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Senior Fundraiser Features Chenille Sisters



The
EMBOLDENED
Girls
*A Candid Conversation
With Jane Fonda & Lily Tomlin*

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MAY 14, 2015 | VOL. 2320 | FREE

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**FORMER
SMOKER**

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HIV did.**

Brian, age 45, California

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COVER

14 The Emboldened Girls
Photo: Melissa Moseley / Netflix



“ As someone born both black and gay, I can say that I am not ashamed of being either, and that neither was a choice. When a group of people are denied fundamental human rights for any reason, it is very much an issue of civil rights.

– Darrius D. Hilmon, Affirmations'
Executive Director, pg. 4

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NEWS

- 4 Anti-gay billboard ad up on telegraph
- 5 Your guide to Ferndale Pride 2015
- 6 Chrysler Fiat to sponsor MCP
- 11 Michigan House considering bill to reverse local human rights ordinances
- 11 Upcoming interfaith marriage discussion
- 13 Senior fundraiser features Chenille Sisters

OPINION

- 8 Parting Glances
- 8 Transmissions
- 10 Creep of the Week

LIFE

- 16 Screen Queen
- 20 Happenings
- 26 Puzzle

PRIDE SOURCE MAGAZINE



Coming June 1, The New Pride Source Magazine

This June, pick up your copy of the new Pride Source Magazine, filled with full-length feature stories, hundreds of LGBT-friendly business listings, an annual calendar of the community's greatest events and much more – available at BTL distribution sites and passed out at this year's Motor City Pride!

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Donate To LGBT Organizations On Give Out Day

Give OUT Day is an annual, 24-hour online fundraising competition that unites the LGBT community nationally to raise funds to support the diverse array of LGBT nonprofits including community centers, arts groups, organizers, clinics, student clubs and sports leagues.

This year will be the third annual Give OUT Day. Thousands of people from across the country come together to donate a grand total of \$1,016,623 last year hundreds of dollars to their favorite local organizations. In addition \$80 thousand in prize funds were handed out last year, engaging the most individual donors across a national and nine local and regional leaderboards.

National Give OUT Day was launched in 2013 and has raised over \$1.6 million for over 500 LGBT organizations from all 50 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. The last day to participate in Give OUT Day and support LGBT organizations across Detroit in their fundraising mission is midnight on May 21.

Some local nonprofits who are eligible to participate in Give OUT Day celebrations include: the Ruth Ellis Center, the Kalamazoo Gay-Lesbian Resource Center (KGLRC), Elsie Publishing Institute, LGBT Detroit (formerly known as KICK), AFF and more.

Make a donation now at www.giveoutday.org.

FERNDALE

Wear Rainbow For Affirmations Pride Prom

In honor of Ferndale Pride, the Carl Ripberger Youth Empowerment Program at Affirmations invites youth ages 13-20 to be young, fearless and fabulous at the Youth Prom beginning at 7 p.m. on May 30.

Held as an afterglow event to the first pride event in the state, Pride Prom will feature food, raffle prizes, a photo booth, music by DJ Tone and plenty of dancing. Attendees will have the opportunity to run for king, queen or ace of the 2015 gender neutral prom court.

Admission is free and youth are encouraged to show off their Pride spirit and wear every color of the rainbow. Attendees are welcome to wear tuxedos or ball gowns. However, formal dress is not required. Youth are invited to come as they are.

“Our gender neutral prom court allows youth to explore gender identity and expression in ways they may not be allowed to in other spaces,” said Victor Walker, Affirmations program coordinator. “We encourage youth to be their authentic selves at all of our events, and want them to feel safe and affirmed.”

This year will be the first time the Pride Prom is hosted on the same day as Ferndale Pride with the goal of offering youth an opportunity to network, engage in social interaction and have fun with other youth with similar interests.

“Prom is about accessibility, not only related to sexual orientation or socio-economic status, but in terms of authenticity. Someone may be their authentic selves in a pair of jeans, flip-flops and a tank top,” said Lilianna Reyes, Affirmations program coordinator. “Prom this year will be an amazing event where youth can network and be their authentic selves.”

For more information about Youth Prom, visit www.GoAffirmations.org/lgbtyouthprom or contact Youth Program coordinators Lilianna Reyes via email at LReyes@GoAffirmations.org, Victor Walker via email at VWalker@GoAffirmations.org or by phone at 248-398-7105.



A national coalition of anti-gay marriage opponents has purchased billboards in the state. The first one appeared last week on Telegraph Road in Dearborn and others have been seen or are expected soon in Flint, Lansing and the Grand Rapids area. RestrainTheJudges.com is targeting the U.S. Supreme Court as they deliberate marriage equality. A GoFundMe campaign titled “Stand Up Against RestrainTheJudges” has been launched to raise money to produce a pro-LGBT billboard. BTL photo: AJ Trager

Anti-Gay Billboard Ad Up On Telegraph

BY AJ TRAGER

DEARBORN HEIGHTS – A coalition of anti-LGBT organizations has launched a controversial advertising campaign that is hitting a little too close to home for LGBT and allied metro Detroiters.

On the east side of Telegraph between Warren and Ford Road is a billboard, sponsored by RestrainTheJudges.com, that reads, “Homosexuality is a choice. Not a civil right,” and lists two Bible verses: Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5. Three anti-LGBT images circulate on the electronic billboard along with three PHR Laser Hair Removal ads and an advertisement for a local law office.

“As someone born both black and gay, I can say that I am not ashamed of being either, and that neither was a choice,” stated Affirmations’ Executive Director, Darrious D. Hilmon. “When a group of people are denied fundamental human rights for any reason, it is very much an issue of civil rights.”

While none of these organizations are located in Michigan, they were recently seen on the Lansing capitol steps, where 16 people participated in an anti-gay rally. Later that day a pro-LGBT rally took place on the eve before the U.S. Supreme Court heard

arguments over the constitutionality of marriage equality bans. A banner identical to the ad over Telegraph was present.

Anti-LGBT groups have been popping up across the country in response to sweeping support for LGBT Americans. According to the Williams Institute in California, support for marriage equality has grown immensely in all 50 states since 2004, especially in states that have legalized same-sex marriage. Recent polling from the Institute finds that a majority of Americans, 63 percent, support marriage equality and the equal rights for all Americans.

“To have open and honest dialogue, it is important to get the facts right. The fact is that a majority of Michiganders support marriage equality. The fact is that people are not choosing to be LGBTQ. The fact is that LGBTQ families in Michigan should have the freedom to marry who they love. Equality Michigan is confident the Supreme Court will recognize these facts and continue to stand by their position that marriage is a fundamental right that provides stability and emotional support to loving and committed couples,” said Sommer Foster, director of political advocacy at Equality Michigan.

Fighting Back

In response to the billboard, local man Ferman Smith has launched a GoFundMe campaign titled “Stand Up Against RestrainTheJudges.” In less than a week the campaign had gathered nearly \$7,500 towards purchasing space on the same billboard to “show everyone that we (LGBT) are all equal and are not separable due to our ethnicity or sexual orientation, but that we are all human and seek equal treatment for everyone in our land,” Smith wrote on the campaign page. Supporters are using #thiswontstand on Facebook and Twitter. You can check out the GoFundMe at <http://www.gofundme.com/thiswontstand>.

Ferman, a college student and Uber driver, saw the billboard May 6 when he was driving to Southfield. Amidst thick traffic he took a photo and uploaded it to Facebook. When he woke up in the morning, the image had been shared by over 2,000 people and he was getting contacted by multiple media sources. By the next day, the post was being shared across the country and into Australia.

The owner of Giesken Outdoor Advertising was forced to turn off

See Billboard, page 12

Your Guide To Ferndale Pride 2015

BY AJ TRAGER

FERNDALE – Ferndale Pride will kickoff the Pride season May 30 with more than 90 vendors, 13 bands, disc jockeys and other performers. The event will cover a big portion of the Nine Mile stretch of Downtown Ferndale beginning at 1 p.m. and stretching until late hours of the night.

This year's event will include performances by Detroit Music Awards winner DJ Maestro and Octavia, The Blueflowers, Nina & The Buffalo Riders, Natalie Cole's Spectacular Drag Show and headliner – Bitch. Vendors will line the streets selling food, beverages and goods, and provide information. Numerous downtown restaurants and merchants will provide promotions and specials.

Pre-Pride Events

Gearing up for the event, Soho will host a Hot Daddies contest beginning at 9 p.m., May 22. The contest will feature men 35 or older who will compete for the title of Hottest Daddy. All attendees are encouraged to bring dollars to vote for the "hottest daddy" and raise money for Ferndale Pride's charities.

Affirmations will open the Ferndale Pride's All Media Art Exhibition at 6:30 p.m. May 28 in the Pittman-Puckett Art Gallery.

Day Of Pride: Saturday, May 30

Starting off the day with color, the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce will host its Rainbow Run, a 2k or a 5k walk-run event that gathered over a thousand participants last year. Participants are encouraged to wear white clothing and be prepared to get covered in non-toxic colored powder that will turn them into shining rainbow runners or walkers. Strollers are permitted during the run, but dogs and bikes are prohibited. For those interested in running to support non-bullying and diversity initiatives in the area, visit www.rainbow-run.com to sign up at a discount or arrive the morning of to pay full price. Runners will begin at E. Nine Mile Road and Bermuda. There will be an inflatable arch marking the starting line. Participants will run along the road and will be escorted by the police department, who will create a rolling street closure to block off traffic.

Affirmations will host its Pride Prom the day of Ferndale Pride from 7-10 p.m. for all LGBT youth ages 13-20. Youth are encouraged to wear as many colors of the rainbow as they can in celebration of Ferndale Pride; formal wear is not required. The rainbow themed event will be held as an afterglow to Ferndale Pride and will feature food, a gender queer prom King and Queen contest, raffle prizes, photo booth and music by DJ Tone.

Volunteer Opportunities

For the third year, Clean the Ferndale Up project will begin at 8 a.m. on May 16. The project was designed by the Ferndale Community Foundation in partnership with the City of Ferndale to improve the environment in parks, roadways and other public areas. Those interested in cleaning up the city will meet at the City Government building. Visit <http://>

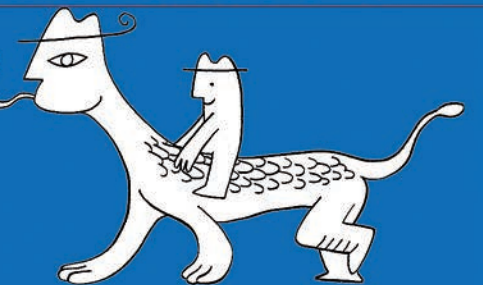
See Ferndale Pride, page 6



Ferndale Pride 2014. BTL file photo: Andrew Potter

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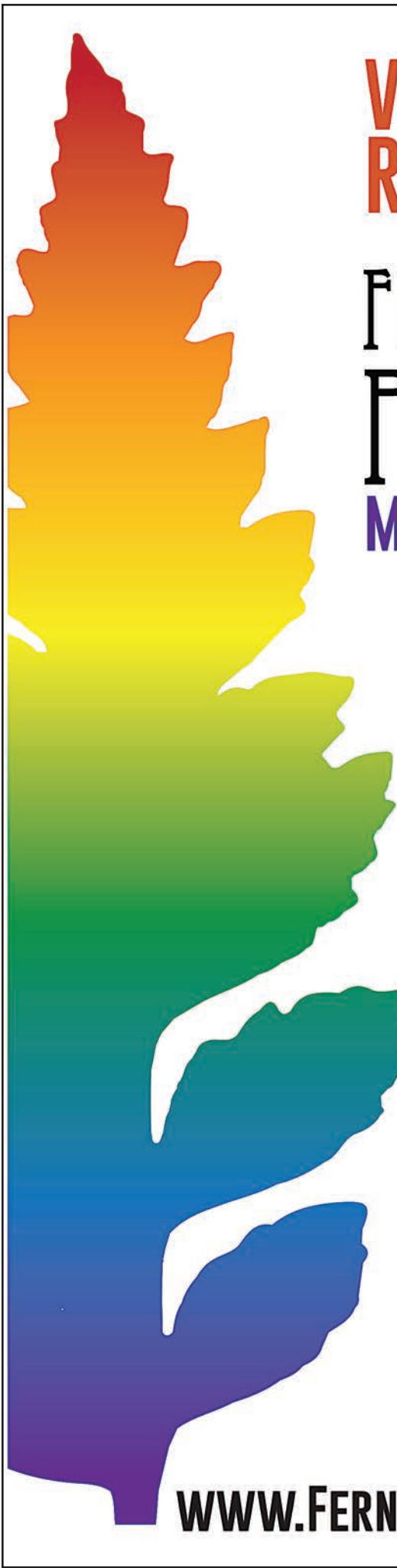
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FERNDALE PRIDE

MAY 30, 2015

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JOIN US AT AFFIRMATIONS FOR ANY OF OUR VOLUNTEER MEETINGS AND WE WILL HELP FIND THE PERFECT VOLUNTEER FIT FOR YOU.

JOIN US AT AFFIRMATIONS FOR OUR VOLUNTEER MEETINGS.



APRIL 21ST - 7PM

MAY 6TH - 7PM

MAY 27TH - 7PM

MEETING UPDATES WILL BE POSTED ON FERNDALE PRIDE'S WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS

WWW.FERNDALEPRIDE.COM

Chrysler Fiat To Sponsor MCP

BY BTL STAFF

DETROIT – In celebration of Motor City Pride, FCA US LLC, formerly known as Chrysler Group LLC, will be the sole sponsor for the Motor City Pride Parade.

FCA US LLC has been a major sponsor for MCP for the past three years. This year Fiat partnered with Chrysler to be not only the sole sponsor of the Pride Parade but also a pyramid sponsor for Michigan Pride.

“It’s called Motor City Pride. Years ago, when it moved to Detroit, we felt responsibility to be a part of that road. And we are excited for the third year to provide a little more support and provide some increased commitment to the work that Equality Michigan is doing, and also to what we are doing and activating at Motor City Pride,” Greg Hawkins, chair of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance at FCA US LLC, said.

“We see Motor City Pride as a very important celebration in the community and since we started coming years ago, we’ve seen that progress happen. We know this year is going to be just as great as the years past,” he said at a MCP Press Conference held May 12.

“We see Motor City Pride as a very important celebration in the community and since we started coming years ago, we’ve seen that progress happen. We know this year is going to be just as great as the years past.”

- Greg Hawkins, chair of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance at FCA US LLC

This year in Hart Plaza, Chrysler Fiat members and volunteers will display new and exciting products including a one of a kind vehicle that was specifically designed for Pride events. Members will also host an annual briefing before the parade on June 7 that will discuss 2015 MCP.

► Ferndale Pride

Continued from p. 5

cleantheferndaleup.com for more information.

Ferndale Pride is always looking for volunteers to help set up and tear down tents and chairs, support vendors, assist DJs and other staff and distribute information. Anyone interested in volunteering can go to www.ferndalepride.com/volunteering/how-to-volunteer.html.

Post-Pride Events

After-Pride events will include Rosie O’Grady’s Drag Queen and King Brunch on May 31, with shows starting at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Rosie’s porch. Rosie’s is located at 279 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale.

May 31 is also Transgender Day of Empowerment; it will be held all day at Affirmations and will offer an entire day of free workshops that are a celebration of self. Participants will spend the day making “decisions, declarations and doing” by taking ownership of their existence and boldly taking one more step forward in the journey of self-actualization.

Held on the weekend of Motor City Pride, the Motor City Bears will host their Speedos Car Wash beginning at 11 a.m. June 6 at 22635 Woodward Ave., just south of Nine Mile. Come out and get cars, bikes, scooters etc. washed by the Motor City Bears and help out the southeast Michigan LGBT community.

Free HIV & STI Testing

Free testing will be available in the evenings at Affirmations May 26, 28 and 30. Testing will be provided by the Oakland County Health Department and AIDS Partnership Michigan.

Sponsors

Ferndale Pride is sponsored by MotorCity Casino Hotel, Rosie O’Grady’s, One-Eyed Betty’s, Suburban Buick GMC of Ferndale, Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, Between the Lines, Metro Times and Tami Jo Urban Tattoos.

All proceeds from Ferndale Pride will go towards benefiting Affirmations, the Ferndale Community Foundation, Michigan AIDS Coalition and Transgender Michigan.



BTL  

Join The Conversation

FERNDALE

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Looking Bassakwards (Pt. 1 of 4)



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

In the late-50s there weren't any nationwide advocacy groups. No newspapers like *Between The Lines*. No TV programs like "In the Life." No Affirmations LGBT Center.

Gays and lesbians – considered a psychologically aberrant, innately suspect, very, very small minority – lived in the closet at home, at church, at work, in public venues. Truth is, the closet as a concept didn't exist.

Bisexuals, it was said among gays and lesbians, lacked the guts to admit who they honestly were sexually. Cross dressing, punishable by law, was forbidden except on Halloween; and U.S. Army Sergeant Christine Jorgensen made big news in the mid-1950s for – whisper, whisper – "having the, you know, operation on his, you know, thingy."

Being "out" was being secretive. One shared a same-sex status or attraction only with trusted queer friends. Nicknames were a given. (I was Big Al. Big, for tall, by the way.) Remembered nicknames: The Empress, Miss Bruce. Tall Dick, Savoy, Drano, Red Birdie.

Being "out" was being secretive. One shared a same-sex status or attraction only with trusted queer friends. Nicknames were a given. (I was Big Al. Big, for tall, by the way.) Remembered nicknames: The Empress, Miss Bruce. Tall Dick, Savoy, Drano, Red Birdie.

Strategy was passing for straight. Play the game. If need be, date. If really need be, get married. If you can, fake it. (I couldn't.) And, for Heaven's Sake, Mary, don't get caught in an after-hours raid. Or by entrapment. (Ask me, I know about both.)

Detroit, as the Arsenal of Democracy, was "the" center for war work and attracted thousands of World War II workers, soldiers, sailors, WAVES, WACS, Rosie the Riveters. Gay bars were all straight owned, thrived and continued on through succeeding decades.

In the War Years, gay bars in metropolitan cities offered meeting places for many who had never met other gays and lesbians. It was a revelation for many, and for many who lost their lives in Europe and the Pacific Theaters.

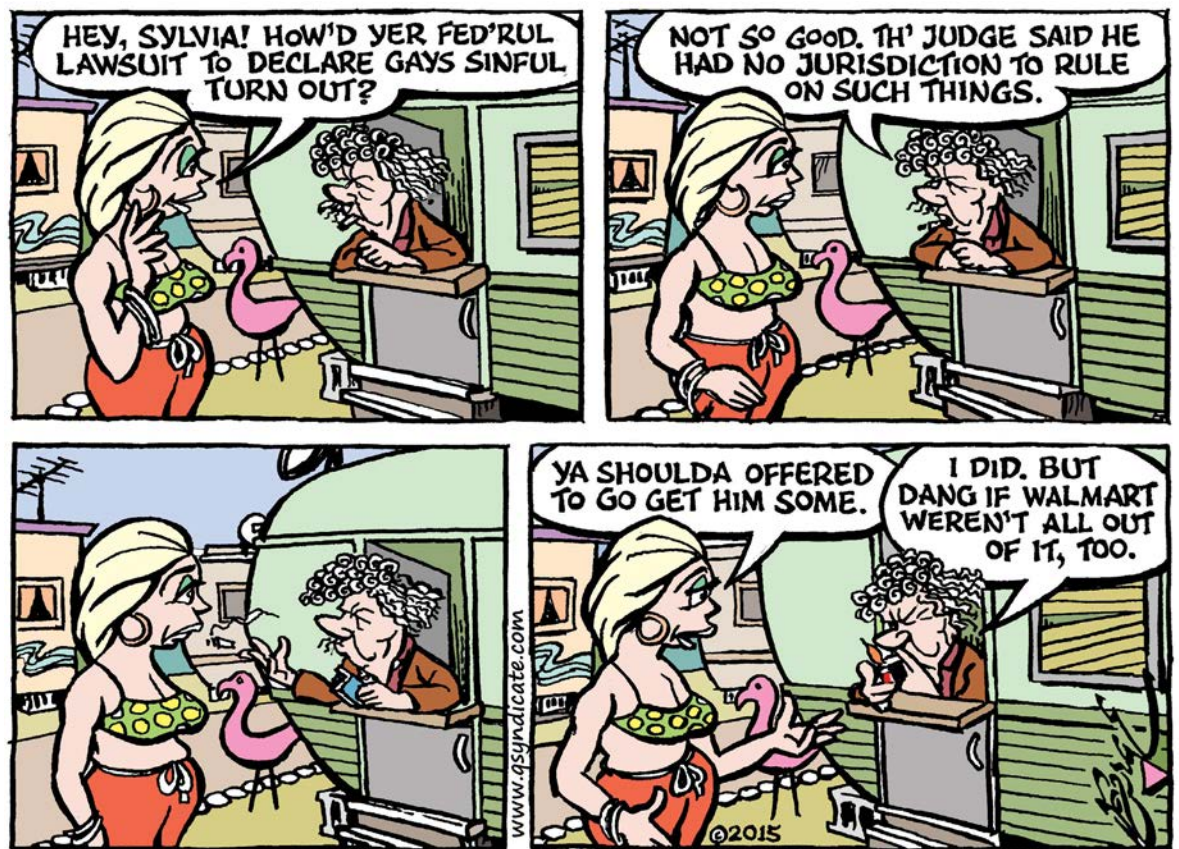
There were several usually crowded gay clubs in the 1950s, and a couple of notorious restaurants in Detroit's downtown area where teenagers hung out, learning from gay/lesbian peers how to cope with a hostile, queer hating, queer baiting world.

Hidden as it was to all but those in the 'know,' Detroit's scene offered a viable gay community. A bar with a back entrance was a plus.

As a native Detroiter – who was fortunate to acknowledge my queerness in my senior high school year (along with six or seven other Cass Tech art students) – I'm devoting this Parting Glances space to excerpts from previous columns of my teenager recollections.

I'll begin with this – maybe familiar – summing up: Gay life 60 years ago was exciting, varied, nurturing, sophisticated, trashy, segregated,

See Parting Glances, next page



Transmissions Book 'Em

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

In 2012, a transgender woman by the name of Victoria Ramirez was in the early stages of her transition. She also had a job as a bookseller at a Barnes & Noble book store in Irvine, California.

While she had not started to live full time in her preferred gender role, she had started to take hormones, had begun to grow out her hair and sometimes wore her nails polished while at work.

Her manager spoke up, telling Ramirez that customers were complaining about Ramirez's appearance. Further, the manager told Ramirez that theirs was a "neighborhood store," and that Ramirez should "think of the children" who shopped at the store.

A year later, Ramirez came out to her manager and sought to begin to transition in the workplace.

Ramirez's manager was having none of it. Ramirez was forbidden to discuss her transition at work without a manager present, was forbidden to wear skirts and was

These cases come in the wake of steps taken by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under President Obama, including lawsuits of their own to protect transgender workers Brandi Branson and Amiee Stephens in Florida and Michigan, respectively.

not allowed to use the women's facilities.

Ramirez was eventually let go for calling in sick, after Ramirez's insistence that she was having stress-induced panic attacks due to her work environment.

While Barnes & Noble's human resources department did later tell Ramirez that what the Irvine, California store did was wrong, and presumably attempted to place her at a location elsewhere, she was eventually not allowed to work elsewhere based on an assessment by Ramirez's former manager.

Barnes & Noble, as you would expect, has not spoken about the case. They have, however, pointed to their track record in support of transgender employees. That support does not, apparently, extend to a manager at the Irvine, California

location.

This is the most recent in a string of similar anti-discrimination cases.

At a Brooklyn location of Forever 21, sales associate Alexia Daskalakis' bosses allegedly mocked her after she started her transition in 2014. She was eventually let go without explanation.

Likewise, Saks Fifth Avenue eventually settled a lawsuit against the company after U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder issued a memo making it clear that Title VII protections extend to gender identity. The company had initially been arguing that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not cover their former employee, Leyth Jamal. Jamal was harassed in the workplace – including by male co-workers who asked if she was a sex worker – and

See Transmissions, next page

► Transmissions

Continued from p. 8

was required to present as male at the Houston, Texas location she was employed at.

These cases come in the wake of steps taken by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under President Obama, including lawsuits of their own to protect transgender workers Brandi Branson and Amiee Stephens in Florida and Michigan, respectively. This also follows the landmark 2012 Macy v. Holder case that first included transgender people under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A report published in 2013 titled “A Broken Bargain for Transgender Workers” spoke to the difficulties transgender people like myself have in the workplace. We face an unemployment rate that is twice the rate of the population as a whole, with 44 percent of transgender people being underemployed. Transgender workers are four times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10,000.

Meanwhile, Congress cannot pass a transgender-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act and people make up horror stories to keep us out of appropriate public accommodations. You see, those fights over transgender people in bathrooms – a topic that I am yet again going into – extends into all of these cases, as employees were barred from gender appropriate facilities.

When I transitioned, I was working at what was then Kinko’s Copies, long before FedEx made them part of their brand. While my story is nothing like what Ramirez or any others I named above faced, I can certainly empathize with the challenges behind transitioning in the workplace. My store’s owner handled my

transition fairly equitably, although the store’s manager eventually forced me out while the owner was away.

At that time, of course, there was no such recourse, and not an EEOC that would have interceded on my behalf if things had gone much worse. Seeing my transgender siblings have equal protection under the law is heartening.

Much like Ramirez’s manager chastised her to do, I also “think of the children.” Unlike her, my thoughts are for the transgender youth of our world who may enjoy a world where they can transition on the job with less fear of discrimination. I expect my “neighborhood store” to reflect all those in that neighborhood – and that includes transgender people like me.

As I mentioned, Saks Fifth Avenue settled the case that Leyth Jamal brought against them. I expect to see the cases against Forever 21 and Barnes & Nobel go down similar roads. I do worry about how things will stand after the Obama administration is over, but am heartened by the case law being created now.

Likewise, that I can be so sure of the outcome of these cases is a sure sign of a turning point for transgender rights. We are seeing our rights upheld, and we are gaining enough support to make a stand for our rights in the workplace, rather than simply taking the abuse we are handed.

We still have a long way to go, and I hasten to add that having these protections does not stop employers and others from violating our rights in the first place.

Make no mistake, however – it is a vital thing to be able to throw the book at those who might infringe upon those same rights.

Full disclosure: Gwen Smith’s spouse was once laid off at Barnes & Noble. You can find her on Twitter at @gwenners.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 8

unsegregated, colorful, drab, fulfilling, energetic, dangerous, sheltering, sustaining, fun, wild, crazy – and damned less expensive.

(Beer, 35 cents a bottle. Gin martini, \$1.25. Jail bait, \$5 or \$10, depending upon late-hour urgency and/or attraction). Looking back...

... I was 19 the summer I graduated. Free from studies, living at home, taking time off before job hunting, I was keen to explore the gay scene. I heard from friends about the infamous Hub Grill, located at Farmer and Bates, two blocks from City Hall, and, much

too inconveniently, from the First Police Precinct.

The Hub Grill was a greasy spoon (knife and fork) with large windows, angled on the two street corners. To enter was to be gawked at. Queer! Faggots! Fruits! To stool sit in everybody’s sight was thumb-your-nose brazen.

“Flamers” – obvious queens – never seemed to mind. They thrived on the attention. Seated at the counter I was asked, “Are you a browning king or a browning queen?”

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Creep of the Week

Health Insurance Companies

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

We all know that men can get breast cancer. It's more common in women, but it can and does happen.

Thankfully, we live in the United States of Gender Equality, where everyone is totally cool with issues of sex, and gender identity isn't some rigid thing no one dare deviate from unless they want to be ridiculed and alienated for the rest of their lives. Plus no one believes that physical bodies are always either 100 percent male or 100 percent female – no variation ever.

A lot of Americans understand what transgender means based on reading headlines about Bruce Jenner on the cover of the National Enquirer in the supermarket checkout. But that's not the whole story (duh).

So if someone who identifies as male needs to be screened for cervical cancer because he has a cervix, no one would dream of denying him that service just because, duh, males don't have cervixes/how can that even be possible/what? ick/brain explodes/next, please?

Ha ha. Just kidding. America is full of small-minded, hateful people and our laws often reflect that fact.

And so it was that insurance companies have denied coverage for things like “pap smears for dudes” simply because the patient's driver's license said “male,” or “prostate exams for gals” just because the patient's driver's license said “female.”

Granted, what it means to be transgender is very unclear to the general public, in part because we “know” what it means to be female or male (or at least we think we know. We don't. We just prescribe a bunch of sexist expectations about appearance and behavior and call it a day) and we “know” that you're born that way (again, we don't know shit, but we believe what we've been taught since an either/or binary is a lot easier to navigate and understand than a fluid continuum).

In other words, a lot of Americans understand what transgender means based on reading headlines about Bruce Jenner on the cover of the National Enquirer in the supermarket

checkout.

But that's not the whole story (duh). We live in a world where people identify as male, yet still have a vagina and cervix. We have people who identify as male who have had what is commonly known as sex-reassignment surgery. And neither person is less male than the other, unless, of course, we are sticking to narrow definitions that help no one navigate life as a human being.

The thing is, both of these men need and should have access to preventative care and insurance companies shouldn't have the power

to tell them, “You've to choose between insurance coverage and a gender identity that makes sense for you. You can't have both.”

Thankfully the Obama administration has stepped in to tell insurance companies, “Oh no you better don't” and make clear that everyone gets preventative care deemed necessary by a medical professional. No more discrimination against transgender people.

This is a super important thing.

The Human Rights Campaign's David C. Stacy spoke to the New York Times about the implications of this clarification. “A transgender man who has a need for breast cancer screening would be assured of getting that screening,” he said. “A person who has transitioned from female to male may still have a high risk of breast cancer.”

And it should be doctors who make that determination, not some insurance adjuster sitting in an office somewhere checking a box on an insurance claim form that reads, “Nope. Die.”

Now I realize that naming “health insurance companies” as this week's Creep is really broad. And probably not all companies are guilty of this. But enough are. So if you're an insurance company and I hurt your feelings, just remember that you make money off of denying people the basic need of health care. So fuck off.

Castro's Daughter Sponsors Blessing Of Cuban Gay Couples

BY ANDREA RODRIGUEZ

HAVANA (AP) – The daughter of Cuban President Raul Castro sponsored a blessing ceremony Saturday for gay couples on an island where gay marriage remains illegal.

Nearly two dozen gay couples held hands or embraced, some crying, as Protestant clergymen from the U.S. and Canada blessed them as part of official ceremonies leading up to the Global Day against Homophobia on May 17.

Castro's daughter Mariela heads Cuba's Center for Sex Education, which has been pushing for gay rights in a country with a history of persecuting homosexuals.

While she was careful not to call Saturday's ceremony a wedding, the event had most of the trappings of matrimony.

Luis Enrique Mederos and his partner for 14 years, Alain Morales, approached clergyman including Troy Perry, founder of Los Angeles' gay-friendly Metropolitan Community Church, and held hands beneath a canopy while the pastors blessed their relationship.

“Luis, I give you my life,” Morales said, as the crowd of 300 applauded and cheered.

“It's a step to strengthen our relationship because we're both religious, believers,” said Mederos, a 47-year-old graphic designer. He said he saw the ceremony as an important step toward the eventual legalization of gay marriage in Cuba.

“It's a dream for the Cuban gay and transgender community that one day it won't be just a symbolic and we can get married, because we're also part of this changing world,” he said, embracing Morales, 38.

Uruguay, Argentina and a string of U.S. states, along with several in Mexico, have legalized gay marriage or civil unions.

Homosexuals were hounded and persecuted during much of the presidency of Fidel Castro. After handing

power to his brother Raul, the elder Castro said he regretted his treatment of gays, and Cuba has been granting increasing rights to gays in recent years.

Mariela Castro, who is the most visible gay rights advocate on the island, uses her position as a member of Cuba's ruling family to push for reforms. Last year, as a member of parliament, she voted against a workers' rights bill that she felt didn't go far enough to prevent discrimination against people with HIV or with unconventional gender identities.

It was an unprecedented action in an assembly that uniformly votes unanimously in favor of government proposals.

Castro did not attend the blessing ceremony, but headed a colorful gay rights march by more than 1,000 people along one of Havana's main streets.

A few minutes after Mederos and Morales, Belkis Gonzalez and Maria de los Angeles Machin stepped up to receive their blessing. A couple since 1989, they raised Machin's son and Gonzalez's daughter together.

“This blessing means a lot to us,” said Gonzalez, a 48-year-old screenwriter. “It's a reaffirmation that we have a relationship of love and we aren't hurting anyone. If God put us together, it's because we wanted us to be united.”

The event came a day before another manifestation of changed times in Cuba: Raul Castro's visit with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

The church and the Cuban government were in a state of open hostility in the years after the 1959 revolution that put Fidel Castro in power. But a thaw began in the 1990s. Cuba removed a constitutional clause declaring the country an atheist state, Pope John Paul II paid a momentous visit in 1998, Pope Benedict XVI visited in 2012, and Cuba made Good Friday an official holiday.

Raul Castro was expected to discuss both diplomatic talks with the U.S. and the pope's planned September visit to Cuba when he visits the pontiff on Sunday.

Guam Gay Marriage Case Won't Wait For US High Court Ruling

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) – A lawsuit challenging Guam's same-sex marriage ban will move forward later this month after a federal judge decided against postponing it until after the U.S. Supreme Court rules on gay nuptials this summer.

But U.S. District Court of Guam Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood gave Guam's governor and the department that denied a lesbian couple a marriage license some extra time to work with a private attorney, The Pacific Daily News reported Friday.

That's because Guam's attorney general has taken a different position from Gov. Eddie Calvo, saying the U.S. territory should issue marriage licenses to gay couples.

Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson appointed a local attorney to defend Calvo and the Office of Vital Statistics registrar because she will not do so.

Loretta M. Pangelinan and Kathleen M. Aguero, both 28, sued April 13 after the registrar refused

them a license because Guam law defines marriage as a union between two people of the opposite sex.

The couple based their lawsuit on a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision in favor of same-sex marriage. The U.S. District Court of Guam falls under the 9th Circuit.

If Guam allows gay marriage, it would be the first U.S. territory to do so.

In a statement Friday, Calvo said he told his administration to prepare for two possible outcomes from the Supreme Court case: a ruling saying states have the right to define marriage, or one recognizing same-sex marriage as a fundamental right.

If it's the former, discussion on the matter likely will continue in the Guam, the governor said.

“I believe it will open up the opportunity for further conversation so that the true will of the people can be reflected in our laws,” Calvo said. “And as ardent a defender as I have been for our local law as currently written, I will be as ardent in defending any new law, if that is the will of the people.”

Michigan House Considering Bill To Reverse Local Human Rights Ordinances

BY AJ TRAGER

LANSING – In an attempt to create uniform community benefits ordinances throughout the state, a Michigan lawmaker has waged war against 37 municipal LGBT civil rights ordinances that have been passed in the state.

The Michigan House is considering House Bill 4052, the “Local Government Employer Mandate Prohibition Act,” that seeks to limit the units of local government to adopt, enforce or administer certain local mandates for employers. The Committee on Commerce and Trade held a meeting on the bill that would prohibit local units of government from creating a “community benefits ordinance” under which contractors or developers would enact new rules for engaging in business with other companies; prohibit local units from establishing any requirement related to employee wages or benefits except as provided by law; and void any community benefits ordinance or similar ordinance adopted by a local unit in violation of the act.

Local government bodies would therefore be prohibited from adopting, enforcing or administering an ordinance, local policy or resolution regulating the relationship between an employer and its employees or potential employees if the resolution contains requirements exceeding those imposed by the state or federal government.

“This bill may negatively impact dozens of human rights ordinances,” said Bill Greene, interim executive director of Equality

“This bill may negatively impact dozens of human rights ordinances. A lot of people will be effected by this.”

- Bill Greene, interim executive director of Equality Michigan

Michigan. “A lot of people will be effected by this.”

The bill was introduced by Rep. Earl Poleski, R-Jackson, on Jan. 22 after he introduced a similar bill in the Michigan Competitiveness Committee in December 2014.

Sommer Foster, director of political advocacy for Equality Michigan, testified in the committee on commerce and trade regarding the bill May 12.

Read the bill here: www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/billintroduced/House/pdf/2015-HIB-4052.pdf.

Upcoming Interfaith Marriage Discussion

BY BTL STAFF

TROY – Central Woodward Christian Church (DOC) will host an Interfaith Panel Discussion on Marriage Equality May 20.

An upcoming interfaith marriage discussion panel will discuss theological underpinnings regarding marriage, marriage equality, ethics surrounding civil marriage rights and faith teachings about doing justice.

Discussion will include panelists: Dr. Bob Cornwall, Central Woodward Christian Church; Rabbi Annie Sleutelberg, Congregation Shir Tikvah; George and Kit Belvitch, Fortunate Families and a few others yet to be announced. Kevin Hogan from the Michigan Roundtable will serve as discussion moderator.

“As we know all too well, the main opposition to LGBT rights and marriage equality comes from the religious right,” Rick Modglin-Green, associate pastor at DOC, said. “We seek to help to change that narrative to one of justice and inclusion for LGBTQ people. As we know, the best way to gain support is by telling our stories.”

The event is put on in cooperation with Michigan for Marriage with the goal of helping to create a greater acceptance of Marriage Equality in the greater communities of metro Detroit. Discussions will begin at 7 p.m. at Central Woodward Christian Church located at 3955 W. Big Beaver Road in Troy. Childcare will be provided while parents and guardians attend the panel.



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Left: Tanya M. Vaughn, MS, CNM, FNP-BC
Teressa C. Kuz, MSN, WHNP-BC

Right: Hina Javaid, MD
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► **Billboard**

Continued from p. 4

the company landline and temporarily suspend email due to the high volume of hate calls he was receiving. The Dearborn Area Chamber of Commerce is going to host a panel discussion in the near future on the ethics regarding these situations for advertisers.

On the GoFundMe page, Ferman encourages donors and non-donors to email him and talk about how the billboard affects them and what kind of message the equality billboard should say.

“I want people to follow what is going on and to give me their input. I want to hear their comments, thoughts, suggestions and tips,” Ferman said. “I’d love for them to reach out to me. I want people to email me and stop me in person. It is a fight for equality for the LGBT community and for all races and religions; we all should be treated equally.”

The group, RestraintheJudges.com, is a coalition of anti-LGBT organizations from across the country that are looking to inform and mobilize Americans that stand against marriage equality and LGBT rights. Coalition members include: Americans For Truth About Homosexuality, Faith2Action.org, Vision America Action, Judicial Action Group, Defend the Family, BarbWire with Matt Barber, The American Family Association of Pennsylvania, Conservative Republicans of Texas, Campaign for Texas Families, Liberty Alliance, Dr. Hotze – the Prescription for America and CMP.

On the national level, the group is calling for a recusal of U.S. Supreme Court Justices Ginsburg and Kagan and is seeking to remove any powers of implementation the high court has over American policy. The coalition is currently hosting a service where interested parties can pay to send a “Restraining Order” to SCOTUS. The restraining order directly reads: “We the people of the United States affirm our right to self-governance and hereby issue a restraining order to the United States Supreme Court and all Federal Courts who attempt to usurp the following: 1. The sovereign vote of the American people 2. Our State Constitutions 3. The sacred institution of marriage between one man and one woman and 4. Our Constitutionally protected First Amendment Rights.”

The order continues to claim that SCOTUS has assaulted the constitutionally protected First Amendment rights of pastors, churches, businesses and facility owners, employees, public officials, organizations, ministries and citizens and demands a “cease and desist from undermining the will of the American people.”

Joining in support are Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas. King introduced HB 1968, titled “Restrain The Judges on Marriage Act,” which is seeking to remove jurisdiction from federal courts and remove appellate court jurisdiction from the U.S. Supreme Court before the nine justices can issue a ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges, the same-sex marriage case currently being decided by the Supreme Court. Respectively in his branch of government, Cruz introduced Senate Bill 1080, the “Protect Marriage From The Courts Act,” which aims to restrain the judges in an attempt to maintain that the “sacred right of marriage” stays between one man and one woman.

Billboards such as this one are to be installed and shown in Flint, Grand Rapids and Lansing in upcoming months. Ferman hopes to gather enough money to have a one to one ratio of equality billboards to those purchased by the anti-LGBT group.

Supporters of LGBT equality are using #thiswontstand on Facebook and Twitter. You can check out the GoFundMe at <http://www.gofundme.com/thiswontstand>.



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Senior Fundraiser Features Chenille Sisters

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR – A fundraiser to support local seniors will showcase an award-winning documentary and harmonizing legends from Ann Arbor.

Hear the sweet, serious, silly and satisfying sensation of the Chenille Sisters when they perform before the showing of an award-winning feature-length documentary “Alive Inside” on May 28 at the Michigan Theater as part of an upcoming fundraiser to benefit local seniors.

The Chenille Sisters have performed together for over 30 years, harmonizing throughout the streets of Ann Arbor and beyond. In the early 1980s Grace Morand, Connie Huber and Cheryl Dawdy met at the Old Town Tavern in Ann Arbor. The three of them would gather late in the afternoon and sit around a table, singing and playing their guitars together. Huber and Morand started a duo called “Cookin’” and began performing in bars across town. Not long after, they invited



The Chenille Sisters

Dawdy to join them on stage for a few songs and she stuck with the pair, forming a trio. They quickly caught the attention of former manager of The Ark, Dave Siglin, who booked them for the Persuasions at The Ark in 1985 and put them in the Ann Arbor Folk Festival lineup in 1986.

They rehearsed daily and performed almost every weekend for nearly 20 years. There was a drop in funding for performing arts in the late ‘90s, which caused a drop in performances for the Chenilles. Now, the three artists perform roughly 12 times a year. They are known for their playful performances, eclectic choices in fashion and above all else having fun on stage.

Their 12th and latest album titled “May I Suggest” was released in 2006 and includes many songs that fans have requested the group perform and some new favorites including “Your State’s Name Here,” “God’s Gift To Women” and “May I Suggest.”

The event will be emceed by Rob Reinhart, host and producer of Acoustic Cafe, with a special VIP reception before the documentary showing offering refreshments and a meet-and-greet with Reinhart.

“After decades surrounded by music, ‘Alive Inside’ is the most amazing musical experience I’ve ever seen. It’s simply the best example of how powerful music is,” Reinhart said.

Winner of the Audience Award at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, “Alive Inside” follows social worker Dan Cohen, founder of the nonprofit organization Music & Memory, as he demonstrates music’s ability to combat memory loss and restore a deep sense of self to those suffering from it. Filmmaker Michael

Rossato-Bennett visits family members who have witnessed the miraculous effects of personalized music on their loved ones and offers illuminating interviews with experts.

The fundraiser is by Big Hearts for Seniors, a group that promotes awareness and raises funds for five non-profit, community-supported programs of the University of Michigan Health System serving older adults throughout Washtenaw County. Organizers have expressed a desire to reach the LGBT community and include LGBT senior needs

in their work.

Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels, Housing Bureau for Seniors, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Michigan, Silver Club Memory Programs and Turner Senior Wellness Program all collaborate to make sure that seniors obtain access to home-delivered meals, affordable housing options, support to remain independent, mental stimulation and relief from social isolation, as well as care for those with dementia. All funds raised go directly to these programs and provide critical services.

Since 2006, Big Hearts for Seniors has raised funds through participation in the Ann Arbor Marathon and the Big House/Big Heart race, from which the name Big Hearts for Seniors originated. The 2014 fundraiser featured a screening of “Age of Champions” at the Michigan Theater and raised over \$25,000 for Big Hearts for Seniors.

The Chenille Sisters will perform at 6:30 p.m., directly before the documentary showing. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for VIP tickets and at 6:15 p.m. for general admission. Cost for attending the fundraiser is \$50 for VIP tickets and \$15 for general admission. Tickets are available at the door or online at www.med.umich.edu/geriatrics/BHS.

The Michigan Theatre is located at 603 E. Liberty St. in Ann Arbor.

For more information contact Rachel Dewees, director of the Turner Senior Wellness Program, at 734-998-9350 or email her at rdewees@med.umich.edu.



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Photo: Melissa Moseley / Netflix

A Candid Conversation With Jane Fonda & Lily Tomlin

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lily Tomlin is watching Jane Fonda weep.

As the showbiz icon releases a steady stream of waterworks – she’s “wiping tears away,” Tomlin notes – Fonda pauses slightly to collect herself before answering.

The question? Why gay men have forever revered older women even when the rest of the world – and Hollywood – have not.

“I find the question so moving that it makes

me cry,” says Fonda.

It’s one revelatory moment among many during this candid conversation with the 77-year-old actress and the Detroit-born Tomlin, 75, who appear together in the new Netflix original series “Grace and Frankie.” The beloved pair play two golden girls forced to start anew after their husbands drop a big truth bomb: They’re in love with each other.

This isn’t the actresses’ first time working together, of course.

In 1980, Tomlin and Fonda memorably

joined forces with Dolly Parton to put misogynistic men in their place in “Nine to Five.” Decades later, the film is a feminist-celebrated comedy classic.

Will Dolly make a cameo on “Grace and Frankie”? During our freewheeling interview, the two longtime friends talked about the possibility of a “Nine to Five” reunion on their new series, but they revealed plenty more too. Fonda opened up about her own experiences dating high-profile gay men, one of whom proposed to her. Tomlin recalled the time she

lashed out at Chita Rivera. But first, the crying.

You’ve both addressed aging in Hollywood, and this show deals a lot with aging as well. Historically, gay men – we love our “Golden Girls,” we already love Grace and Frankie, we love our Chers and Bette Midlers. Why do you think, despite Hollywood’s reputation for ageism, there has *always* been a place for older women in the gay community?

Lily: I may be terribly wrong and cutting

my tongue out for this: It's like, well, we're women of a certain age, and maybe we're considered more audacious.

Jane: I find the question so moving that it makes me cry. I had never thought of it before, and it makes me so moved. I think Lily put her finger on it just now. Older women tend to be more audacious; they're bigger and bolder and, god knows, gay men love big and bold, right?

Does it go any deeper than that, do you think?

Lily: It's like (drag performer) Lypsinka. I knew he was from Mississippi, and he's like a little kitten in a way; his hair is so soft and pale red, and he's got a big, high, very white-skinned forehead. When I first saw Lypsinka, I could just see this little boy – 4 or 5 years old in Mississippi – growing up around all these Southern women, and my family's Southern too. I just saw him seeing through them and into their hearts. He saw the women being oppressed and being pigeonholed and how they act kind of audaciously just to free themselves. I just could see that little boy, and he satirized women's behavior so brilliantly – all the stuff, the travails they have – and I just wept when I saw him because he was so brilliant. I think there are hinges between those two things. Jane is wiping tears from her eyes.

Jane: How she said that – that he sees through them into their hearts. And also: The notion of surviving.

Lily: And him making up this incredible creature who's just so much fun to watch, and yet it's painful. I could feel his little boy pain all through those years.

You both have had a profound influence on the LGBT and ally movements. Can you share a moment in your lives as LGBT activists and trailblazers that stand out as particularly memorable to you?

Jane: Campaigning with Harvey Milk in the Castro District in San Francisco for Prop 6. He was the most joyous. He was like Allen Ginsberg. He was always smiling and laughing, and he was beloved and he was funny. The most lovable person. I was so happy when I was with him. And it was just so much fun going into those gay bars with him – oh my god!

Lily: I never got to meet Harvey Milk. I knew (LGBT activist and historian) Vito Russo; he was my good friend. I used to exchange so many stories with him. I was up on the Strip one night when I was not on "Laugh-In" yet. I was unknown and a woman that I was friends with who was a publicist had brought Chita Rivera to meet me, and Chita talked with a Bronx accent, and she's talking really fast and you don't know what she's saying. I kind of zoned out for a minute because I could

hardly understand her at that point, and then I suddenly heard her say, "purse nelly." First she had said my "boy dancers" and the skin on the back of my neck bristled up, and that's when she said "purse nelly" and then I just went ballistic. I said, "What did you say?!"

You lashed out at Chita Rivera?

Lily: I lashed out. She said, "I dunno! WHADISAY?" I said, "You said, 'purse nelly.' I wanna know what that means. What you meant by that!" "I don't know. Whadisa? Pursenelly? Personally." She was saying "personally"!

Jane: Personally! (Laughs)

Lily: And I didn't even cop to it. I was so embarrassed. I just doubled over laughing and fell on the floor.

Jane: I just went to my 60th high school reunion. I went four years to an all-girls boarding school, and in the days leading up to the reunion I kept wondering, "God, I wonder whatever happened to Pat Johnson?" Because everyone in the class knew that Patty Johnson was gay, or at least we thought that she was. But no one talked about it. Not even among ourselves. Nobody ever said anything. And she was at the reunion – there were only four of us at the reunion.

Lily: Four out of the whole class?! Awww.

Jane: And Pat Johnson was there, with an oxygen tank, mind you. It was the first time she'd been out to dinner in five years because she had some allergies to chemicals. And there she was with her wife! An amazing woman violinist! And I thought, well, this is very great. I never ever would have imagined back in the day that Pat Johnson would be able to get married to her lady friend.

Let's talk about your friendship with each other. Was it smooth sailing from the very beginning?

Lily: Yeah, we hit it off right away. I was so excited when Jane came to see one of my shows way back in the day

Jane: This was pre-"Nine to Five"!

Lily: Yeah. I was all excited. She came backstage and was very complimentary, and then next thing I knew...

Jane: I was offering her a role in "Nine to Five," which was originally going to be a serious movie until I saw Lily's one-woman show called "Appearing Nightly." I decided I didn't want to make a movie about office workers until she was one of them. And it had to be a comedy. It took me a year to convince her and Dolly to be in it! During that year we kind of saw each other because we'd be talking about different ideas and stuff, and so we kind of became friends before "Nine to Five."

See Jane & Lily, page 18

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Screen Queen

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI



Into the Woods

Throughout her longstanding career as Acting God, Meryl Streep has used her cinematic superpowers to, on occasion, expertly polish turds, turning them into beautiful pieces of holy excrement. But even The Streep has her limits. “Mamma Mia!” was a scenic snafu no matter what notes the actress nailed; Rob Marshall’s film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim’s “Into the Woods,” luckily, extinguishes the leftover fumes from that ABBA stinker. This musical is not the Streep Show, however. Though she maintains a godly presence as the morphing witch, the dark magic is more than just Meryl’s. The actress, of course, gives heft (and some seriously solid singing) to the film’s heart, but praise is due all around – to Anna Kendrick as Cinderella, to Chris Pine as her Prince, and to the fantastically paired James Corden and Emily Blunt, the baker and his wife. What’s lost in the translation from stage to screen – a minor gripe – is redeemed by way of transformative sets and Disney’s surprisingly faithful retelling of Sondheim’s upturned “happily ever after.” Deeper in the woods, there’s a fair array of supplements on the Blu-ray release, though none of them will change your life more than this one: “She’ll Be Back,” the Streep number not seen in the final film.



Selma

Martin Luther King Jr, we’re sorry. We’re sorry that your life was spent standing for racial equality, and yet here we are a half century later,

black people still violently targeted

on the basis of skin color. In light of recent events, then, the Oprah-produced MLK story, “Selma,” resonates with painful truth: strides still need to be made. The drama harrowingly depicts the civil rights movement in full swing, as MLK relentlessly pushes for the end to legalized segregation through demonstrations such as the historical Montgomery-bound march of 1965. A watershed cinematic experience, “Selma” is a galvanizing portrait of a fearless leader, brought to life with spirited authenticity by a spellbinding performance from English actor David Oyelowo. More than a mere by-the-book history lesson – and under the meticulous direction of Ava DuVernay – it’s a moving masterpiece, from the gut-punch beginning to the heart-healing conclusion. Among the bountiful extras are a featurette called “Recreating Selma,” centered on adapting a true story for film, and two commentaries, both with insight from DuVernay.



Maude: The Complete Series

Before wisecrackin’ her way into the hearts of every homo as Dorothy Zbornak on “Golden Girls,” Bea Arthur was already earning her queer icon cred on “Maude.” Playing the classic TV comedy’s namesake for six years in the mid ’70s, the Broadway actress earned affection (and Emmys) by proving she could dial up the sass simply by flashing her iconic stone-cold stare. Bold, prickly and politically liberal, Maude epitomized the qualities worthy of gay worship, and the character – in all her button-pushing brilliance – busted the doors down on topical, controversial political and social issues: race, homosexuality and abortion, to name a few. Arthur infused the hard-hitting commentary with her iconic comedic genius and sharp, acerbic wit, all while showcasing her signature real-life speaking voice. All 147 half-hour episodes of “Maude” are finally culled for the first time on DVD in this vast collection that includes never-before-seen footage, featurettes (among them: “And Then There’s Maude: Television’s First Feminist”) and Maude-centric episodes of “All in the Family,” the series that launched Bea into queer-culture stardom.



Interstellar

The mind-bending ways of Christopher Nolan (don’t pretend you’re still not trying to figure out “Inception”) return to exhaust your mental capacity during this dense, time-twisty behemoth. Forget details, though. Screw logic. You’re gonna erupt into a geyser of waterworks even if you can’t make sense of it all. Nolan goes all out, grounding his flashy CGI-prettyed space odyssey with the emotional heaviness of a hero torn between leaving his family and saving the world – you know, just everyday problems we all have. Technical concepts and heady philosophical affirmations express a relatively simple antithesis to the hard science on hand: the enduring power of love. Poignancy comes courtesy of Matthew McConaughey, who radiates a deep emotional bond with his daughter (the always-radiant Jessica Chastain) that only strengthens as the three-hour epic culminates into a dizzying display of wondrous speculation about life on earth... and beyond. An entire supplemental disc delves into the film’s key scientific observations; the 50-minute, McConaughey-narrated feature on the visuals, theories and science behind “Interstellar” is particularly intriguing.



Dear White People

The black people of “Dear White People” want you to know that, no, they aren’t all into Tyler Perry movies, and yes, they like, even love, Taylor

Swift. Justin Simien’s funny and frank directorial debut wryly spotlights an astounding number of stereotypes and cultural misappropriations pertaining to a group of “don’t call us African-Americans” at a white-heavy Ivy League. As individual stories thread through a satirical narrative – one arc involves an aspiring gay journalist – race issues in post-Obama, 21st-century America are exposed by blowing the lid off “weaved” black chicks and black guys with big, thick... Even the film’s classical chestnuts – the whitest of white music – have something profound to say about the racial divide that “Dear White People”

See Screen Queen, page 24

Peppermint Creek Theatre Produces Mid-Michigan Premiere Of Sexy New Play

LANSING—Peppermint Creek Theatre Company, with license from Dramatists Play Service, is proud to announce the two-week run of the sexy comedy “Venus in Fur” in its Mid-Michigan premiere.

Thomas, a beleaguered playwright/director, is desperate to find an actress to play Vanda, the female lead in his adaptation of the classic sadomasochistic tale “Venus in Fur.” Into his empty audition room walks a vulgar and equally desperate actress – oddly enough, named Vanda. Though utterly wrong for the sophisticated part, Vanda exhibits a strange command of the material, piquing Thomas’ interest with her seductive talents and secretive manner. As the two work through the script, they blur the line between play and reality, entering into an increasingly serious game of submission and domination that only one of them can win. A mysterious, funny, erotic drama that represents yet another departure for the multifaceted David Ives.

So far, “Venus in Fur” has received critical acclaim. The New York Times wrote, “The teeter-tottering test of wills

that takes place in ‘Venus in Fur’ makes even the most fraught encounter between a domineering director and a sensitive performer seem like a play date in the sandbox. Audiences may be pleased to hear that in this 90 minutes of good, kinky fun, the upper hand does not necessarily belong to the usual suspect.”

The Village Voice has said, “‘Venus in Fur’ invites both carnal and cerebral excitement,” while the Associated Press has reviewed the play as “a modern take on a classic tale, skillfully twisting plot and characters in a fast-paced journey into one man’s entrapment by a clever, vengeful female.”

“You want funny? You want sexy? Then you’ll want to see ‘Venus in Fur,’” writes the New Jersey Newsroom.

Peppermint Creek Guest Director, Rob Roznowski, had this to say about the show: “‘Venus in Fur’ works on various levels. The juggling of these various levels as director with these actors has been such an exciting part of the process. Audiences can latch onto the play as a theatrical

sparring match, character study or exciting exploration of gender roles.”

The production will take place at Peppermint Creek’s performance venue, the Miller Performing Arts Center, 6025 Curry Lane, Lansing. The show, which has already had shows on May 7-10, will have performances at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sundays for the rest of its run. The final shows will be Thursday, May 14 through Sunday, May 17. Tickets can be ordered online at www.peppermintcreek.org and are \$15 general admission, \$10 for students/seniors 65 and over.

This production of “Venus in Fur” is being directed by PCTC Guest Director and head of the Michigan State University Department of Theatre, Rob Roznowski. Joseph Mull will play the role of Thomas; Mary Dilworth will perform as Vanda.

To purchase tickets, visit www.peppermintcreek.org. Follow “PCTC” on Twitter: @PeppermintCreek or on Facebook.

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► Jane & Lily

Continued from p. 15

What is different about working with each other on "Grace and Frankie" compared to when you worked together on "Nine to Five" 35 years ago?

Jane: We're together more! I mean, it's four months, almost every day for almost 15 hours, which is a real treat for me. You know, Lily is very unusual. She has a real funny bone. So, watching her take on not just the scripts but life is a pleasure.

Lily: Thank you, Ms. Fonda!

After doing the first season of "Grace and Frankie," what advice do you have for women who are romantically involved with a gay man?

Jane: Try to stay friends. You know, it happened to a friend of mine when I lived in Atlanta, and she told me about it and it was very hard for her because she really loved him a lot. Because she loved him, she was able to understand that he needed to become who he really was, and they remained very, very close friends and they still live in the same building. I think that's the way to do it. Compassion, empathy, love, understanding - we need more of it.

Have either of you dated a gay man before?

Jane: Oh yes! Oh my god. When I was young, I was the female that gay guys wanted to try to become heterosexual with. A very famous actor who's gay - and I will not name names - asked me to marry him. I was very flattered, but I said, "Why?" This was 1964. And I mean, he wasn't the only one. It's very interesting. And I lived for two years with a guy who was trying to become heterosexual. I'm intimately acquainted with that.

Did that come to mind as you were shooting this show, where you are married to a gay man?

Jane: (Laughs) No! Not until you made me think of it right now.

Lily, have you had any similar experiences?

Lily: No, I didn't; but I had girlfriends who dated gay guys in college and they couldn't understand why so-and-so didn't, you know, take them into their arms and sweep them away. Because they danced together so well! They were beautiful, tall blonde people! They were just kind of breathtaking, and they did make a nice looking couple, but that was about as far as it would go - looks. I had a girlfriend and we got into a big fight about being gay when I first moved to New York. She was watching "Lust for Life" with Anthony Quinn, who is so macho as Gauguin in that movie, and I said something like, "Look how macho this guy is - he's unbelievable!" She said, "If I were gay, I'd beat down the door of the nearest psychiatrist." I said, "If I fell in love with my refrigerator, I'd give it lamb chops!"

Netflix has really been a pioneer in reaching beyond LGBT stereotypes and being LGBT inclusive, and it's done it again with "Grace and Frankie." How do you feel about the state of gay characters on TV as a whole? And what is it about this platform that allows Netflix to tell LGBT stories without getting gimmicky or exploitative?

Lily: I think it's been a long time coming. Although, it's happened because of so many things that have gone before, and this culture has changed. Large parts of the culture have changed. Not the culture as a whole. You know, there's still a lot of -

Jane: Homophobia. I lived in the South for 20 years, and, unfortunately, homophobia is all too alive and rampant, but because there are so many more gay men and women in mass media and they're very lovable - and more and more people are coming out - Americans know somebody who's gay and lesbian. Once that happens, it's a lot harder to remain homophobic.

Did you ever think that gay marriage would be a reality in your lifetime?

Lily: No, I did not.

Jane: No, I didn't either.

Lily: I mean, I began to suspect. The last generation or two that have come along, they so demanded to be visible and they've taken for granted everything that the gay community had fought for so hard for a long time - it was wiped away from their minds that they were not accepted or not loved. I mean, they may have known it but they didn't own it.

Jane: I agree, and I'm very optimistic. I found what Justice Kennedy said - that it should be looked at as sex discrimination - cause for optimism.

I remember when this show was announced, everyone was really hyped about you two getting back together, but they were also hoping for a Dolly Parton cameo. Has that been discussed as a real possibility amongst showrunners?

Lily: Well, it's been discussed because so many people inquired about it and thought about it. Of course Dolly's a good friend and the three of us really like each other and we've been friends all these years, but because "Grace and Frankie" is set apart, we want to establish our identity before we think about dragging the "Nine to Five" life into it.

Jane: It's a different style. It's a different animal. We wanna keep it that way. For now, anyway.

What do you think your "Nine to Five" characters, Judy and Violet, are up to these days?

Jane: Violet's probably heading up a Silicon Valley company! Maybe we're married!

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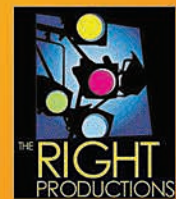


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▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 20

The Michigan Theater and the Ann Arbor Chapter of the American Guild of Organist "Special Screening of "The Phantom of the Opera"" Tickets: \$10-15. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. May 17. 734-668-8397. Michtheater.org

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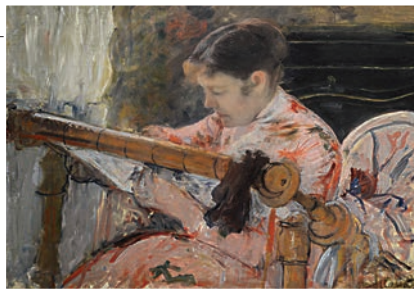
10 Naked Men Tickets: \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. May 15 - June 8. 248-545-5545. thewingwald.com

All Star Showdown Tickets: \$15. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, The Elizabeth Theater, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. Through May 16. gocomedy.net

Bad Jews Tickets: \$41-48. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company, in the DeRoy Theatre on the campus of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. May 20 - June 14. 248-788-2900. jetttheatre.org

Faust Tickets: \$25-128. Michigan Opera Theatre, Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Through May 17. 313-237-SING. michiganopera.org

Frost/Nixon Tickets: \$5-20. What A Do Theatre, 4071 Dickman Rd., Springfield.



Editor's Pick

The Flint Institute of Arts will join a worldwide community of museums on May 18 to celebrate The International Council of Museums' (ICOM) International Museum Day. To mark the occasion, the FIA will offer free admission to the galleries and special exhibitions. The FIA Museum Shop will offer members a 20-percent discount and non-members a 10-percent discount. The Palette Café will offer a 10-percent discount to all patrons.

This year's theme will be "Museums for a sustainable society." The theme recognizes the role of museums in raising public awareness about the need for a society that is less wasteful, more cooperative and uses resources in a way that respects living systems. By bringing museums to the forefront of this model of a sustainable society, the International Museum Day theme aims to foster awareness among the whole society about the current consequences of human action on the planet and the absolute necessity of changing its economic and social model.

Currently on view at the FIA is "Style Moderne: French Art Deco Enameled Glass" from the Ed & Karen Ogul Collection (through September 23), "The Islander: Water Anderson Watercolors" (through June 25) and more. The Flint Institute of Arts is located just two blocks off I-475 in the Flint Cultural Center between the University of Michigan-Flint and Mott Community College.

Through May 23. 269-282-1953. whatado.org

Hamlet Tickets: \$10 in advance only. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Summer Home, 20937 John R., Hazel

Park. Through June 7. slipstreamti.com

Luv Music Benefit. Tickets: \$50-100. Matrix Theatre, Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. 7:30 p.m. May 15. 313-967-0999. Matrixtheatre.org

Meshuggah-Nuns Tickets: \$26-41. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through May 17. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles Tickets:

\$30-70. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. May 17. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Salvage Tickets: \$12. 50-41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through May 24. 734-663-0681. Pntheatre.org

The Carol Burnett Show - Mama's Family Takes Over Tickets: \$10 for the show; \$13-15 for the meal. Reservations required. TNT Productions, Downriver Council for the Arts, 81 Chestnut St., Wyandotte. Through May 16. 734-626-8395. Facebook.com/groups/209703561488/

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 Tempest . Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through May 17. 313-833-7900. Mosaicdetroit.org

Ties That Bind Real stories. True stories. Told live. Tickets: \$16 online. The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren, Detroit. 8 p.m. May 15. twistedtellers.org

ART 'N' AROUND

DIA "Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward

Ave., Detroit. Feb. 6 - May 17. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Beauty, Passion and Bliss: 19th Century Masterworks". 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. May 17 - Aug. 16. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

MOCAD "The Obama Paintings and the Lincoln Monument". Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. May 15 - Aug. 2. 313-832-6622. Mocadoetroit.org

River's Edge Gallery "Dream(Face) Land" 3024 Biddle, Wyandotte. May 15 - June 12. Artattheedge.com

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

UMMA "Mine More Coal: War Effort and Americanism in World War I Posters". 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. May 9 - Sep. 20. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan, Inst. for Research on Women and Gender "Re-imagining Gender" Lane Hall, 204 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 15 - June 26. 734-764-9537. lrwg.research.umich.edu/events/exhibitions.html

Woodside Church "A Body of Water" Tickets: \$15. Woodside Church, 1509 E. Court St., Flint. May 3 - May 15. 810-767-4911. Woodsidechurch.net

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► Screen Queen

Continued from p.16

blasts. The sneers don't end there; "The More You Know" offers six minutes of stereotype debunking via PSA-style segments, and "Racial Insurance" is essentially black eye for the white guy. Outtakes, deleted scenes and a making-of are also included.

Also Out



The Theory of Everything

Whether he's Marilyn Monroe's boy-toy, the real-life physicist Stephen Hawking or, in the forthcoming "The Danish Girl," a trans woman, Eddie Redmayne's versatility is as alluring

as the shiny, happy actor himself. And now he has an Oscar to prove it. Winner of Best Actor for his spot-on portrayal of Hawking in the magically moving "The Theory of Everything," Redmayne fully embodies the shattered-but-inspiring life he depicts, perfectly capturing the charming sincerity, undying humor and gradual physical impairment required of someone afflicted with motor neurone disease. Special features are few: a director commentary, a brief behind-the-scenes and a handful of deleted scenes.



Birdman

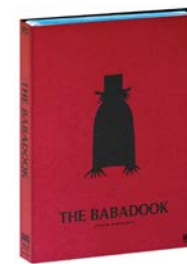
The ego is a screaming nuisance in "Birdman," an insane acid trip starring Michael Keaton as a washed-up actor who hangs out in the deep, dark corners of his own head. It's messy in there,

and for someone whose career has taken a nosedive – he's aged out of "Birdman," the superhero role that earned him notoriety – Riggan Thomson is plagued by being, well, Riggan Thomson. Keaton excels as a neurotic narcissistic whose hallucinations get the best of him as he attempts to reclaim his heyday glory with a Broadway production, unraveling in the process. Adding to the insanity is Emma Stone as his delirious daughter and the technical zippiness of the seemingly-but-not-actually ceaseless shot. Besides a peek into the making of "Birdman," there's also a striking exchange between actor and director during "A Conversation with Michael Keaton and Alejandro G. Iñárritu."

Olive Kitteridge

Just in case you somehow forgot that Frances McDormand is one of the greatest living actresses of our time, "Olive Kitteridge" is here to remind you. As the titular protagonist

in this beautifully bleak four-part HBO miniseries, the " Fargo" dynamo is a despicable monster, bound to a graceless existence due in large part to a mentally unstable lineage. Why do you still feel so deeply for someone who's so intolerable? Because McDormand. The masterclass mines the mind and heart of someone suffering mental illness, scaling her every emotion and experience to full effectiveness. At once dreary and life-affirming, "Olive Kitteridge" is television at its most poetic. Extras are non-existent, but with four hours of McDormand's brilliance, it hardly matters.



The Babadook

Real-life horrors are, oftentimes, more horrific than the made-up yarns of the cinematic frights creeping our psyche. Paralyzed by her own, Amelia, a widowed mother (a sympathetic Essie Davis), falls into

a psychological fit on the anniversary of her husband's untimely death. The trigger? A children's book called "The Babadook," an ominous pop-up that devours Amelia's mentally unstable, grief-stricken mind. The demon within is often the worst kind, as we learn in this clever and surprisingly touching nail-bitter about the toll tragedy can take, and the unbreakable bond between mother and child. Director Jennifer Kent's original concept, the short film "Monster," is included among a haunting heap of bonus features.



Wild

Reese Witherspoon leaves the pink résumé paper at home in "Wild." Based on Cheryl Strayed's memoir, the "Legally Blonde" bend-and-snapper steps into Strayed's hiking boots,

packing her bags and the shattered bits of her heart for a trek through the Pacific Crest Trail. The hope of healing her grief-stricken wounds and abating her recklessness follows her through this 1,000-plus-mile stretch of enlightenment and renewal. Jean-Marc Vallée directs a standout performance from Witherspoon, who acts alongside the also-compelling Laura Dern (as her mother in flashbacks), during his raw, picturesque followup to "Dallas Buyers Club." Strayed relates the movie to her own life during the extras, which also include a Vallée commentary, deleted scenes and a look at the rustic Oregon shoot.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com.

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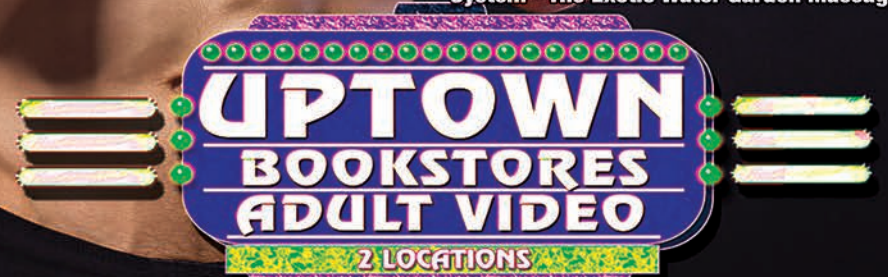
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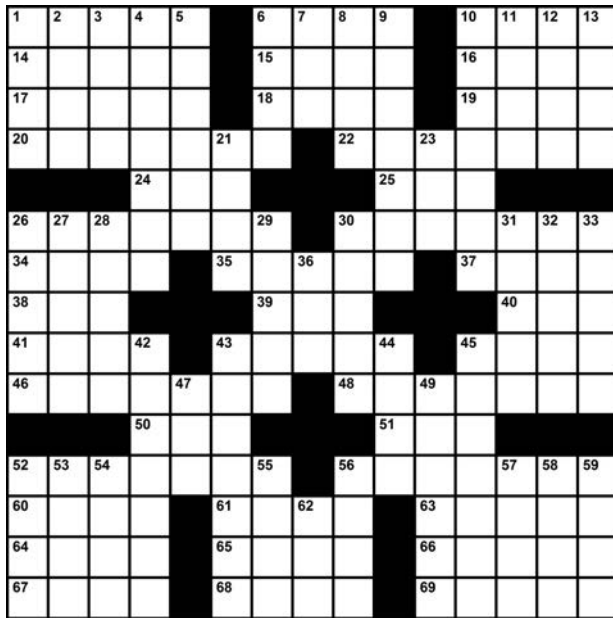
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Across

- 1 Sounds of stallions on streets
- 6 Low man in the loft
- 10 *Guillermo of "Weeds"
- 14 Like a room by Thom Filicia
- 15 "It ___ Necessarily So"
- 16 Prime the poker pot

- 17 It arouses you in bed
- 18 Unappetizing fare
- 19 Creator of Sal Mineo's "Exodus" character
- 20 *Jim of "The Big Bang Theory"
- 22 *Jonathan of "Mean Girls"
- 24 Pinch opening?
- 25 Small fry

- 26 Marble named for a pussy part
- 30 Inning to stretch in
- 34 State of gay Patee
- 35 Look from Snidely
- 37 Type of straits for straights in a gay bar?
- 38 Divided terr.
- 39 Drops on the grass
- 40 Made a mark in "Hollywood Squares"
- 41 Position at sea
- 43 "Air Music" composer Ned
- 45 The sound of Patti LaBelle?
- 46 Bury again
- 48 Thaw with Nureyev's land
- 50 LP successors
- 51 Edvard Grieg's land (abbr.)
- 52 *Sarah of "American Horror Story"
- 56 *Alan of "The Good Wife"
- 60 Food on the floor
- 61 Go lickety-split
- 63 Soap star Susan
- 64 Vows for many gays these days
- 65 1982 Disney flick
- 66 Rupert Everett's "An ___ Husband"
- 67 *Nathan of "The Good Wife"
- 68 Dundee denizen
- 69 ___ T. Lardbottom of "Kudzu"

Down

- 1 E.M. Forster's fellow
- 2 Song with the line "girls will be boys and boys will be girls"
- 3 Nicky, in "Funny Girl"
- 4 Hang tough
- 5 *Raven of "The Cosby Show"
- 6 Bases for Glenn Burke

- 7 Feel badly
- 8 Stuffed shirt
- 9 Member of the apostles?
- 10 Overcome
- 11 Start of an Evan Wolfson memo
- 12 Keep ___ (persevere)
- 13 Quality of Feniger's cooking
- 21 Thumbs-down votes
- 23 Mo. to elect pro-gay pols
- 26 Wood that doesn't need moth balls
- 27 " ___ of Two Cities"
- 28 *George of "Star Trek"
- 29 Moon in "Return of the Jedi"
- 30 Clinched, with "up"
- 31 *Cynthia of "Sex and the City"
- 32 Staffordshire river
- 33 Hem and haw
- 36 Always, to Byron
- 42 Wall off
- 43 P-town and Fire Island
- 44 Cafeteria list
- 45 Islands in the Atlantic
- 47 Scores by David Kopay
- 49 *Lily of "Nashville"
- 52 Beach toy
- 53 Alan of "The Object of My Affection"
- 54 Second word of fairy tales
- 55 Drug cop
- 56 Relief of Lincoln
- 57 Tops cakes
- 58 Mar. Madness source
- 59 Quark founder Tim
- 62 Loving murmur

Solution on pg. 20



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