

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



Tracking Intimate Partner Violence

Michelle Brown
On Nelson Mandela

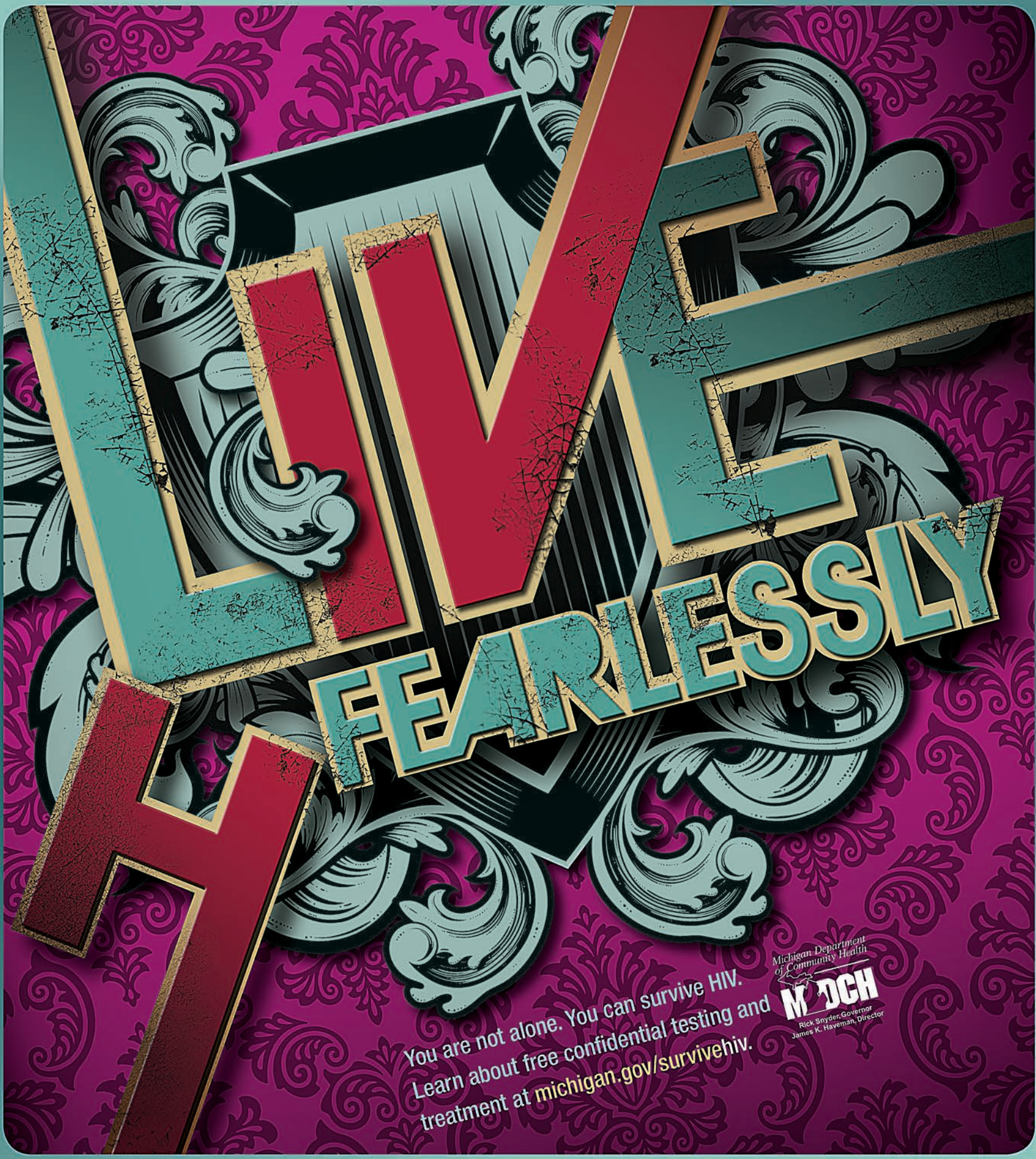
“ Too many voters think they can't make a difference or that all the candidates are the same. I want those voters to know that I will listen to their concerns and that I am committed to being their voice in Lansing.”

-Rudy Serra,
State Rep. Candidate, pg. 8



EXCLUSIVE

MY 8 MINUTES WITH BRITNEY SPEARS



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COVER

14 My 8 minutes with Britney Spears

Photo: Michelangelo Di Battista



We love our gay market and we wanted to make sure we provided a song for our gay market that they could really enjoy, and **we did exactly that.** Everybody else followed, thankfully.

— Mel B of Spice Girls, pg. 16



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ONLINE EXTRA



A Trial Full of Experts: Incredible And Not Credible

Judge Bernard Friedman will hear a lot of expert testimony as he faces the decision of whether April Deboer and Jayne Rowse should be allowed to get married and jointly adopt each other's children.

Head over to Pridesource.com for in-depth analysis of the witness list for the Hazel Park couple's upcoming trial.

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Former State Rep. Agema Speaks Against Homosexuality ... Again

Equality Michigan Calls for National GOP Committeeman's Removal

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

Speaking at the Berrien County Republican Party holiday reception Dec. 5 at Pebblewood Banquet Hall in Bridgman, the Michigan national GOP committeeman slighted the LGBT community once more speaking against gay marriage and implied that gay people with AIDS should not get health insurance.

According to The Herald Palladium of Benton Harbor Agema said, "I stand for traditional marriage, no homosexual ones... The family unit is the basic unit in society. When you tear the family apart, you tear the country apart."

He claimed that when he worked at American Airlines, gay people would claim to be partners with an AIDS-infected person just so that person could get medical care.

"Folks, they (gay people) want free medical because they're dying (when they're) between 30 and 44 years old," he said. "To me, it's a moral issue. It's a Biblical issue. Traditional marriage is where it should be and it's in our platform. Those in our party who oppose traditional marriage are wrong."

Equality Michigan decried Agema's remarks with Managing Director Emily Dievendorf saying, "It is unconscionable that in 2013 a political figure in a prominent position would feel so comfortable spewing lies about real people in a pathetic attempt to deny fundamental rights to families in Michigan.

"Republicans have made tremendous strides over the past year in reaching out to its LGBT constituents. Equality Michigan feels strongly that the next obvious and necessary step Republicans must make to show that they stand on the side of reason is to rid themselves of Dave Agema, a venomous committee member whose hate speech and fear tactics have become an embarrassment to not only their party, but to everyone in Michigan," said Dievendorf.

Agema, who hails from Grandville, is

a former state legislator who proposed eliminating HIV funding and spearheaded legislation to take away domestic partner benefits for all public employees. In April, he did a radio interview with "Washington Watch Live with Tony Perkins" where spoke of homosexuality as a sin and said, "So if you

"It is unconscionable that in 2013 a political figure in a prominent position would feel so comfortable spewing lies about real people in a pathetic attempt to deny fundamental rights to families in Michigan.."

- Equality Michigan Managing Director Emily Dievendorf



Dave Agema

really love someone, if you really were concerned about someone, if you saw your friend, for example, dying of alcoholism would you just stand quietly by and watch it happen? Or would you speak up and say, 'hey, I want to help you.'" He also shared an anti-gay article on his Facebook page claiming that homosexuals account for half of the murders in

large cities.

Equality Michigan has called on Republican leadership to denounce Agema's remarks and seek his removal as a committee member of the Republican Party. The organization is also encouraging the healthcare community to correct Dave Agema's erroneous remarks perpetuating a harmful stigma about people living with HIV.

Learn More Online:

>> www.equalitymi.org

When Violence Happens, Call Equality Michigan

Support Services, Tracking Work To Help Victims

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

When violence happens to LGBT people, Equality Michigan is there to help. Their reporting Hotline - 866-962-1147 ext. 107 - is a place where victims can get



Equality Michigan Director of Victims Services
Yvonne Siferd. BTL file photo: Andrew Potter

resources and support, and where their voice can be heard by being part of the data collected by the agency.

Violence and victimization come in many forms including hate crimes, discrimination, pick-up crimes, harassment, intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

Equality Michigan will help whether

an incident is a hate crime or not, though the distinction does matter in terms of tracking.

"I find that most people don't understand the distinction between what a hate/bias motivated crime and regular crime," said Director of Victims Services Yvonne Siferd. "In other words, if a crime is perpetrated against someone who happens to be LGBT-identified, that, in and of itself is not a hate crime. The essential element to a hate crime is that the motivating factor of the crime is a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Crimes motivated by hate tend to be more brutal and violent, and tend to result in severe injuries. Also, crimes motivated by hate do not only affect the survivor or victim of the crime, rather, because the crime is motivated by a specific characteristic, like being LGBT, it sends a message to the entire community that it is unsafe to be who you are.

"Because Michigan legislators have yet to act to include hate crime protections for LGBT Michiganders, the tool that we must use is the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which requires some type of bodily injury or an attempt to commit bodily injury with fire, a firearm, or other dangerous weapon. In other words, crimes against property (spray painting "FAG" on someone's car, for example) do not qualify as a hate crime under federal law. That doesn't mean that an individual would have no recourse in the courts for such a crime, but

it would not qualify for the enhanced sentencing under hate crime laws," said Siferd.

REPORTING CRIMES

To report a crime or discrimination against LGBT individuals call 866-962-1147 ext. 107

>> www.equalitymi.org

Reporting Crucial

But regardless of the type of crime or incident, reporting is crucial.

"In terms of reporting, I cannot stress enough how important it is. Data collection is not a sexy topic, but the importance of it cannot be understated. At the micro level, it helps us to identify trends in the types of crime and discrimination our communities face in Michigan. That, in turn, allows us to direct our resources appropriately and identify gaps in systems. At the macro level, it provides important information on what is happening to our communities. That information is often then used by policy makers and legislators to implement inclusive legal protections for LGBT and HIV-affected communities.

"Additionally, personal narratives are powerful, and often help us to illustrate our communities' needs. The data is sort of like the bones and the narratives really provide the meat on the body. We are always looking for people to share their experiences with us, so that we can be better advocates. We are also launching a "storytelling" page on our website soon, to offer people another way to share their stories and experiences with us," Siferd said.

The most recent numbers come from 2012.

The majority of survivors who reported incidents to Equality Michigan identified as cisgender - a term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth - (80 percent), gay (45 percent), male (51.09 percent).

Lesbians were the second largest reporting population at 30 percent.

Transgender identified individuals were ten percent of all reporting victims/survivors, however, anti-trans bias was indicated by 25 percent of all survivors. The types of violence directed toward trans people tends to be more brutal and is disproportionately large for such a small population, for example, two out of the three murders Equality Michigan reported to the NCAVP were transwomen of color. The number of anti-trans bias crimes increased by 32 percent from 2011 to 2012.

Thirty-six percent of reporting victims/survivors were of unknown race/ethnicity, 35 percent identified as white, 24 percent identified as African-American, four percent identified as Latino, three percent identified as Native

See Hate Crimes Reporting, page 12

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Tracking What You Don't Talk About: Intimate Partner Violence In The LGBT Community

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

An 18 year-old high school senior is facing trial in Bloomfield, CT for stabbing his partner to death after what appears to be a history of manipulation and violence against him by the 27 year-old. Local news reports said the older man had been engaged in a sexual relationship with the teen for two years, and that when the teen tried to end it, he harassed him and outed him on Facebook.

On Dec. 6 the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) issued a press release about the intimate partner violence related homicide of Matthew Rairdon, in Westbrook, Maine. According to local media reports, Patrick Milliner shot Matthew Rairdon to death in Rairdon's apartment before turning the gun on himself and committing suicide on Nov. 30. Media reports stated that Milliner was distraught over the end of their relationship.

In 2012 there were 21 reported homicides committed by LGBT partners - the highest number of intimate partner violence homicides ever reported by NCAVP.

"NCAVP is deeply concerned about the frequency of IPV related homicides and the lack of public attention these homicides receive," said Chai Jindasurat, co-director of Community Organizing and Public Advocacy. "NCAVP calls on mainstream anti-violence organizations and LGBTQ communities to prioritize LGBTQ intimate partner violence as a critical issue affecting us all, and to join our efforts to prevent, respond to, and end this violence."

Tracking violence against the LGBT community is a daunting task. Tracking incidents of violence within the community is an even greater challenge. But NCAVP remains committed to understanding and preventing the problem of intimate partner violence (IPV). Their 2012 report, which was recently released, looks at violence in 20 states, including Michigan.

IPV has many names including domestic violence, IPV, dating violence, spousal abuse and/or partner abuse. It also has many victims. In 2012, NCAVP programs received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence. This number does not reflect the scope of the problem, it simply tells the number of people who came forward and sought help or reported an event to an agency that tracks that data.

In Michigan there is only one organization that reports IPV statistics for the LGBT community. Equality Michigan heard

See Partner Violence, page 12

Creep of the Week Les Kinsolving

One of the anti-gay right's favorite arguments is that the gays are actually the intolerant ones. It's a pretty laughable premise, actually. When it is proposed that LGBT people shouldn't be protected from workplace discrimination, that same-sex couples shouldn't be allowed to get married, that transgender folks should be "put in camps," that gays should be stoned to death, LGBT people and their allies understandably protest. And then we are accused of being intolerant of our persecutors' religious or moral beliefs.

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Kinsolving

Right-wing broadcaster Les Kinsolving has an especially insulting take on "tolerance" in a guest column posted on World Net Daily on Dec. 2. Now, WND, for the uninitiated, is a rabbit hole of hate and lies for and by right-wing luminaries. The hot subject on WND right now is Nelson Mandela, and how he was a Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Person.

Kinsolving's column, however, focused on Mary Cheney and what an intolerant dyke she is.

Kinsolving writes wistfully, "There was once a day in this nation when lesbians and others with alternate sexual orientations were comparatively mute."

Something tells me that if Kinsolving could get his hands on a time machine he would take it back to 1969 to stop the Stonewall Riots.

Kinsolving continues, "There has developed a militancy that may well know no bounds, and that has torn apart the family of the former vice president of the United States."

Mary Cheney, as we all know, is a lesbian. Liz Cheney, her sister, is a candidate for the U.S. Senate. And Liz "does not believe in same-sex marriage." Which is, I should point out, a stupid thing to say since same-sex marriage is an actual thing. The same goes for people who say, "I don't believe in organized religion" because, duh, organized religion is real. So you're either saying you don't think it exists or what you really mean is that you don't practice it or like it or whatever.

For Liz's stance on "same-sex marriage," Kinsolving writes, "[S] he has been publicly denounced by her militant lesbian sister, Mary Cheney, and Mary's similarly militant lesbian mate, Heather Poe."

Poor Dick Cheney and his family torn apart by lesbian militants. Makes you wonder why terrible things happen to terrible people. But I digress.

Kinsolving reports that the Cheney sisters aren't speaking and Mary is holding out until Liz changes her tune.

He then quotes Mary as saying, "Liz's position is to treat my family as second-class citizens. That's not a position I can be 'lovingly tolerant' toward."

Kinsolving writes, "This really begs a question: How would lesbian Mary expect her sister to regard her orientation if she were polyandrous (female polygamy), a pedophile, incestuous or necrophiliac?"

Um, no, actually it does not beg that question. At all. Not only is equating lesbianism with polygamy, pedophilia, and necrophilia insulting, it's a clear attempt to dehumanize Mary Cheney and Heather Poe and to excuse Liz Cheney's shitty treatment of her family for her own political gain.

In Kinsolving's world, Mary is the intolerant person in this equation because she's calling out her sister for being an asshole instead of letting Liz slap her in the face and responding, "Thank you sister, may I have another?" I say Hail Mary for calling bullshit when she sees it.

Read Kinsolving's column at www.wnd.com/2013/12/the-intolerant-cheney-lesbian/

Judge Orders Colo. Cake-Maker To Serve Gay Couples

BY IVAN MORENO

DENVER (AP) – A baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex ceremony must serve gay couples despite his religious beliefs or face fines, a judge said Friday.

The order from administrative law judge Robert N. Spencer said Masterpiece Cakeshop in suburban Denver discriminated against a couple "because of their sexual orientation by refusing to sell them a wedding cake for their same-sex marriage."

The order says the cake-maker must "cease and desist from discriminating" against gay couples. Although the judge did not impose fines in this case, the business will face penalties if it continues to turn away gay couples who want to buy cakes.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a complaint against shop owner Jack Phillips with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission last year on behalf of Charlie Craig, 33, and David Mullins, 29. The couple was married in Massachusetts and wanted a wedding cake to celebrate in Colorado.

Mullins and Craig wanted to buy a

cake in July 2012, but when Phillips found out the cake was to celebrate a gay wedding, he turned the couple off away, according to the complaint.

Nicolle Martin, an attorney for Masterpiece Cakeshop, said the judge's order puts Phillips in an impossible position of going against his Christian faith.

"He can't violate his conscience in order to collect a paycheck," she said. "If Jack can't make wedding cakes, he can't continue to support his family. And in order to make wedding cakes, Jack must violate his belief system. That is a reprehensible choice. It is antithetical to everything America stands for."

The Civil Rights Commission is expected to certify the judge's order next week. Phillips can appeal the judge's order, and Martin said they're considering their next steps.

Mullins said he and Craig are "ecstatic."

"To a certain extent, though, I don't think that this is necessarily a surprise," he said. "We thought it was pretty clear cut that he had discriminated against us."

Mullins said he hopes the "decision will help ensure that no one else will experience this kind of discrimination

again in Colorado."

A similar is pending in Washington state, where a florist is accused of refusing service for a same-sex wedding. In New Mexico, the state Supreme Court ruled in August that an Albuquerque business was wrong to decline to photograph a same-sex couple's commitment ceremony.

Colorado has a constitutional ban against gay marriage but allows civil unions. The civil union law, which passed earlier this year, does not provide religious protections for businesses.

"At first blush, it may seem reasonable that a private business should be able to refuse service to anyone it chooses," Judge Spencer said in his written order. "This view, however, fails to take into account the cost to society and the hurt caused to persons who are denied service simply because of who they are."

ACLU attorney Amanda Goad said no one is asking Phillips to change his religious beliefs.

"But treating gay people differently because of who they are is discrimination, plain and simple," she said.

School Official Backs Transgender Remark

DENVER (AP) – A Colorado school board member who said she has no regrets about saying transgender students should use locker rooms that conform with their biological sex has vowed to keep pushing for schools to ignore court rulings on the transgender issue.

Delta School District 50J school board member Kathy Svenson told The Associated Press on Friday that transgender boys would pose a serious safety risk to girls in girls locker rooms, and allowing transgender girls into a boys locker room would raise privacy issues.

Svenson, 73, is in the second year of her four-year term but said she won't run for re-election because she would like to start her own school where she could set her own rules regarding transgender and homosexual students.

Svenson said she doesn't believe

there is such a thing as people who are transgender, the Denver Post reported. Svenson said they are simply confused.

Svenson said she was flooded with criticism from activists about her comment, even though no transgender students have asked to use the girls locker room at the school.

In Colorado, transgender people are allowed by law to access public or workplace restrooms designated for the gender that matches their identity. That policy was affirmed in June, when the Colorado Civil Rights Division ruled that a 6-year-old transgender girl, who was born male, could use the facilities for girls in her Fountain school.

Svenson said she was talking about the use of school locker rooms, but the law applies to all public spaces that are gender specific, including locker rooms, said Krista Whipple, president

of the Gender Identity Center of Colorado.

Whipple said she understands some people are uncomfortable with that idea. She said Svenson's comments reflect society's attachment to defining identity based on anatomy.

"Anatomy doesn't define us as a person, who we are on the inside defines who we are," Whipple said.

During a public meeting in Delta in October, in response to questions about school policy, Svenson said, "there would have to be castration to pass something like this around here." She told the AP on Friday that she was only trying to make a point in an effort to warn the school board it should come up with a policy before it was forced to face the issue.

Some people in Delta County have called for the recall of Svenson, although no formal action has been taken.

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Between Ourselves: Meet Rudy Serra, State Rep. Candidate



Ferndalian Rudy Serra is running for State Representative for the 27th District, which includes Berkley, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge and Royal Oak Twp. There will be a primary on Aug. 5, 2014 and a general election Nov. 4, 2014.

1 What made you decide to run for State Rep?

People need someone in government on their side. I decided to run because I have a proven record of hard work and successful leadership creating good private sector jobs, supporting LGBT rights, economic justice, quality public education, environmental protection and the interests of children, women and working families. Inexperience in Lansing has made many of our problems worse. I am the only candidate in the race with background in both law and government.

2 What do you feel are the biggest issues facing our state?

The biggest issue is jobs. Our unemployment rate is still above the national average at over nine percent. Michigan is one of only four states in the nation with no tax incentives for job creation, investment, or research and development.

Lansing needs to stop the union busting and concentrate on getting people back to work. We should be investing in repairing our public infrastructure and in fully funding public education. Nearly 40 percent of our public university graduates leave to find jobs. We need to encourage job growth and to attract high-end employers. We need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage, and we need to buy Michigan products and use Michigan services.

3 Do you have any specific projects or legislation that you want to work on?

I want to repeal the lame-duck union busting laws rammed through by the Republicans. I want to make sure that all of our public schools are fully funded and expanded to include pre-school education and college courses. I want to repeal the "Gross Indecency" and "Crimes Against Nature" statutes and amend The Elliott-



Rudy Serra with Miranda.

Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity. I want to amend the Michigan Environmental Protection Act so that any person can once again go to court to stop the poisoning of our air and water. We need a Consumer Protection Act that applies to businesses, whether or not they are licensed. I want to end term limitations, and I want to make registering to vote and casting a ballot easier. There are so many vital issues facing our state that you should review my website at Vote4RudySerra.com.

4 Who do you think is your toughest competition thus far?

My toughest competition is voter apathy. We have around 70,000 voters in the 27th District, but less than 20 percent of them vote in primary elections. Too many voters think they can't make a difference or that all the candidates are the same. I want those voters to know that I will listen to their concerns and that I am committed to being their voice in Lansing. I've experienced loss, hardship and discrimination, and I know what that's like. I was raised by a divorced mom who struggled with the same

workplace inequality that many women still face. I cared for elderly parents, one of whom died under hospice care in my home. I know the challenges faced by people with disabilities and families who struggle to stay together despite illness and aging.

5 Do you have any LGBT specific issues that you hope to work on?

Absolutely! Like I said, I want to amend Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act so that it protects LGBT people by adding "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." I want to repeal our obsolete anti-gay criminal laws that we still have on the books even after the U.S. Supreme Court declared them to be unconstitutional. I want to continue the fight for marriage equality and adoption laws that respect all families. I want to decriminalize HIV status, and promote the best public health practices that effectively fight dangerous diseases. Our "big-brother" Republican Secretary of State who is denying transgender people accurate birth certificates and other vital papers needs to be stopped.

See Rudy Serra, page 11

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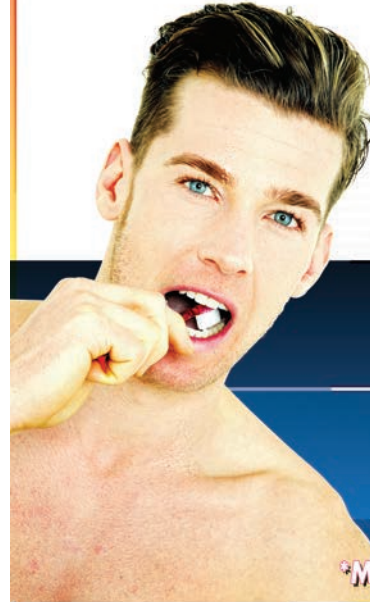
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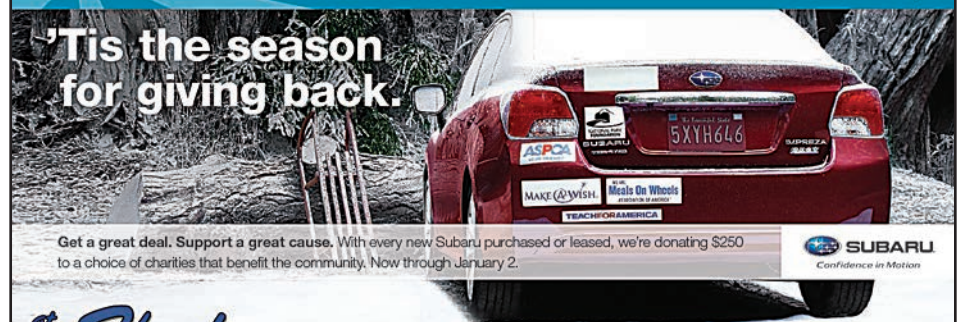
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Mandela Remembered

"Nelson Mandela tore down oppression, united a rainbow nation, and always walked arm-in-arm with his LGBT brothers and sisters - and with all people - toward freedom. Though every man, woman and child who seeks justice around the world mourns this loss, his vision of an equal future lives on undimmed."

- **Chad Griffin, Human Rights Campaign President** As noted by, the protections afforded to gay South Africans in their constitution are a degree of legal protection that LGBT Americans still do not have.

"Every one of us who continues the fight for equality and civil rights in our own communities labors in the shadows of this man who withstood imprisonment as a consequence of his courageous leadership and grew only stronger, more resolute and more dignified."

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal

"Nelson Mandela was an inspiration to the millions of people who yearn for freedom across the world. With great personal sacrifice, he fought Apartheid and state-sanctioned racism. His principled approach, his willingness to reach out to former enemies, led to the introduction of multi-party democracy and real change in South Africa."

Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

As we celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela, I want to make sure he is heralded for doing something no other head of government has ever done. As the first president of post-apartheid South Africa in 1996, Mandela ushered in that nation's new constitution, which included protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation. The first of its kind.

Jonathan Capehart, Washington Post editorial board

"Around the world today, men and women are still imprisoned for their political beliefs, and are still persecuted for what they look like, and how they worship, and who they love."

U.S. President Barack Obama said in his eulogy for Nelson Mandela at First National Bank Stadium in Johannesburg.

My Message From Madiba

When I heard of Nelson Mandela's death, my thoughts went back to that day - June 28, 1990 - when I hurried up Michigan Avenue towards Tiger Stadium to catch a glimpse of this man who has come to mean so much to the world. I knew about apartheid and Mandela but quite frankly was more concerned with the issues in my own life than what was going on in South Africa.

I was an African American, single mother, living a semi-closeted life working in an environment where none of these aspects of my life were valued, appreciated or wanted. In a city with a powerful Black Mayor, like so many residents, I felt powerless. In this land of opportunity, I saw little opportunity in the promise of America - well it didn't hold hope for me. Let's just say I didn't have a chip on my shoulder, I had a friggin boulder on mine, heavy with the weight of discrimination, disenfranchisement and inequality.

I worked, surrounded by others who came to MY city every day, making the big bucks only to scurry home to the safety of the suburbs while casting aspersions on the sea of Black faces they passed on the way. They didn't care about us - this sea of poverty, inequality, desperation that was predominantly African American surrounded by an affluent suburban minority.

So you see, I was more concerned about this American version of apartheid than what was going on in South Africa. But life has a way of reminding us that we are far more connected than separate and lessons for living a life of purpose can come from around the corner or across the globe.

We have all heard the accounts of how Mandela rose to prominence in the African National Congress. He was repeatedly arrested and in 1962 was arrested, convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the state, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Mandela served 27 years. An international campaign lobbied for his release, which was granted in 1990. Just three months after being released Mandela came to Detroit.

Now the bigwigs where I was employed had been given special passes to Tiger Stadium, but only one (the lone progressive) wanted to attend, so rather than "waste the tickets" it was given to me (the lone African American) which, of course, only made this angry black woman angrier especially since my request to leave early just to meet and be with my friends had been denied. Now they offered me the scraps from the table.

But I took those tickets, and as I hurried up Michigan Avenue, I mentally prepared myself to hear angry words, words calling out the oppressors, words of righteous indignation, even calls for revenge. After all, if just sitting eight hours a day five days a week in my personal hell filled me with rage, I could only imagine what a man 27 years a prisoner must feel. His words would amplify my feelings, speak for me, and even inspire my brothers and sisters to rise up against the injustices we faced on a daily basis.

I did not find angry words that day in Tiger Stadium. I found a great warrior, a lion with words of gratitude, appreciation for our shared struggle, and



Viewpoint

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

I did not find angry words that day in Tiger Stadium. I found a great warrior, a lion with words of gratitude, appreciation for our shared struggle, and solidarity.

solidarity. Mandela said he wished he could leave the stage and join us in the stands and embrace us "one and all."

Then he quoted the lyrics to a Marvin Gay song tying it to the struggle of Black South Africans against the ruling minority. "Brother, brother, there's far too many of you dying. Mother, mother there's far too many of you crying." There were raised fists, but not in anger, raised in solidarity.

I left Tiger Stadium singing "What's Going On?" and thinking about that man - Nelson Mandela. One man who took a stand against injustice; who committed to ending injustice not only "by any means necessary" but at whatever personal cost/risk was necessary; A man who after 27 years of incarceration did not

emerge beaten or defeated, but emerged even more dedicated, more determined to the cause of human rights. Dignity, grace, unwavering commitment and dogged determination - that's what was going on, that was his message.

Nelson Mandela went on to become South Africa's president from 1994-1999. His government focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid by tackling institutionalized racism, poverty, inequality, and fostering racial reconciliation. Through his foundation he worked at combating HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Although it wasn't something he was always comfortable with, during his presidency South Africa formed a constitution in 1996 which outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation. That became the basis for judicial action which ultimately led to Parliament legislating in favor of same-sex marriage. South Africa is a global leader on LGBT rights

Mandela was not perfect and his politics often made for very "strange bedfellows," but he lived a life of purpose for which he rightly deserves our gratitude and praise.

Injustice knows no boundaries. It can be as blatant as South Africa's apartheid; as brutal as the water hoses, lynchings and bombings during the civil rights struggles; as devastating as racism or as insidious trans and homophobia, but as long as we allow injustice and intolerance to exist in any corner of the world we remain prisoners of our own making.

They may have imprisoned Mandela for 27 years, but his spirit was always free. On that sunny day in June, 1990 I heard the message of Madiba and my spirit again soared towards the freedom of the rainbow.

Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. Follow her at www.mychangeiam.com and www.twitter.com/mychangeiam



► Rudy Serra

Continued from p. 8

6 What have been some of your biggest accomplishments in politics?

I served as Judge on the third busiest trial court in the nation. I wrote the proposal and collected most of the petition signatures for Ferndale's first Civil Rights Ordinance back in 1991. I led the effort to get Justice Marilyn Kelly elected to the Michigan Supreme Court. As Chairman of the Executive Clemency Advisory Council for the State of Michigan, I helped correct injustice and increase the efficiency of our corrections system. I proved that I have the courage to do justice even when it isn't popular.

I helped to create one of the most successful economic development projects in Michigan, bringing hundreds of well-paid, private sector jobs right here to our district. While I served as County Commissioner, I repealed the "local jail fee" which saved cities in this district hundreds of millions of dollars over the past two decades. I wrote, sponsored, and passed the ordinance that requires Oakland County to buy American made products and I did these things while the Republicans were in control of the county commission.

7 What is FernCare and why is that project important to you?

FernCare is a free medical clinic located in Ferndale on E Nine Mile Road. It's an asset to all our communities, and I am very lucky to serve as Vice-Chairman of the board. The clinic has provided free medical services to more than 1,500 of our neighbors from all over Michigan who do not qualify for Medicaid, have no insurance and have no other source of medical care. You do not have to be a resident of Oakland County to qualify for services at FernCare. Our services are provided by highly qualified, dedicated volunteers. I believe that feeding the hungry, defending the oppressed, helping the poor and healing the sick give a meaning and purpose to life that transcends material success. As an attorney, I've been a voice for people who might not otherwise have a voice. As a FernCare supporter, I can provide care for people who might not otherwise have care.

“ I believe that feeding the hungry, defending the oppressed, helping the poor and healing the sick give a meaning and purpose to life that transcends material success. As an attorney, I've been a voice for people who might not otherwise have a voice. ”

– Rudy Serra

8 On the 36th District Court you had a reputation for clearing cases at a phenomenal rate, often stepping in to clear the docket for the other judges as well. What drove you to be so efficient and how were you able to do that without sacrificing the quality of your work?

When you're doing something you love, it doesn't seem like work. I have a passion for justice, and I love learning new things. The job of a judge is never boring. Every case I heard was unique. When you enjoy what you're doing, it's easy to do it well.

As a State Representative I will have the opportunity to actually change the law instead of just applying it. We need lawmakers who understand what it's like to enforce the laws that inexperienced legislators pass with no idea of how they will impact average people.

9 Who has inspired you in your political career?

My inspiration comes from too many sources to mention them all. My father was a U.S. Army Airborne Ranger in Special Forces in World War 2, Korea and Vietnam. He was a combat foot soldier. He was the only infantryman in history to be awarded The China War Memorial. The most important influence in my life was that he admired me almost as much as I admired him.

Judge Donna Milhouse of the 36th District Court taught me (long before I was ever a Judge) to look every person in the eye, smile, and say "good morning" to them by name. Justice Marilyn Kelly of the Michigan Supreme Court taught me that one can be true to their principles and also maintain intellectual integrity and acute legal analysis.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a modern figure who showed me that there are values worth dying for, just as Jesus of Nazareth had proved centuries before. My grandmother predicted that John F. Kennedy would be murdered months before it happened "because he wants to help the poor people" and, again, the lesson was that there are principles worth dedicating your life to – and giving your life for. I am inspired by people with the courage to do what's right even when it isn't popular.

10 Anything else we should let readers know?

I didn't come from a privileged background. My family members included union members and service members and relatives who suffered unemployment and underemployment. I worked my way through school and benefited from government programs like work-study and employment training, many of which no longer exist. I believe in personal responsibility, and I also believe that government has an important role in providing education, protecting equality and promoting opportunity. My vocation is advocacy. A State Representative's role is to be an advocate. I'm committed to doing my best to help as many people as possible without forgetting where I came from. Winning any election is a team effort and I need your help. Please visit my web site at vote4rudyserra.com to learn more and let me know how I can help you. Also, please consider volunteering or contributing to help me achieve that goal.

Learn more at Vote4RudySerra.com. Watch www.pridesource.com for news on all of 2014 candidates.

Mary Censored XXX-mas



Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I hate to play the Gay Grinch Who Stole Christmas, but there's a movement afoot by the Southern Comfort Baptists to do away with all suspected gay references in Christmas carols and holiday traditions.

Unless we act with a united front (and a well-padded backside), "Don we now our GAY apparel" is doomed. "God rest ye, merry gentlemen" is a goner. Gold frankincense & myrrh (along with patchouli) are out. Mince pie and sugar plum you-know-whats are things of the past.

Rainbow ribbons and wrapping paper are taboo. Red stockings for the chimney will be minus silver belles or D&G designer fur trim. Dancer, Prancer, Cupid are dead ducks. Substitute: Butch, Bouncer, Bimbo.

Yes, Christmas may never be its gay old self again. And Mr. Gailey will forever be a delete from "Miracle on 34th Street." (How gay, by the way, is Kris Kringle? He even looks a bit, well, you know, suspect. And what's all this fascination with kids, anyhow? Has he ever had an authentic FBI security check?)

For readers who are in the dark about the Southern Comfort Baptists - a boisterous offshoot of gay bashing, Disney boycotting, 15-million-strong Southern Baptists - the Southern Comforters swarm like a plague of biblical locust. And they're two-fisted when it comes to minding other people's business and sampling other people's Texas Tea.

Every neighborhood has one or two Southern Comforters livening things up way into the wee-wee sabbath hours. (I passed one leaning against a lamppost and singing the doxology to my neighbor's calico just the other morning. The cat has yet to return saved or unsaved. Neutered or otherwise.)

Southern Comforters are headquartered in Myopic Flats TX, home of the world-famous batter-dipped, low-cal Gila Burger. ("The burger with a bite to die for!") They broadcast over radio station TPARTY-AM, and their TV program, "The Church Key Hour" is syndicated worldwide.

Southern Comforters perform what they call brinkmanship baptism. ("We don't sprinkle. We dunk, count to ten very slowly, and ask God for a miracle.") They don't smoke weed, boogie down, play Bridge, skinny-dip, practice Feng Shui, eat kosher mayonnaise, or play kissy face on the first and last date. Their motto: "One taste of 100-proof heaven goes a long, long way."

More than likely you've seen a controversial full-page ad the Southern Comforters took out in National Expirer tabloid recently (appearing next to Lady Gaga's 'candid camera cuties'). "SANTA: A GAY AGENDA PLOT! Homos put the X in X-Mas! Are There 'Toys' Under Your Tree? Is Your Sock 'Hung' by the Chimney with 'Care?' Beware! The GAGs are coming!"

In case you're too busy to speed read the scandal sheets at checkout counters, Santa really gets a few below-the-belt punches from these burning bush holy rollers: "It's bad enough the Gay Agenda Gang (GAG) has shoved TV's Burt & Ernie and Tinky Winky down our collective throats, but the real Trojan Horse is Old St. Nick himself!

"It's true! Santa, who wears a leather belt and boots, sports a beard and a big beer belly, is what GAGs call a card-carrying 'bear'. His red suit is color-coded to convey a deep-seated message. (Years ago, gay men wore bright red ties. And those unmentionable hankies!)

"Oh, yes! While there may be a Mrs. Santa (a 'beard' of another kind!) what grown man in his right mind breaks bread with elves, second cousins to hobbits, twinkles and fairies?

"Be forewarned. Sitting on Santa's cozy knee and telling him you're naughty or nice - when God knows you're a loathsome, rotten, stinking sinner- is an invitation to damnation. Repent before it's too late! Santa, and all he stands for (which includes same-sex marriage), is anti-American, anti-family values, anti-Rebiblican, and a GAG plot to boot. Amen."

PS: The less said about Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, the better. Mary Christmas.

Charles@pridesource.com, Facebook, too

BRIEFS

MOSCOW

Russia State News Agency Gets Controversial Chief

(AP) President Vladimir Putin on Monday appointed a controversial news anchor to head a restructured state news agency, a move signaling the Kremlin's intention to tighten control over the media and use it increasingly for propaganda of ultraconservative views.

Dmitry Kiselyov, who spent much of his weekly news program on state Rossiya television maligning homosexuality and speculating about Western-led conspiracies, was put in charge of all the resources of the former RIA Novosti, which was renamed Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today).

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

First Australian Same-Sex Weddings Start

(AP) A state lawmaker and his partner dressed in matching suits and ties embraced and kissed in front of Australia's Parliament House early Saturday in one of the nation's first same-sex marriages.

Stephen Dawson, a 38-year-old member of the opposition Labor Party in the Western Australian Parliament, and partner Dennis Liddelov, 39, flew 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) across Australia to be among the first gay couples to marry in ceremonies in the national capital Canberra on Saturday — the earliest opportunity under the provincial government's landmark gay marriage laws.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Gay Weddings 17 percent of Marriages

(AP) Gay weddings made up 17 percent of marriages in Washington this past year, the first year gay marriages were legal in the state, state officials reported Wednesday.

About 7,071 same-sex couples got married in Washington between December 6, 2012, and the most recent complete month of data, September 2013. There were 42,408 total marriages in the state during that time, according to the Washington State Department of Health.

So far, most of Washington state's same-sex marriages, 62 percent, were between two women.

BUTTE, MONTANA

Drafting Anti-Discrimination Ordinance

(AP) The Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners has asked the county attorney to draft an ordinance that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Montana Standard reports - the council approved the motion Dec. 4.

The draft ordinance is expected to be similar to one approved in Missoula in 2010 to protect people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered from housing and hiring discrimination.

Helena has a similar ordinance, but it includes a provision that says in restrooms or places like athletic club locker rooms people should use facilities designated for their anatomical sex.

Commissioner John Sorich suggested last week that the Butte ordinance include that provision, but the decision was made to work from Missoula's ordinance.

► Partner Violence

Continued from p. 5

from 12 victims, four gay, four lesbian, and four heterosexual, with two identifying as transgender.

There are several barriers to reporting. "There is no question in my mind that it is definitely underreported. I would say the single biggest factor in underreporting is lack of knowledge and understanding that IPV actually even exists in our communities. There's the myth of 'mutual combat' i.e. a fair fight; the myth that women can't be batterers; and the myth that IPV doesn't exist in our communities," said Equality Michigan Victim's Services Director Yvonne Siferd. "There is also a certain amount of silencing within our communities because of the way we are often portrayed by mainstream media. We don't want to confirm the mainstream narrative of LGBT people as predatory. Another issue that is distinct from heterosexual domestic violence is that in the LGBT communities, we often share the same support systems as our partners which makes it even more difficult to talk about as the survivor risks losing that support system by talking to mutual friends who may not want to believe that their friend is abusive, thereby alienating the survivor even further."

Police Response Issues

Another problem is one seen in the police responses to reporting of domestic situations. According to the report, "The most alarming findings of 2012 are the reports of police hostility and misconduct toward LGBTQ-identified survivors. Of the six who reported IPV incidents to the police in 2012, two reported excessive force by the police, one experienced physical abuse by the police and three reported unjust arrests. This trend of police hostility toward LGBT and HIV-affected people underscores an overall trend in increased police misconduct," the NCAVP report said.

In the recent Maine murder/suicide area LGBT agencies stressed the challenges. "Matthew Rairdon's homicide is a tragedy," said Kim Fountain, executive director of Vermont's RU12? LGBTQ Community Center. "All too often, LGBTQ domestic violence cases are not treated as such because

► Hate Crimes Reporting

Continued from p. 5

American and five percent identified as "other."

In terms of types of victimization, 31 percent of victims/survivors reported discrimination of some sort to Equality Michigan, which was the most reported type of victimization. Fourteen percent of victims/survivors reported verbal harassment in person, 12 percent reported threats/intimidation, 12 percent reported financial

officers lack the training necessary to identify the violence correctly. We are encouraged to see that Maine's law enforcement is treating this case as intimate partner violence."

Across the 20 reporting states there has been an increase in reporting of incidents to the police, although the number is still low. "In 2012 only 16.5 percent of all survivors reported information about interacting with the police, an increase from 2011 (10.7 percent). Of those who did interact, 54.3 percent of survivors reported the IPV incidents to the police. However in nearly one-third of the LGBT-specific IPV cases reported to the police (28.4 percent), the survivor was arrested instead of the abusive partner."

Only five percent of survivors sought orders of protection against their abuser, and in 76.7 percent of the cases these were granted.

Sorting out domestic conflicts can be complicated for the police, and even for trained advocates like those at Equality Michigan. "When someone calls about this, we first and foremost do our best to determine their status as victim or abuser, as many abusers identify themselves as victims. When we make the determination that someone is the actual victim, we do our best to provide referrals to LGBT affirming and competent service providers," Siferd said.

"Sadly, there is a severe lack of resources and affirming agencies in Michigan, so referrals can sometimes be quite difficult."

Agencies Need Training

New regulations require that agencies who receive funding from the Office on Violence Against Women provide inclusive services to LGBT people. This means that more agencies will be expected to serve the LGBT community, though it also increases the risk that survivors may reach out to an agency that isn't prepared to handle their specific circumstances.

"Most of these places are going to be accepting LGBT survivors without the appropriate training for their staff because they are now mandated to do so," Siferd said. "Equality Michigan is committed to reaching out to and working with these agencies to ensure that LGBT survivors aren't re-traumatized, but this is going to be a long process. There are a lot of very

victimization (such as blackmail i.e. 'if you don't give me \$, I'll tell everyone you are gay'), nine percent reported some type of harassment, five percent reported physical violence, three percent reported being stalked and two percent reported sexual violence.

Earlier this year the National Coalition of Antiviolence Programs Annual Report was issued, giving statistics nationwide. For more information visit www.avp.org/about-avp/coalitions-a-collaborations/82-national-coalition-of-anti-violence-programs.

In addition to tracking the number of

significant differences in terms of LGBT versus heterosexual Intimate Partner Violence - the way it manifests, tactics, etc.

"For example, in the traditional domestic violence model, there are a lot of assumptions based on gender, i.e. the woman is the survivor and the male is the abuser. This gets complicated when the survivor and abuser are of the same gender. For example, a lesbian abuser can easily take advantage of these gendered assumptions by 'playing the victim' so that she can locate her abused partner.

"Mirroring language rather than assuming sexual orientation or gender identity is one tool that intake staff can use to maintain open communication with all survivors, rather than the assumption that everyone is heterosexual/cisgender. Additionally, many shelters are not set up for male or transgender clients and don't know the first thing about their needs. Little things like language and bathroom accessibility can help make a place more inclusive, and are good starts, but what really needs to happen are in-depth and multiple trainings for all staff."

Equality Michigan provides trainings for nonprofits, IPV service providers and police departments in how to handle cases of IPV in the LGBT community.

HAVEN is an Oakland County based nonprofit that works to end violence in all communities. They provide support for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. In cases of LGBT IPV, Haven will refer victims to Equality Michigan for reporting, and HAVEN also does outreach to the LGBT community to educate them on the signs of abuse and how to get help.

Resources

Learn the signs of abuse at <https://www.haven-oakland.org/get-help/step-by-step/is-this-abuse>

Learn how to be a supportive friend to a victim of abuse at <https://www.haven-oakland.org/get-help/support-victim>

Report IPV and other acts of violence, discrimination, abuse etc at <http://www.equalitymi.org/report>.

To learn more about the NCAVP visit their website at www.avp.org/about-avp/coalitions-a-collaborations/82-national-coalition-of-anti-violence-programs

incidents, Equality Michigan can provide mental health referrals, victim advocacy and support, legal referrals, referrals to safe spaces, and other help depending on the situation. They also do anti-violence and anti-discrimination trainings for various groups, and they are Michigan's state-wide LGBT advocacy organization.

For more on Equality Michigan go to www.equalitymi.org. To report a crime or discrimination against LGBT individuals call 866-962-1147 ext. 107.

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MY 8 MINUTES WITH BRITNEY SPEARS

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

The Pop Icon, Unfiltered And Gayer Than Ever

It's Britney, bitch.

No, really, it is. She's on the phone. And Britney Spears – the meek, reserved, media-shy entertainer – doesn't get on the phone with press very often these days.

She's speaking to me from L.A. on a busy day full of frenzied promo leading up to her eighth release, "Britney Jean," when she drops the word that elicited eye rolls from some in the gay community.

The word is "adorable," and Spears – who, in a radio interview with San Francisco radio station 99.7 NOW FM, used it to describe her beauty team (they're also "hilarious," she said at the time) – mentions it to me when I ask her

how wild the gay boys go when they're in the midst of their pop princess.

"They're adorable," says Spears, 32. "They're absolutely adorable."

It seems like an appropriate time to tell her how that "adorable and hilarious" comment went viral and rubbed some the wrong way.

"Wait, what? Who felt the other way?" she asks, sincerely concerned she's offended people, and even a little lost. You get the impression Britney Spears doesn't Google herself.

So, I fill her in.

"I would never say anything to be mean to them. I love my gay fans. Gay people are always usually my best friends in the whole world," she says. "I completely adore them."

Considering the pop star's clout in the gay community, it's obviously mutual. From the then-17-year-old's sexually suggestive breakout hit "... Baby One More Time" – when the once-Mouseketeer, dressed in that iconic Catholic schoolgirl getup, merged childhood innocence with the onset of sexual desire – to "Toxic," easily one of the greatest gay club jams of the aughts, Spears has influenced the queens and queers of the dance floor as much as they've influenced her.

"I get inspiration from them on almost all of my songs," Spears says of her gay fans. "They're somewhat girls, so it's so inspiring to do stuff that they like to hear, like the cool 'in' stuff. Whatever I do for each record is

definitely inspired by them.”

If you’ve heard 2007’s defiantly bold “Blackout” and its pop-dance follow-up “Circus,” and then, obviously, “Femme Fatale,” you know Britney isn’t just full of it. These are really gay albums. But her gayest? Is it “Britney Jean”?

“I would say so, yes,” Spears says, sounding almost unsure, as if the gayness exists equitably on all her releases (and, really, it does). “I just feel like it has that feeling. You can’t really put your finger on it. It just really has that feeling of ... that.”

“Work Bitch” has the feeling of “that” – of gay – so much so that Spears herself has said it’s a salute to her queer fans. The title is “a term of endearment” and was inspired by gay patter among her pals. What other queer street slang has she picked up from them?

She snickers, letting her Louisiana drawl fully flex. “I don’t really know that much. I mean, I hang out with gays all the time. They always surprise me. It changes weekly, you know?”

“The slang you learn?” I ask, just to be clear. “Yeah.”

So maybe Britney doesn’t watch “RuPaul’s Drag Race” on the regular, maybe she isn’t out getting all crazy at the gay clubs (she tells me that being a mom doesn’t allow for nights out with her friends at queer bars, but before children: “Yeah, always”), but part of her – a part she’s not really addressed until now – can empathize with the plight of growing up gay.

“Alien,” one of the most self-reflective tracks on “Britney Jean,” alludes to her own feelings of being an outcast, of being alone, of being Britney Spears: “Had to get used to the world I was on / While yet still unsure if I knew where I belong / That was then, like an alien.”

“The song is basically about when you’re all alone and you feel like you’re alienated from the world,” Spears says. “I think it’s human nature; we all innately do that sometimes and keep to ourselves, and that’s what the song is about.”

It was during her second release, 2000’s “Oops! ... I Did It Again,” with its self-empowerment mantra “Stronger,” that she recognized a big gay following. “I really started noticing more coming to the shows,” Spears recalls. “People were emulating my clothes and wearing the same outfits, and it was just really fun.”

Through the years, she’s met many of these gay boys after shows, where, she says, “a couple of them have told me about their heartbreaks and shared stories about their boyfriends, which has been really kind of sweet.”

I tell her we relate to people who fall down and get right back up. Britney, for all her success, has been to the top, but not without seeing the bottom. Between 2006 and 2008, Spears divorced Kevin Federline, fought tirelessly for the custody of her two boys and sobered up at a drug rehab facility. There was also the panty-less partying, the British accent, the head-shaving and the time she attacked a paparazzo with an umbrella. Life was looking bleak for Britney then, and she knew it. On

“Piece of Me,” a track off “Blackout,” Spears called herself “Miss Bad Media Karma.”

But when she talks about the time she felt alienated, there’s no mention of this more recent regrettable history. It’s clear – not just from our chat, but the rare times she’s been on the phone with a journalist in the last five years – that she doesn’t care to look back. For the most part, anyway.

“Since I was in high school, I’ve been kind of a shy person,” Spears admits to me.

I ask, “Would you say you felt like an outsider then?”

Her voice drops. “A little bit, yeah.”

Because she felt different as a kid, but also, of course, musically – Spears, despite her public ups and downs, has been a mainstay in the queer scene for the last 15 years – I wonder if Britney considers herself what many call her: a gay icon.

“I don’t know about that,” she says, surprisingly frank. “But I know I do have gay fans.”

I remind her that a large part of the community sees her as a gay icon.

Her response? “That’s nice. I don’t know about that.”

But surely she’s thought about her status in the gay community, right?

“Not really, no.”

What about equal marriage? Would Britney like to see her gay friends – she tells me later, via email, that she has an “amazing” relationship with them, many of which are her dancers – get married?

“Yeah,” she says. Then silence. (I give her the opportunity to elaborate over email after our phone chat: “Yeah, it would be a special moment.”)

“So you believe gay people deserve equal rights?”

“Yeah,” she assures. (Via email: “I think everyone should be treated equally.”)

At this point, seven minutes into the conversation, a publicist grabs Britney’s attention. She tells me to hang on a second. Because she’s getting whisked away for a “Britney Jean” listening session that she’s already late to, “This has to be the last question,” she informs, sounding distracted.

I ask about Las Vegas, where she’s launching her two-year residency, “Britney: Piece of Me,” at Planet Hollywood.

Expect half-naked men – she says, because obviously – but also “look forward to a really good time. They’re gonna definitely feel like they’re a part of a show.”

Milking every second of my scheduled 10 minutes with her by sneaking in one final question, I ask her which girl kiss she preferred: the cheek peck Rihanna gave her during the 2011 Billboard Awards, or the legendary Madonna lip-lock at the Video Music Awards?

There’s brief silence, a “thank you” and then a sudden click. That’s it. Our eight minutes together.

And just like that, Britney Spears gives exactly what she promised: a piece of her.

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Photo: Alexander George

Scary Stories

Mel B Talks The Gay 'Eye,' A Spice Girls Reunion & Falling In Love With A Woman

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Mel B will tell you what she wants, what she really, really wants: to get back to being Scary Spice again. Not that the pop star, known as the Spice Girls' wild child, ever got away from her alter ego. But even with a solo song out now – "For Once in My Life," her first single in eight years – Mel B is ready to reunite musically with her gal pals.

In our interview, the Spice Girl chatted about the big part the group's gay following played in their career, the time she fell in love with a woman, and the female artists du jour – and their girl power, of course.

A gay club you were at recently with Mel C couldn't stop playing your new single.

They played it by surprise and I was like, "Woo-hoo!" Mel C and I made our own little selfie video of it. It was a nice little surprise.

How have the gays reacted to the single?

So far, so good. The reaction overall has been really supportive, and it's been really humbling because I've done no promotion for it. I haven't got a big record label behind me. Nothing like that. I'm just doing it all myself, and it's been really well received. I mean, I've had not just the support of fans but the support of celebrities, from Ellen DeGeneres to Kim Kardashian to Tony Hawk. It's been quite a nice little roller-coaster ride.

Well, we missed you.

I know! It's been a loooong time, that's for sure.

Why does now feel like the right time for your first solo single in eight years?

I got the bug doing "America's Got Talent," where I've been watching people perform week in and week out since March. I literally got in the studio

and just started recording with my producer and my writer and it developed from there. I was saying, "I don't want to wait to promote it. I just wanna get it out there now." And I just put it out there with no promotion, no nothing.

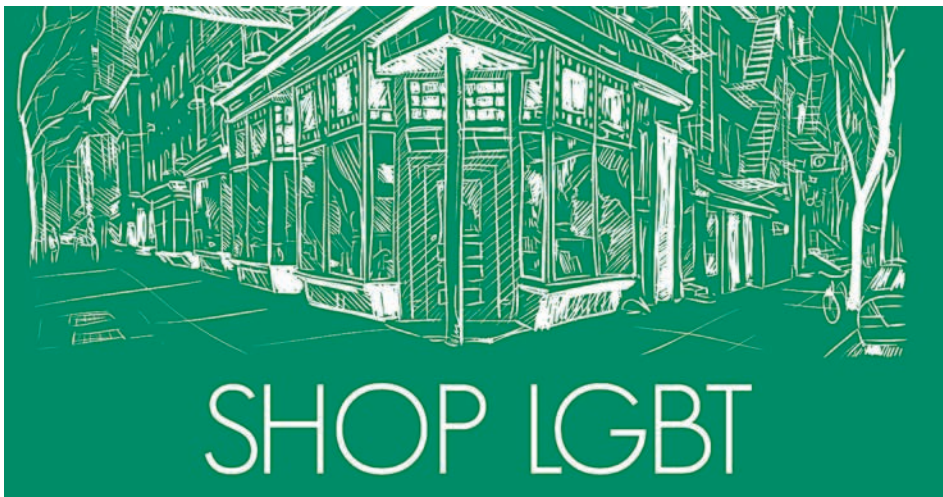
Should we expect a full album?

I wouldn't say a full album, because I don't wanna put that pressure on myself. I'm gonna be in the studio and I wanna do music, period, so it is what it is. I've got that passion back – that's what I wanna focus on this year and all of next year, and as much as possible.

How did you end up on Wisteria Lane – the fictional setting of "Desperate Housewives" – for the music video?

Well, why not? I only had nine hours to film the whole video shoot, and I was a big fan of "Desperate Housewives"

See Scary Spice, page 27



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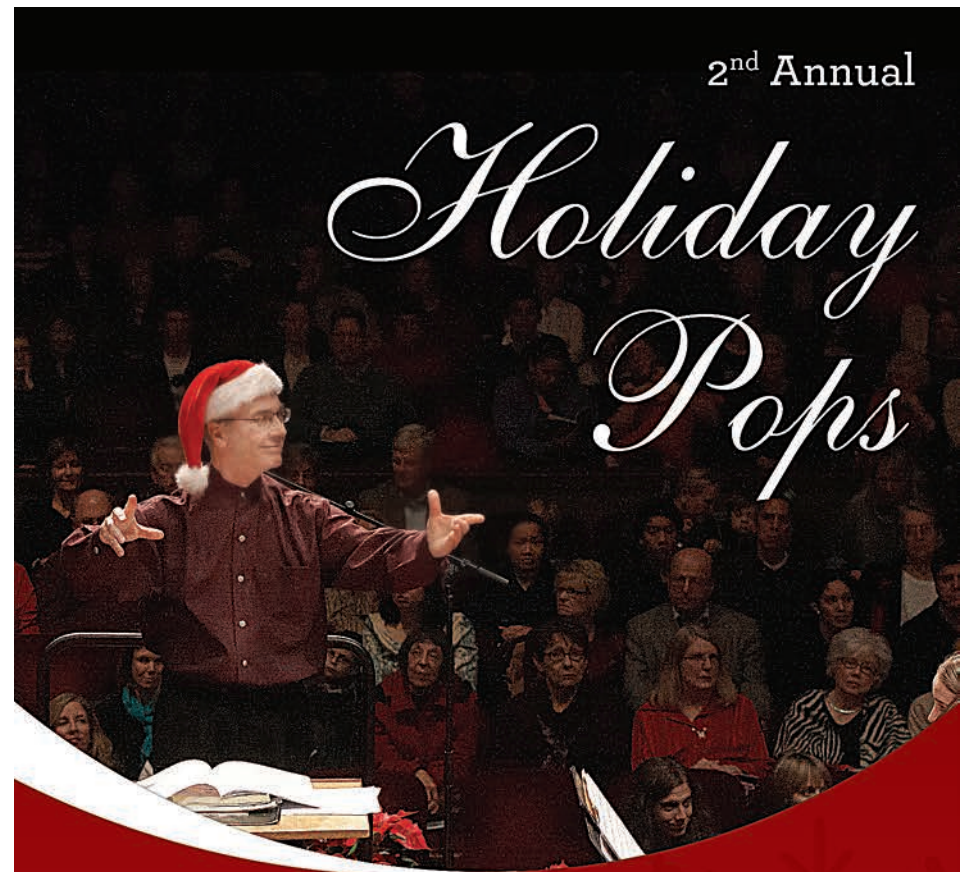
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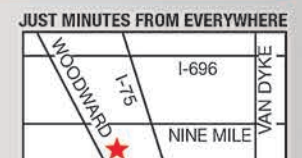
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Warning: Don't Try These Amazing 'Cirque' Acts At Home

BY DANA CASADEI

Twice a week I struggle through a basic yoga class trying to perfect the plank and downward facing dog. Some of my classmates are more advanced, making their bodies look far more graceful than mine, which shakes like the ground during a tornado. After seeing the flexibility, and sheer strength, of those in "Cirque Dreams Holidaze" at the Fox Theatre, my more advanced yoga classmates are not going to seem nearly as impressive next week.

Where to begin to describe the brainchild of director and creator Neil Goldberg? Well, "Cirque Dreams Holidaze" is sort of like the sideshows that were so famous for the "world's strongest men" and bearded ladies. Except this show has a holiday theme, with the ornaments coming alive and songs that would put Santa in a jolly mood.

Goldberg has found an international cast of 30 artists, ranging from the good ole' U.S.A to Australia, and each member comes with a unique specialty. You never know what in the world is going to happen when members of his dynamite team walk on stage. There are some talents that are much more exciting to watch than others, but they'll all keep you entertained, at least for a moment or two.

"Cool As Ice" was probably the most impressive bit, and that's saying something. Not only did the Queen of Ice (Kelli Koloszar) get to show off her vocal chops, but the two icemen, Qiang Xie and Jian Zhang, really steal the show. Xie and Zhang work together, with one climbing on the other, doing balancing acts that will make you fall silent as you watch in awe.

"Symphony of Bells," featuring Maestro



"Cirque Dream Holidaze" at the Fox Theatre is a great holiday treat for the entire family. Photo: Courtesy Olympia Entertainment.

REVIEW

Cirque Dreams Holidaze

Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Daily through Dec. 7. 2 hours, 10 minutes. \$19-69. 313-471-6611.
www.olympiaentertainment.com

(Anatoliy Yenyi, who also standouts as a Wobbly Penguin in Act II) and five audiences members is the show's comedy at its best.

Many of the songs – with music and lyrics by Jill Winters and David Scott, with additional music by Lance Conque and Tony Aliperti – will get your toes tapping with classics like "Holy Night," (the evening's vocal standout). But it's the costumes, created by Cirque Productions' Lenora Nikitin and Santiago Rogo that will

send you head-first into the land of sugar plum fairies. And make you wish that you could pull off wearing their gingerbread house hats or one of the gorgeous leotards.

This is a show that knows its audience well, mainly that there will be a lot of children with short attention spans. Each "scene" is quick, keeping the show going at a brisk pace. At times, though, there is so much going on that it's hard to focus on one thing. It will make you feel like you've stuffed yourself with far too much Who-pudding and rare Who-roast-beast.

Is this traditional theater? Not even close. There's not really a story, and some of the artists could easily be Olympic athletes instead. But during a time of year when time and patience can get the best of us, "Cirque Dream Holidaze" is a nice break to forget about the shopping list that keeps growing and where you'll have your in-laws stay.

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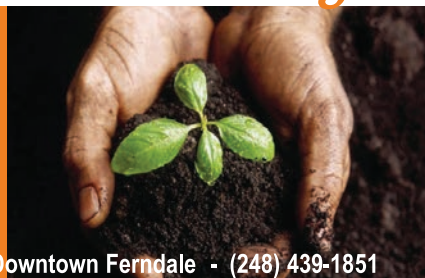
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Between THE Lines

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Michigan AIDS Coalition Continues The Fight Against HIV/AIDS

BY SHELBY CLARK

AIDS awareness and support doesn't end as soon as Dec. 1, World AIDS Day, passes. Michigan AIDS Coalition works to keep services, education and more running all year.

Michigan AIDS Coalition began on Feb. 1, 2009 when the Michigan AIDS Fund and Midwest AIDS Prevention Project merged. As a result, MAC has become one of Michigan's oldest non-profits. MAC has dedicated its goals to health promotion, harm and risk reduction, and HIV/STI prevention education.

As a result of community support, MAC is able to provide multiple services and programs to the surrounding area. In particular, MAC's "Open Arms Support Group" is Southeast Michigan's longest running peer-run HIV/AIDS support group. It's open to those infected or affected by HIV or AIDS. The group meets at 7 p.m. every Wednesday at 429 Livernois in Ferndale.

Other programs include A.D.A.P.T., LGBT sensitivity training for counselors and other professionals; Many Men Many Voices (3MV), an intervention service for African-American gay and bisexual men; and Wonderful Animals Giving Support (WAGS), an animal assistance program for those dealing with HIV/AIDS. MAC offers many other additional services too.

For more information on MAC, or the Open Arms Support Group, call 248-545-1435 or e-mail openarms@michiganaidcoalition.org.

For further resources for those living with AIDS/HIV, visit BTL's Pride Source Yellow Pages at pridesource.com/directory. Check BTL's calendar at pridesource.com/calendar for weekly and monthly events for HIV/AIDS related events.



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Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100

Ruth Ellis Center Second Stories will be showing the film, "Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100" this Saturday in order to help raise funds for the center. A panel discussion will follow the 55-minute long film, led by members of "Race Matters," an LGBT discussion group. Refreshments and fellowship will begin the afternoon event.

"Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100" documents the life of Ruth Ellis, an out lesbian from her birth in 1899 to her death in 2000. The narrative historical documentary features footage from Detroit. Dr. Kofi Adoma, co-founder of the Ruth Ellis center, will host the presentation.

The film will be shown at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Ruth Ellis Center Second Stories, 77 Victor, Highland Park. The event will be on the second floor. All donations go directly to the Ruth Ellis Center.

For more information, call 313-252-1950 or visit www.ruthellicenter.org.



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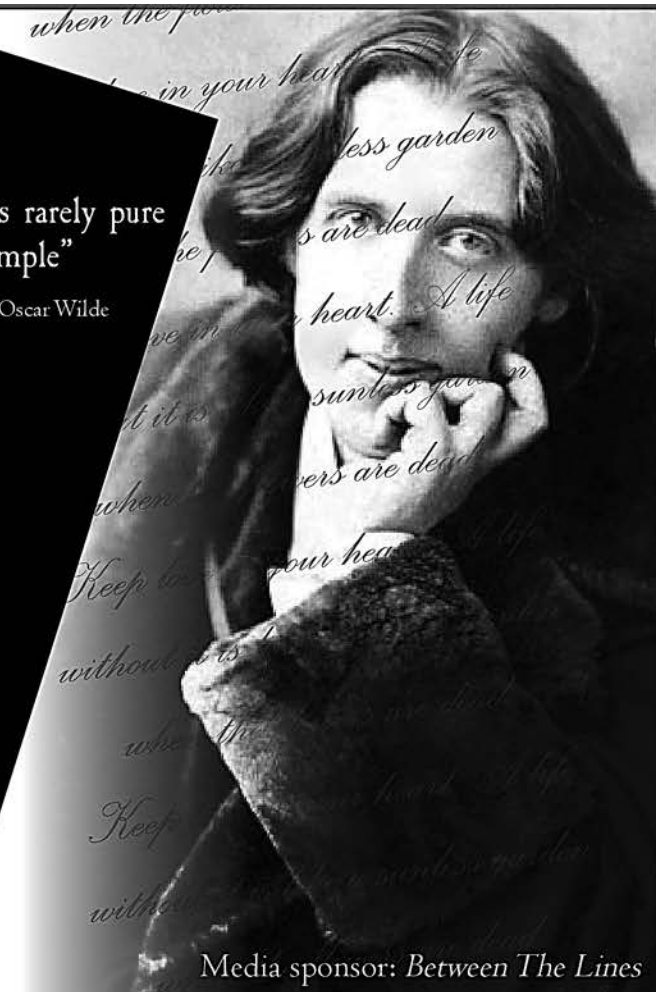
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-Oscar Wilde

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Julia Louise Hosack, Connor Barth, Gordon Gray, Drew Pulver and Matt Kopec in "Elf The Musical." Photo: Joan Marcus

It's A Candy Cane Of A Musical

BY MARTIN F. KOHN

I suspect that in real life Matt Kopec can sit still, although his hyperkinetic performance in the touring musical "Elf the Musical" provides little evidence to support that hypothesis. As the title character, Buddy the Elf (who is really a human raised by Santa's helpers), Kopec sings and dances, mugs shamelessly, gestures broadly and scampers about the stage like a 5-month-old Labradoodle.

These aren't bad things in a big venue like the Detroit Opera House where the kids in the last row of the balcony, like any other paying customers, deserve to go home happy.

Happy is the operative word here. Based on the perky 2003 movie that starred Will Ferrell, "Elf the Musical" has enjoyed a couple of holiday season runs on Broadway and has now taken to the road. Its songs, by Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin, are generally upbeat if not terribly memorable, and its book, by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin, no strangers to merriment – having performed similar chores on "Annie" and "The Producers" (Meehan) and "The Drowsy Chaperone" (Martin) – has enough dashes of grown-up humor to keep parents interested.

The production, directed by Sam Scalamoni, is colorful and lively and full

REVIEW

Elf The Musical

Broadway in Detroit at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit.
Tuesday-Sunday through Dec. 15. 2 hours, 20 minutes. \$24-72. 1-800-982-2787.

www.broadwayindetroit.com

of comfort and joy. We care about Buddy, and (spoiler alert, sort of) everything turns out all right in the end. If you're looking for something different to take the kids to this Christmas season, "Elf" could be just the ticket.

Familiarity with the movie is not a prerequisite. And if the movie's Papa Elf character (played by Bob Newhart) is a favorite, someone may be disappointed: The character doesn't appear in the musical.

So here's the story: Buddy, the tallest elf at the North Pole, turns out not be an elf at all. A human orphan, he crawled into Santa's sack one Christmas Eve. All grown up now, Buddy finally realizes there's something wrong. Santa (Gordon Gray), who knows all, informs Buddy that the father who never knew of his existence (Buddy's mother died) is alive and living in New York. Buddy sets off to find him.

Dad Walter (Matthew Alan Smith)

Happy is the operative word here. Based on the perky 2003 movie that starred Will Ferrell, "Elf the Musical" has enjoyed a couple of holiday season runs on Broadway and has now taken to the road.

turns out to be a grumpy executive, rendered cheerless by pressures at work. Not only is he put off by a childlike man wearing a green elf suit and claiming to be his son, he has no time for the family he already knows: wife Emily (U-M alumna Jane Bruce) and 12-year-old son (young Tyler Altomari). Incidentally, Walter looks so much like NBC newsmen Chuck Todd that you're waiting for him to reveal the White House soup of the day.

After sundry adventures and misadventures in New York, including a love interest (Kate Hennies), Buddy manages to teach Dad the true meaning of...oh, heck, you don't need to know all this. Just go and enjoy.



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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Dec. 12

Connections 6 p.m. Open to all LGBTQ and Ally youth from 13-18. Join us to meet other LGBTQ and Ally teens and socialize in a safe space. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Art Lovers Singles Mingle 7 p.m. An evening to gather with other single art lovers in a gallery setting. Fine Art, prints and cards, music, beer, wine and cheese. Open to all, hetero + LGBT. Dancing Dog Gallery, 302 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. 734-531-6565. dancingdoggallery@gmail.com. Dancingdoggallery.biz/art-lovers-meet-and-mingle-event-december-12th/

Whole Lives, Healthy Lives Adult Support Group 7 p.m. This one-of-a-kind program in Berrien County helps attendees support each other in healthy ways through active listening and caring feedback. OutCenter, 132 Water St., Benton Harbor. 269-925-8330. Outcenter.org

Friday, Dec. 13

Gay Business Networking 8 a.m. To help members increase their business through a structured, positive, and professional word of mouth. Every second Friday. GOAL, 100 Phoenix Dr., Ann Arbor. Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

OutGirls 7 p.m. It promises to be a fun-filled evening in the Arts District and a great time for LGBTQ women and their allies to get together. OutCenter, Benton Harbor. 269-982-1702. Outcenter.org

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Dec. 14

Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis at 100 1 p.m. Screening of the film. Fundraiser. There will be a panel discussion after the film, led by members/founders of Race Matters, a cross-racial, cross-gender LGBT discussion group. The afternoon begins with fellowship and refreshments. Ruth Ellis Center, 77 Victor, Highland Park. 313-252-1950. Ruthelliscenter.org

Gay Straight Alliance in Berrien County 2 p.m. LGBTQ youth, friends and allies, ages 14-18. OutCenter, 124 Water St., Benton Harbor. 269-925-8330. Outcenter.org

Michigan Beer Film 4:30 p.m. Craft beer and pizza available. Tickets: \$13-15. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. 269-756-3879. Acorntheater.com

Detroit Derby Girls - Detroit Pistoffs vs. Grand Prix Madonnas 5 p.m. Michigan's premier female roller derby organization, rematch the 2013 championship game to round out the year with a hard hitting bout between the Grand Prix Madonnas and the Detroit Pistoffs. Tickets: \$12-15. Free for 12 and under. Detroit Derby Girls, 500 Temple St., Detroit. Detroitderbygirls.com

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Lighthearted or in-depth discussion on a variety of topics. For gay, bi-affectual, and transgender men 18 and up. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

The 100th Annual Boar's Head Dinner and Gold Medal Awards Ceremony 6:45 p.m. Tickets: \$100-760. The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. 313-831-1250. Scarabclub.org

Drag Queen Bingo 8 p.m. Reservations required. 18+. Drag Queen Bentley James. Ticket: \$20. Leaf & Berry, 6385 Orchard

Lake Road, West Bloomfield Township. 248-671-6011. info@leafnberry.com. Leafnberry.com

West Michigan Gay Mens Holiday Concert 8 p.m. West Michigan Gay Mens Chorus, 10 W. Park Place NE, Grand Rapids. Wmgmc.org

Open Meditation Saturdays 9 p.m. A communal, non-hierarchical meditation space open to all. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Sunday, Dec. 15

Holiday Services 10 a.m. Advent Masses, Christmas Eve, and Christmastide Sunday services. Divine Peace Metropolitan



The Detroit Derby Girls match begins at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Masonic Temple Detroit, 500 Temple St., Detroit. Tickets are \$12-15, with free admission for children 12 and under. For more information, e-mail info@detroitderbygirls.com or visit www.detroitderbygirls.com.

Community Church, 1400 Scott Lake Road, Suite H, Waterford. 248-332-1186. Dpmcc.net

Merry Market 10 a.m. MetroTimes & The Detroit Mercantile Co., 3434 Russell St., Detroit.

Tashmoo Biergarten 12 p.m. Pop-up European style beer garden with Detroit sensibility. Food, beer, games, and more. Location often varies. Tashmoo Biergarten, 1420 Van Dyke, Detroit. guten-tag@tashmoodetroit.com. Tashmoodetroit.com

Yuletide Maker's Faire & Chilly Chili Cookoff 1 p.m. Pagan Pride Detroit, 620 Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. Meetup.com

Holidays Unwrapped 3 p.m. Weaving beautiful melodies with a touch of humor, Sing Out Detroit illuminates how being true to yourself can be the best gift you give to anyone, including yourself. Tickets: \$15 Sing Out Detroit, 1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham. 248-943-2411. lindacbrin@gmail.com. Singoutdetroit.org/

Conversation Station 5 p.m. A new topic is discussed each week. GOAL, 714 S. Washington, Royal Oak. 248-981-4227. MarcilWilliams@yahoo.com. GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, Dec. 16

Fun Run & Walk Program 6:30 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Movement with Kristi Faulkner Dance 7 p.m. A different genre of movement each week, including modern dance, ballet, jazz, hip hop/breaking, soft shoe tap dance, and stretch and strengthening. Workshops are designed for beginning/intermediate movers ages 16-55. Tickets: \$5. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Tuesday, Dec. 17

Older Adult and Senior Helpline 4 p.m. Provides peer counseling, empathy and community resources for LGBT adults. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 1-800-398-4297. goaffirmations.org

Trans/Genderqueer Peer Group 4 p.m. EMU LGBTRC, Ypsilanti. 734-487-4149. emich.edu/lgbtrc

Talk Tuesdays 6 p.m. Free. KICK, 41 Burroughs St. 109, Detroit. 313-285-9733. e-kick.org

Interweave 6:15 p.m. A spiritual home to LGBTQ and all family and allies. Potluck begins every meeting. First Unitarian

Editor's Pick

The Detroit Derby Girls take to the rink this weekend with a tense face-off between the Detroit Pistoffs and the Grand Prix Madonnas. The two teams will be facing off like they did in the 2013 championship game — but this year, who will win?

Detroit Derby Girls is Michigan's premier female roller derby organization. With five home teams and three travel teams, the 120-plus skaters involved aim to bring female empowerment and fun to crowds.

The Detroit Derby Girls match begins at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Masonic Temple Detroit, 500 Temple St., Detroit. Tickets are \$12-15, with free admission for children 12 and under. For more information, e-mail info@detroitderbygirls.com or visit www.detroitderbygirls.com.

Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, 4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor. 734-665-6158. Uuaa.org

Euchre at Esquire Club 6:30 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1250 Turner St., Lansing. 517-487-5338. lahronline.org

Life's a Stitch 6:30 p.m. Open to those who Crochet, Knit, Quilt, Needlepoint, Macrame and Jewelry. Free. 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

Coming Out Over Coffee 7 p.m. Casual discussion group about "coming out." Welcomes anyone at any point in their journey. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Service of Affirmation 7 p.m. An Ann Arbor interfaith community service that affirms LGBTQ folks and their Allies. This year the service of affirmation is being called Promising Light: The Voice of Hope. Reception to follow. First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, 4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor. 734-665-6158. xenaphan2000@yahoo.com. Uuaa.org

Tea & Talk 8 p.m. Open discussion with free tea and treats. Triple Goddess New Age Bookstore, 1824 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-347-2112. triplegoddessbookstore.net

Wednesday, Dec. 18

COBO Support Group 5 p.m. Coming out, being out. EMU LGBTRC, Ypsilanti. 734-487-4149. emich.edu/lgbtrc

Newly Single Support Group 7 p.m. Group

for all dealing with the end of a relationship and want to talk - or listen - to others who share similar experiences. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Open Arms Support Group 7 p.m. Southeast Michigan's lonest running peer-run HIV/AIDS support group for those infected or affected by HIV or AIDS. Michigan Aids Coalition, 429 Livernois, Ferndale. 248-545-1435. openarms@michiganaidcoalition.org. Michiganaidcoalition.org

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

Sistrum Weekly Rehearsal 7 p.m. Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, 215 N. Capital Ave., Lansing. Sistrum.org

Young@Heart 7 p.m. Socializing and conversation for those 45 and older.

Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Whiskey Wednesday 8 p.m. Country line dancing. Free juke box. MaleBox Michigan, 23365 Hoover Road, Warren. 586-806-2390. Facebook.com/Male

Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1250 Turner St., Lansing. 517-487-5338. lahronline.org

Thursday, Dec. 19

The Parent Network 6 p.m. This group aims to assist parents in understanding their child's identity, while also giving parents the opportunity to socialize with other adults who have LGBT children Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Transgender Helpline 6:30 p.m. A representative from Transgender Michigan is available to answer questions on helpline. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

20 Somethings 7 p.m. Social group for young adults. Followed by an evening out. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

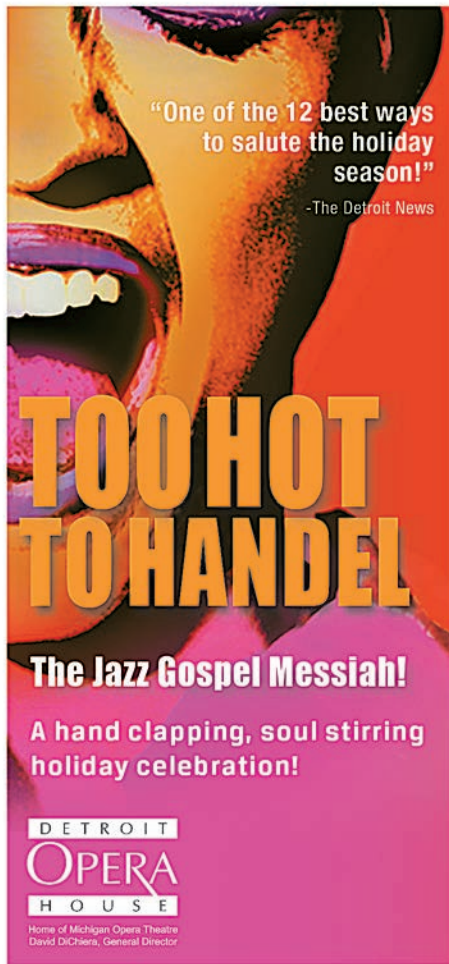
MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Handel's Messiah". Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Dec. 14. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Michigan Philharmonic "Holiday Pops

See Happenings, page 26



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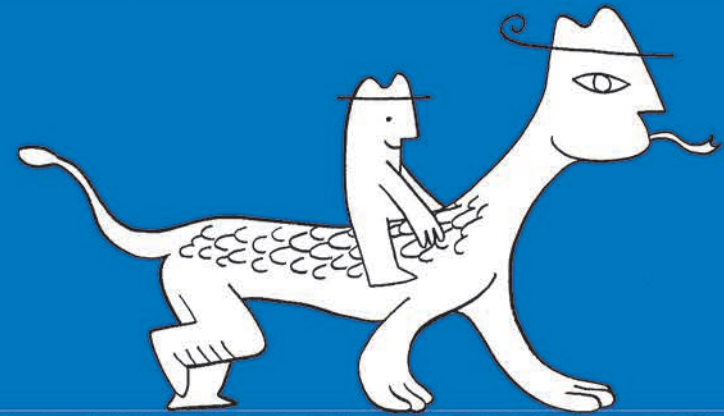
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Family Sundays

Puppet artist Victoria Rose Most demonstrates how she created the puppets from the animated film *Coraline*.
Student Lunchroom, 12-4 p.m.

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On Saturdays, buy one adult ticket and receive one free youth ticket!

Guest of Honor: *Caravaggio's Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy*, through January 12.

Balance of Power: A Throne for an African Prince, through March 16.

Foto Europa: 1840 to Present, through April 27.

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► **Happenings**

Continued from p. 24

with the Phil" Amy Kuras, cello. The Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman Ave., Plymouth. Dec. 12 - Dec. 12. 734-453-0870. Michiganphil.org

CONCERTS

Blind Pig "ANAMANAGUCHI" 18+. Tickets: \$12-15. Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 9 p.m. Dec. 13. 734-996-8555. Blindpigmusic.com

Blind Pig "Ekoostik Hookah & Dragon Wagon" 18+. Tickets: \$15. Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 9 p.m. Dec. 14. 734-996-8555. Blindpigmusic.com

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "A Rocky Mountain Christmas: A Tribute to John Denver". Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 18. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Michael W Smith: A Very Special Christmas". Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 3 p.m. Dec. 15. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts "Mark O'Connor" Appalachian Christmas. Tickets: \$20-48. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 3 p.m. Dec. 15. 586-286-2222. Macombcenter.com

Olympia Entertainment and Fifth Third Bank "Gary Hoey" Ho Ho Hoey's Rocking Holiday Show. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 13. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Olympia Entertainment and Fifth Third Bank "Karen Newman" Christmas Eve on Woodward Ave. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 18. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

The Ark "Irish Christmas in America" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 16. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "The Ragbirds present Ebird & Fridays Holiday Show" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 13. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Delbert McClinton" Tickets: \$50. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 18. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Lucy Kaplansky" Tickets: \$17. 50. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 14. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Hoots & Hellmouth with special guest Holy Ghost Tent Revival" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 12. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Kiana June Weber" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 17. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Orpheum Bell and Jonas Friddle & the Majority" Tickets: \$16. 50. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 15. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "Victor Wooten with Regi Wooten, Joseph Wooten and Futureman" Tickets: \$30. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 7 p.m. Dec. 16. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Majestic "Total Science" With Ronin Selecta, Sinistarr, Cybernetik R3volt, Shipping and Handling, and MC Yoda. 18+. Tickets: \$0-15. The Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 9 p.m. Dec. 14. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

The Majestic "St. Cecilia" With Shapes & Colors, Passage To India, and West and Run Doors. All ages. Tickets: \$8. The Magic Stick Lounge, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Dec. 13. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

The Whiting "Mannheim Steamroller

Christmas" "Mannheim Steamroller Christmas" by Chip Davis has been America's favorite holiday celebration for over 25 years. Grammy Award winner Chip Davis has created a show that features the beloved Christmas music of Mannheim Steamroller along with dazzling multimedia effects performed in an intimate setting. Tickets: \$39-\$75. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 3:30 p.m. Dec. 15. 810-237-7333. http://thewhiting.com/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=5432

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Wonderful World of Christmas \$10. Spotlight on Youth at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Dec. 12 - 15. 734-394-5300. www.Canton-mi.org/villagetheater

Annie \$16-18. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Dec. 13 - 29. 248-473-1856. www.Farmingtonplayers.org

Christmasville \$10-12. Emergent Arts at The Mix Studio Theatre, 8 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti. Dec. 12 - 22. 734-985-0875. www.emergentarts.com

Irving Berlin's White Christmas \$15-35. The Croswell, 129 E. Maumee St., Adrian. Through Dec. 22. 517-264-SHOW. www.croswell.org

Peter Pan \$7-24. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 15. 269-343-1313. www.kazoocivic.com

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever \$7-15. The Twin City Players, 600 W. Glenford Road, St. Joseph. Through Dec. 22. 269-429-0400. www.twincityplayers.org

The Fantasticks \$18. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through Dec. 22. 248-541-6430. www.Stagecrafters.org

White Christmas The Musical \$12-20. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Through Dec. 15. 517-482-5700. www.riverwalktheatre.com

PROFESSIONAL

'Twas the Night Before Christmas \$10-25. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Through Dec. 22. 248-850-9919. www.twomusestheatre.org

5 Plays by Beckett and 1 by Ionesco Reservations strongly recommended; pay-what-you-can. The Abreact, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. Dec. 13 - Jan. 11. 313-454-1542. www.theabreact.com

A Christmas Carol \$18-41. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through Dec. 22. 248-377-3300. www.mbtheatre.com

A Facility for Living \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through Dec. 29. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

Adult Education \$10. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. Dec. 13. 269-756-3879. www.acorntheater.com

Christmas at the Acorn: A Christmas Extravaganza \$20. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. 8 p.m. Dec. 21. 269-756-3879. www.acorntheater.com

Christmas Belles \$15-18. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Dec. 21. 586-771-6333. www.broadwayonstage.com

ComedySportz Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Through Dec. 28. 877-636-3320. www.comedysportzdetroit.com

Ebenezer \$29-32. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville.

Through Dec. 31. 248-347-0003. www.tippingpointtheatre.com

Elf The Musical \$24-72. Broadway in Detroit at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Dec. 15. 313-237-SING. www.broadwayindetroit.com

Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!) \$10-25. Two Muses Theatre, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Through Dec. 22. 248-850-9919. www.twomusestheatre.org

Fast Times at Nazareth High \$20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through Dec. 14. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Fireside New Play Festival Pay-What-You-Can. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Dec. 15 - 18. 734-663-0681. www.performancenetwork.org

Fridays and Saturdays at Go Comedy! Go Comedy! Improv Theatre, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Ghost the Musical \$32 and up. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Through Dec. 15. 800-WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

Home for the Holidays \$32-39; includes dinner, non-alcoholic beverage, dessert & show. The Dio - Dining and Entertainment, 135 E. Main St., Pinckney. Through Dec. 23. 517-672-6009. www.diotheatre.com

I Love a Piano \$33-35. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Jan. 5. 269-343-2727. www.farmersalleytheatre.com

Improv Mondays \$5 at the door. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Irving Berlin's White Christmas \$15-28. The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through Dec. 22. 734-268-6200. www.theencoretheatre.org

Jack & the Beanstalk \$12-17. The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. 1 p.m. Dec. 15. 248-661-1900. www.theberman.org

Jerry's Girls \$27-46. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Jan. 5. 734-663-0681. www.performancenetwork.org

Late Night Saturdays \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Dec. 14. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

My Way: A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra \$22-25. The Box Theater, 90 Macomb Place, Mount Clemens. Through Dec. 14. 596-954-2677. www.theboxtheater.com

Orphan Train \$20. What A Do Theatre, 4071 W. Dickman Road, Springfield. Through Dec. 14. 269-282-1953. www.whatado.org

Over the River and Through the Woods \$15-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through Dec. 29. 517-655-SHOW. www.williamstontheatre.org

She Loves Me \$20. The Snug Theatre, 160 S. Water St., Marine City. Through Dec. 21. 810-278-1749. www.thesnugtheatre.com

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold \$35. Miller on the Road at Tibbits Opera House, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. 8 p.m. Dec. 20. 269-387-2300. www.millerauditorium.com

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold \$35. Miller on the Road at W.K. Kellogg Auditorium, 50 W. Van Buren St., Battle Creek. Dec. 21.

See Happenings, page 29

► Scary Spice

Continued from p. 16

and we were like, “This is it. Let’s book the whole thing there.”

Does making out with yourself, which you do in the video, count as lesbian action?

It’s all about feeling good about yourself and loving yourself. When you dress up for a fun night out with your girlfriends and you look in the mirror, who doesn’t wanna kiss themselves? But if you want to take it the lesbian route, you can do that too!

When did you know you had a gay following?

Spice Girls. We always had an inkling. We love our gay market and we wanted to make sure we provided a song for our gay market that they could really enjoy, and we did exactly that. Everybody else followed, thankfully.

Were there any Spice Girls songs you recorded with the gays in mind?

All of them, from “Wannabe” to “Who Do You Think You Are.” That the gay market embraces you a little bit – it’s very humbling. And the gays will tell you whether they like it or not. A lot of my team is gay, so they tell me what will work and what won’t work. They’re very straight, and they’re very honest. I like that about them. It’s just nice to be a part of that. It’s nice to be accepted in that world.

How did you end up with such a gay team?

The best hair and makeup are done by the gays, whether you’re a gay or a girl or a cross or whatever. They have the eye.

What is your relationship now with the Spice Girls? Do you girls hang?

Yeah, I was just in London a couple of weeks ago doing my show “Stepping Out” and I went partying with Mel C. I had dinner with Geri (Halliwell). I just did Emma (Bunton’s) radio show. Me and Victoria (Beckham) get together. We just got together last year at the Olympics. We’ve known each other for 20 years, and it’s like a sisterhood. It’s not gonna be broken anytime soon, especially after 20 years.

But what about these rumors of Victoria not getting along with the rest of the girls?

You always hear rumors about one of us hating one of us. If it’s not me and Geri, it’s Victoria and Mel. All of that is just rumors. The press just gets bored sometimes.

It sounds like there might be hope for a Spice Girls reunion album?

I’m always saying that.

How about a reunion tour?

We got together at the Olympics, so I like to never say never. It could always happen.



How has Scary Spice changed since the '90s?

She’s still the same: an 18-year-old kid who runs around with curly hair, screaming. (Laughs)

As someone who helped trail blaze girl power, when you look at the newest wave of female artists, who is carrying that torch?

Everybody is doing it in their own way, from Rihanna to Beyoncé to Miley Cyrus and Lady Gaga. They’re all doing it. They’re all strong, independent women taking control of their own careers – and no matter what people say, they’re doing it and they’re doing it well.

You told Howard Stern just a couple of months ago that you’ve kissed all the Spice Girls. Which one is the best kisser?

Oh, they’re all good.

Yeah?

Of course they are.

But can you pick just one?

How could I? They’re all just as good ... in their own different way.

Though you’re now married to a man, you were in a five-year relationship with a woman. Because of that, people were assuming you’re bisexual. Were you intentionally hinting that you are?

I didn’t have any intention of anything. You just fall in love with whomever you fall in love with. If people wanna put labels on themselves, then yeah – but no, I had a great relationship. It had a start, middle and an end, and that’s it.

What’s next for you?

Performing my music and getting my Scary Spice vibe out there musically.

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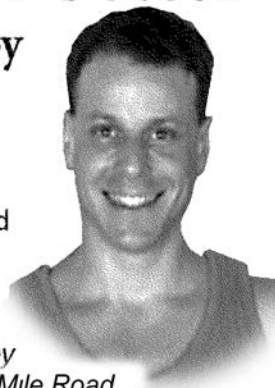


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Classifieds

01-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday

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

Bloomfield Hills-Sunday / Tuesday / Thursday

8:00 pm, North Woodward
Equality, Birmingham Unitarian
Church, 38651 Woodward,
Bloomfield Hills, lower level
classroom - enter first walkway off
Woodward entrance. Big Book/12
& 12 Meeting.

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-Saturday

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

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

Livonia-Friday

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

Warren-Monday

7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay
AA, Odd Fellow's Hall, 830 S
Monroe St Closed/Discussion.

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS LGBT AL ANON

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)
Pinecrest & Drayton, Ferndale
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OH, SO WHAT ARE YOU GETTING HIM?

UNDRESSED.

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Solution to puzzle from page 30

R	O	S	A	N	E	R	O	U	N	D	E	R		
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E	S	S	E	N	E	G	A	D	N	E	S			



Editor's Pick

"Annie," the feel-good, rags-to-riches musical that took Broadway by storm, opens Dec. 13 at the Farmington Players Barn.

Maryanna Lauter stars as the rambunctious little redhead who steals Daddy Warbucks' heart. She's almost 10-and-a-half years old, and she's playing her dream role. "From a parent's point of view, I couldn't be more proud of Maryanna's work so far in developing this role," says her mother, Amy Lauter, who is co-directing the show. "She pretty much eats, sleeps and breathes Annie"

The family-friendly hit tells the tale of the young orphan girl searching for her birth parents. It's based on the "Little Orphan Annie" comic strip that began in 1924.

"Annie" runs through Dec. 29 and is almost sold out. For ticket information, call 248-553-2955.

The Farmington Players Barn is located at 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington between Orchard Lake and Farmington Road.

► Happenings

Continued from p. 26

269-387-2300. www.millerauditorium.com

Snow Girls \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Dec. 16. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

Snow Queen \$5-10. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Dec. 14 - 21. 313-961-7777. www.puppetart.org

Sundays at Go Comedy! Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Terry Fator: The Voice of Entertainment \$29-79. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 14 - 15. 313-471-6611. www.Olympiaentertainment.com

The Scullery Maid \$41-48. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company at Aaron DeRoy Theatre on the campus of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Dec. 18 - Jan. 12. 248-788-2900. www.jetttheatre.org

The Vast Difference 18.50-\$42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 18. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

The Wizard of Oz \$12-18. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Through Dec. 22. 810-237-1530. www.flintyouththeatre.org

Thursdays at Go Comedy! Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Two Guys and a Christmas Tree \$40 with turkey dinner; \$35 show-only. Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd., Marshall. Through Dec. 21. 269-781-4293. www.turkeyville.com

War Horse \$30+. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Dec. 17 - Jan. 5. 313-872-1000. www.broadwayindetroit.com

Wednesdays at Go Comedy! Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. www.gocomedy.net

Woodward Wonderland: A Detroit Holiday Celebration \$16-32. Mosaic Youth Theatre at the Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 12 - 15. 313-833-7900. www.mosaicdetroit.org

Yo Gabba Gabba! Live Holiday Show

\$26-46. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 13. 313-471-6611. www.Olympiaentertainment.com

ART'N'AROUND

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "Waylande Gregory: Art Deco Ceramics and the Atomic Impulse" Waylande Gregory (1905-1971) redefined American ceramics in the 1930s and 1940s, creating monumental ceramic sculptures and helping to shape Art Deco design in the United States. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 16 - March 23. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "My Brain Is in My Inkstand: Drawing as Thinking and Process" An original exhibition that brings together 22 artists from around the world to redefine the notion of drawing as a thinking process in the arts and sciences alike. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 16 - March 30. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "From the Archives: Forging Cranbrook's Gatescape" From peripheral entrance gates to interior ornamental gates executed in wood, wrought iron, cast iron and steel, over 80 gates have been installed on the campus. Walking and bus tour. Tickets: \$30-35. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Oct. 5 - Feb. 22. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Dancing Dog Gallery "Making a Splash - Intense, Gestural Art by Sophie Grillet" Free. United States, 302 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Dec. 6 - Jan. 11. 734-531-6565. Dancingdoggallery.biz/

Detroit Institute of Arts "A Throne for an African Prince" The works of Africa sculptor Olowe of Ise, whose royal throne fills this gallery, are much sought after by museums; the DIA is one of only two museums to own three of his pieces. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 1 - March 16. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy" Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 1 - Jan. 13. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Downriver Council for the Arts "School District Art Exhibits" Students set forth to promote peace and friendship between the two schools through their art. Allen Park & Melvindale High Schools, Allen Park & Melvindale. Dec. 1 - Jan. 2. Downriverarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Free Saturdays" FirstMerit bank has issued a grant that funds free admission to the museum's galleries and exhibitions every Saturday for the next three years. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Sep. 14 - Feb. 22. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Saturday All Day with The Arts" Drop-in family activities. Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Aug. 3 - Dec. 28. 616-831-1000. artmuseumgr.org

Krasl Art Center "Sketches to Sculptures, Rendered Reality: Sixty Years With Marshall M. Fredericks" Marshall M. Fredericks (1908-1998) was a pre-eminent figurative sculptor in American art in the 20th century. Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph. Nov. 8 - Jan. 12. 269-983-0271. Krasl.org

Michigan State University Museum "Extraordinary Ordinary People: American Masters of Traditional Arts" A journey across America through the lives of people whose creativity is rooted in a deep sense of cultural identity. Michigan State University Museum, 409 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. Sep. 3 - Dec. 20. 517-355-7474. museum.msu.edu

MOCAD "Dan Austin" Architecture expert. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

MOCAD "Festive Fibers with Whitney Sage" Family day. Free. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 12 p.m. Dec. 15. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Pewabic Pottery "Made by Hand: Detroit's Ceramic Legacy". Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 19 - Jan. 12. 313-833-1805. Pewabic.org

robert kidd gallery "Kevin Tolman: Recent Works" These paintings invite viewers to peer through tonal, multi-layered spaces to glimpse more frenetic underlying fields. robert kidd gallery, 107 Townsend St., Birmingham. Nov. 9 - Dec. 19. 248-642-3909. Robertkiddgallery.com

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "The Uncanny Life and Legacy of Harry Brorby" West Michigan artist. Free. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Custer St., Saugatuck. Dec. 13 - Jan. 31. 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

UMMA "Three Michigan Architects: Part 1 - David Osler". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Dec. 7 - March 31. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

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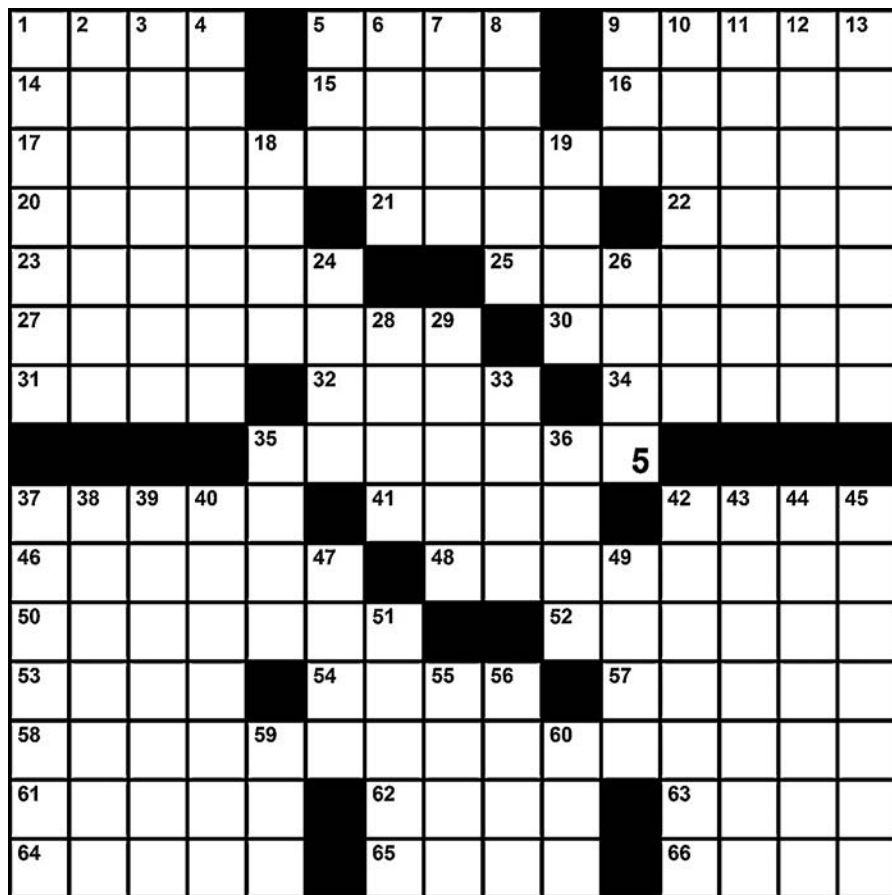
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 9 Like a bottom
 14 Business VIP
 15 Lysol target
 16 Easily screwed
 17 Adam Levine's fiancée models for this company
 20 Clock watcher
 21 Family diagram
 22 Verb of Verlaine
 23 Heaped praise on
 25 Answers an email, e.g.
 27 Tops?
 30 Most in need of some rays at Laguna Beach
 31 Brady Bunch prefix
 32 Puts down quickly
 34 Silences for Bernstein
 35 Adam Levine's band
 37 Garter tosser
 41 Kind of log
 42 Rupert Everett's "The Next Thing"
 46 Go back on one's word
 48 Place to say "Ooh, long!"
 50 Et cetera
 52 Condom

- 53 Leave as is
 54 Coward of "Blithe Spirit"
 57 Memory units
 58 Honor for Adam Levine from People magazine
 61 Cara of "Fame"
 62 Jerry Herman musical
 63 Tributes in verse
 64 German industrial hub
 65 "How queer!"
 66 Snug retreat

Down

- 1 Abuses with the tongue, perhaps
 2 Rust producer
 3 Place in solitude
 4 Supported an org. for ending AIDS?
 5 Neither companion
 6 Ready for press
 7 "The Lion King" sound
 8 Brian of figure skating
 9 Single, in gay Paree
 10 Enclosure on a dirigible
 11 Besmirches
 12 Highest mountain top
 13 Checks to make sure
 18 Shaft output
 19 Penetrate slowly

- 24 "It's ___ vu all over again!"
 26 Like the longest holes on the course
 28 "Gilmore Girls" daughter
 29 Like Edna Turnblad
 33 Foot fetish target
 35 "Let ___!"
 36 Songwriter Holly
 37 Two wood in Sheehan's sport
 38 Many summer residents of Fire Island
 39 Research aids
 40 Earmark
 42 "___ 5" (sci-fi series)
 43 One that comes out on the beach
 44 They bear arms
 45 Most closemouthed
 47 Many, many moons
 49 Marching band member
 51 Shirker's phrase
 55 Web info source
 56 Teacher in "The King and I"
 59 Dusk, to Dickinson
 60 Composer Rorem

Solution on pg. 28

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