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– Michelle E. Brown



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Mozart

Mozart

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SUNDAY

Mussorgsky

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I won't deny that there have been times in the last 12 years that I wish we never said we were gay.

— Tegan Quin of Tegan and Sara, pg. 16



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Youth Rising: The Push For Marriage 2014

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

Change is bubbling up in Michigan's LGBT community, with people who weren't even old enough to vote when Proposition 2 imbedded marriage inequality into the State Constitution, now taking up the task of trying to get that amendment removed, perhaps as early as 2014.

Pockets of activism not currently associated with any of the established LGBT agencies has people riled up, some wondering what it will take to move forward on the marriage issue in the state, while others contend that 2016 is a more realistic timeframe for this battle.

The perspectives vary among interested parties, but the passion is the same. With a quickly changing national and pop culture acceptance of LGBT relationships and the inexpensive and easy mobilization that comes from internet resources, it is simply a whole new world for activism. How the parties come together, and how the energy of the youth movements will coalesce are currently working themselves out. Those who are ready to fight are finding a place at the table, and those who want to wait are sticking to their research. But ready or not the youth of Michigan are revved up and ready to go.

MiLove – Ann Arbor

Andrea Ernst of Ann Arbor is at the forefront of the youth marriage equality movement. She and her friends have formed MiLove, a group that has officially registered as a Ballot Question Committee with the state of Michigan. Their goal is simple; collect enough signatures to put a repeal of Prop. 2 on the ballot for Nov. 2014.

Inspired by the victories in other states, MiLove wants to put the issue to a popular vote in Michigan.

"If we're successful then it'll open the door to so many LGBT rights," Ernst said. "At the end of the election we saw progress. Myself and a few of my friends said 'why can't we do this here?' We researched other agencies and couldn't come up with people who were actually working on marriage equality around the state, so why not us?"

The friends learned that they would need over 300,000 valid signatures, but that they'd have to collect double that to protect against the invalid ones. And while they know that money is an issue, they believe in the power of social media and grassroots organizing to overcome some of the things that made communication difficult in past election efforts.

"We're focusing on colleges campuses. The young people will be important to the cause. We're reaching out to LGBT groups and hoping they will help. We're trying to tap into

“*At the end of the election we saw progress. Myself and a few of my friends said 'why can't we do this here?'*”

-Andrea Ernst, MiLove

larger organizations and listservs, and doing a lot of email and social media," Ernst said.

She explained that having tables at pride events and on campuses during welcome weeks will be a big part of their efforts, and they hope that statewide and national organizations will get on board to help them with fundraising and support from older voters.

So far they have found an ally in PFLAG, who has helped spread the word through their email lists. "We started there because it's a well-known organization with many chapters," Ernst said. A recent email blast helped them increase the likes on their Facebook page to over 1,000.

They've contacted other organizations through the state, and will be meeting with leaders from Unity Michigan and the Community Center Network next week to discuss a broader plan. "I'm very eager to learn," Ernst said. "I've never done a campaign before. I've always wanted to be part of LGBT advocacy, but this is the first thing that has fallen in my lap."

MiLove can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MiLove2014.

Marriage Michigan – Grand Rapids

A seven-member board in Grand Rapids is also taking on same-sex marriage from the grassroots up. Marriage Michigan is attempting to form a Political Action Committee and plans on putting language on the ballot to not only remove Prop. 2's language from the constitution, but the new ballot language would include legalization of same-sex marriage.

"We anticipate there's not going to be too much opposition," said co-founder Chris Surfus, citing a study that says 56 percent of Michiganders favor marriage equality. "The reason 2014 is best is that there is a lot of political outrage in Michigan and a more progressive demographic. They say voter turnout is not as big if it's not a presidential election, but there will be a lot of backlash in 2014."

Some have suggested that 2016 would be a more practical target date, but Surfus is not convinced. "We are absolutely set in getting this done in 2014. Equality Michigan wants

to push it in 2016. They want to focus on advocacy, but they're advocating to people who won't listen to you. The representatives aren't representing us. The only way to do it is to take it to the people. We're going to put it on the ballot and make it happen."

What makes the Marriage Michigan approach different Surfus said, is that they will appeal to all political persuasions. "It's not a Republican or Democrat issue. There's rising support in conservatives. We're going to take a tax and government non-intervention approach. We'll make it clear we're only changing civil marriage, not religious marriage. We'll include religious protection language and do a lot of faith-based outreach."

Surfus is a student at Grand Valley State working towards a masters degree in public administration, and members of the board are fellow students. Their goal is to raise \$2 million to hire a firm to get the signatures they need and to use social media to help them recruit 2,000 volunteers throughout the state. Surfus also founded TEAM – Tolerance Equality Awareness Movement, and has spoken to school districts about bullying policies as well as other equality-promoting events.

Find out more about Marriage Michigan at www.facebook.com/MarriageMI.

The Legal Perspective On Michigan's Marriage Fight

Attorney Jay Kaplan of the Michigan ACLU has seen the damage done by the 2004 Prop. 2 passage, and is familiar with the legal struggles that could come from trying to have it repealed. He noted that in Michigan, Prop. 2 takes so much off the table for LGBT people because of the way the amendment is worded to not recognize same-sex couples for any reason.

"I applaud people who are willing to explore this," Kaplan said. "It's going to take a great deal of financial resources and people resources."

He said that the risk of having multiple groups bringing forward petitions is that people opposed to same-sex marriage are likely to try all they can to invalidate signatures. For

example, if there were to be two petitions and someone signed them both, there is a possibility that neither signature would count if challenged.

Kaplan said that if a ballot initiative comes forward and does not pass, that it won't stop people from trying again in 2016. "But people could be confused, and that confusion could remain."

Another concern is that if it doesn't pass, it could create another hurdle to public acceptance in the state. "Opponents would argue that if it failed they will say its proof society isn't ready. If it fails you could try again, but voters can get confused."

Kaplan added that some are holding off on any efforts until later in the year when the U.S. Supreme Court makes their ruling on the California Prop. 8 case. One possible outcome is that the Court could chose to invalidate all state laws that oppose the right of same-sex couples to marry, in which case no ballot measure would be necessary.



What About The Politics?

The Director of Policy at Equality Michigan, Emily Dievendorf, is set on waiting until 2016. "The next two years our focus is on public education and polling," Dievendorf said. "We've had conversations with national organizations and political consultants who support our first amending Elliott Larsen (the state's nondiscrimination legislation). We still need to be doing public education. We're not going to get the excitement or funding necessary to get people to the polls unless a great number of Michigan citizens know what we lack."

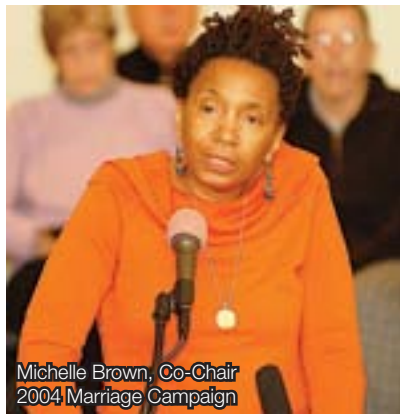
She pointed out that in Michigan people can still be legally fired for being LGBT. They can be discriminated against. They cannot have second parent adoptions. And there are no hate crimes laws to protect them. Her thought is that these issues need to be addressed before the general public will support marriage equality. In states that have achieved marriage equality



Emily Dievendorf, Equality Michigan



David Garcia, Affirmations and Community Center Network



Michelle Brown, Co-Chair 2004 Marriage Campaign

other protective policies were already in place for the LGBT communities.

Equality Michigan is planning a state-wide tour to educate people about how LGBT folks are treated unfairly. Dievendorf said she has not met with the newer regional groups yet, but instead hopes that people will be patient. "Allow us a chance to engage them in a statewide strategy," she said. "Islands never win. It

help we can get. This is an incredibly expensive effort and we intend to ensure it is a sound investment for supporters. We also don't need to reinvent the wheel. This has been tested in other states. We are looking at tested approaches and learning from successes and failures experienced by similar states. We can do this right the first time, but only realistically and together."

know if 2014 is feasible or not, but I do know that whether we fight this in 2014 or 2016 we will need everyone at the table."

"What does not make sense is to have a small group doing something on their own - we're not going to win unless we do it together. We will need progressive churches, university coalitions, labor, and LGBT leadership working together. We need to reach out to all age groups. We can win, but we have to play smart."

Garcia volunteered on the 2004 campaign and remembers the struggles the group faced, but he also remembers what it was like to be fired and willing to go the distance for the cause. He once walked from Swartz Creek to Lansing in protest of being forced out of his job for standing up for gay rights. "You can't ignore this kind of passion and it's exactly what we need. All the CCN partners are here to help."

“ I don't know if 2014 is feasible or not, but I do know that whether we fight this in 2014 or 2016 we will need everyone at the table. ”

- Dave Garcia, Affirmations & Community Center Network

needs to be a smart collaborative effort." She explained that Equality Michigan is doing research and putting together a plan to lead the way to a 2016 victory. In the meantime she said those who feel like being involved should spend their time doing lobbying of their elected officials in support of amending Elliott Larsen. Dievendorf is hopeful that legislators' minds can be changed with sharing stories and public pressure.

"What I've learned is to make it a point not to assume that a legislator has no interest. It's a very small minority, in either party, that don't favor fairness. What they need to hear is that it's important to the people they represent. They need a reason to vote in our favor... Our leaders only feel accountable to our needs if they hear from us," said Dievendorf.

She noted that, "all the Unity Michigan partners are moving forward toward repealing the constitutional amendment without leaving Elliott Larsen behind. Equality Michigan is doing the homework with national organizations to make sure we have a strong and sustainable plan. After the planning, we absolutely will need all the

The Grassroots Involvement

Dave Garcia, executive director of Affirmations Community Center located in Ferndale, which is part of the Community Center Network (CCN), is serving as one of a handful of point persons for much of the organizing that is happening statewide. While he's excited by the groups who are coming together, he's concerned about the efforts being disconnected from one another.

"I don't want to throw water on anybody's enthusiasm and effort. We all want to repeal the marriage amendment. We all want the same thing, and we have to be smart about it. One of the biggest challenges in 2004 is we didn't have enough people working together and on the same page. We need to better understand where key leadership is, and how we can bring more people together."

The Community Center Network, along with Unity Michigan partners, has reached out to the groups in Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor and scheduled a breakfast with them and leaders from around the state on Feb. 16. "I don't

It's Not The Same As 2004


In 2004 Michigan was hit with a ballot proposal that enshrined marriage inequality into the state's constitution. Heavily funded efforts were launched in 13 states that year, and the LGBT community was caught off guard and under attack. Michelle Brown was one who stepped up to lead the defense in the state. While voters passed Prop 2 by 59 percent, Brown is careful not to characterize the efforts of the gay community as a "failure."

"There are people who are cautious now, who say that we failed before and fear we may fail again. But we didn't fail. It gave us an opportunity to talk about these things. We had conversations with people who knew nothing about the community. It forced us to get people out of their sandboxes and work together. It was hard, but we did it. We didn't back down and we made progress. A lot of people came out as activists because of Prop. 2 and those people are still out working today.


"We gained visibility and put a face

See Marriage, page 7

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Overview: Upcoming Supreme Court Same-Sex Marriage Cases

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

At the Ferndale Public Library, attorney Lisa Schmidt donates her time to do community education classes about a variety of legal issues. Most recently she tackled the sometimes complicated issue of same-sex marriage, breaking down its context and where the laws may be headed once the U.S. Supreme Court hears two marriage-related cases this spring.

The easy-to-follow presentation left everyone in the room more educated on the matter, and with permission we've passed along a bit of that information here so that readers can too have a basic understanding of what is going on with this issue.

What is marriage?

While this may seem obvious to some, in debates it can seem like people are discussing two very different issues. Schmidt pointed out that in legal terms, marriage cannot be defined by religious beliefs, nor by the ability to have children. Often people will argue that because only a man and a woman can procreate, that only a man and a woman should marry. However infertility is not a legal barrier, and there are many married couples who do not have children or who may not ever want them.

Why marriage matters?

Courts have determined that the right to marry is fundamental to freedom. Not only does it promote free will, there are other benefits that married couples enjoy, including:

- Joint liability for debts
- Mutual support obligations
- Property rights
- Survivor benefits & intestate succession
- Immunity from subpoena against a spouse
- Visitation rights in jails, prisons, & hospitals
- Military communication rights & death notifications

Why do some states allow same-sex marriage and others do not?

States are allowed to regulate marriage without infringing on the rights of a man and a woman, including for reasons of race or religion. They can, however determine things like legal age, waiting periods, how far apart they must be in the bloodline etc. Throughout the nation couples who are married in one state are considered married wherever they go. This is called the full faith and credit clause, meaning that states must recognize the legal contracts of other states. Same-sex marriage is the glaring exception. In Sept. 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act which explicitly defined marriage between one man and one woman for all federal purposes (such as social security). DOMA also overrode the full faith and credit clause and granted states permission to ignore the marriage licenses and rights of couples who were legally wed in other states.

Should the Supreme Court care?

In 1967 the Supreme Court ruled that states could not prohibit interracial marriage, with their decision in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*. Some wonder why a similar case could not break down the state-level barrier for same-sex couples.

In 1972 a couple did try to bring their fight for equality to the Supreme Court. In *Baker v. Nelson* two men were denied marriage and they appealed. The Supreme Court chose not to hear their case "for want of a substantial federal question." Since then the case has been viewed as a precedent against the Federal government ruling on the issue. Schmidt explained that *Baker* may not be a valid precedent because there was not a high enough level of scrutiny in the case.



Could the change in climate matter?

Times have changed since 1972. As of January there are now nine states which allow same sex marriage including Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and Washington — as well as the District of Columbia and two Native American tribes. In addition, Rhode Island recognizes same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions and California, which briefly granted same-sex marriages in 2008, now recognizes them on a conditional basis. Thirty states including in Michigan prohibit same-sex marriage in the state constitution.

Popular opinion has changed too, and while polling may vary there is generally stronger support among young adults. Last year for the first time, a majority of Michigan citizens polled indicated their support for same-sex marriage.

What will the Supreme Court rule on this year?

The Supreme Court has decided to take on

two same-sex marriage cases this year. Each one addresses a different, but important facet of the marriage issue. The first addresses the Proposition 8 case in California and the second addresses a case where a couple was married in Canada and had a civil union in New York, but when one partner died the other was left with a \$363,053 inheritance tax bill.

Prop 8 Decisions

In California, there was same-sex marriage, and then a ballot proposal stating that marriage could only be between a man and a woman was passed. In 2009 it was upheld by the State Supreme Court. In 2010 it was struck down by the U.S. District Court and that ruling was again affirmed by the 9th District U.S. Court of Appeals.

What will Supreme Court rulings mean?

There are several ways that the Court can rule. They can rule in a very limited way, making the determination for just the specific cases. Or they could rule in a broad way that affects state's rights and the federal government's rights. The rulings could go in favor of same-sex marriage or against it. Schmidt presented the outcomes on a sliding scale, looking at what could be gay-positive outcomes or gay-negative outcomes.

What are potential positive outcomes?

The Court recognizes gays and lesbians as a protected class (**Both cases could impact this**)

All state constitutional and statutory gay marriage bans are invalidated (**Prop 8**)

Gay marriages qualify for full benefits under federal law (**DOMA**)

States may not take away gay marriage once it has been granted (**Prop 8**)

States can still ban gay marriage but must recognize marriages performed elsewhere (**DOMA**)

What are potential negative outcomes?

The Court finds there is a rational basis to support treating gay marriage differently (**Both cases could impact this**)

States have the specific authority to define marriage (**Prop 8**)

States may refuse to recognize gay marriages performed elsewhere (**DOMA**)

Federal government may limit benefits awarded to gay marriage (**DOMA**)

States may not pass new statutes or constitutional amendments, but old ones stand (**Prop 8**)

What is Schmidt's prediction?

Legal experts have speculated what could happen, and Schmidt said she's not going to, except to say that whether they go in favor of same-sex marriage or against it, they're likely to do so in a big way. "There were a few other cases that they could have taken, and they picked these ones carefully. It means they are likely to make a firm statement either way. Though they could make the decisions narrowly if they wanted." She pointed out that most people consider it to be a split jury, with Justice Anthony Kennedy being the "swing" vote. Both cases are scheduled to be heard in late March, with the decisions expected to come out in late June or early July.

Learn More

Freedom to Marry is an organization at the forefront of the same-sex marriage movement, with plenty of resources for those who want to learn more and get involved. Their website is www.freedomtomarry.org.

Schmidt is a private-practice attorney who handles civil rights, criminal and family law. Her next presentation will be about gun control. Find out more on her website at <http://schmidtlawservices.com>.

► Marriage

Continued from p. 5

to our LGBTQ communities in places where it had never been before," she said.

"Marriage was never one of my hot button issues. But when this happened and I heard the way they (proponents of Prop 2) were talking about us I could not be quiet. I was at the art fair by Wayne State and saw it right in my own back yard. There were people getting signatures, and I knew they were being paid, and it was terrible. I knew then that I had to get involved."

The rush to combine resources and the overwhelming odds being faced, meant that groups hunkered down with a fresh mindset of efficiency. Individuals stepped in and became spokespeople, simply traveling the state, sitting on discussion panels, speaking to groups and introducing themselves to people who had no idea what it was like to be gay in Michigan.

Money was a factor, and contributions from national organizations helped to fund the defense, but significant funds were raised from grassroots efforts like house parties as well.

An outside consultant was brought in to manage the effort, and data and techniques were borrowed from efforts in other states. Brown said that whether the move is for 2014 or 2016, money and research will be important to the success of the campaign. For example, one thing she learned from 2004 that stuck with her was passed down to her from David Wilson of Massachusetts.

"There they learned that placing an emphasis on family and the issues tied to it helped to break down barriers more effectively than dialogue about individual rights and gay rights did," said Brown.

"When you broke it down to what is a family, the anti-marriage sticking point vanished. You speak in terms of adoption, of parenting, of being able to help someone you love when they are sick and economic issues like healthcare. Then bring in kids whose parents are gay or whose aunts or uncles are and you speak from their perspective. It's powerful," Brown said.

Another lesson came from talking with people in other progressive groups. "Sometimes we go out and talk about our issue without working with others on their issues," Brown said. "Being visible makes a difference. We are each more than just gay."

She remembered going to a town hall where the push back from the mostly anti-gay crowd was terrific. "I was getting nowhere with the crowd on presenting our side. We were ready to give up when a woman in the audience stood up with encouraging words. She remembered me from a community clean-up event and she said, 'I don't know about gay stuff, but I remember that woman who came in and cleaned up a park. I know she cared about our community. So if this is something that's important to her and helps her stay here than we should listen to what she needs,'" Brown

recalled.

She learned that responding to attacks with grace and humanity is more effective than defensive indignation. And she was able to teach others that even within the LGBT community there is a diversity that needs to be recognized. "There is an assumption when we're talking about gays that we're talking about suburban whites. That's not the case," she said. One stereotype that grated on her nerves was when others in the LGBT community would complain to her about the hate spread by the Black Baptist Churches and want to know her insight. Even though it's been years since she practiced, she felt compelled to say, "I don't know. I was raised Catholic."

Despite misunderstandings and conflicts, the group succeeded in presenting a solid public front in fighting the bigotry that had been sprung upon them. Overall Brown was proud of the effort. Her disappointment comes not from the voters, but from the divisions in the community that came about after.

"Afterwards we went back to our respective sandboxes. We're still operating the same way in some instances. There is a way to plan and manage things, but things also need to happen virally. There's a vitality to young people. They don't have that baggage or those power struggles that the people who went through this before keep carrying," said Brown.

If she could give any advice to the young people, Brown would tell them that, "they need a strategy. Don't close the door to those before you. Be open to hearing what they have to say because there are lessons to be learned. But also stand your ground and recognize what you bring to the table. Recognize your power."

Brown said that personally she is ready to step back and support the youth who are moving things forward and hopes that other established leaders will do the same. "This isn't 2004," she said. "There wasn't Twitter and Facebook. There wasn't all this support in the public and the media. And there is a whole generation without the same baggage. They have no idea what we went through, and they don't have it to weigh them down. They look at the world and say, 'Why not now?'"

How To Get Involved

Individuals and groups that want to be at the table as the marriage discussions are happening can contact Megh Hollowell at Affirmations at mhollowell@goaffirmations.org. Affirmations has been active with the Unity Partners and the Community Center Network and Hollowell is serving as the point person for organizing volunteers and referring them to other community centers and organizations to help. The Community Center partners all offer volunteer opportunities on the marriage issue and on educating Michigan residents about the challenges LGBT people face. Those interested in lobbying their legislators can learn from Equality Michigan, which is also part of the Unity Coalition.

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Creep of the Week

Diana Medley

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Not every teacher is able to find the courage to boldly declare that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students have no purpose in life and that their very existence is offensive to her.



But special education teacher Diana Medley at Sullivan High School

in Indiana is an exception. Especially if by “courage” we mean ignorance and bigotry, or, as the combination of the two is more commonly called, “dumbfuckery.”

Now, as I am sure you can imagine, the gays started it. All Medley and a few like-minded folks wanted was a homo-free prom but Sullivan High School wouldn't give it to them, metaphorically punching Jesus in the face by allowing same-sex couples not only to attend prom, but to participate in the Grand March, which I guess is some kind of prom parade or whatever but it doesn't even matter what it is because obviously gays shouldn't be allowed in it because GOD.

“We don't agree with it and it's offensive to us,” Medley told a local TV news reporter.

By “it” I'm pretty sure she's talking about homosexuality and since she and her cohort are all offended, they decided to make their own little prom in a church basement or something and make it very clear: NO HOMOS ALLOWED.

Besides being offended that people who are different than her exist, Medley has some very specific thoughts about gays and lesbians.

“I believe it was a choice that she made,” she told NBC 2 (who “she” is here is not clear, though it could be any lesbian. I think it's pretty safe to say

that they're all the same to Medley). “I don't believe that they were born that way. I think that life circumstances made them choose that. I think that God made everybody equal.”

Let's unpack that. Gay people were not born gay, they just choose to be gay to compensate for their terrible lives. And God made everybody equal. Except that Medley obviously is not interested in treating gay, lesbian, and bisexual students as equal to heterosexual students. So by “equal” I think she means “straight.” Which means that the queers have gone and “unequaled” themselves, making this whole thing their own damn fault.

And to think that Medley gets paid real taxpayer dollars to “educate” openly gay students.

“I have kids come to me because of their sexual preference, and they know I don't agree with it, but I care about you,” she said.

I'm pretty sure she's talking about homosexuality and since she and her cohort are all offended, they decided to make their own little prom in a church basement or something and make it very clear: NO HOMOS ALLOWED.

For the record, I would advise students not to go to Medley about your “sexual preference” because, for one, she doesn't seem to know that's not the same thing as sexual orientation. Though I doubt she cares. Secondly,

someone who thinks you're too icky to go to prom doesn't care about you.

If LGBT students need further proof of Medley's “caring,” check out what she says when the newscaster then asks if she thinks that gays have a purpose in life.

“I don't. I personally don't. I'm sorry. I just, I don't understand it. A gay student or adult or person isn't going to come up and make some change unless it's because they realize you know what, it was a choice and I'm choosing God,” said Medley.

Granted it's not the most articulate answer, and I think the words “I don't understand it” speak volumes, but the meaning is pretty clear. The only purpose Medley thinks homos have is to de-gay themselves in the name of God.

Oh, and also to ruin prom for the kids who matter.

Detroit Man Sentenced For Anti-Gay Hate Crime

DETROIT – Almost two years after Justin Alesna was brutally attacked in a convenience store, his attacker, Everett Dwayne Avery, 26, was sentenced to 18 months in prison to be followed by three years of supervised

“The amount of cruelty that was shown to me throughout this whole situation is beyond appalling.”

- Justin Alesna

release. Avery was convicted of committing a federal hate crime by assaulting Alesna because he is gay.

BTL reported the March 7, 2011 attack soon after it happened. At that time Alesna told BTL that Avery asked him to not stand too close to him while Alesna was standing in line and waiting to purchase cigarettes. Avery then started asking Alesna if he was “a fucking homo.” Alesna ignored him, purchased his cigarettes and went to leave when Avery stopped him and showed him a gun. Alesna said Avery then punched him in the face, fracturing his eye socket.

Ex-Corunna Teacher Says She Lost Job Over Gay Club

CORUNNA, Mich. (AP) – A former teacher is suing a central Michigan school district that did not renew her contract following a dispute over a poster raising awareness for the LGBT community.

The Argus-Press of Owosso reports Thursday that Brook Johnson filed the suit in federal court in Flint against the Corunna Public Schools and some current and former district officials.

The district says it's declining comment because

Alesna fought back and asked the cashier to call the police. The cashier did not call the police, but told the men to stop fighting.

“The amount of cruelty that was shown to me throughout this whole situation is beyond appalling,” Alesna said. “The fact that I was assaulted and asked to leave the crime scene. The fact that there were two other individuals besides myself and the clerk who did nothing but gawk and laugh the whole time this was going on. What happened to decency?”

Avery pled guilty to violating the federal Hate Crimes Protection Act on Aug. 29, 2012.

“Congress has made it clear that it is a crime to assault people solely on the basis of their sexual orientation,” said U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan Barbara McQuade. “Prosecutions under this law are important to ensure that all people in our community know that they have the full protection of the law.

“Hate-fueled incidents like this one have no place in a civilized society,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Justice Department is committed to using all the tools in our law enforcement arsenal, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to prosecute acts motivated by hate.”

officials haven't been served with the lawsuit.

Brook says she got negative evaluations because she was involved with a high school diversity club. Brook's contract expired in 2011.

Brook was the club's adviser in 2009 when the school board voted to remove a club poster from a school showcase. The board later allowed the poster to remain.

Grant Allows Affirmations Cyber Center Upgrade

FERNDALE – The new year is bringing changes to Affirmations Community Center. A grand re-opening event will take place on Feb. 15 to unveil the improvements. One of the most notable changes is the addition of 15 new computers in the cyber center area. A grant from the David Bohnett Foundation which provides funding, state-of-the-art technology and technical support, made these recent upgrades possible. The new computers will allow for additional programming and training courses going forward.

In addition, by leveraging a Building for the Future grant that provided matching funds, the center has replaced flooring in the most heavily used areas, using more durable and easily maintained materials.

“I believe the upgrades have made an incredible improvement. Ultimately, I believe center users will have a better experience by being in a more welcoming space,” said David Garcia, executive director.

The grand re-opening event will take place all day Friday and tours will be given every hour beginning at 10 a.m. by Garcia. Community members are also invited to a wine toast at 6 p.m. Beverages and snacks will be available throughout the day. Affirmations is located at 290 W. 9 Mile Rd. in Ferndale.

For more information contact Director of Communications Cassandra Varner at 248-398-7105 ext. 227 or email CVarner@GoAffirmations.org.

HIV Prevalence Predictions in Gay, Bi Men 'Staggering'

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING – If current infection trends continue unabated, the federal government estimates that today's 20-year-old men who have sex with men will face a 50 percent infection rate in 30 years - 70 percent for black men who have sex. Those numbers double the highest prevalence estimates during the height of the epidemic in the late 80s and early 90s experts say.

The government also says that the current cohort of 20 year old men who have sex with men has an overall prevalence today of 10 percent, while black men who have sex with men have a 20 percent prevalence.

The predictions were presented in a session at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's annual Creating Change Conference held in January in Atlanta. Greg Millett, an employee of the CDC assigned to the Office of National AIDS Policy at the White House, presented the numbers to a gathering of about 40 people, mostly from AIDS service organizations, during a three hour session on HIV in the men who have sex with men behavioral category.

Michigan AIDS advocates and LGBT leaders call the predictions "staggering" and "unconscionable."

The Michigan Department of Community Health, however, says it has known about the

predictions in one form or another since 2009, but did not share those numbers with AIDS groups or LGBT organizations.

"While MDCH has not directly shared this study with ASOs and LGBT leaders and organizations, we have used this information and the numbers to shape and prioritize our priorities, for community conversations, and to inform our community partners as has been evident by the agencies and the initiatives that are funded by MDCH that ASOs and LGBT organizations are providing in the respective jurisdictions to focus and target the LGBT community," said Angela Minicucci in an email.

She said the department does not share studies with the community when they are "made public by the institution publishing them."

Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of KICK which is an African American LGBT community agency in Detroit, said the numbers were troubling, but that the MDCH's failure to disclose them widely was an issue as well.

"I can't understand why it would be private particularly to those who provide services" Lipscomb said. "The more the information is withheld from people we provide services to the more people die. We know that when there is a lack of knowledge we perish."

AIDS Partnership Michigan Appoints Chief Executive Officer



Tom Verwest, president of the board of AIDS Partnership Michigan, has announced the appointment of William D. VanHemert to the position of chief executive officer effective March 4. VanHemert will succeed Barbara Murray, who is retiring after 24 years in the leadership position. He will become the 30 year old organization's third CEO.

VanHemert was employed at APM from 1993 to 1996. After moving to the western U.S., he served in positions with the Arizona Department of Health, New Arizona Family and United Behavioral Health in San Francisco. He returned to APM in 2009 and has most recently served as director of community mobilization

and development, including the development of APM's highly recognized social media campaign to increase HIV testing targeting young African American men in Detroit, Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

VanHemert holds a BS in Psychology from Central Michigan University and a Master of Social Work in Clinical Mental Health from Wayne State University.

AIDS Partnership Michigan, the state of Michigan's first incorporated AIDS service organization, provides total wrap around services in response to HIV/AIDS including operation of the Michigan HIV/STD Hotline, HIV counseling and testing, medical case management, community re-entry for the Michigan Department of Corrections and Wayne County jail, behavioral health services and early intervention services. Over 8,500 clients are served annually. The organization employs 26 full time staff and manages an annual operating budget of \$2.2 million.

Learn more at www.aidspartnership.org, on Facebook and at 1-800-872-2437.

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Re: Leon Panetta expands gay partners' benefits

"At the time of repeal, I committed to reviewing benefits that had not previously been available to same-sex partners based on existing law and policy. It is a matter of fundamental equity that we provide similar benefits to all of those men and women in uniform who serve their country. The department already provides a group of benefits that are member-designated. Today, I am pleased to announce that after a thorough and deliberate review, the department will extend additional benefits to same-sex partners of service members."

— Leon E. Panetta, Statement from Secretary of Defense

"All members of our armed forces provide the same service, make the same sacrifices, and take the same risks to protect our country – and the military, like many employers – would like to treat its people equally. But DOMA's gay exception means that the federal government, including the Pentagon, may not provide family protections to families or even respect married couples as married, if they are gay. The problem is not what the military and employers would like to do; it's that the law is tying the hands of employers and the military for no good reason."

—Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry

"Secretary Panetta's decision today answers the call President Obama issued in his inaugural address to complete our nation's journey toward equality, acknowledging the equal service and equal sacrifice of our gay and lesbian service members and their families. We thank him for getting us a few steps closer to full equality - steps that will substantively improve the quality of life of gay and lesbian military families"

—Allyson Robinson, OutServe-SLDN Executive Director

For more information on OutServe-SLDN, visit www.outserve-sldn.org.

It's February: Time for Love, Marriage And Equality



Viewpoint

OPINION BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

It's February; love's in the air, and apparently everyone is high on the Valentine's Day Kool-Aid.

You expect to be inundated with love stories, engagements and wedding photos but did you ever think you would see so many LGBTQ engagements and weddings?

I mean it's not just in traditional media but on social media and in local media as well.

Ellen DeGeneres/Portia de Rossi, Elton John/David Furnish, Cynthia Nixon/Christine Marinoni, George Takei/Brad Altman, Neil Patrick Harris/David Burtka, Rosie O'Donnell/Michelle Rounds and Jim Nabors/Stam Callawader are just a few of the celebrity couples whose nuptials have made headlines.

And these unions are being reported not as assaults on the "sanctity of marriage" but as a reason to celebrate far and wide. Did you see how many times ABC celebrated the marriage of Sam Champion to Rubem Robierb? They talked about it the entire weekend of the pair's nuptials.

With Maryland and Maine joining Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Washington and the District of Columbia, more and more LGBTQ brothers and sisters are following Beyonce's advice and "Putting a ring on it." I've received so many invitations that for 2013, I've had to add a new line to my personal budget for wedding gifts and travel. Amazing!

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with a reporter and talk about the marriage equality movement and the changes I've seen since 2004 when I first got involved fighting a discriminatory proposal in my home state of Michigan.

Unfortunately that proposal passed, enshrining discrimination into the state's constitution. It went beyond banning same-sex marriage and civil unions, and was interpreted by the Michigan Supreme Court to not allow public employers to grant domestic partnership benefits.

Then as now, I'm not looking for a wife. I've never had dreams of a big wedding, a church wedding or any kind of wedding for that matter. My mother got married in a yellow suit in her parent's living room about three months after meeting my dad. The story was steeped in romanticism but the reality of married life observed from this child's eye – well led me to the conclusion that, like the song goes, "I could do bad by myself."

But there was something about that first foray into the war for marriage equality that hit home. Not only were these opponents spreading lies and falsely vilifying my community, I realized that in many instances I was invisible as a gay American to my friends, family, co-workers, neighbors and

community.

Since those early days we, as a community, have done a lot to remove that invisibility and the public shift on gay marriage is the result of all that hard work. Even as I write this I know other states including Illinois are moving towards marriage equality.

A part of me is ready to go out and buy some dancing shoes for all those wedding receptions on the horizon but I'm still not ready to jump on the marriage band wagon.

Why you might ask? Because we still haven't had that real discussion about marriage that goes beyond the ring and the ceremony – the denial of the basic human rights.

I have dialogues on gay rights and marriage on several different sites and on the weekly blog radio program I co-host "Can We Talk For Real." I have been amazed by the diversity of feelings on marriage in the LGBTQ community.

Marriage is how we acknowledge our relationships, a showing of our personal commitment to the love of our life for the whole world to see. So how are we making marriage our own in our ceremonies, in our expectations and in our lives? Are we making it our own or buying into the industry?

I read a recent post where the woman had a laundry list for potential spouses which included not only income and education levels but also that her future spouse owned a car no more than five years old. Then there are the wedding planners/packages that for the right price can give you the best faux-heterosexual ceremony so authentic that even FOX News was fooled recently using a "wedding kiss" photo to accompany a piece about traditional gender roles that was actually of a same sex couple.

But this isn't what we've been fighting for, more like unintended consequences.

What we've been fighting for is equality under the law. Equality promised in the Constitution to protect citizens from discrimination from laws that treat them differently for no good reason. And let's

face it, there is no good reason to deny LGBTQ Americans marriage equality.

Protect the sanctity of marriage – seriously. Same sex marriage had nothing to do with Kim Kardashian's failed 72 day marriage, then getting pregnant without benefit of marriage by another man while still married to her 72-day wonder husband.

Marriage is an archaic but evolving institution that establishes the rights and obligations between spouses including at least 1,138 federal tangible benefits, protections, rights, and responsibilities that marriage brings couples and their children. Bottom line is if you want the benefits then you better put a ring on it.

But amidst our voices lifted in singing "Going to the Chapel" is another chorus of voices asking why; why must we go through the motions to provide basic human rights for our spouses and families?

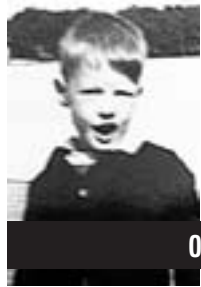
Chicago songstress C.C. Carter related how she had been dragged kicking and screaming to the altar to marry her spouse. It wasn't that she didn't love her wife. They have been together for years and no license or piece of paper could give them greater acknowledgement, recognition or validation. The issue for Carter was why she (or anyone) needed to get a license to provide what should be a basic human right for everyone – to provide for and protect our families.

In the end it's all about love. The love we have for each other. The love we have for our families. The love we have for equality and ultimately, the love we should have for one another to live in peace, safety and equality. Now wouldn't that be an amazing Valentine's gift to the world?

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



Lucy Van Pelt Goes Disco



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I'm spending several hours this week with 40 kids, the youngest three, the oldest 14. Each has a story about being or becoming aware that they are "different," had crushes on other boys, puppy loved other girls. Incipient same-sex attractions all.

Their stories are accompanied with photographs taken by adoring parents, nosey neighbors, intrigued friends, who in the long run provide support, rejection, bewilderment, and once in a while applause.

Each kid's awakening moment features in a new book, "Born This Way: Real Stories of Growing Up Gay," by Paul Vitagliano (Quirk Press, \$14.95). Vitagliano is a radio DJ, events promoter, self-styled "promosexual."

Presumably a big Lady Gaga fan.

"I started the BTW project to show young gay kids that they're not alone: many others have gone through everything they're experiencing now," says Vitagliano "We must share our stories and pay it forward for future generations. Being gay is as normal and natural as being straight."

"How could they not but know I was gay?" asks Dennis, now 38, of a picture of him treasure snapped for posterity at age 3, with his hands artsy on his hips, one knee a little too akimbo, in Vogue magazine high fashion style, not to set off gaydar alarms for today's readers.

Then there's Steven, age 4, looking every bit the little charmer in a blue baton-twirler's costume. His sister's. He says, "I don't remember wearing it, but I'm sure my mom thought it was harmless and funny. As early as this age, I loved feminine things: art, and playing doctor with my cute neighbors.

"Later I was in chorus and band, like many of us kids back then. I was the only boy in junior high to choose disco class over football."

Clarissa, age 4, born in the Bronx, 1969, is shown riding a Merry-go-round motorcycle. "I always wanted to be tough and dirty, and I would go to work with my dad the mechanic. My mom found a way to get me to wear dresses by making them herself, patterning them after Lucy Van Pelt of the Peanut's cartoon. I acknowledged Lucy's toughness, and I felt touch in those dresses too."

Not included in the book is someone very special to me: Bobby, age 5. The picture (see above) is taken at Lake Orion, Michigan. Bobby answers to the nickname given to him by his Uncle Jack: "Buzz." Bobby also learns early on to provide full title information should he be lost (or, kidnapped for ransom by a Buck Rogers movie serial villain): Charles Robert Bobby Alexander, Jr.

Bobby is an only child, which is OK with him, as there are plenty of kids in the apartment building where he lives. He is popular with girls, Betty, Joan, and Patsy, but enjoys playing baseball, kick-the-can, and What Time Is It, Mr. Fox? with Burton School classmates and neighborhood chums.

At age 13, Bobby who has magically become Al, is told by same-age, former kindergarten buddy, Charles Authier, "We better stop this, or we'll grow up to be, you know, queer." (I know what happened to one Charles. I wonder whatever happened to the other?)

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LGBT Catholics React To Pope's Resignation

BY CHUCK COLBERT

In a decision that surprised, if not shocked the one billion Roman Catholics worldwide, Pope Benedict XVI said on Monday that he was stepping down.

News of his resignation came during a meeting of Vatican cardinals. "After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry," Benedict said, according to the English language text of his remarks from Reuters.

Benedict's departure takes effect on Feb. 28, marking the first time in six centuries that a pontiff has resigned.

The 85-year-old pope spoke of his decision to resign as one of "great importance for the life of the Church."

A March conclave, a meeting of the College of Cardinals, will convene to elect the pope's successor, perhaps before Easter, March 31

Benedict XVI, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was elected pope on April 19, 2005.

From 1981 until his election, Ratzinger served as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), the church's doctrinal enforcement arm. In both roles as prefect and pontiff, he was a decidedly conservative theologian, crafting increasingly hardline doctrine against homosexuality.

Nevertheless, Benedict's resignation prompted measured reactions from some LGBT Catholics.

"I think the pope's resigning is one of the noblest things he had done in his papacy," said Ernest L. Camisa, secretary of Dignity San Francisco.

Another gay Catholic, Eugene

McMullan agreed. "I can only feel a profound sense of relief, gratitude and renewed hope on hearing the news that Pope Benedict has resigned," he said.

"This should be good news for everyone," added McMullan, who is a lead organizer with the advocacy group Catholics for Marriage Equality in California.

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, said

inclination" and "intrinsic moral evil" to explain "homosexual acts."

Those harsh words influenced recent 1990's editions of the Catholic Church's Catechism, calling gays to chastity, which in effect requires of them mandatory life-long celibacy as the only way to sexual morality.

Dignity San Francisco's Camisa took issue with the call to chastity. "To enforce a vow of celibacy or chastity

on gay people who have no choice in the matter of being gay is inhumane," he said.

McMullan went further. "The animus of Halloween Letter made homosexual orientation a special disposition to evil, almost a second original sin," he said.

Under Cardinal Ratzinger's tenure, the Vatican articulated its unambiguous opposition to same-sex marriage.

"There are absolutely no

grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar to or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and the family," he wrote in the June 2003 CDF document, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons."

"Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural law," Ratzinger explained.

The same 2003 document also denounced gay and lesbian couples who are parents. "Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children," Ratzinger wrote.

More recently, in his Jan. 7, 2013 "State of the World" address, Pope Benedict XVI spoke out against global efforts to extend civil-marriage rights to same-sex couples, naming same-sex marriage a threat to "human dignity and the future of humanity itself."

Boston-based Charles Martel, co-founder of Catholics for Marriage



Pope Benedict XVI. Photo: miqu77, Shutterstock.com

in a statement that while members of his organization "are praying for the future of the church and for the pope's health," they "are praying, too, for LGBT Catholics and their families and friends, whose lives were made more difficult living under Benedict's reign."

As DeBernardo noted, "For the last three decades, Benedict has been one of the main architect's of the Vatican's policies against LGBT people.

Based in Mount Rainier, Maryland, New Ways Ministry is a national gay-positive ministry of education, healing, reconciliation, and justice for lesbian and gay Catholics, families, and friends and the wider church.

It was under then Cardinal Ratzinger's leadership, for example, when the CDF issued a 1986 "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons."

LGBT Catholics often refer to the document as the "Halloween Letter" because of its October issue date.

The letter speaks of "objective disorder" to describe the "homosexual

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Equality, an advocacy organization, offered an assessment of the pope's marriage equality legacy.

"In terms of marriage, one of the things that Benedict has done is to speak about gay people in the language of being less than what God intended," said Martel. "The pope seemed incapable of recognizing that any ministry to gay people requires not merely respect, but to acknowledge a sense of wholeness in the person. That is a very sad legacy indeed."

The executive director of Medford-based DignityUSA, an LGBT Catholic advocacy organization, was even more pointed. "I think it would be difficult to think of a religious figure who has a more damaging legacy for LGBT people than Benedict," Marianne Duddy-Burke told the Boston Globe.

For years the Vatican has steadfastly stood against the use of condoms in the fight to stop the spread of HIV infection. During a 2009 trip to Africa, Benedict said condom use might even make the AIDS epidemic worse.

But in what appeared to be a slight relaxing of Church policy, the pope said that in the case of male prostitution, condom use might be acceptable.

"There can be single justified cases," Benedict said, "for example when a prostitute uses a condom, and this can be the first step toward a moralization, a first act of responsibility in developing anew an awareness of the fact that not everything is permissible and that we cannot do everything we want."

The pope's comments, reported by any number of mainstream media outlets in November 2010, came from a lengthy interview with a German journalist.

Not all Catholics agree Benedict XVI's departure is good news.

"I think not," said Phil Attey, a gay man and pro-equality Catholic activist and former executive and co-founder of Catholics for Equality.

He explained, "What it means to me is that the most hateful and mean spirited anti-gay pope in the history of the Catholic Church is so determined to continue his reign of terror beyond his life on earth, that he's going to orchestrate his succession, ensuring the next pope carries on his mission to demonize, marginalize, and oppress every gay man who comes out of the closet and demands to be treated as equals among God's children."

"In short, it's likely the next pope is even more hateful and mean spirited than this one," said Attey.

And yet for all the Vatican's anti-gay rhetoric over several decades, pro-LGBT Catholic advocacy organizations voiced hope.

"We pray the new pope will listen to, and know or get to know LGBT people, particularly those who have established loving and faithful households with children, and that he will encourage bishops to do likewise," said Mary Ellen and Casey Lopata, co-founders of Fortunate Families and parents of a gay son.

The Rochester, New York-based Fortunate Families is resource and networking ministry with Catholic parents of LGBT children.

For its part, the Catholic group Equally Blessed also voiced hope for a brighter future with a listening pope.

Equally Blessed is a coalition of four LGBT-friendly Catholic advocacy organizations, including DignityUSA, Fortunate Families, Call to Action, and New Ways Ministry.

"With the pope's impending resignation, the church has an opportunity to turn away from his oppressive policies toward LGBT Catholics, and their families and friends," the coalition said in a statement.

It continues, "We pray for a pope who is willing to listen to and learn from all of God's people. We pray for a pope who will realize that in promoting discrimination against LGBT people, the church inflicts pain on marginalized people, alienates the faithful, and lends moral credibility to reactionary political movements across the globe."



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Getting Creative

Gay Owned Mortgage Company Here To Help

BY JIM LARKIN

Peg Matthews knows it can be uncomfortable when gay and lesbian couples make one of life's biggest decisions – mortgaging their home – with an agent who either doesn't understand or, worse yet, doesn't condone their lifestyle.

Yet that's usually what they are forced to do when they go to a big bank or large mortgage company. That's not the case at Creative Capital, which Matthews recently re-opened near her home town of Saugatuck, at 2987 Blue Star Highway in Douglas. She believes it to be the only gay-owned mortgage broker in the state.

The small office with statewide service stresses personalized care to gay and lesbian clients, in the same manner that she and her own partner of 22 years would want.

"It's one of the biggest decisions you're going to make in your lifetime and it should be a happy occasion," said Matthews, who previously had a Creative Capital office in Royal Oak. "So you should be able to be yourself and be completely comfortable and open with the person providing the service, instead of wondering what he or she thinks of you.

"We shouldn't have to give our business to straight-owned businesses out of lack of choice and thankfully, when it comes to mortgages now we don't."

Matthews was a financial consultant to automobile dealerships before opening Creative Capital offices in suburban Detroit and Saugatuck in the late 1990s and continuing into the early 2000s, before the

bottom fell out of the mortgage business and Matthews went on to other pursuits.

But the rejuvenation of the real estate and mortgage market allowed her to re-enter the field and provide the specialized service she said gay people deserve.

"With us you can be perfectly honest instead of sitting there thinking what to say and what not to say," Matthews said. "Let's face it, a lot of bankers are very conservative and that's not

the kind of person most gay people feel comfortable dealing with."

She noted that those handling loans at major banks do not have to be licensed and operate instead under the umbrella license of the bank. Brokers like Creative Capital, however, have to have federal and state licensing. Her closing costs and interest rates are also usually lower than big banks, she added.

"Plus when you go into a bank you have to fit your scenario into their programs," she added. "I have the ability to customize programs to fit you."

Although located in Saugatuck, she can provide mortgages for people throughout the state. She has offices she can use in the metro Detroit area and title companies that can go directly to people to close their loans.

"With the Internet, overnight delivery and e-mail services, you don't even have to come into my office," she said. "I've done mortgages in Traverse City, the Upper Peninsula, all over Michigan."

You can contact Matthews at ccipeg@comcast.net and view her website at creativecapitalinc.com.



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The Tegan and Sara Interview



Quin Sisters On Pop Evolution and Pros Of Having A Lesbian Sibling

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

They've been on the verge of straight-up pop music for years, but Tegan and Sara, who just announced an opening gig for fun, on July 16 at Meadow Brook Music Festival, are going all in with "Heartthrob."

Don't think they're all happy and stuff, though.

"It's our most heartbreaking record," Tegan reassures. "It's a great record for people who loved our past music. It's just that they have

to get past the sound."

The sound she's referring to was captured in all its heavenly bliss when their seventh album's first single, "Closer," instantly aligned itself with some of the best pop songs of the mid '90s. We revisited that defining era in music – and even before then, when the girls were hanging New Kids on the Block posters in their bedroom – during our new interview with the Quin sisters.

Are your house parties anything like the one in

the video for "Closer"?

Sara: We were reimagining our teen years when we were putting this video together. In middle school and high school, we loved house parties. Our house parties then would've been an R-rated version of this. We were fairly disgusting and doing things that I would be embarrassed to have on camera. I'm like an old woman now. A house party for me now means more than two people over and me going to the store to get wine. (Laughs)

Tegan: Our house parties have gotten quite a bit less interesting than they were when we were younger. I still think we can throw down a pretty mean shindig, but we don't generally do karaoke. And I've never had a costume party.

"Closer" could really be the theme song to somebody's first kiss. What songs remind you of your first?

Sara: There's something about Björk, because this girl I had a crush on loved

("Post"), and if I hear it now I'm completely transported back to high school. I never could have told her that I felt something for her, that I had a crush, so whenever I hear any songs off of "Post" I immediately go there.

Tegan: I remember discovering Ani DiFranco and really embracing the side of me that liked girls. I was also really into Ace of Base and I would sit in my parents' huge Jacuzzi tub in their bathroom and fill up the tub after school and sit in it and talk on the phone (with my friends) and listen to that Ace of Base record over and over again. It's so weird that I was naked the whole time. (Laughs)

Was your first kiss with a boy?

Tegan: My first kiss was with a boy. If anything, I loved having boyfriends because I could talk about how much I liked girls with them all the time. (Laughs) In my teen years I dated boys but I didn't hate it. I wasn't like, "Oh, gross." And then I kissed a girl and was like, "One's not right and one is definitely awesome."

For this album you really immersed yourself in '80s and '90s pop music. What was the first pop album you owned?

Sara: My first choice as a child was New Kids on the Block. We had all the records, sleeping bags and posters. Everything you could possibly have. Then I branched into punk, grunge, rock and indie rock. It's only recently, in the last six or seven years, that I've gotten back into what I would now classify as pop music.

Tegan: New Kids on the Block was huge for us. That first cassette tape that came out in 1986 was, besides children's music, the first music that we picked ourselves. It was very empowering. Around that same time, I remember really getting excited about Michael Jackson, because he was on the radio all the time. In sixth and seventh grade it was Janet Jackson, Paula Abdul and Ace of Base. I think our parents were slightly horrified because we grew up with U2 and Bruce Springsteen, so we were much more blue-collar than that. Then came dance music – as much as we were total punks and really into hardcore music, we were really into dance music, too. And then we got into Nirvana and we'd go to raves on the weekend. We were very confusing. (Laughs)

Why didn't a full-on pop album come before this one? Are you just at a point in your career where you don't really care what people think?

Sara: We've been around now for 13 years, and you almost do stop caring what people think. If anything, you try to stop caring because you think to yourself, "We made some of our best music when we didn't have an audience. We didn't think anybody cared about us. So maybe it's best to go back to when you're trying to excite yourself and the band, and ultimately people will gravitate toward that."

Tegan: I think we were self-conscious. We didn't think we could just jump right in, and I'm so glad we didn't. I think we would've

alienated our audience – and I also think we would've just alienated ourselves from our genre, as well. We were so indie rock that if, all of sudden, we made a pop record, they would've been like, "What the fuck?" This gradual evolution has been necessary. I don't think we would've existed if we had tried to do it differently.

Did you worry about the hipsters who can't really appreciate anything beyond that angsty indie rock?

Tegan: No. It's not necessarily hipsters, but there is a certain type of person who is really interested in what's cool and being hip, but they don't actually buy records. So when we sat down to make this record with Greg Kurstin, we talked about our fears. He said, "Don't worry about your fans. You wrote great songs. Who cares if you put a bunch of keyboards on it? That is what you're listening to; it's what you're inspired by. Embrace that part of yourself and don't worry."

"Heartthrob" is that record where I just want people who love *that* record. We'll take anybody. I don't really care. If people from the dance world like it, great. If people from the indie world like it, great. If it's those people who like Lady Gaga and Katy Perry, that's fine, too.

Sara, feeling isolated within the queer community and not having LGBT role models is what inspired your song "I'm Not Your Hero." But you had Tegan. Most people would think that would be the best kind of support. Is that not the case?

Sara: Certainly having Tegan in my life has meant that I feel inherently supported, because I have someone who is like me and who is going through a lot of the same experiences I am. My life would be entirely different if Tegan were straight. I've always had this person who reflects, for good and for bad, so much of me. We look the same, and we enjoy so many of the same things and have so many of the same ideas about the world. We have this band and we also share this culture and identity of being queer.

I can say all that now as an adult in my 30s, when I've built a whole language for myself around that identity – but when I was 15, 16, 17, I didn't have any of that. In fact, I had no idea if I was really gay or if Tegan was gay. I didn't understand any of that. I was astoundingly confused and blind about what was really going on, and there was lots of loneliness in that.

Talking about feeling isolated within the queer community is so hard. It's hard enough when you just sort of exist within a community and sometimes you feel like they're actually not representative of you or like that's all you have. It's complex, and there was a time in my life where I felt all of those things. It gets even more complex when you are a public person and now you represent both people. You feel sometimes there's a burden there, and sometimes you feel proud and other times you feel like everybody is mad at you because you're not saying the things they would say. It's complicated.

See Tegan and Sara, page 22

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The OutField

Philippe Kahn: A Role Model For All

BY DAN WOOG

As a volunteer assistant wrestling coach, Philippe Kahn had an easy relationship with the athletes at South High School in Torrance, Cali. They respected his talents, but like teenagers everywhere, they were wrapped up in their own lives.

Occasionally though, they'd ask about his wrestling career. Where, for example, was he competing now?

"I was honest," Kahn says. "Still, I'd fudge things. I'd say, 'Cologne,' instead of 'The Gay Games in Cologne.' But kids aren't stupid. They have access to Google. You can't conceal something like that."

One day after practice, a freshman yelled across the crowded locker room: "Hey, coach. Are you gay?"

Kahn responded, "Sorry to disappoint you, but I already have a boyfriend. You're out of luck."

Most wrestlers laughed, defusing the situation. Kahn followed up: "See you tomorrow."

"No you won't," the ninth grader replied.

The reason, Kahn learned later, was that the boy was leaving on vacation. At the moment though, his disappearance seemed ominous.

"He was a smart kid. He was testing the limits," Kahn says.

The assistant coach was already out to the rest of the staff. "I'm upfront," he explains. "I don't lie, deny or misrepresent who I am." Some of the older wrestlers already knew too. They didn't care.

Part of their nonchalance was generational. Teenagers today – even athletes – know far more about gay issues than their parents, even their older siblings. They have LGBT friends. They see out gay people on the news, in the media, and (finally) the athletic world. To many teens, homosexuality is a non-issue.

Part of the wrestlers' ease with Kahn is because of their activity. Wrestling, the coach notes, is "a minority sport."

“He’s a true role model, showing that being gay is far less important than being a strong wrestler, and an even stronger person.”

There is little glamour, and plenty of drudgery. Crowds are small. Friends and family members often treat wrestling with disdain. "Why do you want to roll around on a mat with another guy?" they wonder – and ask aloud.

Wrestlers are passionate. They love the sport's intense physical and mental demands, its one-on-one competition, the self-confidence it breeds. They revel in being part of a misunderstood minority. They overcome their own doubts, and the questions of others. They learn to laugh when someone calls it a "gay sport."

In that, his South High charges were no different from Kahn. He discovered wrestling at age 12 in Florida, and was immediately hooked. "The intensity was amazing," he recalls. "I hadn't done well in team sports. But I liked being on a wrestling team. At that age, that's so important."

It was especially important because, even then, Kahn knew he was gay. He did not look or act "obviously" gay, he says, so he was spared harassment. But as a 140- and 145-pound high school wrestler, he was deep in the closet.

The University of Florida did not have intercollegiate wrestling, so he competed on a club team. Kahn graduated with a degree in journalism and telecommunications, then worked as a news anchor at stations in Florida, Oklahoma and Texas.

Ad dollars dried up after 9/11, though, and after moving to California he became a car salesman. He began with Mini Coopers; soon, he sold BMWs.

But Kahn never lost his love for wrestling. By then totally out of the closet, he found Gene Dermody – the founder of a gay wrestling club in San Francisco, and former president of the

Federation of Gay Games. Through Dermody, Kahn learned of gay wrestling organizations in Southern California, where he lived.

He trained for the Gay Games with the Southbay Wrestling Academy, a straight club. Their connection with South High led to Kahn's coaching career.

In the beginning, he was "standoffish" with the high school athletes. "It was still all about me," he says. "I was training and competing. I had my own baggage about coaching kids. I worried about things like the perceptions of other people."

But the more time he spent with teenagers, the more he realized they didn't care he was gay. And the more he worked with the South athletes, the more he understood the unique role he could play.

He was a role model to the gay wrestlers – without knowing who they were. Yet with 70 student-athletes in the program, Kahn says, "the statistics say they're there."

He was a role model to the straight ones too. They ask Kahn questions about life – college, relationships, etc. – that have nothing to do with sexuality. He's gratified by the respect they show him, and inspired by their maturity.

Philippe Kahn returns that trust and respect. He's a true role model, showing that being gay is far less important than being a strong wrestler, and an even stronger person.

On and off the mat.

Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach and gay activist. His latest book is "We Kick Balls: True Stories from the Youth Soccer Wars." He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.

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► Tegan and Sara

Continued from p. 17

Is it a double-edged sword to talk about being lesbians because you care about the gay rights movement but also because you just want to be musicians?

Tegan: I won't deny that there have been times in the last 12 years that I wish we never said we were gay. It overshadows the music, for sure. But honestly, and without coming off cheesy, every single day right now it feels like I run into someone who tells me a story about them or someone they know or their kids where they found comfort in that we're different and we're outspoken, whether it's because we're gay or because we're women or because we have funny haircuts. (Laughs)

There seems to be people finding incredible comfort and inspiration and empowerment in who we are. We've had people be like, "Oh, they're gay" or "Oh, that's gay music" or "I don't like gay people," but we gain so much from being out that it kind of neutralizes that. Like, I don't care. There have been moments where it's been dark, where someone is really homophobic, and I just wanna, like, run away and hide. Instead I just pick up a 2-by-4, metaphorically speaking, and bash through it and keep getting up on stage and being proud of who we are.

I know so many people who are closeted, and I make fun of them. I'm like, "You're so ridiculous. What career are you protecting? You're supposed to be selling your art. You're supposed to be projecting this image, and you're just clouding your image because you are not proud of who you are." You have to be proud. In the end, who cares if I was cool or not. Did I make change? Did I help the world? That should be more important.

What's more challenging: growing up gay or a twin?

Sara: I would say being gay. I had no other experience to compare it to. I always had a best friend. I always felt like I had someone who was someone I could check in with. We always had each other. But I think being gay is so complex and I felt incredibly isolated in that, in not understanding my identity. The world at large

is projecting an image of heteronormativity all the time, and you're thinking, "I'm not like that. I don't behave like that."

Tegan: Being a twin, because we didn't come out until we were almost out of high school. I didn't feel weird about being gay, because we had gay friends and we had a really alternative group of friends and my mom was a social worker. Being a twin and just always being grouped together – always having to share the same stories, the same friends, everything – it was so hard. That was way harder.

If you're having a disagreement in the studio, who wins that battle?

Tegan: It depends on who wrote the song. If it's Sara's song and she disagrees with me, she ultimately has veto power – which is annoying, because a lot of times I'm right. (Laughs)

Sara: We're fairly democratic in the studio. We've never really had a huge blowout over a decision about a song in the studio. We've had blowouts about a lot of things, but it's not usually like, "Hey, I think this guitar should be like this."

What's your biggest pet peeve about each other?

Sara: She's incredibly stubborn, and there's this impulsive go-for-it attitude – and sometimes that drives me crazy when it seems like it's going against me. But when it's in terms of bringing us to the next level, I love that confidence and bold-headed stubbornness. That's when I think, "Yes, go for it" – as long as it's not directed at me! (Laughs)

Tegan: It would take me 24 hours to tell you all my pet peeves. We've been doing a lot of vocal work – lots of warming up and warming down – but she doesn't warm up and warm down in her space or on her time; she does it right in the middle of the dressing room while we're trying to talk before we go on stage. It makes me wanna tackle her.

Have you tackled her?

Tegan: When we were young. I haven't physically attacked her in probably, like, 15 years. (Laughs)

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Hear Me Out BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lisa Loeb, Justin Bieber



Lisa Loeb, 'No Fairy Tale'

Lisa Loeb will forever be defined as an artist of a bygone decade. (Boy, reality *does* bite.) But it's not like she doesn't already know this; "The '90s" is a hand-clappy/ooh-ooh pop song off her seventh studio album that fondly reminisces on her career-high – when the ubiquitous "Stay (I Missed You)" became an MTV mainstay – and also asserts that she's ready to move on from those glory days. "Sure, I liked it then, but I don't want to go back," she sings, suggesting that popularity is overrated and that this project is a new start for the singer-songwriter. Because it's her first album of non-children's music since 2004's "The Way It Really Is," it is. Otherwise, this is the same geeky girl singing the same girly song. Produced by Loeb and New Found Glory's Chad Gilbert, "No Fairy Tale" revels in pure '90s nostalgia (so much for leaving that decade behind). It's also a sad reminder as to why "Stay" was Loeb's only major hit. The songs are stuck in retro mode, sounding like half-baked demos with elementary arrangements and just a few grabby hooks; not to mention, her writing – seemingly culled from somewhat cleaned-up diary entries – is void of any soul and spirit. Some of it is truly dreadful (read: "It's OK to show them that you're well ... if they can't take it, they can go to hell"). "A Hot Moment," one of two songs

written by Tegan and Sara, isn't bad, but you can't help imagining what the twins could've done with this on their own. The title track almost has enough edge to sound like a good Green Day song, and the heartfelt apology "Ami, I'm Sorry" is a throwback to her girl-with-guitar days. Those days when her life was a fairy tale. And it was, but even princesses can't be pretty forever. *Grade: C-*



Justin Bieber, 'Believe Acoustic'

Justin Bieber's not just stripping down to his boxer briefs like he recently did in Miami. The 18-year-old's getting sonically naked on this set of acoustic tracks from "Believe," his grown-up third studio album released last year. This lo-fi vibe might show off his passionately maturing voice, but, without a surging dance beat to distract you, it also spotlights the silliness of his still-boy lyrics. I mean, did we really need an acoustic guitar version of "Beauty and a Beat," sans Nicki Minaj? Hasn't the world suffered enough? "As Long As You Love Me" would seem just as ridiculous – seriously, some of those come-ons are straight-up cheese – if it weren't for his

nimble flow when he takes on the Big Sean part. "Boyfriend," paired with just some gentle strumming, is pretty damn sexy as it slinks about into an almost hypnotic state. It actually almost works better than the original, and not just because it sounds like Bieber is right there, singing to you. Two of the three new "acoustic" songs aren't bad ("I Would," a pick-me-up, doesn't follow the acoustic theme), but "Nothing Like Us" is a clear standout – one of his most tender confessionals and a song that could really only be about one person: Selena Gomez. He wrote it, and it's just piano and his sad, sad voice. If Biebs hadn't already proved that he's growing up with the original "Believe" release, he does so here, in just a few minutes of ripened woe. Which answers a very important question: He must be getting hair down there. *Grade: B-*

Also Out



Emmy Rossum, 'Sentimental Journey'

With the release of her 2007 debut, singer-actress Emmy Rossum seemed ready to turn pop music on its head. Her old soul, though, had different plans. Six years later and the "Shameless" actress is slipping back to the mid-1900s, capturing the vintage sounds of cabaret, ragtime and Broadway for this DIY classic-covers concept album. It's a direction that fits Rossum's refined opera-trained voice; "I'll Be With You in Apple Blossom Time" is an understated beauty, and her exquisite "Autumn Leaves" could fool people into thinking it's the '50s all over again.



Swing Out Sister, 'Private View'

Andy Connell and Corinne Drewery know how to go all out for an anniversary. They mark 25 years in music – their debut, "It's Better to Travel," dropped in 1987 – with a true must-have for fans of the chill-pop duo: a package that includes a CD of reimagined classics and rare gems, an all-access live-concert DVD and a glossy photo book. The "Fabulous Party Mix" handle on one of their biggest hits, "Breakout," is a sly bit of sarcasm: In its reincarnation, the song is a jazzy living-room version of the celebratory original. Cheers to that – and to another 25 years.

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 14

Free HIV Testing 5 p.m. Free, anonymous HIV testing is available at S3 Safe Sex Store every other Thursday until 9 p.m. Testing is performed by HARC staff. Call to schedule an appointment, but walk-ins are more than welcome. S3 Safe Sex Store and HIV/AIDS Resource Center, 1209 S. University, Ann Arbor. 734-741-1434. Info@bak-inc.com S3safesexstore.com

Men's Film Group 7 p.m. Meets every Thursday at Affirmations. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. 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. Youth@KGLRC.org Kglrc.org

Friday, Feb. 15

Love Hangover 6 p.m. Affirmations Youth Program transforms into club ICE for a Love Hangover party. Open exclusively to youth under 21 for dancing, hanging out and meeting new friends. Non-alcoholic beverages provided. Club ICE, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Annual Valentine's Dance 7 p.m. To benefit the GLBT Scholarship Fund. Music, dancing, open bar, family style dinner, dessert, silent auction, 50/50 raffle. Tickets: \$50 in advance, \$55 at the door. The Forum Foundation, 26601 Ryan Road, Warren. 248-573-9932. TheForumFoundation.org

Bisexual Peer Group 7 p.m. Our group meets monthly on the third Friday & discussion relates to bisexual identity. Building is handicap accessible using ramp to rear entrance. Bisexual Peer Group, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. Bipriedannarbor@gmail.com Facebook.com/groups/110918256984/

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: The Black American Experience: Famous Human Rights Crusaders; Two women who stepped up and spoke out against injustice are the inspirational subjects of this installment in the series that celebrates the achievements of prominent black men and women in American history. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org/

Saturday, Feb. 16

Unstuck: Reviving the Movement for Social Justice, Human Dignity and the Environment 12 p.m. The gathering will bring together activist, academic, and faith-based communities for a public conversation on how to successfully address the profound challenges of growing social inequality, mass incarceration, sustainable economic development, global warming, and a culture that still struggles to embrace difference. The influential social critic Dr. Cornel West and internationally renowned preacher, The Rev. James Forbes, will be the keynote speaker along side UAW President Bob King, The Rev. Selma Massey, Prof. Bunyan Bryant, human rights lawyer Deborah Labelle, Prof. Ahmad Rahman, Prof. Mary Summers and others. Ann Arbor Faith Groups, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Brownpapertickets.com/event/304212

Sunday, Feb. 17

PFLAG Ann Arbor Meeting 2 p.m. Third Sunday of every month. Attendees may park in the back of St. Andrews Episcopal Church. Support group and monthly speaker at each meeting. PFLAG Ann Arbor, 306 N. Division

St., Ann Arbor. President@PFLAGAA.org Pflagaa.org

PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting 2 p.m. Midland, Bay City and Saginaw area PFLAG. Meets the third Sunday of every month. Offering support, education and advocacy for LGBT individuals and families with group and monthly speaker at each meeting. PFLAG Tri-Cities, 2525 Hemmeter Road, Saginaw. 989-941-1458. Pflag-mbs.org

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Discussion Group with facilitator. LGBTQI (and allies) 35 and over, join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. Topic: What would you do illegally if you know you would not get caught? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., Royal Oak. 248-981-4227. MarciLWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, Feb. 18

One Voice Chorus 7 p.m. LGBT Choral group. Meets every Monday. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

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

Tuesday, Feb. 19

PFLAG Family Reunion Detroit Chapter 7 p.m. PFLAG Family Reunion Detroit Chapter for People of Color meets the third Tuesday of every month. Provides a safe space for those who are dealing with the joys and challenges related to the coming out process of their family members. All are welcome, but this chapter specifically focuses on people of color in the City of Detroit and the close surrounding suburbs. PFLAG Family Reunion Detroit Chapter, 7707 West Outer Dr., Detroit. 313-286-8572. Info@pflag-fr-detroit.org Pflag-fr-detroit.org

St Mary's Lesbian and Gay Outreach Ministry 7 p.m. Affirming ministry teaching LGBT Catholics to reconcile faith with orientation. A safe space for discussion and prayer. Meets the third Tuesday of every month. St. Mary's Student Parish, 331 Thompson St., Ann Arbor. Thies@Umich.edu

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

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

Wednesday, Feb. 20

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

Co-Gender Rap Discussion 6 p.m. Light refreshments and good fellowship between men and women, young and seasoned. Meets every third Wednesday of the month. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. 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

JGN Open Board Meeting 7 p.m. Jewish Gay Network, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. 248-432-5661. JGNMI.org

Transgender SOS 7 p.m. A safe space for spouses, partners, family and friends of transgender people. Ages 18 and up. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

P.L.U.S. Youth Group 9 p.m. For Middle and High school age youth who enjoy socializing with people their own age, going through the same issues as they. Meets every Wednesday. The Lesbian and Gay Community Network, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. 616-458-3511. Grlabt.org/calendar/



Editor's Pick

Webster's Dictionary defines a "rabbit hole" as "a bizarre or difficult state or situation." In playwright David Lindsay-Abaire's "Rabbit Hole," opening Feb. 15 at the Farmington Players Barn Theater, a couple struggles to put their lives back together after the accidental death of their child. As they battle to return to "normal" and reunite as a couple, each copes with the tragedy in very different and often conflicting ways.

While the play is a poignant drama about loss and reconciliation, it is not about the death of a child, according to director Brian Tupper. Instead, he says it explores "the way the parents and loved ones grieve the loss. It's an examination of the healing process for those whose life carries on."

"Rabbit Hole" runs Feb. 15 to March 2 at the Barn Theater, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, in Farmington Hills. Tickets (\$4-\$16) are available at the box office at 248-553-2955.

Thursday, Feb. 21

Free HIV Testing with S3 and HARC 5 p.m. Free and confidential HIV testing provided by HIV/AIDS Resource Center at S3 Safe Sex Store. Call ahead to schedule an appointment, or simply walk-in. Appointments take approximately 20-30 minutes. Testing is provided the first and third Thursday of the month at S3. S3 Safe Sex Store and HIV/AIDS Resource Center, 1209 S. University, Ann Arbor. 734-741-1434. S3safesexstore.com

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

Livingston County PFLAG Meeting 7 p.m. Meets the third Thursday of every month. Please park behind the church, use the handicapped entrance, and follow the signs to Room 127. All are welcome! Livingston County PFLAG, 400 E. Grand River Ave., Brighton. 517-548-0839. LivingstonPFLAG@aol.com Facebook.com/pages/Livingston-County-PFLAG

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

Friday, Feb. 22

Polyqueer Womens Group 7 p.m. Open meeting to lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women who are polyamorous or curious about women-centered polyamory. Meets the last Friday of the month. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. PolyLezzie@yahoo.com JimToyCenter.org

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: North Country; Based on an inspiring real-life event that took place in the 1970s, North Country stars Charlize Theron in another low-glamour but high-impact role as Josey Aimes, one of only a handful of women working in the Minnesota iron mines. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org/

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Beethoven's Ninth" Beethoven's Selections from the Creatures of Prometheus and Symphony No. 9. Choral. Tickets: \$15. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 21 - Feb. 24. 313-576-5111. DSO.org

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "Chamber Series: Tuba and 'Bones!'" Featuring works by Dvorak and Faure on trombone, tuba, euphonium and piano. Tickets: \$10-15. Molly Grove Chapel, 510 W. Ottawa St., Lansing. 3 p.m. Feb. 17. 517-487-5001. LansingSymphony.org

CONCERTS

Caesars Windsor "Paul Anka" One of the most popular teen idols of the late '50s and an accomplished Juno award-winning singer, Anka is known for his hit songs "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" and "Having my Baby". His incredible songwriting skills have allowed him to collaborate with a variety of music's biggest stars including Frank Sinatra, Patti LaBelle and Celine Dion. Rock Swings, one of his most recent albums, made Top 10 in the UK and hit No. 2 on Billboard's Top Jazz Albums chart, proof that Anka is widely appreciated for both his new music and his classic hits. Tickets: \$45+. Caesars Windsor, 377 E. Riverside Dr., Windsor. 9 p.m. Feb. 16. 800-991-7777. CaesarsWindsor.com

2980. RoyalOakMusicTheatre.com

The Ark "My Folky Valentine" With Annie & Rod Capps and more. Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 14. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Ark "Suzanne Vega" Tickets: \$40. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 23. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

The Ark "Brian Vander Ark & Pat McGee" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 20. 734-761-1800. TheArk.org

Wharton Center for the Performing Arts "Ladysmith Black Mambazo" For over forty years, the voices of Ladysmith Black Mambazo have blended the intricate rhythms and harmonies of their native South African musical traditions with the sounds and sentiments of Christian gospel music. The result is a musical and spiritual mix that touches a worldwide audience. Tickets: \$25-38. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 20. 800-WHARTON. WhartonCenter.com

FILM & VIDEO

Flint Institute of Arts "Trishna" Freida Pinto, best known for Slumdog Millionaire, stars in a visually stunning drama, derived from Thomas Hardy's classic novel Tess of the d'Urbervilles, about the son of a British property developer and the daughter of an auto rickshaw owner from India. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Feb. 15 - Feb. 17. Flintarts.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "2013 Academy Award Nominated Short Films" A ticket to a satisfying banquet of this year's Oscar nominated animated and live-action shorts - as well as an opportunity to predict the winners before the Oscars are handed out. Detroit Film Theater, 5200 Woodward Ave, Detroit. Feb. 1 - Feb. 17. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Catered Affair - A New Musical A 2nd Stage production. \$16. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Feb. 22 - March 10. 248-541-6430. Stagecrafters.org

A Song for Coretta \$5-10. Center Stage Jackson at Kiesel Auditorium at Middle School at Parkside, 2400 Fourth St., Jackson. Feb. 15 - 24. 517-414-8652. CenterStageJackson.org

Cinderella, Kids \$5-20. The Crosswell Opera House, 129 E. Maumee St., Adrian. Through Feb. 17. 517-264-SHOW. Crosswell.org

Hilarious Chekhov: The Bear and The Proposal \$12. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 15 - 17. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org

Rabbit Hole \$14-16. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Feb. 15 - March 2. 248-553-2955. FarmingtonPlayers.org

Shakespeare in Hollywood \$11-12. The Twin City Players, 600 W. Glenford Road, St. Joseph. Through Feb. 17. 269-429-0400. TwinCityPlayers.org

Slueth \$8-14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Feb. 14 - 24. 517-482-5700. Riverwalktheatre.com

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) \$17-19. Spotlight Players at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Feb. 15 - 24. 734-394-5300. SpotlightPlayersMI.org

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Communicating Doors \$5-20. The University Theatre at Williams Theatre, Gilmore Theatre Complex, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 17. 269-387-0722. WMUTheatre.com

See Happenings, page 27

Detroit Mercy Theatre's 'Wings' Soars

BY JOHN QUINN

"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." Joni Mitchell sang that line in "Big Yellow Taxi." Few things will hammer her observation home like the sudden onset of debilitation. In Arthur Kopit's poetic "Wings," stroke victim Emily Stilson ponders what's gone – independence, communication, fundamental balance.

Balance is key to understanding Emily's struggle with panic and paranoia in this compelling one act, performed by The University of Detroit Mercy Theatre Company. Emily had been a daredevil, a "wing walker," performing death-defying stunts on the upper wing of a biplane. The stroke paralyzes her right side and damages her speech center. Confined in a wheelchair, Emily has also developed "aphasia." She has lost the linkage between thought and speech. Her frustrating attempts to talk to her rehabilitation experts result in gibberish. Can she, to crib another line from pop music, "take these broken wings and learn to fly" – again?

Although "Wings" made Kopit a Pulitzer Prize finalist and garnered a Tony nomination in 1978, originally it was a radio play for the NPR drama project, "Earplay." That context illuminates this production's staging. Melinda Pasha's scenic design is stark, an empty stage upon which set pieces appear only when needed. It is backed by a reflective screen that reflects Rudy Schuepbach's somber mood lighting. The intimate scenes are played in pools of light, and the focus is literally on Emily, since she is onstage for almost the entire show. Also noteworthy is sound designer Mathew Lira's contribution. Not only is Emily's experience sparked by random noises and fragments of music, the sound track reflects her inner monologue, which is so different from what she can articulate.

It takes a rare actor to pull this complex performance together, and director David L. Regal turned to associate guest artist Melissa Beckwith. Without gesture or blocking available, she conveys emotion by subtle



Melissa Beckwith gives a striking performance in "Wings." Photo: Greg Grobis

PREVIEW

Wings

University of Detroit Mercy Theatre
Company at Marygrove College Theatre,
8425 W. McNichols Road, Detroit. 8 p.m.
Friday-Saturday & 2 p.m. Sunday through
Feb. 17. 80 minutes; no intermission. \$10-
20. 313-993-3270.

<http://Theatre.UDMercy.edu>


expression and convincing delivery of the verbal nonsense that is all Emily has left.

Her performance is striking.

The Theatre Company provides drama students with the opportunity to work with professional directors and associate guest artists. It's an advantage that should be seized for all it's worth. Because this was originally a radio play, scenes are justifiably static and voice is



paramount in defining character. Given how pivotal Emily Stilson is, this is the opportunity for the supporting players to give us some unique characters. They need only follow the lead of the admirable Dr. Arthur J. Beer. In what amounts to a cameo as Mr. Brownstein, he projects a fully developed character while working under the burden of an assumed speech impediment. Beckwith and Beer, along with Joel Frazee, turn a long scene of speech therapy into a gentle comic gem.


"Wings" is a thought-provoking theatrical event, contemplation on the strength of the human spirit. In the end, the message is not, "be thankful for what you've got," but "where there's a will, there's a way." That's not a bad lesson to take away from the theater.



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Classifieds

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

- Ann Arbor-Friday**
7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.
- 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 Pincrest. 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, Odd Fellow's Hall, 830 S Monroe St Closed/Discussion.

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AL-ANON MEETINGS

- Diversity Wednesday Al-Anon Family Group**
Wednesday 8pm
St. Luke's Parrish Hall (in basement)
Lewiston & Livernois, Ferndale MI
Closed Meeting
- Go After Your Serenity (G.A.Y.S.) Al-Anon Family Group**
Saturday's 8pm
Drayton Ave. Presbyterian Church (in basement)
Pincrest & Drayton, Ferndale
Closed Meeting

113 ANNOUNCEMENTS - OPPORTUNITIES

- Actors Wanted for Adodi Detroit**
Looking for black male actors/singers ages 18-60, for, Fighting Words, a gay themed program to be presented at the Adodi Spring Retreat in April. 1-810-348-6098 Ask for Sidney
- 428 PROF. SERVICES - MASSAGE**
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Solution to puzzle from page 28



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Editor's Pick

Here's your ticket to a satisfying banquet of this year's Oscar nominated shorts – in both the animated and live-action categories – as well as your opportunity to predict the winners before the Oscars are handed out on Feb. 24.

The short-film nominees are traditionally among the year's most creative and surprising films of any kind,

yet they're also the most difficult to find. This month, the Detroit Institute of Arts presents them in one eye-popping program, with a brief intermission between the animated and live-action categories. The animated portion of this year's program (shown first) is relatively family-friendly, though the live-action shorts are recommended for ages 17 and up. This year's total running time is approximately three hours and ten minutes.

Nominated films include "Maggie Simpson in 'The Longest Daycare,'" "Adam & Dog," "Paperman," "Death of a Shadow" and several more. Tickets are available for Feb. 15, 16 and 17 and advance tickets are highly recommended. For more information go to www.DIA.org

▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 24

The Arabian Nights \$12-15. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 17. 313-577-2960. Bonstelle.com

The Laramie Project U-M Dept. of Musical Theatre Studio Production at Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin, Ann Arbor. Feb. 21 - 24. 734-764-2538. tickets.music.umich.edu

Urinetown: The Musical \$7-15. Eastern Michigan University Theatre at Quirk Theatre in the Quirk Dramatic Arts Building, East Circle and Best Hall, Ypsilanti. Feb. 15 - 24. 734-487-2282. mtshows.com/show_detail.asp?showid=000280

PROFESSIONAL

Drumline Live \$20-45. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. Feb. 16. 586-286-2222. MacombCenter.com

End Days \$15-22. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through Feb. 24. 517-655-SHOW. WilliamstonTheatre.org

Felal \$30-100. Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison, Detroit. Feb. 12 - 17. 313-887-8501. MusicHall.org

Good People Previews Feb. 21-24 & 28 (\$23-\$32), \$27-41. Performance Network, Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 21 - March 31. 734-663-0681. PerformanceNetwork.org

How The Other Half Loves \$15 opening night; \$18 all others. Broadway OnStage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Feb. 22 - March 23. 586-771-6333. BroadwayOnStage.com

Jack and the Beanstalk \$8-12. Wild Swan Theater at Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Building, Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. Feb. 14 - 16. 734-995-0530. WildSwanTheater.org

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat \$18-\$32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through March 3. 734-268-6200. TheEncoreTheatre.org

Lake Effect Fringe Festival \$10. Dog Story Theater, 7 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids. Through Feb. 24. PCShakespeare.com

Making Porn \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Feb. 22 - March 18. 248-556-8581. TheRingwald.com

Marriage Plays in rotating repertory. \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Feb. 22 - April 6. 313-577-2972. Hilberry.com

Next to Normal Previews Feb. 13-15 (\$25-\$31), \$31-\$40. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. Feb. 13 - March 10. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

Passing \$16-26. The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Feb. 21 - 24. 248-661-1900. theberman.org

Rain \$30-70. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Feb. 23. 313-471-6611. Olympiantertainment.com

Rock of Ages \$25-65. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Feb. 20 - Feb. 21. 810-237-8689. TheWhiting.com

Show and Tell \$15. Puzzle Piece Theatre at Russell Industrial Center, 1600 Clay St., Detroit. Through Feb. 24. 313-303-8019. PuzzleStage.org

Sister Act \$32+. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Feb. 12 - 17. 800-WHARTON. WhartonCenter.com

Soul Mates \$15-\$18. Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. Through Feb. 24. 313-408-7269. MagentaGiraffe.org

State of Emergency Free. Shop Floor Theatre Company at Beecher High School Randall Coates Auditorium, 1020 W. Coldwater Road, Flint. 1:30 p.m. Feb. 22. 810-424-5453. shopfloortheatre.com

State of Emergency Free. Shop Floor Theatre Company at U-M Flint Theatre, 303 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 7 p.m. Feb. 23. 810-424-5453. shopfloortheatre.com

The Divas Project \$20-38. Plowshares Theatre Company at Boll Family YMCA Theatre, 1401 Broadway St., Detroit. Feb. 15 - March 10. 313-744-3181. Plowshares.org

The Four Bitchin' Babes \$40-55. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. Feb. 23. 586-286-2222. MacombCenter.com

The Lion King \$25+. Broadway in Detroit at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Feb. 13 - March 10. 313-237-SING. BroadwayinDetroit.com

The Whipping Man \$23-27. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 24. 269-343-2727. FarmersAlleyTheatre.com

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf \$8-10. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Through Feb. 24. 248-850-9919. TwoMusesTheatre.org

Wings \$10-20. University of Detroit Mercy Theatre Company at Marygrove College

Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Road, Detroit. Through Feb. 17. 313-993-3270. Theatre.UDMercy.edu

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

Detroit Institute of Arts "Motor City Muse: Detroit Photographs, Then and Now" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 1 - June 16. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Winfred Rembert: Amazing Grace" 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Jan. 27 - March 17. Flintarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Stoked: Five Artists of Fire and Clay" 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Jan. 20 - April 7. 269-349-7775. KIArts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "TheBody Eclectic" 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, Ferndale. Feb. 1 - Feb. 28. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

M&M Enterprises "The Southfield Pavilion Antiques Exposition" 26000 Evergreen Road, Southfield. Feb. 22 - Feb. 24. 586-465-9441. Antiquesexposition.com

Michigan State University Museum "East Meets West: The Transgender Community of Istanbul" 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. Jan. 22 - April 14. Museum.msu.edu

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

The Henry Ford "Celebrate Black History" 20900 Oakwood, Dearborn. Feb. 1 - Feb. 28. 313-982-6001. TheHenryFord.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Francis Alys: Guards" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Dec. 15 - March 31. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art "El Anatsui: When I Last Wrote to You about Africa" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 2 - May 5. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

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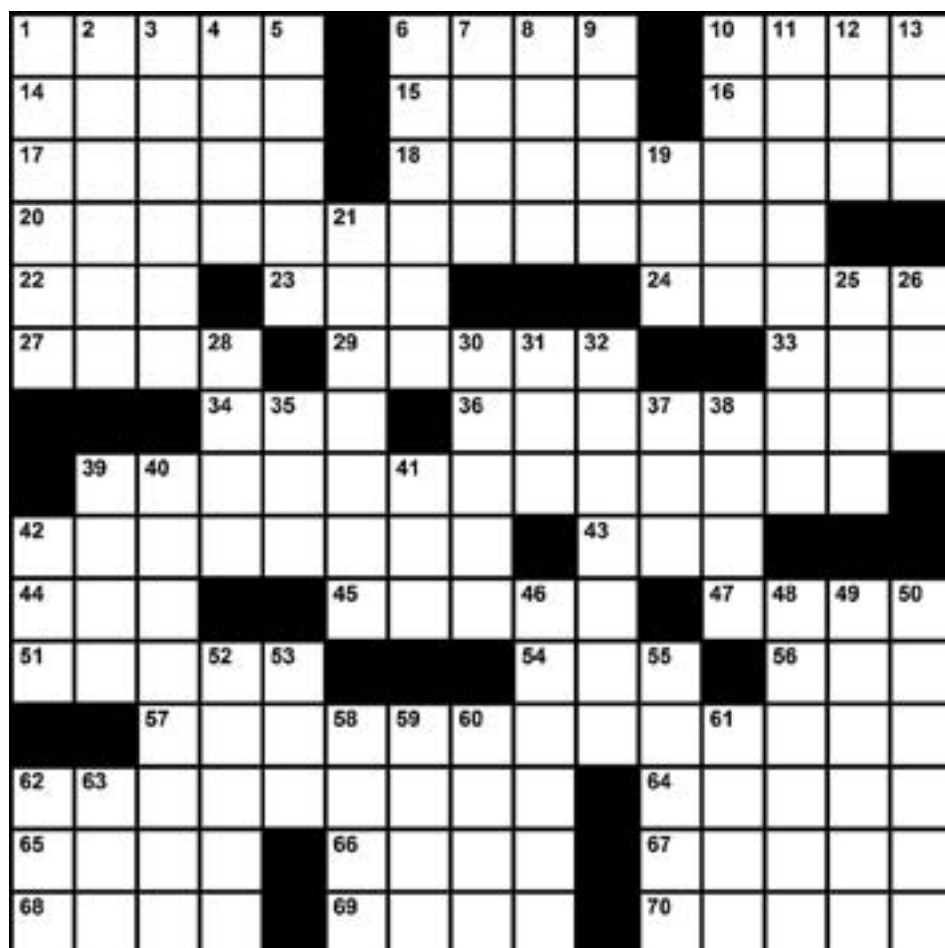


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- 23 Athenian T
- 24 Strikes out
- 27 Series ender
- 29 Blowholes
- 33 "Let's call ____ day"
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- 36 Copy source
- 39 "America" writer's role at a DC celebration
- 42 Glass footwear in a fairy tale
- 43 It connects Dick to Dyke
- 44 Article in a German newspaper
- 45 Spaghetti strainer
- 47 Carrier to Tel Aviv
- 51 A real mouthful
- 54 "Got a Rainbow" lyricist Gershwin
- 56 "Diamonds ____ Forever"

- 57 In "America", the writer noted that his people weren't like people on this TV show
- 62 Song from a Broadway rock musical?
- 64 First name in Irish literature
- 65 Words said with a nod
- 66 Erotic opening
- 67 Brand of machine that cuts leaves of grass
- 68 The life of Riley
- 69 Cruising areas
- 70 Mistake by Glenn Burke

Down

- 1 David Hyde ____
- 2 Join the army
- 3 Cher's portrayer in "Clueless"
- 4 Allergic reaction
- 5 Result of a good, hard workout
- 6 Overpower by force
- 7 Attachment often found on drawers
- 8 Pastoral poem
- 9 "Julius Caesar" costume
- 10 "Time in a Bottle" singer Jim
- 11 '60s First Daughter
- 12 One that gets laid
- 13 Low mark
- 19 Bring to a halt
- 21 Lays waste to

- 25 Louisiana, in old OrLÈans
- 26 Mineo of _Rebel Without a Cause_
- 28 Ballet move
- 30 Viking-liking
- 31 Part of a chorus line?
- 32 Like the moon, at times
- 35 Type of tent that may be erected
- 37 1.0, for one
- 38 Actress Skye
- 39 Tennis champ Nastase
- 40 The Gay ____
- 41 William Tell's canton
- 42 Get hard
- 46 Moving porn
- 48 Cavalry member that can stick it in you
- 49 Jockey Eddie
- 50 Newsman Jim
- 52 Number of sides to a gay symbol
- 53 Like cool cats
- 55 Humble home
- 58 Antigay prejudice, e.g.
- 59 Go for another tour
- 60 Official records
- 61 Visitor at gay.com
- 62 Hurry, to Shakespeare
- 63 Nutty fruitcake center?

Solution on pg. 26

Cocktail Chatter

Pisco Punch

BY ED SIKOV

Call me the Pisco Kid. Yes, I'm still on a Pisco kick. The attentive reader will recall that my last Cocktail Chatter column concerned the Peruvian firewater called Pisco, a delicious and hard-knockin' brandy distilled from Muscat grapes. Research into the drink's history yielded the unexpected information that a punch made out of Pisco and pineapple syrup was San Francisco's most fashionable cocktail in the late 1800s. Nowadays, the Pisco Sour appears more often on cocktail lists than Pisco Punch, so I decided to take the more adventurous route and make a round of the punch for Dan and me.

Well, sports fans, it was a punch in both senses of the word. The cocktail knocked us off our feet. We ended up ordering Chinese delivery for dinner, because after a couple of these babies neither one of us was capable of cooking. Besides, given the alcohol on our breath, lighting the cooktop would have put us at risk of blowing up the kitchen. Like Planters' Punch, Pisco Punch is so delightfully drinkable that you don't know you're getting snookered until it's too late to do much about it. Do not – I repeat, do not – go to the trouble of creating a multi-course meal if you're planning to serve Pisco Punch as “le cocktail du nuit.” By the time you're ready to serve your laboriously created Beef Wellington your guests won't care if you served them Alpo straight from the can.

Here's both the classic recipe and my time-saving and less watered-down variation.

Pisco Punch (The Classic Version)

Cut a fresh pineapple into chunks, or – better – buy a container of cut-up fresh pineapple, and place the chunks in a larger sealable plastic container along with 1/2 cup of Really Simple

syrup.* Refrigerate overnight so that the fruit macerates. The next day, mix the following in a cocktail shaker or pitcher for each portion you plan to serve:

- 2 TBS pineapple-infused simple syrup from the container of pineapple
- 4 TBS filtered water
- 3 TBS lemon juice
- 6 TBS Pisco Portón

Refrigerate the shaker or pitcher until you're ready to serve the drink. Do not serve the punch on ice unless you haven't chilled the punch enough; it shouldn't be watery. Serve with a chunk of pineapple in each glass.

*Note: Simple Syrup is a pain to make the classic way; it's much easier to mix equal parts of sugar and water in a jar, put the lid on the jar, and shake it till the sugar is dissolved.

Pisco Punch (My Quicker, Punchier Variation)

Buy a can of pineapple chunks in syrup. In a cocktail shaker or pitcher, mix the following ingredients for each portion:

- 2 TBS pineapple syrup from the can
- 3 TBS lemon juice
- 6 TBS Pisco Portón

Chill the cocktail thoroughly in the refrigerator before serving; again, do not serve over ice. And forget the chunk of pineapple stuck in the glass since it's just going to take up space that would be better served by the cocktail itself. Moreover, you don't really want to see your guests digging the thing out of their glasses with their fingers and then wiping their sticky hands on your nice throw pillows.

Ed Sikov is the author of the e-book, “The Boys’ and Girls’ Little Book of Alcohol,” a novel with recipes based on his Cocktail Chatter column.

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by Eve Ensler

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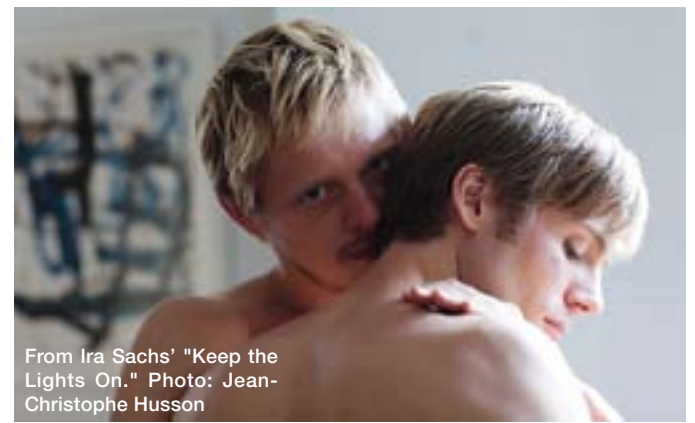
What are The Vagina Monologues? The Vagina Monologues is a collection of monologues written by Eve Ensler. It is a play that is performed by women from all over the world. It is a play that is performed by women from all over the world. It is a play that is performed by women from all over the world.

Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

James Franco is one of the beautiful people, but you knew that

Let's just go ahead and make the man an honorary gay, shall we? Because at this point in his career, as a movie star/student/artist/culture-creator, James Franco is more than just gay-friendly or gay-adjacent, he's gay-absorbed. A heterosexual who's chosen queer culture as a topic to explore and explore and explore from as many angles as possible, including the much-buzzed about Sundance Film Festival entry "Interior. Leather Bar" (which imagined itself as a documentary about the mythical missing 40 minutes from the film "Cruising"), Franco will now take on "The Beautiful People," a biopic of Jay Sebring, a straight man in a stereotypically gay profession. You might not know his name but Sebring was well known in Hollywood in the 1960s as the playboy hairdresser to the stars. He had an affair with "Valley of The Dolls" star Sharon Tate and, along with her, was tragically murdered by the Manson Family. In other words, his life has needs-to-be-a-movie written all over it. Franco will direct and star in the project, but there's no other word on casting or a schedule, so this one will most likely show up in 2014 or later.



From Ira Sachs' "Keep the Lights On." Photo: Jean-Christophe Husson

Sean Hayes won't be told which sexual orientation to play

After the "Promises, Promises" flap (in which a gay "Newsweek" reporter took issue with Sean Hayes playing a heterosexual character in a Broadway musical – yes, really) it was only a matter of time before Hayes decided it was time to prove his non-gay-acting talents on a bigger stage. And after starring in last year's TV pilot about gay parents, one that didn't get picked up, the "Will & Grace" star is back with another untitled pilot from "Better Off Ted" creator Victor Fresco. This time he plays a single father (of no defined sexual orientation, but let's assume the guy is straight, why not?) raising a 14-year-old daughter and dealing with a problematic boss at work. If it works, it'll be one more brick out of the wall of resistance to openly gay actors crossing that boundary. So let's all hope this one gets picked up. Neil Patrick Harris can't carry this kind of sitcom burden all by himself.

'AbFab,' Part Eleventy

A touchstone comedy series of the 1990s, one that permeated all of gay culture, won legions of fans and, to this day, refuses to go quietly into that good night. No, it's not "Sex and the City," it's "Absolutely Fabulous." And after one-off specials and mini-seasons, dormancy and resurrection, brilliantly funny periods and stretches where you wondered why they keep beating this dead horse only to rebound back into funny again, here comes a film. That's right, an "AbFab" movie. Will it be theatrically released or will it stick to the familiarity of television? Nobody's talking just yet, but Joanna Lumley has confirmed that it is, indeed, in the planning stages; that she's fully on board to step back into Patsy's sleek, drunken, vicious couture; that Jennifer Saunders is writing the script; and that she hears it's also a musical (that last bit might just be wild conjecture and probably is). But whatever's true, whatever it turns out to be, whenever it sees the light of day, we're in. We're always in. We always will be in. Until these two characters are a hundred. Or more.

Romeo San Vicente is still absolutely fabulous himself. He can be reached at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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