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What New Federal Rules
On Trans Care Might Mean
Creep Of The Week Says
Rainbows Are Evil

*Pamper
Your Pet*

- PG. 19



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“ I got one guy who wrote me saying he gets bullied a lot in school because he’s gay. He says he just wants me to empower him to get through that and get through the torment. ”

Leona Lewis Opens Up About Her Influential Gay Uncle, Talks ‘Gay Husbands’ & Drag Queen Bingo

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Join The Conversation @ PrideSource.com



PAMPER YOUR PETS

Andrea Pociask and her partner Amber Wickett are proud parents to Chase, a white mastiff/pit bull terrier mix with subaortic stenosis, a terminal genetic heart condition that affects the left side of his heart. It’s unknown how long Chase has to live, but this couple is determined to give him the time of his life.

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BRIEFS

MI Supreme Court Orders Reconsideration Of Custody Case Involving Lesbian Parents

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING – On Friday, the Michigan Supreme Court ordered the Michigan Court of Appeals to reconsider its findings in a custody dispute between an upper peninsula couple – Jennifer Stankevich and Leann Milliron.

The couple married in 2007 in Canada. Sometime before their marriage, Milliron gave birth to a child, conceived by artificial insemination. The two cared for the child together until they split up in 2009. The couple agreed to share visitation with the child, but could not come to a common agreement as to what that schedule looked like.

Stankevich filed an action in Dickinson County Circuit Court for custody and visitation rights. That court dismissed the claims because Michigan did not recognize same-sex marriages. She appealed that ruling.

In October 2013, the Appeals Court upheld a decision by Dickinson County to throw out a lawsuit for custody of a minor child born to the couple. Stankevich appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court, which rather than rule, put their consideration in abeyance until the appeals process played out with the DeBoer case.

Friday, the Supreme Court revisited that appeal. Rather than take the case up, the court vacated the October 2013 decision of the Court of Appeals, and remanded the case back to the court for reconsideration taking into account the Obergefell v. Hodges decision released in June by the U.S. Supreme Court. Obergefell was the decision which made marriage equality the rule of the land.

Clerk Won't Interfere With Gay Marriage Licenses

MOREHEAD, Ky. (AP) – Clerk Kim Davis returned to work Sept. 14 for the first time since being jailed for disobeying a federal judge and said she was faced with a “seemingly impossible choice” between following her conscience and losing her freedom over denying marriage licenses to gay couples.

With her voice shaking, she said she decided not to interfere with deputy clerks who will continue to hand out the marriage licenses in Rowan County, but Davis declared they would not be authorized by her and she questioned their validity.

In her first day back after a five-day stint in jail, Davis said she was torn between obeying God and a directive from the judge that “forces me to disobey God.” Davis, an Apostolic Christian, believes gay marriage is a sin.

“I’m here before you this morning with a seemingly impossible choice that I do not wish upon any of my fellow Americans: my conscience or my freedom,” Davis said, reading from a hand-written statement outside the courthouse where she works.

Attorneys Seek \$11 Million-Plus In Marriage Legal Fees

CINCINNATI (AP) – Attorneys who brought the Ohio lawsuit that led to a Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage want a judge to approve their request for more than \$1 million in legal fees and expenses from the state.

The attorneys say the request is reasonable because of the difficulty of the case and the importance of the issue. They also argued in a filing Friday for a court-ordered 50 percent enhancement of their \$1.1 million request.

The lawyers say such an enhancement is permissible because their work resulted in a landmark court decision and the attorneys took on a difficult and unpopular case.

The Cincinnati lawyers represented James Obergefell, who sued Ohio’s health director for refusing to list him as the surviving spouse on his husband’s death certificate.

Some N.C. Magistrates Say No To Same-Sex Marriages

MARION, N.C. (AP) – A supervising judge says magistrates in a northwestern North Carolina county are refusing to perform same-sex marriages, citing the state’s religious exemption law.

WLOS-TV in Asheville reports four McDowell County magistrates have recused themselves from performing the ceremonies. Magistrates from a neighboring county are substituting.

Supervising Judge Randy Poole said that, by law, the McDowell magistrates cannot perform any kind of marriages for six months if they refuse to wed gay couples.

State lawmakers adopted a measure in June that allows court officials to refuse to perform gay marriages because of their religious beliefs. Gov. Pat McCrory vetoed it, but the N.C. Senate and House overrode his veto.

Columbia University Law School Professor Katherine Franke says the North Carolina law violates the U.S. Constitution’s requirement that state governments operate in a “religiously neutral” fashion.

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AIDS Walk Detroit Participants Reflect On The Disease, Then And Now

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

ROYAL OAK – The 25th annual AIDS Walk Detroit took place Sunday. Organizers estimated over 1,000 people were in attendance and anticipate they will have raised more than \$160,000 by the time they've finished accepting donations next month. These, however, are not the numbers that AIDS Walk Detroit was hoping for. On their website, organizers announced they had "ambitiously" set a goal of raising \$225,000 and seeing more than 3,500 folks participate. While organizers were undoubtedly disappointed with the numbers, so, too, were many of the walkers.

"I wish it was a little bit larger," said David Agius, who walked this year for the 20th time. "In the beginning it was a little bit more than it is now. But it's not in the newspaper anymore. People think it's gone, but it really isn't gone."

Not by a longshot. The walk's emcee, Dr. Partha Nandi, gave out some staggering statistics just before the walk began.

"You know that commercial, 'You've come a long way, baby?'" Nandi asked the crowd. "Absolutely, we have. But there's a lot of work to be done. (An estimated) 37 million people are living with HIV disease today. In 2014, 2 million people around the world were newly infected with HIV ... as we do this walk, 230 people per hour get infected with HIV, 5,600 people every single day."

Mary Liz Curtin of lifestyle store Leon & Lulu not only walked but was also a sponsor. She, too, noticed a decline in attendance.

"I think people are forgetting it," she said. "It breaks my heart that the younger people think that it's just something you can just take a little cocktail for and they think it's a cocktail in a drink with an umbrella; I happen to know it's a little more complicated than that. So it makes me sad to see the young kids getting infected, and now there's a whole new group

“For so many people this was still a death sentence. People were dying. I did HIV/AIDS law. I used to do wills for people and power of attorney and help them get social security benefits and usually they would pass away. So I just remember all these wonderful people who are gone.**”**

- Jay Kaplan, who has participated in AIDS Walk Detroit every year since it began in 1991.



The AIDS Memorial Quilt always produces an emotional response in those who view it. Below, Committed for Christ sang two inspirational songs before the start of the walk, Dr. Partha Nandi served as the emcee for the walk, and the lifestyle store Leon & Lulu once again provided the "cash car" for the walk. The store pledged to match all donations dropped off at the car. BTL photos: Jason A. Michael



of older HIV positive people dealing with age related diseases that no one ever thought they'd get. So it's fabulous that they're old enough to get diabetes, but it's a whole other set of complications."

Dr. Richard Cooke, a primary care physician for HIV-positive patients and an AIDS Walk Detroit board member, agreed.

"Today I treat patients with HIV and they're living to the point where I get to treat diabetes and hypertension and all the diseases that people today are fortunate enough to be able to have," said Cooke. "Because for so many years we lost kids who were 20, 25, 30 years old, and they never lived long enough to reach a ripe old age and have grandkids. Now, I get to do annual well visits. And today the kids that unfortunately still get it, I can talk to them and explain to them that we're fortunate to be able to treat it like any other chronic disease. But understanding that you have to take special care of yourself but you can still live a full, long life."

Jay Kaplan, who has participated in AIDS Walk Detroit every year

since it began in 1991, was witness to a time when HIV was much more than merely a chronic illness.

"I just remember that it was a very different time," Kaplan said. "For so many people this was still a death sentence. People were dying. I did HIV/AIDS law. I used to do wills for people and power of attorney and help them get social security benefits and usually they would pass away. So I just remember all these wonderful people who are gone."

"I lost a lot of people who were very close to me and people that I knew," Kaplan continued. "It's still a very important thing. Even though it's a chronic illness, people still get infected. We need to have services, treatment and education available to people."

Walker Frank D'Amore echoed Kaplan's sentiments.

"There's no cure for AIDS yet," said D'Amore. "People are still affected by and infected with it. Agencies are having their funding cut. So if I can help raise funds, that's what I'm going to do."

See AIDS Walk, next page

New Executive Director Joins World AIDS Day Detroit Maxwell Cameron Joins Agency As Fifth Anniversary Arrives

BY BTL STAFF

FERNDALE – With just 76 days to go at presstime, World AIDS Day Detroit has hired Maxwell Cameron as its first full time executive director as it looks to grow in its fifth year of operations. The organization has also relocated its offices to 429 Livernois Ave.



Maxwell Cameron

in Ferndale as part of this expansion.

“This year is the fifth anniversary of World AIDS Day Detroit, and we are thrilled to have Maxwell on board to lead the organization’s growing operations. It is time to end AIDS and we can all play a role in delivering an AIDS-free generation. Cameron’s leadership will help us to grow and expand our community partnerships that allow us to create a voice that is audible to the public,” said Phil Kucab, WADD’s board president and founder.

Cameron began his work in HIV in 2005 when he founded a student-led organization called AIDS Tanzania, which focused on counseling and testing in northern Tanzania.

Since then he has held various roles with AIDS service organizations, including AmeriCorps, AIDS Walk Detroit, AIDS Walk San Francisco, and most recently as the corporate sponsorship and donations manager for the Canadian AIDS Society.

Since 2011, World AIDS Day Detroit has worked to bring a community severely impacted by HIV/AIDS together, with one voice, towards an AIDS-free generation. The organization has brought together community organizations, political and business leaders, medical professionals and the general public through its events and initiatives. These events have included a Mayors Breakfast, a youth-focused educational symposium and a benefit concert.

“This year, we are going to capitalize on the success and experience of our organization and make World AIDS Day even bigger and more exciting,” explained Cameron.

Kucab reminds everyone why bringing awareness to HIV/AIDS is so important, saying, “One in five people living with HIV do not even know they have it. Treatment and care is accessible, yet less than half of the people in and around Detroit who have HIV are being treated. HIV medications save lives and help prevent the spread of the disease.”

For more information, please visit www.worldaidsdayus.com. World AIDS Day is held annually on Dec. 1.



► AIDS Walk

Continued from p. 6

And that’s what AIDS Walk Detroit continues to do, even in a changing climate. To date, the walk has raised \$3.8 million to benefit HIV/AIDS services here in Michigan in its 25 year history. The numbers may be down, but organizers are still understandably pleased with their efforts.

“It was a wonderful day bringing together

over a thousand people to honor the lives of those we’ve lost to HIV/AIDS, celebrate those who are living with the virus today and support work in HIV prevention and care across Metro Detroit,” said AIDS Walk Detroit board member Teresa Roscoe in a statement. “We want to thank the walkers, volunteers and sponsors who helped make the event possible as we work towards an end to HIV.”

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Backlash Fought With Power And Love At Religious Symposium

BY JAN STEVENSON

DETROIT— Faith, freedom and leadership were explored and challenged by over 60 clergy and laity at a symposium entitled “Liberating Religious Liberty” Sept. 10 on the campus of Wayne State University.

Hosted by The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at Pacific School of Religion and the ACLU of Michigan, along with other local organizations, the summit was a full day of workshops and discussion about the role of faith in public life, the conflicts between some religious doctrines and civil rights and how to move forward towards a more just and inclusive environment both in the public

“*What we worked on today is what I believe, which is that beliefs should not be weapons.*”

— Rev. Roland Stringfellow, senior pastor at Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit.

sphere and in houses of worship.

“We are celebrating the work we did today, and we are building a movement and a future together,” said Rana Elmir of the ACLU of Michigan at the final reception that evening. “But liberty and justice for all is a marathon, not a sprint ... I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that we still have a ton of work to do as a social justice movement and a community.”

Rev. Roland Stringfellow, senior pastor at Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, said, “What we worked on today is what I believe, which is that beliefs should not be weapons. Because some people maintain a very narrow and rigid view of religion, it causes a lot of spiritual violence.”

Stringfellow, one of the principle organizers of the day-long event, warned of the dangers presented by the religious freedom bills cropping up in legislatures across the country. “People are literally dying spiritually, emotionally and physically due to the rejection they hear from the pulpit, from their families and even from our legislators. Today is about motivating the base so we can have one solitary voice as we speak to our political leaders to say that these laws strip people of their humanity and that is not what government should be about.”



Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and Rev. Roland Stringfellow, senior pastor at Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, encouraged people to celebrate victories but stay vigilant in fighting the backlash. BTL photo: Jan Stevenson

The evening was capped off with a funny, moving and inspirational message from Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. She said the LGBTQ community has much to celebrate with the passage of marriage equality, but must also remember that this victory was achieved because so many people stood with the LGBTQ community. “How we got to this moment is that people who didn’t have a dog in this fight stood up for us,” said Kendell. “Ben Franklin is credited as saying, ‘Justice will not be served until those that are unaffected by injustice are as outraged as those who are.’ People who did not know someone who was LGBT, who did not have a family member, stood up and voted or asked a co-worker to not say discriminatory things.”

“The challenge for us will be to keep fighting for those who still need our help – for poor LGBT people, rural LGBT people, LGBT people of color, trans people – or

“*We have now, in this country, in this movement, power and love. So what are we going to do with it? We are going to demand justice and correct everything we can with love because we’ve benefitted from that very combination.*”

— Kate Kendell

imagine that someone who is a poor, trans, African-American woman in rural Alabama! She needs us, so showing up for her answers the moral charge of paying forward the moment that we are now enjoying.”

Kendell closed by quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, “Power without love is reckless and abusive. Love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is

love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

“We have now, in this country, in this movement, power and love. So what are we going to do with it?” asked Kendell. “We are going to demand justice and correct everything we can with love because we’ve benefitted from that very combination.”

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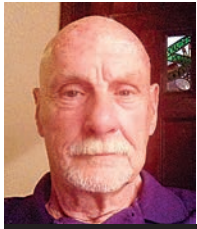
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FOR MATURE AUDIENCES



Is Mary's Little Lamb Gay? Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Every family has at least one stray sheep contentedly nibbling forbidden pasture under the shade of the mythic forbidden-apple tree. Ours was my 80-year-old Aunt Tootsie.

She had a habit of muttering in her cups, "Sail off into the wind, sailor!" when she had one too many. (Martinis, not sailors.)

Whether that was Aunt Tootsie's fair-weather sign-on or a gale warning turn-off was never quite determined at our infrequent family get-togethers. (It did, however, spark my early interest in sailors, nautical maneuvers and dinghies.)

Speaking of lost sheep: A recent British scientific study finds that 6 to 8 percent of rams are totally gay or, if you prefer, "pinkos." These same-sex woolies – not to be confused with football, bun-slapping muttonheads – have a different brain structuring than their straight-shagging bovine counterparts.

While we gay woolies find same-sex rutting to be of intriguing clinical interest – that's what X-tube's really all about – our non-gay, biblical woolites are obsessed with these ramifications in animal husbandry. (Being washed in the Blood of the Lamb is a little too close for their laundromating comfort.)

Holy Protecting Pets (HPP! for short)! A family values organization located in Waggoff, Georgia wants so-called "pink sheep" rams to be corralled in ex-gay prayer pens for reparative therapy, Bible verse counseling, fleece back combing, short horn retwisting. And, if all else fails, strictly kosher neutering.

HPP! president Rev. Mark-Luke Dutibound expresses grave concern about the British data. "I'm convinced it's a Satanic plot. It's enough that we've made scapegoats out of gays and lesbians; now we've got these damnable four-legged sexual considerations to deal with.

"You can be certain that when sheep, ewes, rams, lambkins – and for that matter pigs, cows, does, horses, dogs, cats, wombats – came off Noah's Ark, they were all straight and 40 days really horny to multiply. But not fruitfully."

HPP! gets worried e-mails from parents who are wondering about their own impressionable kids. "What do I tell my Tommy about counting his bedtime sheep?" asks one concerned daddy. "What if just one sheep is, you know, a 'pinko'? Do they jump fences differently?"

"And what's this business about one for the master, one for the dame, one for the little boy who lived down the lane? Are they into some kinda kiddy kink? Yes sir! Yes sir! Three bags full! It's scary."

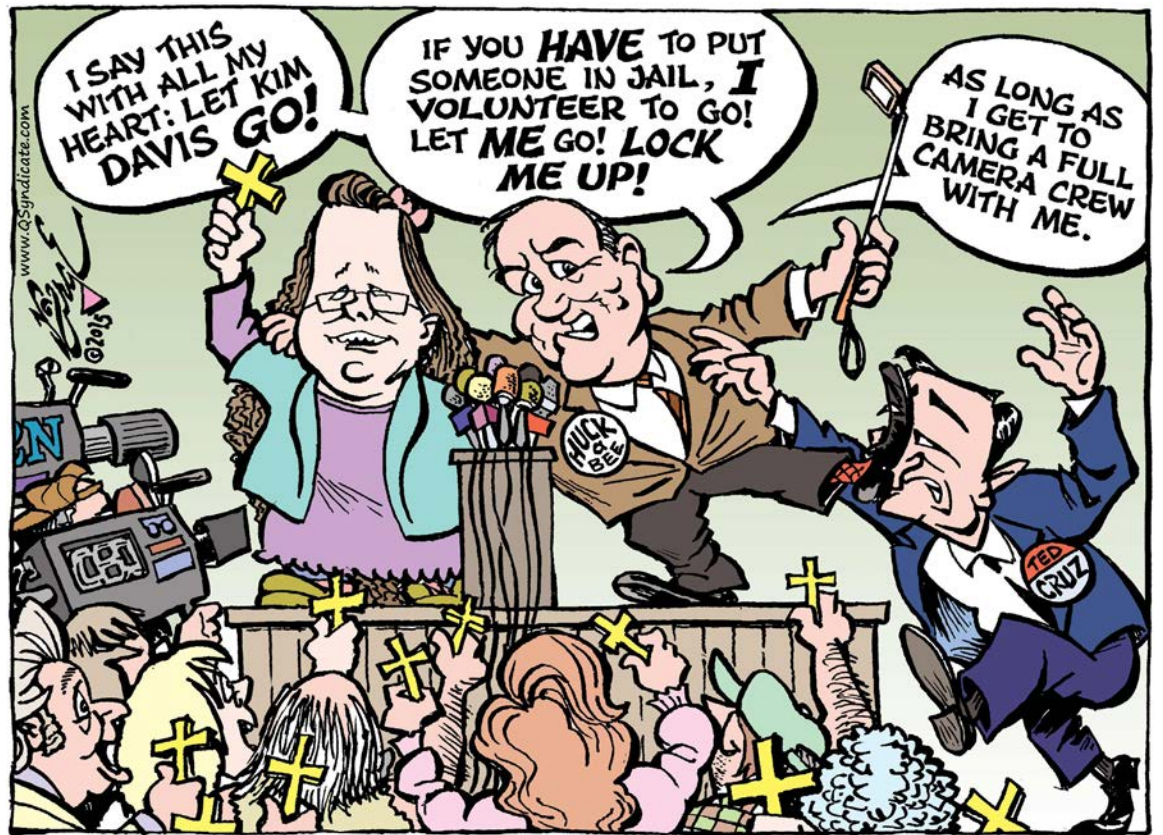
A panicked mom in Palin County, Alaska, frets, "What if my Nora asks about Mary's Little Lamb? Is that Mary as in gay, by the way? Do tainted lambs follow children to kindergarten? Would it help to home school my kids, or my kids' kids or their kids' kids? Help! I'm not kidding."

"We advise parents not to take kids under 12 to farms where the gay rams are grazing," said Rev. Dutibound at an HPP! sheep shearing fundraiser. "It's bleatingly bad form that zoo chimps openly diddle. Now this. We don't approve of same-sex animal husbandry in any form!"

Predictably, gay activists are alarmed at these blatant instances of kidophobia. "Why can't these HPP!-ers just let these herbivores munch grass and mount each other in peace? Truth is, some animals have little hornies. Some animals have big hornies. Who gives a rat's winkie, anyway?"

"If you can't cuddle up to a sheep – straight or gay, bi or transgender – for heaven's sake butt out. That should be everybody's bottom line. No bull about it!"

Charles@pridesource.com



Viewpoint

What New Federal Rules On Trans Care Might Mean For Michigan

BY JAY KAPLAN

On Sept. 3, 2015 the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued its proposed rules on anti-discrimination protections under the Affordable Care Act. These proposed rules have been long and eagerly awaited by the transgender community. The regulations make it clear that transgender people are protected against discrimination in both health insurance coverage and health care insurance, under the theory of sex discrimination. For example, if a private or government insurer covers estrogen treatments for a cisgender woman going through menopause, it cannot refuse to cover such treatments for a transgender woman, whose doctor has determined them to be medically

necessary.

While the proposed regulations do not mandate an affirmative duty by insurers to cover gender confirmation (or gender reassignment surgery), some procedures related to gender reassignment surgery that are covered for cisgender persons, such as a hysterectomy or top surgery, may also have to be covered for transgender persons. These proposed regulations go a long way towards redressing a long shameful history of policies and practices that have put transgender people on the margins of the health care system, unable to get a foot in the door.

For years, private health insurers have had blanket exclusions for transgender related health treatment, including hormone therapy, which

is a standard accepted treatment for gender dysphoria according to the World Professional Organization for Transgender Health (WPATH). The ACA was designed to increase access to health care for millions of uninsured Americans, including transgender people. However, the way the ACA has been implemented in the state of Michigan has denied that promise for many in the transgender community. The ACA requires all participating states to select a state benchmark insurance plan that sets a minimum standard of coverage for all other participating health insurance companies to adhere to. Michigan chose Priority Health as its benchmark plan. However, Priority

See Trans Health, next page

► **Trans Care**

Continued from p. 10

Health, in its policy for small employers, denies coverage for any medical service or procedure related to gender transition. As a result of this, some private insurers like Blue Cross Blue Shield that were previously covering hormone therapy are now refusing to pay for such therapy, citing Priority Health's exclusion as part of the state's benchmark plan.

The ACA was designed to increase access to health care for millions of uninsured Americans, including transgender people. However, the way the ACA has been implemented in the state of Michigan has denied that promise for many in the transgender community.

In addition, Michigan's Medicaid and expanded Medicaid programs prohibit payment for any medications related to gender identity conditions, depriving the most financially needy of transgender persons access to essential medications necessary for their transition. This policy was developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, more than a decade ago, with no public input and clearly with a disregard for medical science and treatment standards. Clearly, both private and public insurance policies would be in violation of the proposed regulations and could be challenged.

In a recent survey conducted by the Transgender Center for Equality, 19 percent of transgender persons reported being refused medical care, 28 percent were subjected to harassment and 2 percent said that they were victims of violence in doctor's offices. Such statistics clearly point out the need for comprehensive reform. These proposed regulations provide an important and much needed tool to challenge the widespread discrimination against transgender people in accessing health services and point the way to reforming unfair private and public policies and practices that have denied access.

Jay Kaplan is the staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project.



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Federal Court: Michigan HIV Confidentiality Law Doesn't Apply To Governments

BY TODD HEYWOOD

In June, the Federal District Court in Detroit ruled that Michigan's confidentiality law, which subjects those who reveal HIV testing information and medical files to potential criminal and civil actions, does not apply to "government entities."

The lawsuit stems from an Aug. 3, 2012 traffic stop. Shalandra Jones and her then-fiancé were stopped by Dearborn Police Officer Eric Lacey. Lacey stopped the couple because the vehicle allegedly had a burned out brake light. As he discussed the situation with the couple, he claimed to smell marijuana. Jones produced a small amount of marijuana, and Lacey requested and received permission to search the vehicle.

During his search, Lacey found Jones' HIV medications. Dashcam video of the incident shows Lacey telling Shalandra Jones that she should disclose her HIV-positive status whenever a police officer asks her to step out of a vehicle. He said he was "pissed" that Jones hadn't disclosed her status before he searched the vehicle, and he told the couple: "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."

Legal experts say there is no legal obligation in Michigan for a person with HIV to disclose his or her status to a police officer.

She was ticketed for marijuana possession – a criminal misdemeanor. City officials attempted to prosecute Jones for the marijuana possession despite her qualifying for a medical marijuana defense. Officials repeatedly offered to drop the criminal charge if Jones would sign a waiver of civil rights and agree not to sue the city, Moore said at the time.

Lacey made repeated statements expressing his fear of being infected with HIV or other diseases after coming in contact with the woman's earrings, which were in her purse, during the search of the couple's vehicle. At other points, however, he seemed to say that he understood that he was not at risk for contracting HIV. He expressed concerns about the possibility of being exposed to contaminated needles in the course of his search, but he did not find any needles in the vehicle. He also said he was worried about taking diseases home to his family.

The American Independent News Network filed a Freedom of Information

Act request with the city of Dearborn for the dashboard video of the incident, and subsequently published that video. In the video, Jones' HIV status is revealed.

Jones' attorney, Joshua Moore of Detroit Legal Services, argued the release of the video, unredacted, violated Michigan's confidentiality law. The court disagreed.

Judge Laurie Michelson ruled that the law only applies to a person, which does not include a common definition of government agencies. She further ruled that there was no evidence that a person was involved in releasing the video, and thus the HIV status, under the FOIA request, but rather it was a government entity which released the information.

"We are disappointed that the District Court, in effect, has gutted Michigan's HIV confidentiality law," Moore told POZ Magazine last week. "Under this ruling, government entities, which are most likely to possess the names of people living with HIV, are not subject to criminal sanctions if they identify a person with HIV. That's dangerous for people living with HIV, and it's important Michigan's Legislature address this immediately."

And he is not alone in challenging the decision.

"It is disappointing that the Court finds that Michigan's confidentiality law does not pertain to governmental entities," Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the LGBT Project of the ACLU of Michigan, told the newsmagazine. "However, a governmental entity could still be held liable for releasing medical information and information about a person's HIV status under both HIPAA and the constitutional guarantees of privacy (in the instance of the booking sheet), particularly where the facts demonstrate that the aggrieved individual has not publicly disclosed their HIV status. And you're correct that when you file an FOIA that it is the discretion and determination of the local governments as to what they will release, and this could result in them releasing information that she shouldn't. However there can be legal consequences for this."

State health officials said the ruling would have no impact on the state Department of Health and Human Services handling of HIV information, which would remain confidential.

Jones and the city of Dearborn have settled the discrimination lawsuit, although conditions of the settlement are not known at this time.

Courser Resigns, Gamrat Expelled From State House, 'Deceitful Conduct' Cited

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING – Tea party conservative lawmakers Reps. Cindy Gamrat, R-Plainwell, and Todd Courser, R-Lapeer, are no longer representatives in the Michigan House.

After a marathon session of the House—which began at noon last Thursday and ended around 4:30 a.m. Friday – Courser resigned and Gamrat was expelled by a 91-12 vote of the House. Gamrat's expulsion puts her in the history books as the fourth sitting representative to be removed from the Legislature by a vote of the body.

Courser submitted a letter of resignation at 3:12 a.m. as the House prepared to vote for a third time on a resolution to expel him. Gamrat refused to resign, and an expulsion resolution booting her from the Legislature passed shortly after 4 a.m. She was immediately escorted off the House floor by House security, and state police escorted her from the building, reported MLive.com.

The Courser resolution was facing a third vote, after Democrats refused to cast a "yea" or "nay" vote on the resolution, and in violation of the House rules.

"My fellow Democrats are simply asking for a full, accountable and transparent investigation before we take an action that has only occurred a few times in the history of this state," said Democratic Leader Tim Greimel, D-Auburn Hills, in a statement. The statement was released Thursday night at about 6:30 p.m. "We believe it is not too much to ask for the select committee to exercise due diligence, follow due process and have a complete picture of what happened, and who knew about it and when, before taking such an extreme step as expulsion. The actions of the two representatives were indeed egregious, and removing them from office may be warranted. However, the purpose of the investigation, and whatever action the committee deemed appropriate, was supposed to

restore the faith and trust of the public to this body. When the committee members struck relevant testimony from the record, disallowed the subpoena of material witnesses and refused to initiate an independent investigation, they are leaving questions unanswered raising doubt in the outcome. We cannot vote for expulsion until we have a full picture of the issue at hand."

As the night wore on, GOP leaders struck a deal with Democrats which allowed the expulsion process to play out. That deal means that the whole affair will now be investigated by both the Michigan State Police and the Attorney General's office.

The two were targeted after the Detroit News published audio secretly recorded by a former staffer of their office. The recordings revealed a bizarre plot – hatched by Courser – to send out an email accusing Courser of being a "porn addicted bisexual pervert." The goal of the email, Courser explained in one recording, was to "inoculate the herd" with a "controlled burn" – in other words, mislead voters into disbelieving he and Gamrat were having an extramarital affair.

Within hours of the story appearing in the Detroit News, Republican Speaker of the House Kevin Cotter ordered the House Business Office to

investigate the pair for potential violations of House rules and misuse of taxpayer resources.

That report was released last week and found the conservative duo had engaged in "deceptive, deceitful and outright dishonest conduct."

Courser had been defiant since the beginning, going so far as to accuse the GOP of conducting a "political hit" against him and Gamrat after the release of the House Business Office report last week. Most political observers expected him to cling to his office until the House expelled him.

For her part Gamrat initially claimed no involvement in the bizarre email, but audio recordings showed that was likely untrue. She submitted a letter Tuesday to the House Special Committee admitting that the House Business Office findings were accurate. Thursday, when the Committee voted out an expulsion resolution, rather than a censure resolution, Gamrat claimed she had a deal with GOP leadership to accept responsibility and get censured. She said she does not agree with the House Business Office findings, despite saying otherwise in testimony before the Special Committee and under oath.

Both House seats will have special elections to fulfill the remainder of the terms of office of each lawmaker, who face reelection in 2016.

House Bills Introduced By Gamrat Before Expulsion Remain

Shortly before she was expelled from the state House, Cindy Gamrat, former representative from Plainwell, introduced bills to add restrictions on abortions and add protections for religious leaders who refuse to marry same-sex couples.

House Bills 4851 and 4852 were both introduced by Gamrat on Sept. 9 with Reps. Jim Runestad, Ed McBroom and Aaron Miller as cosigners. HB 4851 would ban abortions after 20 weeks except to save the mother's life, and HB 4858 would add protections for religious leaders who refuse to perform marriages that violate their beliefs.

Despite having been removed from office, Gideon D'Assandro, spokesperson for state House Speaker Kevin Cotter, R-Mt. Pleasant, told Michigan Public Radio that nothing will change with the bills and believes lawmakers will judge the bills based on their merit, despite Gamrat's performance while employed by the state.

Gamrat's name will remain on the bills as the lead sponsor. Both bills have been referred to the House Criminal Justice Committee.

Creep of the Week

Steve Deace

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Ah, rainbows. Kids wear them on their clothing. They're slathered in sprinkle form onto ice cream cones, are the namesake of a favorite "My Little Pony" character, and even form in the sky because science.



Steve Deace

Of course, the rainbow is also a symbol of LGBT pride. And that, for some, has made the rainbow into a symbol of evil.

Like radio host and author Steve Deace who writes on the Conservative Review website that the Rainbow Jihad is running roughshod over America and will not be satisfied until total domination and, presumably, color saturation, is reached.

He begins his column by listing the handful of cases where people have tried to use their faith as an excuse to discriminate against gays and lesbians and were told that, nope, they

couldn't do that. Top of the list, of course, is Kim Davis. Then there's the Oregon bakers, the florist in Washington. The usual suspects.

Absent, of course, from this list are the countless gays and lesbians who have been discriminated against over the years with no legal recourse. Discharged from the military for being gay? Too bad. Fired for being a lesbian? So sad. Did a photographer refuse to work with you because "two dudes together would make me puke"? Well, such regurgitation was his right under God, laws be damned. Because there weren't any.

But no, please explain how Rainbow Jihad is wreaking havoc, Mr. Deace.

"What I have dubbed 'the Rainbow Jihad' is a carefully coordinated cultural hijacking decades in the making," he writes. "Like a parasite that long exists in a body but doesn't manifest itself until the host is at its weakest, it has been unleashed by the Left because they believe they have successfully eroded our Judeo-Christian foundation."

Granted, anyone who thinks that this nation's Judeo-Christian stronghold has been destroyed has a very tenuous grasp on reality. The majority of Americans identify

Of course, the rainbow is also a symbol of LGBT pride. And that, for some, has made the rainbow into a symbol of evil.

as Christian. It's just that Christians are, more and more, beginning to recognize that maybe LGBT people don't make Jesus puke after all and that two people of the same sex creating a family isn't so awful.

Deace would say these Christians have been brainwashed. As evidence that the "Rainbow Jihad" has been decades in the making, Deace cites an obscure 1989 book called "After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90's" by Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen. From what I can tell, the book argues that the principles of advertising can change the minds of the general population about who and what gays are. Deace quotes liberally from the book, and it's clear he thinks each quote is particularly damning, but he offers no real analysis and no context. It's worth noting that this book is long out of print (you can nab one on Amazon for about \$200) and the authors have never published anything else from what I can find. In other

words, this is some obscure stuff, yet Deace has latched onto it as if he's found the official playbook of the homos.

Not surprisingly, Deace ties the issue of LGBT equality with that other right-wing scourge: "big government."

"Make no mistake, this has nothing to do with 'love' and 'equality.' It has everything to do with using the coercive power of government to allow the Left to impose its will upon bitter-clinging dissenters everywhere," he writes. "The precedent is being set that there is no limit to government power, and if you will not comply you will be made to care – even by being sent to jail."

Well gays and lesbians, joke's on you. All this time you thought you were fighting for love and equality and this whole time you were nothing but pawns in Big Government's takeover and destruction of the Christians. Oh well, at least it's nice to be wanted.

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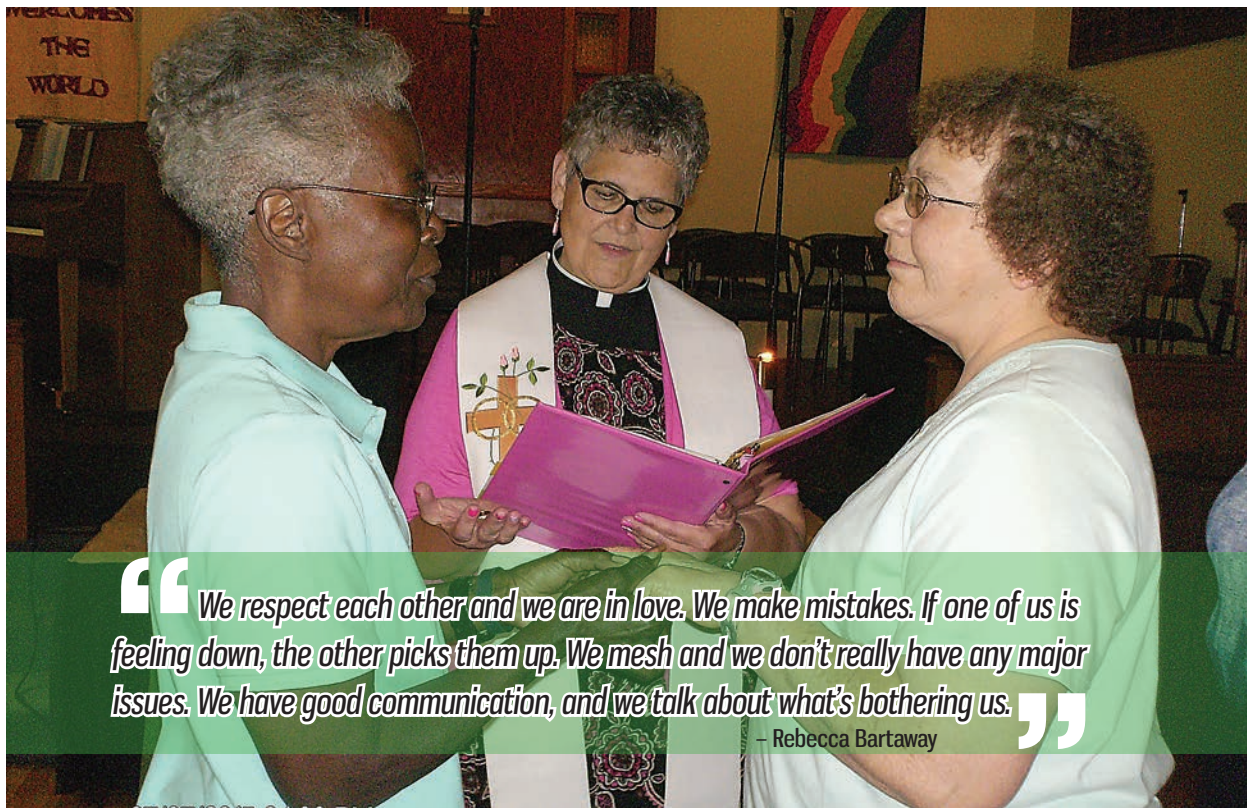
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“ We respect each other and we are in love. We make mistakes. If one of us is feeling down, the other picks them up. We mesh and we don't really have any major issues. We have good communication, and we talk about what's bothering us. **”**

– Rebecca Bartaway

Vanessa Williams and Rebecca Bartaway tie the knot July 7 before their friend Charlene. Rev. Deb Dysert officiated the ceremony at Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit.

U.S. Air Force Retirees Finally Tie The Knot

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – Marriages have been popping up all over Michigan since the historic U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that made it legal for same-sex couples to finally get married. Many LGBT couples have waited decades, often lifetimes, to benefit from the legal protections granted to opposite-sex couples and to be seen as equal in the eyes of the law.

Before the existence of Match.com and Grindr, it wasn't uncommon to find an LGBT personal ad amongst newspaper classifieds. The language was often coded to hide the sexuality of the author and led to the success of finding dates and even long-lasting relationships.

Thirty-five years ago, Rebecca Bartaway responded to a personal ad in a Detroit newspaper and decided to meet the author for coffee. Little did she know that she would legally marry the woman of her dreams, Vanessa Williams, in 2015.

“She is a very interesting person, deep thinker. She had a funny attitude. She had a funny personality and we clicked,” Bartaway said.

The two of them have spent three decades caring for one another through college degrees, health complications,

retiring from the U.S. Air Force and planning end of life services. As an interracial couple, Bartaway says that they haven't received a great deal of discrimination in the Detroit area but do notice the occasional “look.” They're a couple who has been to hell and back, she says, and are grateful to have been saved from the derogatory statements that are commonly used against LGBT couples, specifically interracial LGBT couples.

Williams served in the U.S. Air Force for 36 years, six months and two days and convinced Bartaway to join the service. “I got tired of going to drill weekends by myself,” she jokes.

Bartaway, who came from a military family, eventually served for six years in Selfridge Air National Guard Base and then went on to be a semi truck driver. She is now pursuing her second master's degree in education with the goal of working with nonprofit organizations, serving at an animal shelter or working somewhere that deals with human rights and social issues.

Williams spends her retirement working two days at Pet Smart and volunteers her extra free hours at the Dearborn Animal Shelter. Together they take care of their two Siberian huskies and their freshwater tank full of angel fish.

Ten years ago, before a large group of family and friends, Williams and Bartaway affirmed their devotion in a commitment ceremony officiated by Rev. Deb Dysert at the Divine Peace. The ceremony was elegant and grandiose with a reception to match. “We had the whole nine yards,” Bartaway said.

“When marriage was finally legal I said, ‘Why don't we just go through with it?’ If Rev. Deb is still receptive, I'd like to have her officiate,” Bartaway said. So, on July 7 they became legal spouses before an audience of one: Bartaway's long-time friend, Charlene.

“I am relieved that we are official! Before this, when there would be legal happenings, we'd have to have powers of attorneys and now she's my wife – my spouse. We don't have to worry about anything medical; we have relief from so many of those worries,” Williams said.

When asked about the secret to a lifelong partnership, Bartaway said the key is in good, solid communication and honesty.

“We respect each other and we are in love. We make mistakes. If one of us is feeling down, the other picks them up. We mesh and we don't really have any major issues. We have good communication, and we talk about what's bothering us,” Bartaway said.



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Wedding Announcements



Mark Bugajski and Chuck Ester

Mark Bugajski and his partner, Chuck Ester of Dearborn Heights, finally tied the knot July 18 on the sky deck at Affirmations after spending 18 years together. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. Roland Stringfellow.

“While we had contractually afforded each other many of the rights of a married couple

long ago, when we had trusts drawn up by Rainbow Law, a true marriage ceremony was something we both wanted. After getting our marriage license, just being part of a mass marriage at the County Building in downtown Detroit didn't seem right,” Bugajski said.



Jen Shock and Christie Hoenicke

Jen Shock and Christie Hoenicke were the first same-sex couple to marry in Kalkaska County after the historic U.S. Supreme Court ruling June 26.

See Wedding Announcements, page 18

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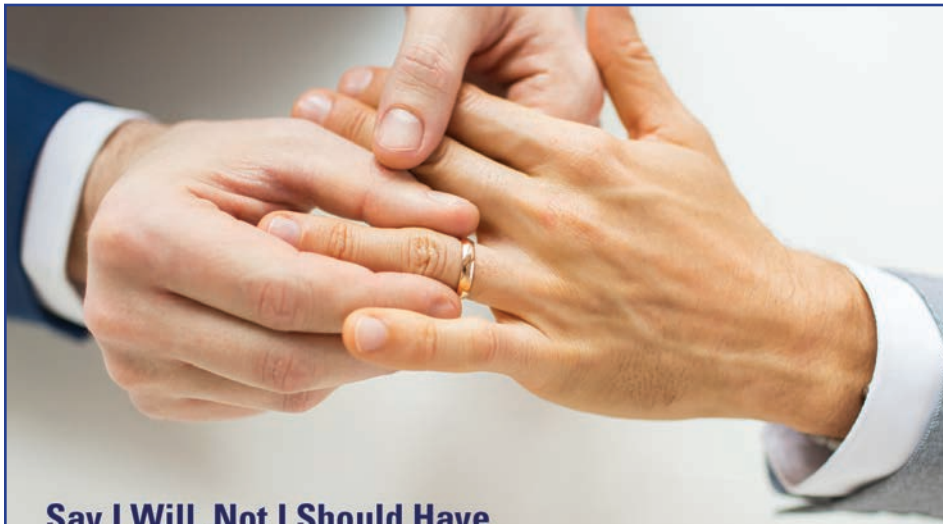
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Frederick William Hoffman and James Robert Stokes

Frederick William Hoffman (L) and James Robert Stokes have announced they will be joined in marriage Nov. 29, culminating the couple's 32-year engagement. The ceremony and reception will be at the Dearborn Inn with the Honorable John B. O'Reilly, Jr., mayor of Dearborn, presiding.

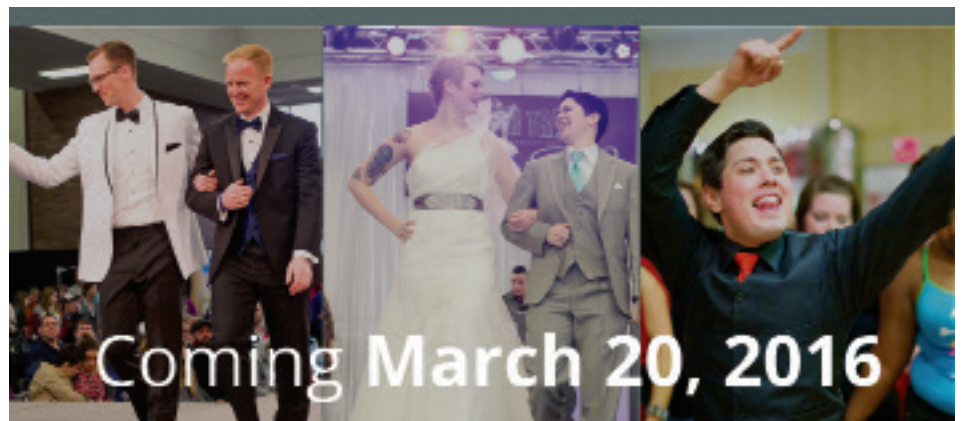
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Pamper Your Pet

Abandoned Garden City Dog Finds Loving Home
-See page 20

Nonprofit Group Links LGBT, Vegan Activism
-See page 22



Andrea Pociask and her partner Amber Wickett are proud parents to Chase, a white mastiff/pit bull terrier mix with subaortic stenosis, a terminal genetic heart condition that affects the left side of his heart. It's unknown how long Chase has to live, but this couple is determined to give him the time of his life.

Carpe Diem: Saving Chase

BY AJ TRAGER

SOUTHGATE –In late July, the Humane Society of Huron Valley called out for a hero who would be willing to provide the final home for a 3-year-old dog named Chase.

Chase, a white mastiff/pit bull terrier mix, has subaortic stenosis, a genetic heart condition that narrows the blood stream pumped from the heart, affecting the stability and health of the left side. To make matters worse, Chase is being treated with heartworm disease, a sickness affecting the right side of his heart. While he is being treated

for heartworm, nothing can be done about subaortic stenosis which could flare up at any moment. Simply put, today could be the last day that Chase takes a nap in his mothers' arms.

"To adopt a dog with this condition is an emotional challenge, for sure," HSHV's COO, Matthew Schaecher, said in a July 31 press release. "But Chase still has lots of love to give, and we're sure there's someone who wants to do the same in return."

Less than one month after HSHV began its search for Chase's new guardians, Andrea Pociask and her partner Amber Wickett, a lesbian

couple from Southgate, saw the Facebook video shared by the HSHV, fell in love with him and brought the 90 pound dog home.

"We brought him home on Aug. 20. That feels like it was years ago already," Pociask said. "He adjusted pretty well. He has a little bit of separation anxiety. Or at least he did for a minute when we had to go out of town and had a friend come over and stay with him. She had to leave for a few hours, and he found an area downstairs, and he decided he wanted to taste the couch. Well, he didn't like the cushions and decided to taste the stuffing. It must've tasted

"We take care of people and things that need it and that is who we are. We see something broken and we want to fix it, and if we can't fix it we want to love it to death."

- Andrea Pociask

like Neapolitan ice cream for him."

Pociask and Wickett are the perfect mothers for Chase. Pociask works as a home care nurse, and Wickett works as a hospice nurse. They met at work in 2014 and quickly fell for one another.

"We take care of people and things that need it, and that is who we are. We see something broken and we want to fix it, and if we can't fix it we want to love it to death," Pociask said.

They get attached to their patients and always hope to comfort people to the end of life or, if at all possible, make them better. The decision to adopt Chase was an easy one. If anyone is prepared to take care of Chase, it's Pociask and Wickett, who have a self-defined "special relationship with death."

"You can't change the world, but you can change your world to make it work for everyone around you," Wickett said. "All you can do is go in there and give them your all, and sometimes it is exhausting."

Chase has a big yard that he can play in and other friends, Ethel and Lucy, the couple's two cats. But Pociask and Wickett are limiting his exercise due to his conditions. Chase is supposed to take it "slow." But it didn't take long for him to be considered part of the family, and they are determined to make sure that his end of life is as fun and full of love as they can provide. They take him on car rides and park visits.

He accompanies them to 7-11 and gets to smell the slurpees. And he is surrounded by two people that wait on him hand and foot.

"I don't know his background, but I can tell you that to me, before the Humane Society got him, it doesn't feel like he was loved all that much," Pociask said. "He loves to give kisses and slobber all over everything. We've had him around little dogs and he does great. He's very patient and calm."

Wickett and Pociask may have the skills to handle Chase's passing, but they are far from prepared for it. Even though they are constantly surrounded by death and struggle, they haven't been numbed to it one bit.

"It's going to hurt. I am surrounded by death all the time, but it still hurts. We're losing a family member, essentially," Wickett said.

Chase continues to give back, and Pociask says he never stops showing his love. She wishes that more people would adopt their pets instead of purchasing them from a high-end breeder. Wickett, whose family has bred show dogs her whole life, said that this experience has changed her life and now she wants to adopt all of her future pets.

"Seeing his story broke my heart," Wickett said. "So did me telling her that there are a lot of animals out there that need good homes that aren't necessarily being sold to make a profit."

Last Gas Chamber For Pets Still Remains In Michigan

BY AJ TRAGER

BRANCH COUNTY – There is only one remaining county in Michigan still using gas chambers to euthanize unwanted animals at local shelters.

Four of Michigan's 83 counties were still utilizing a gas chamber at the beginning of this year but three have since banned the practice following the introduction of Michigan Senate Bill 403 on June 16, authored by state Sen. Marty Knollenberg, R-13th District, and co-sponsored by state Sens. Rick Jones, R-24th District; Ken Horn, R-32nd District; Tonya Schuitmaker, R-26th District; John Proos, R-21st District; Curtis Hertel Jr., D-23rd District; and Jim Marleau, R-12th District. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture.

Gas euthanasia, or the "inhalation method," is legal; however, opponents believe the practice is inhumane because it is stressful on the animals and may take several minutes for the animal to die. The inhalation method is "acceptable with conditions" and "may have greater potential for operator error or safety hazard, are not well documented in the scientific literature or may require a secondary method to ensure death," states the 2013 American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines for the euthanasia of animals.

The intravenous injection method is the "humane method" recommended by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, based on the AVMA guidelines for euthanasia.

Branch County, located south of I-94 by Coldwater and Union City, remains the last county in the state to use a gas chamber. Michiganders for Shelter Pets spoke with Sheriff C. John Pollack of Branch County Aug. 31, who said that the gas chamber was still usable despite being involved in a fire at the Animal Control facility in May of this year.

According to Animal Control officer Ernie Baker of Branch County, the gas chamber has

See Animal Gas Chamber, page 24

CALL TO ACTION

Contact your local state senator to ask for their support on SB403. Visit www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html for up to date contact information for all state senators. Members of the Michigan Committee on Agriculture can be found at www.senate.michigan.gov/committee/agriculture.html.

Branch County residents are encouraged to attend an upcoming county commissioner meeting to be held at 11 a.m. Sept. 24. Visit www.co.branch.mi.us/ departments for a list of all county commissioners and their contact information.

Abandoned Garden City Dog Finds Loving Home

Pamper Your Pet

BY AJ TRAGER

CANTON – On Aug. 12 a pitbull-mix puppy named Lazlo, approximately 6 to 8 months of age, was found wandering the corner of Ford Road and Merriman in Garden City. He was malnourished and hungry for attention. A concerned Michigan resident took him to the Humane Society where he was rejected care for having what's known as mange, a skin disease consisting of parasitic mites that affects animals and sometimes humans and causes extreme itching, hair loss and the formation of scabs.

Thankfully, Lazlo quickly found his way to the compassionate and loving home of Andrea Kerby, a 26-year-old Canton resident who lives with her parents and works at a local dog care facility. Kerby decided shortly after meeting Lazlo that he was going to become the next member of her multi-pet home.

In the roughly two months since Lazlo has been in Kerby's care, his mange has practically disappeared. Where his shoulder blades, legs, stomach, face, chest and back were shed of all hair, they are now white, and his immune system has drastically improved. He takes baths every few days, and Kerby administers natural oils and antibiotics which will clear up his mange in roughly 30 days.

When he arrived in her home, Kerby noticed that the young dog took immediately to eating quickly, suggesting that his last home did not feed him properly. Kerby has him on a strict diet of Merrick Puppy Food, known for being premiere, U.S.-based dog food.

"The second he walked into our house he was all up on me. He's just so happy with everyone. He will go up to anyone, any dog (and) lick their face. He's just so happy and sweet. I don't know how anyone could just, you know, dump him. It's sad. Any rescue would be happy to have this dog because he's just so easy and sweet," Kerby said. "But we're keeping him. It was pretty much decided the moment he walked in the door."

Lazlo's new mom has been very proactive in getting him the care he needs by taking him to the veterinarian, getting his shots and



Most of Lazlo's body was covered in mange, a skin disease that causes hair loss and the formation of scabs, when he found his way to his new home in Canton after being abandoned in Garden City. In just 30 days, with a strict regimen of antibiotics and healthy food, Lazlo is nearly healed.

"I don't know how anyone could just, you know, dump him. It's sad. Any rescue would be happy to have this dog because he's just so easy and sweet."

– Andrea Kerby

even implanting a microchip.

Shortly after taking Lazlo into her home, Kerby authored a Craigslist ad calling out the previous owner.

"I have your dog," Kerby's advertisement starts, then describes the status of Lazlo's body and his experience at the vet. "Regardless of the miserable, cruel being that 'cared' for him, he has the most loving, positive attitude about life. He loves everyone and everything. When meeting a new person, all he wants is to hop right in

their lap and give kisses. You couldn't break his spirit if you tried."

Kerby has always loved animals, often more than people. Between Lazlo and the puppy they got last year, Kerby and her family have three other dogs, one cat and a guinea pig.

For the last six years she has worked full time at Happy Hounds, a cage-free "doggy day care" facility in Plymouth. She's always had a home full of animals. Kerby's family has had cats, salt water aquariums, rats and a "little bit of everything." Every dog they've ever had has been a rescue.

In the four weeks Lazlo has been in the home, Kerby has taught him to sit and has started working on other easy commands like "stay." The Craigslist ad has been shared over 3,000 times since Kerby wrote it, and she has received countless emails from people thanking her for caring for Lazlo.

"It's absolutely amazing to know that so many others care and have, or would have, done the same thing for an animal in need," she said.

Lazlo has a Facebook fan page. Visit www.facebook.com/AdventuresOfLazlo to see up to date pictures and keep connected with his progress.



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BY BTL STAFF

Nonprofit Group Links LGBT, Vegan Activism



Mariann Sullivan and Jasmin Singer. Photo by Derek Goodwin.

In a new short film from the multimedia nonprofit Our Hen House (<http://www.ourhenhouse.org>) – whose mission is to change the world for animals – a group of

passionate activists from the LGBT world talk about how they personally connected the dots and “came out” for the animals, too. The video, “Coming out for Animals,” highlights personal stories of connections between gay rights and animal rights, all told while enjoying vegan food.

In the video, Our Hen House founders Jasmin Singer and Mariann Sullivan, the dynamic couple behind the popular “Our Hen House” podcast, speak about the social justice connection between animal rights and LGBT rights, while other LGBT vegans comment on their own second “coming out.”

“It was really liberating to realize I could incorporate animal rights into my own life mission,” Singer says at the beginning of the video.

“When you think about being gay and being vegan, I always kind of see the coming out process as very similar,” says Patrick Kwan.

“When it came to coming out, vegan

was harder,” Michael Suchman notes.

“It was a lot easier for me first to be vegetarian and go through that struggle and have a lot of people question my decisions and question my lifestyle. Then coming out as a lesbian, I knew that my lifestyle was for me and I had to stay strong,” Gabriela Hirsh-Gonzalez says.

“I actually came into the animal rights movement by way of the AIDS awareness movement,” Singer reveals. Ethan Ciment made a similar connection, adding, “I was sort of drawn into AIDS activism in the early ‘90s with ‘ACT UP.’ I do think that form of activism – taking something that was invisible and making it visible – has completely informed my sense of activism for animals.”

“I think there are a lot of gay people in the animal rights movement,” says Donna Dennison, “and personally I think it’s because we’re a compassionate group. Most of us have experienced some form of discrimination, bullying.”

“I really didn’t think of it as a social

“It baffles me that, if you’re going to fight for equality, why aren’t you fighting for it for everybody?”

– Gabriela Hirsh-Gonzalez

justice issue until much later; it was an emotional issue,” says Mariann Sullivan. “One of the things that is most important when working in a social justice movement is the importance of allies. We all know if a movement is going to succeed, we need allies among the people who already have the power.”

“It was very surprising to me that people in the LGBT community did not view animal rights the same way that I did,” Hirsh-Gonzalez adds. “It baffles me that, if you’re going to fight for equality, why aren’t you fighting for it for everybody?”

“Coming Out for Animals” can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/ZHvz63j80Ps>.



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March To Help Homeless Pets With Michigan Humane Society

The Michigan Humane Society will be hosting four different walks as part of the larger event, "Mega March for Animals." Participating will help rescue, shelter and care for animals in need while helping said animals find good homes.

All walks are 2 miles long, with shorter routes available, and open to pets. Animals must be on-leash or in a carrier at all times, and walkers must be prepared to clean up after companion animals. Vaccination records for pets should be brought to the events, as they must be presented if asked for them; do not attach records to registration. Water will be provided for animals and walkers throughout the day; a small snack will be provided after the march.

Participants who register online will also be entered to win a one-year supply of dog or cat food from Purina. There is no cost to register, and attendance at the marches is not a requirement to win.

A march has already been held Sept. 12 in Woodhaven's Civic Center Park. All metro park locations require a \$7 daily pass to enter. The events begin at 9 a.m. and finish at noon. The remaining locations for this year's Mega Marches are:

Sept. 27

Belle Isle, Detroit

Oct. 4

Kensington Metropark, Milford

Oct. 4

Stony Creek Metropark, Shelby Township

To register, visit www.michiganhumane.org.

► Animal Gas Chamber

Continued from p. 20

only been used to kill six dogs since 2013. Because of a program supported by several local animal groups, the shelter works to find homes to adopt out animals taken in.

On Aug. 25, the Van Buren County gas chamber that was discontinued in February was finally deposited in a scrap yard by Shelter Director Kasey Murphy. Prior to the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office taking control of the Animal Control office in 2004, the chamber was used to euthanize approximately 1,200 animals each year, according to a news release by the department.

The Berrien County board of commissioners unanimously passed a resolution Aug. 27 that mandates legal injection as the only form of euthanasia permitted at the facility. The chamber will be phased out over a period of 90 days.

According to the 2014 Animal Shelter Annual Report compiled by the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Berrien County Animal Shelter took in 1,286 dogs and euthanized 43 percent of them. That same year, 87 percent of the 1,641 cats accepted into the shelter were put down.

Exactly one day later on Aug. 28, Animal Control Director Michael Grice of Cass County announced that "the agency will stop using the euthanasia machine effective Jan. 1, 2016 or sooner."

While the machine continues to comply with American Humane Society standards and continued use of the machine is "acceptable with conditions" by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the county believes it is time to discontinue its use, Grice says.

Several bills have been introduced over the past couple years seeking to outlaw the use of gas chambers but none, so far, have made it to the governor's desk. SB 403 aims to outlaw the practice of gas chambers in the state and holds that intravenous injection is the only humane method of euthanasia.

According to a 2011 poll conducted by the Associated Press, 71 percent of Americans support a shelter approach to unwanted animals in place of euthanasia. The American Humane Society says that 2.4 million adoptable cats and dogs are put down in U.S. shelters every year and suggests that owners spay or neuter their pets to reduce overpopulation.



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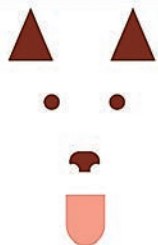
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Detroit Zoo, Michigan Humane Society Host Semi-Annual Adoption Event

BY BTL STAFF

The Detroit Zoo and Michigan Humane Society, in collaboration with more than 30 local animal welfare organizations, will host the semi-annual event "Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo." Hundreds of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens will be available for immediate adoption to loving homes at one of the nation's largest off-site companion animal adoption events.

P.O.E.T. Animal Rescue will be one of the featured animal welfare nonprofits. The organization takes in not only dogs and cats but also birds, rabbits and raccoons on an as needed basis in Michigan and Ohio. April DeBoer, one half of the Michigan couple (along with Jayne Rowse) who helped bring legal same-sex marriage to the entire country, is a volunteer with the organization and will be on hand at the event to help adopt out animals.

Presented by Purina One, Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo will be held outdoors under tents in the zoo's front parking lot beneath the landmark water tower. There is no charge for admission or parking for the adoption event;

however, regular admission and parking fees apply for those visiting the zoo. The event will include special appearances by Detroit Zoo mascots, the Zooper Heroes.

Last year, the spring Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo event found homes for more than 400 animals. Since the event's inception in 1993, more than 21,000 dogs, cats and rabbits have been placed into new homes at the spring and fall events.

Attendees are urged to take note of the following policies:

- Adoption fees and policies vary by participating groups.
- For health and safety reasons, please leave current companion animals at home.
- Strollers are not allowed in the tents. Upon entering the event, guests will be asked to park any strollers before entering the tents.

The fall edition of Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo will be held from 1-7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19. The Detroit Zoo is located at 8450 W. 10 Mile Road, Royal Oak.

For more information, call 248-541-5717 and press 9 or visit www.detroitzoo.org.

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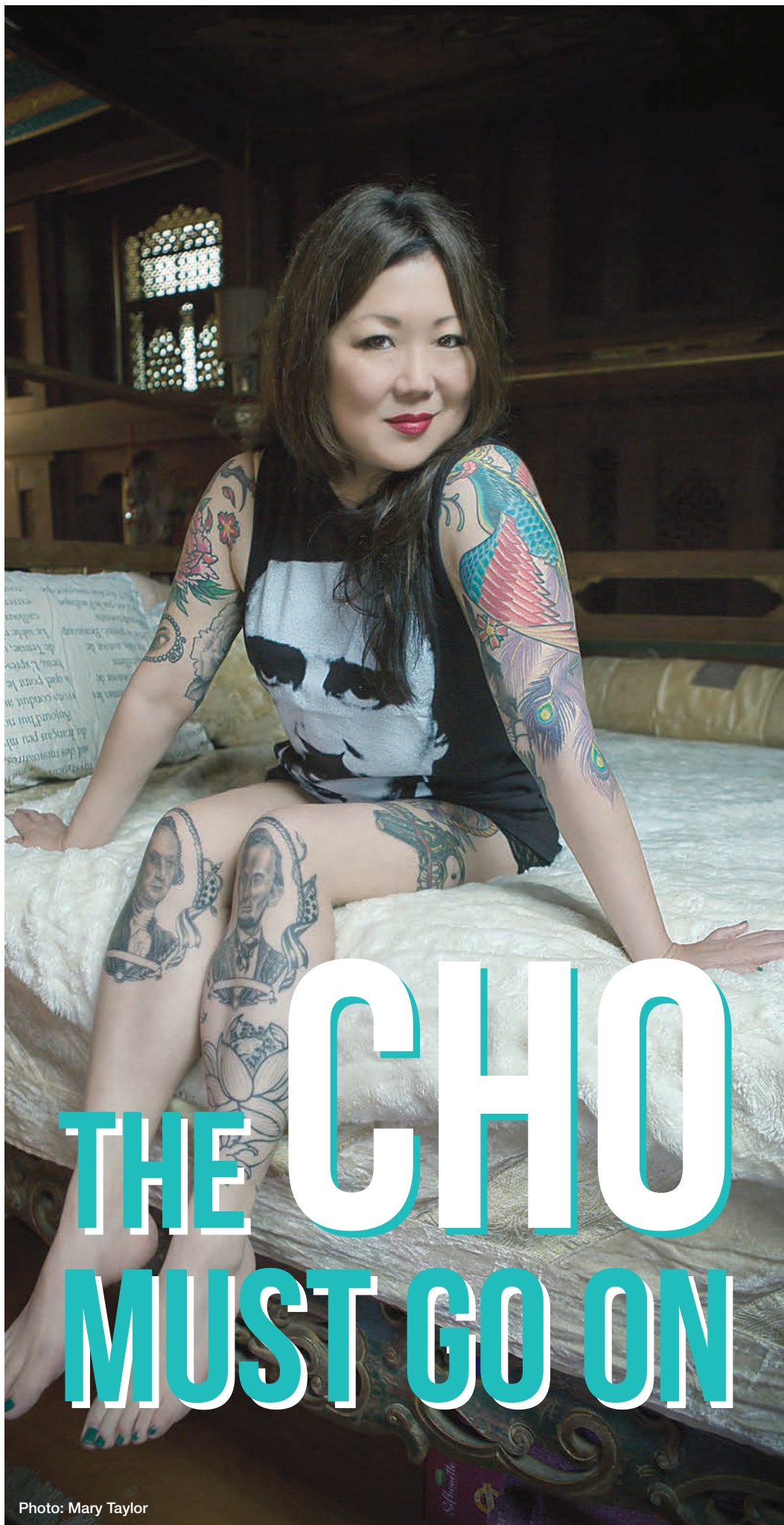


Photo: Mary Taylor

Margaret Cho Laments Loss Of Comedy Heroes, Talks Tour, Bisexuality & This 'F*cked Up' World

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Margaret Cho was a comedian even before she knew it. “As a kid, I was thinking all these things,” Cho, 46, recalls, expounding on her surprising childhood shyness, “and when I would say them, people would laugh. I was really confused by that.”

It makes sense now, of course. Cho, after all, has turned life’s ugly truths – from political injustices to homophobia and the gory details of her colonoscopy – into 20 years of comedic gold.

Luckily, for Cho, the world is still insane. Everything happens right in front of us, in real time, and we can’t turn away. And Cho, naturally, has something to say about that. You know, along with gun control, beheadings, the Amy Schumer movie shooting, rape, female comedian sexism and the “systematic slaughter of African Americans.”

Yes, Cho is still fearless. Yes, she is still notorious. And yes, her latest tour, “psyCHO,” will – like all things Cho – tear down the world’s wrongdoers in the fiercest and funniest of ways.

The first time I interviewed you was while I was in college. And the world, it seemed, was less fucked up then.

(Laughs) It’s still being fucked up. Like, I think it was always this fucked up and we didn’t know about it because we didn’t have Facebook and Twitter to alarm us every single day. I remember when you really had to look for beheading videos... (laughs). You couldn’t just start playing them.

How do you – and how should we – deal with the accessibility of... everything?

I understand that there are a lot of things that need our attention, and I think maybe pick your battles. Which causes do you really want to look at and think about? I just wanna get over police brutality. That, to me, is the most pressing issue, so my thing is dashboard cam. I’m so dashboard cam / body cam; that’s what I watch for hours on end.

Your upcoming show will assess some of the serious issues we’re facing today. How do you balance comedy and sociopolitical issues?

You have to find a truth there. For me, comedy or humor is often a coping mechanism. A lot of what I’m talking about is police brutality and the different sides of it that I’ve encountered and what I see happening in the media. As a comedian, it’s a kind of alchemy that’s really the magic, you know. Something so tragic and terrible as this systematic slaughter of African Americans in this country – how do you find some way to talk about that that isn’t totally depressing?

How do you? And moreover, how do you turn it into comedy?

It’s funny, because whenever white and black people fight, Asians and Mexicans don’t know what to do. ‘Cause we’re like, “Are we white? Or are we black? We just wanna pick the winning side.” (Laughs) For me the joke here is the gradations of how we view racism. Everybody’s a human being, so it’s very hard to figure out how to talk about it, so that’s my take on it. And I have a lot of different things that I’m talking about in the show: gun control, and also different kinds of police brutality that I’ve witnessed.

Another comedian, Amy Schumer, whose movie was playing when a gunman opened fire in a Louisiana theater, is taking on gun control as well.

It’s great.

How do you think comedy can create sociopolitical change?

Comedy now is a major player in politics. A lot of people are responsible for this, but the main ones are Jon Stewart, Bill Maher, Hannibal Buress and Stephen Colbert – now Amy Schumer. These are people who are actually changing the way we feel about politics, about who is gonna be president, about race. Comedy can really shift the way we view everything.

Comedy’s a really big part of politics, whether it seems obvious or not. Amy’s been doing it with feminism, and now she’s been thrust into gun control because she’s forced to. This is something that happened at the showing of her film. The most non-violent thing you could want to do is go see a comedy with her in it. Her perspective and her voice is so needed and so fresh, and it’s so not a shoot-em action experience. For me, that’s very heartbreaking, because her success is so important to me. I consider her like my daughter in comedy.

Comedy’s a mentoring art form, so you have your mentors – that’s another part of the show. My mentors are dead, which is very strange. Joan Rivers and Robin Williams and Taylor Negron – they all passed away last year. So for me, this tour

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– this is the first time I'm going out without a mentor, without my teachers. They're all gone, and that's a really weird feeling.

Regarding Joan: You call her your comedy "mother." What parts of her life and career do you connect with most?

Just her love of show business, her love of comedy, her love of comedians. Her constantly trying to get me to see the value of my life, and to have gratitude for everything that I receive and to know that I would be safe. She always felt that comedians live the longest in terms of career; we'll never have to worry; we'll always have steady work, which is different from actors, especially women who are only able to work for a short period of time in their lives.

And she was fearless, but actually full of fears because she was very, very anxious about whether jokes worked. She put forward this space like (imitating Joan), "I don't care! I'm a funny person! It's a joke!" But she was seriously scared about what people would think, and she was always scared people were gonna kick her ass. So that was funny about her. But I really admire her because she challenged the status quo in comedy. When she was performing comedy in the '60s and '70s and she was pregnant, she couldn't even talk about that. She had to use euphemisms to talk about her pregnancy while doing comedy. So that's how far we've come in terms of censorship: what we allow women to talk about.

How do you think the landscape for female comedians has shifted? Are we at a place now where they're fully accepted by the comedy community and the public?

It's gotten a lot better. I think we're way past that weird Christopher Hitchens' thing that women aren't funny. Now that thinking seems very old fashioned. It's very Jerry Lewis to go there. (Laughs) It's odd that Jerry Lewis even felt that, because I worked with a lot of his contemporaries 'cause I've been around forever. I was, like, discovered by Bob Hope and worked with Alan King and Robert Klein and they always really accepted me. Milton Berle too! Very, very accepting of my presence in comedy.

Do you still write a joke a day?

I try to. It takes different forms, but I try to write either a joke or some kind of observation. I'm also working on a book and trying to bring forth this idea that sexual abuse survivors should come forward and stop thinking of themselves as victims and think of themselves as survivors instead. (Cho recently revealed to Billboard that

she was raped as a teenager.) So, it's either a joke or an idea or a song or some type of artistic endeavor that would benefit me creatively. I try.

Is the book only focused on rape victimization?

That's part of it. Part of it is a memoir – the history of my work in comedy and the people that I have known. There's a lot of different kinds of stories in there, but one of them is just trying to talk about this idea of victimization. That if we got rid of that word and really focused on the survivor part of it, it would be maybe easier to handle.

When you were young, your father wrote joke books. What was his influence on you when it came to comedy?

He still has an influence; he's a funny guy. My parents are both really funny people, and they're also very respectful of the creative life – they think it's the highest kind of life you can aspire to. And they love writers and writing, so they're very proud of that aspect of my work. So, it's good. My dad's still always telling me what I should be writing and what he wants me to discuss, so he's very alive in my creative world.

And your mom, of course, is as well. How often do people come up to you and ask you about her?

Oh, all the time. She's a genius! She really is. She's a guitarist, and she's much better than I am. She plays flamenco guitar. She's a very, very beautiful singer. She's a seamstress; she taught me how to sew, which is where I get my design side. I do a little bit of fashion design on the side still. But that's where I get my inspiration – she's inspired me to do a lot of different things.

Your tour name is a play on the word "psycho." What is your definition of a psycho?

I think it's allowing your rage to consume you, allowing your insanity to consume you, allowing other people's insanity to consume you. I think psycho is often a very feminizing term. "Oh, she's a psycho bitch." "She's fucking psycho." That's the worst thing you can say about a woman. Even the movie "Psycho" – Anthony Perkins is trying to be his mother, so that's a psycho. It's a feminized kind of experience. It's almost hysterical. Women are always hysterical or psycho. So that's why I like it.

Do you have any psychotic tendencies?

I'm actually more OCD than psycho. There's a drought in California, so you're always checking – I'm always checking the tap. I'm always going online when I'm away to check the water meter. First of all, I shut off the water when I leave. Not only shut it off in the house – I shut it off in the water main! Everything is shut down! (Laughs)

We are currently, and thankfully, experiencing increased trans visibility. As someone who identifies as bisexual, where do you see the

See Margaret Cho, page 32

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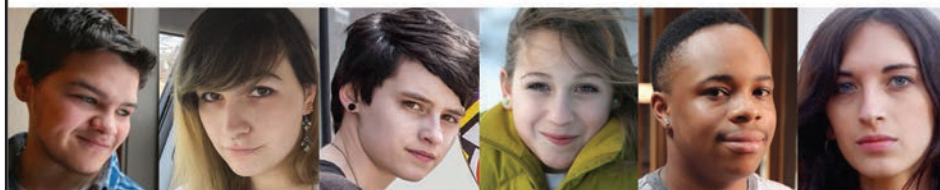
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Leona Lewis, Free & Unfiltered

Singer Opens Up About Her Influential Gay Uncle, Talks 'Gay Husbands' & Drag Queen Bingo

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Leona Lewis is having a Mariah Carey moment. She's singing, mimicking the ascending whistle notes that close out Carey's early-'90s hit "Emotions." It's not much – just a few notes, sung as the song comes up casually in our conversation – but this "moment" entails more than an impromptu Lewis performance via cellphone.

Lewis mirrors Carey not just vocally – both have voices strong enough to knock you over. But the "Bleeding Love" belter's career is soaring with the same wings that Carey once spread back in 1997, when the legend emancipated herself personally and professionally. The U.K. "X Factor" star walked away from her label of seven years, Simon Cowell's Syco, in 2014, citing creative differences; now signed to Def Jam, Lewis' first studio album, "I Am," flaunts her newfound independence.

Liberation certainly looks good on Lewis. The 30-year-old Londoner has never seemed more free... and fun. Who knew she played drag queen bingo? Or how growing up around her gay uncle helped her learn to be herself? And that she has "gay husbands" in major cities across the world? Well, now we do.

You've played a lot of gigs in your life. Been on a lot of stages. What was it like being on the G-A-Y stage in the U.K. recently?

Oh my god. Doing G-A-Y is one of the funnest shows I get to do, and that's why I always go back whenever there's an album. Literally – you can just do whatever you want. The more flamboyant, the more fun it is and the more the audience gives you so much energy. So yeah, there's always so much love and support there.

Are you used to being around that many gays in your everyday life?

I mean, yeah. I obviously have so many gay husbands.

What constitutes a "gay husband" – and how many gay husbands do you have?!

I have my L.A. gay husband, and I have my U.K. gay husbands. I've got a few there, and that just constitutes as my gay best friend. If I don't get married, then clearly we'll end up getting married. (Laughs)



Photo: Catie Laffoon

I wonder, though: Can one gay husband get jealous over another gay husband?

Sometimes they do. I definitely split my time equally. And I get jealous over my gay husbands with their straight wives! So they have to split their time with them for me. It's a partnership.

When were you first aware of your gay following?

When I was doing "The X Factor" every week we'd have people coming down to the show, and I found myself with a huge gay following. Again, just so much love. People were waiting for me after the shows, and I'd go and sign stuff, so it was really early on that I

became aware of that.

In 2007, "Bleeding Love" elevated you in so many ways, including within the gay community. You know how we love our big, belty voices. I can't imagine what that song did for your gaggle of gay husbands.

(Laughs) They were loving it. And they're always giving me opinions on what I am to wear on stage and what I am to do on stage. I'm like, "All right, guys; calm down."

How often do you take their advice?

I mean, it depends on who it's coming from. I have my stylist – a very close friend of

mine – who's an amazing stylist. He has suggestions on wardrobe and stuff like that. And I listen. But some of them are crazy. Sometimes I'm like, "Yeah, no; you wear that."

How do you think your gay fans will relate to "I Am"?

I have a lot of fans who are younger and haven't even come out to their families yet. I do this campaign called "I Am Empowered" to share stories, mantras and affirmations, and I got one guy who wrote me saying he gets bullied a lot in school because he's gay. He says he just wants me to empower him to get through that and get through the torment, and so I know that it definitely is a very, very strong message to the gay community, especially being young and coming out and being open. It's very hard and it's a very difficult time, and you need to be empowered in that. You need to have the strength to stand true in what you are and who you are. And it's a very prevalent message on the album.

How did you end up with a drag queen in the video for "Fire Under My Feet"?

It was my idea. My uncle actually is gay, and when I was younger I remember he would wear makeup and eyeliner. It was the '80s, so you know – people were all out there. And it was always so normal to me; it was never something I questioned, never something that I found anything other than normal. So I had that experience growing up. And even though he's not a drag queen, I wanted to put that in the video. I wanted people to know that you can be whatever you want to be.

What did you learn from your uncle about being yourself?

He taught me a lot. When I was younger, it was to be accepting of anything; however people want to express themselves or present themselves is up to them. It's not something to look at weirdly or that should be shunned. And self-expression – he taught me that. Not being afraid to show who you are.

What does it mean to you to know that your songs are being fiercely lippped by drag queens?

I love it! A couple of months ago I actually went to drag queen bingo and they were

commenting on the (“Fire Under My Feet”) video saying, “I love that you have a drag queen in there.”

Did you win at bingo?

I didn’t, unfortunately. But I did get to call out some numbers, which was kind of cool!

Which line on the album means the most to you?

On “I Am” it says, “Thought I would never rise again. But I am, I am.” It’s about going through times and thinking it’s the hardest time and not seeing the forest through the trees but knowing that time is such a big healer and a big factor in so many situations. I feel like so many people give up just as they’re about to have a breakthrough, and sometimes you have to go through that. The line “I am, I am” is, I feel, a powerful affirmation to put out there when you’re going through those times.

Your vocal abilities often draw comparisons to Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston and Celine Dion. What songs of theirs would you be most apt to sing at karaoke?

With Whitney, definitely “I Wanna Dance With Somebody.” I mean, everyone does that song at one point or another! Mariah... it would have to be “Heartbreaker.” It’s just so cool and I love the video – she was in the movie theater, and I remember she had the pink top and her little denim jeans. And Celine: probably “All By Myself” or “My Heart Will Go On.”

What’s your favorite note that’s ever been sung?

I feel like it has to be during “I Will Always Love You” – the long-held note that Whitney does, and you’re like, “What is she doing right now!? She’s killing my soul.”

PETA named you Sexiest Vegetarian in 2008. Where does that rank on your list of career achievements?

Uhh. Quite high! Sexiest anything! I will take what I can get, soooo... that ranks very high.

In your opinion, what’s the sexiest vegetable or fruit?

A peach.

That came to you a lot quicker than I thought it would.

Right?! I surprised myself even.

Now that the album is finished, how are you feeling about the label changes you made in order to honor who you are as an artist?

I feel amazing about it. I’m lucky enough to be in a position where I made that leap

of faith and then, luckily, there were people at the other side to catch me and help me do what I wanted to do. I really count myself blessed because it does take a lot to walk away from such a big situation. But, again, I knew what I needed to change and that I needed to do me and be very authentic to me, and so, this is it. I just feel lucky that I can do it; a lot of people don’t get that opportunity.

You say you had to “do me.” Did you ever feel like you’d strayed from your authentic self?

I feel like I’ve definitely always been true to myself, but sometimes I feel like myself, as well as other people, get a bit lost by everything that goes on within music. The heart of what we do in music is to connect with people and express ourselves and share that with people. But I feel like the hair and the makeup and the designer clothes takes over everything. The fame, the notoriety and letting that get to your head is so dangerous. My dad’s always told me, “Don’t believe the hype.” That’s something that’s always stayed with me.

When you look out at the pop scene, do you see a lot of authenticity?

You know what I see a lot of? Amazing artists. And I also see a lot of (them) seem to be a bit lost. But again, it’s all part of an individual’s journey and it’s all part of learning about ourselves. You have to go through that learning process sometimes. There’s a lot of very young people in the industry, and being so young and vulnerable and subject to... I don’t know... a lot of impressions, sometimes you can just get lost in it.

“Bleeding Love” was a colossal success, so I have to imagine it set the bar high for you. How much pressure have you felt to match the success of that song and what it did for your career?

Definitely in the beginning I felt pressure. There’s definitely been a lot less pressure the past few years, but for my second album (2009’s “Echo”), I felt a lot of pressure then.

When I was first recording my (new) album, even before I had a deal, there was never any pressure on me. It was just like, I’m recording music; this is what I do. With my first album, again, there really wasn’t any expectations, so I didn’t really have a lot of pressure. But then after the album blew up and went massive, there definitely was a bit of pressure. I was like, “Oh my gosh, this is happening; I’ve got to step up my game. I’ve got to be better. I’ve got to match it.” I’ve learned over the past few years that that is definitely not conducive to creativity. You have to just go down a new path and blaze a new trail.

FRENCH TWIST

MASTERWORKS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

FROM ATGET TO MAN RAY

Man Ray, French, b. America, 1890–1976, *Portrait of Dora Maar*, 1936, Gelatin silver print, 9 x 6.875 inches. © Man Ray Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY/ADAGP, Paris 2015. All works are from the collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg. This exhibition was organized by art2art Circulating Exhibitions.



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Happenings

Editor's Pick

OUTINGS

Thursday, Sept. 17

MAC Health 1 a.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), Detroit. www.MichiganAIDScoalition.org

UMS Student Welcome Party and Open House 11 a.m. Take advantage of an unforgettable opportunity to visit the inside of Hill Auditorium. Learn about UMS events this season and how you can be involved. Snacks provided, student tickets available for purchase. University Musical Society, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor 734-764-2538. umstix@umich.edu www.Ums.org/performance/ums-student-welcome-party-and-open-house/

En Pointe in Detroit 6 p.m. Attire: robe noir/black dress. Tickets: \$25. pas de deux bridal, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900. www.Dia.org

Voices 6 p.m. Tickets: \$175-275. Ruth Ellis Center, BTL, Lear Corporation, 130 E. Atwater St., Detroit. www.RuthElliscenter.org

Friday, Sept. 18

20th Anniversary ArtWorks Detroit 150 pieces of donated fine art. Live and silent auction. Michigan AIDS Coalition, 1600 Clay St., Detroit. www.MichiganAIDScoalition.org

LGBT Dinner 6:30 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, Lansing. www.Lahronline.org/

Sunday, Sept. 20

LGBT Parenting Support Group 1 a.m. The purpose of the group is for LGBT families to have a monthly opportunity to get together to get to know one another and to discuss topics of interest. Free. Organization Name, 318 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale. 248-955-3219. info@natureplayhouse.com www.Natureplayhouse.com/

Bisexual Peer Group 4 p.m. Our group meets monthly on the third Sunday & discussion relates to bisexual identity. Building is handicap accessible using ramp to rear entrance. Bisexual Peer Group, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. paylor9@icloud.com [Facebook.com/groups/110918256984/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/110918256984/)

Monday, Sept. 21

Fourth Annual Premier Golf Tournament 12 p.m. Tickets: \$190+ (Canadian) Windsor Essex Tourism, Windsor.

A Public Theology of Human Rights

Michigan AIDS Coalition's ArtWorks Detroit comes this Friday, serving as the newer incarnation of MAC's previous three-day fundraising event. This year will feature Gretchen Gonzales Davidson and Ethan Davidson as honorary co-chairs. The art auction will benefit MAC.

Original work by 150 artists will be featured, as well as other live and silent auctions. Hors d'oeuvres, drinks and desserts will be on hand. There will be complimentary valet parking.



ArtWorks Detroit will begin at 6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18 at The Alchemy-Warehouse C, 2051 Rosa Parks Blvd., Detroit. Tickets are \$75. To purchase tickets, visit www.michiganAIDScoalition.org.

Friday, Sept. 25

Bistro Fridays Special menu. \aut\BAR, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com

Comedy for A Cause 8

p.m. Come as you are to a great night of Comedy and help raise money for Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit. Tickets: \$15. Laff Tracks Comedy Club of Novi, and Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, 30850 Beck Road, Novi. 248-924-9578. dave@lafftracksnovi.com www.Lafftracksnovi.com/index.php/comedy-for-a-cause

Saturday, Sept. 26

turnIT aut \aut\BAR, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com

The Orb 8 p.m. Tickets: \$20+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-544-3030. www.TheMagicBag.com

Young Frankenstein 8 p.m. Tickets: \$22-24. Stagecrafters, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. 248-541-6430. www.Stagecrafters.org

MUSIC & MORE

Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra "Beethoven Festival with Garrick Ohlsson". Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 19. 734-994-4801. www.A2so.com

Go Comedy! Improv Theater "6 Chamber Roulette" Tickets \$18. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 8 p.m. Sept. 18. 248-327-0575. www.Facebook.com/GoComedy

Go Comedy! Improv Theater "The

X-Factory!" Tickets: \$7. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Sept. 16 - Sept. 23. 248-327-0575. www.Facebook.com/GoComedy

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell" Tickets: \$45-75. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Sept. 18. 248-399-2980. www.RoyalOakMusicTheatre.com

Sound Board - Motor City Casino "Kim Russo" Tickets: \$30-75. Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 2 p.m. Sept. 20. 800-745-3000. www.MotorCityCasino.com

The Ark "Jeffrey Gaines & Freedy Johnston" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 21. 734-761-1800. www.Theark.org

The Ark "Marcia Ball" Tickets: \$30. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 20. 734-761-1800. www.Theark.org

The Ark "Nellie McKay" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 19. 734-761-1800. www.Theark.org

The Ark "David Berkeley" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 23. 734-761-1800. www.Theark.org

University Musical Society Audra McDonald returns to UMS for her sixth appearance, featuring music from her most recent recording, "Go Back Home." Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 17. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/audra-mcdonald-2/

Water Access Volunteer Effort "Charity Golf Open". Western Golf & Country Club, 14600 Kinloch St., Redford. 8:30 a.m. Sept. 22. www.WesternGCC.com

THEATER

Cinderella Tickets: \$35+. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Sept. 22 - Sept. 27. 800-WHARTON. www.Whartoncenter.com

ComedySportz Two teams battle for laughs and points as they make up scenes, games and songs on the spot. A family-friendly show! ComedySportz Detroit, Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Through Oct. 31. 877-636-3320. www.comedysportzdetroit.com

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels Tickets: \$20-22. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Through Sept. 20. 517-482-5700. www.RiverwalkTheatre.com

► Margaret Cho

Continued from page 29

bisexual movement headed?

I think it's different. Bisexuality is considered one foot out, one foot in. You don't qualify as gay all the time. There's this element of distrust. Visibility is very important for the trans community because of the suicide rate of teenagers and the violence that goes underreported and the disappearance of trans women all over the place. There's not been a lot of rage about that because people didn't know.

Now, there's more of an understanding and it's not acceptable anymore, so I think that's wonderful. I would love to see that for the bisexual community, but I also have an understanding too. I get it because I started as a lesbian and then realized that there was more to my sexuality than I realized. I thought I was being very free and very out, but there was more to the story. It's hard; I felt like, "Am I going through a phase?" You always question yourself in the bisexual community. You don't really know.

When did you first know you were funny?

It took a while to figure out how to be a standup comedian. And this is when I met Robin Williams. I actually met him when I was much younger, but I met him again as a comedian. He had become very famous doing "Mork and Mindy" (1978-1982), and he was doing movies at that point and he had been the doorman at a comedy club that I lived across the street from called the Holy City Zoo (in San Francisco). I would perform there and he would always come in and do surprise performances, but this was, like, every night, so it really wasn't that much of a surprise. He was there every day, and I would always have to perform after him. I don't know why he got it in his head, "I have to go before her all the time," but I learned how to do comedy by going after him and bombing for years. (Laughs)

When you eventually did launch your professional comedy career, why was it important to you to be as open about your life as possible?

That style became very cool. When I started I was just trying to figure it out, but when I was in my early 20s, talking about things in great obsessive details was really brought on by doing comedy in bookstores and people like Janeane Garofalo and Marc Maron, who were in more of the alternative scene. Which is Colin Quinn, which is actually Ben Stiller. We would do these weird midnight writing sessions with Ben Stiller and Judd Apatow at this coffeehouse on La Brea and you would see all these comics. Now they're very famous people, of course. But they would get together to write at midnight. It was this thing that was very powerful and very alive, and the more you could make yourself look bad as a person, you looked better as a comic.



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Jim Norton is a nationally-touring comedian and best-selling author who has appeared in numerous shows like "The Opie and Anthony Radio Show", "The Comedy Central Roast of Bob Saget", numerous HBO specials, and was a regular on "Lucky Louie" and "Louie" along with comedian Louis CK.



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Michigan Native Premieres Play About Gay Teens

Slipstream Theatre Initiative is fresh off the heels of its first season and diving head first into its second, kicking off in December. But every once in a while a script comes along that is undeniably one that must be produced right here, right now.

Slipstream is proud to announce the production of such a script, "B.F.'s!" by local author and playwright, Frank Anthony Polito, based on his novel "Band Fags!"

Though their second season doesn't officially start until December, Slipstream will be producing this Michigan premiere in September to celebrate the opening of their new, permanent space. 460 Hilton is the new home for the group, which previously moved from space to space. "B.F.'s!" will be the show to open the space and bring an original script to the metro Detroit area.

"B.F.'s!" is an almost-totally-true story that takes place over the course of four years (1984-1988) in Hazel Park. It tells the honest story of two best friends, both struggling with finding their own identities in a world that shuns boys who play with dolls and dress a little differently. High School can be a devastating place,



Maxim Vinogradov as Brad (left) and Jackson Abohasira as Jack (right). Photo courtesy of Slipstream Theatre Initiative.

especially for young people in the closet in a time and location that frowns upon embracing your real self. Over the course of the four-year journey of the play, the two best friends experience a lot of firsts, a tremendous amount of internal struggling and an overwhelming sense of needing to find their own voices, and more importantly, to have those voices heard.

The two-person cast, under the direction of Artistic Director Bailey Boudreau (who also does the costumes), consists of up-and-comers Maxim Vinogradov ("Taming of the Shrew") and Jackson Abohasira ("Taming of the Shrew"). Though the play has been produced in San Francisco and New York,

playwright Polito has been dying to have it produced here, where he grew up (and where it takes place). And just a warning: the names may have been changed to protect the innocent, but most of the situations are actual events.

With a throwback "I Love the '80s" set (complete with wood paneling and early "Days of Our Lives" pin ups), designed by Ryan Ernst and a soundtrack of memorable 80s tunes designed by creator Polito, this play is sure to take the audience on a journey to a time when knowing ourselves seemed an impossible feat. It resonates with men and women of all generations as it is a story about coming of age and learning to deal with the consequences. Friendship is a sacred bond that is often challenging and not without its faults. Join Slipstream as they explore the value of these seemingly unbreakable bonds and venture into the intricate world of the teenage mind.

"B.F.'s!" has remaining shows 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays, Sept. 18-27. The Slipstream Theatre Initiative is located at 460 Hilton, Ferndale. Tickets for the show are \$12 in advance only. For tickets, contact 248-298-9617 or by visiting www.slipstreamti.com.

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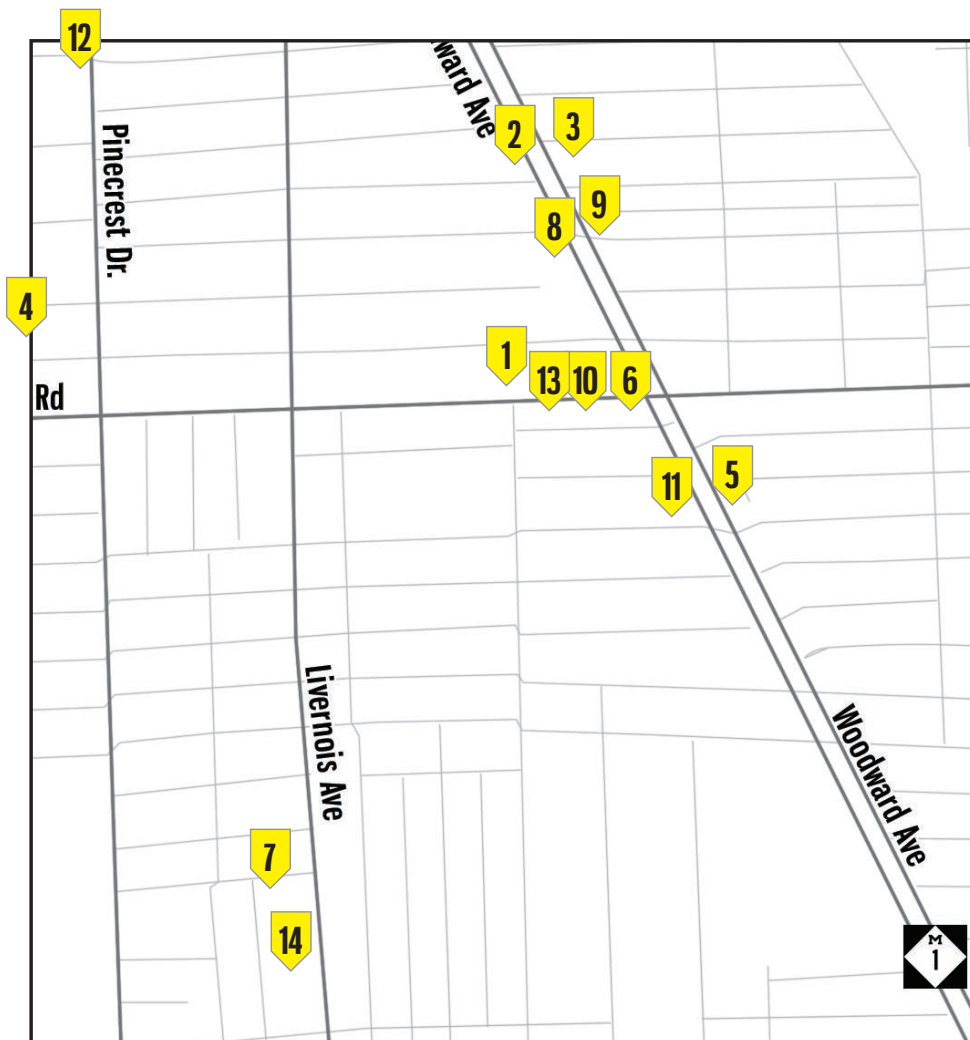
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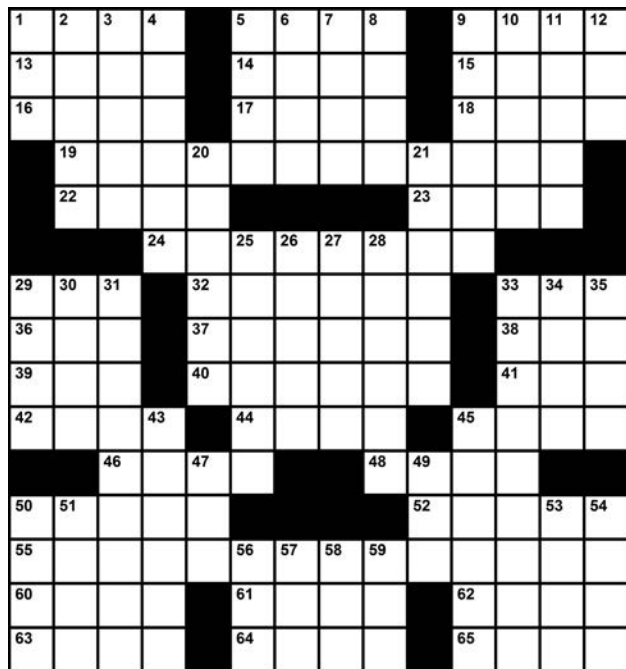
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Q Puzzle



- 33 Newt, to Candace
- 36 Palindromist's exclamation
- 37 Character played by
- 19-Across
- 38 Like Abner, before Viagra?
- 39 The feminine side
- 40 Comes down hard in showers
- 41 Versatile vehicle
- 42 Reactions to seeing a hottie
- 44 Morales of "Jericho"
- 45 Zipper problem
- 46 To some extent
- 48 Rank of von Trapp of Aust.
- 50 When to have sex
- 52 Dull finish
- 55 Title character of 33-Down
- 60 Phillippe of "Gosford Park"
- 61 Film that exposed Treat Williams
- 62 NY Met or LA Dodger
- 63 Hankerings
- 64 Response to Brut's "How many hot dogs did you have?"
- 65 Actress lone
- 12 Before, to the Bard
- 20 Sounds in "The Trolley Song"
- 21 Uses a slur
- 25 Slaved away
- 26 Responds to yeast
- 27 "___ little silhouetto of a man ..."
- 28 Highlands language
- 29 It goes on a hero's meat, maybe
- 30 Birth state of Langston Hughes
- 31 Setting of 33-Down
- 33 TV show of the nude scene
- 34 Beatles' meter maid
- 35 Jackie's designer
- 43 Rears to your first mate
- 45 Gives rise to
- 47 Singer DiFranco
- 49 Verlaine's soul
- 50 "Aida," to Gomer?
- 51 "Mommie Dearest" star Dunaway
- 53 Deuce taker
- 54 French I verb
- 56 Broadway role for Antonio
- 57 "Cabaret"'s Kit-___ Klub
- 58 Pose for Mapplethorpe
- 59 Capote bio

First Nude Scene

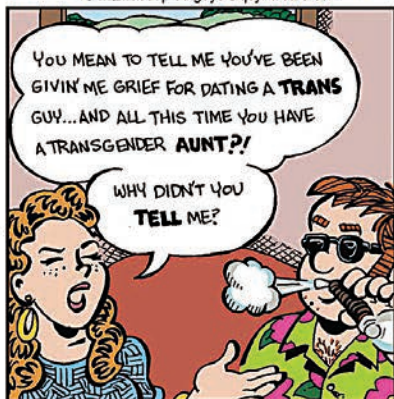
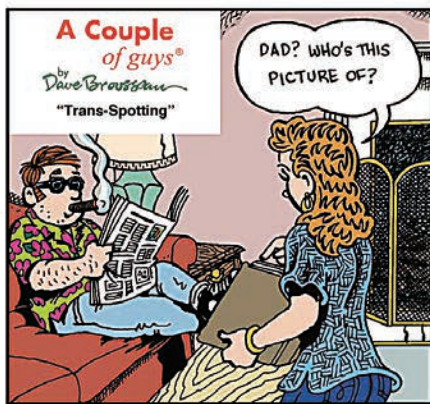
Across

- 1 "I ___ Andy Warhol"
- 5 Singer k.d.
- 9 Cartoon skunk Le Pew
- 13 Sounds of approval from Oz?
- 14 Reed in a Ned Rorem work
- 15 "June Is Bustin' Out All ___"
- 16 "Mrs. Doubtfire"- attire
- 17 It's left on a map
- 18 Baptism or bar mitzvah
- 19 Trans actress who had her first nude scene with 55-Across
- 22 British peer
- 23 One with a tricky tongue
- 24 55-Across in drag?
- 29 Tat word, often
- 32 Spread about, as rumors

Down

- 1 Like McCullers' cafe
- 2 Chronicler of Poker Flat
- 3 Tara name
- 4 1982 title role for R. Williams
- 5 Rob of "The West Wing"
- 6 Genesis brother
- 7 Sticking in one's proboscis
- 8 Catches on to
- 9 Wife of Ellen
- 10 Madonna title role
- 11 Pan handle?

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