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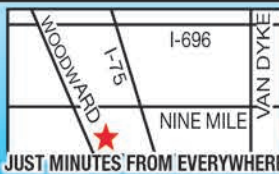
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6 Newborn girl experiences religious discrimination

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“ Given all the events that are happening in Indiana, I thought it would be good to clarify my position. **I would veto RFRA legislation in Michigan if it is a standalone piece of legislation.** ”

– Gov. Rick Snyder, pg. 5



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Woman Sues Dearborn For Violation Of Rights

Officer Allegedly Issued Ticket For HIV Status, Incident Caught On Camera

BY TODD HEYWOOD

The city of Dearborn is being sued by a Detroit woman who alleges the city violated her rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act during a traffic stop in August of 2012. Shalandra Jones is arguing in court that when Dearborn Police Officer David Lacey ticketed her for possession of marijuana, he did so because of her HIV-positive status.

The incident was caught on the dashboard video camera of Lacey's patrol car on Aug. 3, 2012. He pulled a 1999 GMC Jimmy over for a failed brake light. Jones and her partner Mark Scott were in the vehicle, with Scott at the wheel.

After approaching the vehicle, Lacey said he smelled marijuana and asked for it to be surrendered. Jones handed over a small amount of marijuana. Later in the exchange she would reveal she was a medical marijuana card holder, but that her card had expired.

Because of the marijuana, Lacey searched the vehicle for other contraband. During that search he found Jones' HIV medications. He admitted later in the video he was "pissed" by the discovery because he had been searching the vehicle without gloves and had touched Jones' earrings in her purse. He was worried, he said repeatedly, that he would take something home to his family.

HIV experts say it is exceedingly unlikely Jones' earrings could have resulted in transmission of HIV.

Despite a warrant for Scott's arrest, he was released with two "fix it" tickets. Jones was ticketed for a misdemeanor possession of marijuana charge. Jones was able to get the city to drop the charge, but a year later. Her attorney, Joshua Moore of Detroit Legal Services, said at the time that Dearborn prosecutors consistently offered to drop the marijuana charge if she would agree to sign a document waiving her right to sue the department.

At issue are the statements Lacey made indicating he was issuing tickets because Jones had failed to disclose her HIV-positive status to the officer. Something, incidentally, she is not legally obligated to do in Michigan.

"Ok, I explained it to (Scott)," Lacey said to Jones. "I asked him if he had anything and he said, 'No.' Stuff like that. As soon as I'm getting you out of the car, 'Sir, I'd like to tell you I'm HIV-positive.' Whatever it is. Tell me right away. I explained to him, you know, this is the west end of Dearborn. It's a relatively nicer area, and we usually don't have a lot of stuff like that around here."

Lacey told Jones that if suspects don't disclose diseases they have and whether they are carrying

needles, "We're going to be really mad."

"I understand that what you have isn't something I could get, but it makes me nervous... I don't want to take it home to my family," Lacey told Jones. "Honestly, if it wasn't for that, I don't think I would have wrote anybody for anything. But that kind of really aggravated me, you know what I mean? You got to tell me right away, 'I've got this. I've got that.' 'Cause at that time, I wasn't wearing any gloves."

"I wrote you for the marijuana," explained Lacey, instructing her to get her marijuana card renewed and to contact the court within 14 days.

Jones is also alleging that the city has failed

"I understand that what you have isn't something I could get, but it makes me nervous... I don't want to take it home to my family ... Honestly, if it wasn't for that, I don't think I would have wrote anybody for anything. But that kind of really aggravated me, you know what I mean? You got to tell me right away, 'I've got this. I've got that.' 'Cause at that time, I wasn't wearing any gloves."

– Dearborn Police Officer David Lacey

to properly train law enforcement staff on dealing with people with various diseases, including HIV.

In the reporting after the incident was first revealed, Dearborn Police Chief Ronald Haddad told the Dearborn Press and Guide the department was taking action to beef up training related to HIV.

"We've also partnered with an HIV health professional and educator who will assist us with providing a greater understanding (of HIV transmission)," Haddad told the newspaper Oct. 1, 2012. "We want to be transparent, and I'm confident we can do better."

But in an August deposition in the case, Dearborn training officials said no such training had ever been conducted. In fact, Moore says Dearborn officials were offered a no-cost training as well as policy review by Equality Michigan. That offer was never accepted.

In that same report, Haddad said Lacey had "a positive demeanor" when dealing with the couple. But depositions in the case show Lacey was ultimately found to have violated departmental policies.

"It's a notice of a written reprimand with 10 days of unpaid suspension held in abeyance. And it also directs that he get

additional training, and it's for the violation of unbecoming conduct under Section 24 in the rules and regs," Haddad said in his deposition while holding Lacey's reprimand, "which in part makes it a violation for insensitive language or expressing prejudice towards someone."

Aside from arguing that Lacey discriminated against her for issuing tickets because she failed to disclose her HIV-positive status, Jones is suing the city alleging they violated Michigan's HIV privacy law by releasing the police video under the state's Freedom of Information Act. The video was released, unredacted, to the American Independent News Network.

private – something the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals rejected.

The lawsuit and controversy has also raised questions about Equality Michigan's annual ComedyFest. That event is held at a Dearborn owned facility.

"Although it saddens me to hear Equality Michigan is having an event at a Dearborn owned property, I hope that they will approach the city for another opportunity to train on diversity and HIV education," Moore said. "It is clear their police department is grossly undertrained. I have often thought the response from the LGBT community from the horrific actions of Officer Lacey would be much more if Ms. Jones were a white gay male."

Emily Dievendorf, executive director of Equality Michigan, said the organization will work to address any concerns.

"Equality Michigan will continue to offer and insist that the city of Dearborn conduct proper and complete LGTBTA and HIV training to public officials and law enforcement," she said in a written statement. "We also implore the city of Dearborn to modernize their laws and pass an LGBTQ-inclusive human rights ordinance. Since Mayor Guido invited us over a decade ago, it has been out pleasure to bring our ComedyFest event to such a diverse and historically rich city. However, with over 30 other cities now taking steps to protect LGBTQ people, Equality Michigan can only ask LGBTQ Michiganders to travel to a city where they are unprotected for so long. We have not yet made a final decision on ComedyFest 2016's venue, and we will be talking to community leaders about addressing these concerns before we do."

Lawyers on both sides will be in court at 2 p.m. May 7 to argue whether the lawsuit can continue.

NOTE: Todd A. Heywood originally broke this story at the American Independent News Network. Because he was the reporter who sought and published the video of the traffic stop, Dearborn officials have listed him as a possible witness in this case. Depositions and court filings show the city believes Heywood is responsible for releasing Jones' HIV-positive status. Heywood argues that the city has the responsibility under the Freedom of Information Act to sort exempt from non-exempt materials prior to releasing public documents. He argues the city had an obligation under the FOIA exemption for information that is a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy to exempt the information on Jones' HIV-positive status. He further argues that the city was in violation of the act in numerous ways during the requesting period, including refusing to provide a way to email a request – a move that is a violation of FOIA. Heywood rejects Dearborn's defense related to the release of Jones' HIV status and is prepared to say so on the stand if called in the case.



Snyder Breaks Silence: 'I Would Veto RFRA Legislation In Michigan'

BY TODD HEYWOOD

In a rare moment of political frankness, Michigan's Republican Gov. Rick Snyder has announced he would veto religious freedom legislation if it does not have companion legislation to protect the LGBT community from discrimination.

"Given all the events that are happening in Indiana, I thought it would be good to clarify my position," he told the Detroit Free Press during an interview April 2. "I would veto RFRA legislation in Michigan if it is a standalone piece of legislation."

The Free Press reports he specifically said that there should be two separate bills – RFRA and an amendment to Elliot-Larsen, the state's civil rights law, to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Snyder made similar statements about reservations related to RFRA last December when it passed the state House. At that point, an amendment to Elliot-Larsen had died in committee. He has called for dialogue about the civil rights bill previously, but that call was unilaterally dismissed by Republican Speaker of the House Kevin Cotter.

"I am quite positive that Gov. Snyder doesn't want the blowback of what is happening economically in Indiana

happening here," says TJ Bulcholz, owner of Vanguard, a communications shop in Lansing. Bulcholz also works on political campaigns and has a long career in government service with Democrats. "I think a lot of this veto threat is this administration seeing which way the

In a rare moment of political frankness, Michigan's Republican Gov. Rick Snyder has announced he would veto religious freedom legislation if it does not have companion legislation to protect the LGBT community from discrimination.

wind is blowing."

The legislation sponsor, Sen. Mike Shirkey, R-Clarklake, told the Free Press he was undeterred by the veto threat.

"That's the governor's prerogative, but I intend to give him that chance (to veto the bill)," he told the Free Press. "I'm not surprised, but I'm not deterred."

He said he would not "cave to pressure."

"We are happy that Gov. Snyder, after intense pressure by Progress Michigan and the progressive and business communities, has strayed from his typical non-committal rhetoric by being absolute in his language about vetoing a RFRA bill in Michigan," said Lonnie Scott, executive director of Progress

Michigan. "However, if the governor is serious about his commitment against discrimination, he should demand that Attorney General Bill Schuette retract his suit in defense of Michigan's discriminatory marriage ban and call on the legislature to immediately pass an updated version of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to protect the entire LGBT community."

Emily Dievendorf, executive director of Equality Michigan, commented, "Equality Michigan appreciates that Gov. Snyder has publicly stated his support for modernizing Michigan's

anti-discrimination law to be inclusive of the LGBTQ community. However, Michigan will not benefit from a so-called Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and packaging these bills together could still harm Michigan families and bring the type of justified uproar to Michigan that Gov. Snyder is trying to avoid. We call on the governor to press harder for passage of an amendment to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and that he veto any Religious Freedom Restoration Act, regardless of what it is packaged with."

BTL called out Gov. Snyder's silence on Michigan's RFRA in an op-ed earlier last week. Read the editorial at <http://pridesource.com/article.html?article=70892>.

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Newborn Girl Experiences Religious Discrimination

Local Lesbian Couple Who Made National News Comments On Controversy

OUR FAMILIES

BY AJ TRAGER

OAK PARK – Bay Windsor Contreras was just 6 days old when she experienced her first instance of discrimination. While she may not remember it, her mothers, and the nation, will remember the pediatrician who refused to treat Bay on religious grounds.

Jami Contreras and Krista Dornfried-Contreras knew they wanted children very early on in the relationship. They met on the west side of Michigan when Krista took a job near Heart. Jami grew up in the area, and once their relationship was established, they started thinking about raising a family and chose to move to east Michigan where many of Krista's

family still resides.

“When I met her I instantly knew that I really liked this girl and thought, ‘I really need to get to know her.’ She was just different than anyone else I’d have ever

were 100 percent confident with ourselves and our relationship before we brought a baby into the mix, so we could teach her that confidence,” Jami said. So they both stepped completely

that it was time to start their family but felt like they should get married first. However, same-sex marriage has yet to be made legal in Michigan.

“Even though it was illegal,

They had a known sperm donor that they found on a website who had previously helped a lesbian couple and wanted to help someone out again. After meeting with him and getting all the necessary paperwork out of the way, they began their journey together as parents.

Like every family that has just had a child, Krista and Jami sought out a pediatrician that would be right for them. A few months before Bay was born they began interviewing pediatricians that they liked, searching for someone with a more holistic approach. Dr. Vesna Roi of Roseville was their third of five appointments and fit the bill for everything they were looking for in a pediatrician from medical philosophy to personality. They set

“*Our whole thing was raising awareness. She made her decision. I hope that she can eventually see that she was wrong and that we can get some education out there for doctors and for the medical field in how to handle LGBT families and how to be a team and work together to get the best care for everyone.*”

met,” Jami said describing the first time she saw Krista. They hit it off immediately and knew that they would eventually want kids. “We wanted to make sure that we

out of the closet with little to no discrimination from their employers. Then they moved to Detroit.

One night, they both expressed

we still felt it was important for our family that we be married somewhere to have that protection,” Jami said. They got married out of state.

See Contreras, page 14



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Kate Wade and Eileen Brandies, one of the 323 couples married on March 22, 2014, hiking near Lake Louise in Canada.

First Michigan Same-Sex Couple To Receive Pension Benefits

OUR FAMILIES

BY AJ TRAGER

ANN ARBOR – “It was the first time of being in love. We call it our grand passion; everybody should have one once in their life,” Kate Wade told BTL while recounting the immediate connection she and her wife, Eileen Brandies, had when they first got together.

They met 28 years ago and were married two years later at Metropolitan Community Church. Retired now and planning end of life finances, Brandies was concerned that Wade wouldn’t have access to the pension she accumulated from her many years working as a teacher.

Wade and Brandies are one of the 323 couples that got married in March 2014 after Judge Bernard Friedman struck

“I didn’t expect to feel, after all these years, any different, but there is something really powerful to legitimacy, and when I say ‘my wife’ now, I don’t feel like I’m pretending. It feels real and not just something between us. When we got the official things in the mail, it legitimized it some more.”

down Michigan’s 2004 voter approved same-sex marriage ban. In a last minute decision, that morning they rushed to Oakland County and were married by

County Clerk Lisa Brown.

“I didn’t expect to feel, after all these years, any different, but there is something really powerful to legitimacy, and when I say ‘my wife’ now, I don’t feel like I’m pretending. It feels real and not just something between us,” Wade said. “When we got the official things in the mail, it legitimized it some more.”

All legality of their 2014 marriage was up in the air due to the stay that was placed on Friedman’s decision by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. Thankfully, the ACLU, on behalf of eight couples married on that historic March day, filed a lawsuit against the state seeking legal recognition of the same-sex marriages performed during the legal window provided by the absence of a stay. On Jan. 15, Judge Mark A. Goldsmith found that Michigan’s refusal to legally recognize these couples was

See Pension Benefits, page 14



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Theodore Washington II and James Lawson outside their home in west Detroit, posing in front of a heart they created from natural debris found around their home. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

Neighborhood Activists Fight Post Office Discrimination

OUR FAMILIES

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – An old brick church sits at one end of a small street in west Detroit. At the other end is a barricade of a couple dozen tires – an attempt to keep people from depositing heaps of trash. Decades ago, the area used to be home to many of the city workers in Detroit before they fled to neighboring areas. Now, only one couple lives on the block, and they are working tirelessly with the city to ensure the area stays clean from waste. Their other tasks include planning a nature development project, caring for stray cats and battling cancer. In addition to the trash, they have another big problem: they don't receive their mail.

James Lawson and his husband, Theodore

Washington II, moved to the area in the spring of last year to conserve money after Lawson was diagnosed with esophageal non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. They removed 40 truck loads of trash with the help of the mayor's office; that garbage had made it difficult for cars and city vehicles to access their home.

"Last year the snow was so bad, the mailman was driving through the snow and around sofas and mattresses to get to us. But when he found out that we are gay, because we are outside cleaning up the street, he decided he wasn't going to come down here anymore," Lawson said.

They have two garbage cans. One for their personal rubbish and another dedicated to picking up the street's trash they constantly clean up from dumpers. They'd like to put in plants that are indigenous to the area and build up the natural wildlife. This isn't their

home forever, but the couple firmly believes in making things grow, wherever they are.

"When the mail stopped coming, we lost half my income, we lost our food stamps, we lost my insurance, we lost Teddy's income because he was getting paid for helping me, my medications weren't being delivered," Lawson lists. "This went on for almost four months. Tracking down our mail became a full time job."

Lawson had to reissue his state ID and for months it never came. They switched the delivery address to Washington's parents' house, and it arrived immediately.

When they called the Department of Human Services or Social Security offices to see where the status of their mail was, the offices said the documents were in the post, had records of transit and referred them to their local post office. Sometimes the post office would stockpile their mail, but usually the documents were sent back to the sender.

So they decided to approach their mail carrier directly and, "He said, 'Well, you faggots can walk and get your mail. I'm not going down there,'" Washington recalled.

In the beginning, the carrier had the cloak of "this is an inconvenience," Washington says, that there was too much trash. They then spoke with friendly neighbors in the area who said that he was making derogatory statements to them as well.

"Even the trash guy backs his truck in, gets our trash and backs out," Lawson said. "He waves at us and says that we're doing a great job."

Washington says he has heard nothing but support from his neighbors about their relationship and how they are cleaning up the street. They've barbecued together and have even donated food to help everybody out. But the couple is disappointed in the lack of neighborhood leadership and would like to see their neighbors take a more active role in cleaning up the area.

Lawson and Washington spoke with a lawyer who decided to file charges in mid-March against the mail carrier under the First and 14th Amendments regarding equal protection violations.

"It's been a year with just holding people accountable," Washington said. "What we hope to gain from the lawsuit is accountability. It's not just the post office, it's anybody that has a job that is to serve the public."

Lawson is a retired master chef and Washington is a pastry chef. But ever since the cancer diagnosis, due to financial burdens and shifting their approach to cancer treatment, they have been forced to change their way of living. Lawson's cancer is in remission, but before that decision, Lawson lost 80 pounds and says he was on the brink of death. Lawson has had three surgeries in the last six months, and the extra step of obtaining their mail has complicated their day to day lives.

"In order to get respect, you have to give it. You can't expect people to walk on eggshells around you. And we know what is around us. We know the neighborhood we are in, we know everybody has to hustle," Lawson said. "We deserve our mail just like anybody else, like any other couple that is struggling or not struggling. This incident brings awareness that something as old as the post office will even tolerate this kind of behavior. They went through wars to get people their mail. And this guy wouldn't walk through some weeds and stray cats to come down a street that has been cleaned to bring us our mail."

"If we tear down the walls of separation, we are all human and we are in this journey together. If people would set aside the idea that you aren't more than what is on your driver's license, we could believe that you are more than what society has stereotyped you to be. There's not a lot out here. Where are the people out here making the positive change and being the examples for these kids?" asked Washington.

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Heather And Her Mommies Get Makeover

OUR FAMILIES

BY AJ TRAGER

MASSACHUSETTS – Twenty-five years ago, 50 publishers received a copy of “Heather Has Two Mommies,” a picture book by Lesléa Newman. The book walked through a 5-year-old’s first day of kindergarden, but publishers didn’t jump on the chance to place Heather in the hands of American households. Much has changed since the book hit library shelves, so Candlewick Press has relaunched Heather with a whole new look and an updated storyline. “Heather Has Two Mommies” was the first children’s book to

portray lesbian families in a positive way.

“I wrote ‘Heather Has Two Mommies’ in 1998, and nobody would publish it. So a friend of mine and I co-published it on our own,” Newman said, describing her early experiences with the book which included receiving donations in \$10 increments to fund their work. “I don’t know where the time has gone. Many things in the world have changed; some things haven’t changed. I’m glad that the book is going to have a new life. And a quarter of a century on, it’s still marching on and doing its work in the world.”

Heather’s favorite number is two. She has two arms, two legs, two pets and two Mommies. She likes gingersnaps and big glasses of milk. On her first day of school Heather plays with building blocks and



settles into nap time with the class. During a classroom activity drawing their families, Heather realizes that not every family looks the same, a discussion that prompts learning and growth.

“Any parent reading the book will see a family of two parents and

families fought to censor Heather, libraries and schools maintained their ground and kept the book on the shelves.

“It was met with passionate opposition 25 years ago. I don’t anticipate that happening again,” Newman told BTL. “What I do

think and hope is that it will be very meaningful for kids with two moms, which was its intention in the first place. It will also be of interest to kids who have families with different constellations than Heather’s, who may have friends with two moms or parents who want to share the beautiful diversity of the world with their kids.”

In the children’s book world, authors and consumers talk about how children relate to the storyline through windows and mirrors. When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, strictly humorous or negative, they learn that they are devalued in the society of which they are a part, an essay published by childrensliteratureassembly.org describes.

“When a child reads a book, he or she might see a mirror,” Newman said. “So a kid with a family of two moms would read ‘mommies’ and that would be a mirror. And then kids

See Heather’s Mommies, page 15

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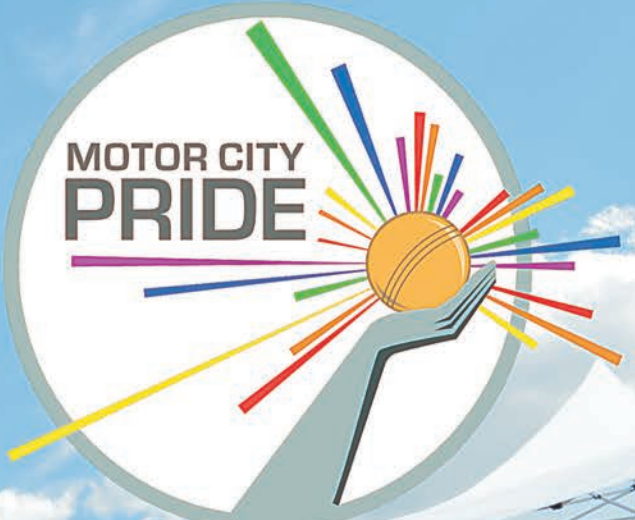
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Maddie Adams

BY AJ TRAGER

DEARBORN HEIGHTS – Maddie Adams, 22, is a regular volunteer at Affirmations, answering phones and assisting members of the staff. She has been interested in LGBT activism for many years, including her previous work with Freedom Michigan to try and pass the LGBT inclusive Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act amendment before the end last year's legislative term. BTL sat down with this young activist to hear more about her personal story.



How long have you been an activist, and what got you interested in activism?

I've been interested in activism and politics since I was a teenager, but what really got me interested is when I began my transition. As a trans woman I have seen and heard a lot of very unnerving stories of discrimination in the workplace, public facilities, businesses, schools and many other places. I felt a strong urge to get involved in activism and do what ever I could, and use the skills that I have, to hopefully improve the quality of life for myself and my friends here in Michigan. So, I began volunteering for phone banks

and post card drives in the beginning of 2014.

When did you start with Freedom Michigan, and what responsibilities did you have?

I began work with Freedom Michigan at the end of November 2014. I was the advocacy organizer for Wayne County, responsible for all volunteer outreach, growing capacity for our phone banks by contacting faith leaders, community leaders and student organizations to get them involved in volunteering to try to pass (ELCRA) before the new year. We also worked on opposing the Michigan Religious Freedom Restoration Act for a short time.

What did that experience bring to you?

I learned quite a bit from working with Freedom Michigan, even though it was a short campaign. I learned that the majority of the faith leaders, community leaders, student organizations and citizens in general believe that discrimination in the workplace is wrong and that one's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression do not impact one's work performance.

Why is it important for you to stay active in the LGBT community?

As a trans woman myself, I feel it is necessary. I feel an obligation to myself, friends and all trans people everywhere to stay active by being an advocate in support groups and an activist for the legal non-discrimination protections that the LGBT community so desperately needs.

What other issues should the community be looking at besides marriage equality?

As far as the big issues, we need to look at changing health care benefits so that trans people can get the necessary care that we need. Also, we need to keep pushing forward in the non-discrimination fight. We need to keep working on city wide and county wide non-discrimination ordinances.

What's next for you, in activism and in life?

I'm currently looking for another position in political activism either here in Michigan or in another state. I love doing that work, and I can't wait to start again. As far as life, I plan on continuing to volunteer at Affirmations among other things.

► Contreras

Continued from p. 6

up a prenatal consultation.

"She was very honest with us, I thought, and let us know about her schedule," Krista explained. "We didn't pick up anything from her. But we left there and told her we were happy and she basically said to make an appointment when the baby was born."

Bay was born on a Tuesday and they called a day or two later to schedule an appointment for four days out. They arrived in the office for their scheduled appointment but were met by a different doctor who explained that Dr. Roi had prayed on it and that she would not be able to take Bay on as a patient.

"We looked at each other pretty shocked because we couldn't believe what we were hearing," Jami said. "We thought we were reading it wrong. But then the other doctor started explaining that they could take us on as patients as long as we were loving parents, and she said that she had four other gay families that she sees. Which doesn't make you feel better when they can hand count how many."

They put a lot of time into finding a pediatrician and were extremely surprised that Bay received discrimination on religious grounds based on her parents' relationship.

"What if she has something

that only a specialized surgeon can help with, and he decides that he doesn't like gay people so he can't operate on her?" Krista asks, "What if we go to school and the principal has a problem with us being lesbians; can she be refused from that school? If this is allowed, where do you draw the line?"

Religious Freedom Restoration Acts have been circulating around the country. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence just experienced a huge backlash from 100 major corporations and LGBT-allied groups who spoke out in opposition to a newly signed bill which would allow corporations and businesses to discriminate against LGBT individuals due to "strongly held religious beliefs." A similar RFRA bill was introduced in the Michigan legislature at the end of the 2014 legislative term and again in the 2015 term but is currently sitting in a Senate committee.

Gov. Snyder just released a statement saying that he would not sign a Michigan RFRA without changes to the state's civil rights act to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity, but until the situation arose in Indiana, Snyder was largely silent on the matter. Michigan does not have any legal protections for the LGBT community who can still be denied services or housing based on their identity.

"The RFRA has provided a bigger license to discriminate.

And when they wrote the bill last year, opposition to the bill was saying that EMTs could refuse service and the supporters came out saying that that would never happen – that no one in the medical profession would deny anyone based on their sexual orientation – they just wouldn't do that. Well here we were with a 6-day-old and this happened. Thank god it wasn't the surgeon, but it could be. Do we have to wait until one of us, or someone like us, has to die in order for that law to then not go through?" Jami asks.

The couple wants to have one more child and then possibly adopt. But they don't know what that will look like given the political climate around same-sex second-parent adoptions since laws may change after the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage in June 2015.

"Our goal was never to take down a doctor. Our goal was never to have this vendetta against her and have everyone look at her and go after her. We didn't start this for that," Jami said. "Our whole thing was raising awareness. She made her decision. I hope that she can eventually see that she was wrong and that we can get some education out there for doctors and for the medical field in how to handle LGBT families and how to be a team and work together to get the best care for everyone."

► Pension Benefits

Continued from p. 8

unconstitutional and the 323 were officially acknowledged by state law.

Pension applications must be filed with the state within 12 months of the marriage. So, Brandies and Wade quickly made their way up to Lansing to speak with a state representative, who said that they were the first same-sex couple in the state to file for adjusting pension disbursements to arrange for survivors' benefits. The state wasn't prepared for the same-sex applications, so their representative sent a note up

to her superiors describing the situation to get it rushed through. A few days later, their information arrived in the mail.

"I hate this conversation, because it's about her dying," Wade said with a pause, "but she feels so much safer. She feels safe that I'll be okay. Also, I have all these old lady tests that I'm taking because I had been putting them off (due to insurance issues). And now she is lining them out for me."

A few weeks ago they went to get their taxes done at the Royal Oak Senior Center, and they filed their joint federal and state tax returns for the first time.

"It's something that, for straight

people, when they get married it doesn't even cross their mind. What a luxury to not have to worry about that," Wade said.

Since retirement, they have spent time switching between fostering kittens and traveling. They have a cottage in Canada and three grandchildren that Wade describes as brilliant and beautiful. They like to hike and spend time in nature.

"I can't imagine a world without her. You get to feel like you are the same person," Wade said. "We talk about when we are really, really old, we'll foster senior dogs. Because, at that age, you don't want to outlive your pet."



Lesléa Newman.

► **Heather's Mommies**

Continued from p. 12

who come from families that are not similar to Heather's would see the book as a window. So, a window looking into another experience. And I think two things: that children need to see themselves reflected back in a piece of literature because this is a very validating experience and gives the child a message that they aren't alone, and that there are other families like theirs. Kids also need to see windows. They need to see them and be exposed to all kinds of families and cultures so that they learn about the wonderful diversity that makes up the human race. They also learn to celebrate that diversity, and not be afraid of it, and not feel like it has to be oppressed and repressed in any kind of way."

The basic storyline of Heather has remained the same but now sports entirely new illustrations. A few changes were also made to the text, including a scene where Heather's forehead originally crinkled and she cried thinking she was the only one in the room without a daddy – she now simply wonders about her family dynamic without expressing a specific emotion. Another tweak involves the classroom; when the students are drawing their families, Newman has added a little girl who lives with her grandmother.

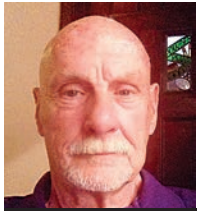
"I never dreamed that a book I wrote that came from such humble beginnings would be noticed, let alone banned, burned, defecated upon, read into the Congressional Record, written up in the New York Times, the New Yorker, Newsweek and parodied by Jon Stewart and many others, and finally republished by a well-established and respected children's book press," Newman said.

Despite all the positive changes for the LGBT community, Newman says that only a handful of LGBT-inclusive books are published every year. She would like to see Heather and shorelines like hers be integrated into classroom curricula.

"I do think we are two – possibly even just one – generation away from a world where this will be no big deal. My hope is with our youth as they claim the world as their own and hopefully in a way that respects, accepts and celebrates diversity in all its forms."

Newman was approached by Tricycle Press to write two more books on same-sex partner households: one titled "Mommy, Mama and Me" and "Daddy, Papa and Me." She later published "Donovan's Big Day," a story about a 5-year-old ring bearer who, on his moms' wedding day, has a "big job to do." Newman has written dozens of other children's books and has also authored other stories, including "October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard," a novel in verse for older teens poetically depicting fictitious scenes surrounding Shepard's death. She's also written books for adults that deal with lesbian and Jewish identities and the intersection and collision between the two.

Render Unto Caesar's Pizza



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Following an unexpected backlash – best described as a concerned public whiplash – Fools for Christ, Inc. announced on Easter Sunday its cancellation of their scheduled “Hate Someone Special for Jesus Week.”

Reluctant to admit it, recent media and big-name protests against Indiana’s perceived anti-LGBT, so-called Religious Freedom Law prompted Fools for Christ, Inc. to soft-pedal its campaign by renaming it, “Snub Someone Special for Jesus Week.”

Comments FFC, Inc. spokesperson, Rev. Franklin Falwell Robertson, “Apparently America is not yet ready to openly practice hate as a spiritual tool for redemption of its sinning, predominantly Democratic, middle class, same-sex marrying, unsaved, Satanic citizens.

“Until that time comes – hopefully before the Last Days Rapture takes place – avoidance, while not as effective as open Christian hostility and honest hate, is the next best thing.

“Key, of course, is how the snubbing is done. Fortunately, there are many choices. Ask: What choice would Jesus choose?”

“It helps if you have a leather-bound Scofield Bible at hand, for example, to shake in a gay person’s face as one walks away from the proverbial ‘near occasion of sin,’ say if you’re doing back room bar ministry.”

Rev. F. F. Robertson – ever one to set an example for his flock of born-againers – boasts to the Lumbago Texas Sentinel that, during Holy Week, he had purposely practiced spiritual snubbing by not tipping six gay waiters between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

He cites gay waiters as a “blatant example of this country’s decline as a Christian Nation. America needs to wake up to the fact that gay waiters are – God knows! – everywhere. They are not above spiking our plum puddings and putting little rainbow umbrellas in our ginger beers. On Guard, America!”

ADDENDUM: As this week’s issue of BTL goes to press, it’s been learned that an Indiana pizza parlor has become – overnight – more than a half million wealthier from unexpected contributions by friends of Fools for Christ, Inc. for the eatery’s outspoken, if somewhat cutesy, refusal to serve LGBT people in person or at traditional same-sex weddings.

As might be expected, Rev. F. F. Robertson, a connoisseur of all-toppings pizza – except sinful anchovies – is reluctantly pleased by the change to snubbing.

This from today’s Lumbago Texas Sentinel: “It’s nothing short of miraculous,” says Rev. F. F. Robertson. “God’s hand is surely on the pizza. It’s clearly manna from Heaven. It’s an occasion for a 12-slice celebration. A sure sign that spiritual snubbing, no matter how you slice it, works wonders for those Christian businesses that do it for our master chef Jesus.

“Clearly this financial ‘shower of blessing’ on these humble pizza true believers is an incentive for others, specifically those churches frustrated by not being openly active in their redeeming hate toward LGBT people. What better way to raise needed tax-exempt funds for our church affiliates of Fools for Christ?”

“With that goal in mind, I’m asking that the Sunday following April 15 – a time of great tribulation for all Americans – that pass-around Communion consist of small, commemorative pieces of blessed pizza and grape juice or wine. The latter, needless to say, a Cabernet Sauvignon not recommended by a gay waiter.”



Transmissions



OPINION BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

We are living in very mean times.

The news is filled with police assaults and murders of people of color. Congress is continuing to try and gut health care and other social safety nets. Certain elements of the media continue to blame women, immigrants, the poor, religious minorities and people of color – amongst others – for all of societies’ ills.

In the way of all this, the religious right – presumably feeling that the writing is on the wall for the marriage battle they’ve fought since the 1990s – is looking for new avenues that will allow them to continue to discriminate against LGBT people.

With a stroke of Gov. Mike Pence’s pen, Indiana became the most recent state to pass a “religious freedom bill.” The bill, SB 101,

opens the door for discrimination against LGBT people in the Hoosier State based on one’s religious beliefs.

The Indiana law is one of 21 enacted by states after the Federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 was held as unconstitutional as applied to states in 1997. The push for these bills has ramped up, too, in the wake of the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* case which allowed that company to not cover contraception for its employees under the Affordable Care Act mandate based on the corporation’s religious beliefs.

As the wildfires that are these “religious freedom” bills continue to spread, such is not the only tack the right is taking. Within the transgender community – as I have discussed more than a few times – the fight is on to bar transgender

people from restrooms and other public facilities under the guise of “public safety” and a mythological fear that sexual predators will use such bills to commit crimes.

Bills continue to proceed in Texas and Florida. A third bill, in Kentucky, has thankfully failed to pass a Democratic-controlled House, but not without a good fight.

A pair of Missouri bills have added an additional wrinkle: One will disallow bathrooms that aren’t single-stall to be gender neutral, while another would disallow state revenue to be used to help create a “gender-neutral environment.”

I’m trying to figure out how removing gender-neutral bathrooms can be really covered under this veneer of “public safety.” This can only be assumed to be squarely disallowing transgender people equal access to public facilities.

A recent case in Midland, Michigan may be a new flashpoint in this battle. A Planet Fitness location cancelled the membership of one of its users, Yvette Cormier. Cormier had stated that a “man” – in actuality a transgender woman – was using the facility and complained to several other customers about it. Planet Fitness, citing its policy as a “judgment free zone,” cancelled her membership.

Cormier is not going quietly. Indeed, she is suing Planet Fitness for more than \$25,000, claiming “embarrassment, humiliation and severe emotional distress” from “a man (using) the locker room” while Cormier did. Her counsel, the Kallman Legal Group, has a history of anti-LGBT causes.

I want to share one more story, though, perhaps in contrast to the above. Planet Fitness is not the first gym to face a similar issue.

Some months back, a transgender woman by the name of Tammy Powers was at a 24 Hour Fitness location at Van Ness and Post in San Francisco. She had been using this facility for just over a year.

Much like the Planet Fitness incident, Powers was in the changing room when another woman started shouting. “There’s a man in here,” she called. The two of them exchanged words, making their way to the front desk to complain about each other.

The staff of 24 Hour Fitness took them both aside to get each side of the story. At the end of this, Powers was told that this situation would not happen again. Powers did not ask what the staff had done, deciding that it was over and it was time to just “move on.”

There’s more to this story.

Months later, a woman approached Powers at the gym, saying, “Hi, remember me?” It was the woman who had called her out.

She continued, “I really need to apologize to you.” She added that she had no real information about transgender people and did not understand what Powers was going through. She had since learned more. At the end, they hugged.

I spoke to Powers before finishing this column, and we discussed how this contrasted with what happened at Planet Fitness. It reminded me of an important part of all of these bathroom bills, and one I’ve addressed before.

For many people out there, even now, they do not understand us. They may not even realize they know any transgender people. We’ve not been a part of their experience. When their lawmakers push for these anti-transgender “bathroom bills,” people don’t see how this will harm anyone – and they may truly believe that anyone who is transgender is a potential predator.

Perhaps I’m overly optimistic, especially in the wake of all this anger, and hate, and general meanness in the air. We can hardly claim to be this modern, enlightened society we often claim to be while blacks are still being lynched in Mississippi, or while women still get blamed for helping to cause their own rapes.

As we gain a voice, and as we continue to gain visibility, we become harder to demonize. People begin to see transgender people as not some faceless “other” in the world, but their co-worker, their family member, their friend. We become human. Sometimes the greatest change will not come from policy nor law – but from people losing their fear through familiarity.

That, too, will beat any meanness.

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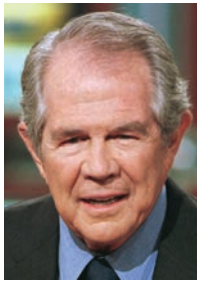
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Creep of the Week

Pat Robertson

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Extra, extra! Read all about it: Pat Robertson will come to your Big Gay Wedding! There's one condition: you're gonna have to show him a baby conceived through butt sex.



Pat Robertson

Now, I know what you're thinking: "That's not how babies are made and why would I want Pat Robertson at my wedding? He's a hateful old man."

To which I say, "Hey, I'm just the messenger."

It all started on the April 6, 2015 episode of "The 700 Club" when Robertson responded to a letter from a viewer asking, "If same-sex couples, especially those who are married, claim they are Christians, how can they continue to live this lifestyle? As a Christian, if they read the Bible, they should know the Bible's definition of marriage is only between a man and a woman. Please help me understand."

Please help me understand."

His answer? "The gays want to control everything."

He continued, "This is part of the left-wing agenda to do away with Christian values and to substitute for Christian values the progressive concepts of morality."

It's cute of him to condemn "progressive concepts of morality" as if the very idea is blasphemy. I'll take that over the so-called Christian values that shower an anti-gay pizzeria owner in Indiana with over \$842,000 while those poor folks Jesus had a thing about starve in the street.

Robertson's answer quickly ends up in the territory of anal sex, as usual. "If you show me one couple that conceived a child... through anal intercourse, just show me one in all the world, and I will say, 'I agree with you and you are right.' Show me one. There are 8 billion people, 7 billion, show me one time when a child was conceived by that kind of sexual activity. It is unnatural, I'm sorry."

Sorry not sorry, he means.

So that's it, then. Any sex act that doesn't make a baby is an act of loins possessed by the devil.

Robertson has had anal sex on the brain as of late. On his April 2 show he talked about Memories Pizza, the aforementioned company that was handsomely rewarded by way of Go Fund Me after they publicly declared that they wouldn't serve pizza at a gay wedding because Jesus. (Note: even Robertson pointed out that no gay couple is going to serve pizza at their wedding. Because, Jesus.)

This led him to, of course, rant about anal sex.

"It doesn't matter what custom you've got. It doesn't matter what holy thing that you worship and adore; the gays are going to get it," he said.

That's right. We're climbing in your window, snatching your people up. So hide your kids, hide your wife and hide your husband.

"They're going to make you conform to them," Robertson continued. "You are going to say you like anal sex, you like oral sex, you like bestiality, you like anything you can think of, whatever it is. And sooner or later you are going to have to conform your religious beliefs the group of some aberrant thing. It won't stop at homosexuality."

Note: only same-sex couples engage in anal and oral sex. Straight couples would never (clutches pearls, faints).

It's clear that Robertson can't see the forest of gay people past the trees of penises. To him, if you're gay, you're just a sex act, which is why there's no distinction between a man having sex with his husband and a man having sex with a dog. You have no redeeming qualities. Your very existence is oppressing him.

He didn't really answer his viewer's question. But what he should have said is that the Christian lifestyle is a choice. Being a terrible person is also a choice. Being a terrible person who uses Christianity as justification for said terribleness is the choice Robertson has made.

Indiana Success Emboldens Gay Rights Advocates In U.S.

BY TOM DAVIES AND ANDREW DEMILLO

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) – Gay rights advocates are hoping to parlay the momentum from their big legislative victories in Indiana and Arkansas this week into further expanding legal protections for gays and lesbians in states around the U.S.

Hundreds of people calling for Indiana to add protections for gays and lesbians to state civil rights laws marched through downtown Indianapolis on Saturday, drawing the attention of fans attending college basketball's Final Four basketball tournament, a major event in American sports. They chanted "No more Band-Aids masking hate," before they walked several blocks to Lucas Oil Stadium, site of the NCAA men's basketball championship semi-final and final games.

Facing widespread pressure, including from big businesses such as Apple and Wal-Mart, Republican lawmakers in Indiana and Arkansas rolled back their states' new religious objections laws, which critics said could be used to discriminate against gays. Amid the uproar, the Republican governors of Michigan and North Dakota urged their own legislatures to extend anti-discrimination protections to gays.

A wave of religious objections laws have been proposed in states across America as same-sex marriage rapidly advanced, prompting a backlash from conservatives.

Court rulings and state legislatures

have legalized same-sex marriage in 37 states and the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to finally issue a decision on the legality of gay marriage this year.

The gay rights movement is also pressing for protections for gays and lesbians in states' non-discrimination laws. Twenty-nine states don't include protections for gays, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. But the Indiana and Arkansas laws, along with, are fueling efforts to change that as the 2016 elections approach.

Most of the states without sexual orientation protections are in the South or the central Plains, which tend to be more conservative. As public opinion has become more supportive of same-sex marriage and other gay rights in recent years, many businesses say such protections factor into their decisions about expansions and help them attract top employees.

Indiana's Republican-controlled Legislature took a first step by adding language to its new religious objections law stating that service providers can't use the law as a legal defense for refusing to provide goods, services, facilities or accommodations based on sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors. It is now the first Indiana state law that explicitly mentions sexual orientation and gender identity.

The governors of New York and Connecticut, who had imposed bans on state officials traveling to Indiana as a symbol of their opposition to the religious objections law, lifted those

bans on Saturday in response to the changes in the law.

Arkansas' amended law only addresses actions by the government, not by businesses or individuals. The law's supporters say the changes would prevent businesses from using it to deny services to individuals, even though it doesn't include specific anti-discrimination language similar to Indiana's law.

Gay rights proponents want Arkansas to go further, though, and are trying to build support for adding sexual orientation to the protected statuses covered by the state's civil rights laws. The state's attorney general, Leslie Rutledge, last week approved the wording of a proposed ballot measure that would add such protections, clearing the way for supporters to begin gathering the signatures needed to get it on the November 2016 ballot.

Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson, meanwhile, has left open the possibility of issuing an executive order that would prohibit workplace discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people at state agencies.

Arkansas state Rep. Warwick Sabin, a Democrat from Little Rock, said the issue isn't going away.

"Other states are moving ahead of us and Arkansas is being left in the dust," he said. "We need to make an affirmative statement about our values as a state, and I know that the vast majority of Arkansans believe in fairness and opportunity for all of its citizens,"

Depressive Symptoms Tied to LGB Identities In Early Adulthood

WASHINGTON D.C. – People whose same-sex attraction surfaced in early adulthood reported more symptoms of depression in a nationwide survey than those whose sexual orientations did not change or changed in the opposite direction, according to a new study by a University of Illinois at Chicago sociologist.

The study, "Sexual Orientation Identity Change and Depressive Symptoms: A Longitudinal Analysis," found that LGB-identified people who initially identified as straight, LGB-identified people who switched to straight and LGB consistent identities were more likely to experience depressive symptoms than their strictly heterosexual counterparts.

The findings suggest that a sexual identity change toward same-sex attraction may continue to be a stressful

life event despite American society's increasing acceptance of LGBT people, said study author Bethany Everett, an assistant professor of sociology at UIC.

"This study highlights the need for social support during periods of sexual identity transition toward same-sex attraction, not just for adolescents, but also for young adults," said Everett. "Supporting people during this time period may be critical for improving their mental health."

Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, also known as Add Health, Everett's study included over 11,200 respondents who were interviewed in both the third (2001-2002) and fourth (2008-2009) waves of the survey about topics including their depressive symptoms. Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 26 in wave three and 25 to

33 in wave four.

Everett said future research should continue to investigate the factors that contribute to the link between sexual identity change and symptoms of depression.

"It may be that changes to bisexual, gay or lesbian identities expose young adults to new sources of LGBT-related discrimination," she said. "Additionally, there is a certain amount of stigma attached to sexual fluidity itself that may impact mental health during this developmental period."

The study was supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development grant R03HD062597, the Office of Research on Women's Health, NICHD grant K12HD055892 and the University of Colorado Population Center grant R24HD066613.

Political Hors D'oeuvres

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Gary Glenn Apologizes For Agenda Alert



State Rep. Gary Glenn, R-Midland, and president of the American Family Association of Michigan, has issued a formal apology to residents of his district for an "agenda alert" he issued two weeks ago. The alert was because the new editor at the

Midland Daily News is – clutch those pearls – gay and married to his partner.

Following his alert, Glenn was subject to national media scrutiny, including from The Advocate. He stuck to his guns though.

Apparently that didn't work to divert attention, so he sent a letter to the Midland Daily News and apologized.

"I apologize for having publicly and unfairly prejudged Tony Lascari's ability to fairly, impartially and professionally serve as news editor of the Midland Daily News," Glenn's letter to the editor reads. The letter was published Easter Sunday. "There is no evidence in your

10 years as an MDN reporter that you have used that position to advance any personal or political agenda."

He also apologized to constituents for the "uproar" that followed and said he "thoughtlessly cut and pasted an article to Facebook..."

He concludes his attempt at a mea culpa with this lovely parting thought.

"Again, Tony, my sincere apology," he wrote. "I wish you, your staff and readers a Happy Easter, especially grateful this weekend in particular to have a Savior who died for and forgives all our transgressions."

Isn't that special?

Bristow, White Nationalist Defender Of 'Traditional Marriage,' Getting Divorce

My how times can change. A year ago, Kyle Bristow and Jason Van Dyke, two white nationalists, filed an amicus brief in the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals demanding the court uphold Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage.

Now, Bristow is suing his wife Ashley Bristow for divorce. He also wants full custody of the couple's 2-year-old daughter.

The action was filed in Oakland Circuit Court in February.

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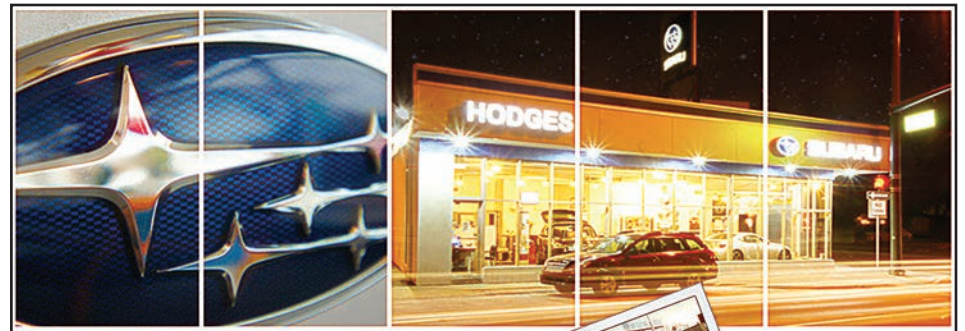
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Photo: Michael Tackett

Scott Eastwood Talks Gay Fans, Sex Scenes & Why He Endorses His Famous Father's Gay Marriage Mantra

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Scott Eastwood has already provided a generous hunk of swoon-worthy shirtlessness, but the model-turned-actor is just getting started. In his first lead role as Luke Collins in the film adaptation of Nicholas Sparks' "The Longest Ride," out April 10, Clint's sexy son makes you feel all the feels as a bull rider pursuing a hard-won girl (and, for good measure, flashing his now-famous abs).

During our recent interview, the 29-year-old talked about winning over the gay world as a full-time stud, identifying with his father's Libertarian beliefs on LGBT equality, his Martin Luther King man crush, and keeping his thoughts

(and other stuff) in check during sex scenes.

Scott, you were obviously blessed with good genes, and people have taken note of that, many of them in the gay community. At this point in your career, how aware are you that gay men enjoy you?

Now I am – you're bringing it to my attention! I love it. I don't discriminate against any fans. Fans are fans, and gay men are great. I support gay marriage and the whole bit. I think everybody should be able to be with who they want to be with. My dad is the same way. He's a total Libertarian – everyone leave everyone alone. Everyone live their own private life. And why does everyone gotta be all up in arms about it?

Your dad put it best when he spoke about gay marriage: "I don't give a fuck about who wants to get married to anybody else! Why not?!"

I'd give the same fucking quote – that's perfect. I'm a firm believer that everyone's human. We're only on this planet for a short period of time, and we should all just be as kind as we can to other people because, in life, all you really have is how you affect people, in a negative way or a positive way.

How did you learn to embrace that mentality?

My mom – and my dad too – was really a firm believer (of it), and really compassionate and selfless. She's such a firm believer that in life you gotta be compassionate. Everyone's

from different walks of life and everyone has their own reality, and to be uncompassionate is not very human.

You were a model for so long –

I wasn't really a model for that long. People say that, but they don't really know. I mean, I did a couple of modeling jobs, but I never really pursued that. I was like, "Oh well, that's not really for me. I'm gonna do something different."

Why wasn't modeling for you?

I didn't find it creative enough. It was cool, though. It paid some bills when I was in college as a struggling, broke actor.

Your body, however, is breaking barriers. I read a web comment recently that said, "Even I, as a Gold Star lesbian, look at this guy and state categorically, 'A-hummina-hummina-hummina.'" What's it like to know you can have that effect on even the lesbian community?

(Laughs) That's awesome! I mean, I don't really know what I've done that's worthy of it.

You've taken your shirt off a few times, so there's that.

(Laughs) Yup!

The hat, the Levis, the boots. You rock that look like you were born a cowboy.

There's probably a little bit of cowboy in me somewhere.

When it comes to gay roles, could you see yourself playing one? Is it too soon to get you in a "Brokeback Mountain" remake?

Oh my gosh – that's funny! (Laughs) To me, it's all about the script and the director. I'm very director-driven and material-oriented, so if it's a great script and a great director, then yeah.

What do you look for in a great script and a great director?

Ohh. That's hard to put into effect. It's gotta have that *je ne sais quoi*, as they say. You don't know why it's amazing but it is.

What about this Nicholas Sparks movie stuck out to you when you read the script?

Well, for one, I love (director) George Tillman, Jr. – his films are great. I loved "Men of Honor." I thought it was a fantastic movie. I thought that movie was an old '90s drama, which don't exist anymore. I was really so excited to work with him. I thought it was a very unorthodox choice to have him direct a Nicholas Sparks movie. And then geez – what else? The script was great.

The name of the movie, "The Longest Ride," really lends itself to a porn spinoff down the line, don't you think?

That would be amazing. That'd be so funny if that happened. And why not?!

Your sex scene in this movie wasn't your first.

I've had a few. I've had about four or five.

What's the trick to shooting a sexy sex scene?

Keeping your thoughts sort of... controlled.

In addition to keeping other things "controlled."

(Laughs) I'm only one man! I can only do what I can do. But I think it's sexy. I mean, being in a shower with a beautiful, sexy woman – I was turned on! I had fun!

In "The Longest Ride" or during every sex scene you've done?

(Laughs) Some more than others.

You've shown full butt before, and in "The Longest Ride," you graciously give us a glimpse.

With this movie, how was it determined how much butt would be in the shot?

(Laughs) For me, I didn't really care. The butt thing – to me, this was a really classy story and a really classy movie, so I didn't care about showing a little butt in there. That's part of it. Sex scenes – you see a little bit of action, right? And that's what makes a good sex scene. Not too much. You don't wanna give it all away. You gotta leave something to the imagination.

Has your father seen the movie?

He hasn't.

How do you feel about him seeing those scenes?

I'm really proud of the film, and I hope he enjoys it. It's not all the time you do a film you're really proud of.

When you're in a movie about love and relationships and sex, people are interested in your own personal experiences.

(Laughs)

How do you deal with those kinds of questions? Are you an open book?

Partially. I don't give everything away. You gotta have your private life too. But I'm not shy. I love women.

Well, then, barn sex – yay or nay?

I mean, why not?!

On Twitter recently you said your man crush is your dad. Who are some of your other man crushes?

People who have the balls to change the world. Guys like Martin Luther King, who said things at a time when they weren't acceptable. People who are out doing great things. Guys like Enric Sala who are saving the world. The Pristine Seas project. People who are working toward curing cancer, or working with kids – that's really great stuff to me.

What are or have been some of the challenges of creating a career independent of your father?

That people take me seriously. I've been doing it for 12 years, and I always say Hollywood is like high school. If you're not the cool kid, you're the outcast. And nobody really cares and people don't take you seriously. I was never the cool kid. Definitely not the cool kid. And so I split. I split LA. I lived in San Diego. And there's been a couple of moments I thought about throwing in the towel, for sure. I once heard from Mel Gibson. His advice was, "Just stick around and keep plugging away at it. Keep your head down and keep working hard."

With so much attention on your shirtlessness, is there more pressure to prove yourself beyond the hunky exterior?

I don't really think about it like that. I don't spend a lot of time on it. There'd be a lot of wasted time if I let that consume my thoughts. I just keep my head down and do the best I can.



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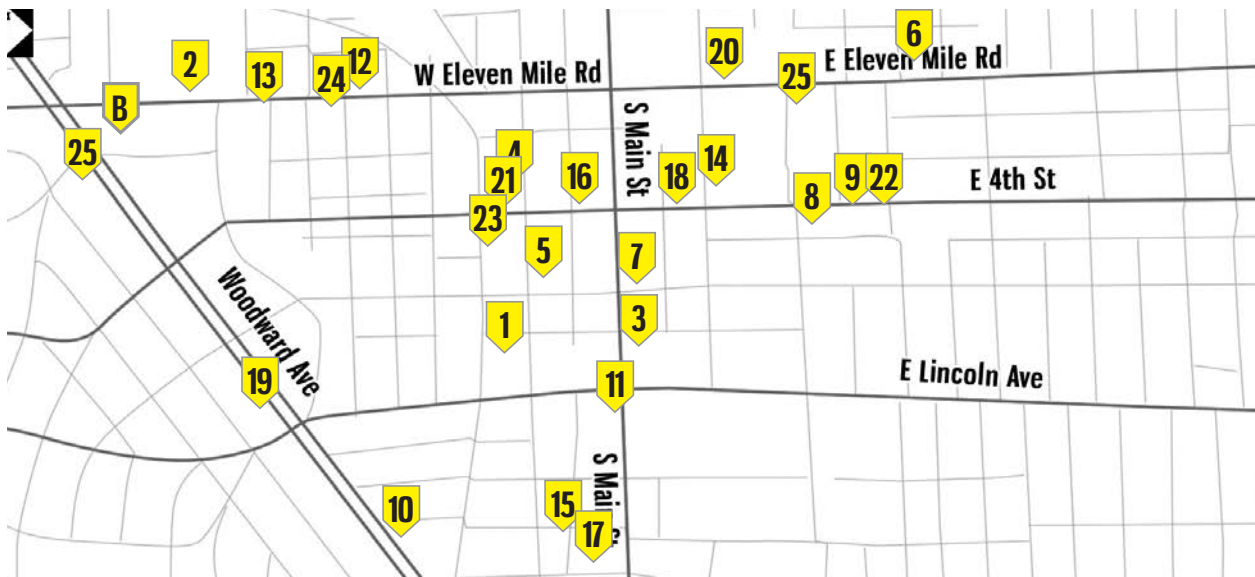
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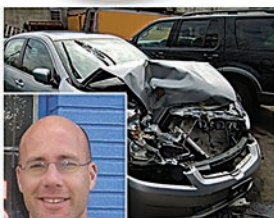
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ROYAL OAK – Set to a thrilling pop-rock score, Pulitzer Prize-winning “Next to Normal” offers an intimate portrait of a family dealing with bipolar disorder that is at once devastating, honest, heartbreaking – and unexpectedly humorous. The musical runs April 17 through May 3 on the 2nd Stage at the Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, in downtown Royal Oak.

According to director Stephanie Samuel-Lucas of Windsor, “Next to Normal” expertly fuses challenging subject matter with moments of levity. While the show deals with the difficult condition of mental illness and its effects, it has a texture that makes it interesting.

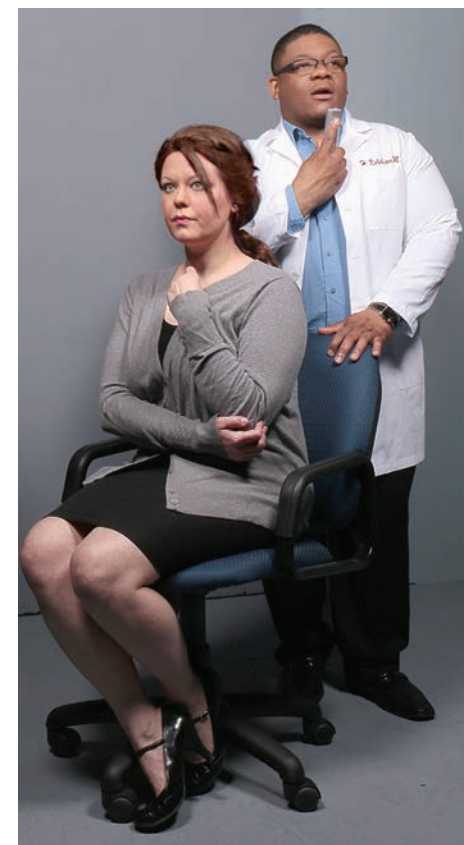
“It is so raw, and the audience feels that,” she says. “However, there are many moments that you find yourself chuckling. Brian Yorkey, who wrote the book and lyrics for this show, uses such craftsmanship in breaking tensions. The subject matters are all things that ‘normal’ people don’t address. There is no passive-aggressive behavior here.”

Diana (Sandria Haney of Southfield), ostensibly an everyday suburban wife and mother, is actually on an emotional roller-coaster ride as she battles the effects of her bipolar disorder, a condition that pulls sufferers between moments of depression and mania. Meanwhile, her embattled teenage daughter, Natalie (Allison Megroet of Berkley), frustrated from years of her mother’s episodes and living in the shadow of her brother, Gabe (Bill Brunner of Royal Oak), finds comfort in a budding relationship with a classmate, Henry (Jeff LaMothe of Oak Park). With her patient and stalwart husband, Dan (Matt Scharlau of Bloomfield Hills), at her side, Diana enters a labyrinth of treatments at the hands of her “rock star” psychiatrist, Dr. Madden (Michael Adams of Eastpointe). Ultimately Diana’s journey leads back to the one painful moment that altered her life forever.

With such a small, intimate show, the cast is critically important. “When you have a cast this small in numbers, there is no room for error – every bit has to be perfect,” says Samuel-Lucas. “When we heard each of the six actors at auditions, we knew we had a great cast. I am proud to say they are hitting it night after night – even just in rehearsal. I get goose bumps just thinking about what each one brings to their character,” she says.

Samuel-Lucas believes in 2015 many people feel more comfortable facing taboo topics. “It would be cool to know the audience leaves the theater thinking about the issues. I know people will be moved – if they let themselves be vulnerable to it. With this cast, it’s inevitable,” she says.

“Next to Normal,” book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey and music by Tom Kitt, opened April 15, 2009 at Broadway’s Booth Theatre and ran



for more than 700 performances before closing Jan. 16, 2011. It won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and received eleven 2009 Tony Award nominations including Best Musical and won three for Score, Actress and Orchestrations.

The final dress rehearsal, Wednesday, April 15, is open to the public as a “pay what you can” (PWYC) night. The admission price is at the discretion of the patron. There are no advance sales and doors open at 7 p.m. and close at 8 p.m. (no late seating). Patrons are encouraged to pay cash; credit/debit cards require a \$5 minimum. This is a general seating event and first come, first served with no refunds/exchanges. PWYC night is made possible by the generous support of Vibe Credit Union.

The show runs approximately two hours and 20 minutes, including one intermission. “Next to Normal” is rated PG-13.

Advance tickets for performances are \$18. Tickets may be purchased online at www.stagecrafters.org (online handling fees apply) or by phone at 248-541-6430 using Visa or MasterCard. All seats are reserved. If shows have not sold out, tickets can be purchased at the box office one hour prior to the performance for an additional \$2 per ticket. Students are encouraged to attend Half-Price Student Night on April 23. RUSH tickets may be available for at-the-door purchase for Friday performances. “Next to Normal” is sponsored by Vibe Credit Union.

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Puzzle solution on pg. 30

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Editor's Pick



Angie Martell. Photo: Andrew Potter

Jim Toy Community Center will sponsor an event together with the Washtenaw County Bar Association LGBTQ Rights Section and Michigan Law's Outlaws. The panel discussion, "The Road Forward: A Community Conversation On LGBTQ Rights in Michigan," will feature Jay Kaplan (ACLU Michigan), Lisa Ruby (Michigan Poverty Law Program) and Angie Martell and S. Kerene Moore (Co-chairs of WCBA LGBTQ Rights Section).

The community conversation will involve these local professionals weighing in on the national marriage equality decision in

June, as well as answering the questions, "How will the decision impact LGBTQ families in Michigan, and what legal resources will be available to the community?"

The event will run from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15 at the University of Michigan Law School, South Hall Room 1225, 625 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, April 9

Re-imaging Gender 15 promising artists take on one of the thorniest challenges facing contemporary art: how to render the modern spectrum of gender, going beyond the simple male/female binary to include a wide variety of identities and sexualities. University of Michigan, Inst. for Research on Women and Gender, 204 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 734-764-9537. schwarde@umich.edu umich.edu/lrwg_research.umich.edu/events/exhibitions.html

Free HIV Testing 2:30 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

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

Saturday, April 11

Enchanted Spring Bash 2015 Tickets: \$175-500. Affirmations, Detroit. Goaffirmations.org

Nerd-A-Game-Day 10 a.m. In honor of International Tabletop Day & Free Comic Book Day. Nerdageddon, 117 E. Grand River Ave., Brighton. Nerdageddon.com

Own Your Gender 7 p.m. The Network, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. 616-458-3511. Grlgbt.org

Mitten MAVens vs Grand Raggidy Attack 7:30 p.m. The Mitten MAVens will be taking on Grand Rapids B team the Grand Raggidy Attack in April, this is not a bout to miss! This will be the first time the two teams are taking each other on. Tickets: \$10-12. Lansing Capital Roller Derby, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. Mittenmavens.net

Sunday, April 12

Bookclub in April 2 p.m. Discussing "The Red Tent" by Anita Diamant Lansing Lesbians - L2L, 2820 Towne Centre Blvd., Lansing Charter Township. Meetup.com/Lansing-Lesbians-L2L

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

Monday, April 13

Substance Abuse Weekly Therapy Group 6 p.m. The Center for Relationship and Sexual Health, 25600 Woodward Ave., Ste. 215, Royal Oak. 248-399-7447. officemgr@crsh.com

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, April 14

5th Annual Spring Breakfast 7:30 a.m. In recognition of Sexual Assault AWAREness Month. AWARE, Inc., 209 E. Washington, Jackson.

LGBTQ+ Support Group 4 p.m. For teens age 14-18. Call number for location. True Teen Group, East Lansing. 725-222-TRUE. truelgbtq@gmail.com

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

Wednesday, April 15

Trans & Gender Queer Group 12:30 p.m. Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. 734-487-4149. Emich.edu/lgbtrc

Sistrum Weekly Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, 215 N. Capital Ave., Lansing. Sistrum.org

Thursday, April 16

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

Friday, April 17

Bisexual Peer Group 4 p.m. Our group meets monthly on the third Friday & discussion relates to bisexual identity. Building is handicap accessible using ramp to rear entrance. Bisexual Peer Group, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. Biprideannarbor@gmail.com Facebook.com/groups/110918256984/

Whoopi Goldberg 8 p.m. Tickets: \$48-78. Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 800-745-3000. Motorcitycasino.com

Saturday, April 18

Ira Glass Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 800-WHARTON. Whartoncenter.com

LGBTQ Health & Wellness Fair for the LGBT Community 1 p.m. Includes free healthy snacks, raffle prizes and more. Affirmations' Health & Wellness Program, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Alcohol Abuse Weekly Therapy Group 2 p.m. The Center for Relationship and Sexual Health, 25600 Woodward Ave., Ste. 215, Royal Oak. 248-399-7447. officemgr@crsh.com

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

MUSIC & MORE

Italian Film Festival "Italian Film Festival" All films are free and open to the public. Various, Various. April 2 - April 26. Italianfilmfestivals.org

Midtown Detroit Inc. "Art X Detroit". Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 9 - April 26. 313-832-6622. Artxdetroit.com

Comedy

Pound Pals of Taylor and Pound Pals Downriver "Comedy for Paws" Raising money for the sick and injured animals at Taylor Animal Shelter and Downriver Central Animal Control. Tickets: \$20. Portofino Restaurant and Banquet Facility, 3455 Biddle Ave., Wyandotte.

8:30 p.m. April 10. Paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=BD84VN7MLWLC2

Concerts

Michigan Theater "Noir Film Series". Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 12 - April 27. 734-668-8397. Michtheater.org

Static Network "The Luckouts-Bronze Mambas-Boy Royal-Saturnine Hello" Four great bands for your entertainment pleasure! Paychecks Lounge, 2932 Caniff, Hamtramck. 9 p.m. April 11. 313-874-0909. Paycheckslounge.com

The Ark "Hot Club of Cowtown" Tickets: \$25. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 15. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Gangstagrass" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 13. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Neil Woodward" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. April 12. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Robert Earl Keen" Tickets: \$45. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 9. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Luke Wade" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 10. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Liz Longley" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. April 11. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "Charlie Hunter Trio" Tickets: \$20. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 12. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Magic Bag "Kitty, Daisy & Lewis" Tickets: \$15+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 10. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

Unlimited Sky Production "Wednesday Night Jazz & Soul Music Series" Every Wednesday Night Jazz & Soul Music Series featuring some of the best live music in Michigan Cover: \$5. Harbor House, 440 Clinton, Detroit. Jan. 21 - June 24. 3139679900. Harborhousemi.com

Dance

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts "The StepCrew" Tickets: \$43-49. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 3 p.m. April 12. 586-286-2222. Macombcenter.com

Wharton Center "Aspen Santa Fe Ballet". Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. April 16. 800-WHARTON. Whartoncenter.com

Other

Hidden Promise "Exploring the Healing Energy of the Horse" Based on the Confidence Through Connection Clinics at Hidden Promise, this program will take one step further in exploring the energetic effects that horses' huge heart centers have on humans and vice versa. You will focus on how to feel or connect with the horse without touch. Discover how to feel the energy of the horse. Know when and how your energy affects another being and how this feedback allows you to make instant positive change to take into daily life. Powerfully connect with a horse energetically to experience expanded consciousness and awareness. All of this will boost your feelings of harmony and confidence while giving you more awareness to the energy in your life. Tickets: \$175. Hidden Promise, Allen Road, Fenton. 10 a.m. April 12. 248-302-5998. Confidencethroughconnection.com

The Oakland Center "Michigan Pinball

Expo". Oakland University, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. April 9 - April 12. 248-370-2030. Oakland.edu

Trinity Divine Healing "Health & Wellness Classes" Cost: \$5-10. Grace is Sufficient Ministries Neighborhood Center, 13345 Joy Road, Detroit. Jan. 12 - May 30. 313-451-2472.

Unit Circle Ltd. "World Space Party Detroit" Free! All ages! Michigan Science Center, 5020 John R. Street, Detroit. 8 p.m. April 11. 313-577-8400. Dland.tv

Shows

The Ark "The Verve Pipe Kids' Show" Tickets: \$12.50. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 11 a.m. April 11. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "Risk! Podcast Live" Tickets: \$12+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 8 p.m. April 9. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

THEATER

QED Tickets: \$13-15. Barefoot Productions, Barefoot Productions Theatre, 240 N. Main St., Plymouth. April 10 - April 12. 734-560-1493. Justgobarefoot.com

College/ University Theater

Global Get Down Lansing Community College Performing Arts Department, Dart Auditorium, 500 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. April 10 - April 12.

Professional

America's Got Downton Impressionist and YouTube sensation Luke Kempner creates more than 30 characters in this tour-de-force one-man parody that blends celebrity visitors with well-known characters from the PBS hit television series "Downton Abbey." Tickets: 43. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 12 - April 12. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Chuggington Live! The Great Rescue Adventure A fun, two act musical, this live show is presented before a giant LED video wall featuring animated locations and background action sequences from the popular TV series. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$20. 50-58. 50. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. April 12 - April 12. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood: Two Man Group Using their quick wit, Colin and Brad take contributions from the audience to create hilarious and original scenes... just like a live version of "Whose Line Is It Anyway!" CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$29-49. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 8 p.m. April 11. 810-237-8689. thewhiting.com

Crane Maiden Based on the ancient Japanese folktale of a poor but honest young man who saves the life of a wounded crane, the crane turns out to be a young beautiful woman with whom he falls in love. Tickets: \$5-10. PuppetART, Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Through April 16. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

God of Carnage Who's being childish? The two 11-year-old boys from a private elite elementary school who duke it out on the playground, or their parents who go at it over coffee, rum and clafouti? CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$18-20 in advance; \$2 additional at the door. Two Muses Theatre, Barnes & Noble, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. April 10 - April 26. 248-850-9919. twomusetheatre.org

Improv Mondays At 8 p.m. the show kicks off with a guest improv troupe, followed by a performance by Planet Ant's resident Home Team. The night closes with The Ant Jam, an opportunity for anyone to improvise on the Planet Ant stage. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$5 at the door. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through June 29. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Julius Caesar Marcus Brutus, a Roman senator, is torn between his friendship with Caesar and his loyalty to Rome. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$7-14. Dog Story Theatre, Dog Story Theatre, 7 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids. Through April 12. 616-425-9234. pcshakespeare.com

King Lear The Shakespeare classic is Sid's first to be performed in a traditional proscenium-style venue. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$20-25. Shakespeare in Detroit, Marygrove College Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit. April 9 - April 19. shakespeareindetroit.com

Luca Tickets: \$26-41. Meadow Brook Theatre, Oakland University, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through April 12. 248-370-2030. Ticketmaster.com

Mary Poppins An enchanting, heartwarming show with an important message about love and cherishing what really matters. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$26. Riverbank Theatre, 358 S Water St., Marine City. April 10 - April 26. 810-278-1749. riverbanktheatre.com

On Golden Pond A heartwarming story about revisiting the past and forging new bonds across generations. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$30-32. The Encore Musical Theatre Company, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. April 9 - May 3. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

See You Next Doomsday A man finds himself stranded on a nightmarish future Earth, where he must fend off cannibals, racist robots and bloodthirsty mermen in order to escape a dying planet aboard the spaceship of a friendly alien named Richard Gere. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$10-20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. April 10 - May 2. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Sirens Tickets: \$10-35. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Through April 26. 517-655-SHOW. Williamstontheatre.com

Stories of Reintegration The story of soldiers returning home only to struggle with reintegrating into the lives of their families and communities. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$10. Young Fenix Physical Theatre, St. John's UCC, 2120 Russell St., Third Floor, Detroit. 7 p.m. April 10. yfxphysicaltheatre.org

Sugarhill On a hot muggy night as we sit on the precipice of a new era, a stranger comes to Sugarhill, Louisiana setting off unimagined ripples that both fulfill a child's wish and test a family's love and strength. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company, Aaron DeRoy Theatre on the campus of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. April 15 - May 10. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

Talley's Folly Lanford Wilson's romantic comedy about a pair of mismatched souls longing to find love after nearly giving up on the dream. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$12-42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through May 23. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

See Happenings, page 28

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Editor's Pick

Ferndale's Ringwald Theatre presents the critically-acclaimed "Tender Napalm" this month. In 2011, the theater produced Philip Ridley's disturbing, unshakeable, unlike anything ever seen "Mercury Fur" to great acclaim. Now, four years later, comes his Michigan premiere of "Tender Napalm."

The play is a high-impact exploration of the relationship between two people and the violent world that surrounds them – and the place where these things meet. Explosive, poetic and brutal, the play

weaves a compelling tapestry to re-examine and re-define the language of love and how that love struggles to survive in the face of catastrophe.

"Tender Napalm" opens Saturday, April 11, and plays through Monday, May 4 at 8 p.m. on Saturday and Monday nights with 3 p.m. Sunday matinees. Tickets for the show range from \$10-20.

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Editor's Pick



Head to Lansing this weekend for some good ol' fashioned roller derby! The Mitten Mavens will face the Grand Raggidy Attack, the Grand Rapids B team, this Saturday. This will be the first time the two teams face each other. Tickets for the derby match are \$10-12. Children 12 and under are free.

Established in 2010, the Lansing Mitten Mavens Roller Derby League is a non-profit, skater-run, flat-track roller derby league based in Lansing, Michigan. The Mitten Mavens consists of a diverse group

of women and men that form a unique opportunity to participate in an amazing sport, give back to the Lansing community and learn relentless leadership skills.

The Mitten Mavens vs. Grand Raggidy Attack event will begin at 7:30 p.m. on April 11. The match will be held at Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. For more information, visit www.mittenmavens.net.

▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 27

Tender Napalm A high-impact exploration of the relationship between two people and the violent world that surrounds them - and the place where these things meet. Tickets: \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 11 - May 4. 248-545-5545. theringwald.com

The 39 Steps This hilarious spoof of the 1935 Hitchcock thriller blends frenzied performances and wildly inventive stagecraft with spies, murder and some good old-fashioned romance! CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$10-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. April 10 - April 25. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

The Glass Menagerie Moving and powerful, tragic and poetic, come celebrate one of theater's greatest achievements, courtesy of iconic playwright Tennessee Williams. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$29-31. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. April 10 - April 26. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

The Kiss of the Sun For Pardon Tickets: \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through May 17. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

The Merchant of Venice Shakespeare's classic play tells the story of a wealthy Christian merchant who mistakenly makes a deadly bond with his enemy, a Jewish money lender with nothing and everything to lose. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$10. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through April 30. 2483270575. slipstreamti.com

The Merry Widow A wealthy widow's wealth, if she decides to remarry, will be transferred to her next husband. So her countrymen aim to keep her money in the country by meddling to find her the right local suitor. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$25-128. Michigan Opera Theatre, Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. April 11 - April 19. 313-237-7464. michiganopera.org

The Outgoing Tide Retired from his trucking business and now living in their summer home on the Chesapeake Bay

with his wife of 50 years, a man has come up with an unorthodox plan to secure his family's future. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$27-32. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. April 9 - May 3. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

The Phantom of the Opera A masked figure lurks beneath the catacombs of the Paris Opera House, exercising a reign of terror over all who inhabit it. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: From \$32. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Through April 12. 800-WHARTON. whartoncenter.com

Violet As a girl, Violet was in an accident, leaving her with a visible scar across her face. With enough money finally saved, she's traveling across the 1964 Deep South towards a miracle - the healing touch of a TV evangelist that will make her beautiful. CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$35-41 (includes meal). The Dio - Dining and Entertainment, 135 E. Main St., Pinckney. Through May 17. 517-672-6009. diotheatre.com

Yakety Yak -- A Fifties Tale Join us as Robert and Ray, two elderly men in their 80s, decide to buy a diner and use it as a class reunion dance. When the guys turn on the jukebox, they are transported back to the '50s and get a chance to relive the fun again. Remember: "Yakety Yak, don't talk back!" CLICK HERE for complete show information. Tickets: \$39-43. 50 (includes dinner). Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd., Marshall. Through May 2. 269-781-4293. turkeyville.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Detroit Artists Market (DAM) "2015 DAM Annual Scholarship Awards & Exhibition - College for Creative Studies". Detroit Artists Market, 4719 Woodward Ave., Detroit. March 1 - April 11. 313-832-8540. detroitartistsmarket.org

DIA "Photographs from the Detroit Walk-In Portrait Studio by Corne Vermeulen". Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 1 - May 17. 313-833-7900. dia.org

DIA "Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral" A rare opportunity to see three exquisite marble carvings and other Italian Renaissance masterpieces by sculptor Luca della Robbia. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 6 - May 17. 313-833-7900. dia.org

DIA "Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Detroit" Tickets: \$24. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. March 15 - May 31. 313-833-7900. dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Common Ground: African American Art Exhibition". Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Feb. 8 - April 26. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org

MOCAD "Radical Scavengers: the MOCAD Quilting Bee Project" This winter the Mobile Homestead space transforms into a contemporary quilt making workshop for the community. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 25 - May 24. 313-832-6622. moca-detroit.org

The Scarab Club "Lowriding: From Crenshaw to Woodward". The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. April 1 - May 16. 313-831-1250. scarabclub.org

UMMA "Hana Hamplova: Meditations on Paper". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 21 - Aug. 9. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

UMMA "HE: The Hergott Shepard Photography Collection". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 14 - June 14. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

UMMA "Medicinal Plants and Gardens: The Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 25 - May 3. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

UMMA "Guido van der Werve: Nummer veertien, home". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 1 - April 26. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

UMMA "Flip Your Field: Objects from the Collection" An exhibition from the Museum's collection of three-dimensional objects. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 24 - July 19. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan, Inst. for Research on Women and Gender "Re-imagining Gender" 15 promising artists take on one of the thorniest challenges facing contemporary art: how to render the modern spectrum of gender, going beyond the simple male/female binary to include a wide variety of identities and sexualities. Lane Hall, 204 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 15 - June 26. 734-764-9537. inwg.research.umich.edu/events/exhibitions.html

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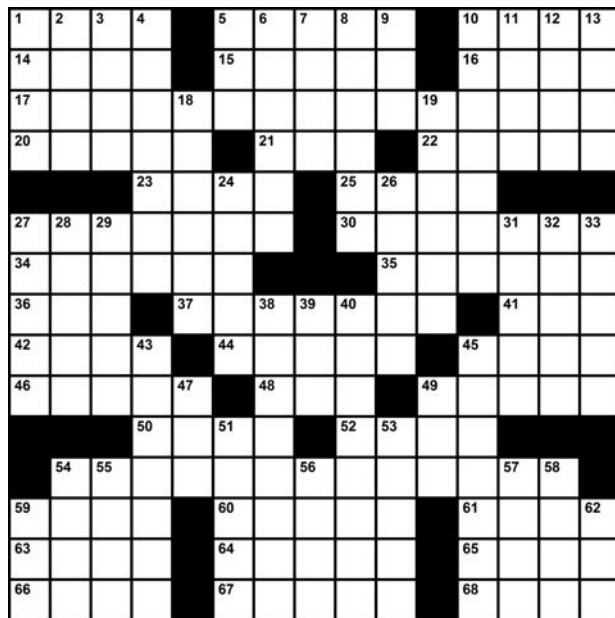
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Q Puzzle

Homophobia Is For Nincompoofs!



Across

- 1 Lorca's stick
- 5 Bandleader Shaw
- 10 Like a stereotypical wrist
- 14 Wife of Buck's Wang
- 15 Quick raid
- 16 Canal of New York ferries

- 17 With 34-Across, "a sort-of survival guide" by Leighton-Dore
- 20 Reeves of "My Own Private Idaho"
- 21 Bear with a small package
- 22 Where to find a date in a hot place
- 23 "Beatie Bailey" dog

Down

- 1 11th U.S. president
- 2 Soothing agent for skin
- 3 Composition of some beds
- 4 Monotonous
- 5 It's south of Eur.
- 6 A gangster shoots it off

- 25 Revolting
- 27 Delinquent
- 30 Flockhart of "The Birdcage"
- 34 See 17-Across
- 35 Author Leighton-Dore
- 36 Islands instrument
- 37 Brings indignity to
- 41 Gift of Ellen DeGeneres
- 42 Abound (with)
- 44 Screwed up
- 45 Edna, for one
- 46 Like an active partner
- 48 Lubricant
- 49 Language of Leif
- 50 Poet ___ Wu
- 52 Cold feet
- 54 Leighton-Dore's kiddie lit book about coming out
- 59 Strip a fruit
- 60 Rub it in
- 61 Sound of being banged?
- 63 Tutti-frutti ingredient
- 64 "Wonder Woman" star Carter
- 65 Put in a position
- 66 Cleans the floor
- 67 Day one
- 68 Go up and down
- 7 Long pants, for short
- 8 Like Shakespeare's feet
- 9 Optimist's place for a cock?
- 10 Toast of the cut
- 11 Bisexual writer Murdoch
- 12 Skimpy skirt
- 13 Sheehan's tees, e.g.
- 18 Went one one better
- 19 Stein's Alice
- 24 Eliza Doolittle, for one
- 26 Checked out the joint
- 27 "Breakfast on ___"
- 28 Clay of "American Idol" fame
- 29 Shooting type
- 31 Type of daddy
- 32 Lions and Tigers and Bears
- 33 "A Delicate Balance" author
- 38 Area of the Audre Lorde Project
- 39 Paul Newman role in "Exodus"
- 40 Successful on one's own
- 43 Heather's parents, in kiddie lit
- 45 Oz visitor
- 47 Letter before omega
- 49 Beauty sleep
- 51 "West Side Story" Jet, e.g.
- 53 Annoy during a blow job?
- 54 "Otello" villain
- 55 Bend in a sink pipe
- 56 Charged particles
- 57 John Goodman's "Normal, ___"
- 58 Intense rage
- 59 Cager Parsons
- 62 To God, in Latin

Solution on pg. 26



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Classifieds

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