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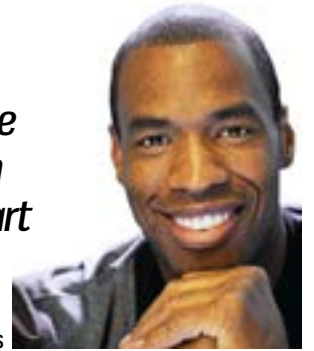


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Before Detroit Show

What Moves Jodi
Allen Toward Change

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the first openly gay athlete
of a major American team
sport. But I'm happy to start
the conversation.”

– Jason Collins



AMY GRANT In Her First Gay Press Interview

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COVER STORY

14 Amy Grant in her first gay press interview

Photo: Jim Wright



It's a true honor to be a part of someone's journey to health and happiness. It brings meaning and purpose to my life.

- Jillian Michaels, pg. 20



Join The Conversation @ PrideSource.com

NEWS

- 5 High heels, hugs and handwritten notes
- 6 80 kids to strut out bullying
- 7 Rhode Island moves toward approval of same-sex marriage
- 9 Making history: NBA's Jason Collins comes out as gay
- 10 Cool Cities: Ferndale

OPINION

- 8 Shifting the paradigm to be architects of change
- 9 Creep of the Week
- 12 Parting Glances

LIFE

- 19 On interviewing Amy
- 20 Tough love
- 21 It's all in how you play the game
- 22 Happenings

REAR VIEW

- 24 Classifieds
- 25 Puzzle

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



Fracking Presentation Debunks Industry Arguments

Professional well-driller Joe Curry of Holly has been speaking out against the expansion of fracking in Michigan. Among his presentations was one given in Ferndale on April 23 at the request of Oakland County Water Resource Officer Jim Nash, who hopes to educate residents about the risks.

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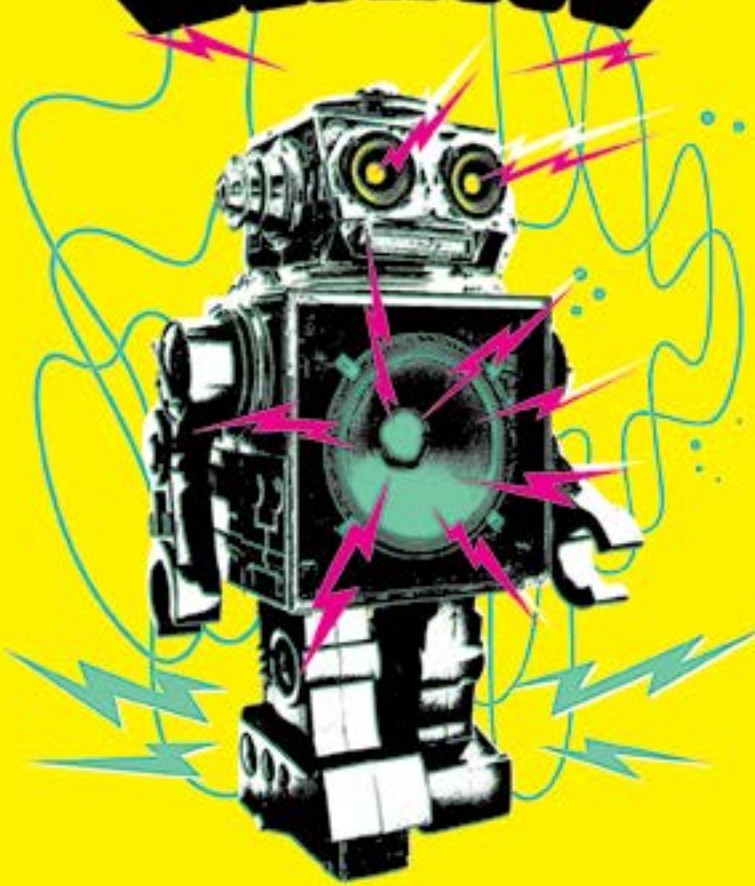
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High Heels, Hugs And Handwritten Notes

What Moves Jodi Allen Toward Change

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE - "In 36 years, I hugged like four people. But I love hugs now. High heels, hugs and handwritten notes, that's what is important to me," said 42-year-old Jodi Allen as she gave the keynote speech at the Transgender Day of Empowerment at Affirmations.

Allen shared words of wisdom that have helped her in the transitioning process, focusing not on the struggle but on the power of finding one's own empowerment within themselves.

She told the story of Victor Frankl who lost his entire family to the Holocaust. Frankl famously said, "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

This lesson came up in Allen's mind as she wondered what to say to the room full of people in various stages of transition, and allies who were there to learn more about transgender people. The topic assigned was that of explaining empowerment, trying to decide what is empowering.

"It is hard to define," she said. "It's like pornography. It's hard to define and different for everyone, but we know it when we see it."

One way to understand power is to understand labels. "We invest power in labels. Getting surgery. Super high heels. The ability to vote. What if these things are taken away? What if someone takes away your makeup or your heels? What about your right to vote?"

"...We spend how much time on our presentation, but how much time do we spend thinking about our own thoughts," she said. "If we have the power to make things important, you know what, we also have the power to make ourselves important."

Allen's mental transformation came in two major stages. The first was six years

ago when, still living as Bill, she made the decision to get sober. "The greatest gift I've ever been given is being an alcoholic. The second is being trans," she said. "If you met me as Bill I was smart, educated, good at my job, but closed off, difficult. When I drank I didn't have healthy relationships, even with myself. When I drank, I knew everything. I knew I was more awesome than you. And if you were awesome I put you down, I didn't share anything with you because then you might be more awesome than me. I had this attitude of scarcity. I was hoarding awesomeness.



Jodi Allen with her mother Victoria at last Saturday's Transgender Day of Empowerment. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire

"Getting sober taught me total honesty. I was sharing things I didn't share with people... It's like a key that finally works after you've been out in the rain for ten minutes fumbling with it."

She took on the attitude of being "truthful, talkative and transparent." And for a while she was happy. But in time another truth emerged. She closed up again. People at work thought she was drinking again. She discovered Jodi, and had to begin another process to set her free.

Committing to a positive mental

attitude and joining a transgender support group at Affirmations helped her work through the challenging steps of understanding what a transition would mean. By coming up with a plan, and using positivity, Jodi Allen found more love in the world than she ever expected.

"People like my mom were kind and poured goodness into me," she said. "My office has been nothing short of inspiring. Somebody wrote me a little note saying 'sometimes people will surprise.'"

"People poured love into me. It made my world better and I want to pour it into

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80 Kids To Strut Out Bullying May 7

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

WARREN - Through years of doing high school class photos, Pam Patrick of Patrick Photographic Studio has heard many sad stories from kids who have been affected by bullying. "We deal with 18-20 schools each year and these kids tell us things. And we realized things. There has always been bullying and physical violence but it seems things are getting worse. Now there's this cyber-bullying. This has to stop. We listened and we thought, who better to champion this cause? Let's get this out in the open and let's deal with it," Patrick said.

They came up with an idea that lots of students could take part in - a fashion and variety show called Strut Out Bullying. The event is 6 p.m. May 7 at the Warren Civic Center and is free to the public. Over 80 students from 18 area schools are involved in the grand production, including a drum line from Warren Mott and Cousino High, a singer from Royal Oak High School, and fashion

from students from Rochester and Sterling De La Salle. Students from the Warren Woods Cosmetology program are donating the hair and make-up for youth who will be taking the runway.

Mixed with the entertainment will be skits written by the youths about bullying, tackling how it feels to be bullied, including a youth who is taunted for being gay. "They want to show what it is like when kids are being bullied. Judgment signs are placed on them and rescuers rip them off and put good messages on instead," Patrick

"We want to give these kids a way to say 'we're not going to do this,' and to stop the bullying.."

- Pam Patrick of Patrick Photographic Studio

said. The point is to show that standing up for others can make a difference. "We want to give these kids a way to say 'we're not going to do this,' and to stop the bullying."

The students met weekly for over a month to put the program together. Patrick hopes to be able to make this an annual event.

In addition to the performances, students will be presenting a pledge to the Mayor of Warren, stating that they will not bully others.

Obituary: Paul Edward Steczek

July 22, 1957 - April 17, 2013



Paul Edward Steczek, the long time owner of Blue Moon Video Store on 8 Mile Rd. in Detroit, died Apr. 17 after a long struggle with a lung infection. He was 55. His husband, Daniel

Christine, said the couple would have celebrated their 19th anniversary on Apr. 23.

Steczek, one of four children, grew up in the Herman Gardens project of Detroit. He worked at Backstage Restaurant in the 1980s, and in 1988 became the manager of 24 Hour Video in Detroit, a position he held for 14 years. In 2002, Steczek opened Blue Moon Video. Christine said the store will remain open and that he will continue operating it. "Paul worked so hard to build it. I'm not gonna let it fail," said Christine.

Steczek learned he was HIV positive 22 years ago. Christine said he met Steczek the first time he walked into 24 Hour Video, and there was an immediate spark. "I was not out before I met Paul," said Christine who is now retired from a factory job. "He told me he was HIV positive the first time we met. He was always very concerned for me. I am HIV negative and Paul had always said that the disease was his and his alone. He was the most selfless, caring man I ever knew. With the way things are in the community... new HIV cases emerging too often, this is something that needs to be told. Anyone can have a healthy and safe sex life," said Christine.

Steczek was close with his large, extended family and deeply involved in his Catholic faith. He regularly attended mass until his health declined, after which he watched mass on TV every day. He had been active in Dignity Detroit, regularly attending mass at the Most Holy Trinity Church in Detroit.

A memorial service was held Apr. 20 at Harry J. Will Funeral Home in Wayne.

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Rhode Island Moves Toward Approval Of Same-Sex Marriage

(CNN) - Rhode Island moved toward becoming the 10th state in the nation and the last in New England to approve same-sex marriage after its state Senate voted April 24 to approve a bill extending marriage rights.

Senators approved the bill 26-12 Wednesday afternoon.

Though the House version of the bill passed by a vote of 51 to 19 in January, the Senate amended it, "so it needs to go back to the House, where it has solid support," Senate press secretary Greg Pare said. The House could vote on the amended version as soon as next week, he said.

Governor Lincoln Chafee, an independent, has indicated support for the measure.

The Senate Republican Caucus on Tuesday expressed unanimous support for the bill.

The Rhode Island Catholic Conference said Tuesday in a statement posted on its website that it appreciated that exemptions for religious organizations had been included in the bill. "Unfortunately, the exemptions fail to protect individuals and small businesses who believe that marriage is a union of one man and one woman," it said.

Scott Spear, an advisory board member of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Marriage, said he would have preferred the fate of the bill be decided in a public referendum rather than by the Senate.

"We believe the record of marriage as has existed throughout the history of civilization stands for an empirical truth, and that truth is a marriage is a union between one man and one woman," he said in a telephone interview.

Iowa, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland,



State Senator Donna Nesselbush after the Rhode Island Senate's vote on same-sex marriage. Photo Steven Senne/Associated Press

Washington and the District of Columbia allow same-sex marriage. Their combined populations, based on U.S. Census estimates for 2012, represent 15.8 percent of the U.S. population.

The addition of Rhode Island's 1,050,292 residents would nudge that up to 16.1 percent.

For some lawmakers, the issue transcends politics. During a debate Tuesday over reversing Nevada's law banning same-sex marriage, state Sen. Kelvin Atkinson revealed that the issue is a personal one for him. "I'm black, I'm gay," he said. "I know this is the first time many of you have heard me say that I am a black, gay male."

"It was an impulse decision," he said Wednesday in a phone interview with CNN, adding that he had not planned on saying anything in the session. "I felt it was time to do it."

The Nevada Senate voted 12-9 to start the process to repeal the gay marriage ban.

guarantee an override, and Christie has suggested putting the question before voters.

Oregon: Gay marriage advocates hope to place a proposed constitutional amendment on the 2014 ballot that would reverse a ban on gay marriage passed by voters in 2004. The effort has the support of Gov. John Kitzhaber.

Minnesota: Hundreds of gay marriage supporters gathered at the state Capitol this month to urge lawmakers to vote for gay marriage. Legislation has cleared committees in both the House and Senate.

Illinois: The state's Senate approved gay marriage legislation on Valentine's Day. Supporters in the House say they're still a few votes short but hope a vote is held before the General Assembly adjourns this spring. Gov. Pat Quinn supports the bill.

5 States That Are Next In Same-Sex Marriage battle

AP - Rhode Island is set to become the 10th state to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry following a key vote in the state's General Assembly this week. Gay marriage supporters are shifting their focus to other states, including:

Delaware: The state's House approved a bill Tuesday legalizing same-sex marriage on a 23-18 vote. The bill now moves to the Senate. It has the support of Democratic Gov. Jack Markell. Delaware approved same-sex civil unions last year.

New Jersey: The Democratic-led legislature is expected to attempt to override Republican Gov. Chris Christie's veto of gay marriage legislation a year ago. But there aren't enough Democrats to

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NBA Player Jason Collins Comes Out

Reactions From The Tweet-O-Sphere

"Congrats Mr. Collins on your courage to come out, you have helped paved the way for others - homophobia is dead in sports - I hope!"

Larry King, CNN Commentator

"I hope Jason is received well by our NBA family. Jason is a friend and a former teammate that I've enjoyed many laughs and conversations with and his sexual orientation won't change that with me. I've already reached out to him personally to show support and will encourage more guys to do the same."

Jerry Stackhouse, NBA Brooklyn Nets guard and former teammate of Collins

"Character is found in those who lead. I am so proud of my friend, Jason Collins, for showing all of us what leadership looks like."

Shaquille O'Neal, former NBA star center

"Hey Jason Collins - you are now an activist!!! And trust me, you will sleep a lot better now- freedom is a sweet feeling indeed!"

Marina Navratilova, tennis legend who publicly came out as lesbian in 1981

We salute you, Jason Collins for your courage and leadership. Any time you want to throw out a first pitch at Fenway Park, let us know.

Boston Red Sox Official Twitter

"Jason Collins showed a lot of courage today and I respect him for taking a stand and choosing to live in his truth."

Dwayne Wade, superstar of the NBA's Miami Heat

"Jason Collins has announced that he is gay. I know Jason and his family well and I support him 100 percent."

Earvin Magic Johnson

Shifting The Paradigm To Be Architects Of Change



OPINION BY MICHELLE BROWN

Since DOMA landed on the steps of the Supreme Court, support for LGBTQ equality seems to be busting out all over.

Supporters are everywhere - LGBTQ, straight, young, old, black, white, brown, religious, Democratic and Republican. Folks we all knew were gay and some we never suspected were gay have come out. Even some who had professed being cured of their gayness have come out again.

The wedding registries are filling up and the wedding bells are ringing for me and my gal (or him and his pal).

But before we proclaim that we are living not only in a post racial but also a post homophobic society, think again. There's a whole lot of work to be done within and without before we reach one beloved community.

At an LGBT dinner recently, the speaker called on our straight allies to be more vocal, more engaged in our fight for equality. He said "We can't do it without you" comparing their involvement/participation to that of white's in the civil rights movement. Although I agree completely, the primary responsibility for changing hearts and minds still lies with the LGBTQ community and we have some internal and external work to be done.

Is it just me, or does anyone else think we spend too much time adding letters to define our community and not enough building community? I understand we add more letters to the acronym to be more inclusive. That's a good thing.

We are the melting pot. LGBTQIA and all the other different elements "melting together" into a common culture but we're also the multicultural salad bowl where our different cultures mix, but remain distinct.

We celebrate our different cultures as a true expression of our rainbow. But we need to be more than a pretty picture. On issues affecting our community from employment to immigration, we must raise a unified voice on more issues than marriage.

Even as we showed our solidarity for marriage equality, LGBTQ youth continue to face lives of despair. LGBTQ teens are more likely to attempt suicide, use alcohol, cocaine, and other drugs. They are also more likely to be victims of physical violence, verbal harassment, rejection, isolation, depression and HIV/AIDS. Too many are going to the altar, but they're not getting married, they're getting buried.

As we showed our solidarity for marriage equality, members of our LGBTQ community worried not only about finding jobs but being fired from their jobs for being gay. Despite the highest levels of public support for protecting LGBTQ workers (9 in 10 Americans mistakenly believe workplace discrimination is already illegal) fewer than half of state governments protect LGBTQ workers from discrimination and there

is still no federal law to protect LGBTQ workers from employment discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

As we showed our solidarity for marriage equality, during the Supreme Court deliberations, reports of exclusion of uniquely trans-specific banners began to surface, ironically during the same week we celebrated Transgender Visibility. Did HRC really ask that the Trans banner be removed for a photo-op before the U.S. Supreme Court? Holy equality Bat Man - talk about shades of the ENDA misstep!

How can we ask our allies to stand up for us when we aren't prepared to stand up for one another? Time to declare our commitment to full equality of all members of the LGBTQ community - nobody gets left behind.

Despite the flurry of high profile outings in the news, many in our community choose to live private lives. Consequently, for many in the general public, if you're not Ellen & Portia the perception of the LGBT community is still defined by sitcoms, stereotypes and homophobic hate-speech.

Many define an ally as a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group [straight] who works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for the oppressed population [LGBT persons]. If we continue to think of allies using this definition we will continue to perpetuate a "them and us" dynamic, and isn't it time to break the dominant/oppressed model?

It's time to shift the paradigm, to redefine the relationship between the LGBTQ community and our allies. Our challenge is to do more than engage our allies but to transform them into members of our community where it's no longer them and us, the majority group

advocating for the oppressed population, but one community "with liberty and justice for all."

So how do we make this change? How do we change hearts and minds? How do we change allies into our brothers and sisters? How do we become that Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King?

Only we can tell our stories and we need to be telling them to friends, families, co-workers, neighbors and colleagues.

Let's start by being out not just at the clubs or in the safe places but over the fence in our backyard talking to your neighbors, at community meetings, in church, at work. Leverage our intersectionality - we are more than gay. Bring our entire authentic self in to every situation. Don't let society pigeon hole us into only LGBT debates. Yes we want marriage equality, but we want good schools, paved streets, jobs, good government, safe communities and the best for our families.

But most importantly tell our story, not as a victim, but as an equal. Start where we are most comfortable. Go for the low hanging fruit - those friends and family who say they love and support us - and ask them to join us in this struggle, shoulder-to-shoulder as warriors for equality. Let it be like ripples in a pond, spreading out across families, neighborhoods, communities, the nation and the world.

The times they are a changing. Let's be the architects of this change. Our time is now!

Michelle E. Brown is a Public Speaker, Activist and Author follow her at <http://www.mychangeiam.com> and <http://www.twitter.com/mychangeiam>



Making History: NBA's Jason Collins Comes Out As Gay

BY JOE STERLING

(CNN) - It's the biggest move of his career and it's off the court.

Jason Collins, who played with the NBA's Washington Wizards this season, has disclosed that he is gay, making him the first active openly homosexual athlete in the four major American pro team sports.

Collins, who is now a free agent, made the disclosure in a column appearing in the upcoming issue of Sports Illustrated.

A center, Collins played with six NBA teams over the past 12 seasons and attended Stanford University.

NBA Commissioner David Stern said Collins is widely respected.

"We are proud he has assumed the leadership mantle on this very important issue," he said in a statement.

Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former President Bill Clinton and Stanford alumna, wrote on Twitter that she is "very proud of my friend Jason Collins for having the strength & courage to be the first openly gay player in the NBA."

Bill Clinton called the announcement an "important

moment for professional sports and in the history of the LGBT community."

Collins, who played for the Boston Celtics this season before being traded, wrote in his essay that U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy,

things: his passion for the sport he loves, his unwavering integrity, and the biggest heart you will ever find," Kennedy said. "I'm proud to stand with him today and proud to call him a friend."

A few athletes have come out as gay after they've left professional sports. One is John Amaechi, a former NBA player.

Amaechi told CNN he hopes Collins will be a catalyst for a wider acceptance of openly gay athletes, saying he believes Collins is better equipped than anyone who came before him to handle the attention that will come his way. But it may take more, Amaechi said.

"I know people like to believe one iconic (figure can change things),

People like to believe one iconic figure can change things, Amaechi said, "but

the reality is that when there's this tipping point, or enough people coming together deciding that change is necessary, that's when change happens."

In 2005, Sheryl Swoopes -- a top player in the WNBA, the women's pro league -- announced she was gay.



See related online story about Jason Collins endorsement opportunities.

D-Massachusetts, helped prompt his decision to come out as gay. Kennedy and Collins were roommates at Stanford. He recounts hearing about Kennedy -- who is not gay -- marching in Boston's Gay Pride Parade.

"For as long as I've known Jason Collins he has been defined by three

become Lansing City Clerk. In January of 2000, he was appointed to the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Mental Health Board, where he continues to serve. Prior to moving to Lansing, he served on the East Lansing Human Relations Commission.

Chris lives in Lansing's Westside Neighborhood with his husband Brad. In 2004, the couple married among friends in Lansing and officially in Windsor, Ontario.

The May 8 fundraiser is at Grand Cafe Sir Pizza in Old Town, 201 E. Grand River Ave.

Suggested donation levels are supporter \$50 and sponsor \$150. RSVP to voteswope@gmail.com or go to www.voteswope.com to make a contribution through PayPal.

LCC Gay Straight Alliance Soliciting Art For Lansing Area AIDS Network.

LANSING - Lansing Community Colleges Gay Straight Alliance will host a Charity Art Auction to raise money for the Lansing Area AIDS Network May 4. The group is still soliciting art pieces, and anyone interested in donating a piece, or donating time to perform at this event please contact their adviser Christopher Green-Szmadzinski by email, szmadzic@lcc.edu.

Creep of the Week

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Diocese of Columbus

Imagine that your mother has just died. This is, for most, a difficult, emotional time. Plus there's so much to take care of: funeral arrangements, notifying friends and relatives, taking care of the estate. Not to mention grieving.

Now imagine that you're a closeted lesbian at a Roman Catholic high school and there's one more detail to take care of: putting an obituary in the paper. Do you mention your partner name in the obit? I mean, you've been a couple for 15 years. What could be the harm?

Well, if you're physical education teacher Carla Hale, it turns out that the harm is pretty great. Not only had she just lost her mother, but also she was quickly fired from Bishop Watterson High School in Columbus Ohio, after 19 years, for being a lesbo after a parent brought the obituary to the attention of the school.

Which leads to the question: how big of an asshole do you have to be to run to the school with an obituary of a teacher's mother in order to get her fired? Answer: not as big of an asshole as the administrators who actually fired her, but still, pretty big.

A statement from the Diocese of Columbus claimed, "Personnel who choose to publicly espouse relationships or principles that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic church cannot, ultimately, remain in the employ of the church."

Oh, I see. The problem isn't that she has a female partner, but that it got published in the newspaper. Got it. The Catholic Church prefers secrecy, which is evident in their handling of the insanely huge and far-reaching child sexual abuse scandal. Priests who rape kids can be shuffled from diocese to diocese so long as everybody stays quiet. But a gym teacher is found to be a lesbian and we've got to keep her away from kids -- not because she's been accused of any kind of abuse, but because her partner's name is Julie and not John. Good one, Diocese of Columbus.

Look, when you've got a record like the Catholic Church on issues related to sexual impropriety and

keeping kids safe, firing a lesbian teacher is not upholding morality, it's sanctimonious bullshit.

Mind you, Hale is not an idiot. She knew that putting her partner's name in the obit was a risk.

Which leads to the question: how big of an asshole do you have to be to run to the school with an obituary of a teacher's mother in order to get her fired?

"[Julie] asked me if I really wanted to put her name in there," Hale told the The Columbus Dispatch, "[but] my mom really loved Julie and Julie loved my mom and as I sat there with my brother, you know, it was like... his wife was mentioned, my niece's husband was mentioned, so why not? Why not my person I love?"

And we all know how that turned out.

But the story isn't over yet. After asking to be reinstated and being told "no homo," Hale announced that she is filing a complaint with the Columbus Community Relations Commission. In Columbus it is illegal for employers to fire someone just for being gay. There is also a Change.org (www.change.org/petitions/diocese-of-columbus-reinstate-faculty-member-carla-hale) petition asking for her reinstatement that has over 103,000 signatures as I write this.

For her part, Hale is trying to keep a positive attitude. "This is happening for a reason and I have to be supporting of all of those that are standing up on my behalf," Hale said at a press conference.

Referring to the outpouring of support she has received, Hale had a message for LGBTQ young people: "Hopefully, they're seeing just the support and the love that's out there, and it's reassuring them that regardless of their sexual orientation ... we all deserve the same equalities, and the world's changing."

Not nearly fast enough, but here's to Hale for finding the courage to fight the good fight and leave the closet behind.

Swope Kicks Off Reelection Campaign

LANSING - Chris Swope kicks off his reelection campaign for a third four-year term as Lansing's city clerk with a fundraiser May 8. Swope, who is openly gay, was named 2011 City Clerk of the Year by the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks.

Swope was executive director of Michigan Equality, a LGBT rights organization that has since merged into Equality Michigan, and he is a past president of the Lansing Association for Human Rights. In 2001, he was elected to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, a position he held for five years before resigning to

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Run 4 A Reason Benefits LGBT Charities May 11

A "nifty t-shirt and backpack" aren't all you get when you sign up for the annual Run 4 A Reason event in Downtown Ferndale. There's also the warm and fuzzy feeling of helping out a slew of LGBT charities, and the fun breaking a sweat with up to 500 fellow walkers and runners.

The run starts at Affirmations Community Center on May 11 at 10:30 A.M. and has a \$25 registration fee, which includes a t shirt and backpack. The run is approximately 5 miles long and people can run or walk to the finish line.

Proceeds go to Affirmations Community Center, Ruth Ellis Center, Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, Higher Ground, Equality

Michigan, Michigan Diversity Council and the Jewish Gay Network.

The event is organized by Get Out and Live (GOAL). For more information visit their website at <http://run4areason.org/>.

Affirmations Accepts Blue Cross Insurance for Mental Health Services May 1

Beginning May 2013, Affirmations will formally begin accepting new clients with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan health insurance for counseling and mental health services.

The organization has been working diligently over the past year to re-configure its mental health services into a model with long-term financial sustainability and this is a strong step in that direction. The insurance billing success came as a result of support provided by Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority which sought to address the mental health needs of LGBT people in the region.

"LGBT people may not feel comfortable seeking out mental health services out in other spaces, so it's important that the services meet people where they are, enabling access to needed services for many who might

not otherwise seek them out," stated David Garcia, executive director for Affirmations. "People have been coming to Affirmations for years to seek counseling and support for their sexual orientation and gender identity - a place where they know they'll receive sensitive and culturally competent care - so it's the perfect location."

Affirmations serves all LGBT people requesting counseling, regardless of ability to pay. Clients without insurance are seen on a sliding fee scale. Affirmations currently has one clinician on staff and also works with a team of masters' level students from area social work, counseling and psychology schools to provide quality therapy to those seeking support and guidance. For more information about Affirmations' Mental Health Services, visit www.GoAffirmations.org.

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Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I can be contentedly thinking of a dozen inconsequential things – Major League baseball scores, movie star divorce trivia, Rebiblican obtuseness – but let me get a city block from my art studio, and suddenly I have to, oh, darn it, pee.

I'm convinced my bladder has a mind of its own and takes a polymorphous perverse delight in reminding me at inconvenient moments just who really runs my private Waterworks Park, who schedules my personal Old Faithful spoutings.

It's all so sneaky. Underhanded. Always with no advanced warning.

Whoa! Hold on there! I urge the little guy who surely works the valve, bargaining for few more seconds 'til I get my key in the lock and make an unscheduled dash to the loo, there to process yet another distillation of my allotted 40,515 lifetime of golden quarts.

I'm not alone in being ambushed by this most insistent of Pavlovian reflexes. It happens to everybody, and to some with five-alarm frequency, or so maintains a Cosmopolitan article, "Do You Always Have to Pee? (Find Out Why Your Tank Seems So Tiny – And the Surprising Ways to Fix It)."

To be honest, I wouldn't have brought up the topic in mixed company (tiny vs. big tankers); but if peeing is good enough for that sex-and-plumbing monthly, I'm sure my PG readers – who sometimes pee in the oddest places – and at the most improbable angles – won't take offense at my piddling commentary.

According to Cosmopolitan, some hapless glamour gals pee as many as 15 times a day. "My boyfriend calls me the pee queen," says Venessa, 25, "Because I'm at the mercy of a bladder that won't quit, while he can hold it in all night." (Note: I wish I could find someone with that holding-it-in-all-night expertise – even an amateur's half hour would suit me just dandy. Pee Queen, indeed!)

You'll be pleased to know that bladder size has nothing to do with the frequency of voiding (or avoiding voiding). Nor is male or female equipment a factor, says urogynecologist Dr. Ingrid Nygaard. "No matter what gender you are or your overall physical size, all bladders are capable of expanding to about the same amount – able to hold 18 ounces of liquid."

The problem is that we're drinking more liquids these days. "We're becoming a nation of chronic drinkers," says Lindsey Kerr, M.D., another pee-in-the-bottle (and smile for me) specialist. "And logically, the more a person drinks, the more she's going to need a bathroom break."

As for Cosmopolitan's "surprising" ways to curb an insistent urge to go on bladder patrol beyond a reasonable call of duty (and occasionally for purposes of auxiliary cruising), desensitization heads the list. "As soon as you feel the need to go into the bathroom take a few deep breaths, relax, and hold it for half an hour." (Note: Hold your own, not his.)

You may get a little red in the face, or find yourself doing a few spontaneously choreographed tea room dance routines, but don't worry your pretty unzipped head. In time your feisty bladder will learn who's boss and come around to behaving itself like a lady or gentleman (or both) in public.

To pee or not to pee. That is the question. Just let it all hang out. (Or, in.) Shake. Rattle. Go with the flow.

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Free Health Conference To Offer HIV/AIDS Info, Young Men Targeted

BY BTL STAFF

DETROIT – The numbers are daunting - 19,800 Michigan residents currently live with HIV. More than 67 percent of these individuals live in southeast Michigan, 78 percent of which are male. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) reported the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses occur among young men age 13-24.

In response, the African American AIDS Advisory Committee (A4C), the Michigan HIV/AIDS Council, the Oakland University School of Nursing, and the Man Alive Planning Group will be offering a free conference May 18 for young men and those who love them, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Riverview Hospital located at 7733 E. Jefferson in Detroit.

"It is clear that youth, especially young men, are not getting the information they need to keep HIV from becoming a part of their lives," says Terry Ryan, CEO of

the Michigan AIDS Coalition. "National statistics indicate that one in five individuals with HIV is unaware of their infection, which is a dangerous statistic. We need to encourage those at risk to use local resources like those available at MAC, and to attend events like these that will help educate our community and stop the spread of this lethal disease," he says.

The conference will include informative workshops and presentations, free HIV/STD testing, and blood pressure and diabetes screenings. Local resources will be on display and representatives will answer questions and help attendees gain access to local resources. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for guests in attendance. The day will also include raffle prizes and giveaways.

For more information, please contact Royale Theus at the Michigan AIDS Coalition at 248-545-1435 ext. 111, or visit www.michiganaidcoalition.org.

► Jodi Allen

Continued from p. 5

But she also knows that in order to foster relationships instead of burning bridges, she must continuously practice openness, patience and love.

"I had to allow these feelings that other people have, good or bad, to be in a safe space. Sometimes people are wrong and I have to not attack it. I have to be patient and let them talk through it," she said.

In addition to the transgender support group and the ladies at Gigi's who helped her express her beauty, Allen credits her mother with giving her love and support. Victoria beamed with pride as her daughter spoke to the large group at the Day of Empowerment. Afterwards she told Between The Lines, "As Bill all those years it was like you're hiding a secret and you can't let people in. He was negative, no hugs and kisses. Whenever he'd come over I was so relieved when he left. I always wanted a loving relationship, but I thought, okay we are just one of those families. But as soon as he told me he was transitioning, we had a better relationship."

Now they have heart-to-heart talks and share clothes. "It wasn't always easy. When Bill came out to me I was surprised to say the least. It wasn't easy for me because I didn't realize that I was being judgmental of other people," she said. "I don't want people to judge poorly. Transgender people aren't people hanging out in the bathrooms waiting to snatch up your children like the stereotype that is out there. That is so hurtful, and I didn't realize it."

Victoria introduces Jodi to her friends, and has other transgender people over to dinner. "I feel bad for those who don't have the relationship we have," she said.

Allen's father, who lives in Florida, is not nearly as accepting. "My dad never wanted to talk about it. Dad was dedicated to the notion of this celebrated son," Allen said. "He won't even see me."

The positive attitude Allen cultivated in herself helps her deal with those disappointments. In breaking it down to, "what happens when people take things away and all that is left is yourself and the freedom to choose your outlook," Allen said it is fundamental. "When the world doesn't love you, you better love yourself or you're fucked."

Allen and her mother came to the Affirmations Spring Bash two years ago, where they painted part of a large collage together as part of the DIA-centered event. That evening is when Arlene Kish invited Allen to join the board of directors for the LGBT community center.

"I knew I wanted to give back. All that love, I wanted to pour it into others. When Arlene asked me to be on the board, it was an opportunity that changed my life. It helps me keep pouring the love because I know that when I'm out at events or reaching out to people, I may be the first transgender person they've ever met. So I feel obligated to be as awesome as I can be, so people walk away thinking, 'wow, that is a transgender person. She is awesome. Transgender people are awesome.'"

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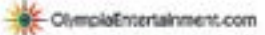
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HEART IN MOTION

A Conversation With Christian Music Legend Amy Grant

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

A call from Amy Grant started as these promo chats usually do. Hellos were exchanged, small talk was made and questions about her first studio album of all-new material in 10 years, “How Mercy Looks From Here,” were answered.

Then we shifted into territory the most successful Christian music artist of all time, now 52, has never spoken about publicly since hitting the scene in the '70s with her spiritual pop, before “Heart in Motion” turned her into a crossover success.

During her first gay press interview, and for an entire hour, the Grammy winner reflected – with her usual sincerity and thoughtfulness – on her loyal gay fan base, how she reconciles Christianity and homosexuality, her “compassion” for gay marriage and the unforgettable dinner she shared with out ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero.

How are you, Amy?

Honestly, my brain is so rattled today.

There's a lot going on in the world right now, especially with the Boston Marathon bombing and the Texas plant explosion.

There is a lot going on, yes. I just want to go somewhere and sit and be very still. I just did, with the band, a kind of unplugged performance for SiriusXM Radio. It was the first time I have sung some of those songs for an audience and, you know, you can create muscle memory with a song. You just work on your technique and then it becomes like muscle memory. But the first couple of times you do it, it engages all the emotions around the song – and I just kept getting choked up.

Which songs from the album were you performing?

The first one was “How Mercy Looks From Here,” and with all the stuff going on I could hardly get the song out. I was going, “Well, great, they’ll be playing this over and over on XM.” So, there were the nerves of this being the first time performing those songs for anybody. I guess I have felt emotionally drained, but you’re right – it’s because of what’s been going on. We’re all connected.

How does this new album reflect your life at this point?

Photo: Jim Wright

It's funny, being 52 and putting a record out, I have felt this incredible freedom. It feels like this is going to be the least required of me as a person to sell the songs. As a woman, when you're younger, so much of it has to do with looking pretty, doing a video and wearing the right clothes, because a lot of music is visual.

But there is real freedom in going, "I never have to worry about what I'm going to look like in a bikini again." Not that I ever looked good in one, but I would feel weird even just putting one on, because I'm old ... er. Older! (Laughs) You sort of go, "Whew. That pressure's not going to be there." And I feel that way about the music. To me, it feels essentially about the message of the songs and not even a reflection of me. It just feels like collective life experience.

I know you have a thing for eating chips in the studio because the oil coats your throat. How many bags of Lay's potato chips did you go through while recording "How Mercy Looks From Here"?

It was funny, because (producer) Marshall (Altman), who I had never worked with before, we did a lot of preproduction work. I knew him from (working with) Natasha Bedingfield. And when we started comparing notes, and when I made a request to make sure we have Lay's potato chips, he came around the corner wide-eyed and he said, "I didn't think about it until you said that. This is part of urban legend that this started with you." I said, "Well, I don't know if it started with me, but all those early days up at Caribou Ranch, where it was so dry, that's when I started doing it." Marshall said, "You don't go to a studio if they don't have a bowl of potato chips." And I laughed my head off. I said, "Well, it works; the whole world should do it!"

When the biggest Christian music artist of all time is doing gay press, you know we've come a long way. Were you kept at bay from gay press beforehand, earlier in your career?

It never came up.

But you have obviously had a big gay following for quite sometime. Why have gay people connected to you in such

profound ways?

All of us sometimes feel disenfranchised or, for whatever reason, like we're just on the periphery or marginalized. People feel that for all kinds of reasons, and by the time you've lived any amount of life, I think anybody has had that experience somewhere. I remember doing concerts back in the early '80s and going shopping with some of the singers that I was working with and one of them, Donna McElroy, had to get some makeup – and she's African-American – and I said, "Hey, I'll meet you back here." I ran my errands and I came back and said, "Are you done?" She said, "No one's waited on me."

Everybody is outside of some circle, but what I've always wanted to do is have a message of honesty and welcoming, and being willing to say this is the good, bad and the ugly. This is who I am. And if I'm saying that about myself, it's like, jump in, the water's fine. So I love that. I love that people connect to my music.

“The journey of faith is just being willing and open to have a relationship with God. And everybody is welcome. Everybody.”

At this point in your career, are you at all concerned about people passing judgment on you for talking to gay press?

We all ultimately need to know that we're loved, and I think it would be really crazy if you said, "I'm not going to talk to this group of people because someone's looking on that's not a part of the conversation and might have an opinion about it." I mean, my whole life has been that. (Laughs) It takes all of our energy to navigate whatever road we're on. What's interesting is, this last year I was invited on Monday mornings to go to a woman's house – also a songwriter, also a singer – and just have some time of quiet stillness all together. But her house wasn't even quiet. There were workers there sometimes, or there was nowhere to get that was quiet.

As we were sitting there trying to get quiet, she said, "It never gets still, and so I'm not gonna get all rankled in my head. I'm just gonna say, 'Well, there's the noise of the person next door blowing off their driveway with that

really loud motor. There it is. There's the sound of sirens going up and down the street.'" She said, "When we learn to observe without judgment, then we have the ability to observe and learn, or to observe and be." And I said, "Do you know how exhausting it is to observe with judgment all the time? It's just exhausting." I have thanked her many times. We could all stand to hear that.

You came from a fairly strict religious upbringing, but it sounds like there's been an evolution in the way you see people.

Well, I don't know. When you say strict, that's interesting. What do you mean by that? (Laughs) I mean, we went to church every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, every Wednesday night.

You're right. I should say diligently religious.

Yeah. I remember when we moved to Texas and my parents went to this really, I guess, conservative church – a Church of Christ – and something incredible was happening within that church community. I remember seeing this transformation in my mom and dad. I was old enough to remember that. What I remember about our home after that was that it was welcoming ... to everybody.

To black people? To gay people?

Just to people.


Did you ever feel that you had to reconcile your Christian faith with your acceptance of homosexuality?

That's not my life experience. In the same way, if you put my shoes on, you would go, "I thought this experience was going to be one way and it was totally different." None of us has any idea what somebody's life experience is like.


Do you remember the first gay person you knew? Did you have a close gay friend?

Absolutely. But my first: maybe college. Someone might have just seemed theatrical or, I don't know, effeminate, but when I was in high school – I graduated in '78 – I had friends in high school who eventually said, "I'm living a gay lifestyle," but they didn't say it then. People were very private about their sexuality, period. Maybe not everywhere, but I just don't remember,

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► Amy Grant

Continued from p. 15

“I’m exploring this, I’m exploring that.”

When did you first know you had a gay fan base?

Probably by the time I was 18.

How did you know? Did a fan tell you his or her coming-out story?

No. Just from meeting people. I don’t know. I guess I’m kind of going, that was a long time ago. I’m 52. (Laughs) I’ve never even thought about it. It’s like saying, “There’s gray-haired people in the crowd, too.” If people come to my shows, this is what they say: “Wow, there are people of all ages and lifestyles in your crowd.” That’s what they always say. But then someone will come up and say, “You know, I saw a guy with a boa on,” and I’ll say, “Oh yeah, yeah, I’ve always had a big gay following.” (Laughs)

To me, I don’t give it a second thought. I remember the first time someone from the crew said, “I smell pot in the back of the crowd,” and I went, “Well, fantastic! Yay!” I’m so glad that just *people* are coming.

From photos I’ve seen and conversations I’ve heard, you seem to have established some close relationships with people in the Gay Friends of Amy Grant group on Facebook over the years. Can you describe your relationship with them?

When you’ve done something for a long time, there is a great familiarity that comes over the years. I will say that I have a couple of friends that I made – just because they came to shows for a long time – and I figure we must have some things in common because, of all the music we’re all attracted to, at least we share this music in common.

Weren’t you invited to perform at the wedding of one of your gay fans but couldn’t due to your schedule?

I was invited. I was honored to be invited. I have to tell you: Anytime somebody asks me to perform at a wedding, I say, “I do not have a good track record.” (Laughs) A lot of the weddings I’ve performed at, the marriages have ended poorly.



Check out writer Chris Azzopardi’s personal reflection on this interview on page 19

I recall seeing you perform with Melissa Etheridge for Lifetime’s “Women Rock!” special in 2000 and thinking, as a teenager struggling with his sexuality, “She’s performing with an openly lesbian performer; she’s throwing her gay fans a bone.”

You know what’s so interesting, even when I was discovering my own sexuality and meeting people that had a different experience, I didn’t categorize then, and I don’t categorize right now. It makes me realize that I don’t have any idea of what it would feel like every moment of my life to go somewhere and feel judged.

But you have felt judged, right? Judged for getting divorced. Judged for your pop crossover, even.

No, no. Do people from a distance have an opinion? Yeah, that’s human nature to have an opinion. Whatever was going on in a rag magazine, or whatever someone was saying behind my back or in a heated conversation, I was never in that circle. I wasn’t part of that conversation. I never, ever pursued one chat room. If there was an article or some argument – “I can’t believe you’re doing this” – I just never pursued it because I thought, “We don’t understand each other.”

There are a lot of times that I wind up in situations that I do not see eye to eye with somebody. And it doesn’t help to throw gas on the fire. Clearly they’re going to have their opinion. Carry on. And I’m gonna go do what I’m gonna go do.

I know you are not a political person.

Yeah, I’m not.

So how do you respond to people when they ask you about your feelings on gay marriage?

In the same way that I did not tell one person who I voted for. I don’t. I never talk about anything like that. I did tell Vince (Gill, her husband) the day after the election. (Laughs)

But I think my response is, I have had so many occasions in my life where I have felt really strongly about something – but that feeling has changed. Those feelings change about different situations, and so because I’m a public person – and because I want always to bring people together – I really do say this is a world that’s unfamiliar to me and I am always trying to observe with compassion.

This isn’t a cut-and-dry issue for you, then.

Well, nothing is cut-and-dry. You know, one of the most fascinating dinners I’ve ever spent sitting next to somebody I had not met was at a large function with my family. We were all seated with place cards; it was a large group and I introduced myself to the fellow next to me. It was Anthony Romero (executive director of the ACLU). I mean, we didn’t line up our views; I just said, “Oh my goodness.” And he said, “I think they probably thought this was going to be very funny having us sit next to each other.” (Laughs)

I just said, “Tell me about your life.” He asked me the same thing. He told me good things about his job and hard things about his job. It was two human beings that have had very different lifestyles sitting next to each other and sharing life. Given 10 choices, would Anthony and I choose the same things? Maybe so. Maybe not. But I felt so changed by that. And what I really felt was, well ... I ... (pauses)

What did you feel?

Well, I kept his card for a long time, and I hoped that our paths would cross again. I felt a lot of compassion for his parents, first-generation immigrants, and he described his childhood and what it was like. I went, “This makes

total sense that he has invested his life coming to the aid of the people in his world that are disenfranchised because, for a whole different set of reasons, his parents were marginalized.”

And you found that inspiring?

Yes. You know what, we all face challenges in our life that we didn’t anticipate, and the most important thing is that we not face them alone. To me, if there’s anything that comes out of this conversation, in the same way that a relationship cannot be nurturing if it’s competitive, it’s this: When you don’t understand something, you can either default to judgment or you can default to compassion. Those take you down completely different roads.

Are you speaking about yourself?

Yeah, and that’s really ... ahh, I’m just talking about life in general. This is interesting because I have never done an interview where it feels every question is saying, “Tell me I’m OK.” That’s what feels like the underlying energy behind the questions, and I’m just going, “That’s a powerful kind of energy” – and for different reasons. Maybe not sexuality. Because that’s what every person’s crying out for. Anyway, sometimes a good night’s sleep helps for more concise answers.

It’s just that we’re living lives that are different from each other. It’s like two people sitting at a dinner table having a long conversation. If you and I were facing each other at a different table and we walked away and somebody asked us to describe where we were, my entire view was behind your head. I mean, I’m gonna describe the place differently than you. That’s just true about all of life and really, I’m trying to listen and learn and in a way have a great opportunity to try to understand the fan base that comes to a show. I’m even more glad they feel welcome. Even more glad after this. Can I say one thing?

Of course.

I know that the religious community has not been very welcoming, but I just want to stress that the journey of faith brings us into community, but it’s really about one relationship. The journey of faith is just being willing and open to have a relationship with God. And everybody is welcome. Everybody.

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On Interviewing Amy

Why The Christian Music Icon's First Gay Press Interview Almost Didn't Happen



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Back in the mid-'90s, I watched from my seat at The Palace of Auburn Hills, just outside Detroit, as kids circled Amy Grant onstage with overzealous glee while she sang "Say You'll Be Mine." I wanted to get in on that dance carousal to be as close to this woman – my childhood idol – as possible. I wanted that so badly. Shy little me just couldn't find the gumption for that. I was intimidated by all those thousands of people. And her.

I'd been an Amy diehard since I pretty much ransacked my mom's "Heart in Motion" cassette. I couldn't get enough (sorry, Mom). Obsessed with "Galileo," I'd replay the song – in other words, I rewound that thing so many times I eventually wore out the tape – because I had mad nerd love for Ben Franklin, and Amy clearly did, too. She was singing about him.

I've made lots of other memories to Amy Grant music. On my Walkman, I'd bop down to the bus stop with "Baby Baby" singing in my ears, no matter how unhip it was. "I Will Remember You" was, for me, the high school send-off you never forget, and later I'd think of that song for all my goodbyes (to a friend, a dying relative and so on). There were Christmases that wouldn't have been the same without "Breath of Heaven," there was the song I put on a Mother's Day mix for my mom ("Oh How the Years Go By"), and there were more Amy concerts than that of any other performer.

As a kid who attended catechism and took communion nearly every Sunday, I connected to her messages of faith, compassion and being all-inclusive. I didn't care what she thought about homosexuality then, only that hers be

the voice that help me come to terms with it. I clung to those messages of "love conquers all" when things got hard, when I felt like ending my life. And I thought about it plenty of times. But I'd close my eyes and listen and hear that voice of comfort and faith filling my heart. She was the big hug in my headphones.

That connection – an affinity that anyone who's admired a musician from afar knows well – was the reason I almost didn't pitch an interview request to her people when I found out she was releasing her first studio album in 10 years, "How Mercy Looks From Here." Did I want to know how Amy felt about gay issues? About my community? About me? I was the little kid too scared to get *that* close to her all over again.

This time, I went for it.

Amy listened intently and responded thoughtfully. She expressed herself in the best way she knows how: with stories. And she did all of this for an hour.

She didn't have to do this at all.

In that moment, we were two human beings from two very different walks of life engaging in an illuminating dialogue.

Amy didn't take any strong stands, she didn't directly come out as pro-gay and remained relatively neutral, but she spoke honestly and from the heart – just as I expected her to. People will say her statements about not dividing her fan base were safe, and maybe they were. But I didn't sense that at all. What I found was, truly, a person who didn't know my world. Our world.

And who can blame her? I haven't taken communion in over 15 years.

She referred to being gay as a "lifestyle," but remember: This is a woman who's never spoken to gay press before, and you won't see her in a Pride parade anytime soon (she is not Lady Gaga, people). And if we're going to play that game, call me out, too: I misidentified her religious upbringing when I called it "strict."

"When you say strict, that's interesting," she said, laughing. "What do you mean by that?"

We are clearly two people divided by

radically different lives, generational gaps and family histories, and that's OK. I can live with not knowing where she stands on issues that are important to me but may not be to her, because I know there's no judgment. She sees people as they are: as people. She said it herself: "When you don't understand something, you can either default to judgment or you can default to compassion." I loved that.

The questioning seemed to reveal something I wasn't aware of. I've been doing gay press interviews for years. This was Amy's first.

"This is interesting, because I have never done an interview where it feels like every question is saying, 'Tell me I'm OK.' That's what feels like the underlying energy behind the questions and I'm just going, 'That's a powerful kind of energy' – and for different reasons."

Acceptance, I learned in that moment, comes in many shapes and from many people. Parents, peers, the president. But how about the people we idolize? The performer whose music wasn't just music – but memories?

I might not know where Amy stands on gay rights. I might never know. But I've decided it doesn't really matter.

I'm grateful to her on behalf of my younger self, the little kid who wore out his mother's tape and derived strength and solace in her music. I won't let politics get in the way of that.

For my 30th birthday, my mom asked me to go on a getaway with her, so we're road-tripping to Amy's hometown for her Nashville Weekend. We go this fall, and I'm already creating a playlist of songs in my head that I hope to hear.

When I'm dancing under the sun and stars on her Tennessee ranch, I won't be thinking of gay marriage or government policies. It will just be about the music and how much it matters to me and everyone else there. Some of the people will be just like me and some will be different, but as Amy said in our interview, "I figure we must have some things in common because, of all the music we're all attracted to, at least we share this music in common."

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Tough Love

Jillian Michaels Talks Tour, Family And Health

BY ANDREA POTEET

Since she first appeared on NBC's "The Biggest Loser" in 2004, Jillian Michaels has earned a reputation as a tough – and even intimidating – trainer.

But for Michaels, who stops May 9 at the Fox Theatre during her Maximize Your Life Tour, that attitude isn't over the top. It's necessary.

"It's a job that involves a life-or-death intervention on a time frame," Michaels, 39, says of the show and her resulting reputation. "In all other aspects of my business, it's about providing information and inspiration."

And if Michaels comes off as harsh, it's because she can relate. As a middle school student growing up in Los Angeles, Michaels was nearly 180 pounds at 5-foot-2 and the target of constant

bullying and harassment from classmates. She found solace and change in a martial arts class at 14 that helped her transform her body and her circumstances.

"I think many kids are bullied," she says. "Not just kids that are LGBT. I would simply say to any kid struggling with bullying that it does get better. Stay strong, respect yourself, set boundaries and stand tall."

Her love of martial arts inspired her career choice. At 17, Michaels was living on her own after her mother kicked her out of the house. While earning her black belt, she discovered her love of training others – and after a brief stint at a talent management company, she quit to become a full-time personal trainer. In 2002, she opened up Sky Sport and Spa with trainer Jackie Warner of the Bravo show "Work Out."

"I'm a firm believer that when you do what you love and live your truth, the universe conspires on your behalf," she says. "Health and fitness was transcendent in my life."

For most of her career, Michaels has been fiercely private about her personal life and sexuality. But after she and partner Heidi Rhoades

adopted a daughter, Lukensia, and Rhoades gave birth to son Phoenix in May 2012, Michaels said visibility became more important.

"I do feel my personal life is irrelevant with regard to the information and message I share," Michaels says. "With that said, I would never want anyone to misinterpret our desire for privacy as shame. It's important to me my kids know I'm proud of them and our family."

Since becoming a mother, Michaels said she has had to find innovative ways to fit in time for fitness, from squeezing in a workout DVD while the kids are with a sitter or incorporating biking and hiking into family time.

"I don't live in the gym or subsist on a diet of chicken and broccoli," she says. "Extreme diets or fitness regimens are unnecessary. It's about simple math and common sense."

And for Michaels, it's about getting to change people's lives for the better, guiding those struggling with weight-related health issues into healthy, active lives.

"It's a true honor to be a part of someone's journey to health and happiness," Michaels says, "to

know that in some way – no matter how large or small – you've played a part. It brings meaning and purpose to my life."

Michaels will take that journey a step further when she hits Detroit's Fox Theatre, bringing the energy and intensity of her workout DVDs to the stage. The idea, she said, came from her sporadic motivational speaking engagements and the desire to reach more people in an intimate setting.

"I fell so in love with it and the direct connection to the audience that I wanted an opportunity to do it in a concentrated, energetic interactive live show," she says.

And for Michaels, who has risen from private trainer to household name in under a decade, her career goals don't reach much further than where she is now. The opportunity to change lives is all she needs.

"I'm actually quite content changing lives one person at a time," Michaels says. "I don't need more than the gifts I've already been given. I just want the silly cliché of leaving the world in a better place than I found it."



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It's All In How You Play The Game

BY CAROLYN HAYES

Lamentably postponed and long anticipated, Magenta Giraffe Theatre's production of "The Maids" (by Jean Genet, translated by Bernard Frechtman) is categorically worth the wait. Closing the season with a daring ideological text that harkens back to the company's initial production of Sartre's "No Exit," director Frannie Shepherd-Bates use cresting tension and the crucial force of opposites to dabble in a dangerous game and see it through to mind-bending ends.

In a posh bedroom, an impulsive woman clad in only a slip (Jaclyn Strez) mercilessly berates a demure woman dressed as a maid (Molly McMahon). The melodramatics of the exchange could be mistaken for a soap opera, but for good reason, which the attentive viewer will begin to pick up from the first smooth instances of interjection and name correcting. Indeed, these are hardly line flubs, but rather carefully laid exposition: The two are sisters, both of them maids, engaging in a vindictive fantasy of the "I'll be her and you be me" variety while their mistress is out of the house.

And what a house it is. Designer Adam Crinson saturates the tastefully detailed set with color at its periphery, both juxtaposing and complementing the modified French provincial aesthetic. The foreground is subjected to regimented contrasts, piled-on patterns and extremes tied together by their dearth of pigment. As it turns out, most everything in this world is reduced to black and white, from Crinson's meticulous set dressing and properties, to Katie Casebolt's vastly symbolic costumes, to the mindsets of the sisters themselves. Because their identities as maids are no more material to them than the ceremonial games they play, the divide between authentic and artificial self further feeds into the polar dualities they allow to consume them: light and dark, master and servant, innocent and guilty, leader and follower, winner and loser, life and death.

The slow reveal of the play's conceit beneath the conceit is brilliantly served by Strez and McMahon. The former's flinty take on her unseen employer manages to be both despicable and strangely aspirational, while the latter's occasional defiant ad-lib hints at the pair's true dynamic and, more importantly, copacetic principles. As is prone to happen when one's time is not one's own, the ritual must be cut short in anticipation of the Madame's return. Yet even as the sisters tidy the ransacked room, lingering



Jaclyn Strez and Molly McMahon serve up fine performances in "The Maids." Photo: Chuk Nowak

PREVIEW

The Maids

Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday through May 18, plus 3 p.m. May 12. 1 hour, 30 minutes; no intermission. \$15-18. 313-408-7269.
www.magentagiraffe.org

resentments hover and permeate the conversation, making clear a murky divide that exists between their violent imaginations and vengeful realities. As the sisters' cogent deliberations turn eerily toward enacting the mayhem of their game play, the power of opposing energies makes the developments believable, with tempestuous Strez's peaks and valleys volleying off McMahon's venomous suggestion and powerfully icy burn; it's a truly terrible partnership and a wanton pleasure to witness.

Another scenario is suddenly conjured by the long-awaited appearance of the employer, that effusively self-interested Madame (Meredith Gifford). Whether she is as bad as the sisters portray her or whether she is being seen through their lens is for the viewer to decide; in either case, this is a marvelous monster indeed. Between histrionic guilt, misplaced overcompensation, and hateful bemusement, her relatively brief appearance heaps context and empathy onto a heretofore-narrow worldview, but Gifford's finest contribution is the pure comic sharpness of her detestable privilege-blind superiority. Through her, the prospect of Madame's elimination

can safely shift from a position of dread to delectable possibility.

Where the play succeeds is in making plain its many possible, fascinating, and intertwined facets of play-acting and reality, even as they continue to invert and gain complexity by turns. The more strenuous task is to keep the viewer invested in an ultimate purpose; otherwise, it's like being asked to feed Schrodinger's cat – faced with an indecipherable puzzle, it's too easy to simply pour out some kibble and wander away. Here, the play's steady modulation through late revelations and persistently added layers serve to make things less transparent, not more, threatening to disengage the viewer from an enigma that so thoroughly refuses to be known. Yet it's a relatively minor complaint in light of this show's extremely high degree of difficulty, translating to a gentle muddle of concluding beats that don't quite meet the promise of a tremendous existential foundation.

With a firm grasp on its dichotomies and an impressive ability to turn on a dime, "The Maids" delivers no shortage of intellectual rigor bolstered by riveting stakes. This production's strident tone, extravagant performances, and fundamental teamwork lay the groundwork for an insistent treatise on the roles we take on within our relationships, jobs, and society, as well as how we define them (and they us).

It takes a ruthless company to tackle such a cagey offering, but Magenta Giraffe has again proven its mettle for posing huge questions and running headlong at them.

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, May 2

Lavender Graduation 4:30 p.m.
Spectrum Center, 530 S. State St., **Ann Arbor**. 734-764-0087. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Cross Dressers of West Michigan
5:30 p.m. This social and support group will have discussions involving makeup lessons, clothing choices, how to pass, how to help your home life, what your SO thinks, and even group activities. The Network, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. 616-458-3511. Grlgbt.org

Kalamazoo LGBT Professionals Network 6 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 3307 Stadium Drive, **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kalamazoolgbtnetwork.com

Friday, May 3

Save-A-Life Adoptathon 12 p.m. Over 100 animals will be available for adoption each day. Mid-Michigan Cat Rescue, Inc., 3431 Tittabawassee Road, **Saginaw Charter Township**.

Friday Night Socials: Aff Trivia 6 p.m. Snacks and beverages available for purchase. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

MDSL Kick-Off Party 8 p.m. Play your favorite bar game, dance the night away, and don't forget the 50/50 raffle. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages available for purchase. Music provided by DJ Doug and games include beer pong, flip cup and bag toss. 18+. Admission: \$5. Metro Detroit Softball League, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, May 4

Waves of Courage: Social Science Evidence to Strengthen Ally & LGBT Equality Efforts 8:30 a.m. Admission: \$25. Michigan Project for Informed Public Policy, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Art for Aids 1 p.m. Come Join us for afternoon of purchasing donated art. All proceeds will benefit Lansing Area Aids Network. 515 N. Washington Square, **Lansing**. 517-483-1285. Szmazic@icc.edu Facebook.com/events/454165277984904/

Sunday, May 5

Get Out Bike & Shore 2 Shore Equality Ride Training 10 a.m. Ride through the subdivisions of Ferndale, Huntington Woods and Royal Oak. 16-mile ride. Lunch to follow at local Ferndale restaurant. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Cinco De Mayo March for Full Citizenship Rights for All 12 p.m. BAMN is bringing movement for immigrant rights home to Detroit and spreading it across the nation after our 300 strong Detroit contingent marched in DC with over 100,000 people from all over the country. March to Clark Park. By Any Means Necessary, **Detroit**. 313-806-1485. Bamn.com

6th Annual Dog Wash 1 p.m. All proceeds benefit American Cancer Society. Donation: \$15+. Bubble & Bark, 686 Liveries St., **Ferndale**. 248-544-9244. Bubbleandbark.com

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Discussion group with facilitator - LGBTIQ (and allies) 35 and over - join GOAL each week for discussion, food and fun. Topic: Should

means gained thru illegal or immoral means be accepted to help those in need? (Prostitution, gambling, drug sales, etc.) Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, May 6

Jay Kaplan: Understanding the Marriage Equality Supreme Court Cases 12 p.m. Listen to LGBT Legal Project Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Michigan speak. Dinner and dancing to follow. Tickets: \$35+. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 401 E. Michigan Ave. #100, **Kalamazoo**. 269-382-1888. Fooddance.net

Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus 7 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1020 S. Harrison Road, **Lansing**. Haston@lcc.edu lahronline.org

Tuesday, May 7

Foster Parent Orientation I 10 a.m. Join Judson Center in this free event to learn more about how to help children in need by

hivaidresource.org Hivaidresource.org/dining-for-dollars/

KLRC Walk/Jog/Run Group 6 p.m. The Resource Center's Health and Wellness Committee is proud to offer our very own group devoted to walking, jogging, and/or running. Everyone is welcome, regardless of physical ability and/or sexual orientation. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 4143 N. 10th St., **Kalamazoo**. KLRC.org

Beloved Hearts 6:30 p.m. Grief Support Group (LGBT and allies) for those who are grieving the death of a loved one (including pets). Meets every Wednesday. Call for information and address. Get Out And Live!, **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.comorbillyray92@comcast.net GetOutAndLive.me

Significant Other Support 7 p.m. Discussion and support group for friends and loved ones of LGBT. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Thursday, May 9



The Sixth Annual Dog Wash starts at 1 p.m. May 5 at Bubble & Bark, LLC, located at 686 Livernois St., Ferndale. Suggested donation is \$15 or more, depending on services. Call 248-544-9244 or visit www.bubbleandbark.com for more information.

Editor's Pick

Is your dog a little musty from being trapped indoors this winter? Bubble & Bark will host their Sixth Annual Dog Wash, with all proceeds benefitting the American Cancer Society. Pamper your pooch while supporting the fight against cancer.

Founded in 2006, the pet facility offers a variety of services for canine companions, from grooming to daycare to luxury suites. Training, supplies and self-service dogwash are other reasonably priced offerings. Staff include certified pet care technicians and groomers.

becoming a licensed foster parent. Judson Center, 12723 Telegraph Road Suite 200, **Redford**. 313-255-8258. Foster_Care@judsoncenter.org judsoncenter.org

Allies Out of the Closet 6 p.m. Straight ally speakers will talk about the importance of straight allies in our efforts to create more LGBT friendly legislature in Michigan. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Greater Lansing Gay Men's Chorus Rehearsal 6:45 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 510 W. Ottawa St., **Lansing**. info@glgmc.org

Wednesday, May 8

Launch: Explore the Neutral Zone 1 p.m. 8th grader students are invited to come explore the Neutral Zone and see what it has to offer. Free. The Neutral Zone, 310 E. Washington, **Ann Arbor**. 734-214-9995. Neutral-zone.org

Campaign Kick-Off Fundraiser 5 p.m. Chris Swope for Lansing City Clerk. Suggested contribution: \$50-150. Chris Swope for Lansing City Clerk, 201 E. Grand River Ave., **Lansing**. Voteswope.com

18th Annual Dining for Dollars 6 p.m. Tickets: \$100-125. Appetizers and cocktails, silent auction and strolling raffle. Dinner prepared by Chef Alex Young. Homemade ice cream sundae bar. HIVAIDS Resource Center, 2501 Jackson Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 734-572-9355 ext. 24. Hbrock@

This Boy is a Bottom: Willam, Detox, and Vicky Vox Willam and Detox from seasons four and five of RuPaul's Drag Race perform with Vicky Vox. Menjo's, 928 McNichols Road W, **Detroit**. 313-863-3934. Menjosbar.com

Voices Story Project Share your story through Voices, a project highlighting the experiences of LGBTQ people in the Kalamazoo area. Selected pieces will be read at the Pulse: Allied Artist event. This is Fire, 1249 Portage Road, **Kalamazoo**. 269-344-6659. Voices.fire@gmail.com

Lansing Community College Gay Straight Alliance 5:30 p.m. Bingo after at Esquire. Lansing Association for Human Rights, **Lansing**. Spennyj@lcc.edu lahronline.org

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. Jjenkins@GoAffirmations.org GoAffirmations.org

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Ives in Detroit" Program: IVES Symphony No. 3, "The Camp Meeting," WEILL The Seven Deadly Sins. IVES Symphony No. 1. Tickets: \$25+. Max M. Fisher Music

Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. May 7. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Promusica: Dimitris Kotronakis" Tickets: \$45+. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8:30 p.m. May 3. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Fort Street Chorale "Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra Perform Brahms Requiem" The exquisitely beautiful German Requiem by Johannes Brahms will be presented by the Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra. Tickets: \$20. Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 W. Fort St., Detroit. 3 p.m. May 5. 313-961-4533. Fortstreet.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Dave Sharp and the Secret Seven" Dave Sharp, electric/double bass. Chris Kaercher, saxophones. John Churchville, Tabla & Percussion. Elden Kelly, guitar/cumbush. Andre Frappier, guitar. Gaylynn McKinney, drums. 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. May 3. 734-763-4186. Kerrytown.com

CONCERTS

Blind Pig "Black Pus" Brian Chippendale of Lightning Bolt and Thrill Jockey Records. 18+. Tickets: \$8. Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 9 p.m. May 6. 734-996-8555. Blindpig.com

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Civic

See Happenings, page 26

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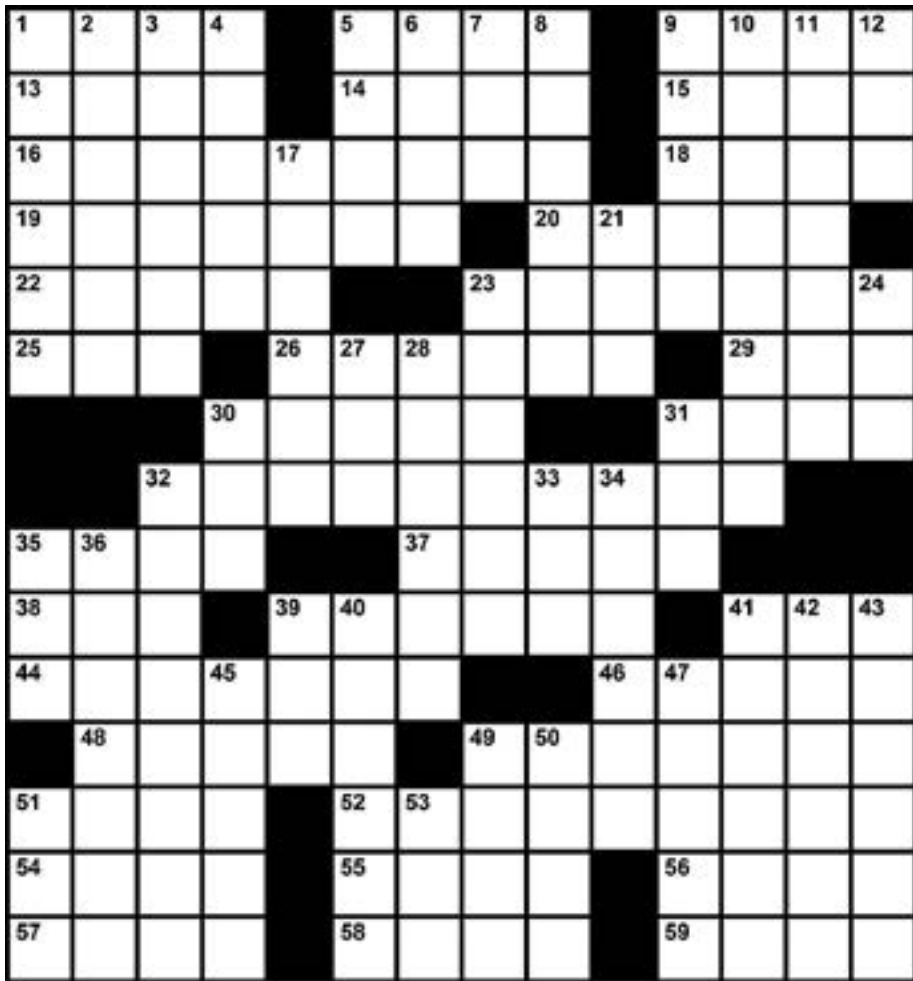
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Piano Man



Across

- 1 Coup target, to Cocteau
 5 Points at the target
 9 "There Is Nothing Like a ____"
 13 The M in SMU (abbr.)
 14 Cut it
 15 Juan, in Moscow
 16 With 32-Across, Liberace biopic
 18 Famed Loch
 19 Ferrera of "Ugly Betty"
 20 Gets frothy at the mouth
 22 Gives temporarily
 23 With 44-Across, Liberace portrayer in a biopic
 25 C. Torres and others, on "Grey's Anatomy"
 26 Banana treats
 29 Regret bitterly
 30 Acted sheepishly?
 31 Tabloid fodder
 32 See 16-Across
 35 Perry of Metropolitan Community Church
 37 Happening place
 38 Internet trigram
 39 Rears to your first mate
 41 Dyslexic's deity?
 44 See 23-Across
 46 Cole Porter's "Katie Went to ____"

- 48 Accusation of pedophilia, e.g.
 49 Enters through the cracks
 51 The Beatles' "Let ____"
 52 Actor who played Liberace's lover in a biopic
 54 Rip Torn's voice role in "Hercules"
 55 Touched down
 56 Lambda Legal Defense suit, e.g.
 57 Hebrides language
 58 Irene of "Fame"
 59 Watched intently

Down

- 1 Do a job on "Six Feet Under"
 2 Swarmed
 3 Birthplace of Socrates
 4 Base before home
 5 Bi
 6 Minute quantity
 7 Dash letters
 8 Deem appropriate
 9 Shore of Palm Springs
 10 Prayer to the Queen of Heaven
 11 He rubs you the right way
 12 Halves of ems
 17 Maxima maker
 21 Place for future Lts.

- 23 Bette of "Bette"
 24 Do-over for Mauresmo
 27 Hippie's home
 28 "Frasier" actress Jane
 30 Water near San Francisco
 31 Dr. of the rap world
 32 Tennessee's Mississippi birthplace
 33 Alice portrayer on "The Brady Bunch"
 34 Tired from muff diving?
 35 Abe Lincoln's boy
 36 Prominent cock
 39 '70s org. of kidnappers
 40 Runway surface
 41 Chagrin
 42 At leisure
 43 Removed seeds from
 45 Honkers in the sky
 47 Lickety-split
 49 Direction from Susan Feniger
 50 Jazz singer James
 51 Suffix with magnet
 53 Home st. of Harper Lee

Solution on p. 24

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Editor's Pick

Kick up your heels at "Behind the Scenes with Summer Circle Theatre." The MSU Department of Theatre's fourth spring gala takes place 6-9 p.m. May 8.

The casual evening will include appetizers and wine, a country barbecue dinner and a silent auction. The event will also include dancing with the string band Oh! Contraire and caller Mike Clark. WLNS anchor and community theater personality Evan Pinsonnault will be

the emcee for the evening's festivities.

Proceeds for the event will be used to support the 2013 Department of Theatre season and to replace the department's dance floor, which is also used for stage combat classes. The Department of Theatre has a reputation for producing award-winning musicals.

The event will be held in the department's brand new scene shop on the MSU campus on Wednesday, May 8. The goal for the event is \$15,500. Tickets are available for \$45 each by calling 517-355-6691.

Happenings

Continued from p. 22

The Palette "Happy Hour". Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. April 18 - Sep. 26. 810-234-1695.

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

8 \$10-15. Peppermint Creek Theatre at Miller Performing Arts Center, 6025 Curry Lane, Lansing. 8 p.m. May 10. 517-927-3016. peppermintcreek.org

9 to 5, the Musical \$15-35. Crosswell Opera House, 129 E. Maumee St., Adrian. May 10 - 19. 517-264-7469. crosswell.org

A Little Night Music \$18. The Players Guild of Dearborn, 21730 Madison, Dearborn. Through May 19. 313-561-8587. Playersguildofdearborn.org

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying \$12-23. The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. May 3 - 19. 269-343-1313. kazooocivic.com

Legally Blonde \$16-18. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Through May 18. 248-553-2955. farmingtonplayers.org

Rabbit Hole \$14-\$16. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre's 2nd Stage, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. May 10 - 19. 248-541-6430. stagecrafters.org

Sleeping Beauty \$10-12. Children's Ballet Theatre of Michigan at Holt High School Auditorium, 5885 Holt Road, Holt. May 3 - 5. cbtdance.org

The Beauty Queen of Leenane \$10-12. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. May 10 - 19. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com

The Lion in Winter \$11-22. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at Arthur Miller Theatre within the Walgreen Drama Center, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. May 9 - 12. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org

The Man Who Came to Dinner \$7-23. Kalamazoo Civic Senior Class Reader's Theatre at Carver Center Studio, 426 South Park St., Kalamazoo. May 10 - 12. 269-343-1313. kazooocivic.com

Time Stands Still \$7-19. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Parish Theatre, 426 S. Park Street, Kalamazoo. Through May 4. 269-343-1313. KazooCivic.com

PROFESSIONAL

35MM \$15. The AKT Theatre Project at Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut, Wyandotte. Through May 4. 734-258-8370. www.akttheatre.com

Aida \$25-115. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. May 11 - 19. 313-237-SING. michiganopera.org

Angelina Ballerina - The Musical \$17-20. Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison, Detroit. 4 p.m. May 5. 313-887-8501. musichall.org

August: Osage County \$10-22. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. May 10 - June 3. 248-545-5545. thetheringwald.com

Brimstone and Treacle \$20; \$10 May 28 only. Planet Art Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. May 10 - June 1. 313-365-4948. planetart.com

Catch Me If You Can \$35-80. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. May 7 - 19. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com

Evita in Concert \$50 benefit performance; \$25 all others. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. May 2 - 4. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

Marat/Sade \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through May 11. 313-577-2972. Hilberry.com

Spank! The Fifty Shades Parody \$45.50. City Theatre inside Hockeytown Cafe, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. May 1 - 5. 800-745-3000. olympiaentertainment.com

Tapdance! \$18. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through May 11. 586-771-6333. BroadwayOnStage.com

The 5th Annual Improv Festival \$10-25. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. May 10 - May 11. 269-343-2727. crawlspacetheatre.com

Wicked \$45-160. Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Drive, Kalamazoo. Through May 5. 269-387-2300. millerauditorium.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Art Center "Potential 2013" 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. April 13 - May 12. 734-994-8004. AnnArborArtCenter.org

Ariana Gallery "Annual Glass Show". Ariana Gallery, 119 S. Main St., Royal Oak. April 26 - May 31. 248-546-8810. Arianagallery.com

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "2013 Graduate Degree Exhibition" Tickets: \$4+. 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. April 21 - May 12. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookartmuseum.org

Detroit Art Museum "Line by Line: Drawing Explored". 4719 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 18 - May 24. 313-832-8540. Detroitartistmarket.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Motor City Muse: Detroit Photographs, Then and Now" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 2 - June 16. 313-833-7900. DIA.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Around the World with 80 Objects" 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Jan. 1 - June 30. Flintarts.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Saturday All Day with The Arts" 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. April 6 - June 29. 616-831-1000. Artmuseumgr.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts "Art League Lecture: Impressionism, Fashion and Modernity" 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. 7 p.m. May 8. 269-349-7775. Kiarts.org

Kerrytown Concert House "May Gallery Exhibit" Rita Malone - Painter. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. April 30 - May 28. 734-763-4186. Kerrytown.com

The Gallery Project "Circus" 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. April 4 - May 5. 734-997-7012. Thegalleryproject.com



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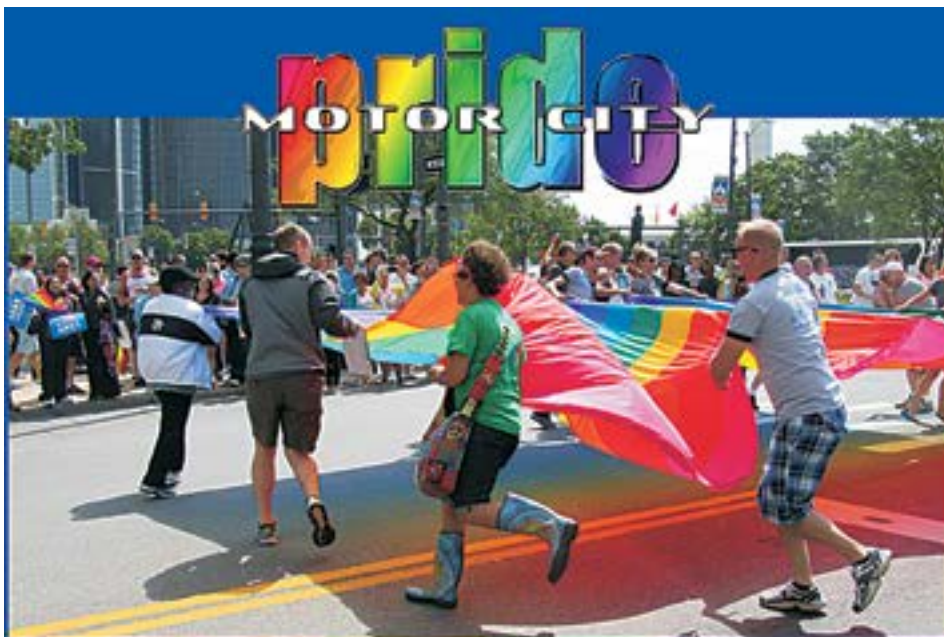
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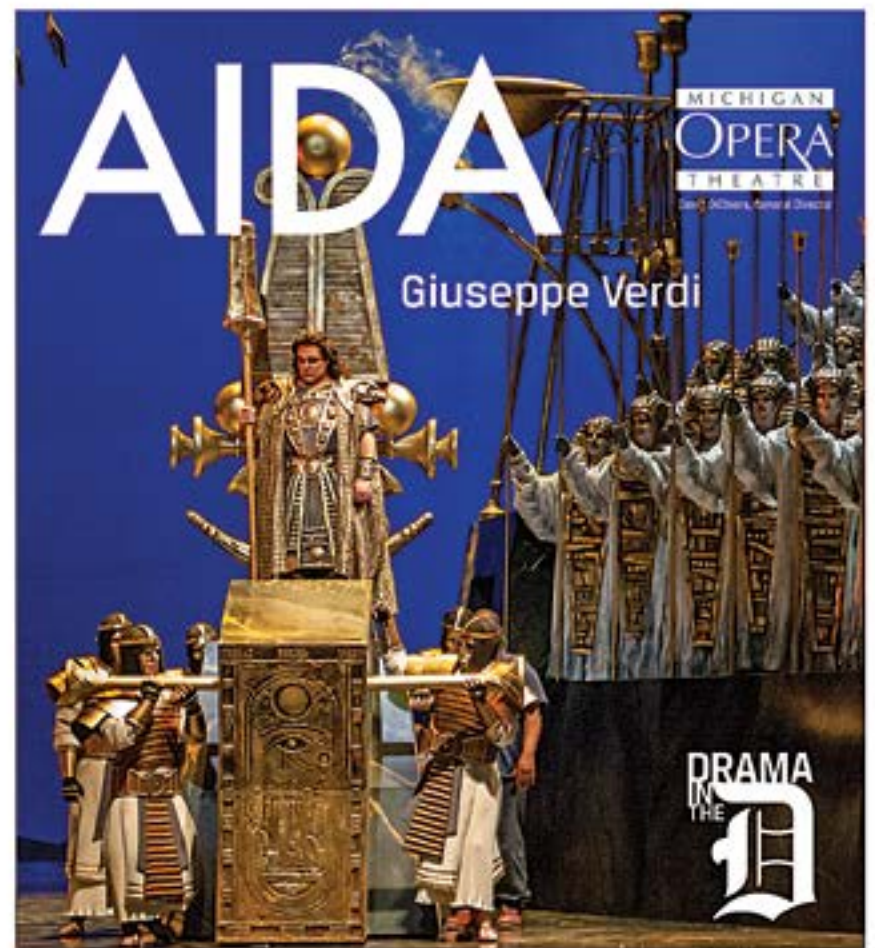
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