couples from a wide range of benefits that are available to heterosexual couples.

Four federal district courts and two courts of appeal have overturned the provision in various cases on grounds that it unfairly deprives same-sex couples of federal benefits. The justices almost always will hear a case in which a federal law has been struck down.

The Obama administration broke with its predecessors when it announced last year that it no longer would defend the provision. President Barack Obama went further when he endorsed gay marriage in May.

Republicans in the House of Representatives stepped in to take up the defense of the law in court.

Paul Clement, the Washington lawyer representing the House, said the law was intended to make sure that federal benefits would be allocated uniformly, no matter where people live.

"DOMA does not bar or invalidate any state-law marriage, but leaves states free to decide whether they will recognize same-sex marriage," Clement said in court papers.

The court has several cases to choose from, including that of 83-year-old Edith Windsor of New York. Windsor faces \$363,000 in federal estate taxes after the death of her partner of 44 years in 2009. In two other cases, same-sex couples and surviving spouses of gay marriages in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont are seeking a range of federal benefits, including Social Security and private pension survivor payments, access to federal employee health insurance and the right to file a joint federal income tax return.

In the only instance in which a gay couple already is receiving federal benefits, federal court employee Karen Golinski in San Francisco has been allowed, under a court order, to add her wife to her health insurance coverage. That could be reversed if the Supreme Court upholds the marriage law provision.

No matter which case the court chooses, the same issue will be front and center – whether legally married gay Americans can be kept from the range of benefits that are otherwise extended to married couples.

Ban On Gay 'Reparative' Therapy' Faces First Legal Test

BY LISA LEFF

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) - A first-of-its-kind California law prohibiting licensed psychotherapists from counseling gay minors on how to become heterosexual faced its first legal test Friday as lawyers for those who support "reparative therapy" asked a federal judge to block the ban.

U.S. District Judge Kimberly Mueller in Sacramento held a 50-minute hearing on whether the law violates the First Amendment and should be kept from taking effect as scheduled on Jan. 1.

Four counselors and two sets of parents who say their teenage sons have been helped by psychological efforts to change their sexual orientations are suing to overturn the law.

Their lawyer, Mathew Staver, asked Mueller to keep it on hold while the lawsuit proceeds, arguing that the ban would force young people who do not want to be gay to turn to unlicensed counselors.

"What you ultimately have is a doctor-patient relationship that is being interfered with in a very dramatic manner," Staver said. "If (lawmakers) really think this kind of therapy causes harm, why would they want to push them toward unlicensed practitioners?" he said.

Lawyers for the state argue the ban is appropriate because it seeks to protect young people from a practice that supposes an individual's sexual orientation

The law, which was passed by the California Legislature and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in October, states that mental health professionals such as psychologists, social workers, family counselors, psychiatrists who use "sexual orientation change efforts" on clients under 18 would be engaging in unprofessional conduct and subject to discipline by state licensing boards.

should be changed instead of regarding homosexuality as a healthy part of the human experience.

"All our state has done is what is in its power and duty to do, which is to ban a course of professional conduct that does not work, has been scientifically discredited and renounced by every mainstream mental health association," Deputy Attorney General Alexandra Gordon told the judge.

At Staver's request and with Mueller's blessing, the families involved in the case are being referred to with pseudonyms to protect their privacy. They did not appear in court Friday.

The law, which was passed by the California Legislature and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in October, states that mental health professionals such as psychologists, social workers, family counselors, psychiatrists who use "sexual orientation change efforts" on clients under 18 would be engaging in unprofessional conduct and subject to discipline by state licensing boards.

Mueller spent much of the hearing asking the lawyers to clarify whether the activity targeted by the law constitutes a definable set of actions that are within the state's power to regulate or an unconstitutional limit on free speech.

Staver argued that as written, the statute is so broad that it would prevent counselors from even referring clients to out-of-state practitioners or making any statements supporting "a client's wish and self-determination to reduce same-sex attraction."

Gordon disputed his claim. She said the law was narrowly tailored to prohibit only a proscribed course of therapy and would not keep mental health practitioners from expressing their views on homosexuality.

Mueller said she intends to issue a written ruling next week.

► Teacher

Continued from p. 7

to the instructional class content planned for that day. The purpose of this established practice is to ensure that instructional materials are appropriate for the course and its students. It is because we care about all students that we have this procedure in place."

"Suspending a teacher for playing a song with lyrics like 'love is kind' and 'if I was gay, I would think hip-hop hates me' says more about the school district's intolerance towards same-sex love than the teacher's judgment of her student's music tastes," says Equality Michigan Director of Policy Emily Dievendorf in a "I cannot help but wonder if they would have suspended her for playing a song that speaks positively of opposite-sex love or provides observations on the oppression faced by certain religions."

Johnson provided Fox 2 News with a letter from the District, which included

a list of the topics they felt made the "Same Love" video inappropriate: homosexuality, religion, politics, and language. Johnson has been allowed to return to work, but could not be reached for further comment.

South Lyon Community Schools Superintendent William A. Pearson said in a press release later that week, "The decision to suspend was not made on content, but the expectation that we do need to have all instructors preview web-based materials prior to student viewing and these must be tied to the class objectives. We put ourselves at risk with various topics if this previewing does not occur ... I certainly believe there is a place for controversial issues during the school day, and where appropriate our courses and curriculums allow for those discourses to occur."

Pearson continues, "If students or stake holders believe this discipline is a form of bullying, will encourage bullying, or most importantly causes any

member of our school community to feel they do not belong then I have sent the wrong message, and must correct that.

"We want all students to feel they belong and that they are valued, and our policies and procedures must support this. I am willing to not uphold the suspension but the violation of the district practice regarding web-based clips and our expectation for instructors previewing materials under this will remain in writing."

The following Friday, Nov. 30, Assistant Superintendent Baker announced that Johnson's pay would be restored for the two days of unpaid leave. The ACLU intends to continue investigation according to Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT project.

Pearson says South Lyon Community Schools promote a culture of diversity and tolerance, citing the schools' diversity programs, "Challenge Days," and the policies of the Board of Education.



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Robert C. Jones



In the uphill battle for marriage equality, gays and lesbians have had to stare down many a disappointing court decision where bias and homophobia masqueraded as law. Granted marriage equality received a significant boost across the country from the November election, but just in case we were getting too comfortable with good news, Judge Robert C. Jones comes to the rescue.

Jones, a federal district judge appointed by George W. Bush, ruled late last month that Nevada keeping same-sex couples from marrying was totally cool with him. Jones found that the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection of the laws was not intended for homos and that the people of Nevada were right to "[maintain] statutes that reserve the institution of civil marriage to one-man-one-woman relationships."

His reasoning? Why, to save the human race from destruction, of course. "The perpetuation of the human race depends upon traditional procreation between men and women," Jones writes in his ruling right after he basically says that adoption is for losers.

Also, according to Jones, gays and lesbians do not face discrimination, which I guess means that discriminating against them when it comes to marriage equality is no big deal? "Homosexuals have not historically been denied the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, or the right to own property," Jones writes. Because those are the only areas in which discrimination counts, I guess.

Oh, and Jones says, because gays won a couple of ballot measures in the 2012 election, "It simply cannot be seriously maintained, in light of these and other recent democratic victories, that homosexuals do not have the ability to protect themselves from discrimination through democratic processes such that extraordinary protection from majoritarian processes is appropriate."

In other words, "Grow a pair, gays. You won a couple rounds of marriage equality poker, now get lost. Never mind the fact that there are a couple of right-wing nuts waiting for you outside with a baseball bat who will gladly relieve you of your winnings. But hey, as long as not everybody wants to smash your heads in, you've got nothing to complain about."

But, of course, Jones was just thinking about "the family." And by that I mean heterosexuals, obviously. Everybody knows that same-sex couples are just roommates. Jones writes in his ruling, "Because the family is the basic societal unit, the State could have validly reasoned that the consequences of altering the traditional definition of civil marriage could be severe."

Hmm... the State could have reasoned such a thing, but validly? Me thinks not. I'll use Massachusetts as Exhibit A: gay folks getting hitched there have not caused the crumbling of the Commonwealth.

But I suspect Jones doesn't pay much mind to the non-destructive results in liberal cesspools that allow same-sex couples to wed. He writes, "It is conceivable that a meaningful percentage of heterosexual persons would cease to value the civil institution as highly as they previously had and hence enter into it less frequently ... because they no longer wish to be associated with the civil institution as redefined."

Got that? If gays and lesbians can get married, then heterosexuals will say "fuck it" and just live in sin the rest of their lives. What a wise and sound argument. You really can't argue with logic like that. Because it isn't logic, it's lunacy.

VCU Coach Says He Was Fired For Being Gay

BY HANK KURZ JR.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia Commonwealth University women's volleyball coach James Finley is fighting to get his job back after he says he was fired because he is gay.

Finley, 52, has filed a complaint with VCU's Office for Institutional Equity. University spokesperson Pamela D. Lepley said an investigation is being conducted and must be completed within 45 days.

The findings will be provided to Finley and VCU President Michael Rao. The coach said he would consider taking legal action if not reinstated.

He was fired on Nov. 19, one day after the Rams lost in the semifinals of the Atlantic 10 Conference tournament. The Rams finished 25-6, their best winning percentage (.806) in Finley's eight-year tenure and their first season in the A-10.

Finley said when he met with athletic director Ed McLaughlin and executive associate athletic director Jeff Cupps, they told him their decision not to renew his contract — which expires Dec. 31 — had nothing to do with his won-loss record. The coach, who is 151-116, said he was told that they would help him find a new job; McLaughlin said Cupps would even write a letter of recommendation.

That's not good enough for Finley.

Over Thanksgiving break, Finley said, "My husband and I were talking about it, and we can't just walk away."

Finley said a lot of the tension began when McLaughlin, 39, took over as the AD in mid-August. The coach said he started feeling isolated.

"I have felt completely not a part of the thing that I love," Finley said. "For one person to do that, and to meet with me for the first time and

to tell me I'm not a good representative of the university — somebody that doesn't even know me because he's never made an effort to get to know me — there's no other conclusion that I can come to other than that he just doesn't want a gay person representing his athletic department."

Phone messages left at McLaughlin's office were not returned to The Associated Press. In a Nov. 19 release announcing Finley's dismissal, McLaughlin said: "Our program needs a different direction and different leadership to attain our goals of achieving an elite level nationally."

McLaughlin, who was the AD at Niagara for six years before arriving at VCU, issued another statement this week after Finley went public with his complaint.

"I came to VCU because of how the university embraces diversity and inclusive excellence and fosters a community where differences are valued and respected," McLaughlin said. "It is unfortunate that Mr. Finley feels the decision not to renew his contract was based on anything other than previously stated concerns about the volleyball program."

Lepley said she could not discuss Finley's dismissal for privacy reasons, but said in another statement that the school and McLaughlin "are fully committed to the core value of diversity - as reflected in the university's diversity statement and strategic plan" and that VCU practices "the spirit of that policy statement every day."

Finley believed that was true at the urban university in downtown Richmond until McLaughlin arrived. Then, Finley said things changed.

Before he was summoned to McLaughlin's office to be fired, Finley said he and the AD

had never had a conversation. When they passed in the hallway, Finley said he would say hello, and McLaughlin never acknowledged him. The coach said at one athletic event, McLaughlin mingled with other coaches and donors, but McLaughlin walked away whenever he tried to join a conversation.

"We would take our team to watch men's soccer, women's soccer, field hockey and Ed would be down on the bench, he would be high-fiving the kids, interacting with them," Finley said. "He knew them by name. ... He didn't come to our games, he never introduced himself to our girls, didn't participate with us."

VCU has become a special place to Finley, he said, because of how fully it embraces diversity, and how it always made the coach, his husband, John Sternlicht, and their three sons feel "welcome, not tolerated." Sternlicht said much of the athletic department attended their wedding 2 1/2 years ago.

Finley said to walk away, rather than speak out, would send the wrong message.

The most stinging blow on the day he was fired came when Finley received a call from some of his players, who he described as "distracted" after having met with McLaughlin to learn of his firing. When they told him McLaughlin said he wanted to hire someone "that will represent the university well," Finley said "that just stabbed me in the heart."

"When you've fought discrimination your whole life, you're used to code things like 'new direction,' 'we want someone to represent us well,'" Finley said. "In other words, I don't want a gay person representing me well."

Finley said he hopes the outcome of the university's investigation is based solely on his record as a coach.

"You always want to be judged on your work," he said, "not on who you love."

Appeal Vowed In Nevada Same-Sex Marriage Ruling

BY KEN RITTER

LAS VEGAS (AP) - A federal court challenge to Nevada's ban on same sex marriage has been turned back in U.S. District Court, but proponents vowed Friday to fight on with an argument that a pair of state laws regarding same-sex unions unconstitutionally make gay couples "second-class citizens."

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund attorney Tara Borelli noted that a Thursday ruling by U.S. District Chief Judge Robert Jones came a day before the U.S. Supreme Court considered whether to take up the gay marriage question, and just weeks after voters approved same-sex marriage in three states and defeated a ban in a fourth.

"We think this decision is not only out of step with where the country is headed, but also completely wrong on the law," Borelli said. She said a challenge will be filed with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Jones, in Reno, ruled that Nevada has "a legitimate state interest" in maintaining the

traditional institution of marriage and that excluding the recognition of same-sex couples is "rationally related to furthering that interest."

The question "is not the wisdom of providing for or recognizing same-sex marriages as a matter of policy," Jones wrote in his 41-page order. Rather, he called it a constitutional question about Nevada's right to prohibit recognition of marriages from other states "if those laws do not conform to Nevada's one-man-one-woman civil marriage institution."

The Nevada lawsuit, *Sevcik v. Sandoval*, was filed in April on behalf of eight Nevada couples. It was the first by Lambda Legal to make the direct state marriage equality claim in federal court.

It said the 2002 state constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution by denying same-sex couples in Nevada the same rights, dignity and security that other married couples enjoy.

Borelli said letting domestic partners register their legal status but not marry "brands these loving couples and their children as

second-class citizens."

The lawsuit also accused the state of establishing a "selective bar to access to marriage" with a 2009 domestic partnership law that passed over a veto by then-Gov. Jim Gibbons, a Republican. And it maintained that same-sex couples are still discriminated against by hospital officials and police officers who question their relationship status because they aren't legally recognized as spouses.

During a hearing in Las Vegas in May, Jones noted a difference in the California and Nevada cases. The California ballot initiative aimed to kill a law that had been enacted to recognize same-sex marriages, while the Nevada Legislature didn't extend to same-sex couples the same degree of legal protection.

Jones said Thursday he would accept no further arguments in the case. He previously canceled oral arguments that would have been held earlier this month, and he said his ruling based on written filings was enough.

Nevada is one of 31 states that have amended their constitutions to prohibit same-sex marriage.



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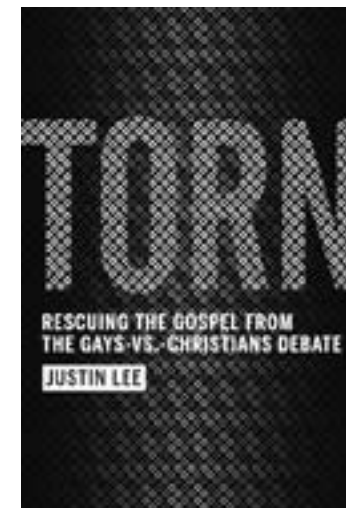
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New Memoirs Tackle Complex Relationship Of Gays And Christians

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS



Torn: Rescuing The Gospel From The Gays-Vs.-Christians Debate

Are Christians truly homophobic bigots? Or, are all gays "activists" seeking to undermine the moral fabric of society? Neither is true and yet the church is being destroyed from controversy over the issue, asserts Justin Lee, founder of the Gay Christian Network, in the new book "Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate."

Lee writes, "And while so many of us in the church have been focused on the 'threat' to our culture posed by homosexuality, we've missed the realization that the church in our culture is under attack - not by gays, but by Christians."

Revealing his own path to reconciling Christianity with homosexuality and his leadership role in navigating the politically charged debate, Lee strives to dispel myths about Christians and gays and encourages both groups to engage in more effective dialogue. "... As more people come out as gay, that leaves more Christians who know them with questions about how to truly be loving in a culture that views Christianity as anti-gay," he writes. "Americans on both sides are becoming increasingly frustrated with the tone of the debate, and many are calling for more loving ways of handling the differences of belief."

From "God Boy" to "heretic" to spokesperson for a potentially new understanding of Scripture regarding homosexuality, Lee outlines the pain and confusion felt by gay people, and by the Christians who love them. "Some say that the growing acceptance of homosexuality is further evidence of our world's fallen nature, and that we Christians must hold fast to God's truth in the face of the winds of change," he writes. "Others say that we Christians have made a terrible mistake in unequivocally condemning homosexuality, and that a more complete understanding of human sexuality and the Bible's cultural context should move us to repent and reevaluate our stance. Either way, if we answer this question incorrectly, will we have committed one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the church?"

Campaigning against the so-called culture war, Lee sets forth seven ideas needed for resolution including grace, education, dissolving the "ex-gay approach", and allowing gays to actively participate in church.

Outlining a searing personal story of being torn between what he believes and who he is, shared by countless other people who are also gay and Christian, Lee hopes that honest dialogue can set a new tone for civil discussion.

About the Author: Justin Lee founded the Gay Christian Network (GCN) in 2001 and currently serves as its Executive Director, overseeing ministry operations around the world, and speaking at conferences, on college campuses and at churches.

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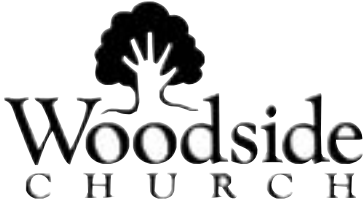
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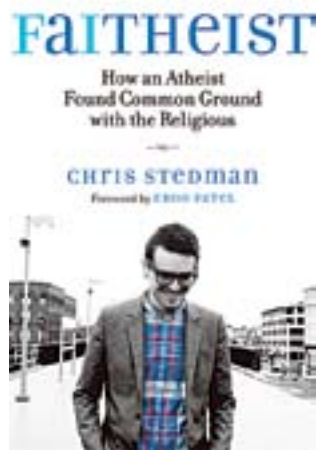
Faithest: How An Atheist Found Common Ground With The Religious

"In a culture that increasingly asks us to check our religious and nonreligious identities at the door - to silence the values and stores we hold most dear - the 'New Atheist' brand of secularism isn't helping," writes Chris Stedman. "Although I believe that many New Atheist critiques of religion are correct and have helped many people find liberation from oppressive beliefs, these critiques have also often neglected to account for the full range of religious expression and have resulted in segregation that has parsed the religious and the secular into opposing camps."

In "Faithest," Stedman draws on his work organizing interfaith and secular communities, his academic study of religion and his own experiences to argue for the necessity of bridging the growing chasm between atheists and the religious.

As someone who has traveled from being a true believer to a nonbeliever, Stedman is uniquely positioned to bridge the faith divide. He traces his journey from "born again" Christian to openly gay atheist, starting with a description of his loving, irreligious family in Minnesota, then moving through his middle school conversion to Christianity and his high school years when he struggled to reconcile being gay with being Christian.

Mere months after converting to Christianity in middle school, Stedman put words to what he knew all along. "I was asking a lot of questions and in the process I discovered two things almost simultaneously: I was queer and my church would kick me out if they discovered my secret." Stedman shares his months of loneliness and suffering; obsessively reading Bible passages about the sin of homosexuality and spending lunch time alone in a classroom, fasting and praying. When his mother discovers his secret, he recalls his intense shame - and his utter relief when she



took him to a Lutheran pastor who assured him his sexual orientation was natural.

Stedman traces his undergraduate years at a Christian college and his experiences since then, eventually joining the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard. He recounts how he went from the heartbreak of "letting go of God" to being a belligerent nonbeliever, then searching for values and meaning in his post-religious life. He shares the role other people played in shaking his thinking, from fellow students who engaged his religious

questioning during a trip to El Salvador to the young Muslim woman he meets who empathizes with him over what it is like to be seen as different.

"Even though I had spent my college years studying religious texts," he writes, "I suddenly found myself wanting to learn more about the lives of religious people."

Stedman's quest takes him to Chicago where he interns with the Interfaith Youth Core and becomes "an atheist seminary student" at the University of Chicago. He remembers being physically assaulted by anti-gay bigots and later finding the courage to engage with Christian proselytizers outside a queer bar, each sharing their stories and coming to see one another as human beings, he writes, instead of caricatures of their sexualities or religious identities. These lived experiences and his work organizing interfaith communities, he explains, have profoundly shaped his vision for a society in which atheists and the religious build relationships across the faith divide so they can work collaboratively towards shared values.

About the Author: Chris Stedman is the Assistant Humanist Chaplain at Harvard University, the emeritus managing directory of State of Formation at the Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue, and the founder of the first blog dedicated to exploring atheist-interfaith engagement, NonProphet Status. Stedman writes for the Huffington Post, the Washington Post's On Faith blog, and Religion Dispatches. He lives in Boston.

Michigan Roundtable Hosts Annual Inclusion Breakfast

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion celebrates its Second Annual Celebrating Faith Inclusion Breakfast, featuring guest Keynote Speaker Ross Murray, Dec. 7 at the Renaissance Unity Church.

Ross Murray is the Director of Religion, Faith & Values for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). His mission is to amplify the voices of LGBT-affirming communities of faith and LGBT people of faith.

Murray has secured national and religious media interests in stories that bring examples of LGBT equality in faith communities to Americans. He speaks and writes frequently about the relationship between religion and

LGBT people and has written for and appeared on CNN, the Washington Post, Huffington Post and Religion News Service.

Murray is also founder and director of The Naming Project, a faith-based camp for LGBT youth and their allies. The Naming Project has also been the subject of much media, including the award-winning film Camp Out, as well as the controversial episode "Pray the Gay Away?" of "Our America" with Lisa Ling.

Tickets to the Second Annual Celebrating Faith Inclusion Breakfast are \$40 per person and sponsorship of the event (including four breakfast tickets and a logo displayed at the event and on the Michigan Roundtable website) is \$250. Advanced purchase at www.MiRoundTable.org/LGBTFaith.htm is strongly recommended. For more information, call 248-709-3703 or email KHogan@MiRoundTable.org

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Screen Queen

The Gift Guide

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO CRY



Beaches

There's nothing like sobbing – with a cup of tea, in the fetal position, in bed (don't pretend you haven't) – to "Beaches." Two friends – Hillary Whitney, an ACLU attorney, and "C.C."

Bloom, a Broadway star – share 30 years of love, laughs, men and tacky clothes. On two very different paths, their lives converge when, decades after meeting as kids, Hillary drops the cancer bomb on C.C. We all know what happens after that, even 25 years after the film's release: "Wind Beneath My Wings" plays over that sappy beach scene and – god help us – we turn into mush. So who cares if it's got all the makings of a Lifetime movie and the first hour seems longer than all the years we spend with these girls. This one's about seeing The Divine Miss M in this hug-a-friend PSA. Extras include a new interview with Mayim "Blossom" Bialik, who plays young C.C., and Bette's "Wind Beneath My Wings" music video – for the real masochists.

FOR RETIREES (AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM)



The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

There's not much eating or praying, but grief and renewal – and lots of loving – all reside in this old people's destination movie, "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel."

The delightful adaptation of the bestselling book casts seven retired strangers – played by the elite British ensemble of Judi Dench, Maggie Smith and Tom Wilkinson – who are off to India to experience new beginnings. When they arrive at what was advertised as a swanky resort (but isn't), that turns out to be nearly impossible – or so they thought. Dench, as a newly widowed woman, adds another dynamic performance to her IMDB list, as does a fiery Smith playing a wheelchair-bound

racist and Wilkinson in the role of a gay man with romantic ties to India. With so much acting greatness, no wonder there's a Blu-ray extra dedicated to them: "Casting Legends" reinforces why "The Golden Girls" aren't the only blue hairs worth our time.

FOR KIDS (AT HEART)



Finding Nemo

Who knew a fish that speaks whale and forgets everything could keep Ellen DeGeneres' career swimming? "Finding Nemo," though, was just as much a success for the once-lambasted

lesbian (turned cool talk-show host) as it was for Pixar, who made box-office history with its sweet story of a fish tyke separated from his dad after braving the underwater world – the catalyst for his father to face his own fears as he sets out on a wild adventure with Dory to find his son. "Nemo," released in 2003, raised the (sand)bar for animated features of the last 10 years, but now – on Blu-ray and in 3D for the first time – there's no forgetting that this Oscar winner is one of Pixar's masterpieces. Even if you're Dory.



The Muppet Christmas Carol

For the '90s generation of kids, it wasn't Christmas without the Muppets. Now the Justin Bieber crowd – and grown-ups who still remember this holiday classic

as a gay ol' time – can bask in all the lighthearted glee of watching Jim Henson's puppet pals star alongside Ebenezer Scrooge with this Blu-ray release. Fresh off a welcome big-screen return with "The Muppets," out last year, Kermit and Miss Piggy take on the Cratchits with charm – and, in the case of the latter, diva audaciousness – while Michael Caine as Scrooge does a dead-on interpretation of the legendary party pooper. Two new extras, including Christmas carols from the singing puppets when the movie's paused, debut on this edition. Joy to the world, the Muppets have come.



FOR FANS OF CHANNING TATUM

Magic Mike

It's the season of giving – and director Steven Soderbergh is very generous with the amount of men he unwraps in his male stripper movie. As if that wasn't enough, he includes an actual story. It's not as beefy as Channing Tatum's butt, but it's there: Based on the actor's real-life go as a peeler, "Magic Mike" merges art-house indie with MTV video stripteases to tell the story of a veteran dancer – and other "cock-block kings of Tampa" – who learns there's more to life than stuffing dollar bills in a G-string. It's part cautionary tale/part reason for getting hot actors to take their clothes off in a legit film (hello, it's Soderbergh). Matthew McConaughey steals scenes as the club's resident dirtbag, and Matt Bomer does a Ken doll routine that gives new life to those Mattel toys. More of him – the perfect little butt not seen in theaters – shows up in the special features, which are truly, truly special.

FOR MUSIC LOVERS



A MusiCares Tribute to Barbra Streisand

Imagine having to sing for Barbra Streisand – and not just any song, but one of hers. The thought itself makes you wish for over-the-counter Xanax, even if your name is Faith Hill,

Diana Krall, Barry Manilow, Leona Lewis or any of the other artists who tribute the legend during this gala recorded in February 2011. Babs' music career is swiftly captured in just one hour, with Krall's opening performance of "Down with Love" – from 1963 – all the way through to Streisand's 2011 release "What Matters Most." Standouts include Lewis belting the heck out of "Somewhere," Lea Michele doing "My Man" and a career-best from Faith Hill on "Send in the Clowns." But it's Babs herself, performing



two songs at the end, who shows these girls why they're bowing down to The Voice.

FOR TV FANS



Friends: The Complete Series

The legacy of "Friends" isn't just Jennifer Aniston's hair: The award-winning NBC show about six pals living in New York was a cultural phenomenon with ratings that are unheard of today in TV land. But it didn't just champion the tube. "Friends," which wrapped in 2004, was the first show to ever televise a lesbian wedding – and even though it was no "Will & Grace," it definitely registered a 3 on the Kinsey scale for its sly gay jokes and budding bromances. Now those – and wedding proposals, triplets and a really bad tan – can be revisited outside of reruns, with all 10 seasons as they aired in glowing hi-def and reformatted for widescreen sets. Along with an episode guide, the discs come in a hardcover book housed in a handsome box that features a maturing hologram of the cast. Seventeen hours of extras are carried over from previous releases, while brand-new retrospectives and a gag reel make their debut. For anyone wanting to remember Central Perk and the musical musings of Phoebe Buffay, this is the way to go.

FOR FILM BUFFS

Alfred Hitchcock: The Masterpiece Collection

Scary birds and a killer shower scene gave Alfred Hitchcock his nickname – The Master of Suspense – but the great filmmaker also left us hanging when it came to some of his more

questionably gay characters. Obviously there's Norman Bates as a cross-dresser in "Psycho," but there's no question that, viewed now, there's a lot of gay going on in 1948's "Rope," about two probably-"it" men who murder a former classmate, stuff him in a chest and serve a buffet-style dinner on it. During one extra, out screenwriter Arthur Laurents and actor Farley Granger talk about the gay subtleties that were snuck into the play-turned-film. Fifteen more hours of bonus features – commentaries, screen tests and a new documentary on "The Birds" – accompany the 15 films in this sublime Blu-ray collection (only two have ever been released in this format). The essential ones are all here: "Rear Window," "North by Northwest," "Vertigo," with old-Hollywood legends like Grace Kelly and Cary Grant. And of course there's "Psycho," the movie that secured Hitchcock's master status. In hi-def, Anthony Perkins never looked so good as a woman.



Sunset Boulevard

"Sunset Boulevard" was Gloria Swanson at her crazy best (read: those eyes), inhabiting the role of a washed-up starlet who's lost her marbles. The actress plays Norma Desmond in the 1950 film noir about said woman, a silent movie star long forgotten, who takes in a fella (the studly William Holden as Joe Gillis) who's hurting for money and could also be key to the comeback she so desperately needs. What starts as a movie-making partnership turns into codependency, a screwy affair and ultimately murder. Rightfully regarded as one of the best American films of the 20th century, "Sunset Boulevard" is a deliciously campy black comedy about celebrity vanity that's still relevant to the real-life stars of today – don't you think Lindsay Lohan is ready for *her* close-up? Included on the stunning Blu-ray remaster are an insightful commentary and the debut of a deleted scene.

See Screen Queen, page 26



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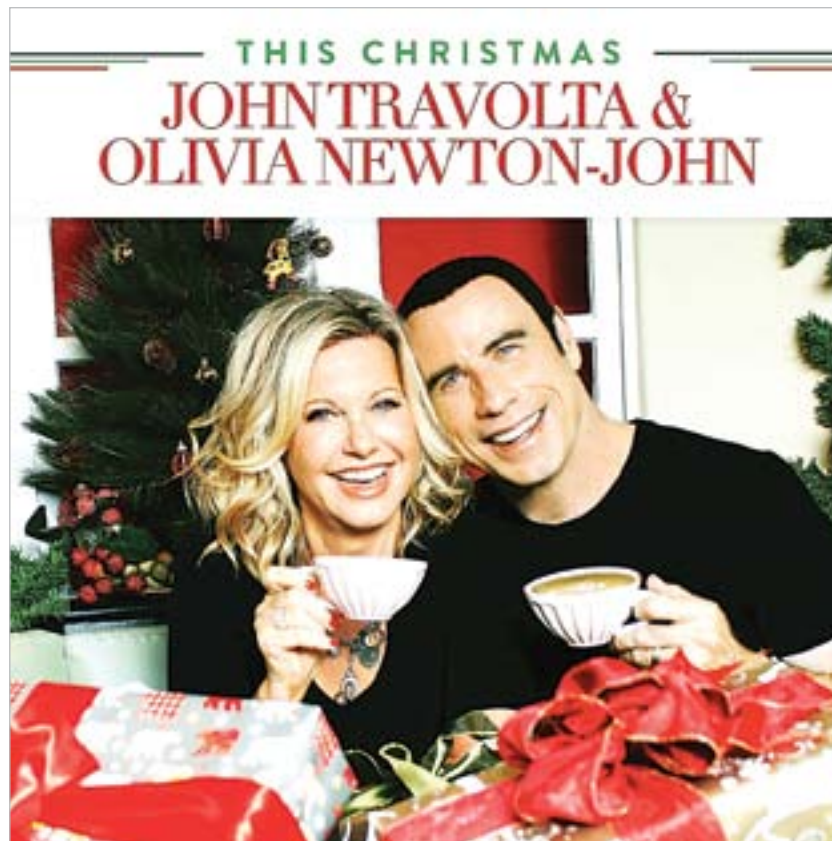
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Hear Me Out ... For The Holidays

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI



Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta, 'This Christmas'

Friends since summer lovin' brought them together over 30 years ago, Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta are, still, hopelessly devoted to each other. They're as chummy together in the liner pics of their charity Christmas album, where they even share an oversized coffee mug, as they are on these creepy renditions of classics. "Baby It's Cold Outside" is the worst offender (or best, depending on how you look at it). On the traditional-sounding track, they're dropping each other's names – he calls her "Liv" (barf) – and making that banter cornier than that Sir, I Wanna Buy These Shoes For My Mama song. Travolta's "oh gosh, I really do have to go" line sounds less like a farewell and more like he's ready to drop some poops. It's hard to even take them serious on "Silent Night," which isn't half bad; Olivia's voice is still pretty and pleasant, and even Travolta doesn't sound like he's still wearing Edna Turnblad's "Hairspray" muumuu. But gosh, a children's choir – of course! "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," featuring Kenny G for max cheesiness, has Travolta in Elvis mode. The booze really takes over when they get to "I Think You Might Like It," a rollicking soft-rocker that's being billed as the sequel to "You're the One That I Want" from their "Grease" days. For better or worse, at least it sounds like a Danny and Sandy song. Will you like it? They think so. The album's

an Ugly Christmas Sweater Party full of nostalgia and awesomely bad moments – but it's hard to tell if they're in on the joke. They bring in some pretty serious talent: Tony Bennett, James Taylor and Barbra Streisand. Let's hope Babs has a healthy sense of humor. *Grade: C+*



Cee Lo Green, 'Cee Lo's Magic Moment'

Cee Lo Green's more nice than n a u g h t y – remember when he wrote a whole ditty to cuss-out that heartbreaker? – now that he's got the Muppets and Jesus onboard for one of the best Christmas albums in years. Green's life-size personality works to his advantage when it comes to bringing the holiday cheer: songs that are recycled every time this year are picked up off the ground and resurrected with spirit, freshness and the jolly teddy bear's velvety croon. When everyone from En Vogue to the Olsen twins have covered "What Christmas Means to Me," what does he go and do? Shows them how it's really done. His boisterous remake sleigh-rides on a thumping bass line, with girl-group harmonies, that sounds every bit signature Cee Lo: big, bright and bubbly, even a little retro. It's so good, actually, that it's hard to imagine the classic existed

before him. What he does with "White Christmas" is even more remarkable: The song's got an old-soul feel, but hits a key change that catapults Green's voice to the North Pole. Christina Aguilera could learn something from the no-frills delivery of Cee Lo's "Mary Did You Know?"; she forgets that less is more on their "Baby It's Cold Outside" duet. Cee Lo sounds better alongside Kermit (no, really: the frog) on a song that works in the Muppets with a love-trumps-all theme. Is singing with the Disney bunch a risk? No – for an artist that's as animated as a Muppet, it's a hoot. He has a better shot at failing a Joni Mitchell or Mariah Carey cover, but pulls off "River" and "All I Want for Christmas Is You" like he's got some magic of his own. *Grade: B+*



Tracey Thorn, 'Tinsel and Lights'

Leave it to Tracey Thorn to make "the most wonderful time of the year" a holiday that has more in common with an episode of "Six Feet Under": depression, death and getting so drunk nothing matters anymore – this is what Christmas means to her. The Everything But The Girl frontwoman's unexpected entry in the holiday-music domain features two songs she wrote: the piano-led "Joy" holds onto hope despite feeling the Christmas blues, while the title track is what love does to someone who was once "looking down the barrel of a gun." The tune, "Tinsel and Lights," is like watching snowflakes cascade outside the window – there's a gentleness to the way her voice works over the ambling arrangement. The rest of the songs are covers of lesser-known carols: she makes Dolly Parton's great "Hard Candy Christmas" her own little gem of optimism through tough times; does Stephen Merritt's liberation-for-the-brokenhearted, "Like a Snowman," originally written for drag-duo Kiki and Herb's Broadway show; even Randy Newman's "Snow" shows up to reminisce on wintertime memories. "Sister Winter" is Sufjan Stevens' heartfelt song about the isolation caused by loss, and Thorn's melancholy lilt, easing into the breathy eeriness of her upper register, translates that experience – it's clear she knows the feeling. "Tinsel and Lights" might not be at all what the title suggests: There's nothing bright and shiny about this release – and there doesn't have to be. But like Over the Rhine, Tori Amos and other artists who've stretched the Christmas album concept into more than just a joyful celebration of Jesus, Thorn's addition is a real gift. *Grade: B+*

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Lisa Lampanelli Loves (To Hate) You

Comedian Gives The Skinny On Ann Arbor Gig, The Gays & Her Words To God

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

You know how some people show affection with hugs and kisses? Lisa Lampanelli's idea of love is racial slurs, gay jokes and every so often calling someone that *other* word for vagina.

Her "equal opportunity" act has landed her on Comedy Central roasts and even on the most recent season of Donald Trump's "Celebrity Apprentice," where the Queen of Mean was let go during the final four interview and walked away with \$130,000 – all of which she donated to the Gay Men's Health Crisis.

Now that's love.

You're coming back to Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater on Dec. 8. The last time I saw you there was in 2009.

How have you survived?

Well, I get enough of you on TV. Actually, that's not true – I don't get enough of you anymore. I get 90 pounds less of you.

Hey, make it 93! Don't even chop those three off, bitch. Oh my god, what a pain in the cunt to be overweight. I hope I keep it off – because if not, I might as well just kill myself.

How has losing all this weight affected your gay fan base? You know how we gravitate to the chubby chicks.

Not anymore! You're an old-school fag. They used to like fat chicks and they'd call them fag hags; now they like the fruit flies, so maybe I'm an elderly fruit fly for them, instead.

You've performed in both Ann Arbor and Detroit. What's the difference?

Obviously the demographic. You have to ship black people into Ann Arbor to scare whites. So come on, black people – come out and scare those kids at the university.

Before your gig here, you're going on vacation, I hear.

Because the hurricane was so horrendous and set us all back. Like, I have to get my whole deck fixed. I'm devastated! So I'm like, let me take two weeks off just to get back to my Zen place. God forbid I start overeating and suddenly I'm back to fag hag status once again!

Now that you're watching your figure, the news of the defunct Twinkie hasn't really affected you, has it?

No – I was never a big fan because, as you know, with men and with food, I always liked the chocolate. Though I went back to vanilla men when I came to marrying Jimmy Big Balls,

INFO

Lisa Lampanelli

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chocolate desserts – that's still my thing.

Are you really as embarrassed talking about his balls as you were during your recent appearance on "The Late Show with David Letterman"?

I really didn't think (Dave) wanted to go there that much – that's what was cracking me up! I go, "I'm gonna mention Jimmy's name just to crack Dave up and we'll move on"; then he couldn't let it go. I was dying. I couldn't believe David Letterman was so interested in Jimmy's nutsack. I'm very proud. He was into it. I was like, "Gurrrl ... what's going on there?"

It's different if a gay guy wants to talk balls, isn't it?

Oh, of course! They're allowed to. It's in your rights. You can get married in nine states and you can talk about balls in 14.

If you're so repulsed by the male genitalia, which you seem to be –

Oh, I hate it.

Wouldn't that make you a lesbian?

No, because I'm repulsed by the female genitalia too! It makes me repressed and Catholic.

Does being with Jimmy change how much you talk about banging the blacks in your show?

Out of respect for Jimmy Big Balls, I don't talk about the blacks. Although when he's not at a particular show, certainly I'll say, "Hey, I've had more black behind me than Obama."

So they're still a target.

Oh my god. I make fun of everybody still. Are you kidding me? I can't help it. What's wrong with me?

I thought Jimmy might've softened you up a bit.

I know! I think I got more angry because I can't eat anymore.

I do love that you've been so open about the weight loss surgery. You could've played it off like a new diet fad or talked about how you started exercising.

Oh, I know – I love that whole thing. It's like, "Oh, I did Weight Watchers." You did not, you lying cunt.

Star Jones did, didn't she?



I think Star lied about it, but it came back to haunt her, so I kind of learned from that. You know what, I've been honest my whole life. I've done shameful things – I dated black guys. This is much less bad than that.

Let's talk "Celebrity Apprentice" and how hated you were on that show.

With "Celebrity Apprentice," the right people loved me – basically hard-working people who've had to actually deal with idiots. People

come up to me on the streets and they're like, "Oh my god, I hated every bitch you had to work with and you were so right to yell at them." Also, the deaf community isn't really thrilled with me because I made so much fun of Lou Ferrigno, but whatever – he couldn't hear me!

Would you ever do a reality show again?

See Lisa Lampanelli, page 24

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► Lisa Lampanelli

Continued from p. 20

I wanted to do "Dancing with the Stars" because Adam Carolla and Penn Jillette told me it was really fun and physically exhausting but emotionally and mentally very uplifting. I don't think I can do it because they say you can't do it if you've already done a competitive reality show. Maybe they'll change the rules, because I wanna do it.

Maybe try out for "American Idol"? Can you sing?

I'm the best singer, like, maybe in the world.

I thought so.

Don't ever forget, mister. I'm a triple threat. I can't sing, I can't dance ... but I'm a cunt.

You have a lot of gay friends too, I hear, and you donate to a lot of gay causes. What's your gay circle like where you live in N.Y.?

Well, I have no bitchy queens allowed in my entourage. If there's gonna be one bitchy queen, it's gonna be me - that's it. So, my friends: I have Gay Taylor, Gay Michael and Shawn, Gay Frank and Jim and Gay Tommy and Kenny. It's nice because they're really cool people.

Do you always use the gay moniker when you refer to them?

Well, usually I just call them Faggot 1 through 7, but Jimmy likes to put a name to a face.

Is he friends with all your gay friends, too?

Yeah! You know what's funny? Seriously, I made sure he wasn't a homophobe from our first conversation. I wanted to test him. So when I met him over the phone, I said to him, "Oh, I was out with my friend faggot so-and-so," and I wanted to see if he'd laugh and if he was a homophobe. He goes, "Does this guy have a name? Because I'm sure he'd rather you call him that." And I'm like, "OK, so Jimmy likes the gays." And it's nice! He always says, "Isn't it crazy that the happiest couples we know are our gay friends because they don't have kids and they're just really, really grounded?" I'm like, "Yeah, the faggots are better than us!"

You've been doing this for, like, 100 years.

Seventy-three.

How's your gay fan base changed since the beginning?

I'll be honest with you: The gays always liked me, but the dykes used to be very bitchy. They used to get their cunts up in an uproar all the time over politically incorrect jokes. But I've noticed in the last five years - and I don't know what happened - but they lightened up, and I

“There's no God up there going, 'Everyone but gays should get married.' You know, the only two people who shouldn't get married are ugly people, all right? Have you seen what results when ugly people get married? Three words: Honey Boo Boo.”

-Lisa Lampanelli

think dykes are catching up with gays in sense of humor. I'm very impressed with the lesbians.

Are you conscious of not recycling old material during your stand-up?

Totally, because it makes me very nervous that somebody is gonna yell out a punch line at me - that's a real thing! I have very punchline-y jokes; it's not tons of stories. There's so much that annoys me on a daily basis that there's no reason to come to a show a year later and still be doing the same stuff. This show that I'm doing now, there's so much about the "Apprentice" that I'm supposed to not be talking about and it's all like, "Oh, confidentiality agreement," and I'm like, "You can't fire me twice, NBC. Suck it!"

How often do your minority friends help you with a joke?

I don't have minority friends because I'm white. Come on, please. Let's get with the program.

What's your role in the upcoming movie "Not Fade Away" with James Gandolfini?

Honey, I'm hardly in the movie. I'm just proud that I got to work with those guys. But guess what I found out that's even better? I just did this and you might be the first reporter I'm telling this to: I just filmed a "Simpsons"! That's so iconic. It's like a bucket list thing to do.

As yourself?

No. I definitely acted how Lisa would act, but I play this woman Marge makes friends with, and the woman overreacts and thinks Marge is banging the husband. So, I'm a battle-ax and a half, a real fucking warhorse - so yeah, I'm hardcore Lisa. And my husband is played by Seth MacFarlane. Isn't that cute?

Trying to get the mental image of you together.

Don't, don't. Keep the clothes on, believe me.

You always refuse to apologize for anything you say, whether it's on

"Celebrity Apprentice" or with your stand-up. Why shouldn't a comedian apologize?

Well, I shouldn't apologize because I say it in humor. You only apologize for stuff you mean, so if I've unintentionally done a joke that hurts your feelings, it's like, "Sorry, dude, live with it; it's called a joke."

I just think if we started apologizing for one joke, it's gonna be another one, and then another one, and then pretty soon you're not being yourself anymore. I understand why people have to apologize if they have a network job, like how Tracy Morgan had to apologize - you're on a network, you have to kind of play ball. I'm not employed by anybody. I'm self-employed, so you can all suck it.

There are people who don't understand your comedy. They think you're prejudiced against everyone in the world.

Which makes no sense, because I hate white people, too - hello!

What offends you?

People really meaning the racial jokes. I know in my heart I'm only making fun of the people I like. But if you hear people who sound like they really hate gays or blacks or Asians, that's kind of fucked up.

When was the last time you defended a gay guy?

I used to have an opening act that was a gay guy and noticed some people calling him a faggot during his set, and I had them kicked out. I just wouldn't put up with it. I'm like, "Nobody calls anybody a fag during a Lisa Lampanelli show except Lisa Lampanelli, bitches. Let's get that straight."

If you were gonna die tomorrow, what would be your last words?

"Let the fags get married, God. You don't give a shit, right?" I'm telling you, there's no God up there going, "Everyone but gays should get married." You know, the only two people who shouldn't get married are ugly people, all right? Have you seen what results when ugly people get married? Three words: Honey Boo Boo.



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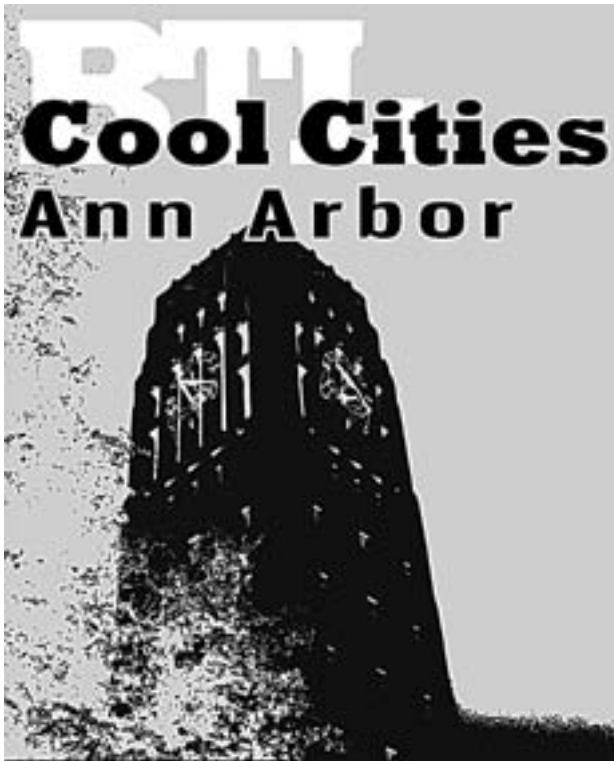
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When Family Is The ‘White Elephant’ In The Room

BY JOHN QUINN

It’s coming up on 60 years since Perry Como first sang “There’s No Place Like Home for the Holidays.” Joe Hingleberg and Travis Peltó’s new comedy “White Elephant” is less sentimental and therefore more realistic than that. The show, playing late night Thursdays at Go Comedy! in Ferndale, suggests that holidays at home can be a little bit of Hades.

Stephen Drummond (Peltó) is not at *his* home for Christmas. He’s making the dreaded “meet the family” visit with his girlfriend, Janelle. They take separate planes; he arrives, she’s delayed. That leaves Stephen at the mercy of Janelle’s father, Norm (Mike McGettigan), and uncle, Dusty (Garrett Fuller), who seem to demonstrate that oafishness is genetic. Primed with alcohol, they’re ready to harass this intruder on a family holiday. Nor are Janelle’s sensible stepmother, Sharon (Melissa Beckwith), and hyperactive little brother, Sean (Hingleberg), immune from the hazing.

So Stephen is on his own as he learns the Turner family holiday traditions, which include high octane drinking

REVIEW

‘White Elephant’

Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale, 10 p.m. Every Thursday through Dec. 27. 1 hour, 5 minutes. \$10. 248-327-0575.
www.gocomedy.net

games and White Elephant – wrapping unwanted items for a sort of grab-bag gifting. But “In vino veritas,” and, as tongues are loosened, the holiday turns to hilarity.

The situation and characters of “White Elephant” are not unfamiliar, but how they’re used is fresh and funny. Hingleberg and Peltó are the creators of “Wirelessless,” last season’s Wilde Award winner for Best Original One-Act Comedy. That show’s director, Bryan Lark, returns to deliver a crisp, disciplined production that closely observes the natural comic build in the material for maximum enjoyment onstage. As if he didn’t have enough in his hands, Lark is also responsible for set, sound and costume designs. Director and playwrights

have established an artistic relationship that really works.

The performances have the usual high polish of Go Comedy! ensembles, but there are always some eye-catchers. In Hingleberg’s case the “eye-catching” is literal. As 10-year-old Sean, he’s clad in a fire-engine red, NASCAR logoed flannel onesie, complete with feet. The character is both naive and wise beyond his years, bouncing around the stage chugging Red Bull. Writing a juicy role for himself won’t get the playwright on Santa’s “naughty” list.

It’s hard to take one’s eyes off Melissa Beckwith, who takes another beautifully crafted character to its artistic limits. Her face is as expressive as her voice; step-mother Sharon’s emotions are as easy to read as print on a page.

Perhaps this review makes “White Elephant” sound like another satirical slam of “family” values. It’s not. Ultimately truth and trust are redeeming characteristics in even the most cynical society, and this little gem just exudes Christmas cheer. I wouldn’t mind if this became something of a holiday classic. God bless us, everyone!

► Screen Queen

Continued from p. 17

FOR HIPSTERS

Tarantino XX

Women are fierce in the twisted world of Quentin Tarantino. They cease knife brawls, kick Kurt Russell’s butt and rock a pantsuit with the empowering swagger of a lesbian. That’s why his iconic femme fatales are so revered: They are to film what Madonna is to music. The “Kill Bill” dyad’s Uma Thurman as an avenging Bride, Zöe Bell and Rosario Dawson holding their own in a high-speed car chase, and pre-“L Word” Pam Grier in a wildly amusing grrl-power plot that has her double-crossing a money launderer – they’re all here in this 10-disc commemorative release that celebrates the influential and controversial virtuoso. Also among them: Tarantino’s earliest films, “Reservoir Dogs” and “True Romance,” and “Pulp Fiction,” the quintessential 1994 release that became as well-known for its imitable style as it did for that gay rape scene. Those films launched a career of pop-culture riffs and genre subversion with high body counts and hardcore quotables. Film aficionados analyze his impressive oeuvre during the Critics Corner extra, and there’s a Q&A with Tarantino and Grier who reunite to talk “Jackie Brown.” Both are among five hours of new special features. Pantsuit not included.





Elizabeth Rager as Honey Ray, Kelly Kucharski as Twink, and Sarah Lynn Oravetz as Frankie in "Christmas Belles." Photo: Broadway Onstage Live Theatre

'Christmas Belles' Does Everything But Ring

BY DANA CASADEI

Most Christmases there's always one gift that doesn't appeal to you – the one from the distant relative that still thinks you're 12, not 23. But like your momma taught you as a kid, you still act grateful, smile politely and say "thank you," while secretly searching for the receipt. Broadway Onstage's holiday show, "Christmas Belles," is kind of like that present.

Let's start with the positives, the pretty wrapping paper if you will. Beverly Dickinson's direction nicely utilizes the space, having characters easily move on and off the stage. Each scene plays out like a skit on SNL, with a black light quickly going on to get the next scene ready. With Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten's script, that set up works extremely well.

With a cast of almost a dozen, there's quite a bit happening, with the main focus being on the Futrelle sisters: big-haired and big-mouthed Honey Raye (Elizabeth Rager, one of the evening's standouts), who's directing the Christmas pageant; extremely pregnant Frankie (Sarah Oravetz); and Twink (Kelly Kucharski), the felon. Twink accidentally burned down half a trailer park when lighting her ex-boyfriend's NASCAR memorabilia on fire.

REVIEW

Christmas Belles

Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Friday-Saturday through Dec. 22, plus Sunday Dec. 9 & 16. \$18. 586-771-6333.

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As you can probably guess, Honey Raye's show doesn't exactly go as planned. Revenge is plotted by Geneva (Jane Burkey), the show's former director for the past 27 years, the majority of the cast gets food poisoning, and then there's something about a polar bear. Simply, it's a mess – and I'm not just talking about Honey Raye's Christmas pageant.

I knew I was in for, well, an interesting two hours, when the first line slip-up happened only minutes into the performance. But I had hope that it would get better. This was second night jitters, I told myself. Sadly, this was followed by quite a few more throughout the evening, and from a variety of actors.

The casting also seemed a little off. Twink mentions that she was in a relationship for 16 years, but Kucharski doesn't look over 25. So unless she met her boyfriend when she was 9, it wasn't entirely believable; nor was the man she ended up with in the end. Same goes for

her sister Frankie, who's supposed to be the mother of Gina Jo (Kate Dickinson). I loved Oravetz's performance; she's funny and had a great deadpan, but she didn't look nearly old enough to play Dickinson's mother. The show's couples didn't have much chemistry, either.

As for the rest of the characters, the ones that had less stage time were more memorable than those in major storylines.

Dub (Rick Mason), whose storyline mainly revolves around trying to pass a kidney stone, is one you won't forget. Mason is so over the top and ridiculous, but it's fantastic. Same goes for Futrelle rival Patsy (Rachel Dalton), aka the town wench, and Raynerd (Daniel Woitulewicz), the town's version of Forrest Gump. Patsy's an awful character and not likable, but Dalton earned some of the biggest laughs of the night during Act Two, in a scene that could have been done even more extreme. Raynerd isn't a man that says much, but when he recites "The Christmas Story" in Act Two, you can't help but have a huge grin come across your face. Almost every time Woitulewicz is on stage, you will smile.

"Christmas Belles" is a show of hit or miss moments. Much like that present, you'll either learn to love it or forget it by morning.

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Dec. 6

AIDS in Black and Brown: HIV Testing 10 a.m. Sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Latin@ Student Organization, and Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Inc. AIDS in Black and Brown, University of Michigan. **Ann Arbor.** Worldaidsweekum.wordpress.com

AIDS Awareness Luncheon 12 p.m. Spreading awareness and education. Speakers will discuss first-hand experience with the disease and statistics. Student advocates are also invited to read poems, litanies and short stories of the history of World AIDS Day. As space is limited, RSVP by Dec. 1 (Link available on Facebook). PRIDE UM-Dearborn, 4901 Evergreen Road, **Dearborn.** Facebook.com/Prideumdearborn

United in Anger Screening 5:10 p.m. Visual AIDS's "United in Anger: A History of ACT UP," a new film by director Jim Hubbard, produced by Sarah Schulman and Jim Hubbard for Day With (out) Art/World AIDS Day. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., **Ann Arbor.** 212-627-9855. VisualAids.org

AIDS in the Arts 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Black Student Union and EnspIRED. AIDS in Black and Brown, 525 South State St., **Ann Arbor.** 734-763-4186. Worldaidsweekum.wordpress.com

Speak Out 7 p.m. Offers a welcoming environment for LGBT people to improve their public speaking and leadership skills. Meets the first and fourth Thursday of every month. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor.** 734-995-9867. Crystal@jimtoycenter.org

Friday, Dec. 7

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Tracy Ullman: Live and Exposed; In this stand-up performance, the multitasking Ullman sums up the highs and lows of a varied career that includes appearances in films (Plenty) as well as sitcoms ("Girls on Top"). Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org/

S.P.I.C.E. 7:30 p.m. S.P.I.C.E. works to empower and enhance the lives of women of color in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning community in Metropolitan Detroit, by eradicating the health, social and educational barriers facing them. Meetings are on the first Friday of every month. S.P.I.C.E., 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Saturday, Dec. 8

Crossroads 7 p.m. Dedicated to serving the needs of transgender individuals. Meets the second Saturday of every month. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Eat Drink & Be Merry 7 p.m. Choral Music Celebrating the Holidays. Join Sing Out Detroit for this musical romp - Renaissance style. Tickets: \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. 355 West Maple Road, **Birmingham.** 248-514-0330. Singoutdetroit@gmail.com Singoutdetroit.org

Chanukah Concert & Jam for Food Justice 8 p.m. Featuring Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Donations of any amount are welcome to cover event costs and benefit great Detroit food justice initiatives. Congregation T'chayah, 1457 Griswold St., **Detroit.** T'chayah.org

Fusion of Cultures 9 p.m. Sponsored by the African Student Association, Arab Students Association, Latin@ Students Organization, Black Student Union, Persian Students Association, and the Indian American Student Association. AIDS in Black and Brown, University of Michigan, **Ann Arbor.** Worldaidsweekum.wordpress.com

Sunday, Dec. 9

Winter Celebration Potluck 2 p.m. Winter Celebration Potluck is a special monthly meeting. Will still have support groups, but the program portion of the meeting is replaced with the potluck. PFLAG asks that if you are able to, that you bring your favorite dish to pass. Genesee County PFLAG, 2474 S. Ballenger Highway, **Flint.** 810-496-8302. Pflagflint@yahoo.com Pflagflint.com

Rainbow Book Club 4:30 p.m. Book club dedicated to reading and discussing classic and contemporary literature. Meeting since before 1998, every second Sunday of the month. Rainbow Book Club, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor.** 734-995-9867. Catherine.heme@gmail.com

Conversation Station 5 p.m. LGBTQI (and allies) 35 and over - join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. Topic: What are your pet peeves? 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak.** 248-981-4227. GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, Dec. 10

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

Tuesday, Dec. 11

Calhoun County Coalition for Inclusion 5 p.m. 3Ci is a coalition of faith leaders, medical professionals, students, teachers, youth and community members dedicated to creating an inclusive, open and welcoming community for LGBTQ youth and adults alike in Calhoun County. 3Ci meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Calhoun County Coalition for Inclusion, 2855 Capital Ave., **Battle Creek.** Inclusion.coalition@yahoo.com Ppmsm3ci.org

Out4Equality 6:30 p.m. Calling all slam poets, poets, writers, musicians, comedians, rappers: Affirmations hosts an open mic series called Out4Equality the second Tuesday of every month. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

LanSINGout Rehearsal 7 p.m. LanSINGout Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to enriching those around them through music, fellowship and community involvement. LanSINGout Gay Men's Chorus, 510 W. Ottawa St., **Lansing.** 517-490-1746. Info@lansingout.org Lansingout.org

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

Wednesday, Dec. 12

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 kgjrc.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 every Wednesday on the upper level of the Affirmations building. Senior Koffee Klatch, 290 W. Road Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 586-573-9932. GoAffirmations.org

Wild Wednesday 6 p.m. A group for youth ages 12-18 interested in hanging out with other kind and supportive youth in a safe environment. Dedicated to Make a Change, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor.** 734-657-1792. Gail@dedicatedtomakeachange.com Dedicatedtomakeachange.com

Newly Single Support Group 6:30 p.m. Group for all dealing with the end of a relationship and want to talk - or listen - to others who share similar experiences. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

TransCend 6:30 p.m. Open to persons 18 and older. Younger are welcome with parent or guardian permission. KGLRC 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Tracy@kgjrc.org Kgjrc.org

Goodie 2 Shoes 7 p.m. A new social group dedicated to reaching out to the community and helping others. Meets every other Wednesday at MCC Detroit. Goodie 2 Shoes, 2441 Pinecrest St., **Ferndale.** 299-399-7741. AnnCox@Pridesource.com

Thursday, Dec. 13

Gender Non-Conformists 7 p.m. A social and discussion group for transgender, genderqueer, gender-neutral and gender-exploring individuals. Space also available to significant others. Meets every Thursday. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Jjenkins@GoAffirmations.org GoAffirmations.org

Resource Center Health Group 7 p.m. LGBTQ and allied teens 13-18. E-mail for more info. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo.** 259-381-2437. Kgjrc.org

Friday, Dec. 14

Youth Only HIV Testing 6 p.m. Free anonymous testing for individuals 21 and under. Available the second and fourth Friday of every month. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

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: Aimee and Jaguar; Based on the memoirs of Lily Wust, this is the story of two women who fall in love in 1943 Berlin. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

Saturday, Dec. 15

Christmas Cookie Walk 10 a.m. Troy Oaks Community of Christ hosts its 8th Annual Christmas Cookie Walk. Large variety of homemade cookies available for \$8/lb, candy and specialty treats, and prepackaged cookie plates with 1 lb of cookies for gift giving. The Troy Oaks Compassionate Ministries Team will also be collecting toys for Toys for Tots during this event. Troy Oaks Community of Christ, 3830 Crooks Road, **Troy.** 248-321-5553. Mcmcfall@gmail.com

KGLRC Winter Gala Awards Ceremony and Fundraiser 7 p.m. Join the KGLRC in celebrating another year. Wonderful entertainment, fantastic food and cocktails as well as sought after silent auction items from favorite local businesses XX all in addition to the REACH Awards for Retail, Education, Ally, Community, Faith and Humanitarian of the Year Award. Tickets available online. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 314 S. Park, **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-7775. Kgjrc.org/winter-gala/

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus Winter Concert 7:30 p.m. Doors at 7 p.m., GRWC's Winter Concert. Grand Rapids Women's Chorus, 1100 Lake Dr. SE, **Grand Rapids.** GRWC.org

Sparkly, Jolly, Twinkly, Jingly 7:30 p.m. Detroit Together Men's Chorus presents their Holiday Concert, "Sparkly, Jolly, Twinkly, Jingly" under the artistic direction of Brian Londrow. Tickets: \$18 in advance, or \$20 at-the-door. Tickets available by phone or at Five15 and Just 4 Us. Detroit Together Men's Chorus, 610 W. Thirteen Mile Road, **Madison Heights.** 248-544-3872. Info@dtmc.org Dtmc.org

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Romeo & Juliet" Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet, Aedes' Violin Concerto and Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet. Tickets: \$15+. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** Dec. 8 - Dec. 9. 313-576-5111. DSO.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "The Nutcracker" Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis, Sierra's Navidad en la montana, and Tchaikovsky's Act II of Nutcracker. Tickets: \$15+. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** Dec. 13 - Dec. 14. 313-576-5111. DSO.org

Michigan Philharmonic "Home for the Holidays" Michigan Philharmonic invites all to come "home" for festive, family-friendly yuletide pops concerts featuring traditional holiday favorites. Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman Ave., **Plymouth.** Dec. 13 - Dec. 13. 734-453-0870. MichiganPhil.org

Michigan Philharmonic "Home for the Holidays" Michigan Philharmonic invites all to come "home" for festive, family-friendly yuletide pops concerts featuring traditional holiday favorites. Seligman Performing Arts Center, 22305 W. 13 Mile Road, **Beverly Hills.** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 14. 248-559-2095. MichiganPhil.org

CONCERTS

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "A Creole Christmas" Celebrate with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band as they "swing in" the holiday season New Orleans style. Seasonal favorites like "Blue Christmas," "Swinging In a Winter Wonderland," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," and "The Dreidel Song" will be hot and spicy. Treat your family to a Big Easy holiday celebration they'll never forget! Tickets: \$18. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** 8 p.m. Dec. 6. 313-576-5111. DSO.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Cairn to Cairn" Tickets: \$10-30. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., **Ann Arbor.** Dec. 7 - Dec. 7. 734-769-2999. KerrytownConcertHouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Global Jazz Project" Tickers: \$5-25. Global Jazz Project presents traditional avant-garde jazz infused with world music concepts. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 13. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House Eric Vloeimans and Florian Weber; Eric Vloeimans on trumpet and Florian Weber on piano. Tickets: \$5-25. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 14. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Olympia Entertainment "Ho Ho Hoey's Rockin' Holiday Show" Following a sold out performance last year, world renowned rock guitarist Gary Hoey will return to the City Theatre with his signature "Ho Ho Hoey's Rockin' Holiday Show." Tickets: \$33-55. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** 8 p.m. Dec. 7. 800-745-3000. Olympiaentertainment.com

The Ark Caravan of Thieves; Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 8. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Ark "Erin Zindle & Friends" Holiday Show. Tickets: \$16. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 15. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Ark Shawn Colvin; Tickets: \$42.50. The Ark, 316 S. Main, **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 12. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Ark Melissa Ferrick; With special guest Anne Heaton. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., **Ann Arbor.** 8 p.m. Dec. 7. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Berman Center for the Performing Arts "Dan Gross and the Cliff Monear Trio" Dan Gross, cantor of Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, joins local jazz legends the Cliff Monear Trio for an evening of celebration and song through music of the season and the American songbook. Tickets: \$31. The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 West Maple Road, **West Bloomfield.** 7:30 a.m. Dec. 13. 248-661-1900. Theberman.org

OTHER

Flowers of the Lakes; Huron Valley Optimists Club; Triangle Creative Arts "A Piano Extravaganza: Tour de Force on Four Grand Pianos" Four master pianists and local musicians bring March of the Toys and other songs to life on four grand pianos. Delightful for all ages. Admission: \$7-\$25. Lakeland High School Performing Arts Center, 1630 Bogle Lake Road, **White Lake.** Dec. 8 - Dec. 8. 800-585-3737. 4-pianos.com

Yourist Studio Gallery "Yourist Studio Gallery Annual Holiday Sale" Choose from all of the beautiful ceramic works, meet artists and enjoy some appetizers and desserts. Yourist Studio Gallery, 1133 Broadway St., **Ann Arbor.** 5 p.m. Dec. 7. 734-662-4914. Youristpottery.com

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Blame of Bones Get a Clue Mystery Theater at Historic Farmington Masonic Temple, 23715 Farmington Rd., **Farmington.** Dec. 15 - 16. 248-476-2099. blameofbones.eventbrite.com

Christmas Belles \$11-12. The Twin City Players, 600 W. Glenlord Road, **St. Joseph.** Through Dec. 23. 269-429-0400. TwinCityPlayers.org

Four Scenes: A Hungarian Trilogy \$6-10. Fancy Pants Theater at Studio 246, N. Kalamazoo Mall, **Kalamazoo.** Through Dec. 9. 269-599-6437. FancyPantsTheater.webs.com

Just in the Nick of Time \$10 adult, \$6 youth. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., **Royal Oak.** Dec. 6 - 9. 248-541-6430. stagecrafters.org

Nuncrackers \$19. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., **Kalamazoo.** Through Dec. 9. 269-343-1313. KazooCivic.com

The 1940's Radio Hour \$16-18. Farmington Players, 32332 W. Twelve Mile Road, **Farmington Hills.** Through Dec. 22. 248-553-2955. FarmingtonPlayers.org

The Hollow \$18. PTD Productions at Riverside Arts Center, 76 North Huron Street, **Ypsilanti.** Dec. 6 - 15. 734-483-7345. ptdproductions.com

The Night Before Christmas \$19-\$23. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., **Kalamazoo.** Dec. 15 - Dec. 19. 269-343-1313. kazooicivc.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

White As Snow, Red As Blood: The Story of Snow White \$7-15. Eastern Michigan University Theatre at Quirk Theatre, Eastern Michigan University, **Ypsilanti.** Through Dec. 9. 734-487-2282. Emich.edu/emutheatre

PROFESSIONAL

A Christmas Carol \$17-\$40. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., **Rochester.** Through Dec. 23. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

Editor's Pick



Roberto Sierra

During its special performance of "The Nutcracker," the Detroit Symphony Orchestra will perform the world premiere of Roberto Sierra's "Navidad en la montaña," featuring acclaimed vocalist Heidi Grant Murphy on a program of classical holiday delights.

Led by DSO Music Director Leonard Slatkin, the performance will also include Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker, Act II" and Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis."

A shimmering soprano with enchanting stage presence, Heidi Grant Murphy is one of the outstanding vocal talents of her generation. Today, Murphy has established a reputation not only for her musicianship and impeccable vocal technique, but also for her warm personality and generosity of spirit. Murphy has appeared with many of the world's finest opera companies and symphony orchestras, notably the Metropolitan Opera, Salzburg Festival, Frankfurt Opera, Netherlands Opera, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Opera National de Paris and Santa Fe Opera.

Performances begin at 7:30 Dec. 13 and 8 p.m. Dec. 14 at the Max M. Fisher Music Center in Detroit. Tickets begin at \$15 and are available by phone at 313-576-5111 or online at DSO.org.



Editor's Pick

The New Theatre Project offers its second world premiere by playwright Kevin Kautzman at The Mix. After the huge audience success of "If You Start a Fire [Be Prepared to Burn]," TNTP is eager to showcase more work by Kautzman. "His plays are magical," says artistic director Keith Paul Medelis. "There is a delicious theatricality and poetry to all of them that makes them a treat for any company. We are very happy to serve these plays with their first outing."

When Steph returns home to North Dakota for the first time in years and surprises her estranged childhood friend Jane, they descend into their memories and

relive the summer Jane told Steph her deepest secret: She knows how to turn into a wolf.

Performances are at 8 p.m. Friday-Sunday through Dec. 16.

All performances take place at the Mix Studio Theater, 130 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. Tickets are \$10-\$15.

A Christmas Carol \$15 adult, \$10 youth and senior. Wild Swan Theater at Towsley Auditorium, Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor. Dec. 6-9. 734-995-0530. wildswantheater.org

A Little Night Music \$30-\$46. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron, Ann Arbor. Through Dec. 30. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

A Paradise of Fools \$17 in advance, \$20 at the door. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through Dec. 23. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Antigone in New York \$25. The Elizabeth Theater, Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Through Jan. 12. 313-444-2294. ParkBarDetroit.com

Bringing Up Baby New Year \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff St., Hamtramck. Through Dec. 15. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Cancer! The Musical \$25. Planet Ant Theatre at Boll Family YMCA Theatre, 1401 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Dec. 15. 313-365-4948. brownpapertickets.com

Christmas Belles \$15-18. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Dec. 22. 586-771-6333. Broadwayonstage.com

Ebenezer \$20-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through Dec. 23. 517-655-7469. WilliamstonTheatre.org

Faith Healer Free; donations accepted. The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette, #113, Detroit. Dec. 7 - 29. theabreact.com

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

Greetings! \$15-18. Two Muses Theatre, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Through Dec. 16. 248-850-9919. TwoMusesTheatre.org

Home for the Holidays \$28. Dionysus Theatre and Performing Arts Academy at Hartland High School Auditorium, 10635 Dunham Rd., Hartland. Dec. 7 - 23. 517-672-6009. diotheatre.com

Jersey Boys \$34-\$94. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Dec. 12 - Jan. 6. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com

Miracle on 34th Street \$20-\$52. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Rd., Clinton Township. Dec. 7 - 8. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

My Way: A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra \$33-35. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 23. 269-343-2727. FarmersAlleyTheatre.com

Only the Best \$15-\$22. Mosaic Youth Theatre at Detroit Film Theatre inside the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 14 - 16. 313-833-4005. mosaicdetroit.org

Ordinary Days \$29-\$32 Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through Dec. 9. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

Othello \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Jan. 17. 313-577-2972. Hilberry.com

Plaid Tidings \$26-\$32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through Dec. 23. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

Puppet Scrooge \$12 adult, \$10 senior & student. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. Through Dec. 16. 313-967-0999. matrixtheatre.org

Superior Donuts \$18.50-42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 15. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

The Homosexuals \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Dec. 10. TheRingwald.com

The Marvelous Wonderettes \$20-\$22. The Box Theater, 90 Macomb Place, Mount Clemens. Through Dec. 8. 586-954-2677. theboxtheater.com

The Snow Queen \$10 adult, \$5 child. PuppetArt at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Dec. 1 - Jan. 26. 313-961-7777. PuppetArt.org

War Horse \$32-\$72. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Dec. 5 - 9. 800-WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

Wolf Cry Wolf \$10-15. The New Theatre Project at Mix Studio Theater, 130 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. Through Dec. 16. 734-961-8704. TheNewTheatreProject.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Charles H. Wright Museum "Visions of Our 44th President" 315 E. Warren, Detroit. Nov. 1 - April 30. 313-494-5853. Thewright.org

Cranbrook Art Museum "From Here to There: Alec Soth's America" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 17 - March 30. 877-462-7262. CranbrookArtMuseum.org

Cranbrook Art Museum "Soo Sunny Park: Vapor Slide" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 17 - March 17. 877-462-7262. CranbrookArtMuseum.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Worth a Thousand Words: American Political Cartoons" 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. Nov. 3 - Jan. 6. Flintarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Drawing Together: International Cartoons" 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. Nov. 1 - Dec. 30. Flintarts.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Real/Surreal" 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Nov. 1 - Jan. 13. 616-831-2904. ArtMuseumGr.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Salvador Dali's Twelve Tribes of Israel" 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Nov. 1 - Jan. 13. 616-831-2904. ArtMuseumGr.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Robert McCann: New History Paintings" 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Nov. 1 - Jan. 13. 616-831-2904. ArtMuseumGr.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Treasures from Kalamazoo Collections" 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. Nov. 17 - Feb. 17. 269-349-7775. KArts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Great Lakes Pastel Society National Show 2012" 314 S. Park, Kalamazoo. Nov. 1 - Jan. 8. 269-349-7775. KArts.org

Michigan State University Museum "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway" 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. Oct. 6 - Dec. 30. Museum.msu.edu

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

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

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Voice of the City" 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 2 - March 31. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Faberge: The Rise & Fall" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 1 - Jan. 21. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Picasso and Matisse" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 11 - Jan. 6. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

Toledo Museum of Art "Made in Hollywood" 2445 Monroe St., Toledo. Oct. 7 - Jan. 30. 419-255-8000. ToledoMuseum.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 11 - Dec. 30. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Benjamin West: General Wolfe and the Art of the Empire" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Sep. 22 - Jan. 13. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Discovering Eighteenth-Century British America: The William L. Clements Library Collection" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Sep. 22 - Jan. 13. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

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- Ann Arbor-Friday**
7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.
- Bloomfield Hills-Thursday**
7:00 pm, Sobriety in The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.
- Detroit-Tuesday / Friday**
8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).
- Farmington Hills-Monday**
8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.
- Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday**
11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

- Ferndale-Wednesday**
8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.
- Ferndale-Saturday**
1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.
8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.
- Livonia-Friday**
8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.
- 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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- Diversity Wednesday Al-Anon Family Group**
Wednesday 8pm
St. Luke's Parrish Hall (in basement)
Lewiston & Livernois, Ferndale MI
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- Go After Your Serenity (G.A.Y.S.) Al-Anon Family Group**
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See Classifieds, page 32

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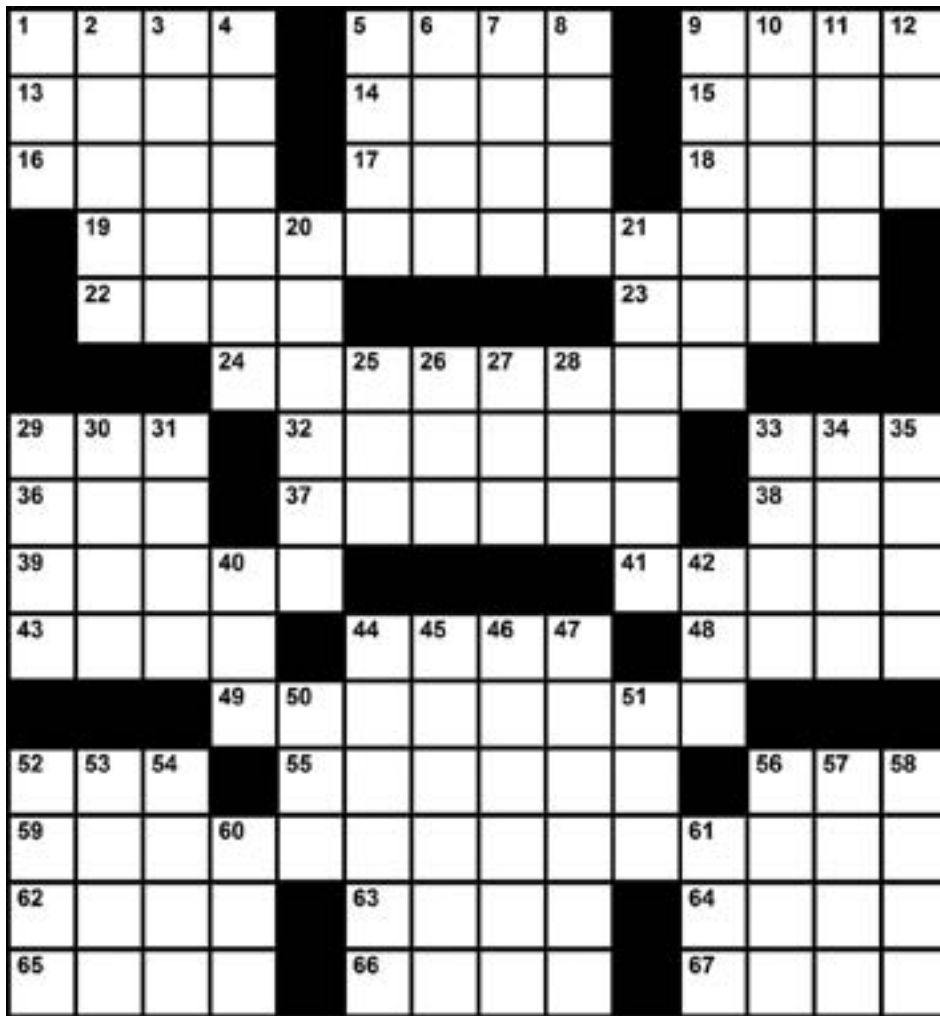
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Outcast Anthems



Across

- 1 Loose woman, in the land of Joe Orton
 5 Bit of Astroglide, e.g.
 9 Rock group?
 13 Tick off
 14 Star quality
 15 Wolfe of fiction
 16 Swallow alternative
 17 Russian river to the Caspian
 18 Pull out your shooter
 19 Outcast anthem of Kelly Clarkson
 22 The lowdown
 23 Face defacer
 24 Outcast anthem of Katy Perry
 29 Running game
 32 Woman of La Mancha
 33 Title for a brother
 36 Home st. of Harper Lee
 37 Male companion
 38 Bagel topping
 39 Came out slowly
 41 Triangular treat
 43 Prick
 44 Little green edibles
 48 Six feet under
 49 With 56-Across, outcast anthem of Lady Gaga

- 52 Kind of will
 55 Fruit jelly stuff
 56 See 49-Across
 59 Outcast anthem of P!nk
 62 Lesbos, for one
 63 Seaside bird
 64 Position at sea
 65 Where to catch a ferry underground
 66 "Caught in the headlights" animal
 67 Have the lead

Down

- 1 AARP members
 2 Painting Fra of Florence
 3 One coming from Uranus, e.g.
 4 Enjoy in a sexual way, with "on"
 5 Conquest of Caesar's
 6 Try to seduce
 7 By word of mouth
 8 South Pacific island
 9 Next to bat, to Billy Bean
 10 "The L Word" episode, e.g.
 11 Remove a slip?
 12 Spill one's seed
 20 Ready for action
 21 Solid gold measures
 25 Lawyer's thing

- 26 SASE, e.g.
 27 Put the moves on
 28 Bruin Bobby
 29 Retreat for D.H. Lawrence
 30 Loads
 31 Strip in the Middle East
 33 You might see a polar bear there
 34 First name in gossip
 35 Circumcised clumsily?
 40 Flow out
 42 Portfolio parts, briefly
 44 Was a chicken hawk
 45 "More! More!" on Broadway
 46 Bring into accord
 47 Journalist/writer William
 50 Uncork, to Shakespeare
 51 Having one sharp, to Bernstein
 52 Bisexual writer Murdoch
 53 Bringing up the rear
 54 "Celluloid Closet" narrator Tomlin
 56 Poet Whitman
 57 Where to find Moby Dick
 58 North Sea feeder
 60 Sarah Jessica Parker's "city" activity
 61 Singer's syllables

Solution on pg. 32

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Classifieds

Continued from p. 30

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Solution to puzzle from page 31

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

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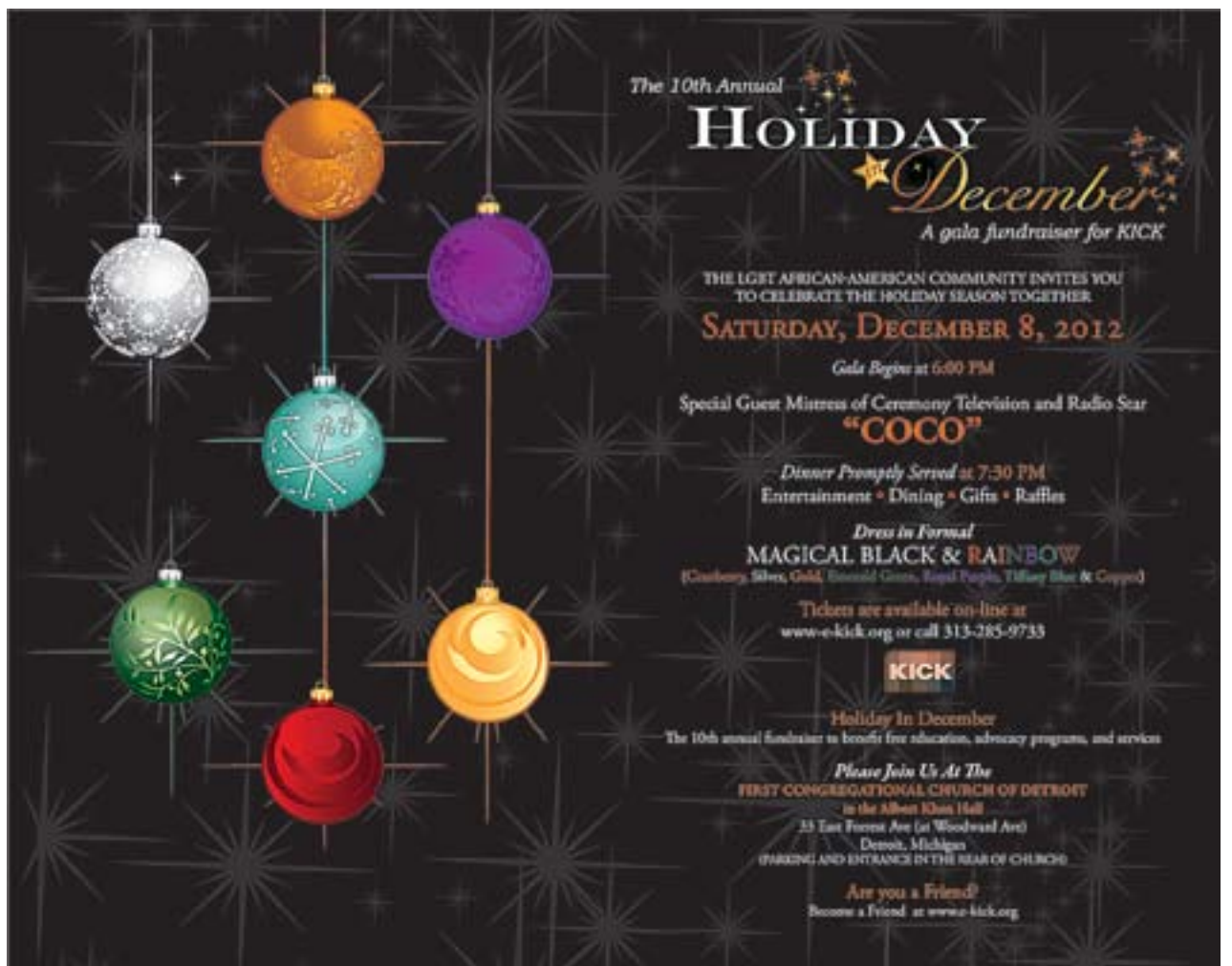


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Cocktail Chatter

Without Ice, Part 1

BY ED SIKOV

"What did you drink during the Great Blackout, Daddy?" It's just too bad I don't have kids! If I did, they'd ask this crucial question around the age of 6, when their dawning awareness of history's imperative met their equally fresh-awakened interest in their father's love of a dwinkie. Maybe it's just as well I'm childless. In any event, Hurricane Sandy is beginning to fade into the mists of the past, but your intrepid columnist is still musing on Sandy's effect on his cocktail hour. Hours. Days. Whatever.

As you may recall, Dan and I spent the night the hurricane slammed ashore without electricity drinking Kirs Royale while fondly remembering the superb casting of the old sitcom "The Mothers-in-Law," with two inimitable gay demicons – Kaye Ballard and Eve Arden – playing the title roles. We could enjoy the Kirs Royale only because the lights went out after we'd opened the champagne; our first round was thus properly chilled. By the time we'd polished off the bubbly, we no longer cared that it was nearing room temperature.

The ensuing four nights and days without power would have been hell on earth were it not for the fact that certain types of liquor can, and sometimes should, be consumed at 70 to 75 degrees. While others were scurrying around Manhattan buying superfluous items like batteries and bottled water, I concentrated my emergency preparations on procuring enough booze to see us through the storm and its aftermath. That's just a joke. Although Dan makes fun of the Spam I keep on hand, the truth is that I've kept our apartment stocked with batteries, water, canned goods, and candles and the equally mandatory liquor ever since 9/11. Only on Day 2 of Sandy did I realize that our ice supply had melted. Quelle horreur! Also: Duh!

What doesn't require ice? Well, Scotch and whiskey for starters. We had more than enough

on hand to keep us toasted and toasty after the sun went down. The apartment was a little chilly without our usual central heating, but after we each had a hefty dram of The Glenlivet, we warmed up just fine.

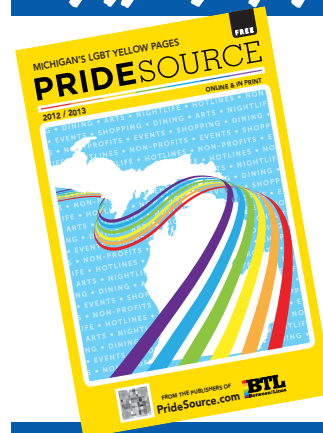
Some Scotch connoisseurs insist that the best way to enjoy the classic whiskey is not, in fact, neat – at room temperature without the addition of a mixer – but with a single ice cube. This delivery method is said to open the Scotch's bouquet. I think they may be right, but there's something to be said for the pleasant kick to the nose and tongue offered by plain, unadulterated Scotch. It grabs your full attention in a way that a one-ice-cubed drink does not. It's like smelling salts, only pleasant. For this reason, I like to serve Scotch neat in a big-bowled wine glass or brandy snifter.

Try it. Pour a healthy jigger of your favorite Scotch into such a glass. Hold it between your third and fourth fingers with your palm cupping the bowl so the heat of your hand warms the contents slightly. Then shove your nose into the glass and inhale. Ahhhhh! That'll wake you up!

Snob that I am, I prefer single malt Scotch to blends; I like the raw, individualistic character single malts present to the mouth. The Glenlivet, Aberlour, Talisker, Oban, Longmore, Strathisla, Redbreast.... They're all quite delicious and run the range from peaty to smoky.

These single malts tend to be pricier than blends. The exception is Chivas Regal, the best blend insofar as easy drinkability is concerned. (Then again there's the rare Royal Salute, a scrumptious blend that's been aged for 25 years; I've seen it offered on the Internet for as much as \$179.99. It's not surprising to learn that Royal Salute is made by the bonnie folks who produce Chivas.) So next time you find yourself in the path of a hurricane, make sure you've stocked some Scotch. Ye can tell your wee bairn that – och! – ye was prepared for the blackout, an' it dinna faze ye at all.

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