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22 Game changer
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The three Appellate Court judges exhibited extreme physical discomfort resulting from being present in the same room as numerous gay and lesbian litigants. In my entire career, I have never seen such juvenile antics in what was supposed to be a professional setting.

— Peter J. Hammer, Director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, page 11



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Call To Action: Petition Seeks To Stop MiRFRA

BY AJ TRAGER

A petition launched Dec. 9 (<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/michigan-citizen-against>) to spread the word and gather support against the Michigan Religious Freedom Restoration Act is gaining significant momentum.

When BTL first got wind of the petition, there were less than 1,200 signatures and a published goal of 1,400 signatures. Less than 24 hours later, the petition has been signed by 42,594 people with its peak hour between noon and 1 p.m., gathering close to 100 signatures every three minutes.

"We the citizen(s) of the great state of Michigan believe that this Act endorses bigotry and discrimination. The state of Michigan should not be subject to this unfair Act!" reads the petition hosted by moveon.org.

The House Bill 5958, modeled after the 20-year old federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, seeks "to limit governmental action that substantially burdens a person's exercise of religion; to set forth legislative findings; to provide for asserting a burden on exercise of religion as a claim or defense in any judicial or administrative proceeding; and to provide remedies."

In the bill, exercise of religion is defined as: "the practice or observance of religion, including an act or refusal to act, that is substantially motivated by a sincerely held religious belief, whether or not compelled by or central to a system of religious belief."

Many believe, as the petition's author does, that "religious reasons" could prevent a person in need from receiving medical help, housing or a driver's license because someone's deeply held religious beliefs prevent them from assisting a member of the LGBT community.

Among the thousands of Michigan citizens that signed the petition, Wyatt Richardson from Hilman, Mich. said, "I'm personally offended by this. Doctors went to school to save people. I am a person. You will save me. You don't get to choose which people you save. Use your degree as it was meant and quit discriminating."

Robert Schumacker of Mount Pleasant added the following to his signature on the online petition: "Jesus never commanded us to discriminate."

Sydney Spaulding of Lansing added, "The fact that this is absolutely in(s)ane and medieval piece of legislature is even being considered is an outrage. It is only indicative of the fact that many lawmakers have lost their realization of the most fundamental rights that a person has, regardless of their religious or sexual orientation."

And signing as number 42,132, Eursla Moore-Doyle from Kalamazoo says, "Jase Bolger should be ashamed of himself. This is just another way give people the OK to treat people unfairly. Why in the world would the legislators think we the people who elected them (would) be OK with this. We are not. Bigotry and discrimination in 2014. Our forefathers and the other people who have worked hard and even given up there lives to that people would no longer be subjected to this. Would roll over in their graves. Shame on you Michigan shame on you."

Sign the petition at <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/michigan-citizen-against> and protect the LGBT community in Michigan.



Michigan Bishop Addresses MiRFRA

BY AJ TRAGER

ROYAL OAK –The 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan for the Episcopal Church delivered a speech of peace, love and change Dec. 9 before many community members of faith.

Gathered in St. John's Episcopal Church in Royal Oak and hosted by the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, community members heard Bishop Gibbs speak on the sanctity of marriage, the harms currently being done by the Michigan Legislature against LGBT people and religion, and how the state is attempting to control the actions of and speak for the Church.

"Growing up as a baby boomer, I saw marriages," Gibbs said. "Happy marriages, bad marriages, folks who should never have gotten married, folks who never did get married, folks who got married too many times, folks who got hitched but didn't know anything about marriage and folks who found somebody to say a few words to but didn't know anything about sanctity."

So what is this sanctity of marriage that the current Michigan ban on LGBT marriage is trying to protect? Gibbs described it as the love shared between two people, no matter what their chosen gender identities.

"You know what I think the sanctity of marriage is? When two people love each other and trust each other enough to be able to have a conversation about their life and what it means, future and what it means, especially together; when two people, who know of the love of God, want to share that

love with each other and family – however they define that – and they want to commit to one another for life. That's sanctity."

Currently, a couple cannot get married in Michigan without the state's approval because it is a state contract. Too often, the state asks faith leaders such as Gibbs to work as an agent of the state.

"I didn't get ordained to be an agent of the state; I am an agent for God. Since when did God's agents need the state to do anything?" Gibbs asked the crowd.

"The recent activity in Lansing scares me a little bit, because they are trying to make it legal for anyone to turn down a sale simply because it would be against their religious beliefs. And that worries me," Gibbs said. "Even with the conversation we're having, this is one short step away from saying, 'Oh, you're black, we're not going to sell to you. You're Asian, we're not going to sell you a house.' It's a very short step."

What came out of the Q&A section of the conversation was a call for a Religious Leader Policy Network. This would serve as a group of religious leaders that keep tabs on legislative policy that is being pushed through Lansing, who would organize the religious response to any bill that threatens the civil rights of all "God's children," in this particular instance, protecting the LGBT community.

In the example of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), passed by the State House on Dec. 4, members of the audience expressed concern that legislators in the state Capitol are seeking to pass such a bill

allowing for legal discrimination. Together they asked what could be done in the days remaining before the end of the lame duck. Gibbs, and other community voices from the crowd such as Kevin Hogan of the Michigan Round Table, suggested calling state senators and Gov. Snyder to express concerns and to get the word out to family and friends about MiRFRA.

"What I want to see happen, particularly here in this state, is to gather up some of the energy that we have used to help change the Episcopal Church and change this state. I have learned in the 15 years I've been here to be very afraid from Election Day to Jan. 1. Some of what goes on in Lansing is unbelievable. Some of what is done in the name of representative government is pure evil. The good news is we get a teeny, tiny hint right before they go into vote and we can go show representation. We have to do more."

A petition gathering signatures of support for stopping MiRFRA has already, gathered 42,000 signatures since Dec. 9 and will be delivered to the Michigan State House, State Senate and Governor Rick Snyder. Sign the petition at: http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/michigan-citizen-against.fb51?source=s.fb&r_by=12028607.

Gibbs has been an ordained pastor for 28 years and has lived in Michigan for the last 15. He was installed and seated as the 10th Bishop in 2000 and serves on the boards of Mariners Inn, Detroit and the National Conference for Community and Justice, Michigan Region.



200 Rally In Rain To Oppose 'Religious Freedom' Bill in Michigan Legislature

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING - Approximately 200 people gathered Tuesday in a light rain and heavy fog to protest against legislation waiting for a possible vote in the Michigan Senate in the last days of the current legislative session. The rally was in opposition to the Michigan Religious Freedom Restoration Act (MiRFRA) introduced by House Speaker Jase Bolger (R-Marshall).

After being addressed by Ann Arbor Democratic State Rep. Jeff Irwin, the crowd marched to Republican Gov. Rick Snyder's office on Capital Ave. then to the Farnum Building, where the majority of state senators have offices. The crowd returned to the capitol building by marching through downtown Lansing, at one point seizing control of the traffic circle at Washington Ave and Michigan Ave, a block from the Capitol.

The crowd chanted "2,4,6,8 5938 is a license to discriminate." 5938 is the bill number of the legislation. As the crowd returned the west steps of the capitol building, passing the windows of the state senate, they chanted, "kill the bill!"

After another speech, participants decided to enter the Capitol building and seek an audience with their state senators. Some choose to verbally protest in the rotunda of the building, chanting and stomping their feet.

The event was organized by three students from Adrian, Michigan who were upset over the bill.

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JUST MINUTES FROM EVERYWHERE

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Study: Only 16 Percent Of Men Who Have Sex With Men Report Using Condoms 'Always'

BY TODD HEYWOOD

A new study by CDC researcher Dawn Smith has found that only 16 percent of men who have sex with men reported consistent condom use during the study period. That same study was used to estimate the efficacy of condoms in preventing HIV transmission during anal sex. Smith found condoms were 70 percent effective in preventing transmission of the virus that causes AIDS.

"The point estimate in our analysis of condom effectiveness when 'always' used by MSM during anal sex with any HIV-positive male partners is 70 percent, modestly less than the 80 percent estimate for condoms when 'always' used by heterosexual HIV-discordant couples," the study concludes. "Although these point estimates do not differ by tests of statistical significance, it is more appropriate to use the MSM specific point estimate of 70 percent effectiveness for discussions and models involving anal sex among MSM than to continue use of the heterosexual 80 percent effectiveness point estimate for MSM.

"This study found that inconsistent ('sometimes') condom use with HIV-positive male partners over months to years offers minimal or no protection, underscoring the importance of the inclusion of messaging by their HIV prevention providers that supports the adoption and continuation of consistent condom use for MSM. In these analyses and in many prior epidemiologic studies, inconsistent condom use with partners of any HIV status is more frequently reported by MSM than consistent condom use. While condom use is often measured over short time frames (e.g., at last sex, in past three months), rates of 'always' use fall significantly when measured over longer time frames. HIV prevention providers should inform MSM who are not using condoms consistently of the low protection offered by inconsistent use and additional prevention options should be considered."

So what does it all mean?

"Our findings of strong but partial effectiveness for consistent condom use, minimal effectiveness for inconsistent condom use and low rates of consistent condom use over 1-2 years, even among persons receiving high quality risk-reduction counseling, may contribute to a better understanding of the persistent rates of HIV infection among MSM in the U.S., despite current levels of condom use promotion and provision," the study reports.

The study reviewed data from two studies and included information on nearly 8,000 men who have sex with men with nearly 50,000 follow up visits. The data was drawn from the VAX 004 study from 1998-1999 and Project Explore which enrolled men from 1999-2001. The Project Explore data contributed information on 3,233 men, while VAX 004 contributed data on 4,492 men.

Political Hors D'oeuvres: Religious Freedom And Legislative Intent

BY TODD HEYWOOD

There's a great deal of gnashing of teeth and angst coming out of Lansing as the last week of the legislature wraps up – particularly around the so-called Michigan Religious Freedom Restoration Act (MiRFRA). That's the bill House Speaker Jase Bolger (R-Marshall) introduced as a balance to amending the Elliott-Larsen Act (ELCRA). ELCRA would have been amended to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. That bill died in committee with Republicans saying there were not enough votes to approve either a fully inclusive bill, pushed by Rep. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), or a so-called "two word" solution offered by Rep. Frank Foster (R-Petosky). The Foster bill would have left gender identity and gender expression out of the law, while the Singh bill would have included those categories.

Anyway, Bolger wanted to assure that if the ELCRA was amended, good religious bakers could still refuse to bake a cake for a gay couple and their nuptials without facing a civil rights complaint. The amendment died in committee, but MiRFRA was given life two days later in another committee, sent off to the House floor, approved by the GOP majority and forwarded to the Senate. In the Senate there was some hope the bill would die in committee, log jammed by Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville (R-Monroe) who had issues with the bill. But Richardville's own caucus sidelined that plan and pushed the bill onto the floor with a discharge petition – so it's possible we'll see a vote on this bill before the legislative session ends Dec. 18. That means Michigan residents could get MiFRA signed by Gov. Rick Snyder by Christmas.

But here's the catch: as the bill worked its way through the House, Democrats attempted to amend the law to limit its scope. Many amendments were offered and rejected. Among them: a measure to prohibit using the law as a defense from prosecution for domestic violence (or child abuse) and an amendment to prohibit using the law as a defense in genital mutilation charges.

Fear not Michiganders! The Michigan GOP is not intent on protecting marriage just from the heathen crowds of homosexuals...

So what happened is the Republican led House has created a "legislative intent" to allow domestic violence and genital mutilation as "religious freedom." Legislative intent is something the courts use in determining how to apply laws. Because Republicans rejected those amendments, they have now implied that MiRFRA will allow domestic violence and genital mutilation. Way to go, GOP. Way to go.

Preserving Marriage

Fear not Michiganders! The Michigan GOP is not intent on protecting marriage just from the heathen crowds of homosexuals; legislation introduced on Dec. 9 would preserve the sacred institution by making divorce significantly more difficult. Under the legislation, a couple filing for divorce must co-sign a document stating the marriage is unlikely to be "preserved." There may not be any children in the marriage nor may the woman be pregnant when such a filing occurs. In that instance, only a preponderance of the evidence (a very low legal standard) is necessary for the divorce to be granted. Otherwise, a person filing for divorce must prove "by clear and convincing evidence" that a divorce should be granted because the defendant in the divorce petition has committed adultery, committed sexual or physical abuse against the plaintiff or children, the defendant has been sentenced to prison for five or more years for committing a felony or the two have lived apart for a year – in the case the defendant has "abandoned" the common home – or two years by mutual agreement or consent.

Saying Good-Bye With A Homophobic Twist

Detroit State Rep. John Olumba – ostensibly a Democrat though he broke from the caucus two years ago – has come to the end of an undistinguished and often absent career in the State House. After

six years of service, Olumba was term limited out and failed to garner enough votes in a Democratic primary for State Senate.

As is the tradition in the State House, departing lawmakers have been making farewell addresses for the past two weeks. And Olumba was no exception – other than arriving late to the session on Dec. 10. His address was a vile assault on other members of the legislature based on race as well as an assault on mentally challenged persons and, of course, LGBT people.

"Many nowadays hate to hear the name of God or see someone pray but love to see a homosexual black male sitting in their offices, so that they can help him. The experiment for exchanging Sigmund Freud for God in the black community has failed. Now everyone wants to help by punishing everyone who doesn't agree with folk's choice to be gay. To me seeing a guy dressed up as a girl is either going to be really funny or really sad? But I mean let's make the observation and move on, but don't offend me by comparing his journey to where (sic) panty hose to work because he feels more secure in them to Martin Luther King being assassinated or to my wife's father being sprayed with hoses or bitten by dogs, or to my great uncles being jailed multiple times. Or to millions of people losing their lives to forced bondage and servitude. I'm exercising my right to freedom of speech."

That's copied right from the House Journal published online Dec. 10. Olumba's speech begins on page 2182.

For the record, I think the comparison of the fight for equality for LGBT Americans and African Americans has been drawn by many including Julian Bonds, Coretta Scott King and others. And I would actually say the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. is comparable to the assassination a decade later of Harvey Milk. But I suppose those are quibbles using facts that someone clearly lost in a land of delusion would not understand. Best of luck to you in your future career, Rep. Olumba.

Representation: Trans Activism In Michigan Lame Duck

BY AJ TRAGER

SAGINAW – Over the past decade she has fought for her life, added her name to become an elected official and now fights to be a Michigan citizen with full rights.

Charin Davenport grew up in the Bay City area in the little town of Essexville. She's lived in Washington D.C., California, New York and many other states, but she now calls Saginaw home. This past November, Davenport submitted her name on the ballot for Delta College Board of Trustees. Even though she lost the election, Davenport remains thoroughly engaged in political advocacy work, particularly in the realm of trans rights.

"I wanted to be as obvious that I was transgendered as I could. That this is me. I'm not doing it for attention. I am not doing it because I am afraid that people will find out that I'm trans, but I wanted them to know it," Davenport states.

After spending 32 years away from her home state, Davenport now teaches English, Composition and Literature part-time, as the first openly transgender professor at Delta College and Saginaw Valley. She has spent much of her free time in the past few months working towards getting gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation protections added to the Michigan's Civil Rights Act: the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA).

"It took us forever to get Elliott-Larsen passed in 1974. If we have to wait another 40 years before we get another shot, I will never in my life know what it is like to have full citizenship. It breaks me heart. Makes me so mad," Davenport says with emotion. "Just that little victory would be the biggest thing ever."

The Michigan House Commerce Committee heard testimony on Dec. 3 from business owners, faith leaders and lawmakers on gender and sexual orientation inclusions to ELCRA, but the LGBT voice wasn't represented. Most importantly, trans voices – the group that could potentially be left out of protections – were not heard.

"I've spoken to other trans folks who feel the same way; that there are some wonderful allies and they will back us up and go to bat for us, but the thing is that trans people need to speak for trans people," she said. "As a community we need to make sure we do everything we can that, when the question is

asked about our community, we are the ones responding and in front of the microphone. It's important to me."

The English professor is no stranger to struggle. In 2004, Davenport was diagnosed with an arteriovenous malformation, an abnormality in the blood vessels of her brain that caused her to have 14 brain surgeries in a year's time to save her life. Today she is healthy, but civil rights issues are on the forefront of her mind.



Charin Davenport

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), described by many as the "freedom to discriminate" bill, is working its way through the Michigan legislature. The Michigan House passed the bill and the state now looks to the Senate for passage or dismissal before it lands on Gov. Snyder's desk to be signed into law.

"What I'm afraid of is that people will feel less emboldened to be allied and more emboldened to be antagonistic or even freer to express hate," Davenport pressed. "If that becomes OK, the next line that you trip over is using passion as a defense for physical violence. That scares the crap out of me. RFRA sounds like the laws that they passed in the south to justify slavery."

RFRA is described by ACLU LGBT project attorney Jay Kaplan as a bill that "could and would allow religion to be used to discriminate against LGBT people, allowing people or businesses to deny employment, housing or services based on their religious views." This bill will affirm that the Michigan Legislature is not interested

in granting full protections to all its citizens, especially the trans community which has been continuously left out of protections and updated civil rights amendments.

So how does the trans community fight statewide discrimination? Davenport believes the answer is representation in daily life and in elected positions.

"I spent many of my early years trying to hide. It's hard work because there are a lot of trans people, maybe most, who don't want others to know. So how do

"What I'm afraid of is that people will feel less emboldened to be allied and more emboldened to be antagonistic or even freer to express hate."

- Charin Davenport on MiRFRA

you ask them to be politically involved?" Davenport questioned.

"If we could get people in elected positions, facing delegates, winning relatively small elections, the next step would come from the people who are getting elected to those positions being the people that the local community knows and trusts. We have to get that trust. And from there, I really want seats in Lansing."

In the meantime, she turns to the faces in the capitol that she can trust, including Rep. Dan Kildee and his aide Mitchell Rivard, the latter recently appointed vice president of the LGBT Congressional Staff Association, a group that works to advance the interests of openly LGBT congressional staffers as well as advocate for current LGBT issues before Congress. Davenport would like to see a grassroots strategy and has begun plans for a transgender forum by trans individuals for the trans community.

"We have a core of a community that we've really never had before. We need to do things like be elected to boards and committees – do what we can. If your local group is having a meeting, go and represent. Get people used to seeing us in City Hall or the County Chambers."



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New Study: How To Change Minds On Gay Marriage

BY DAVID CRARY

NEW YORK (AP) – For years, backers of same-sex marriage have said more voters would support it if only they could hear directly from gay people with a personal stake in the issue. A new academic study bears out that hunch.

In an article released Dec. 11 by Science magazine, researchers from Columbia University and the University of California-Los Angeles detail a rigorous study which found that openly gay canvassers were far more effective than straight canvassers in shifting voters' views toward support for same-sex marriage.

The canvassers, 22 of them gay and 19 of them straight, were recruited and trained by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and had similar one-on-one conversations in June 2013 with 263 voters in Southern California precincts that had supported a still-in-effect state ban on gay marriage. The only difference was that the gay canvassers revealed midway through the conversations – which averaged 22 minutes in length – that they were gay and wanted to get married, but were barred from doing so.

According to follow-up surveys, opinion changes produced by the straight canvassers tended to fade within a few weeks and those voters reverted to their previous views less favorable to same-sex marriage.

However, the changes produced by the gay canvassers persisted nine months later, and the change in attitude often spread to other members of the voters' households who weren't part of the canvassing conversations.

And the magnitude of that change was significant. The researchers, Columbia political science professor Donald Green and UCLA doctoral student Michael LaCour, said it was as if views typical of conservative Georgia changed to those of liberal Massachusetts.

LaCour, the study's lead author, said he hopes to test whether a similar approach of in-depth conversations could shift people's attitudes toward immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally.

There's a widespread perception that many Americans have closed themselves to competing viewpoints, Green said.

"The view that comes out of this paper is much more optimistic," he said. "If you have a respectful conversation between two people, minds can be changed."

On June 26, 2013, just a few weeks after the canvassers' conversations, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down California's gay-marriage ban and ordered the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages. Since then, due to a series of lower court rulings, the number of states allowing same-sex marriage has more than doubled to 35.

"We've always known that the biggest engine of change of heart is conversation with a gay person or a non-gay person who supports the freedom to marry," said Evan Wolfson, president of the advocacy group Freedom to Marry.



Members from the Michigan Department of Community Health, Perceptions, the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, KICK, LGBT HealthLink, Affirmations and The Network gathered for the official release of the report on Dec. 3. Dr. Scout, (fifth from the left) presented his preliminary findings on smoking rates for the LGBT community that same day but will release the full report at a later time. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

Community Centers Release LGBT Tobacco Report

BY AJ TRAGER

FERNDAL – In collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Perceptions in Saginaw and the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center (KGLRC), Affirmations officially released its study on smoking rates among LGBT individuals in Michigan and how effective the marketing is to the LGBT clientele.

The official report showcases that smoking rates amongst the LGBT community in Michigan remain significantly higher than rates for the state at large.

In 2013, MDCH provided funding for the three community centers to host focus group interviews to discuss the effectiveness of anti-tobacco campaigns, policies and treatment services. Intern at Affirmations and University of Michigan student, Hilary Armstrong, analyzed the focus group data collected and found that most participants started using tobacco between the ages of 13-18 and use is most commonly motivated by family and/or social pressure.

An overwhelming number of participants shared the same sentiment of fear and harassment, voicing: "I wanted to smoke because I got tired of being called a sissy.

I got tired; I was one of those kids that you could tell from the time I was walking (that) I was really feminine. So I got picked on. I got called names. So I started smoking just so I could look tough."

The study confirmed that LGBT people living in Michigan smoke at a higher rate than the nation's average even though every participant reported attempting to quit at least once or feeling a desire to quit. Influence from friends, family or a significant other was a big

The 48 participants cited a variety of different methods to quit including prescription drugs and nicotine replacement therapy. The amount of success each participant reported was directly related to how many negative side effects they encountered.

Awareness of the Michigan Quit line was consistently low, and for those that did hear about it, many were reluctant to utilize the service. One of the main critiques involved callers feeling they couldn't establish a

The study confirmed that LGBT people living in Michigan smoke at a higher rate than the nation's average even though every participant reported attempting to quit at least once or feeling a desire to quit.

motivator to quit. And many, when talking about the consequences of smoking, focused on the short term benefits of quitting.

"The things that really came up a lot were things like shortness of breath, wheezing or parking a couple of blocks away and walking to work, being out of breath and not being able to live life the way they'd like to," Armstrong said.

trusting relationship with those on the other end of the line, fearful that the other person would not be an ally of the LGBT community.

Participants were asked to look at various tobacco campaign advertisements and rate how affected they were, positively or negatively. Some participants reported not

See Tobacco, next page

NC Church Members Facing Charges In Beating Of Gay Man

SPINDALE, N.C. (AP) – For Matthew Fenner, a crowd of parishioners gathering around him in a church sanctuary after a prayer service was a sign of trouble.

Within minutes, he said they began to berate him because he was gay. One woman told him he was “disgusting.” Then for two hours, they pushed and hit Fenner, screaming at him as they tried to “break me free of the homosexual demons,” he said in a police affidavit about the Jan. 27, 2013 attack.

Nearly two years later, five Word of Faith Fellowship church members have been indicted for kidnapping and assault in connection with Fenner’s beating.

Now a student at the University of North Carolina, the 21-year-old Fenner told The Associated Press that he believed his life was in danger that night.

He said he had to press authorities to investigate his allegations because of the church’s influence in the community.

“The line between religion and abuse, they are crossing it quite severely. That’s why I’m doing this. They have to know you cannot hurt people,” he said.

But Fenner said nothing prepared him for what happened on Jan. 27, 2013.

After a nighttime church service, three members asked him to go to the back of the sanctuary. In the affidavit, Fenner said the three were soon joined by about 20 others and they surrounded him. And that’s when “deliverance soon ensued.”

He said they began pushing him and hitting him and using “other violent measures” that were all part of the church’s way of trying to cure him of being gay.

► Tobacco

Continued from p. 8

trusting a CDC advertisement but regarding ads put out by LGBT organizations much more seriously; these public service announcements were seen as more accepting.

“These policies, that have been recommended at a nationwide level and have been shown to be affected at that level, really could also be feasible and effective within the context of southeastern Michigan as well,” Armstrong suggested.

The recommendations include: addressing tobacco industry targeting of the LGBT community; expanding tobacco-free laws to include electronic cigarettes and smoking in casinos; encouraging schools and community centers to host parent-child tobacco prevention education workshops; supporting employers and insurance companies in increasing the cost differential in health insurance premiums for smokers and non-smokers; expanding employer coverage for tobacco cessation

counseling programs; increasing the visibility of LGBT-friendly and affirming spaces that do not involve substance use; establishing and promoting tobacco cessation support groups for LGBT communities; promoting Michigan Quit Line as LGBT-friendly and affirming; expanding public insurance coverage of tobacco cessation programs; and improving data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity in health surveys.

The study did have some limitations. The geographic diversity was limited because participants all reside in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula; all focus groups were conducted in English, thus alienating any non-English speaking LGBT; the focus groups were held in LGBT centers, thus individuals living in rural communities were underrepresented; and the recruitment for participation was done online via Facebook and email lists, so individuals without internet access were also left out of the study.

View the full downloadable report at www.goaffirmations.org/group/TPC



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When Fairy Tales Cross



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

There are paths that by strange chances on Christmas Eve mix up in time, space, thought, crazy activation. Some fact. Some fantasy. Who knows?

So it happened once upon a near but distant whimsical time in a universe that was hoodwinked into crisscrossing paths. Five companions on one. Three, on the other. Switching both respective destinations.

Our first group of travelers, names familiar to young and old alike – Dorothy and Toto, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion – were following the fabled Yellow Brick Road to Oz when the unexpected celestial switcheroo occurred.

Quite suddenly they were sideswiped by a brilliant klieg light that seemed to whisk them through December's winter gloom. Giddy. Very, very young. Exuberantly naive at heart. They forgot all about Oz, which isn't an easy thing to do. Ask any LGBT grown up or drag queen.

(Our second regal sojourners: Caspar, Balthasa, Melchoir – bearing gifts for someone deemed eventually of high political estate – were baffled to find themselves in a poppy-infested countryside, traveling only heaven knows to where. A neon sign pointed MGM: "Much Grander Make Believe!")

Along the way, Dorothy and her rerouted friends found themselves waved at by shepherds tending flocks by night. "It seems we're celebrities," giggled Scarecrow, as Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and little barking Toto busied themselves (bravely to be sure) in chasing off wolves in sheep's clothing howling too close for comfort.

Yea, verily, readers, the night was radiantly clear. And the starry light got even brighter. "No doubt!" ventured Scarecrow, with newfound mental acumen, "This star is of -1.44 magnitude. A biggie."

Inspired by their dreamlike mood, Dorothy, who had palatial lyric gifts – she hoped someday to perform in Off Broadway musicals – started to sing. And, belting out of the celestial blue, she sang lyrics she had never heard before but somehow knew by heart, with Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and Scarecrow crooning in. Surprise of surprise, a heavily choir of non-union angels actually hummed along.

How quickly the miles rolled and reeled by. And before they could finish their twelfth joyful rendition of "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louie," they unexpectedly found themselves among a small crowd gathered in front of a tiny, makeshift manger. It's bubble lights twinkled merrily.

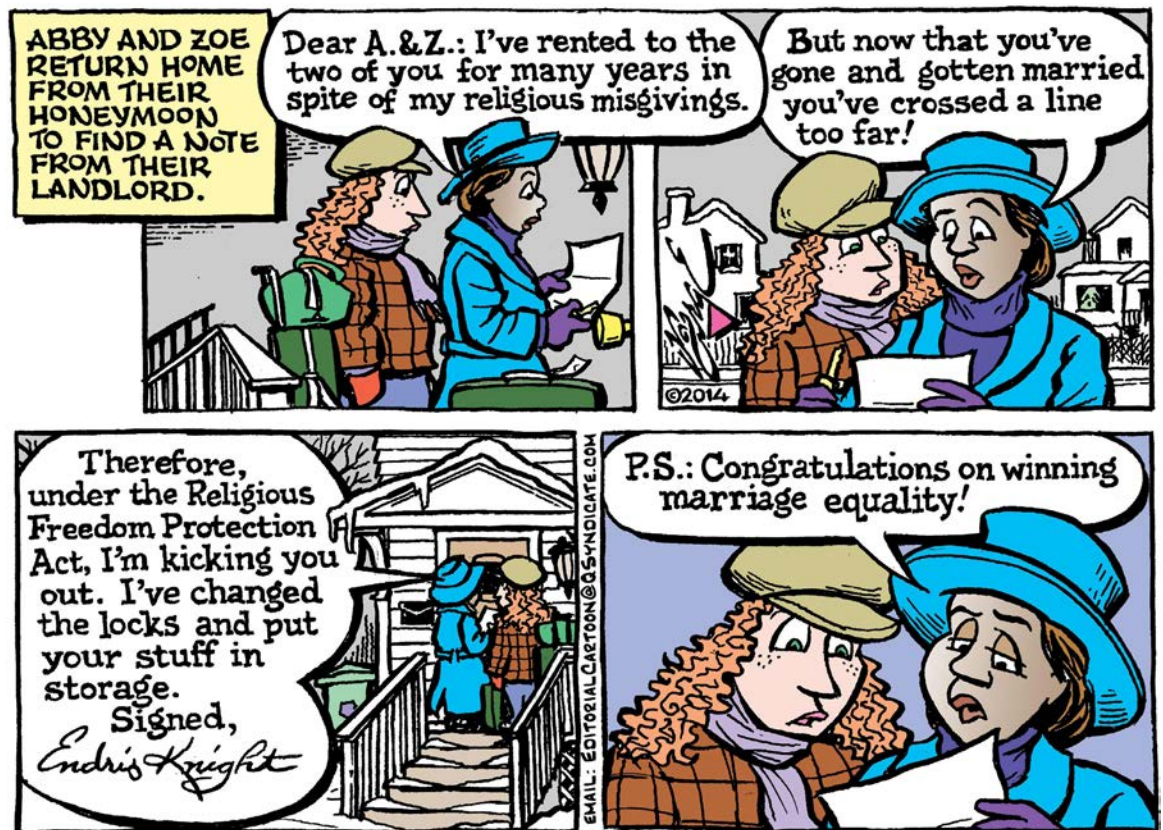
There were shepherds, seven celebrity hi-ho! dwarfs, a newly awakened princess, her adoring prince, and in the center of it all, a smiling mom, a proud carpenter dad, a small baby wrapped in hand-me-down swaddling clothes.

And so, most probably because this was an awe-inspired, opening-night crowd applauding gaily, the little guy began to cry. Not too loudly. But authoritatively audible nonetheless. And in a moment of exquisite improv, Scarecrow pulled straw from his thump-thump-thumping, make-believe heart and blushing gave it to gently cradle the small kid's head.

Dorothy, with perfect on-stage presence, sang another lullaby that again popped magically into her head. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" she sang. The baby hushed. Smiled. Gave the tinniest of – so a Macy's movie Santa years later claimed – technicolored laughs. (The baby's own over-the-rainbow-time would come another day.)

Alas! Alas! In the twinkling of an eye, Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and tail wagging Toto were suddenly whisked away, back to timeline 1939! "Well, I wonder what Auntie Em would say?" sighed Dorothy, shaking her newly halo'd head from side to side.

"And why in heaven's name would a shepherd be wearing Ruby Red slippers and clicking his heels? Is he funny that way?" camped the Cowardly Lion, with a roaring, "AH-men!" Plus an I-just-got-lucky wink. (And one presumes those ecumenical, lucky Wise Men got high and enlightened on the poppies.)



OPINION BY PETER J. HAMMER

Mich-issippi Burning: Marriage Equality, Anti-Gay Animus and Majoritarian Politics

In an increasing number of domains, from worker rights, to marriage inequality, to state-imposed "Emergency Managers," almost exclusively in majority-minority cities, Michigan is becoming known as the "Mississippi of the North," hence the moniker "Mich-issippi." A recent Rolling Stones article ranked Michigan as one of the "5 worst states for LGBT people," along with Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Louisiana.

Mississippi's historic reputation for suppressing civil rights is well known. Last June, we observed the 50th anniversary of the murder of the three civil rights workers near Philadelphia, Mississippi, as depicted in the film Mississippi Burning. Those killings came on the heels of violent protests in 1962 over efforts to enroll James Meredith at the University of Mississippi.

Few people appreciate the significant role played by the 1875 Mississippi Plan in violently ending post-Civil

War reconstruction, or how rewritten state constitutions enshrined discriminatory practices and undermined the very functioning of democracy throughout the South. The truth is that majoritarian democratic processes can often be in opposition to the flourishing of civil rights.

In *Bassett v. Snyder*, Federal District Court Judge David Lawson provides insights into the life and daily struggles faced by gay, lesbian and transgender citizens of Mich-issippi. At issue was Public Act 297, a law revealingly entitled the "Public Employee Domestic Partner Benefit Restriction Act." The legislation did exactly what its title indicated: "prohibited local units of government from continuing to furnish health care and other fringe benefits to the domestic partners of their employees."

Finding that the law was motivated by anti-gay animus, Lawson declared the provision unconstitutional, even under the Equal Protection Clause's more lenient rational basis test. "[T]he primary purpose of Act 297 was to deny health benefits to the same-sex partners of public employees, and that can never be a legitimate governmental purpose."

It is sad, but not surprising, when anti-gay legislation is introduced in state houses across the country. It is something entirely different when anti-gay legislation such as Public Act 297 is introduced, wins super-majority support in the State House and Senate, is signed into law by the Governor and is vigorously defended by the state-elected Attorney General. But this is majoritarian democracy in Mich-issippi.

Peter J. Hammer is Professor of Law at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, Michigan. He received a B.S. and two B.A.s from Gonzaga University and a J.D. and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He serves as the Director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, which is "dedicated to promoting the educational, economic, and political empowerment of under-represented communities in urban areas." This piece was originally published in JURIST - Academic Commentary, Dec. 7, 2014

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What does the reality of the democratically enshrined anti-gay animus documented in Bassett imply for the challenge to the state's ban on marriage equality being litigated in *DeBoer v Snyder*?

The two issues are inextricably interconnected. In a 2004 referendum, a majority of citizens voted to amend the state constitution to prohibit marriage equality. The language was broad: "the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose." Mich. Const. Art. 1, § 25. In the political campaign, proponents claimed that the broad language was necessary to ensure the provision could not be circumvented through enactments such as civil unions, but disclaimed any desire to attack well-established domestic partnership benefits provided by public employers.

Once adopted, however, the marriage shield quickly became a benefits sword. The Attorney General issued an opinion asserting that the marriage ban also prohibited domestic partnership benefits provided by public employers.

I was one of the plaintiffs in a state lawsuit challenging the Attorney General's interpretation. The suit maintained that whatever the amendment provided in terms of marriage, neither the language nor the voter intent prohibited public employers from providing domestic partnership benefits to their employees. The Circuit Court agreed and the Attorney General appealed.

I was in the courtroom when oral arguments were held. The three Appellate Court judges exhibited extreme physical discomfort resulting from being present in the same room as numerous gay and lesbian litigants. In my entire career, I have never seen such juvenile antics in what was supposed to be a professional setting. Yet, these were the jurists who would rule on the legality of my domestic partnership benefits. Not surprisingly, a unanimous panel decision held that the marriage amendment not only banned same-sex marriage, it prohibited domestic partnership benefits as well. The state Supreme Court affirmed. The shield had indeed become a sword.

The Appellate and Supreme Court judicial opinions serve as exemplars of how formalistic textual analysis can easily slide into pretext for results-driven judicial outcomes. This is part of a larger devolution of doctrine, procedure and judging in a legal system that now makes it nearly impossible for civil rights plaintiffs to obtain justice in Mich-issippi. State courts no longer serve as

legitimate checks on the discriminatory abuses of voters, legislators or the state executive.

Undaunted, a number of public employers, including the state's leading universities, amended their benefits agreements to establish "Other Qualified Adult" plans that allowed employees to designate a person of either sex with whom they live and share finances to receive benefits. Similar action was taken by the Michigan Civil Service Commission.

As Lawson noted [PDF], these actions outraged powerful, conservative state legislators. Representative Peter Lund, who later co-sponsored the Public Employee Domestic Partner Benefit Restriction Act, characterized the [Michigan Civil Service Commission] decision as "an absolute abomination ... that shifts people's hard earned dollars into the pockets of same-sex partners." Representative Ken Yonker reacted by issuing a press release condemning the decision as "disgusting" and one that "makes a mockery of the moral fabric that has made America what it is today."

In Bassett v. Snyder, Federal District Court Judge David Lawson provides insights into the life and daily struggles faced by gay, lesbian and transgender citizens of Mich-issippi. At issue was Public Act 297, a law revealingly entitled the "Public Employee Domestic Partner Benefit Restriction Act."

Public Act 297 was subsequently introduced and passed.

Proving the existence of anti-gay bias behind the "Public Employee Domestic Partner Benefit Restriction Act" was not difficult in this context. Animus could be inferred from the title of the legislation, the novel nature of the mandate and its deviation from historic practices, the lack of any defensible alternative public policy justification, as well as these pre-enactment statements of the legislators.

Significantly, Lawson highlighted a number of other characteristics defining life in Mich-issippi for gay, lesbian and transgender citizens: We are leading targets of hate crimes. We face substantial discrimination in obtaining housing. The state provides us no protection against discrimination in employment. We can be fired from employment or be denied service in public accommodations with no recourse to state anti-discrimination laws. Indeed, nearly twelve years since the decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003), the state has failed to

repeal its laws prohibiting fundamental expressions of intimacy.

Given the oppressive interconnection between the state's ban on marriage equality and its prohibition of domestic partnership benefits, what are the implications of finding of legislative anti-gay bias in Bassett for the challenge to the marriage ban in *DeBoer*?

In *DeBoer*, Federal District Court Judge Bernard Friedman put the state's justifications for banning same-sex marriage on trial. After lengthy evidentiary hearings, Judge Friedman held that the state's marriage ban "impermissibly discriminates against same-sex couples in violation of the Equal Protection Clause because the provision does not advance any conceivable legitimate state interest."

The Sixth Circuit recently reversed Judge Friedman's decision. Unable to challenge the district court's factual findings, the majority opinion essentially reasons that facts do not matter. The ban on marriage equality could be salvaged on the basis of "rational speculation" regardless of evidentiary support. As

characterized by the dissent, most of the majority decision reads not like a judicial opinion, but rather like a "TED Talk" in praise of federalism and the wisdom of state-led social change: voters and legislators should have the final say. Burkean courts should not interfere in the process.

The Sixth Circuit's reasoning falls flat. Trust in federalism's "laboratories of experimentation" may be wise in revealing new strategies for utility regulation, but such trust is misplaced in regards to the protection of civil rights. The 1875 Mississippi Plan may be one of the most extreme examples of how democracies can be hijacked and turned into systems of oppression, but the lessons are generalizable. Mich-issippi is also burning.

The juxtaposition of Bassett and *DeBoer* is revealing. In real-time controversies over domestic partnership benefits and marriage equality, public

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Creep of the Week

Craig James

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

People who think two guys kissing or two women same-sexing is really icky and makes Jesus cry don't typically say that gays and lesbians should be killed. Prayed for? Check. Sent to an ex-gay camp where they can find it in their hearts to swap partners and live in one-man-one-woman matrimony? Check. Be discriminated against in employment, housing and public accommodations? Check, check and check.

But even the most loony of the right-wing anti-gay set can't expect to get much traction with a "kill 'em all" approach.

So when a guy identified as "Phillip in Arkansas" calls up the Washington Watch radio show and advocates for that very thing, host Craig James of the Family Research Council should be outraged or at least definitively nip that idea in the bud.

"I want to say something very horrific, a solution, and I think it's the right solution," Phillip says. "We pray for the homosexuals, we've prayed for our enemies but at the same time when they try to force us to go against God — I think that's where they cross the line, and we should pass laws to execute them when they have judges to go against our businesses."

Wow. Tell us how you really feel, Phillip. Note that when he says "go against our businesses," he's referring to the poor Christian business owners who are forced to do nasty things like bake cakes for a gay couple's wedding.

So let's be clear: according to Phillip from Arkansas, the two men who filed a complaint against the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Colorado for refusing to make them a wedding cake should be executed. For having the gumption to complain when the business defied state law. And because they loved each other. And because they wanted cake. They should be killed.

Phillip continued, "I'm sorry. I will pray for them in the meantime, but I know that's horrific, and God forgive me if I'm wrong."

Aww, how sweet. Phillip will keep praying for homos "in the meantime," which means, "Until we get to kill them." And I appreciate his little shout-out for God to forgive him if he's wrong. Except he's already said this is the "right solution," which sounds a lot like a certain "final solution."

So how does Craig James, former footballer, sportsball announcer and failed Texas Senate candidate, react to this "horrific" nonsense? Does he rail against Phillip's ignorance and hatred and point out that Jesus is pro-love your neighbors

So let's be clear: according to Phillip from Arkansas, the two men who filed a complaint against the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Colorado for refusing to make them a wedding cake should be executed.

and the Bible is all thou shalt not murder? Nope.

"Thank you, Phillip," James says. "Uh, you know what, that part there, uh, I don't know about the executing..."

Wait, he doesn't know about executing? Like, he's on the fence? Like, "Gosh, I'll have to give that some thought because it's an idea worth entertaining"?

James continues, "But I do know that we have to be bold and firm and much stronger. God doesn't tell us and calls us that we have to be timid and to stand for our straight — um, our beliefs."

Oh, is that right? God doesn't want you to be timid, eh? About your beliefs?

Roll the tape: "Uh, you know what, that part there, uh, I don't know about the executing..."

Standing real "bold and firm" for his "straight beliefs" there. I'm sure God is super proud.

James continues, "There have been lots and lots and lots of men and women who have died for their Christian beliefs since the beginning, and now we are in a time in this country and in this world where we must be bold and stand for God and His truths."

Notice that he turns the conversation from "Christians should kill the gays" to "Christians have died for their beliefs" even though nobody's advocating killing Christians here, not even the homos who want wedding cakes from Jesus-loving cake shoppes.

And again with this "be bold" shit. After completely failing to address the disgraceful idea of executing gays after it's just been posed on his radio show.

Then again, this is the guy who said in 2012 while running for office, "People choose to be gay (and) they're going to have to answer to the Lord for their actions."

And if "the Lord" comes in the form of Phillip from Arkansas dressed as the grim reaper? Well, we'll just have to bow our heads and remember the "lots and lots and lots of men and women who have died for their Christian beliefs" and call it a wash.

HIV and Employment Discrimination

BY SCOTT SCHOETTES, HIV PROJECT DIRECTOR FOR LAMBDA LEGAL

Q: I have been working at the same company for a few years, and am generally happy there. I recently tested positive for HIV and was wondering — could I get fired if my boss found out about my HIV status?

A: In the decades since HIV was discovered, we have learned much more about HIV transmission and seen enormous strides in the treatments available to individuals living with HIV. Unfortunately, there are many people who are still misinformed about HIV and make judgments and decisions based on unfounded and irrational fears. Even though the short answer to your question is, "No, you should not be fired because of your HIV status," that doesn't mean that your employer has all the information they need to make sound decisions if they were to find out that you are HIV-positive.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the federal law that protects people from employment discrimination based on their HIV status and would protect you if, for some reason, your boss found out you were HIV-positive and tried to fire you for it. This type of employment protection has been in place for almost 25 years, but unfortunately some employers think they don't have to follow the law. In 2012, Chanse Cox was fired from his job as a machine operator on the assembly line at Suncup's orange juice packaging plant in Georgia because he has HIV. Cox had decided to put an end to rumors about his HIV status by

informing his plant manager that he was indeed HIV-positive, but that that had no impact on his ability to perform his duties as a machine operator. Shortly thereafter, Cox was told in a meeting with management that his employment was being terminated as a result of his HIV status.

After consulting with Lambda Legal, Cox filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which conducted an investigation and issued a determination in Cox's favor. Conciliation efforts failed, so the EEOC decided in September 2014 to file suit against Suncup Packaging for violating the ADA. Lambda Legal intervened in the case on Cox's behalf in November of 2014.

Suncup claims that Cox is a threat to the health and safety of others, a preposterous claim based not on sound science or rational concern for other employees, but on unfounded fears. Lambda Legal's Help Desk regularly receives calls from people who are denied employment or basic services because of an unjustified fear of HIV transmission. We've come a long way since the beginning of this epidemic, but in 2014, people still face irrational discrimination all across the country.

If you have any questions, or feel you have been discriminated against because of your sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status, contact Lambda Legal's Help Desk at 1-866-542-8336 or www.lambdalegal.org/help.

► Mich-issippi

Continued from p. 11

actors in the state legislature, the judiciary and the executive have proven themselves incapable of protecting the rights of their citizens. Instead, state democratic processes have demonstrated themselves to be infused with anti-gay animus. In this frame, the "rational speculation unsupported by evidence or empirical data" cited by the Sixth Circuit becomes a very thin veil for irrational bias, prejudice and discrimination.

Martin Luther King would become visibly irritated when people counseled him to be "patient." A voter referendum was not a viable remedy for Mr. and Mrs. Loving of Virginia. For a brief 20-hour window in September 2014, I had the right to marry my partner of over 20 years, but I have never

Martin Luther King would become visibly irritated when people counseled him to be "patient."

had a right not to be fired from my job due to vile forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The state offers no such protection.

Lawson's opinion in Bassett serves as a wake-up call: anti-gay legislative bias is alive and well in Mich-issippi. This has to fundamentally alter how courts frame the legal issues in the debate over marriage equality in DeBoer and the trust they can place in majoritarian politics and in the experiments of federalism. In this setting, deference to state's rights is simply a license for continuing discrimination.

Postscript: While drafting this essay, capping a year-long

effort that catalyzed support from the business community, advocates of amending state law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, introduced legislation in the State House. Earlier, the Republican co-sponsor of the bill had been primaried and lost his seat because of his support for the legislation. The Speaker of the House has now declared the effort dead. Instead, the House Judiciary Committee voted to approve a so-called "religious freedom act" that would make it easier to discriminate against members of the gay, lesbian and transgender community in the state. Mich-issippi still burns.

A Remembrance: Robert Clark

Oct. 5, 1980 – Dec. 13, 2014

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

I couldn't tell you the exact moment I met Robert Clark, but the bond was immediate. We were drawn together by our shared commitment to LGBTQ equality in general,



Robert Clark

but especially for the African American community and politics.

He was a friend, brother, fellow Libra and, at times, a son. He was that next generation of activist that those of us who have been in the trenches hope will one day step forward to lead the fight.

He served on the Michigan HRC Steering Committee, as a member of The Peninsula Group and on the board of Directors, including a term as president, of the Black Pride Society/Hotter Than July – among other things.

Although he was often the youngest person in the room, he was always a valued member of whatever the group, bringing not only energy but also a wisdom that defied his years.

Over the years I had the honor of working closely with Robert. Together we knocked on doors and canvassed voters for more than one election. We logged countless miles going to meetings across the state.

Often, when I talk about my time working with The Peninsula Group, people are amazed at the number of months our team kept at it. It wasn't always easy, but so many times when I was ready to throw in the towel, it was Robert who reminded me of why we were doing this work.

He'd end the conversation with, "So you're going to the meeting tomorrow right? I'll pick you up in the morning." And he would be there the next morning with that great smile even when he was tired from hanging out the night before.

One Saturday morning we were both tired from our Friday nights, and we got lost going to Ann Arbor. I mean really lost. We just kept making the wrong turns for over an hour. We laughed and called it our "Gilligan's Island" trip.

Robert's spirit burned so very bright. He was always multi-tasking – taking care of his

mom, planning some event and who knows what else. So it came as no surprise that he was on the phone organizing when he had a stroke; fortunately, he was at the hospital.

Under 30 and a stroke. It was so hard to believe, but that unfortunate incident gave me an opportunity to see the beautiful relationship between Robert and his mother – a beautiful love. She was there doing what mothers are prone to do – hovering – doing for Robert what he could not do for himself and encouraging him to get better; being a mom. She had brushed his hair. When she left the room, Robert leaned over and asked me to find him a barber; he was concerned she would have his hair styled like when he was a little boy.

He was in rehab for months, but he was determined not to be disabled but to excel in his new differently abled state. Then the unthinkable happened: his dear mother passed away. So much for someone so young, but Robert was a strong spirit and kept on being Robert.

The last time Robert and I had a really long conversation over lunch, we talked about enjoying life – being happy. Despite the doctors' predictions that he would never drive again, Robert was driving. He was happy and he was looking great. That was about three years ago. Since then, it's been the occasional phone call just to say, "Hi." He called me when my aunt died. Every October we had our birthday chat and promised to get together for a drink.

I was pleased to hear that he had been named one of the co-chairs for the 2015 "Hotter Than July." I was looking forward to seeing him at planning meetings and events. I assumed he would be at KICK's holiday event on Dec. 14 and had looked forward to introducing him to my new partner. But it just wasn't meant to be.

Following a recent stay in the hospital here in Michigan, Robert had been taken to Maryland to be with family and was hospitalized. A close friend of his said she was with him before he went to Maryland: "He was in good spirits and was really brave and strong. He was still the same Robert even though he was laying up in a hospital bed."

He made his transition on Saturday, Dec. 14. According to his family, Robert will be cremated in Maryland, and there will be a service in Detroit. More details were not available at press time.

Rest in Peace Robert. Thank you for your service to our community, your commitment to justice and your friendship. You will be deeply missed.

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What is STRIBILD?

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. It combines 4 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. STRIBILD is a complete single-tablet regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking STRIBILD. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking STRIBILD, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. STRIBILD is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** alfuzosin, dihydroergotamine, ergotamine, methylergonovine, cisapride, lovastatin, simvastatin, pimozide, sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio®), triazolam, oral midazolam, rifampin or the herb St. John's wort.
- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection,** or the medicine adefovir (Hepsera®).

What are the other possible side effects of STRIBILD?

Serious side effects of STRIBILD may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do regular blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with STRIBILD. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking STRIBILD.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include nausea and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take hormone-based birth control** (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc).
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breast-feed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in STRIBILD can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.



STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

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Talk to your healthcare provider about starting treatment.

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 **GILEAD**

Patient Information

STRIBILD® (STRY-bild)

(elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) tablets

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information, including Patient Information.

What is STRIBILD?

- **STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before.** STRIBILD is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.
- **STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects, including:

1. Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis). Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take STRIBILD or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**

- feel very weak or tired
- have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
- have trouble breathing
- have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
- feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
- feel dizzy or lightheaded
- have a fast or irregular heartbeat

2. Severe liver problems. Severe liver problems can happen in people who take STRIBILD. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**

- your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
- dark “tea-colored” urine
- light-colored bowel movements (stools)
- loss of appetite for several days or longer
- nausea
- stomach pain

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time.

3. Worsening of Hepatitis B infection. If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take STRIBILD, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking STRIBILD. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.

- Do not run out of STRIBILD. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your STRIBILD is all gone

- Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider
- If you stop taking STRIBILD, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking STRIBILD

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take a medicine that contains:

- adefovir (Hepsera®)
- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozide (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John’s wort

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla®, Complera®, Viread®, Truvada®)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine, lamivudine, or ritonavir (Atripla®, Combivir®, Complera®, Emtriva®, Epivir® or Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom®, Kaletra®, Norvir®, Trizivir®, Truvada®)

STRIBILD is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.

What are the possible side effects of STRIBILD?

STRIBILD may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?”**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking STRIBILD. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take STRIBILD. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of STRIBILD. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

- If you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B infection
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
 - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take STRIBILD.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - Two of the medicines in STRIBILD can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in STRIBILD can pass into your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:

- STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
 - Hormone-based birth control (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc)
 - Antacid medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD
 - Medicines to treat depression, organ transplant rejection, or high blood pressure
 - amiodarone (Cordarone®, Pacerone®)
 - atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Caduet®)
 - bepridil hydrochloride (Vasor®, Bepadin®)
 - bosentan (Tracleer®)
 - buspirone
 - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®)
 - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
 - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
 - clorazepate (Gen-xene®, Tranxene®)
 - colchicine (Colcrys®)
 - medicines that contain dexamethasone
 - diazepam (Valium®)

- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- disopyramide (Norpace®)
- estazolam
- ethosuximide (Zarontin®)
- flecainide (Tambocor®)
- flurazepam
- fluticasone (Flovent®, Flonase®, Flovent® Diskus®, Flovent® HFA, Veramyst®)
- itraconazole (Sporanox®)
- ketoconazole (Nizoral®)
- lidocaine (Xylocaine®)
- mexiletine
- oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®)
- perphenazine
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- quinidine (Neudexta®)
- rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
- rifapentine (Priftin®)
- risperidone (Risperdal®, Risperdal Consta®)
- salmeterol (Serevent®) or salmeterol when taken in combination with fluticasone (Advair Diskus®, Advair HFA®)
- sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®) or vardenafil (Levitra®, Staxyn®), for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED). If you get dizzy or faint (low blood pressure), have vision changes or have an erection that last longer than 4 hours, call your healthcare provider or get medical help right away.
- tadalafil (Adcirca®), for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension
- telithromycin (Ketek®)
- thioridazine
- voriconazole (Vfend®)
- warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)
- zolpidem (Ambien®, Edlular®, Intermezzo®, Zolpimist®)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.

Keep STRIBILD and all medicines out of reach of children.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about STRIBILD. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about STRIBILD that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.STRIBILD.com.

Issued: October 2013



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Photo: JB Lacroix for WireImage

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Ever since Robbie Rogers came out in early 2013, the soccer player has been intent on changing sports culture the best way he knows how – by being himself.

Rogers shares his story in “Coming Out to Play,” a book co-written with Eric Marcus (“Breaking the Surface,” co-authored with Greg Louganis) on the LA Galaxy player’s journey from closeted Catholic to barrier breaker. The first openly gay male athlete to win a big-time team pro sports title in the U.S., Rogers talks being “sad” about the lack of out athletes, homophobia in sports and how stories on LGBT-focused locker room behavior set the gay community back.

What was the most rewarding thing you learned about yourself while writing this book?

I learned a lot about myself writing this, but I don’t know what the most rewarding is. When I wrote about my childhood, and just talking about how closeted I was, how things really scarred me and, obviously, being very afraid to be open with people, I think I learned from all that that I needed to be more open with people and learn from all those experiences. Without working through all those stories and writing all that down, I don’t think I would’ve been as aware of it. So, while I was writing the book, I realized, “Gosh, I need to share things more often with people and talk about things and be open,” which doesn’t come naturally to me. I’m a very shy, quiet person, actually. The most rewarding thing for myself, I think, was to just realize that and try to work on it during this past year, and to continue to work on it.

In the book’s prologue, you say, “I’ve been uncomfortable with the shorthand versions of my life that I’ve seen and read.” What do you hope to clarify?

When I came out, there weren’t details: all the struggle, why it took me so long and what was going on behind the scenes in the soccer locker room. And there are a lot of gay men and women around the world who know

how tough it is – it’s very difficult to be closeted, and then to open up and be honest with people, and then to come to terms with yourself. So, I just wanted to add all the details of the story and talk about why it was so difficult for me. There

GAME CHANGER

Soccer Star Robbie Rogers On Memoir, Sports Homophobia & Being Out In The Locker Room

were articles written like, “Oh, he’s out, he’s happy, he’s playing, everything’s good,” and it’s like, “No – there’s so much more to the story.”

There’s an assumption that men’s sports are not welcoming to LGBT athletes, or even threatened by them. Is this due to the fact that people didn’t know what would happen until someone came out?

Yeah, that’s the big thing: People don’t know what’s gonna happen. People are afraid, obviously, that things might change for them. I don’t necessarily think that the majority of athletes are homophobic, but I think there’s that mentality in the locker room.

From my experience, all the guys that I heard homophobic things from growing up were the first ones to call me, text me and support me (when I came out). Athletes themselves are not homophobic; the sports culture is. As an out professional soccer player, people are sensitive. They know there’s a gay guy in their locker room and they’re not saying homophobic things. Instead, we’re discussing marriage equality. But when there isn’t an out soccer player – a guy that they know is gay – in the locker room, I’m sure things are being said that are homophobic. Again, I know it’s ridiculous for me to say, but it’s not necessarily because (players are) homophobic, but they’re not educated to be sensitive to what they’re saying. Someone might argue that that’s homophobic, but these guys are very loving and supportive of me, and I think if anyone in the locker room did come out, (other players) would be very supportive of them. But it’s that lack of knowledge and education about the LGBT community, and about mental health and just being sensitive to other people, that I think is the issue.

ESPN recently reported on out NFL player Michael Sam’s showering habits, which they’ve since apologized for. What is your opinion on the media’s focus of locker room behavior as it pertains to gay athletes?

It’s absolutely ridiculous. I know that with (NBA player) Jason (Collins) and I there were no issues, but I think sometimes ESPN or different media people get bored and create stories for controversy or attention. I think that was one of those.

I’ve only spoken with Michael a few times, but I’m guessing his experience in the locker room was like Jason’s and mine, and that the guys were very supportive and proud to have an openly gay guy on their team who was changing things for the world. I haven’t really spoken to Michael about that much; I just know from my experience that’s the case, so, I mean, it’s ridiculous when people report that kind of stuff just to create a story to get

comments on Yahoo or wherever else. That’s not gonna change things for the better.

What if you were the topic of that report? What would you have thought of it then?

Honestly? Laughable. I would just be like, “The locker room and my teammates and myself are on the same page and everything is cool. I enjoy being on the team, and I think they enjoy having me on the team.” It’s just laughable.

Does this kind of reporting make you cautious about your locker room behavior?

No. I’m the same as everyone else in that locker room. I shower with the guys. I walk around naked. My experience in the locker room is the same as everyone else’s, and I don’t think it’s any different for any of the guys. They don’t act any differently around me. It’s just normal.

You said recently that you thought more athletes would come out after you did.

No, not just me – but there’s Jason Collins, and there are female athletes who are out, and then Michael. There was a number of athletes, and there was stuff going on around the world. I just thought it was about time more athletes feel comfortable to do it. Maybe it just really shows how the sports culture is just not very accepting to gay men and women being out.

Are you disappointed that more haven’t come out?

No, I remember how difficult it was for me, so I’m not disappointed in that way. I’m just surprised. I know what it’s like being on the other side and being supported and having people that love me on my team, and I just think that everyone deserves that. If (closeted athletes) could somehow find a way to (be out), they would really have so much support. So, I’m a little sad and a little surprised that people aren’t willing to take that leap, but I’m not mad. It’s really difficult, and everyone has to come out at their own pace and at their own time, and I understand that.

Do you know a lot of gay sports players who aren’t out?

Uh, I know a few. I don’t think they’re ever gonna come out.

Ever?

I mean, maybe once they’re done playing, but I just think their lives – I’m not sure. That’s a good question. I don’t know. But I do know a few. Sometimes people have been living a certain way for a long time and are afraid to make a change.

See Rogers, page 22

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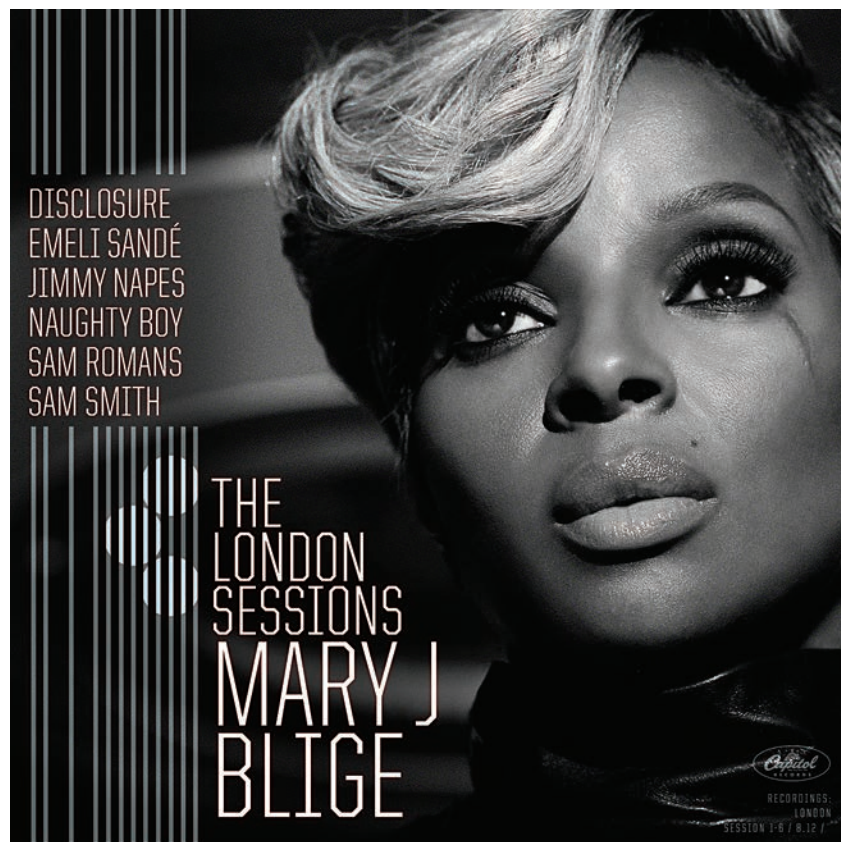
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Hear Me Out

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Mary J. Blige, Carrie Underwood



Mary J. Blige, 'The London Sessions'

Nobody was sensing Mary J. Blige needed a change more than Mary J. Blige. To reinvent her sound, which she says was going "stagnant," the "No More Drama" singer embarked on a journey to London for a few weeks, locking herself away with some of the hottest British musicians: Disclosure, Emeli Sandé, Naughty Boy and Sam Smith. The result is "The London Sessions," a turning point for an artist who, throughout her 20-plus-year career, has prided herself on being the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul. Blige, however, doesn't completely abandon her "What's the 411?" roots — she expands them. Here, her usual musical catharsis is, in many ways, at its most intimate, but when Blige gets crunk at the clubs — letting beat-makers du jour turn her into the disco diva we've always secretly wanted her to be — it's especially apparent she's taking worthwhile risks. "Pick Me Up" taps Naughty Boy for a lounge-y clarinet-adorned dance groove, Craze & Hoax bring in the boom during the spirited "Long Hard Look" and the Rodney Jerkins-produced house anthem "My Love," though substandard by comparison, also grants Blige welcome vitality. Even when she pours her heart out on big ballad "Not Loving You," co-penned by Smith, the influence of her time spent abroad is

evident. With its simple melody, the piano-led torch song is like hearing Mary J. Blige sing for the first time. *Grade: B+*



Carrie Underwood, 'Greatest Hits: Decade #1'

Like most "American Idol" grads, Carrie Underwood was so painfully play-it-safe in the days after her 2005 victory that someone, be it Jesus or not, needed to take that wheel. Whether it was the Man Above or a label head or simply the pressure from the more-musically-fearless Miranda Lambert, mawkish songs about Him, patriotism and her mom would, thankfully, lessen. There would be more grit. More cheatin' tunes. And most importantly, there would be an evolution. The two-disc, 25-track "Greatest Hits: Decade #1" chronicles Underwood's trajectory from "Idol" on, as the vanilla girl with a voice turned into a singing superstar with staying power. One of two new tunes, "Something in the Water," for instance, is in the vein of "Jesus, Take the Wheel" — both are contemporary Christian songs about healing — but its production is

more Kings of Leon than Rascal Flatts. On "Little Toy Gun," a rhythmic drum punch and fiery vocals set the scene for a domestic abuse narrative, which emphasizes an edge Underwood's really only revealed since 2012's "Blown Away," her creative breakthrough. Playing against type, bad-girl kiss-off "Before He Cheats," also included on the set, still reigns as one of her best singles. And a career pinnacle — singing "How Great Thou Art" live with Vince Gill in 2011 — soars all the way to the heavens. If Underwood continues down this road, challenging herself not just vocally but also artistically, "Decade #2" won't need any other hands on the wheel but her own. *Grade: B-*

Also Out



Calvin Harris, 'Motion'

Nu-disco wasn't the same when Calvin Harris and Rihanna brought "We Found Love" into our lives. But on his fourth studio album, "Motion," the DJ's throw-downs need to find more than love — they need to find originality. Squandering his proven knack for original electro-pop is a derivative array of Zumba-made EDM, like "Open Wide," featuring Big Sean innuendo. Harris' collaboration with HAIM on "Pray to God" invigorates, as do a few other songs (see "Ecstasy"), but for the most part, "Motion" is in one very hopeless place.



Haerts, 'Haerts'

On the eponymous debut of Haerts, a Brooklyn band formed while studying at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, glistening synths and '80s-inspired riffs are full of empty promises. Alluring on the surface, the foursome's ultimate vision fails to expand the notion of new wave, trapping itself within the genre's most basic tropes and feeding off a tried-and-true formula. There's clearly talent here — Nini Fabi's evocative vocal prowess is clearly a valuable asset — but for Haerts' follow-up, let's hope they find a way to put it to good use.

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► Rogers

Continued from p. 19

What coming out advice do you have for a closeted gay athlete?

Speak with someone away from your team, your family and your friends – a therapist or someone – to just get those thoughts out. I know that when I kept it inside, it was not very healthy. That's really the only advice I could give. It's tough to give advice on that subject.

When it comes to efforts being made for sports inclusivity, how far do we still have to go?

I think there still needs to be progress, but I think the leagues are changing and the leagues want to have out athletes on their teams so that they can change that perception. But I think there needs to be a bit more work on changing sports culture, because they're just waiting for athletes to come out, and I think, first, they need to create an environment that's more accepting.

You're producing a comedy for ABC called "Men in Shorts" that's supposedly based on your life. But after reading your book, your story isn't particularly humorous. In fact, it's dark, sometimes tragic, and ultimately inspiring. It sounds more like a premium cable drama to me. With that said, how will your life story translate into an ABC sitcom?

The show, first off, is just inspired by my life. I have a huge family, and in the show there's not a big family. And, yes, there's a gay soccer player and he's from LA, so there are a lot of similarities, but there are so many differences too.

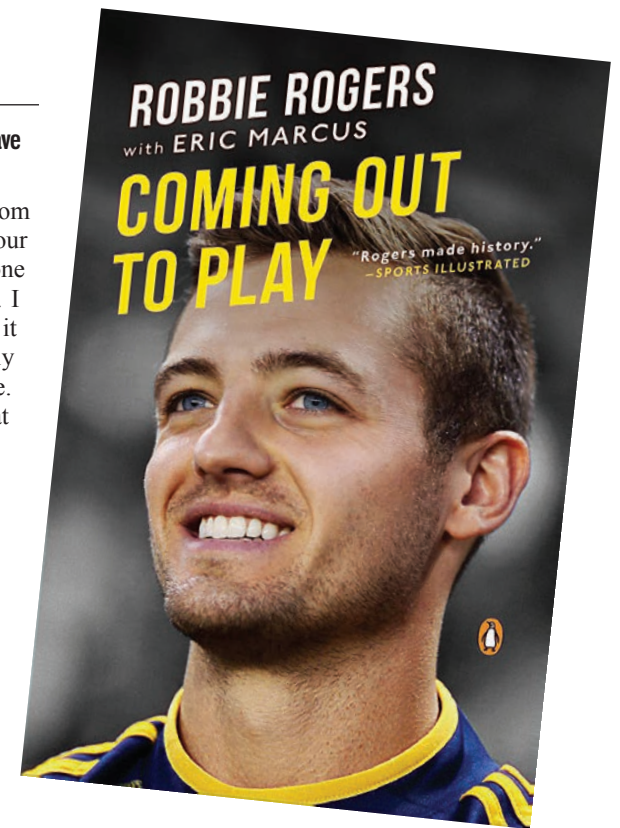
Really what I'm doing is helping the writers in creating characters that are realistic, like, (what it's like the) first time taking showers with the guys or being open to talking about my boyfriend. We're trying to teach people through laughter and through comedy, and also talk about the sports world, but from a different point of view, obviously. It's a total fish-out-of-water concept. There are aspects taken from my life, but it's not based on the book or based on the struggle that I went through.

But there will be shower scenes?

(Laughs) 100 percent shower scenes. I mean, it's the locker room, so it has to be realistic!

On Facebook recently, you posted a shirtless photo of you in bed with the book. How aware are you that some people aren't just interested in you because of soccer?

To be totally honest, yeah, I guess I'm starting



to notice it more now. I mean, through social media. But when I'm out with friends at dinner or grabbing drinks and people come up to me, I'm oblivious to whether (people are) hitting on me or trying to be nice to me. Sometimes I can't tell the difference!

You say that you didn't want to be the poster boy for gay athletes, but then you became that. How have you come to terms with being an accidental activist?

I know I talk about it in my book, but I came out for selfish reasons – for my happiness. I realized I needed to make a change. My goal wasn't to be this person that wanted to change sports culture; it was really just to be happy with myself and my family and friends. I didn't know what the reaction was going to be, and I didn't realize how big the problem was. When I realized how many people related to my story and struggled growing up, it made me feel ridiculous and selfish. I was seeing what kind of difference I was making in people's lives. With the book out, I've been getting tons of letters from people writing me their story and (telling me) how much they relate to my book. It was those reactions that made me want to embrace that role more.

You've obviously been instrumental in changing the tide for the LGBT community in many ways. How far do you plan on taking your newfound platform?

Good question. At the moment, I'm just living every day as it comes. I don't think of it that way – I just do what I feel is right. I just think of myself as Robbie. I play soccer, and yes, I'm gay. And I'm happy to be that person.

Fend Off Winter Freeze With Sing Out Detroit

BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

LGBT concerts aren't over for the season just yet! Sing Out Detroit, southeast Michigan's LGBT and allied chorus, will perform their holiday show, "FA-LA-LA FROZEN," in Royal Oak this weekend. The winter celebration has "a little something for every member of the family." The Dec. 21 show will feature beautiful choral numbers, a medley of songs from the Disney film "Frozen" and holiday classics like "Baby, It's Cold Outside."

Sing Out Detroit is a mixed soprano, alto, tenor and bass (SATB) chorus for LGBT people and allies. Singers with varied musical skills are welcome. The group is also a member of the Gay And Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA), a national organization for LGBT and friends choruses. Established on the core values of creativity, diversity, excellence, camaraderie and significance (meaning "giving generously of our talents to make a positive difference" and "touching audiences with uplifting messages that have enduring impact"), the chorus serves as a diverse, inclusive music group that can provide a supportive environment for LGBT people and allies "to share the joy

of musical performance, while creating harmony."

With more than two decades of experience with LGBT choruses, Todd Ballou is the current Music Director for the chorus, and has been with the local group since 2011. The Ypsilanti resident, who lives on a farm with his partner, Dan, has an extensive resume of musical contributions. Previous to his work with Sing Out Detroit, Ballou represented Detroit at annual conferences and festivals for GALA and performed in the University of Michigan's marching band as a tuba player, where he also marched in three Rose Bowl parades. He earned his Bachelor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from the Big Ten school. More recently, Ballou has participated in local theater, including a rendition of "Faustus," where he selected and performed organ repertoire and sound accompaniment for the Loudermilk Productions play. When not working with Sing Out Detroit, Ballou plays organ and leads the choir of First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit every Sunday morning.

Ballou and the group are as welcoming of their concertgoers as they are their members – all are welcome to attend and volunteer. "We always need help from non-

singers," the chorus' website notes. There's more than one way to show support for the chorus as well. Sing Out Detroit notes, "In addition to enjoying our concerts, there are many ways you can support Sing Out Detroit. Please consider becoming one of our sponsors or placing an ad for your business in our concert program. And of course, we're always looking for volunteers to help out at our concerts – no singing is required!"

Those interested in singing for the chorus can contact Sing Out Detroit to schedule a meeting with Ballou, who will determine new members' vocal ranges and ability to match a pitch. Membership is made up of all ability levels, and new members are welcomed in December and January for the upcoming winter/spring seasons. Rehearsals are from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday nights.

Sing Out Detroit's "FA-LA-LA FROZEN" will begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 21 in the Royal Oak High School auditorium. Royal Oak High School is located at 1500 Lexington Blvd. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. To purchase tickets or for more information, call 248-943-2411 or visit www.singoutdetroit.org.

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Editor's Pick

The Detroit Pistons are hosting their first-ever "Pride Night," celebrating the LGBT basketball fans of metro Detroit. The Friday night game will feature the Pistons facing off against the Milwaukee Bucks. Pride Night is part of the Palace's "Friday Night Out" series, with different themes each night.

As a special feature of the theme night, LGBT attendees can purchase \$45 tickets that include entry into Club 300, an all-you-can-eat and drink menu and a post-game shot on the court. This ticket gives fans a third floor view of the court.

The Pistons will play at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19 at the Palace. The Palace of Auburn Hills is located at 5 Championship Dr. Other tickets are \$19.75-259. Check out www.palacenet.com for more information.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Dec. 18

Free HIV Testing 2 p.m. Free anonymous HIV testing in-store at S3 every Thursday 2-8. Call to make an appointment, or walk-ins welcome. S3 Safe Sex Store and HARC, 1209 S. University, **Ann Arbor**. 734-741-1434. info@bak-inc.com S3safesexstore.com

Transgender Women of Color (TWOC) 7 p.m. Focused on embracing womanhood and developing sisterhood. TWOC, **Detroit**. 313-931-2975.

Ladies Night 10 p.m. Third Thursdays: For women who love women. Pronto Video Bar, 608 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak**.

Friday, Dec. 19

Piston's Pride Night Tickets: \$45. Detroit Pistons, 5 Championship Dr., **Auburn Hills**. 248-377-0100. Palacenet.com

Week End @ SOHO 6:15 p.m. Gay Professionals Social Group, 205 W. Nine Mile, **Ferndale**. Meetup.com/Gay-Professionals-Social-Group-MI

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: The Fish Child. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org/

Saturday, Dec. 20

LGBTQ-Friendly Yoga Class Just B Yoga,

106 Island Ave., **Lansing**. Justbyoga.com

Home for the Holiday 12-Songwriter Showcase & Charity Drive 9 p.m. Static Network has been hosting this night of song for the past eleven years to benefit the community's homeless citizens and pets. The event brings together six local singer-songwriters in one evening of acoustic music for a good cause. The Congregation of Every 1-Local artist and philanthropist Jeff Hocking started the secular community group turned charity to help the homeless and also contribute goods to other homeless shelters for people and also animal rescue groups. 18+. Admission is \$6 or \$5 with one can of people or pet food or winter clothing item. Boots, blankets, socks and hats are much needed this year. Static Network, 2932 Caniff, **Hamtramck**. 313-874-0909. info@staticrecords.com Paycheckslounge.com

W.E.T.'s Queer Ugly Sweater Party 10 p.m. Bring a lightly used winter clothing item and get in for \$3. Donations go to the Ruth Ellis Center and Alternatives for Girls21+. Cover: \$5. W.E.T. Detroit, 5057 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. womenentertainmentteam@gmail.com Facebook.com/events/272468109628269/

Sunday, Dec. 21

Transitions 2 p.m. Free transgender support group. Transitions, 1055 E. South Blvd., **Rochester Hills**. 586-838-0825.

Bright and Gay Cabaret 3 p.m. Winter

Concert. Sistrum, 215 N. Capitol Ave., **Lansing**. Sistrum.org

FA-LA-LA FROZEN 3 p.m. It may be cold outside, but it'll be warm and cozy when Sing Out Detroit chorus takes to the stage December 21 to perform their concert, FA-LA-LA FROZEN. Celebrating the fun and beauty of winter, this show has a little something for every member of the family! Songs include beautiful choral numbers, a medley from the movie, "Frozen," and classics such as Baby Its Cold Outside. Tickets are \$15-20. Sing Out Detroit Chorus, 1700 Lexington, **Royal Oak**. 248-943-2411. Lindacbrin@gmail.com Singoutdetroit.org

Drag Queen Addictions 10:30 p.m. LaBelle and Aretha Franklin impersonator April Summers brings her big personality to the stage as she introduces a lineup of drag stars. 18+. Inuendo Nightclub, Corner of Nevada St. and Southbound I-75, **Detroit**. <https://facebook.com/inuendo>. nightclub?rf=118209121607517

Monday, Dec. 22

Faith Alliance Movie Night 7 p.m. Light refreshments (popcorn and soft drinks). Free. Affirmations Faith Alliance, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. jewis@goaffirmations.org Goaffirmations.org

TransPeace 7 p.m. Ruth Ellis Center, 77 Victor St., **Highland Park**. 313-867-6932. Ruthelliscenter.org

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

Gender Explorers 8 p.m. Spectrum Center, **Ann Arbor**. 734-763-4186. spectrumcenter.umich.edu

Tuesday, Dec. 23

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

Transgender Life Support 7 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Free to be Me Group 12:30 p.m. This is a

support group for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning. The Jewish Gay Network of Michigan (JGN), 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield**. 248-432-5467. Jgnmi.org

Christmas Eve Service 4 p.m. St. Paul United Church of Christ, 31654 Mound Road, **Warren**. 586-264-4777. Stpauluccwarren.com

HIV Testing 6 p.m. Free. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org/events/event_details.asp?id=430531

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 11 p.m. Woodside Church, 1509 E. Court St., **Flint**. 810-767-4911. info@woodsidechurch.net

Christmas Eve Service 11 p.m. Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, 2441 Pinecrest, **Ferndale**. 248-399-7741. Mccdetroit.org

Thursday, Dec. 25

Mitzvah Project Will bring and heat up Christmas dinner for REC residents, then go out at 6 p.m. after for annual Chinese restaurant gathering. The Jewish Gay Network of Michigan (JGN), 77 Victor St., **Highland Park**. 248-342-5661. jgnmi@jccdet.org Jgnmi.org

Friday, Dec. 26

Family Fotos Exhibition honoring all families. OutCenter, 132 Water St., **Benton Harbor**. 269-925-8330. Outcenter.org

Mini Farmers Market 11 a.m. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St., **Saugatuck**. 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

Kwanzaa Celebration-Unity 6 p.m. KICK, 41 Burroughs St. 109, **Detroit**. 313-285-9733. E-kick.org

Pride Friday 9 p.m. The one and only



"inspires, empowers and entertains." The choral group's roots go back to 1986, when it was first formed as the Lansing Women's Chorus. Since then, the group has only grown, bringing together women of all walks of life.

"Bright and Gay Cabaret" will be performed at 3 p.m. Dec. 20 and 21 at Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. Tickets are \$12-15, with tables of eight available for \$90. For more information, visit www.sistrum.org or email info@sistrum.org.

20. 269-756-3879. Acorntheater.com

The Ark "Adam Plomaritas/Jason Dennie w/Thunderwuede" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 18. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "George Winston" Tickets: \$45. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 20. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Crofoot "Har Har Hootenanny" Featuring Reggie Watts, Anthony Jeselnik and more. The Jack White Theatre at Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., Detroit. Dec. 19 - Dec. 20. TheCrofoot.com

The Magic Bag "Giulio Gallarotti and Ricky Velez" Tickets: \$18+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Dec. 19. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Majestic "Reel Cool Time Night". The Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 10 p.m. Dec. 18. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

The Majestic "Jimkata" Tickets: \$10. The Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Dec. 19. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

Irving Berlin's White Christmas \$24. Grosse Pointe Theatre at Grosse Pointe War Memorial Fries Auditorium, 32 Lakeshore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms. Through Dec. 22. 313-881-4004. www.gpt.org

Leading Ladies \$14-16. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Through Dec. 20. 248-473-1856. www.farmingtonplayers.org

The Christmas Schooner \$7-15. The Twin City Players at Lake Michigan College

Annapurna \$12-42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 20. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

Anne of Green Gables \$20. What A Do Theatre, 4071 W. Dickman Road, Springfield. Through Dec. 20. 269-282-1953. www.whatado.org

Annie \$34-69. Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Dec. 16 - 21. 800-WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

Buzz \$17-20; \$75 Black Tie Event on Nov. 15. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodward Wilson, Detroit. Through Dec. 28. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

Christmas Bingo: It's a Ho-Ho-Holy Night \$12-18. Tibbits Opera House, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. 2 p.m. Dec. 21. 517-278-6029. www.tibbits.org

Christmas Caroled \$15-32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through Dec. 21. 734-268-6200. www.theencoretheatre.org

Cirque Dreams Holiday \$24+. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 16 - 20. 313-471-6611. www.olympiaentertainment.com

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

Cornwell's Christmas Carol \$42 with meal; \$37 show only. Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd, Marshall. Through Dec. 20. 800-228-4315. www.turkeyville.com

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

Editor's Pick

Sing Out Detroit's "Fa-La-La Frozen" concert (see page 27) isn't the only festive feature this weekend – Sistrum's "Bright and Gay Cabaret" will take Lansing by winter storm. Sistrum, Lansing's lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender and heterosexual woman chorus, will feature a variety of festive performances.

Sistrum is known for creating music that "inspires, empowers and entertains." The choral group's roots go back to 1986, when it was first formed as the Lansing Women's Chorus. Since then, the group has only grown, bringing together women of all walks of life.

"Bright and Gay Cabaret" will be performed at 3 p.m. Dec. 20 and 21 at Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. Tickets are \$12-15, with tables of eight available for \$90. For more information, visit www.sistrum.org or email info@sistrum.org.

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Curtain Goes Down On Curtain Calls

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

Back in the summer of 2001 when co-publishers Jan Stevenson and Susan Horowitz placed a small ad in the newspaper seeking to hire someone to help expand their theater coverage, little did they anticipate that the middle-aged, bald and bespectacled gentleman who responded would still be there 13-and-a-half years later. But after more than 660 weekly columns, 1,700-plus reviews, and 7,000-plus calendar listings, my tenure as *Between The Lines'* theater editor will come to a close Dec. 20.

It's been a blast – and I thank Jan and Susan from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to play in their sandbox and carve out my own little kingdom to rule as I saw fit. Two better bosses would be very tough to find.

Their goal – and mine – was to seek ways to forge and expand the natural relationship that has existed between the LGBT and theater communities since the dawn of the performing arts. After all, remove all the gay people from on and behind the stage and what would be left? Not much – and much of it would be pretty damn boring.

So that's we did, first by approaching theaters big and small, professional and non-professional, and inviting them to send us their press releases so that we could begin including them in our print and online calendars. And respond they did. Our listings grew to an astounding 50-plus shows a week across the state during the busiest times of the season. (Who said theater is dead? It's certainly alive and kicking here in Michigan!)

But more importantly, as the state's major daily and weekly newspapers were trimming or cutting their theater coverage – especially their reviews of our professional theaters – we decided that was a niche we were uniquely capable of filling. So that's what we did – focusing first in metro Detroit and Southeast Michigan, and eventually expanding from one side of the state to the other. To do that, however, meant we had to increase our critics from a single person – me – to an entire team of professional journalists and critics, many of whom joined us from those very same

newspapers that dropped their coverage. The result, then – in my humble opinion – was the most comprehensive and finest theater coverage this state has ever seen. And I thank the more than one dozen critics who, throughout the years, joined us on our merry, crazy crusade.

Still, we weren't done yet.



Retiring editor Donald V. Calamia celebrating his recent 60th birthday. Photo: J. Williams

If we were going to provide complete coverage of our theaters, and we wanted to build bridges between our communities, it only made sense that we should throw an annual party to bring us all together – and so we created The Wilde Awards. Designed to celebrate the best productions, performances and technical work of the professional theater season, The Wilde Awards first hit the stage in 2002 and quickly outgrew The Furniture Factory in Midtown Detroit. From there, The Gem Theatre

became its home for several years, until finally landing at The Berman Center for the Performing Arts in West Bloomfield, where it celebrated its 13th year this past September. What's more, The Wilde Awards have become a nationally recognized symbol for recognizing theatrical excellence – and, to be honest, we're quite proud of that!

If that wasn't enough to keep us busy, Jan, Susan and I – along with tech guru Kevin Bryant – had yet another idea: Why not launch a separate website to promote the state's professional theaters? Call us crazy, but that's what we did in 2008 – just months before the country's economy tanked and shredded our business plan all to pieces. But we persevered, and after an ownership change or two, EncoreMichigan.com is still alive and picking up steam, attracting thousands of readers each and every day. (I'll be retiring as its editorial director on Dec. 20 as well.)

So how do I feel about leaving behind what I've helped to build these past 13-and-a-half years, you might be wondering?

The quick answer is this: I'm pretty damn proud of what we've accomplished, both personally and as a team. And while I'll miss

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continued on 28



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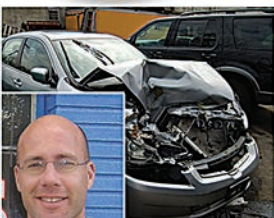
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Editor's Pick

In the spirit of the holiday season, Improv fans have an opportunity to gather with friends, have a few laughs and help a good cause all at the same time! Tickets for the "Holiday Improv Project" are now on sale. The event will be held at Go Comedy! Improv Theater in Ferndale on Dec. 23 at 7:30 p.m. Proceeds benefit The Detroit Creativity Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to giving back to Detroit by

helping to preserve arts education in area schools.

The evening features Marc Evan Jackson ("The Thrilling Adventure Hour"), Sam Richardson ("Veep"), Tim Robinson ("Saturday Night Live"), Phred Brown (music director for Bruno Mars), Margaret Edwartowski (The Second City) and special guests.

Tickets (\$25) are now on sale and can be purchased online at www.gocomedy.net. Go Comedy! Improv Theater is located at 261 East Nine Mile Road in Ferndale.

► Happenings

Continued from p. 28

734-663-0681. www.pntheatre.org

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

Invasion! \$10-20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Mame \$20. Riverbank Theatre, 358 S. Water St., Marine City. Through Dec. 21. 810-278-1749. www.riverbanktheatre.com

Miracle on South Division Street \$15-35. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through Dec. 28. 517-655-SHOW. www.williamstontheatre.org

Old Jews Telling Jokes \$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. Through Dec. 21. 248-788-2900. www.jettheatre.org

Onstage & Unplugged \$90-175. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Dec. 26 - 31. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

Pinocchio \$12-18. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Through Dec. 21. 810-237-1530. www.flintyouththeatre.org

Snow Queen \$10 adults, \$5 children. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25

E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Through Jan. 31. 313-961-7777. www.puppetart.org

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

The Holiday Improv Project \$25. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 23. www.gocomedy.net

The SantaLand Diaries & Season's Greetings \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Dec. 19 - 22. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

The Winter's Tale \$10. Slipstream Theatre Initiative at Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Through Dec. 31. 248-298-9617. www.slipstreamti.com

This Wonderful Life \$27. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Dec. 18. 734-663-0681. www.pntheatre.org

Wicked \$49+. Broadway in Detroit at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Through Jan. 4. 313-237-SING. www.broadwayindetroit.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Abracadabra Jewelry/Gem Gallery
"Celebrate 40 Years with 40 Gifts Contest"
A fun scavenger hunt through neighboring downtown local shops to celebrate 40 years. Abracadabra, 205 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Dec. 4 - Dec. 24. 734-994-4848. Abragrem.com

Cranbrook Art Museum "Iris Eichenberg: Bend". Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 23 - Jan. 25. 877-462-7262. Cranbrook.edu

Cranbrook Art Museum "The Cranbrook Hall of Wonders: Artworks, Objects and Natural Curiosities". Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 23 - March 22. 877-462-7262. Cranbrook.edu

Cranbrook Art Museum "Cranbrook Goes to the Movies: Films and Their Objects, 1925-1975". Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. June 21 - Feb. 28. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Art Museum "Warhol On Vinyl: The Record Covers, 1949-1987+" Drawing from the world's preeminent collection of record covers by Andy Warhol, this exhibition showcases how Warhol used the record cover as a means to popularize his name and directly impact popular culture. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. June 21 - Feb. 28. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Detroit Artists Market (DAM) "Art for the Holidays" The gallery transforms from a fine art exhibition space to a fun, energetic gift market. Detroit Artists Market, 4719 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 26 - Dec. 30. 313-832-8540. Detroitartistsmarket.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Guest of Honor: Monet's Waterlily Pond, Green

Harmony". Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 1 - Jan. 4. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Downriver Council for the Arts

"School District Art Exhibits"
Students set forth to promote peace and friendship between the two schools through their art. Allen Park & Melvindale High Schools, Allen Park & Melvindale. Dec. 1 - Jan. 4. Downriverarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Labyrinth"
The circuitous life of a miniaturist. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Nov. 1 - Jan. 4. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "The Art of Video Games". Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Oct. 25 - Jan. 18. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Michigan State University Museum "Evolution in Action" New exhibit explores evolution of biological systems and technologies - evolution in living things, and also in computers and engineering. A new exhibit, "50,000" reveals an ongoing experiment where scientists have observed bacteria growing, competing, and evolving for 50,000 generations in only 23 years. Michigan State University Museum, 409 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. Aug. 4 - Dec. 31. 517-355-7474. museum.msu.edu

Michigan State University Museum "Michigan and the Civil War" Exhibit highlights Michigan connections in the Civil War. Michigan State University Museum, 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. Aug. 4 - Dec. 31. 517-355-7474. museum.msu.edu

MOCAD "Detroit City: Detroit Affinities" Detroit: Affinities, Speaks and Stages. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 12 - Jan. 31. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

MOCAD "The People's Biennial" It examines the work of artists and other creative individuals, who operate outside the conventional art world. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 12 - Dec. 31. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

River's Edge Gallery "Virgo Rising" Patricia Izzo and Martine MacDonald. River's Edge Gallery, 3024 Biddle, Wyandotte. Nov. 22 - Dec. 31. 734-246-9880. Artattheedge.com

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "Permeated Surfaces" Original works from three Chicago based artists. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. Dec. 12 - Feb. 6. 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

► Curtain Calls

Continued from p. 29

the daily interactions with the BTL staff and our wonderful theaters of all sizes and configurations, every now and then the universe kicks us in the ass and points us in a new direction - sometimes kicking and screaming, sometimes not.

It's the latter that's happening here. Two months ago, I had no plans for the future other than to figure out ways to improve our coverage; a month later, I spent seven days in the hospital after experiencing a life-changing event and being told to change those plans - or else.

Since one thing I'm good at is taking doctors seriously, a new chapter in my

life awaits me. And I'm very much looking forward to it!

But before I head off into the sunset, I'd like to thank our theaters for their trust in me for nearly 14 years; I value the relationships I've built with them, and I look forward to working with many of them again as I move into the next phase of my life journey.

I'd also like to thank the staff at Between The Lines for all of their support over the years. Although the editors and writers have changed over time, their passion has not - and from start to finish, I couldn't dream of a better group of people to work with.

Finally, a big tip of my hat and a major thank you go to our readers, who have stuck with us these past many

years, and who never shied away from telling us what they liked and what they loathed about our coverage. Our ultimate responsibility was to provide our readers with the best work we could possibly produce, and to do so in a way that was entertaining, educational, fair and honest. I think we accomplished that far more than we failed, which is a pretty decent score to leave with.

So what will I do next? After completing my editorial duties for next week's paper, I'll return to the life of an occasional freelancer, working when and where suits me best - and that, of course, includes here at BTL. And elsewhere.

Until then, I wish all of you a Happy Holiday and a very Happy New Year!

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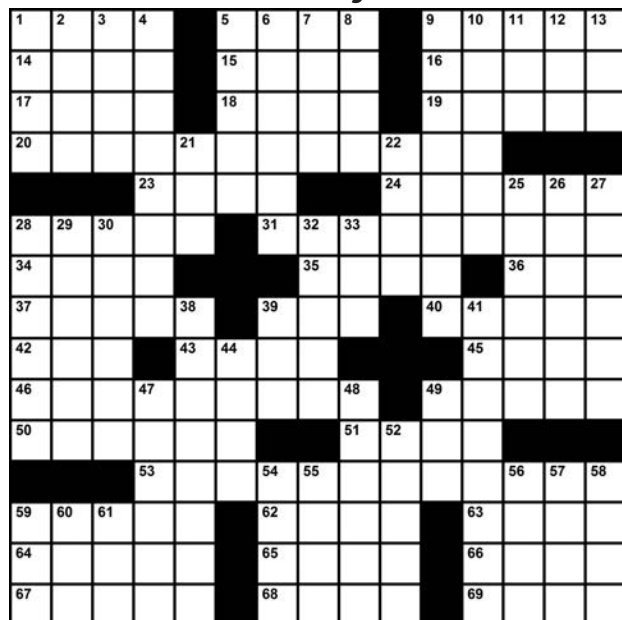
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Q Puzzle

Actor With Dexter-ity



Across

- 1 Deer, or without a dear
5 Verdon, who played Lola
9 "Hollywood Squares" choice
14 ___ Alto, California
15 Estimate ending
16 Intense desires
17 Doug Mattis leap
- 18 Male escort
19 Hamlet's father, e.g.
20 TV series with "dexter-ity"?
23 Branch of math, briefly
24 Cher's portrayal in "Clueless"
28 Comic-strip Viking
31 With 39- and 46-Across, Broadway show with "dexter-ity"?
34 US citizen

- 35 Dramatist Williams, for short?
36 P on fraternity row
37 Chiwetel Ejiofor's "Kinky ___"
39 See 31-Across
40 Part of a daisy chain?
42 NATO turf
43 River in an Alec Baldwin film
45 Oliver Twist request
46 See 31-Across
49 Nathan and family
50 High-spirited horses
51 Oral votes
53 "Dexter" star
59 "In Russia, Party will always find you" comic Smirnoff
62 Bone by the humerus
63 Georgetown athlete
64 Use a gifted tongue
65 Chose not to swallow
66 Roadside stops
67 One who works his shaft
68 Part of a vacuum that sucks
69 Student's book
- 11 Vintage wheels
12 Wood and more
13 Hrs. in Rehoboth Beach
21 Stud site
22 First light
25 It's got milk
26 Words from a closet, perhaps
27 Is nuts over
28 Writ of ___ corpus
29 Check information
30 Takei of "Star Trek"
32 Moral code
33 "Look at Me, I'm Sandra ___"
38 One who's hobby is just plane risky?
39 Spank
41 "Les Miz," for example
44 Cheesehead's st.
47 Couch potato's tool
48 "The Lion King" voice roles for Whoopi and others
49 Lake, to fifty million Frenchmen
52 Make heady
54 Kind of money
55 Food on the floor, maybe
56 Tops
57 Mountain cat
58 Bringing up the rear
59 ___ Kippur
60 Paul Newman role in "Exodus"
61 Toto's home st.

Down

- 1 Sites for three men in a tub
2 Jodie Foster's "___ Driver"
3 Glenn, in "Fatal Attraction"
4 Vehicle for Patty Sheehan's sport
5 Old TV comedian George
6 Pitiable person
7 Hairy twin
8 Verb, for example
9 She played tomb raider Lara
10 Lou of Glenn Burke's sport

Solution on pg. 26



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