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“It is time for Agema’s politics of division to be over. Let’s get Michigan’s boat rowing in a direction that makes everyone feel welcome and helps us all succeed.”

—Jon Hoadley, pg. 10



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COVER STORY

14 Lost & found

Photo: Cambria Harkey



“**Too many times in our history our citizens have had to lead the way on civil rights while our leaders have stood against them. It is time for the Commonwealth to be on the right side of history and the right side of law.**”

– Virginia Attorney General
Mark Herring, pg. 7



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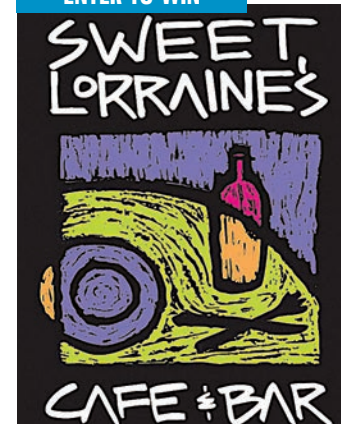
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LGBT Immigration Rights Now Accessible To Michigan Couples

DOMA Ruling Opens Border For Same Sex Couples

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

“From the first day I knew she was perfect in my life,” said 32-year-old Demi. “I was not scared coming here because I wanted to see her again so bad.”

Demi grew up in Greece, a country where LGBT people do not have the right to marry or even to create legal documents to protect their families or their assets. There are no domestic partner benefits, and though she says there is momentum behind the push for equality, she says it “will take longer to happen there” than it has in the US.

It was in a Grecian coffee shop on July 4, 2012 where she met her future wife Athena, now 27. “I was traveling through Europe in Athens,” she said. “I had an app on my iPad called Okcupid Local and we met up for coffee. And now here we are.”

Demi and Athena are among the first LGBT couples in Michigan to take advantage of a new immigration policy that requires the government to treat them the same as heterosexual couples. They were married in Windsor on July 11, 2013 and they then started on their journey towards citizenship for Demi.

Attorney Francyne Stacey of Butzel Long in Ann Arbor guided the couple through the five-month process. This only became possible after the U.S. Supreme Court issued their decision in the Windsor case last June.

“The Windsor decision was issued which invalidated a portion of DOMA, and marriages between same-sex bi-national couples were recognized as constituting a legal marriage for purposes of immigration benefits. Prior to Windsor, only opposite sex couples could benefit from the immigration laws allowing the non U.S. citizen spouse to become a permanent resident due solely to their bona fide marriage to a U.S. citizen.

“The effect of excluding same sex couples was often separation for long periods of time unless the foreign born spouse had a legal basis for residing in the U.S. (a job, sponsorship by another family member), he or she could not be with their partner or they could risk having the foreign national spouse placed in removal proceedings and deported.

“After Windsor, bi-national same sex couples are able to petition the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Service) for the foreign born national to become a permanent resident just the same as an opposite sex couple can. The process requires the submission of a number of different forms, documentation of the bona fide nature of the relationship and, of course, a marriage certificate, to the USCIS. Eventually, the couple is interviewed by the immigration office in Detroit, which has the authority to grant or deny

anything to be afraid of.”

Susan Reed, supervising attorney at Michigan Immigrant Rights Center helps couples of all kinds with their immigration process. “Something everyone, not just LGBT couples should know, is that the immigration law is extremely complicated and harshly punishes even very small mistakes and problems. If you’ll indulge some sports analogy, I’d say that even though the playing field is now basically level, it’s still a tough game. I urge everyone to have competent representation in any application for immigration benefits.”

Reed said she does not know of any LGBT-specific immigration assistance organizations, but that there are attorneys, like Stacey, who are eager to help same sex couples. Michigan Immigrant Rights Center also has a history of working for LGBT equality, having done workshops and provided advice to LGBT couples for several years.

“One thing for low income folks to consider is that, unfortunately, it is my understanding that some of the nonprofit organizations providing immigration legal services that are affiliated with the Catholic Church in Michigan will not assist same-sex married couples pursuing immigration benefits based on marriage,” Reed said.

Stacey is also representing Raymond Shepherd and his partner Raymart Misera. Misera lives in the Philippines, and will have his immigration interview in February. Shepherd organized a Light the Way to Justice Vigil in front of Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse in Detroit in March 2013 to show support for the same sex couples cases that were before the US Supreme Court.

“It is exciting, and we are having a slightly hard time waiting for Feb. 21 when Raymart is going to having his interview. It’s like the old saying about a boiling teapot,” Shepherd said. The couple is hoping to have a June wedding in Chicago since it is the closest state that allows same sex marriage. “We are planning to stay in Michigan. There

“*Something everyone, not just LGBT couples should know, is that the immigration law is extremely complicated and harshly punishes even very small mistakes and problems...I urge everyone to have competent representation in any application for immigration benefits.*”

- Susan Reed, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

permanent residency to the foreign national spouse,” Stacey said.

Stacey has filed paperwork for several couples, but Demi and Athena happened to be the couple whose case progressed the fastest. On Jan. 9, 2014 Demi’s green card/permanent resident application was approved.

“It is a conditional green card,” Athena said. “She can stay here for two years and then it will be reviewed again.” She said she hopes to one day move to Greece with Athena, but only once their marriage is recognized there. In the meantime she is studying political science so she might know more about how to fight for equal rights in marriage and in other issues.

Athena said that the process was “daunting,” but that “the law is now treating people equally. There wasn’t

See Immigration, next page

Conference Back, Teaching About Inclusive Education

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

As parents and students become more demanding of inclusive educational environments, teachers and administrators are sometimes at a

loss for where to find the resources they need. That's why Oakland University created the School of Education & Human Services' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Initiative, and the annual conference that goes along with it.



Keynote speaker HRC's Kisha Webster



Conference emcee Jerry Peterson of REC

Now in its third year, the 2014 Michigan SOGI Education Conference will be held Feb. 7 at a new location – Auburn Hills Marriott Pontiac at Centerpoint in Pontiac. The daylong conference includes breakfast and lunch and has a wealth of speakers and workshops focused on meeting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersex students,

staff, faculty and administrators, with plenty of opportunities to reflect, network, and plan for the school year.

The keynote speaker will be Kisha Webster, director of Education & Community Engagement for Welcoming Schools at the Washington DC based Human Rights Campaign. Webster develops Welcoming Schools materials for HRC and provides consultation, training and technical assistance to schools throughout the country in implementing the program. Prior to joining the HRC team, she spent 20 years as an educator and seven years as a school administrator in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County.

Jerry Peterson of the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit will be the emcee for the conference. Peterson recently moved to Detroit from California, where he most recently served as facilitator for the LGBTQ Youth Advocacy Collaborative in Concord, California. He managed an innovative collaboration with six non-profits in Contra Costa County to reduce rejecting behaviors and increase accepting behaviors toward LGBTQ young people in families, schools, service providers, and faith groups. Prior to that he spent 14 years with the United Way of Allen County in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he served as its president and CEO for four years. In this position, Peterson led the \$6 million, 30-person organization, nurtured community partnerships and launched a 10-year

initiative to improve reading levels of children.

Several workshop options will be available throughout the day, including those led by Equality Michigan, KICK, Michigan State University LGBT Resource Center, Wayne State University School of Medicine, the ACLU and more.

In addition to giving the keynote address, Williams will facilitate a workshop on "Cultivating Conversations on Differences," which includes a viewing of the short film "What Do You Know? Six to twelve year olds talk about gays and lesbians." Participants will practice responding to students' and adults' questions and comments about differences based on gender, sexual orientation, race and religion.

This will be the third year for the conference, which continues to grow in scope and attendance. Not only does the SOGI Conference provide tools for schools, it gives teachers, counselors, and social workers opportunity for continuing education credits. Teachers and School Counselors can register for .6 State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECHs). Social Workers can register for 5.5 Continuing Education Units.

The conference is \$100 for most attendees and \$25 for full time students. To register, or for more information go to <http://www.oakland.edu/SOGI>.

► Immigration

Continued from p. 4

is some temptation to move to a state with marriage equality, but think that is all it is."

LGBT Immigration Issues

While some progress is being made for international couples whose U.S. marriages are being acknowledged in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court rulings last June, individual LGBT people seeking asylum in the U.S. have seen no progress. As the nation debates immigration reform it is essential to advocate for the rights of LGBT people in detention and seeking asylum due to oppressive conditions in their country of origin.



Sharita Gruberg is a Policy Analyst for the LGBT Immigration Project at the Center for American Progress. She has extensive experience working in immigration advocacy, law, and policy, as well as experience providing direct service to immigration detainees,

refugees, and asylum seekers. She authored a report for CAP, *Dignity Denied*, in November 2013. The 29-page report's conclusion, "From sexual assault to lack of access to proper medical care, LGBT immigrants are particularly vulnerable to abuse and mistreatment in immigration detention facilities on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. While we support DHS's efforts to better care for the LGBT immigrants in its custody, its efforts have not succeeded in adequately meeting the particular needs of this demographic. As Congress debates reforms to our broken immigration system, it is critical that these reforms protect LGBT immigrants in DHS custody, promote due process, and preserve human dignity."

Visit www.americanprogress.org to download the report.

BRIEFS

LANSING

Democrat Peters Raises \$1M For 3rd Quarter In Row,

(AP) - Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Gary Peters on Jan. 23 said he raised slightly more than \$1 million for the third straight quarter in his bid to succeed retiring Sen. Carl Levin.

The third-term congressman from suburban Detroit will wait to file his report due Jan. 31, including how much his campaign spent in the last quarter and how much money he had available at year's end. His campaign said most of the money came from Michigan donors and includes no personal financing from Peters.

Earlier this month, Republican Terri Lynn Land said she raised nearly \$1.7 million in the last quarter, \$600,000 of it her own money.

Democrats recently have criticized Land for not calling on her fellow Republican National Committee member from Michigan, Dave Agema, to step down for making anti-Muslim and anti-gay remarks.

Like Peters, the former two-term secretary of state from the Grand Rapids area also will wait to disclose detailed information.

Peters' campaign manager Julie Petrick said his 11,000-plus contributions came from residents in all 83 counties.

As of late September, Land had \$1.9 million on hand and Peters had \$2.5 million. Land is among the top self-funders running for Senate in the 2014 election

cycle, according to political money-tracking website OpenSecrets.org.

The two have been evenly matched in polls for Michigan's first open Senate seat in 20 years, with Land out-raising Peters from October through December by kicking in more of her own dollars.

The race so far has centered on the federal health care law. But Democrats recently have criticized Land for not calling on her fellow Republican National Committee member from Michigan, Dave Agema, to step down for making anti-Muslim and anti-gay remarks. He is skipping this week's RNC meeting in Washington, and leading Michigan Republicans have criticized him or said he should resign.

"I have made it very clear that I do not support discrimination of any kind, and I believe that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect," Land said in a statement. "Dave and I have had private conversations, he knows that we disagree, and I do not support him on this matter."

Peters tweeted Thursday that "it is the failure of leadership to agree to disagree on racism & bigotry."

By Friday Land issued a press release asking Agema to step down.

Online At Pridesource.com

With the 2014 election season gearing up, follow the campaigns that will make the most difference for LGBT equality. Learn about the candidates and how to engage as a volunteer in campaigns across the state.

This election we will see five openly gay candidates running for the State House and the State Senate. Read their interviews online in our special election guide: *Pride Source Votes 2014*.

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AGEMA JUST SAYS NO TO GOP

Despite National Party Pressure, Agema Refuses To Step Down Claiming Grassroots Wants Him To Stay

While Agema apologized for his anti-muslim posting, he did not apologize for his posts about the LGBT community. He said he would not resign his post from the national GOP.

... Although Republican leaders are now expressing embarrassment over Agema's diatribes, his record on minority and LGBT issues were well known and documented before he was appointed to represent Michigan at the national level.

And boiling behind the scenes in this whole situation is a much larger question about who will own and run the GOP. Tea Party activists, who once stood for challenging government spending, have overwhelming shifted their tactic to addressing social issues. And Agema's support is coming from those activists.

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Dave Agema, one of Michigan's two delegates to the Republican National Committee, says he will not resign despite a virtual who's who of Republican leaders demanding his resignation last week. Agema has been in the headlines for months for his antigay and anti-muslim posts on his personal Facebook page.

As party leaders were meeting in Washington D.C. last week, the chorus of voices calling for his resignation grew larger and more diverse. By Friday, the list included Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, and most of Michigan's Republican Congressional delegation. Agema remained silent, and sent a proxy representative in his place to the meeting in D.C. His proxy was former GOP National Committeeman from Michigan Chuck Yob, who himself was the center of significant pressure for comments he made in 2002 saying women were particularly well suited to the Secretary of State post because "they like that kind of work."

But Jan. 24, National GOP Chair Reince Priebus and Michigan GOP Chair Bobby Schostak issued a joint statement, calling on Agema to step down. Agema responded with a press release on his personal website. While Agema apologized for his anti-muslim posting, he did not apologize for his posts about the LGBT community. He said he would not resign his post from the national GOP.

At a Jan. 27 fundraiser in west Michigan, attended by about 50 supporters – including Tea Party leaders and potential GOP Lt. Governor candidates Wes Nagakiri and Todd Courser, according to the Detroit News – Agema slammed critics as trying to silence him, and by extension, conservative voices in America.

"This is going on through the United States. You've got a small minority of people who are basically shutting down freedom of speech because they speak the loudest, they holler the loudest," Agema told MLive following his fundraising breakfast. "The easiest thing for me to do is just say, 'I don't need the hassle,' because it doesn't pay a dime. But all the support I have says, 'Don't give up, Dave. We put you in there for a reason. You're



Dave Agema on state capitol steps in file photo by Todd Heywood.

supporting the grassroots and we want that voice heard at the RNC."

Agema accused his critics of standing up to him because influential donors were threatening "to remove money" from the political coffers.

He was likely referring to Michigan GOP gatekeeper Betsy DeVos, who Jan. 19 had called on Agema to resign his post. DeVos and her family have a legacy of donating to Republican causes and parties – statewide and nationally. A Mother Jones story reports that the DeVos family has invested at least \$200 million in GOP led causes since 1970. Among those groups funded by the family are; think tanks, advocacy groups, media outlets, political campaigns and parties. The family has funded school choice voucher campaigns in Michigan, underwrote the drive for right to work in Michigan, and donated \$500,000 to the National Organization for Marriage.

Although Republican leaders are now expressing embarrassment over Agema's diatribes, his record on minority and LGBT issues were well known and documented before he was appointed to represent Michigan at the national level.

On Russia and Duck Dynasty

In March, Agema posted a link on his page calling homosexuals "filthy," and alleging "homosexuals account for half of the murders in large cities." MLive columnist Ken Braun

was able to track the essay Agema posted to his Facebook to an admitted racist, and member of the KKK.

Last month, Agema posted a story about Russia's draconian prohibition of gay propaganda, calling the law "common sense." This despite reports that neo-nationalist racist groups have been using the law as cover to assault and disrupt gay rights rallies, and are using social networking sites in the country to lure young gay men to meetings where they are beaten, assaulted and humiliated – and videos of the attacks are posted to the internet.

Recently Agema released a video in which he lectures the viewers about the First Amendment. He points to the Duck Dynasty controversy in December, claiming the long-haired patriarch of the popular A&E reality show Duck Dynasty – Phil Robertson – was "fired" from his post in the reality show for sharing his belief in "the Biblical definition of marriage." Agema claims that pressure on the cable channel resulted in them reversing their decision, and a defeat for activists he accuses of trying to silence opponents.

A&E has reported significant decreases in viewers of the show in the first two weeks of the airing of new episodes this year.

But Agema's First Amendment essay argues that if he is unable to speak out in support of such ridiculous violence and vitriol, he is losing his precious Constitutional rights.

Boiling behind the scenes in this whole situation is a much larger question about who will own and run the GOP. Tea Party activists, who once stood for challenging government spending, have shifted their tactic to addressing social issues. And Agema's support is coming from those activists. Agema says he will stay in the party leadership through 2016, and claims his presence is drawing new members to the party. He says he will help the party make gains in 2014 and lay the groundwork towards taking over the White House in 2016.

Meanwhile traditional fiscal conservatives in the party are gearing up for the 2014 election season. With DeVos' condemnation of Agema, the doors were opened for more timid politicians to step up and condemn Agema's rhetoric because the money voices of the party were backing them.

Dramatic Developments In Challenge To Virginia Same Sex Marriage Ban

BY LISA KEEN

The attorney general of Virginia announced this morning that his office will no longer defend the constitutionality of the state's ban on same-sex marriage.

At a press conference, Attorney General Mark Herring told reporters his legal analysis of the state's constitutional ban has determined the law violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection and due process and that it discriminates against gay people on the basis of sexual orientation.

Addressing critics who say he should defend all state laws, regardless of whether he believes they are unconstitutional. Herring said that would be violating his oath and noted that his predecessors, including Republican Ken Cuccinelli, refused to defend other state laws they believed to be unconstitutional.

"Having determined after thorough and rigorous analysis that this unconstitutional law infringes on Virginia families," said Herring, "I have a duty and authority to protect them and their rights. It does not mean the case will end or that the ban will go undefended or unenforced. Until the courts can rule on the matter, [the] state registrar Janet Rainey will continue to enforce the current ban, but neither she nor I will defend its constitutionality."

The announcement comes fewer than three weeks after Herring was sworn in and just one week before a federal judge in Norfolk is set to hear arguments in the first of two lawsuits challenging the ban in federal court in Virginia.

A spokeswoman for Herring told the Richmond Times Dispatch, "We will file a brief that will change the commonwealth's legal position and we will argue along with the plaintiffs." The state's solicitor general is expected to present Herring's position when the court hears oral arguments.

Supporters of marriage equality were elated. "It is a critical and important development when the attorney general—the keeper of the federal and state constitution in the commonwealth— joins us in arguing that barring same-sex couples from marriage is clearly unconstitutional," said Greg Nevins, counsel in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional

Office based in Atlanta. Lambda and the ACLU are representing same-sex couples in one of two lawsuits currently challenging the Virginia ban in federal district courts.

"This is a great day for the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Ted Olson, who is leading the other Virginia lawsuit. "Attorney General Herring's actions today have brought Virginia that much closer to the quintessential American ideals of equality under the law and the freedom to pursue happiness. We are grateful for his leadership and look forward to working with him to strike down Virginia's odious marriage ban."

In another dramatic development, plaintiffs' attorneys on Wednesday submitted Tuesday's Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *SmithKline v. Abbott* that found heightened scrutiny is required for cases involving disparate treatment based on sexual orientation. They ask the judge to apply that reasoning in the summary judgment hearing "or, in the alternative," grant a preliminary injunction against enforcement of Virginia's ban against the two plaintiff couples in this case.

Attorney General Herring's announcement represents a climax in an intense political drama over same-sex marriage in Virginia in recent months. Democrat Herring, who voted for the ban when he served as state senator in 2006, won election last November against Republican Mark Oshershein, who opposes same-sex marriage, by fewer than 200 votes. In fact, Herring only last August shifted his position on allowing same-sex couples to marry, telling the Dispatch, "I would not want the state to tell my son or my daughter who they can and cannot marry."

Just one day before Herring took office, then Republican Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli issued an official advisory opinion that the governor "may not direct or require any agency of state government to allow same-sex couples to receive joint marital status for Virginia income tax returns."

Herring's spokeswoman, Ellen Qualls, told the Dispatch, "The attorney general has a strong interest in the courts adjudicating this matter, which will ultimately be decided by

“It is time for the Commonwealth to be on the right side of history and the right side of law.”

against enforcement of Virginia's ban against the two plaintiff couples in this case.

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SPECIAL EXHIBIT
ON VIEW JANUARY 5 – MAY 4, 2014


Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals

Artifacts from the exhibit depict the freedom experienced by homosexuals prior to the Nazi rise to power in 1933.

FAR LEFT: A 1907 political cartoon depicting sex researcher Magnus Hirschfeld, 'Hero of the Day', drumming up support for the abolition of Paragraph 175 of the German penal code that criminalized homosexuality (image: US Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives)







LEFT: Cover of the September 1931 issue of The Island, a magazine for homosexuals (image: US Holocaust Memorial Museum)




Solidarity
by Richard Grune, lithograph, 1947
(image: Schwules Museum, Berlin)

The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals exhibit details the Nazis' so-called moral crusade against homosexuality in an effort to racially and culturally purify Germany. This persecution ranged from dissolution of homosexual organizations to internment of thousands of individuals in concentration camps. Gay men, in particular, were subject to harassment, arrest, incarceration, and even castration. In Nazi eyes, gay men were weak and unfit to be soldiers, as well as unlikely to contribute to the racial struggle for Aryan dominance.

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BRIEFS

ILLINOIS

GOP Urges Ill. Congressional Candidate To Withdraw

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. (AP) - Illinois Republican officials are calling for a Chicago-area congressional candidate to leave the GOP race after she blamed bad weather on legalized abortions and gay rights.

The (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald reports the state's GOP chairman, Jack Dorgan, says the comments by Susanne Atanus are "offensive" and "have no place in the modern political debate."

He adds the 55-year-old from suburban Niles "has no place on the ballot" and should withdraw.

Atanus is running against David Williams III in the primary for the 9th Congressional District, which includes part of Chicago and its northern suburbs. The winner will face U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky in the general election.

Atanus made the comments during an interview with the paper's editorial board. She says stands by her comments and won't withdraw.

CONNECTICUT

Appeals Court Hears Same-Sex Custody Case In Connecticut

HARTFORD, (AP) - A federal appeals court is making a rare appearance in Connecticut to hear several cases, including one involving a Virginia pastor convicted of helping a woman and her child flee the country and avoid a custody dispute with her former lesbian partner.

Three judges on the New York City-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals are scheduled to hear cases Monday at the University of Connecticut Law School, under an occasional practice to hold court across its territory of Connecticut, New York and Vermont.

Pastor Kenneth Miller of Stuarts Draft, Va., is appealing his 2012 conviction in Vermont federal court for aiding in international parental kidnapping. His 27-month prison sentence is delayed while he appeals.

Authorities say the woman and daughter Miller helped are still believed to be in Nicaragua.

UTAH

Governor Open To Law Allowing Civil Unions

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - Gov. Gary Herbert on Thursday indicated he'd be open to a law allowing civil unions if Utah citizens pushed for such an option for gay couples in the future.

No such proposal is pending, and the governor says his job is to defend Utah's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, which also prohibits civil unions.

Herbert, a Republican, made the comments during his monthly televised news conference Thursday morning.

The governor says he was surprised and disappointed in December when a federal judge overturned Utah's gay marriage ban.

More than 1,000 gay couples rushed to wed until the U.S. Supreme Court halted the marriages this month.

Utah has appealed to the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. They're expected to issue a decision in a few months.

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> www.PrideSource.com

Want A Healthy Relationship? Here's A Class You Can Take

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE - Whatever the relationship, be it with a partner, family member, children, friends or co-workers, there is always more that can be done to improve it. That's why Affirmations is offering a Relationship Skills Class for those who want to learn what it takes to get the relationships they want.

The seven session series runs Feb. 13 - March 27, on Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. at a cost of \$35 for the entire program. Leah Taraskiewicz of HAVEN and Carmen E. Wargel, chair of Macomb Community Domestic Violence Council, facilitate it. Both organizations are tasked with reducing intimate partner violence and helping people in relationships get along better.

"The best way to end intimate partner violence is to create loving and equitable relationships; and everyone deserves to have relationships like that in their lives. These classes are meant to offer skills and creative strategies to support the creation of those types of relationships. Prevention efforts are how we begin to create a safer, more equitable world; these classes are one way that we're trying to do this," Taraskiewicz said.

"The class is very intentional about providing myriad ways for folks with different learning styles to engage the material such as self-reflection, dialogue, group activities, body-based practices, as well as lecture. I will also say as a facilitator

that my style is to be responsive to the needs of the group and that the format of the class will be flexible to the particular needs of individuals and the group as a whole. My hope is that the class will be fun and serious as it will be challenging and rewarding for all of those who participate."

"Sometimes people don't realize they are in unhealthy relationships. They may think that because their partner is the same gender as them that it isn't abuse."

- Lydia Hanson, Director of Health and Wellness at Affirmations

This is the first time the Relationship Skills Class has been offered in Michigan, though the curriculum has been in practice for ten years in Seattle, where the Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse created it.

The class is for anyone, regardless of relationship situation. While the focus is on LGBT people and their relationship needs, allies and family members are welcome as well.

"The creators of the class were very intentional about creating an instructional model that accesses multiple learning modes, so the class is quite varied and interesting. We plan to have a lot of fun while building seriously important skills," Wargel said.

Lydia Hanson, Director of Health and Wellness at Affirmations, hopes that the class will be able to run three times through the year. She expects about 18 people per class, and is looking forward to a diverse mix of participants.

"The class is poly-inclusive and BDSM-inclusive, and is really for anyone who thinks about how they relate to other people," Hansen said.

"Making healthy relationships makes the unhealthy ones stand out more," Hanson said. "Sometimes people don't realize they are in unhealthy relationships. They may think that because their partner is the same gender as them that it isn't abuse."

The Relationship Skills Class focuses on positive relationship development, with topics like exploring personal and cultural relationship values, arguments and making agreements, accountability and building community connections.

For more information or to register, go to www.goaffirmations.org.

► Virginia

Continued from p. 7

the United States Supreme Court."

On Jan. 30, Judge Arenda Wright Allen of the U.S. District Court for Eastern Virginia, is scheduled to hear arguments at a summary judgment hearing in *Bostic v. Virginia*. Famed attorneys Ted Olson and David Boies, who led the American Foundation for Equal Rights' successful challenge against California's Proposition 8, are heading the Norfolk legal team. It is not yet known whether today's announcement might require postponement of that January 30 hearing.

The initial named defendants in *Bostic* are now State Registrar of Vital Records Janet Rainey and Norfolk Circuit Court Clerk George Schaefer.

The amended brief submitted by Herring under Rainey's signature today states that

"marriage is a fundamental right protected by the federal constitution" and that current Virginia law "improperly denies same-sex couples access to" that fundamental right, "without legal justification, and therefore violates the federal constitution guarantees of due process of law and the equal protection of the laws."

The court also granted intervenor status to Prince William County Circuit Court Clerk Michele McQuigg on January 17, noting that plaintiffs did not object.

A second lawsuit, *Harris v. Virginia*, led by Lambda Legal and the ACLU, is pending before a U.S. District Court for the Western District.

"The Commonwealth of Virginia has too often argued on the wrong side," said Herring, referring to historic cases on desegregation in 1954, on interracial marriage in 1967, and on women entering the Virginia Military Institute in 1996.

The same legal principles that applied in

those cases apply in this case today," said Herring.

Referring to his 2006 vote in favor of the ban on same-sex marriage, Herring was blunt.

"I was wrong to stop short of marriage equality," said Herring, but he added his decision today "is not based on my policy preferences" but "based on my thorough analysis of applicable law and the constitutional questions raised by this case."

"Virginia is, in many ways, the cradle of democracy," said Herring, noting that many of the nation's early presidents and authors of key government documents, including the constitution, were written by Virginians.

"Too many times in our history our citizens have had to lead the way on civil rights while our leaders have stood against them," said Herring. "It is time for the Commonwealth to be on the right side of history and the right side of law."

Rainbow Resource Guide Gives Older Adults Options

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

“People need to have LGBT friendly resources. As we age, many of us have to depend more on others for help. People in the community are less likely to have family, less likely to have children. They may feel more vulnerable in general, and they may have fears like being mistreated in their own homes by people that come to help them, or fear of having to go back in the closet to receive care,” explained Attorney Jay Kaplan who works for the ACLU and is part of the LGBT Older Adult Coalition.

The Coalition recognized these fears and needs and has spent the last two years looking for ways to address them. They’ve done trainings with service providers, taken part in conferences aimed at meeting older adult needs, and they have come up with a great new guide to help seniors find competent service providers.

The guide is called The SE Michigan Rainbow Resource Guide for Older Adults, and the first edition went live on their website Jan. 24. The 29-page book lists providers of many services that elders in the community may need.

There are the obvious categories like home care providers, estate planning, aging advocacy agencies, healthcare and holistic healthcare. But there are also professionals one might not think of until they are needed, such as home and auto repair, pet care, real estate agencies, computer repair and moving/relocation services.

“When you are inviting someone into your home, like a furnace repairman for example, you want to know that who you are is not going to be an issue,” Kaplan said.

Kathleen LaTosch of the LGBT Older Adult Coalition helped organize the development of the guide, using an older document called Modern Family Guide as a jumping off point. Working with students from the University of Michigan School of Social Work and other dedicated volunteers, the Coalition was able to not only assemble the list, but verify its contents.

“We wanted to make sure that providers in the book really are LGBT affirming,” she said. “We hope that

providers will want to be part of this guide and see it as a good marketing opportunity, but we also want to make sure they are treating everyone fairly.”

LaTosch said providers were questioned about having nondiscrimination policies and other policies to see if they truly are inclusive. She said many of the providers are active participants in the LGBT Older Adult Committee, and have gone above and beyond to reach out to the community.



Jay Kaplan



Kathleen LaTosch

Lynn Feinberg, Account Executive, Arcadia Home Care & Staffing is among the dozens of care providers listed in the guide. “Arcadia

provides caregivers for individuals who may need services such as light housekeeping, grocery shopping,

meal preparation, laundry, transportation to appointments, companionship, personal care and more. We can offer assistance after surgery as well as with injuries and chronic or acute illnesses,” Feinberg said.

Arcadia is a Michigan-based national company, headquartered in Southfield. Feinberg works from their Birmingham office, which is one of 50 locations across the country, including nine in Michigan. All employees are screened and trained to be inclusive.

“Our staff has received cultural sensitivity training for the LGBT Community through the Area Agency on Aging 1B,” Feinberg said. “This training provides us the tools to deliver supportive care in a warm and welcoming manner. It is important that people feel safe with our caregivers. We understand we are guests in our clients’ homes and therefore, do everything in our power to earn their trust and keep it.

“Arcadia recognizes the importance of being included in the guide because there are a number of seniors in this particular

community that may not have the support of family, friends or neighbors should they need care in their home.”

The SE Michigan Rainbow Resource Guide for Older Adults is available online and print editions will be available at Affirmations, KICK and other LGBT gathering spaces. It will be updated as often as necessary to provide as many resources as possible.

“When you are inviting someone into your home, like a furnace repairman for example, you want to know that who you are is not going to be an issue.”

– Jay Kaplan

About The Coalition

The LGBT Older Adult Coalition was formed in 2010. It is a collaboration of people and organizations in southeastern Michigan who are working to establish effective programs and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults. It is hosted by the ACLU of Michigan and is supported by a grant from the HOPE Fund.

Participating representatives attend from the ACLU of Michigan, Adult Well-Being Services, Affirmations, Area Agency on Aging 1-B, KICK, Citizens for Better Care, The Jim Toy Community Center, Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, Oakland Family Services, Optimal Care Inc, and The Village of Redford.

Meetings are open to all interested parties and are generally scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of every month, 9:30-11 a.m. at the ACLU offices in Detroit. For more information or to verify meeting dates, please contact Jay Kaplan at the ACLU, jkaplan@aclumich.org, 313-578-6812

BRIEFS

Indiana House Clears Marriage Ban Bill

BY LISA KEEN

The Indiana House on Tuesday approved a proposal to change the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage. The vote on House Joint Resolution 3 was 57-40.

The bill now goes to the state senate.

Marriage equality supporters scored an important victory Monday, potentially thwarting the effort to put the ban on marriage for same-sex couples on the Indiana ballot this November. But during debate on the bill Tuesday, Rep. Shelli VanDenBurgh (D-Crown Point) said she thinks the amendment to remove language that would have also banned civil unions and domestic partnerships was just a tactic to give some Republicans political cover. She predicted the state senate would re-insert the language taken out of the House bill and the full original bill would be ultimately passed.

The Republican-dominated House voted 52 to 43 to remove language from the proposed ban that would have prevented same-sex couples from obtaining any form of recognition for their relationships, including civil unions and domestic partnerships. Some opponents said it could even have prevented employers from offering equal benefits to employees with same-sex partners.

During Tuesday’s debate, Rep. Woody Burton (R-Whiteland), who described himself as a “person of faith,” said gay couples can live together but “where does it stop?”

“These people want to live a lifestyle, that’s their right,” said Burton, “but when they force some type of an object on us, then people have a right” to vote.

VanDenBurgh (D-Crown Point) responded to that later by noting that the proposed ban was singling out one group of people. “Where does that stop?” she asked.

Rep. Linda Lawson (D-Hammond) recounted the discrimination she experienced when she sought to become the first woman on her local police force. She said she was forced to wear a man’s police uniform because her supervisor told her that her trying to be on the police force was “trying to be a man.”

“Discrimination is an ugly, mean thing,” said Lawson.

If the senate passes the version of the bill approved by the House, then the proposal will have to be approved by the next legislative session before going to voters.

The state’s constitution requires that, before a proposed constitutional change can be put before voters, it must pass two consecutive sessions of the legislature.

If the senate restores the original language, the House would have to agree to that original version in order to put the measure on the ballot this year.

Go Online For State of Union Analysis

BTL will have complete State of the Union analysis online beginning January 29. President Obama is expected to focus on inequality as a theme with emphasis on economic inequality.

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> www.PrideSource.com

Republican Leaders Chastise Agema, But He Remains Defiant

“For the good of the party, we believe Dave Agema should resign.”

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus and Michigan GOP Chairman Bobby Schostak, in a joint statement released Jan. 24

“Republicans must move on and make it clear through word and deed that Mr. Agema does not represent us. We are focused on growing our coalition so that we may win for our ideas of freedom, opportunity and limited government.”

Betsy DeVos, former Michigan Republican Party Chair

“I think what is best for the party, and is best for Dave, is that he resigns.”

Terry Lynn Land Jan. 24. Land is Agema’s RNC co-representative from Michigan, Michigan’s Secretary of State and the presumptive Republican U.S. Senate candidate in 2014.

“It is important that we have passionate and respectful debate and discussion on a variety of issues, measured by the strength of our persuasiveness, not the shrillness of our voice.”

Republican Attorney General Bill Schuette, who was the first statewide elected official to call for Agema to step down Jan. 24

“Sadly, it has become common for those with positions of responsibility in the public square to drive derision rather than promote tolerance and civility. In all things political, in present times, there must be a renewed focus on charity.”

Michigan Catholic Conference in a Jan. 24 statement

“(As a U.S. Air Force pilot) I was prepared to die to defend our Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, and my opinion is we have domestic enemies at this present time. We’re starting to become what I used to fight against.”

Dave Agema, Jan. 27 at GOP fundraiser in Grand Rapids

Agema Must End Divisive Politics, Encourage Inclusivity In Michigan



Viewpoint

BY JON HOADLEY

Over the past few months, our state has been in the spotlight for many things we’re proud of—car and truck of the year, the rebirth of the auto industry, another year of Promise students—and a few things we’re not, like Dave Agema’s divisive comments.

Dave Agema, Republican National Committeeman for Michigan, is giving Michigan a bad reputation.

Agema has characterized gay people as “filthy” and promiscuous and has said they support the Affordable Care Act only because they are dying young of AIDS and want free medical care. On his Facebook page, he also endorsed a new Russian law making it illegal to discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender issues in ear-shot of children as “common sense.” To top it off, although I’m sure it’s not the last we’ll hear from him, he has shared a blog post suggesting Muslim Americans have made no positive contributions to this country.

You know his behavior has passed the point of a spirited political disagreement when his actions receive not-so-subtle rebukes in Gov. Snyder’s State of the State address with calls for more “civility” and out-right calls for resignation from prominent Republicans like Betsy DeVos.

Enough is enough. We can’t be the state famous for one man’s hate.

It is time for our political leaders and people of goodwill everywhere to speak out against intolerance and to quickly and forcefully provide equal protection under the law to everyone, no matter their race, religion, or sexual orientation and

You know his behavior has passed the point of a spirited political disagreement when his actions receive not-so-subtle rebukes in Gov. Snyder’s State of the State address with calls for more “civility” and out-right calls for resignation from prominent Republicans like Betsy DeVos. Enough is enough. We can’t be the state famous for one man’s hate.

gender identity. Quick and decisive progress on this issue will allow our communities to move on to the many other pressing issues that face our state and our nation today.

We should be investing in kids and schools. We should be protecting the Great Lakes and our natural resources. We should be helping to attract and retain the next generation of entrepreneurs and job creators.

Instead, we’re talking about Dave Agema, and he’s telling a bunch of people you’re not welcome here.

I refuse to let his comments exclude me from my home here in Kalamazoo. Despite his decidedly “uncivil” comments, I’m still a small business owner and job creator, a partner, an advocate for education, and a friend.

But I’m worried about the impact of his hateful words on others. I’m worried about the Muslim teenager trying to picture his or her future here

in Michigan. I’m worried about the gay student who feels a little less safe at school because of the culture Agema is promoting.

This past week we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Among the volumes of wisdom he left us is his observation that, “We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.” This lesson seems to be particularly useful.

It is time for Agema’s politics of division to be over. Let’s get Michigan’s boat rowing in a direction that makes everyone feel welcome and helps us all succeed. And let’s keep Michigan in the national spotlight for our victories of inclusion, not comments of exclusion.

Jon Hoadley is the Democratic Candidate for State Representative in the 60th District representing Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Township and an LGBT advocate. Learn more at www.jonhoadley.com



Rise And Shinola



Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

There was a young man who was down on his luck. He got fired in January. In February his boyfriend dumped him. His cat croaked in March. His wallet was lifted in April. Worse still, in May he turned 29. Over the hill.

June brought summer; but in spite of the sunshine he sat stewing about the misfortunes that had so lately befallen him.

In contrast to the cloudless sky, his face revealed that he was not a happy camper, as the saying goes. And while wrapped up in his Linus/Lucy label blanket of gloom, he was unexpectedly joined by an older gentleman who sat next to him.

"Good day, young man," said the distinguished personage. "Is it not a lovely, most invigorating day?" he asked, taking out of his pocket a small bag of bread crumbs to feed sparrows, of which there was an abundance that radiant morning.

The young man sighed a deep sigh, "Yes, it's a beautiful day, but I can't for the life of me enjoy it. These past few months have been trying."

And, sensing the older gentleman to have a sympathetic ear, he told him all the things that had happened.

"May I give you a friendly tip on living?" coaxed the older gentleman, tossing crumbs to the sparrows, now eagerly crowding around the two bench sitters for fortuitous freebees.

"It's been my experience that whatever one's lot in life one should always say thank you. Indeedly, I begin and end each day with thank you. I do what I call my thank-you meditation."

"And just what might that be?" asked the young man, skeptical but curious nonetheless. (Maybe there's some hope for me after all, he mused; and suddenly the June day and the park seemed sunbeams brighter. The birds just a little less annoyingly chirpy.)

"Well," said the wiser, older gentleman, "it's quite simple. The words become a mantra that you repeat over and over until it becomes a part of what's called your inner child, your subconscious. It's a doorway to change."

"Tell me more," said the young man, convinced that perhaps here at long last was the magic key he needed to turn his life and his luck around for the promise of far better days ahead.

"I repeat. (You needn't be a rocket scientist.) It's so effortless. Just five minutes in the morning before breakfast. Five minutes at night before sleep. But! And this is important, my young friend. You must be persistent. Dedicated. Determined."

"Yes. Yes. What else? Pray to tell."

"Simple," said the older gentleman, putting his now empty bag of crumbs in his pocket, looking at his watch, slowly getting up to leave. "Just repeat 300 times, morning and night, Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Over and over. 300 times. The Universe will surely hear you and respond in kind."

Having so instructed the young man in what many true believers fancy to be the Long Lost Key to the Universe, the aged advisor left, adding "Have a Blessed Day!" and vanished in the twinkling of an eye down the park's less-travelled road.

So encouraged the young man repeated his 300 thanks. Twice daily. Mondays through Sundays. Month after month. Season after season. He didn't get his job back. His lover left town. No one returned his wallet. Regrettably he turned 30. But a miracle happened.

One starry night out of the blue he heard a cosmic voice. It spoke quite audibly. Quite succinctly. Somewhat matter-of-factly. But loudly. And clear. "You're welcome. Set your alarm for six, Mary!"

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Creep of the Week

Todd Starnes

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

I did not watch the 56th Annual Grammy Awards. For one thing, I don't give a shit. For another thing, I'm too old to stay up that late.

But I did watch a clip online of the en masse wedding during Macklemore



& Ryan Lewis performing "Same Love" because anything that gets right-wing ideologues so worked up is something I've gotta see.

I thought it was good.

Starnes is a shining example of what happens when the right begins to realize they're losing the fight against equality.

Macklemore's performance was impressive even though I find the song to be heavy-handed though well intentioned, and he looked especially handsome (no hetero) even if he did wear a bolo tie as a nod to the lesbians. And, as an added bonus, I now know what Ryan Lewis looks like though still not what he does. When Queen Latifah pronounced the 33 couples (though I have to ask, why not 56?) married, okay I admit it, I got choked up.

And then Madonna hobbled out on the stage dressed as a cowgirl. And I thought, "Woah. I didn't realize that Madonna couldn't walk without a cane now." And then she did her best Lucinda Williams impersonation, bless her heart.

But man, by the reactions of the right-wingers on the Internet you would have thought that the whole performance had been a bunch of sweaty homos sexing each other on the stage while waving, "Fags hate God" banners.

Fox News & Commentary host Todd Starnes is a shining example of what happens when the right begins to realize they're losing the fight against equality.

On Sunday, Jan. 26 Starnes basically live-tweeted the Grammys making hilarious jokes like, "I hope Pink didn't eat chili tonight" and "Is Taylor Swift having a seizure?"

But he also warned, "Get ready

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

for CBS to shove tolerance and diversity down our throats tonight" and "#grammys are on -- hide your children." Because gays.

"Here it comes - the Grammys are mocking marriage," he wrote, probably while perched on the edge of his seat unable to look away from the very thing he calls, simply, "Sick," a couple Tweets later.

Starnes didn't just see the Grammy performance as distasteful, he saw it as downright hateful and anti-Christian.

"The Grammys mock God, marginalize the Bible. #hate #intolerance," he Tweeted, offering hashtags of his own personal feelings about gays.

"Remember when The Grammys was about music - and not cramming a social agenda down our throats?" he asked. Admittedly, I do not. It is difficult

to buy the claim that an awards show that handed shiny statues to groups like Hootie and the Blowfish, the Baha Men, and Creed is "about music."

In case you were wondering what Starnes thought of the "Same Love" performance he writes, "Macklemore launches a hate-filled, bigoted, intolerant diatribe against Christians."

Give me a break. In case you are unfamiliar with the song, Macklemore raps, "The right wing conservatives think it's a decision and you can be cured with some treatment and religion." He continues, "And God loves all his children, is somehow forgotten but we paraphrase a book written thirty-five-hundred years ago."

This hardly seems akin to the anti-gay vitriol spewed constantly from so-called Christians. I think it speaks volumes that Starnes takes such offense to being reminded that God loves everybody, not just the straight folks.

Starnes also Tweeted, "I've never seen such a display of intolerance, bigotry and hatred. #Grammys #antichristian"

Assuming Starnes wasn't physically at the Grammys I think we can safely add the words "on TV" to the end of his claim that he has never seen "such a display of intolerance, bigotry and hatred" before, thereby broadening the list of atrocities he has to be willfully ignoring here.

If ignorance really is bliss, then Starnes must be one hell of a happy guy.

Ivory Coast: Mob Attacks Gay Rights Group Office

BY ROBBIE COREY-BOULET

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) – An angry mob "ransacked" the headquarters of Ivory Coast's most prominent gay rights organization, an official said Jan. 27, underscoring the dangers facing such groups in Africa even in the few countries where homosexual acts are not crimes.

The attack occurred after multiple days of anti-gay protests in Ivory Coast, a country generally viewed as moderate and sometimes considered a safe haven for homosexuals fleeing persecution elsewhere.

On Saturday afternoon, nearly 200 people stormed the offices of Alternative Cote d'Ivoire in Abidjan, the commercial capital, flinging stones to shatter windows and stealing computers, said Claver Toure, the group's executive director.

Others heaved sacks of garbage over the property's exterior walls and strew trash and broken glass at the entrance. Signs hung on walls demanded "Stop the homos!" and "Pedes get out!" The word "pede" is short for pedophile and is commonly used in West Africa to insult gay men.

"Everything they could take was taken, and the rest was broken," Toure said, adding that a private security guard was hospitalized with wounds to his face.

U.S. Ambassador Terence P. McCulley said he was "shocked and saddened" by the attack, in a statement posted Monday to the embassy's Facebook page.

"Even if one is not in agreement with the point of view of an organization or its people, we have an obligation in a democracy to support the right of people to organize and express themselves," he said. "I hope that Ivorians will understand that these attacks are not consonant with democratic values."

Toure criticized what he described as a deliberately slow response by security forces, saying police did not arrive until the French ambassador contacted government officials.

Ultimately, he said, about 10 officers came with a half dozen U.N. peacekeepers.

"When we call, the police need to come right away and protect us because we are Ivorians," Toure said.

Interior Minister spokesman Bazoumana Coulibaly said the government was not prepared to comment because it was still collecting information.

In a statement Friday, the Ireland-based human rights organization Front Line Defenders detailed what it described as "coordinated" attacks against Toure's group last week. It had warned that "rumors are circulating that a more virulent attack is envisioned" for Saturday.

On Jan. 20, neighbors gathered outside Toure's home to chant anti-gay slogans and issue death threats against those inside, Front Line Defenders said. Two days later, a mob targeted Alternative's headquarters, placing signs demanding that the organization leave.

It was not clear what prompted the attack against Alternative, located in an upscale neighborhood.

Local media reports quoted residents last week expressing fear that the presence of a gay rights organization would jeopardize their children's safety – highlighting the widespread belief throughout Africa that gay people target children for recruitment.

Toure said his landlord confronted him on Jan. 5 after neighbors complained that more than 20 people were staying in his home and that "condoms could be found throughout the neighborhood each morning" – accusations Toure denied.

The Ivory Coast attacks come amid an increasingly hostile environment for sexual minorities in Africa, most notably in Nigeria, where President Goodluck Jonathan earlier this month signed a law banning gay associations and gay marriage. Dozens have been arrested recently throughout Nigeria since then.

In the northern city of Bauchi,

protesters tried to attack seven men accused of belonging to a gay organization, demanding they be

Human Rights Watch said the attacks should not go unpunished, noting the attacks came "despite several warnings to Ivorian authorities of escalating threats."

stoned to death.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni has voiced opposition to a bill approved by lawmakers last month calling for life imprisonment for some cases of homosexuality, though parliament still could muster enough support to make it law.

Ivory Coast is generally seen as more moderate on the issue, and Alternative has worked increasingly closely with the government on programs to combat HIV/AIDS.

But Matthew Thomann, an anthropologist at American University who has worked extensively with Abidjan's gay groups, said it would be "naive and dangerous" to portray Ivory Coast as an oasis of freedom.

"We must remind ourselves that the lack of anti-gay legislation in a country like Ivory Coast is not the same as LGBT individuals having actual legal protection or recourse when victimized," Thomann said of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender minorities. "There are high levels of impunity for attacks such as those experienced by Mr. Toure and Alternative."

Human Rights Watch said the attacks should not go unpunished, noting the attacks came "despite several warnings to Ivorian authorities of escalating threats."

"The authorities must act swiftly to protect the activists and their supporters from any further violence and to hold accountable those who have led the recent mob attacks."

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Patty Griffin On Her Closeness To The Gay Community, Being A 'Weirdo' & Religion

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

There are singers, there are songwriters – and then there’s Patty Griffin.

Not only has the celebrated songstress been praised for her versatility, Griffin’s untouchable talent has earned her a Grammy and landed her material on releases from some of the industry’s biggest names. For artists seeking poetic musings (and really sad songs), Griffin is a go-to. Besides the Dixie Chicks, Kelly Clarkson, Bette Midler and Emmylou Harris have all given a second life to the writer’s rootsy tunes.

Griffin’s own catalog, though, is immense, and just last year she added two more gems to her repertoire: “American Kid” – a work of staggering genius that, not surprisingly, topped many best-of lists – and “Silver Bell,” her “lost” LP, shelved by her then-label, that was released 13 years after she recorded it.

Touring in support of both albums, Griffin stops at the 37th annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival, headlining the second night of The Ark fundraiser on Feb. 1 at Hill Auditorium. When she chatted from her hometown of Austin, Texas, she was still tinkering with the set list but said to expect a stripped-down performance. And because this is Patty Griffin we’re talking about, you can also expect to be blown away.

“American Kid” is obviously very connected to your late father, who was dying as you were writing it. What is the most difficult song for you to get through live?

I don’t think I have a great deal of difficulty getting through them. My emotional response varies from night to night, and there are times when that can make it hard to sing, but there hasn’t been one in particular that’s gotten me too emotional to sing. It’s all emotional. (Laughs)

It’s been really great to have songs in my own life that speak about him. I didn’t think about it at the time, about honoring him; I was just trying to get myself through him passing away. I didn’t think about how great it would be

INFO
Ann Arbor Folk Festival
6:30 p.m. Jan. 31-Feb. 1
Hill Auditorium
825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor
For full lineups: theark.org

Lost & Found

Patty Griffin headlines the Ann Arbor Folk Festival on Feb. 1. Photo: Cambria Harkey

See Patty Griffin, page 16

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Photo: Cambria Harkey

Church," although it was recorded live with a band in church, was a very polished sound. "Children Running Through" is probably the most polished sound of any record I've done. So I was just ready to get out of Nashville and out of that mindset of everything having that cleanness to it. (Recording in) Memphis really made sense to me – they don't do clean!

Your songwriting has always come from a personal place. Of all your albums, do you feel particularly closest to one? Which has the most significance in your life?

No, but "Downtown Church" was a great learning experience – one of the reasons I carry those songs into this tour. There's so much controversy, and spirituality has been abused and confiscated so much over the centuries, causing countless people to

manipulate people and make them feel terrible. When you boil it down to these songs and express the spirit in a really honest way – especially listening to a lot of black gospel music or right-off-the-farm white gospel music – when it gets to be that close to the bone, it's honest, it's moving and it's uplifting, and that's what it should be.

It was an epiphany for me, and it helped open up my mind to a whole school of music that I had brushed off because I didn't wanna just hear a patriarchal God. If you can remove your prejudices for a moment and get past some of them, it's a whole world of incredible music. It's a big treasure chest.

Hey, who says God can't be a woman?

(Laughs) If you were raised in any kind of traditional Christian home, you never heard them refer to God as a "she."

Speaking of religion making people feel terrible, let's talk about the gay community. How aware are you of a gay fan base?

Very aware of it. I have many, many close friends in the gay community. Sometimes I think I know more gay people than I do straight people right now in my life. Looking back through my life, even to my childhood, I've always had gay friends – although, when I was little, I didn't know

► Patty Griffin

Continued from p. 14

later to tell his story, at least from my point of view. I don't know how thrilled he'd be about some of these things! (Laughs)

How is creating and performing music a catharsis for you?

To me, it's just my nature. It's how I'm built. I feel like I have to do it, you know? I think anybody who's a musician who gets to be 50 and is still a musician, that's really how they're built. They really *have* to do it. So it's very second nature to me. It's really, really not hard for me to express myself that way.

I think of your debut, "Living With Ghosts," as the older cousin to "American Kid"; they're both so raw.

Yes! (Laughs)

How was your approach to "American Kid" different or similar to "Living With Ghosts"?

Oh, I did think of just doing a straight acoustic record, but there are certain things on it that were crying out for arrangements and other instrumentation, so I wanted to make it a small-sounding record. I'm glad you said "raw," because that's what I was aiming for. I wanted it to not be polished at all. For me, I thought "Downtown

they were gay! (Laughs)

One of the reasons the energy of the gay community works really well with me is that when you're different and outside of what's considered normal and acceptable, you have to either plunge into darkness and never get out or grow into something really strong. You have to develop just to survive, so there's a depth, a strength, a resilience and also a real kindness within yourself. You have to be really good friends with yourself – and that's what's really attracted me to gay people in my life.

My gay friends are just unbelievably resilient and such solid people, and I can't say that I find the same with straight friends. There's a little more wonkiness going on. But I think, for me, I always feel – just because of what I've chosen to do for a living, and how everybody in my family scored really high on their SATs and they've all got careers – I'm the weirdo. (Laughs) It's been really great for me to be able to hang out with people who just automatically had to develop that resilience, and maybe there's something that reads from my music that gay people have to look for.

The song "Moses" from "Living With Ghosts" mentions your "best friend who is queer" being oblivious to your pain. Was it written about a real-life gay friend?

You know, yes ... yes, it was. (Laughs) That was one of my best friends many years ago, yeah. I was feeling sorry for myself, and after I'm like, "I'm sorry, Paul!"

Actually, he saved my life, that guy. But yeah, I was just feeling sorry about my failed marriage when I wrote that song, but actually, I didn't know how positive that would be when I wrote it.

How about "Tony," which has become particularly relevant after the rash of suicides in the gay and lesbian community these last few years. When you wrote that song, did you think it would connect so much with that community?

I remember I was on the road in the late '90s and I was at a gig in Montana, I think, and this kid came up to me with a friend of his and said that he had just used that song to come out to his family. He was in tears and he thanked me for that.

I didn't really think about that when I wrote it. Again, I'm always exploring myself, you know? I wrote that song for myself about being a weirdo and suffering from being a weirdo and realizing that there was this really quiet kid in front of me (at school) who was obviously gay.

Later on, after we had graduated and I had moved on and out from where I grew up, I found out that he had killed himself. I didn't really intend to write anything for people to use, but I guess it does work that way. The point is that everybody's suffering with something. That's the place I wrote it from.

That's what you capture so well in your music: the human connection and the human spirit.

Well, trying for it. (Laughs)

Are there any plans to release any songs from the stockpile of unreleased material you have?

There are songs I've done that I've forgotten! I probably won't. I have so many things I wanna do in my life and doing that is not one of them – sorry! (Laughs) At least not right now. My brain won't work that way. Maybe at some point all my focus will go into that because that's where I need to be, but right now I just wanna do other things. I don't wanna worry about what's out there sitting around. I figure if it's gonna have a life, it'll have a life.

Now that you're romantically involved with Robert Plant, might we hear some happy love songs that aren't just about your dog?

I don't know about that! (Laughs)

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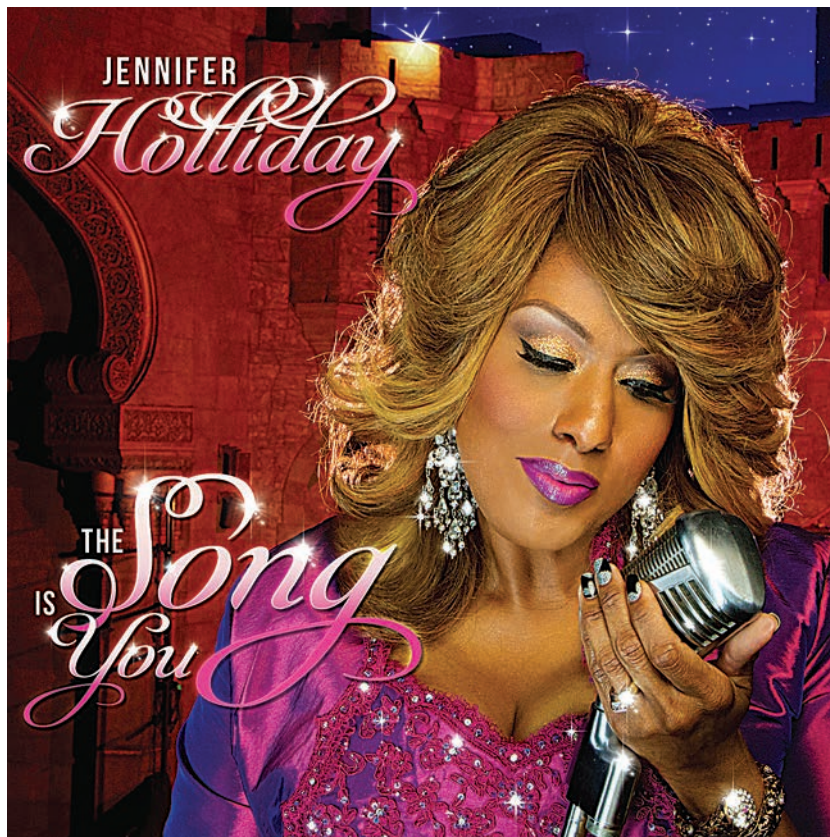
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Hear Me Out

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

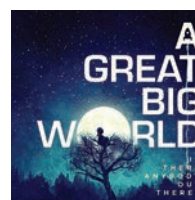
Jennifer Holliday, A Great Big World



Jennifer Holliday, 'The Song Is You'

Jennifer Holliday is not going. And even though it's been 23 years since the Grammy winner – the original Effie in Broadway's "Dreamgirls" – released a secular solo studio album, she's telling you ... and you ... and you. On "The Song Is You," a lovey-dovey set of standards and R&B notables rooted in her trademark theatrics, Holliday sings with the fierceness and soul of Effie, proving one thing: She's still got it. Hear her tear into "At Last," singing it from all the way down in her gut, and you know that's the sound of a woman who's feeling every last word of what Etta James was preaching. She lets loose on the jazzy title track, a big-band cover that would make even Ol' Blue Eyes himself a proud man, and lets her voice drop down to the floor on the slinky "Touch." On both tracks, and throughout the album, the use of live strings and horns – and not fabricated instrumentals – creates a warm and inviting atmosphere that feels fresh and classic. When she reaches the soulful power ballad "The One You Used to Be," a song Holliday wrote for Whitney Houston that was never released by the late singer, she's all passion and pain, her voice climbing all the way up to the clouds. When it's

over, you'll stand up. You'll applaud. And you should anyway, for the very fact that "This Song Is You" impressively showcases a diva who's slipped under the world's radar. Let this be Jennifer Holliday's big comeback – because, if you didn't already, you're gonna love her. *Grade: B+*



A Great Big World, 'Is There Anybody Out There?'

Just thinking about it turns me into a geyser, but "Say Something,"

the star-making single from Ian Axel and Chad Vaccarino (better known as overnight sensation A Great Big World), really takes a piece out of you. An achingly beautiful ballad about letting go that's understated, honest and heartfelt, it's the kind of song made for curling up in the fetal position and sobbing into a pillow. The original, with just the guys, and the radio single – where Christina Aguilera somehow holds back the belts, harmonizing with powerful nuance and turning out one of her most affecting performances – both fill out the album. The song, with Aguilera particularly, is genius and

timeless – everything Big World's debut is not. The Hallmark clichés certainly don't help (the titles alone know no subtlety: "You'll Be Okay," "Cheer Up!" and "I Really Want It"), and Axel's cloying Muppet-man voice isn't enough to elevate them beyond cheesy grade-school platitudes – but the real problem lies in the bad-Broadway, bad-Billy Joel music. The crescendoing "Already Home," a goopy slowie, is what you expect to hear during the sad goodbye at the end of a WB drama, the Five for Fighting-ish "Rockstar" pretends to be edgy and "Everyone is Gay," while laudable for its social conscience, is so over-the-top cartoonish its message of inclusivity gets lost. And to think this is the same duo that was having a brilliant Adele-like moment with "Say Something" – a song that promised so much more. Am I giving up on them? Not just yet, but I'm sad and disappointed and I need my pillow. *Grade: C*

Also Out



Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings, 'Give the People What They Want'

Soul-funk priestess Sharon Jones brings the fire and

lights up everything in her path when she blazes through "Retreat!" off her follow-up to 2010's "I Learned the Hard Way." "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," she proclaims – and she's not kidding. For nearly 30 minutes, Jones does, indeed, give the people – the fed-up, the heartbroken, the underdogs – what they want: empowerment.



Rosanne Cash, 'The River & the Thread'

Like her late father, Johnny, there's an insightful authenticity to the stories Rosanne

Cash tells on "The River & the Thread," the first great country release of this year. Her low-key prayer "Tell Heaven" shines a light on lost souls, a guitar/drum mix drive "Modern Blue" into a mellowing crawl that's moody and moving, and "When the Master Calls the Roll" is songwriting at its richest.



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Between Lines

'Drag Race' Alum Help Launch Ann Arbor's New Gay Party

BY SHELBY CLARK

Get ready to taste the rainbow. Candy Bar, a new weekly LGBT dance party, launches Thursday, Feb. 6 at Live Nightclub in Ann Arbor.

Created to offer a fresh option to the dance and gay party scene in Ann Arbor and metro Detroit, the weekly event will include theme parties, guest entertainers and DJs.

Along with drink specials, mixes from DJ Lancelot and host Bobby Hoffman, opening night for Candy Bar will feature performances by Gia Gunn and Jade, former contestants on "RuPaul's Drag Race."

Jade, a Chicago native, is known for her rivalry with fellow season one contestant Rebecca Glasscock. Offscreen, Jade brings passionate entertainment, having gone so far as to emulate Britney Spears' MTV



performance of "I'm a Slave 4 U" – python and all.

Also from Chicago, and known for

servicing "beauty, attitude, and sass while dripping in jewels," Gia Gunn will appear on the upcoming season of "RuPaul's Drag Race," premiering this February on LOGO.

Live Nightclub, at the corner of First and Huron in downtown Ann Arbor, features two full bars, large dance floor, prompt service and cocktails. A variety of live events occur every month.

Beginning Thursday, Feb. 6, Candy Bar runs 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Live Nightclub, 102 S. First St., Ann Arbor. Admission to launch night costs \$5. A \$10 VIP All Access Pass can be purchased, offering a meet-and-greet and photo with the entertainers.

For more information, visit www.livea2.com.

For other LGBT dance parties in Southeast Michigan, check out BTL's calendar at www.pridesource.com/calendar.html.

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Jan. 30

Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945 The story of what happened to homosexuals in Nazi Germany is the subject of the exhibition. Holocaust Memorial Center, 48123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. 248-553-2400 x24. Holocaustcenter.org

Gender Hormone Counseling Sessions 6 p.m. Darnell Jones, RPH and GNA, will conduct one on one

Friday, Jan. 31

Building the Ban Fracking Movement by Ballot Initiative: To Protect Michigan and Colorado Water 7 p.m. The two speakers are leading the ban fracking movement in Colorado. Donations suggested. The Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan, 38651 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. 231-944-8750. Letsbanfracking.org

Drag Queen Bingo 7 p.m. A fun alternative to your usual weekend hot spots. Shows get out just early enough for you to hit the local clubs or bars!

W. E. T. Detroit's Queer Mingle 10 a.m. Come out and mix and mingle with fellow queers at WET Detroit's Queer Mingle. Bring your diversity, resilience, and fabulousness to the dance floor. In the spirit of Valentine's Day we bring to you a bachelorette auction, where we will be donating 20 of proceeds to a local family in need to spread the love in February. 21+. Cover: \$5. W. E. T. Detroit, 2906 Cass Ave., Detroit. womenentertainmentteam@gmail.com

New Volunteer Meeting 10:30 a.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile

KGLRC Winter Gala and Fundraiser Wonderful entertainment, fantastic food and cocktails as well as sought after silent auction items from your favorite local businesses. Tickets: \$25-50. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Kglrc.org

WWS XII: 12th Anniversary Gala Celebrating the KCH Tradition Wine, Women and Song 8 p.m. Tickets: \$20-50. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-763-4186. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Mosquita & Mari 9 p.m. Free. OutCenter, 91 Hinkley St., Benton Harbor. 269-925-8330. Outcenter.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, Feb. 2

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

Imbolc Celebration 2 p.m. Michigan Pagans, 37084 Huron River Dr., New Boston. Meetup.com/michiganpagans

Server Sundays 9 p.m. Bring in a paystub or POS card. Discounts for those in hospitality industry. aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-994-3677. Autbar.com

Monday, Feb. 3

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

New Member Night 7 p.m. Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. No commitments, just see if we're the right group for you. All are welcome-- LGBT & allies. No sight reading skills or audition are required. Out Loud Chorus, 1400 W. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-265-0740. outloudchorus@gmail.com Olconline.org

Tuesday, Feb. 4

Older Adult and Senior Helpline 4 p.m. Provides peer counseling, empathy

See Happenings, page 25

Editor's Pick



Fighting one of the many winter bugs going around? Laughter can be the best medicine. Head to Ann Arbor Comedy Showcases' Comedy Jamm every Wednesday.

The comedy event serves as a chance for 12 rising stars in the metro Detroit area (and beyond) to do stand-up. The "cut-loose comedy" features different comics each night. Comedians are announced online closer to each show.

Comedy Jamm begins at 8 p.m. every Wednesday at Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, located at 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor, below Seva. Tickets for Comedy Jamm are \$5. For more information, call 734-996-9080 or visit www.aacomedy.com.

counseling sessions for the transgender community. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Trivia with Terry 7 p.m. Join Terry for Trivia upstairs. No registration required. Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-994-3677. Autbar.com

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

Drag Queen Bingo Un-Leashed 8 p.m. "No Holds Barred" Thursday edition! 18+. Tickets: \$20. Five15, 515 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak. 248-515-2551. Five15.net

Refreshments from our full coffee bar (coffee, teas, smoothies), sodas, water, and more. Tickets: \$20. 18+. Five15, 515 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak. 248-515-2551. Five15.net

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: A Perfect Ending. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Sandy Mulligan & The Gypsies! Live 9 p.m. GOAL, 1641 Middlebelt Road, Inkster. Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

Saturday, Feb. 1

Come Hungry, Leave Happy Strolling and tasting food tour. Meet at Rocky's or Mootown Ice Cream. Tickets: \$29. Feet on the Street Tours, 2489 Russell St., Detroit. 248-353-8687. Enjoythed.com

Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Imbolc 2014 3:30 p.m. Children welcome. HLC Witches, 444 S. Main St., Adrian. Meetup.com/michiganpagans

Art & Craft BeerFest 5 p.m. Indoor beer and art festival with live acoustic music. 20 specialty beers from Right Brain Brewery. I'm a Beer Hound & REO Town Pub, 1133 S. Washington, Lansing. Artandcraftbeerfest.com

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Lighthearted or in-depth discussion on a variety of topics. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.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

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Vienna Teng

Artists Give A Folk About Gay Marriage

BY SHELBY CLARK

To raise much-needed funds for the Michigan Marriage Challenge, a movement to help the DeBoer-Rowse family legally co-adopt their three children, the Jim Toy Community Center and The Ark will present “Equality Cabaret: Making Marriage Equality a Reality” on Feb. 23.

The DeBoer v. Snyder case, which was postponed to late February by Federal Judge Bernard A. Friedman of the Eastern District of Michigan, is an attempt to show the court that same-gender couples are fit parents.

April DeBoer, a neo-natal intensive care nurse, and Jayne Rowse, an emergency room nurse, were licensed as a couple to foster parents. They began caring for three newborns who face long-term physical and mental impairments.

Since then, the couple has raised the children, desiring to co-adopt them. The current Michigan Adoption Code prohibits joint adoption for the couple, violating the couple’s right to Equal Protection under the United States Constitution. An attempt to bring the case to court in the fall of 2013 led to the postponement.

Despite being represented pro bono by the law firm Nessel and Kessel, expenses are mounting for the case. An estimated \$250,000 minimum is needed for witnesses and other legal expenses.

University of Michigan professor Holly Hughes will emcee the event, which will

feature performances by singer-songwriter Vienna Teng, folk duo Nervous But Excited, The Dueling Divas Callie McKee and Robby Griswold of Arbor Opera Theatre.

Teng, who’s from Taiwan and received a BS in computer science from Stanford, grew up singing and playing piano. She cites Elton John, Fiona Apple, Tori Amos and Dvorak as some of her many influences. A self-described musician of “awkwardly” classified music, Teng performs piano music that envelopes folk, pop, jazz and Americana.

Another standout of the event, Nervous But Excited, hails from Michigan. Self-described as a “pleasantly aggressive folk duo,” Sarah Cleaver and Kate Peterson have been praised by music legends the Indigo Girls. Nervous But Excited’s music includes diverse instrumentation: mandolins, violins, harmonicas and even ukuleles.

The Equality Cabaret begins at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 23 at The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$25 for general admission, \$100 for supporters (which grants reserved seating house center) and \$250 for benefactors (reserved seating house floor front a center).

For more information on the event, call The Ark at 734-761-1800 or visit www.michiganmarriagechallenge.com. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Michigan Union Ticket Office at 734-763-TKTS.

Check out BTL’s calendar for other events at www.pridesource.com/calendar.html.

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Alex Leydenfrost, Rainbow Dickerson and Michelle Mountain in "Redwood Curtain." Photo: Sean Carter Photography

Simple People, Simple Story, Simply Splendid

BY JOHN QUINN

The contrast could not be sharper. Outside, near-zero temps and howling winds reduced traffic on I-94 to a bumper-to-bumper crawl. Inside, scenic designer Vincent Mountain and lighting designer Noele Stollmack bring a stunning representation of the primordial redwood forests of northern California to the stage of The Purple Rose Theatre. Massive tree trunks, lush undergrowth and mysterious shadows are the setting for Lanford Wilson's drama "Redwood Curtain."

New York Times theater critic Ben Brantley observed that Wilson's works "harked back to the era of more sentimental plays - of portraits of losers on the margins of life." Few characters illustrate that sensibility better than Lyman; suffering from barely understood posttraumatic stress disorder, he's joined the thousands of Vietnam vets living in the vast forest wilderness of Humboldt County. Like the Iron Curtain divided Europe and the Bamboo Curtain divided Asia, the Redwood Curtain divides America from the victims of its embarrassing past.

His routine is disturbed by Geri Riordan, a precocious teen who follows Lyman in the woods. She's a gifted pianist as well as possessor of supernatural gifts that seem only

REVIEW

Redwood Curtain

The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Wednesday-Sunday through March 15. 1 hour, 20 minutes; no intermission. \$18.50-42. 734-433-7673.
www.purplerosetheatre.org

natural to her mother's heritage. Geri is Eurasian, the progeny of a Saigon shopkeeper and an American G.I. Armed with only a sketchy description and a name, she searches the forest each summer for the father who brought her to America and allowed the Riordans to adopt her.

Time for her search is running out. She spends the summers with her Uncle Barney and Aunt Geneva, who is heiress to 100,000 acres of prime timber, now sold in a hostile takeover. Is the gruff, menacing Lyman her father, or is desperation clouding her judgment?

In his program note, PRTC artistic director Guy Sanville remarks on Lanford Wilson's "nose for anything untruthful or contrived." Even though "Redwood Curtain" is shot full of fantasy and coincidence, the power in its characters makes it utterly authentic.

Resident artist Stephanie Buck is making her Purple Rose directorial

debut with "Redwood Curtain" and draws compelling performances from her cast. Alex Leydenfrost gives a restrained, introspective portrayal of Lyman. Beyond the halting gestures and the absolutely flat line delivery, the state of Lyman's soul is read through Leydenfrost's lightless, hopeless eyes - an experience that venues less cozy than the Purple Rose can only envy.

Returning to Chelsea after her appearance last season in "White Buffalo," Rainbow Dickerson plays Geri as a fresh, sassy 18-year-old who is wise beyond her years. Granted the kid is self-assured, but it is puzzling that her confrontation with the really frightening woodsman is marked with such bravado. Her rather complacent acceptance of an assault and robbery seems overly stoic.

Geneva is a study in contrasts. She is witty and outgoing, yet harbors the grief of abandoning her heritage for the sunny waters of Key Biscayne. Michelle Mountain makes the most of the tension implicit in the character's torn emotions.

The great paradox of theater is how an artificial phenomenon can lead us to such profound truths. That paradox is resolved in the works of playwrights like Lanford Wilson, whose fundamental honesty guides our way.



Editor's Pick

The Bonstelle Theatre breaks through the misery of one of Detroit's coldest winters with the Michigan premiere of a stellar addition to the canon of African-American theater, "In the Red and Brown Water."

Beginning Feb. 7 and running through Feb. 16, "In the Red and Brown Water" is one of the three plays comprising the Brother/Sister Plays written by 2013 MacArthur Fellow Tarell Alvin McCauley. McCauley blends West African Yoruban mythology and the African-American experience to tell a poetic story of love and choice through the eyes of a young teenage girl, Oya, who struggles with coming of age in the chaotic yet vibrant Louisiana projects. Director Aku Kadago describes McCauley as a poetic genius in his use of the orishas – a spirit or deity that reflects one of the manifestations of God in the Yoruba religion.

The Bonstelle is located at 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are available by calling 313-577-2960.

► Happenings

Continued from p. 22

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

Aff Action Night 6 p.m. educating others about how to make Michigan an equality state. Pizza provided for volunteers. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

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

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

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

Karaoke 9:30 p.m. Hosted by KJ Les. aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-994-3677. Autbar.com

Wednesday, Feb. 5

Senior Koffee Klatch 1 p.m. A lively, discussion and social group for LGBT adults over 45. Group covers topics pertaining to aging and outside speakers. Potluck dinners at members homes, lunches out and holiday parties. Meets ever Wednesday on the upper level of the Affirmations building. Senior Koffee Klatch, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. GoAffirmations.org

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

Mid-Week Meditation 6 p.m. Suggested Donation: \$3. Michigan Pagans, 195 W. Nine Mile Road, Suite 1B, **Ferndale**. Meetup.com/michiganpagans

Winter Mixer & Annual Meeting 6 p.m. Enjoy great drinks, appetizers and company, along with a short presentation. Old Town Commercial Association, **Lansing**. loveoldtown.org

Dykes on Bikes-Monthly Planning Meeting 6:30 p.m. Monthly meeting to plan rides and socialize. A great group

of women who welcome new members with all levels of experience. Get Out And Live!, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

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, Feb. 6

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

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

Pagan Chat Nights 7:30 p.m. come socialize with FOCAS members and other area pagans! Michigan Pagans, 21700 West Road, **Woodhaven**. Meetup.com/michiganpagans

MUSIC & MORE

Concerts

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Carmina Burana" Tickets: \$15+. Max M. Fisher

Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 30-Feb. 2. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts "The King's Singers" Tickets: \$20-58. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 4 p.m. Feb. 1. 586-286-2222. Macombcenter.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Falling in Reverse" With Escape the Fate, Chelsea Grin, Survive This!. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Feb. 4. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Lotus" With Conspirator. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Jan. 31. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "George Kahumoku & Ledward Kaapana" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 4. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "Lez Zeppelin" Tickets: \$20. Rescheduled from 11/16. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 8 p.m. Jan. 31. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Majestic "Dark Star Orchestra" Continuing the Grateful Dead experience. Majestic Theater, 4120-4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Feb. 3. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

The Majestic "Guilty Simpson" With Aztek The Barfly, Illingsworth, Nolan The Ninja, DJ Dante LaSalle, & Hosted by Supa MC. All ages. Tickets: \$8-10. The Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Jan. 30. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

University Musical Society (UMS) "Fred Hersch Trio" Tickets: \$30-40. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. Jan. 30-Jan. 30. 734-763-3333. Ums.org

University Musical Society (UMS) "Ariel Quartet" Tickets: \$24-46. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5. 734-763-3333. Ums.org

Other

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase "Sean Patton" Tickets: \$10-15. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 30-Feb. 1. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase "Comedy Jamm" It's cut-loose comedy as we present the comedy of 12 of the current rising stars in the Detroit Metro area and beyond. Tickets: \$5. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St.,

See Happenings, page 26

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▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 25

Ann Arbor. Aug. 8-March 26. 734-996-9080. Aacomedy.com

Bach Festival Society of Kalamazoo "16th Annual High School Choral Festival". Dalton Theatre, Kalamazoo College, 1200 Academy St., Kalamazoo. Feb. 5-Feb. 6. 269-337-7407. Kalamazoobachfestival.org

Detroit Film Theatre "2014 Oscar Nominated Short Films" Select dates and times. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 31-Feb. 20. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

The Ark "37th Annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival" Acts including Ingrid Michaelson, Iron and Wine, Neko Case, Patty Griffin, Justin Townes Earle, Jeff Daniels and more. Tickets: \$85-290. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. Jan. 31-Feb. 1. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

Detroit Film Theatre "Blackmail" A rarely seen silent film from Alfred Hitchcock. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 1. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

Big Love \$10-15. Peppermint Creek Theatre at Miller Performing Arts Center, 6025 Curry Lane, South Lansing. Jan. 30 - Feb. 8. 517-927-3016. Peppermintcreek.org

Deathtrap \$7-15. Twin City Players, 600 W. Glenlord Road, St. Joseph. Jan. 31 - Feb. 23. 269-429-0400. Twincityplayers.org

Harvey \$8-10. Center Stage Jackson at Middle School at Parks Road, 2400 4th St., Jackson. Feb. 7 - 16. 517-796-2602. centerstagejackson.org

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change \$16-14. Spotlight Players at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Jan. 31 - Feb. 9. 734-394-5300. spotlightplayersmi.org

Into the Woods \$18-24. The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Parish Theatre, 426 South Park Street, Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 8. 269-343-1313. kazoocivic.com

Leaving Iowa \$8-14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Feb. 6 - 16. 517-482-5700. riverwalk.com

Next to Normal \$13-25. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. Jan. 30 - Feb. 2. 734-763-3333. A2ct.org

The Play's the Thing Free. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at A2CT Studio Theater, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 7 - 9. 734-971-2228. A2ct.org

College/University Theater

Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo \$5-20. The University Theatre at Williams Theatre inside The Gilmore Theatre Complex, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Feb. 6 - 16. 269-387-7222. wmutheatre.com

In the Red and Brown Water \$10-20. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 7 - 16. 313-577-2960. vsushows.com

Seven \$5-20. The University Theatre at York Arena Theatre inside The Gilmore Theatre Complex, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Through Feb. 2. 269-387-6222. wmutheatre.com

Professional

1300 Lafayette East \$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. Jan. 29 - Feb. 23. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

A Doctor in Spite of Himself \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 8. 313-577-2972. Hilberry.com

A Play by Franco Vitella \$15-18. Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at The Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. Jan. 31 - Feb. 22. 313-408-7269. Magentagiraffe.org

Almost, Maine \$32-39. The Dio - Dining and Entertainment, 135 E. Main St., Pinckney. Jan. 30 - March 2. 517-672-6009. diotheatre.com

American Idiot \$34-69. Broadway in Detroit at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Jan. 31 - Feb. 2. 313-237-SING. broadwayindetroit.com

By the Way, Meet Vera Stark \$7. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 6 p.m. Feb. 2. 810-237-1530. flintyouththeatre.org

Clybourne Park \$27-29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Feb. 7 - 23. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

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

County Line \$22-41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Feb. 16. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

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

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through March 22. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

Harris Cashes Out! \$25-40. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through Feb. 2. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

Million Dollar Quartet \$29-67. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Jan. 31 - Feb. 1. 810-237-8689. thewhiting.com

Murder at the Howard Johnson's \$27-32. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Jan. 30 - March 9. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

My Occasion of Sin \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through March 16. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Oliver! \$22-32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Feb. 6 - March 2. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

Sesame Street Live: Can't Stop Singing \$15-68. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Feb. 17. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Somebody/Nobody \$5-20. UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove Theatre, 8425 McNichols Road, Detroit. Feb. 7 - 16. 313-993-3270. http://theatre.udmercy.edu

Tartuffe Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company at Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 1. 269-983-3688. pcshakespeare.com

The Algorithm \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Jan. 31 - Feb. 16. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

The Lion in Winter \$15-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through Feb. 23. 517-655-SHOW. williamstontheatre.org

The Submission \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave.,

Ferndale. Through Feb. 3. 248-545-5545. thewingwald.com

The Taming of the Shrew Part of the Third Annual Detroit Shakespeare Festival. \$20. The Elizabeth Theater Company, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Jan. 30 - March 2. 313-454-1286. elizabeththeater.com

Varekai \$28-82. Olympia Entertainment at Joe Louis Arena, 19 Steve Yzerman Dr., Detroit. Feb. 5 - 9. 313-396-7000. olympiaentertainment.com

You Just Have No Idea \$15-18. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Feb. 8. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "The Islands of Benoit Mandelbrot: Fractals, Chaos, and the Materiality of Thinking" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 16-March 30. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Detroit Artists Market (DAM) "3: Kathryn Brackett Luchs, Lois Teicher and Marie Woo" 719 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 17-Feb. 15. 313-832-8540. Detroitartistsmarket.org

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

Flint Institute of Arts "Point of View: Contemporary African American Art from the Elliot & Kimberly Perry Collection" Art from former NBA player and his wife. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Jan. 26-April 13. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Gallery 1212 Old Town "Homebound: The Work of Nicolas V. Sanchez". Gallery 1212 Old Town, 1212 Turner St., Lansing. Feb. 1-Feb. 27. Gallery1212.com

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Friday Night Conversations" 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Aug. 9-Feb. 28. 616-831-1000. artmuseumgr.org

MOCAD "Mobile Homestead" A permanent art work by the late Mike Kelley. 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 1-June 30. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Pewabic Pottery "State of Flux". Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit. Jan. 1-March 9. 313-626-2000. Pewabic.org

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

South Oakland Art Association (SOAA) "Sculpture Presentation" Refreshments will be served. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 814 N. Campbell Road, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Feb. 3. Soaklandart.com

The N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art "Do The Yale Thing: An Exhibition of Exceptional Artwork by Recent Yale MFA Graduates". The N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, 52 E. Forest Ave., Detroit. Jan. 24-May 21. 313-831-8700. Nnamdicenter.org

The Scarab Club "Gary Grimshaw: Solo" 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. Jan. 1-Feb. 15. 313-831-1250. Scarabclub.org

University Of Michigan Museum Of Art (UMMA) "Flip Your Field: Photographs from the Collection". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Dec. 1-March 16. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

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The OutField

Chris Kluwe Does Not Punt On Marriage Equality

BY DAN WOOG

When Chris Kluwe began working for same-sex marriage in Minnesota – and then wrote a powerful letter in support of the same issue in Maryland – the reason was simple: It was the right thing to do.

What made his voice particularly important is that he was a professional football player. And although not many athletes are outspoken on issues like LGBT rights, Kluwe found surprising support among his teammates. The stereotype of pro athletes as conservative, insensitive brutes unconcerned with social issues is wrong, the former Minnesota Viking kicker claims.

Kluwe's first project – for Minnesotans for Marriage Equality, helping defeat a 2012 anti-gay marriage ballot initiative – raised a few eyebrows in the NFL. But it was his strongly worded letter to a Maryland legislator – who had chastised Baltimore Ravens player

Brendon Ayanbadejo for his support of same-sex marriage – that went viral and unleashed twin debates over where professional athletes stood on the question, and the broader issue of whether they should weigh in on either side of it.

"Athletes are role models. We have an obligation to speak out," Kluwe told The OutField recently. He admits that although it has been "unusual lately" for athletes to talk about social issues, that was not always the case. Tommie Smith and John Carlos gave Black Power salutes at a 1968 Olympic medal ceremony. Two years earlier Muhammad Ali had refused induction into the U.S. army, saying "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong." He was arrested for draft evasion, and although he never served his five-year jail sentence, he lost several prime years of his boxing career. In 1971, the United States Supreme Court reversed his conviction.

After eight seasons with the Vikings, Kluwe was cut last spring.

He believes he was released because of his activism. But he makes a distinction between the team's coaches and front office, and his teammates.

Sixty percent of the players "supported everything I said" about gay marriage, Kluwe told The OutField. The other 40 percent agreed only in part, or disagreed. However, the punter noted, "all of them were glad I spoke out for Brendon. They recognized he had a right to say whatever he wanted, whether they agreed with him or not."

The NFL is filled with smart athletes, Kluwe said. However, the league is "so corporatized," athletes risk losing their jobs if they speak out. With limited years for their careers, not many pros are willing to take that risk.

But Kluwe was. Fortunately, he said, feedback from fans was quite positive. There was some hate mail, but not much.

Perhaps even more important was what he heard from gays and

lesbians – not necessarily football fans – and LGBT youth. Many people told Kluwe that his words and actions affected them directly.

That's been very encouraging, he said. At the same time, it's also "depressing." He wonders, "What does that say about our country that something I do, as simple as speaking out, will save lives? What kind of world do we live in where an athlete who speaks out is keeping kids from killing themselves?"

Kluwe is no longer an active player. But he is as active as ever, speaking at schools and to social action groups. He enjoys answering questions about everything from why he speaks out, to his favorite video games. (In addition to his football talents – and playing bass in an alt-rock band – Kluwe was a noted World of Warcraft player, and writes occasional reviews for gaming magazines.)

Over the past year, Kluwe said he has learned several things. He learned that social issues are indeed very important, and that it is worth risking his career to speak up about them. He learned the depth of importance of same-sex marriage to the LGBT community.

And, he said, he learned that

"people who write angry letters don't know how to spell."

Are gay issues important to the NFL? Kluwe is not sure. "It's a business that probably recognizes it has to change with the times. They may not know completely how to do it, but they're getting there."

So now that he is no longer playing, what's ahead? Kluwe promised to "keep pushing for marriage equality until all states have it." He added, "There are plenty of places in this country where people can be fired for being gay." That is another important issue of fairness for him.

Meanwhile, have he and his wife ever gone to a gay wedding?

He laughed. "I've been invited to a few. I haven't been able to go, though, because of my schedule."

The invitations come from people Chris Kluwe does not know personally. But they feel they know him. They count him as a friend, and they want him there to celebrate the joy he's helped them find.

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



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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Hee Haw! Bringing the Opry to Broadway

If Green Day can go Broadway then the same thing can happen for old-fashioned country music, right? That's the reasoning behind the move to bring TV's one and only vintage country variety show, "Hee Haw," to the stage. Steve Buchanan, head of Opry Entertainment Group, is developing "Hee Haw: The Musical" for arrival on Broadway in spring of 2015. A recent script reading (written by "13" co-creator Robert Horn) impressed a roomful of producers, and Nashville hitmakers Shane McAnally and Brandy Clark are already cranking out songs for the show. Instead of mimicking the TV show's variety format, the story involves a young woman from Kornfield Kounty determined to see the world before she settles down with her boyfriend. Of course, word is that characters from the show, beloved folks like Lulu Roman, Grandpa Jones and Junior Samples, are a part of the action, which leads us to believe that those people all live somewhere along the Seine until discovered by our heroine. Or maybe not. Whatever tweaks are made to the program's contributions to popular country culture, you can bet that tourists from the South (and, well, everywhere else, too) are going to eat it up like a bowl of buttered grits. Last question: Will Harvey Fierstein play Lulu or Minnie Pearl? SAHHHH-LOOT!

Mo'Nique finally picks a new movie to be in

Academy Award winners and career heat: they go together like peanut butter and jelly. Unless you're Mo'Nique, of course. Then you hang back and chill until something you really want to do comes along. It took awhile but she'll make her next big-screen appearance in the new indie from gay filmmaker Patrik Ian Polk ("Noah's Arc") titled "Blackbird." She'll co-star alongside Isaiah Washington and executive produce the film, which is based on Larry Duplechan's novel about a black teenage boy (newcomer Julian Walker) coming out as gay in the South and dealing with divorcing parents and a sister who disappears. Due for a 2014 release after finishing production in Mississippi, look for this one to find its way to an arthouse (or VOD platform) near you sooner rather than later.

Richard Pryor: from one gay director to another?

Remember that Richard Pryor movie that was supposed to happen with Eddie Murphy and director Bill Condon ("Dreamgirls," "The Fifth Estate")? It's not happening anymore.



Michael Cera. Photo: Jaguar PS / Shutterstock.com.

That's Hollywood. Oh, wait, now it *might* be happening again, just not with either of those guys. Now talks with Lee Daniels ("The Butler") have begun and, while Murphy is still being considered for the role, so are younger actors like Marlon Wayans and Michael B. Jordan ("Fruitvale Station"). Though Pryor died in his 60s, the biopic will cover the groundbreaking comic during his 30s, which would make a Wayans or Jordan choice more appropriate. And no matter what happens, don't hold your breath for this one. It'll probably happen eventually. But just look at how long it took "The Normal Heart" to get anywhere. And it *still* hasn't aired. OK, yes, it's slated for May on HBO. But you get it.

For the Bible tells me so

The Ten Commandments, who doesn't love those tips for living? All that shalt not murdering and avoiding covetousness and quitting doing it with your neighbor's wife – they're very popular. And now they're going to be a miniseries from The Weinstein Company on WGN America. The 10-part scripted series will employ a variety of filmmakers to tackle each golden rule, people like Michael Cera, Jim Sheridan ("Dream House") and Wes Craven ("A Nightmare on Elm Street"). Acclaimed gay directors Lee Daniels ("The Butler") and Gus Van Sant ("My Own Private Idaho") are also on board, putting their own contemporary (and maybe queer?) spin on the material. There's no casting news yet but it could turn into a major ensemble event if everything comes together. One problem, though: If they include the one about graven images, doesn't that make turning it into a film sort of automatically sinful? Oh well, can't win them all, can you?

Romeo San Vicente is made of sin. And gluten. But mostly sin. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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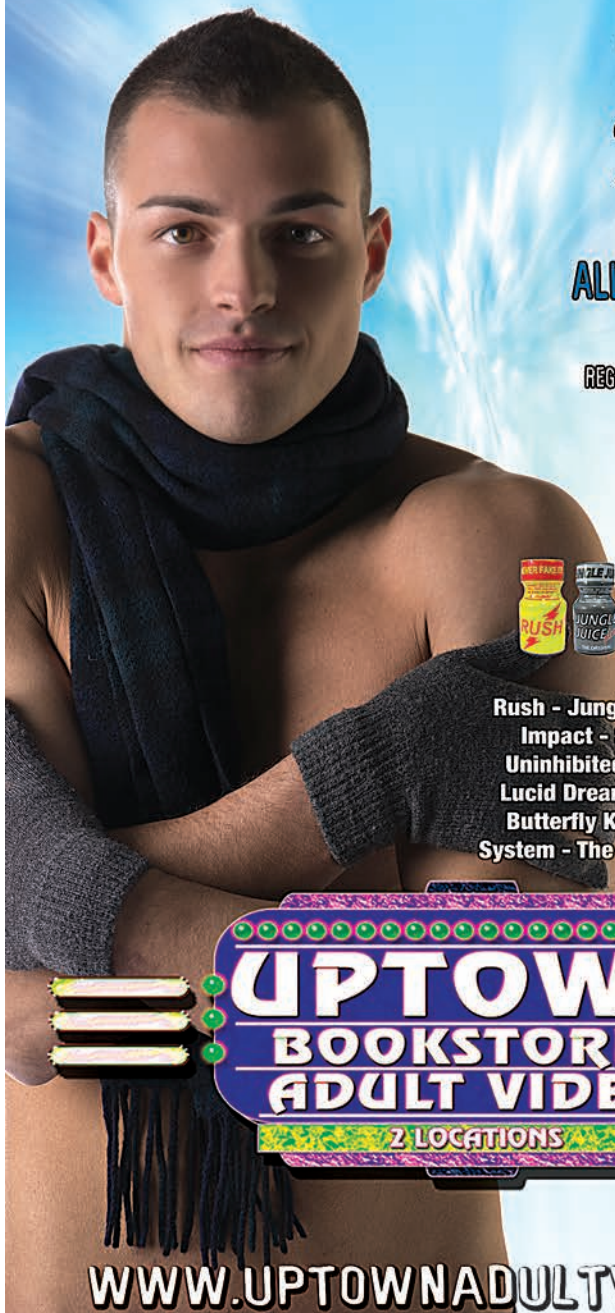


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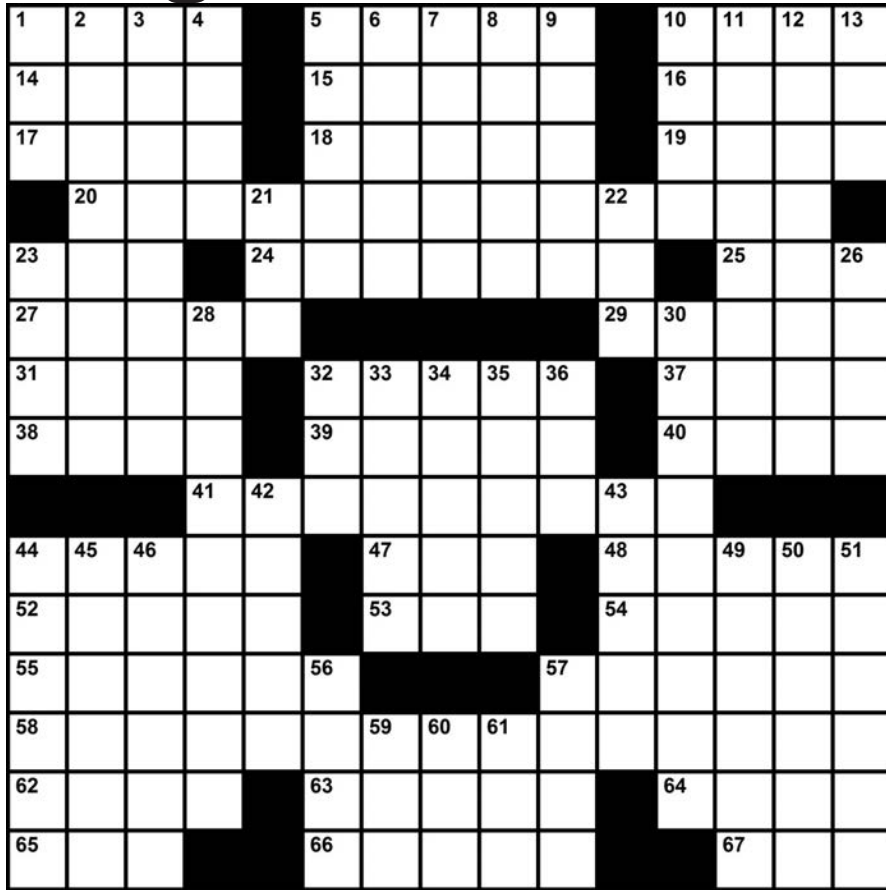
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- 1 "Hold your horses!"
- 5 Resided
- 10 Words in an analogy
- 14 Apiece
- 15 City of Lorca's homeland
- 16 Helped with a line
- 17 Homo leader to toga-wearers?
- 18 "___ Room"
- 19 Composer Thomas
- 20 Start of a quote from Brian Boitano
- 23 Legal matters
- 24 Showy bloomers
- 25 Threesome on a sundial
- 27 Come together
- 29 Singer Marilyn
- 31 Clay Aiken was almost one
- 32 More of the quote
- 37 Go on and on
- 38 "Peter Pan" pooch
- 39 "The Jungle" novelist Sinclair
- 40 Ingrid's "Casablanca" role
- 41 More of the quote
- 44 Orgasm, e.g.
- 47 Whisper sweet nothings
- 48 Have coming
- 52 Campbell of "Martin"
- 53 Where to see two bears at night

- 54 Cara of "Fame" fame
- 55 G, for one
- 57 Black eye
- 58 End of the quote
- 62 English actress Diana
- 63 Dutch resort isle
- 64 One on Bernstein's staff?
- 65 Curve shape
- 66 Use your butt to demonstrate
- 67 Composer Rorem

Down

- 1 Pee-___ Herman
- 2 Estate for Frida
- 3 Special time
- 4 Clumsy come-on
- 5 Bolivian city that means "peace"
- 6 Trump ex
- 7 Record material
- 8 Top
- 9 Country house, to Nureyev
- 10 "___ almost taste it!"
- 11 Extremely precise
- 12 They may mount
- 13 Verse on a vase
- 21 Poet Sarton
- 22 Conclusion of sex?
- 23 Screw royally
- 26 Tiny bit

- 28 Main members of fleets
- 30 Standard
- 32 Believe, informally
- 33 "Spartacus" and others
- 34 "Not to worry!"
- 35 "But there is ___ in Mudville ..."
- 36 Horny African animal
- 42 Kitchen appliance brand
- 43 Bessie of the blues
- 44 Went boldly
- 45 Instruments for Elton John
- 46 Sunflowers
- 49 The Bible Belt, e.g.
- 50 "Jailhouse Rock" singer?
- 51 Came together
- 56 Foie follower
- 57 Adult ugly duckling
- 59 Corn starter
- 60 Family magazine
- 61 J. Edgar Hoover's org.

Solution on 28

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