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LGBT College Students Face More Sexual Violence

The GOP Prez Debates Still Anti-gay After All These Years

Did Michigan RFRA Prevent Battle Creek Couple From Adopting?

- PG. 6



THE RIOT'S RIOT

'Stonewall' Actor, Director Talk 'Whitewashing' Controversy, Emotional Brick-Scene Shoot & Onscreen Sex



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Michigan didn't prepare for this. Our governor, our legislators and our attorney general were fighting a case trying to keep the (same-sex marriage) ban going, and they didn't think about what the ramifications would be if they lost.

- Jennifer LaTosch

The Legal Ripple Effect From Marriage Equality
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OPENING: THE WHALE

"The Whale" of this show is a 600-pound gay man from Idaho named Charlie. His health failing, and having lost his husband to a tragic death, he's reaching out for love and acceptance from others, including an estranged daughter.

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Be sure to head over to Pridesource.com/calendar.html for hundreds more events from arts to theater to LGBTQ friendly events around Michigan.

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WMU Begins New Academic Year With Preferred Name Policy

BY AJ TRAGER

KALAMAZOO – Just in time for the 2015 academic year, Western Michigan University has adopted a preferred name policy that allows students to be identified by a chosen name rather than their legal name in a wide range of campus settings and activities.

WMU joins the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University and Northern Michigan University as the only universities in the state to offer this type of policy to students.

“The option of having a preferred first name is a reflection of WMU’s continued commitment to the inclusion of all individuals,” says Dr. Martha Warfield, vice president for diversity and inclusion. “Recognizing and using the first names students choose for themselves confirms to students that we respect who they are.”

Legal names will still be used for enrollment, transcripts, diplomas, financial aid, e-learning and certain federal reporting, but students are now free to select the first name of their choice for class lists, email, ID cards, the student computing portal (GoWMU) and campus directories. With this move, WMU becomes one of just 146 schools around the nation that have adopted some form of preferred name policy, according to Campus Pride, a national service and advocacy group for LGBT and ally student leaders and campus organizations.

The conversation began roughly eight months ago when a task force was established to amend the university’s policy. The university’s diversity office was supportive throughout the whole process, she told BTL.

The updated policy will appeal to LGBT students, especially transgender students as well as international students, who often choose a first name that enables them to enhance their assimilation to the U.S. and WMU.

The preferred name option also extends to campus employees who can change their preference though the Office of Human Resources. Faculty and staff are encouraged to use preferred first names in their interactions with students and in all university communications, except where use of a legal name is required by university business.

Visit www.wmich.edu/registrar/policies/preferred-name

Obama Pick Would Be First Openly Gay Service Chief

WASHINGTON D.C. (AP) – President Barack Obama said Sept. 18 that he will nominate longtime Pentagon official Eric Fanning to be the Army’s new secretary. If confirmed, Fanning would be the nation’s first openly gay leader of a military service.

“Eric brings many years of proven experience and exceptional leadership to this new role,” Obama said in a written statement. “I am grateful for his commitment to our men and women in uniform, and I am confident he will help lead America’s soldiers with distinction. I look forward to working with Eric to keep our Army the very best in the world.”

Fanning has been acting undersecretary of the Army since June. He has served as special assistant to Defense Secretary Ash Carter and held senior positions in the Air Force, including undersecretary from 2013 to 2015.

The nomination comes as the Obama administration works to eliminate barriers to military service based on sexuality or gender. Army secretary is a civilian position.

Fanning’s nomination must be confirmed by the Senate. He would replace John McHugh, who has said he plans to step down no later than Nov. 1.

Lawmakers: Make Stonewall Inn A National Park

NEW YORK (AP) – Two New York legislators are leading a campaign to designate Stonewall Inn as the first national park honoring LGBT history.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler made their announcement Sunday in front of the Greenwich Village tavern that was the scene of a 1969 uprising at a key moment for the nascent gay rights movement.

“When we look at our country, we have recognized women’s rights, civil rights, all kinds of rights,” Gillibrand said. “The time has come to give this part of our history an imprimatur of national importance.”

National parks can only be created by an act of Congress. They include sites of cultural or historic importance.

Gillibrand says she and Nadler are first asking President Barack Obama to declare Stonewall a monument. A congressional vote on park status would come later.

Gillibrand credited gay-rights activists for spurring action on giving greater recognition to the historic tavern raided by police more than four decades ago, triggering violent protests.

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The Legacy Of Michigan's Anti-gay Adoption Law

Couple Claims Discrimination From Christian Adoption Agency, Children Removed

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Has Michigan's new Religious Freedom law left same-sex couples even worse off than they anticipated? The law allows faith-based agencies that declare their opposition to same-sex adoptions to refuse those cases. But at least one agency – perhaps out of a desire to appear tolerant – may be discriminating against at least one same-sex couple without claiming the exemption the law now allows.

Lansing

As Michigan's new discriminatory adoption legislation was working its way through the state Legislature and to the governor's desk, two faith-based adoption agencies stepped forward with letters to the governor supporting the bills. Both agencies had also testified before legislative committees supporting the legislation.

One of them is Bethany Christian Services.

"Unfortunately, it is that faith which is now under attack," wrote Bill Blacquiere, president of Bethany, in a letter to the governor, "with some state and local governments taking the position that faith-based agencies must choose between their desires to help children and families and their fidelity to their religious principles."

The letter is undated, but was released by the office of Republican Gov. Rick Snyder in June. Snyder was preparing to sign the three bill package into law.

Meanwhile, in Calhoun County, Lorie Adams, 41, and her partner of 14 years, Patti Pulsifer, 54, were continuing their daily routines. Adams stayed home with the two foster children she was trying to adopt; Pulsifer was working second shift at a casino. A year earlier, the request from Adams to adopt the kids was referred by county social workers to Bethany, and Bethany, in effect, took control and oversight of the two children in the couple's care. They would do the background investigations, home visits and other evaluations necessary to make a determination if consent to adopt would be provided.

The two women said their relationship with the social service agency started with a social worker, 20 minutes into her first meeting with them, asking them to explain how they would tell the two children – both under age 6 – that the adult women shared the same bed.

The agency in July recommended consent for the adoption be denied, and by August had removed the children from the women's home, claiming they were at imminent risk



Lorie Adams, 41, and her partner of 14 years, Patti, 54, had two children they were fostering and trying to adopt abruptly removed over three weeks ago by Bethany Christian Services. The agency was one of two faith-based agencies that worked to see a law passed which allows them to discriminate. BTL photo: Todd Heywood

of harm. The women claim the agency's faith based service model was the real reason, and their sexual orientation was the main cause of the denial.

Indeed, Bethany was clear in the letter to Snyder about its "Christian faith."

"We at Bethany are compelled by our faith to serve," Blacquiere wrote, "and we adhere to the values and beliefs of our faith when serving."

That faith, based on the same letter and contemporary reporting on testimony from the agency leaders, prohibits the agency from adopting children to same-sex couples.

Despite this publicly available information regarding Bethany's attitude on homosexuality

and adoption, Bob Wheaton, a spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, denied the agency was aware of Bethany's opposition to same-sex relationships and adoption.

"I can't speak to a specific case," Wheaton wrote in an email to Between The Lines "However, I can tell you that Bethany has not informed us that the agency would not work with a lesbian couple."

Wheaton was unable to explain how the agency was unaware of the agency's opposition to same-sex adoptions. That's despite the agency's own website touting the following as its mission: "Our mission is to demonstrate the love and compassion of

Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services.

"In the hope that we will bring glory to God in everything we do, we focus on three core values:

"Integrity – Make decisions that are consistent with Biblical principles.

Impact – Go above and beyond.

Innovation – Be dedicated to improvement."

Bethany officials in 2011 lobbied the government in Virginia to reject the adoption of a new administrative rule which would prohibit discrimination in adoptions and foster placements on the basis of sexual orientation. The rule was rejected by a government oversight board.

The couple's case is complex. There is no smoking gun to support or deny the adoption found in the hundreds of pages of agency reports and documents reviewed by Between The Lines. There is also no overtly anti-gay statements in those documents.

Ultimately, the conflict comes down to which side of the battle one believes is telling the truth. Either these women are unfit to

The two women said their relationship with the social service agency, Bethany Christian Services, started with a social worker, 20 minutes into her first meeting with them, asking them to explain how they would tell the two children – both under age 6 – that the adult women shared the same bed.

be foster parents and adoptive parents, or the agency denied the adoption because the women are lesbians – and the state set them up for failure by referring them to an agency with a documented anti-gay record.

To be clear: The MDHSS, per its own policies, declined to discuss this case specifically. Bethany Christian Services also declined to discuss the case, and as a result BTL was left with interviews with Adams and Pulsifer, hundreds of pages of documents from MDHSS through Calhoun County and Bethany, and information and documents available on the web. MDHSS did provide some general information to BTL regarding investigations of foster home and licensing agencies.

In the weeks long investigation into this case, BTL has consulted psychiatrists with a speciality in working with the LGBT community, gay and lesbian foster parents and former and current state officials – both elected and appointed.

A Dream Becomes A Nightmare

In June of 2013, Lorie Adams and Patti Pulsifer became licensed foster parents in Calhoun County. The couple was excited to open their home, and their love, to some of Michigan's most vulnerable residents. Since that time, the state has placed 31 foster kids in their home.

Like all foster homes, the couple endured licensing investigations and investigations from Child Protective Services – all things foster parents, both gay and straight, experience. Records show there were six complaints between December 2012 and January 2014. Three of those complaints alleged physical abuse in the home. All three were cleared by CPS investigators. One complaint – involving a foster child stealing prescription medication from the couple and selling it at school – was never investigated by authorities. And two complaints related to licensing issues were substantiated by investigating officials.

In one complaint, the couple had failed to take a foster child to prescribed sexual assault counseling appointments. But that is only half the story. During the time this happened, the couple was dealing with the death of a newborn grandchild. The couple addressed the situation to the satisfaction of Calhoun County authorities, documents show.

The other complaint involved an allegation the couple had failed to properly prevent a sunburn on a child in their care.

In February of 2014, the couple made the decision to adopt two siblings in their care. Their case was assigned to Bethany Christian Services – an evangelical Christian adoption agency based in Grand Rapids. The agency touts itself as the largest Christian adoption agency in the world.

It is also a major supporter of recently adopted state laws allowing adoption agencies

to refuse services to families based on the agency's "sincerely held religious beliefs." That law was passed in June of 2015.

And Adams and Pulsifer were hit on the blindside by the agency in what they say was discrimination based on sexual orientation. They claim a social worker from the agency demanded they explain how the couple would explain to the children why the two women slept in the same bed. Patti described the relationship with the agency as a "witch hunt from the start."

In May and August, the couple underwent two more licensing investigations. The first they were found noncompliant because they had allowed unapproved people to live in the home. The second, alleged Patti, violated state policies on keeping the identity of foster children confidential when she posted items on Facebook. The couple was found compliant with state policies.

In June, caseworkers from Bethany expressed concern about the young boy in the couple's care related to his speech. They claim to have never witnessed the

As Michigan's new discriminatory adoption legislation was working its way through the state Legislature and to the governor's desk, two faith-based adoption agencies stepped forward with letters to the governor supporting the bills. One of them was Bethany Christian Services.

boy speak. An assessment was ordered, and experts determined there was no need for speech pathology programming. Despite this, caseworkers raised concerns in August and September that the boy was not receiving services for what they determined was a developmental issue.

That's when Bethany, after having supervision of the couple and the two kids in care for just seven months, tried to remove the kids. The young boy was 3 years old. The girl was just 22 months old, and had lived with the couple since two days after her birth.

On Sept. 29, Bethany determined it "would not consider maintaining the children in the home."

Interestingly, Bethany had identified an "unrelated, pre-adoptive foster home in Kalamazoo County" for the two children. The home featured a mother, who was employed as a kindergarten teacher, but the agency was unable to explain what the father did for a living.

The Foster Care Review Board ruled against Bethany on Oct. 20, 2014, and ordered the children remain in the home and care of Pulsifer and Adams. The Calhoun County DHS Licensing Supervisor told the agency and the review board that it had placed "several children" in the couple's home, and "would not hesitate to place another child with them."

On April 16, 2015, the couple was again under investigation for allegation that Adams

"frequently kicks and slaps 4 year old foster child." In May, the couple was cleared of any abuse, although they were found in non-compliance with foster care rules requiring them to have any potential new home inspected and approved prior to them moving to the new housing. The couple moved in April, to a smaller house, which was ultimately approved by social workers from the agency. Five other licensing provisions investigators thought might have been violated were found to be compliant.

Licensing officials did not recommend any changes to the couple's license.

Two months later, Bethany informed the couple it was not recommending consent to adopt the children.

The reasons: "inability to recognize developmental concerns; inconsistency with workers and service providers; consistent use of yelling as regular discipline technique; stability of Lorie and Patti's relationship and 9 CPS and/or licensing complaints since December of 2012."

The issues relating to developmental

concerns recognition date back to the difference of opinion between speech pathology experts and Bethany's social workers. The inconsistency referenced missed appointments from earlier and allegations the couple may not have been fully forthcoming with psychiatrists during a psychological evaluation. Social workers claimed the evaluations may have been tainted because the two women did not discuss any relationship difficulties, and relationship difficulties were present between the two women. Earlier this year there was a new break up over alleged infidelity, but the couple worked their problems out together on their own. Bethany social workers were not pleased the women would not discuss the relationship problem with them.

As for those nine investigations, as has already been shown, the allegations related to the safety of the children were never substantiated. There were minor licensing issues.

Bob Wheaton, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Health Human Services, which oversees all foster care and adoption programs, said the department does not know how many licensing or CPS investigations are conducted on an annual basis for the state's 6,379 licensed foster care homes.

But Wheaton was readily able to identify how many licensing investigations were conducted of placement agencies, like Bethany.

"For child-placing agencies, there were

114 special investigations during Fiscal Year 2014, with 37 of those investigations finding citations that required a corrective action plan," Wheaton wrote in responses to an inquiry from BTL. "Total number of citations issued as a result of the 37 investigations was 143."

While Wheaton could not provide specifics on foster home specific investigations, a report released earlier this year following the drowning death of an autistic foster child in Flint, and interviews with current and former foster parents, reveal licensing investigations and CPS complaints are par for the course. The Flint related inquiry found the child placement agency had failed to act on serious licensing violations found and reported in the agency's own records. None of the serious violations cited in the 44-page report match the allegations against Adams and Pulsifer.

The Aftermath

After Bethany notified the couple of the agency's decision not to recommend consent to adopt the two kids, social workers scheduled a Family Team Meeting. During the meeting, two things happened.

First, Adams told workers she was angry, frustrated and tired. Social workers thought she was referring to the children; she was, in fact, referring to the adoption process and the relationship with Bethany.

Second, the little boy began acting up. Adams ordered him to his room as a "time out." The little boy defiantly asked if she was going to spank him again.

Bethany Christian Services social workers' ears perked up. They inquired, had Adams spanked him? She admitted she had, months earlier. Three swats to his rear end for trying to slam his sister's hand in the van door.

Agency workers said they would arrange for respite care – a move wherein an agency brings in another licensed provider to care for the children while the parents have personal time. Adams and Pulsifer thought they were agreeing to someone coming to their home. Instead, agency workers returned and removed the kids "just for the weekend." Once the kids were out of the home, the agency successfully sought an order to permanently remove them, despite opposition from therapists working with the little boy.

The women have not seen the children for at least three weeks. Adams has not seen them since she put them into car seats in an agency social worker's car and they were driven away. Patti had multiple supervised visits. But those were ended when she filed a complaint that the little boy kept arriving at the visits with bruises. Within 24 hours, she was texted by Bethany workers and informed she would no longer be allowed to see the boy she and Adams had come to think of as their son.

And late last week, Patti's move to adopt the kids – taken in July as agency workers were taking the children – was swiftly denied as well.

‘Crisis’: LGBT College Students Nearly Twice As Likely To Experience Sexual Violence

BY TODD HEYWOOD

“Absolutely yes, there is a crisis.”

That’s how Yvonne Siferd, victim services director at Equality Michigan, summarized her response to a huge national survey on campus climates and sexual assault at 27 U.S. universities, including the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

Over 150,000 students at those 27 universities were surveyed – and while the national media focused on the finding that, nationally, 23 percent of undergraduate women reported being victims of sexual assault or sexual misconduct – the survey revealed a troubling new statistic: Those who identified as part of the LGBTQ and gender non-conforming communities were nearly twice as likely to report in the survey that they have been victims than their heterosexual counterparts. They were also less likely to file a complaint with an official agency regarding the incident.

Who the perpetrators of this sexual violence and misconduct were – whether they identified as members of the LGBTQ and gender non-conforming community or not, for instance – was unclear.

“I would say that overall, the LGBTQ students’ experiences are reflective of the intense homo/bi/transphobia that runs rampant in our state,” said Siferd in an email. “We are disproportionately targeted for violence and sexual violence because we don’t fit into the gender roles society has deemed acceptable for us based on the sex we were assigned at birth. We often report incidents to local LGBTQ organizations, like Equality Michigan, but much more rarely report to police/law enforcement – similar to the high amount of survey responses compared to the low amount of reports on campus. This speaks to the larger issues of homo/bi/transphobia that we often experience when we do overcome hurdles to report – being traumatized because the person you report to stigmatizes you because of your sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.”

Michigan State University noted in its press release on the university specific survey results that it had more work to do reaching the LGBT and gender non-conforming communities. Jason Cody, a spokesman

for the university, said already this year the university has expanded its mandatory video on sexual assault to include information on the community, as well as developed LGBTQ and gender non-conforming specific information as part of its sexual assault awareness and prevention campaign.

In the general data found since enrolling

The University of Michigan specific data was similar.

“They’re shocking,” said Amy Hunter, coordinator of the ACLU of Michigan’s Trans Advocacy Project, referring specifically to the national numbers related to LGBT and gender non-conforming students.

“The transgender and gender non-

affirmative consent.

“I think the consent issue is lacking across the board,” Hertel said. “It’s a pretty simple message: Yes means yes.”

Jesse Bernal, the vice president of the division of diversity and inclusion at Grand Valley State University, said the survey results “confirmed” that “we have a serious problem.”

GVSU did not participate in the survey, but Bernal had reviewed some of the findings.

He said education on LGBTQ and gender conforming communities was part of addressing the issue. But he also said being deliberately inclusive of all campus communities in educational programming was important.

“We’re taking a really complex response,” he said. “We’re not promoting strict gender conformity or heterosexual only ideas.”

As director of Title IX – a federal law which governs how educational agencies respond to sexual violence on campus – Bernal said he is taking “an intersectional framework, not just a heteronormative one.”

But when the topic of affirmative consent comes up – particularly around the LGBTQ and gender non-conforming communities – what initially appears “clear” can quickly become muddled.

For instance, he said, how does one account for nonverbal consent?

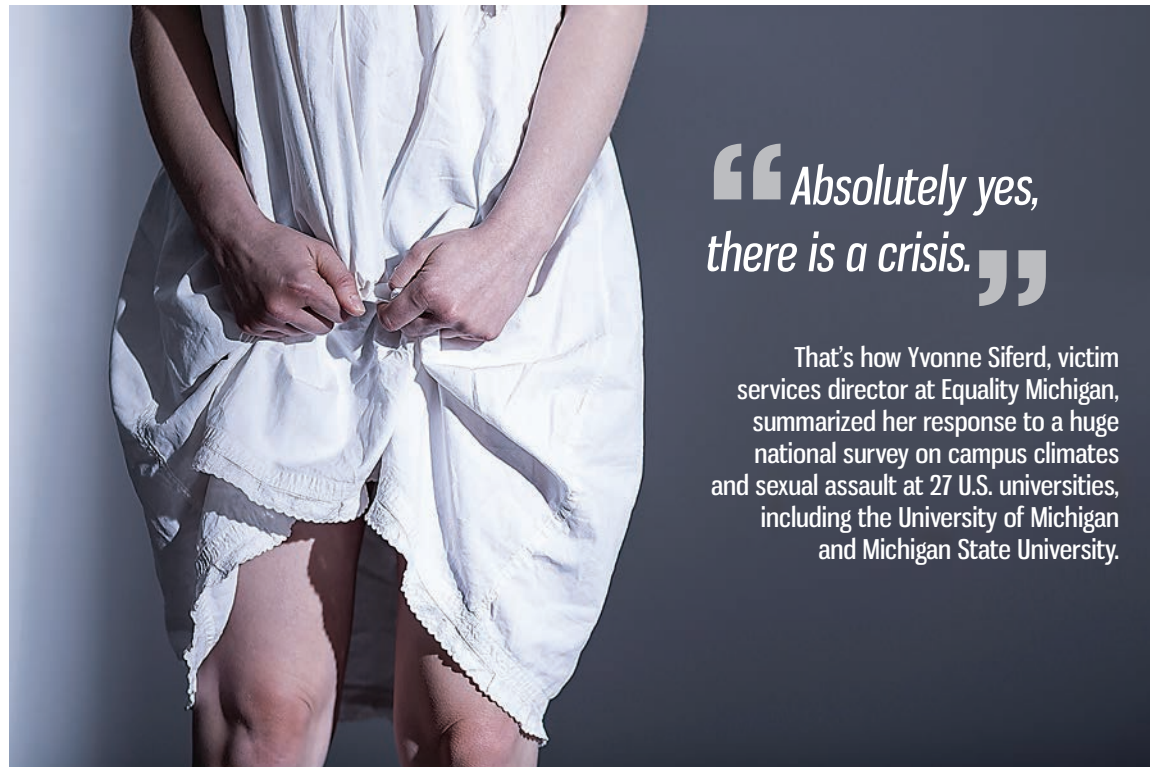
“Consent is complicated,” he said. “Generally, we thought the ‘yes means yes’ made it a lot clearer. Then groups started telling us that they were encountering all kinds of complex dynamics around consent.”

He continued.

“It’s an interesting dynamic, sexual environment for the LGBTQ and gender non-conforming communities,” he said. “We’re just starting to understand that environment. We need to continually work on it.”

The results of the national study, he said, showed that while academics and administrators are working hard to address issues specific to the communities involved, the reality is “this just raises the bar.”

“This really raises the urgency on how quickly we need to understand and respond to these issues,” he said.



at MSU, 13.2 percent of the students responding to the survey said they experienced nonconsensual sexual contact (either penetration or sexual touching) involving physical force or incapacitation. Among female undergraduates, 24.8 percent experienced completed or attempted nonconsensual penetration or sexual touching involving physical force or incapacitation, while 11.7 percent were victims of completed or attempted nonconsensual penetration involving force or incapacitation.

For female survivors of nonconsensual penetration by physical force, 71.9 percent did not report the incident. The primary reason given by students was they did not consider the situation serious enough to report (60.7 percent). Other reasons included feeling embarrassed, ashamed or that it was too emotionally difficult (39.4 percent), or not thinking anything would be done about it (28.2 percent).

conforming community is already most at risk for violence,” Hunter said, “It is now evident that even in spaces where we should be in the safest spaces, we’re not safe.”

Hunter called on MSU officials to implement broad educational outreach for the LGBT and gender non-conforming community about sexual violence, but also general education about the community to the larger university community.

State Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr., D-Meridian Township, said the findings – nationally and at MSU – “confirmed what we already knew about sexual assault: it’s an epidemic.”

He too called the numbers related to the LGBT and gender non-conforming communities “shocking,” and said the reports revealed, “It’s not just a heterosexual problem, it’s an across the board problem.”

Hertel announced last week introduction of legislation to amend Michigan’s laws regarding sex education curriculum to include

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REC Announces 2015 Changes At Voices

Two out of every five homeless youth and one out of every five youth in the child welfare system across the nation identifies as LGBT.



Elliott Broom, Ruth Ellis Center board chair introducing Bruce Vilanch to the VIP guests at Voices 2015. BTL Photo: AJ Trager



Bruce Vilanch, six-time Emmy Award winner, singer, songwriter and actor was the main attraction at Voices 2015. Vilanch livened up the crowd with his sharp comedy and pizzazz. BTL Photo: AJ Trager



The Ruth's Angel Award is given out every year to an individual whose contributions to the center and its mission exceed all expectations. This year's award went to Cynthia Smith, MSW, chief executive officer of Assured Family Services, a Michigan nonprofit provider of juvenile justice and child welfare neglect assessment and treatment services.

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – Every year nonprofits around the state hold their annual fundraisers to thank their donors and to celebrate the work that had been accomplished over the previous year. Voices 2015, Ruth Ellis Center's evening event held at the Waterview Loft at Port Detroit, included a silent auction, open bar, appetizers, performance by Bruce Vilanch and a youth film screening with keynote address given by REC Executive Director, Jerry Peterson.

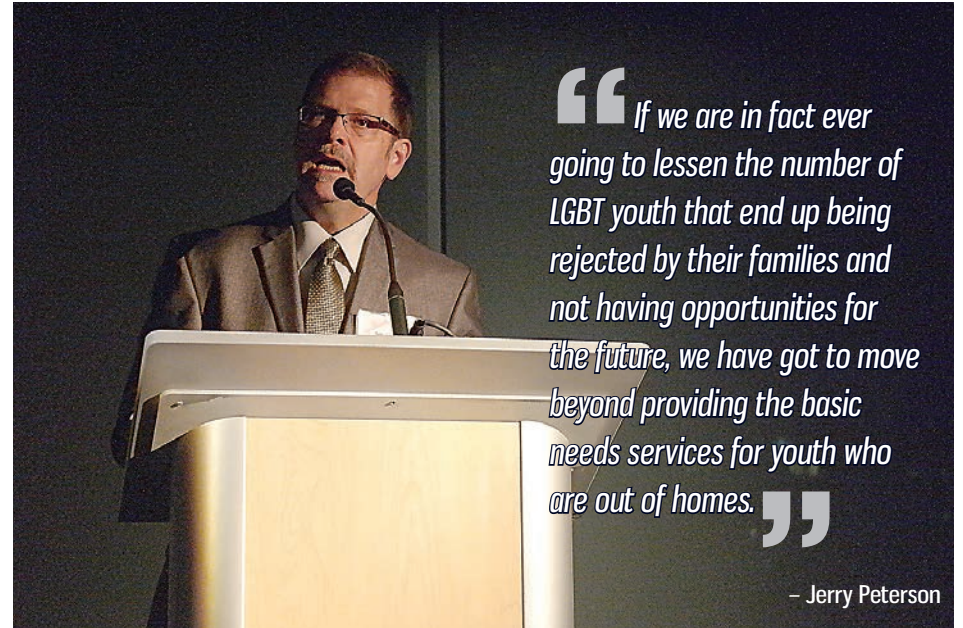
Hundreds of community members attended the evening celebration to honor the services that REC provides to nearly 500 LGBT youth every year. For some, the center may be an opportunity to get a hot meal or a hot shower, but for others the center may provide a safe space. And for some in the foster care of the juvenile justice system, REC becomes their home.

Two out of every five homeless youth and one out of every five youth in the child welfare system across the nation identifies as LGBT. LGBT youth are over-represented in the juvenile justice system and in the identity-to-prison pipeline, where young people are judged and punished on the basis of who they are and the circumstances of their family or identity.

"If we are in fact ever going to lessen the number of LGBT youth that end up being rejected by their families and not having opportunities for the future, we have got to move beyond providing the basic needs services for youth who are out of homes. We have got to move forward and connect with systems and with families before they are separated from one another through whatever process," Peterson pressed.

To implement this strategy, Peterson announced a new contract beginning Oct. 1, with the Wayne County Department of Health and Human Services, where two REC staff train 320 CPS workers with the goal of reducing the rejecting behaviors of the family, increase safety and permanency for the youth in the home and make sure youth are provided opportunities to stay with their family of origin.

Wayne County CPS workers will learn how to recognize abuse and neglect of the youth in response to the sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The identified families may be referred to REC for up to 13 months of intensive services with 24-hour



"If we are in fact ever going to lessen the number of LGBT youth that end up being rejected by their families and not having opportunities for the future, we have got to move beyond providing the basic needs services for youth who are out of homes."

– Jerry Peterson

Ruth Ellis Center Executive Director, Jerry Peterson, presenting his Voices 2015 keynote address Sept. 17, directly following the showing of a short educational film directed by REC youth who wanted to show what is important in the activist life of the center's young people. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

availability to a family advocate. The director of the Wayne County DHHS has agreed to make six hours of the training mandatory for all CPS workers in the district.

Youth Programs Director Jessie Fullenkamp introduced a screening of a short educational film produced by the youth leadership and advocacy group of the participatory research project that shared what is important in the activist life of the center's young people. The documentary showcased unique LGBT youth experiences when interacting with the child welfare system and how CPS policies towards the treatment of LGBT youth can be improved.

Through direct service and advocacy, Ruth Ellis Center will expand its relationship with the Department of Human Services through the family and group decision making project, which will look at youth and their families who are in the system so that they maintain healthy and supportive connections and ideally stay in the home. Josh and Christian, youth highlighted in the film, received certificates of recognition directly following the showing.

"I honor you – we honor you – and all of the other people who come and benefit from Ruth Ellis Center. So, I thank you on their behalf for being here, for showing up, for finding your voice, for finding a way to speak out and make sure that the resources are available so

that deserving young people in our community can have order to help stabilize their lives and maximize their potential," Peterson said to Josh and Christian.

The Ruth's Angel Award is given out every year to an individual whose contributions to the center and its mission exceed all expectations. This year's award went to Cynthia Smith, MSW, chief executive officer of Assured Family Services, a Michigan nonprofit provider of juvenile justice and child welfare neglect assessment and treatment services. Along with her professional success, Smith is the co-author of "Advocating Success - A Groundbreaking Approach to Juvenile Justice," a handbook that provides the foundation for policy direction and vendor accountability in a performance-based juvenile services system.

Lead sponsors for this year's Voices event include: LEAR Corporation, Quicken Loans, Bank of America, EY, Strategic Staffing Solutions, PNC Bank, Henry Grix & Howard Israel, Jeff Antaya & Peter Rosenfeld, Comerica Bank, General Electric GLBTA alliance, MGM Grand Detroit, Allen Brothers, WDET Detroit, St. John Providence and Pridesource Media Group. Centerpieces were donated by Wesley Berry Flowers and silent auction staging was provided by Lisa Gift Wrappers.

LGBT Support Service Center Opens In Muskegon County

BY AJ TRAGER

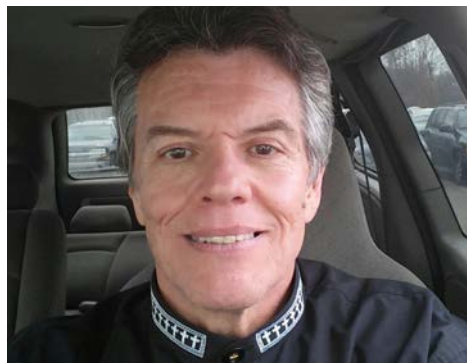
MUSKEGON – The first ever LGBT community center is opening up in Muskegon County, serving Muskegon and surrounding areas.

The LGBT Support Services Center will have a grand opening from 1-3 p.m. and again from 5-7 p.m. on Sept. 23 to celebrate the first ever LGBT center in the Muskegon area, offering resources, support, social opportunities, education and referrals to people from all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

Rev. Robert Teszlewicz, executive director of the center, began the Muskegon LGBT Support Services Center project late last year directly following the suicide of trans youth Leelah Alcorn. He has a degree in social work and has been professionally and socially involved in helping the LGBT community for most of his life.

"I've been involved with the community for decades, and I did a lot of social work for years," Teszlewicz said. "I've always had lots of LGBT clients, too. I've been on Facebook a lot and had more and more people contact me about opening the center. I read this article about Leelah Alcorn; I thought, 'Oh hell no.' That was what motivated me to say it is time to jump back into the saddle."

Teszlewicz has spent the last 40 years as a social worker, a high school counselor, a high school teacher, foster parent and as a reverend of the Catholic Apostolic Church. He has a long history of offering up his home to the LGBT community. Teszlewicz spent much of his time in the late 1980s housing foster care children who were HIV affected and has recently sold his home to fund the LGBT Support Services Center.



"I read this article about Leelah Alcorn; I thought, 'Oh hell no.' That was what motivated me to say it is time to jump back into the saddle."

– Rev. Robert Teszlewicz,
Executive Director, LGBT Support
Service Center, Muskegon County

"I've spoken to so many kids around the country and around the world about the struggles that the trans community faces, and I feel so strongly towards being an advocate," Teszlewicz said.

The center will host a variety of services for the Muskegon area including drop in and hang out areas for both LGBT youth and young adults and is currently working on a directory of services in the area. Teszlewicz would also like to open dialogue with Muskegon schools and have more GSAs present for students.

The center will be home to a host of programs and services including: support groups, life planning, AA/NA groups, mental health referrals, anti-bullying, family intervention services and help in the coming out process. The space will also be available for social gatherings.

LGBT Support Services will be entirely volunteer driven. Around seven volunteers came forth and helped Teszlewicz remodel the space with one volunteer willing to write grants for the center.

"I've done everything: holding the hand of a kid dying of AIDS, and I've seen kids blossom. It's all good. The community backlash is going to get worse between now and the 2016 elections. There isn't any shortage of ignorance around," Teszlewicz said.

The LGBT Support Services Center is located at 2542 Peck St. in Muskegon Heights. Visit the website at www.lgbtsupportservices.org. Free parking will be available in the lot behind the facility or on the street.



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Affirmations Names New Senior Director Of Operations

Lilianna Reyes Promoted To Youth Program Manager

BY BTL STAFF

FERNDALE – After a short search to fill the position, Affirmations recently added to its senior staff – promoting one staff member and hiring another.



Shyam Suchak



Lilianna Reyes

The search to fill the director of operations position started in June just before the U.S. Supreme Court Decision. Shyam Suchak, communications graduate from the University of Toledo with an M.A. in organizational leadership from Lourdes University, joins Affirmations as the new director of operations.

“Shyam represents one of my most significant hires since joining the organization,” stated Affirmations’ Executive Director Darrious D. Hilmon. “He is not only well-qualified to take the center’s operation and HR function to the next level, he’s kind-hearted and cares deeply about others.”

As director of operations Suchak will serve as the center’s internal leader, overseeing the day-to-day operations and human resources functions including training, development, performance evaluation and recruiting.

Previously, Shyam served as director of community programs, operations, and organizational development at Anne Grady Services, providing leadership to three departments with approximately 150 employees.

Formally known as program coordinator for the youth services department, Lilianna Reyes has been promoted to youth program manager and assumes lead accountability for youth programming at the center including the Carl Ripberger Youth Drop-In Center and the newly erected evidenced-based XTL (Cross the Line) Youth Workforce Development Program and the XTL Youth Leadership Development Program.

“Lilianna is a force of nature, and the perfect blend of talent and passion,” stated Hilmon. “Her work developing and implementing outcomes – driven, transformational programs – makes her an invaluable member of my team.”

A graduate of the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School, Reyes has measureable experience working with marginalized populations including people of color, LGBTQ communities and HIV positive communities. She serves on the Board of The Trans Sistas of Color Project.

The Legal Ripple Effect From Marriage Equality

BY AJ TRAGER

FERNDALE – In a community conversation discussing the legal changes same-sex couples will face as a result of marriage equality, Miller Canfield highlighted how, compared to other states, Michigan is far behind in preparing for legal changes resulting from the U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Jennifer LaTosch and Lynn Sirich, attorneys and counselors at law, presented their seminar, “Marriage Equality: New Legalities,” to a group of 30 people Sept. 16 at Affirmations. LaTosch and Sirich outlined how Michigan is dragging its feet when it comes to amending documents and policies for married, or soon to be married, same-sex couples.

“Michigan didn’t prepare for this. Our governor, our legislators and our attorney general were fighting a case trying to keep the (same-sex marriage) ban going, and they didn’t think about what the ramifications would be if they lost,” LaTosch said.

When other states had started preparing legislative and legal statute changes due to a possible marriage equality ruling from SCOTUS, Michigan sat dormant. Thus, adoption, family planning, current state planning documents, real estate documents, prenuptial agreements, post-nuptial agreements, tax planning issues, marriage and divorce are all affected by the shift in state law, extending and expanding many of these rights to same-sex couples.

“I have no great hope that they are going to fix a lot of these things real fast, so what we’re going to try and have to do is find some stop-gap measures to figure out the best way to find protections for ourselves and our kids until Michigan catches up with federal law,” LaTosch said.

All marriages performed are now recognized under U.S. law. Before seeking a Michigan marriage license, LaTosch and Sirich emphasized the importance of terminating old marriages or civil unions that occurred before the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June. These prior situations can cause legal complications down the pipeline.

Same-sex couples can now benefit from the same estate laws and gift-tax advantages that heterosexual couples enjoy. Same-gender spouses will now have intestacy rights, be given priority to be named as a conservator or guardian over their spouse and can finally file joint state tax returns.

Previously married same-sex couples in Michigan filed upwards of five



Jennifer LaTosch and Lynn Sirich from Miller Canfield discussed some legal changes that are a direct result of marriage equality Sept. 16 and highlighted the importance of speaking with a law professional about these changes. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

tax returns. Now, if a marriage was recognized at the federal level, a couple can file amended, joint-returns for the past four years, LaTosch said.

Pre and post-nuptial agreements can be drafted to protect the assets of either partner prior to the wedding date. Sirich suggests a review of established estate planning every three to five years and encourages people to create a trust, which will avoid the entanglements of probate law.

To ensure that children are protected to the best of the parents’ ability, the team at Miller Canfield suggests that married same-sex couples seek a “second” or step-parent adoption. The Michigan Marriage Amendment defined marriage as between a man and a woman. Now post-SCOTUS, step-parent adoptions allow both parents to be listed as legal guardians of the child and extend a number of protections to both parents such as hospitalization rights and many day-to-day protections that married

opposite-sex couples often take for granted, such as custody, parenting and support rights.

LaTosch outlined other ways that Michigan couples are seeking joint-protections for their children such as an Affidavit of Parentage, often applied to opposite-sex couples who have children out of wedlock, which shows intent to protect and take responsibility for the child but may fall circumstance to the Revocation of Paternity Act, which would find the second parent not biologically related to the child and could revoke the gained rights. To combat this, LaTosch suggests filing for a second-parent adoption. Information regarding second-parent adoptions can be found at a local county clerk’s office.

“The ripple effect from this will span decades,” LaTosch said. “Talk to a professional with every step that you do before you just jump in and do something.”

“Michigan didn’t prepare for this. Our governor, our legislators and our attorney general were fighting a case trying to keep the (same-sex marriage) ban going, and they didn’t think about what the ramifications would be if they lost.”

- Jennifer LaTosch

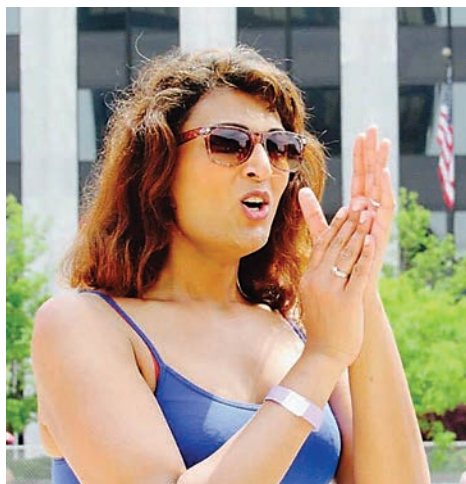
Trans Autism Activist To Speak At V To Shining V

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – Michigan Trans Autism Activist, Dr. Mira Krishnan, is scheduled as a keynote speaker in the second annual V To Shining V. The event was designed by the creator of “The Daily Show,” Lizz Winstead, to celebrate womenfolk and their accomplishments and successes.

V To Shining V will be held Sept. 26 and is a product of Lady Parts Justice, a rapid response collective founded in 2012 that uses comedy, culture and digital media to bring awareness to the state of women’s reproductive rights and access to safe and secure sexual health care so people will get “off their asses and reclaim their rights.”

Lady Parts Justice pays homage to former Michigan state Rep. Lisa Brown, who – while in office – was banned from the House floor



for using the word vagina when arguing against a transvaginal ultrasound bill. She later asked what term she “should” use instead and members of the House suggested something less provocative, like “lady parts.”

Featured speakers include former House representative and County Clerk Lisa Brown; Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence; Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan, Kary Moss; Dr. Krishnan, a behavioral health leader and advocate for children’s, women’s and LGBT issues and Renee Chelian, owner of Northland Family Planning Clinics.

“Part of the reason women don’t act like the majority (now 51 percent of the U.S. population) is that women look at the movement and they don’t see themselves,” says Krishnan. “The fact is that women are really diverse, and working together on something like V to Shining V is one way we come together.”

Krishnan spoke at the inaugural Detroit

event in 2014, where she shared her feminist experience as a transgender woman.

“The fact that we had trans and cis people there, black and white and brown people, straight and LGBT people – that’s where you see how diverse the movement really is, and you see how interconnected all the issues we experience as women are,” Krishnan said. “I was grateful my message was welcomed and we all had a chance to learn from each other. That’s how we move this movement forward.”

Krishnan is eager to speak again at V to Shining V Detroit 2015 and lend her voice to the Lady Parts Justice organization.

“I love the unapologetic nature of Lady Parts Justice, and the humor it brings to the (feminist) movement,” Krishnan said. “The fight can be draining, so it’s good to have some humor to help keep us marching forward. And I am unapologetic about my feminism. I’m not sorry for thinking women deserve reproductive freedom.”

“Part of the reason women don’t act like the majority is that women look at the movement and they don’t see themselves.”

- Dr. Mira Krishnan

This year’s event will be hosted by LPJer stand-up comic Alex English with performances by musician Kelly Elizabeth, slam poet Jassmine Parks, poet Sadia Ghazi, BIKINI KILL tribute band Tankini Kill and DJ Sense from the all-female hip hop collective The Foundation. Other activities will include a silent auction of art and gifts all donated by local businesses and organizations.

V to Shining V kicks off promptly at 3 p.m. Sept. 26 with opening remarks from Lisa Brown at PJs Lager House located at 1254 Michigan Ave., Detroit. Cost of attendance is a suggested \$5 donation and all ages are welcome to join. All funds raised from the event will support the work of Lady Parts Justice, which includes education and outreach in support of women’s reproductive justice. Lady Parts Justice is a project of the Sixteen-Thirty Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization.

For more information go to www.facebook.com/LPJMichigan or visit www.ladypartsjustice.com.

FROM DIRECTOR ROLAND EMMERICH
AND WRITER JON ROBIN BAITZ

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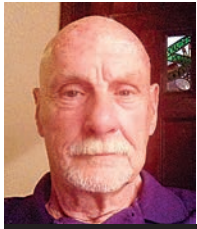
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Candles At Both Ends Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

"I'm burning my candle at both ends. It will not last the night. But, oh, my foes, and, ah, my friends. It gives a lovely light!"

These words are by bisexual poet Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), the subject of a fascinating best-selling biography, "Savage Beauty," by Nancy Milford (Random House).

Millay's poetry – touching, independent, light, feminist, sardonic – is once again reaching new, younger audiences, many LGBT.

My acquaintance with her poetic gifts began with her sonnets. When I was getting over my first "big gay affair," I memorized Millay's "Time does not bring relief/ All you have lied who told me time would ease me of my pain./ I miss him in the weeping of the rain/ I want him in the shrinking of the tide ..."

Pain indeed. I was 23 and into my fourth year of a rewarding affair when I was dumped by my partner Ernie for a soldier on leave named Joe. (Ernie and I were working at Discount Records in downtown Detroit. Joe was a hunky customer.)

Soon I met new friends at the Woodward Bar, circa 1959: Tom, Paul and Jonya, each of whom I found out was a bona fide candle queen. My first dinner in their enlightened company was midsummer. It could just as well have been Christmas for all the flickering-fairy, highlighted enchantment I walked in to.

I think I counted three dozen candles of varying sizes, shapes, scents in strategic places of the living room. The effect was wonderful, but I began to worry. Was a group seduction planned? Was all this flicker and flare to enhance the taste of mediocre food? (Another tuna-potato-chip casserole!) Were we going to have an impromptu rosary?

The simple truth is that these guys loved candles. Jonya, who was Dutch, took pride in a family silver heirloom, once hidden during the Nazi occupation of his country. He called the candle holder a "SHANdalabra," which made his lover Paul smile indulgently.

I think I saw Jonya genuflect as he lit the candles gracing the dining table. A carpenter by trade, his rough hands lovingly arranged flowers as well, of which there was also an abundance on display that festive night.

Tom, who was with Paul before Jonya (and the son of a Detroit precinct police captain), took pleasure in an elaborate dime store-bought fountain in the living room. He called it Miss Trevi. It held plants, glass beads, ice cubes, gold fish. The water's color varied from party to party, augmented by leftover Manhattans.

Little wonder that Miss Trevi gurgled, occasionally burped and wheezed. Compliments given to this bubbling contraption usually resulted in amply free-poured drinks by proud-owner Tom.

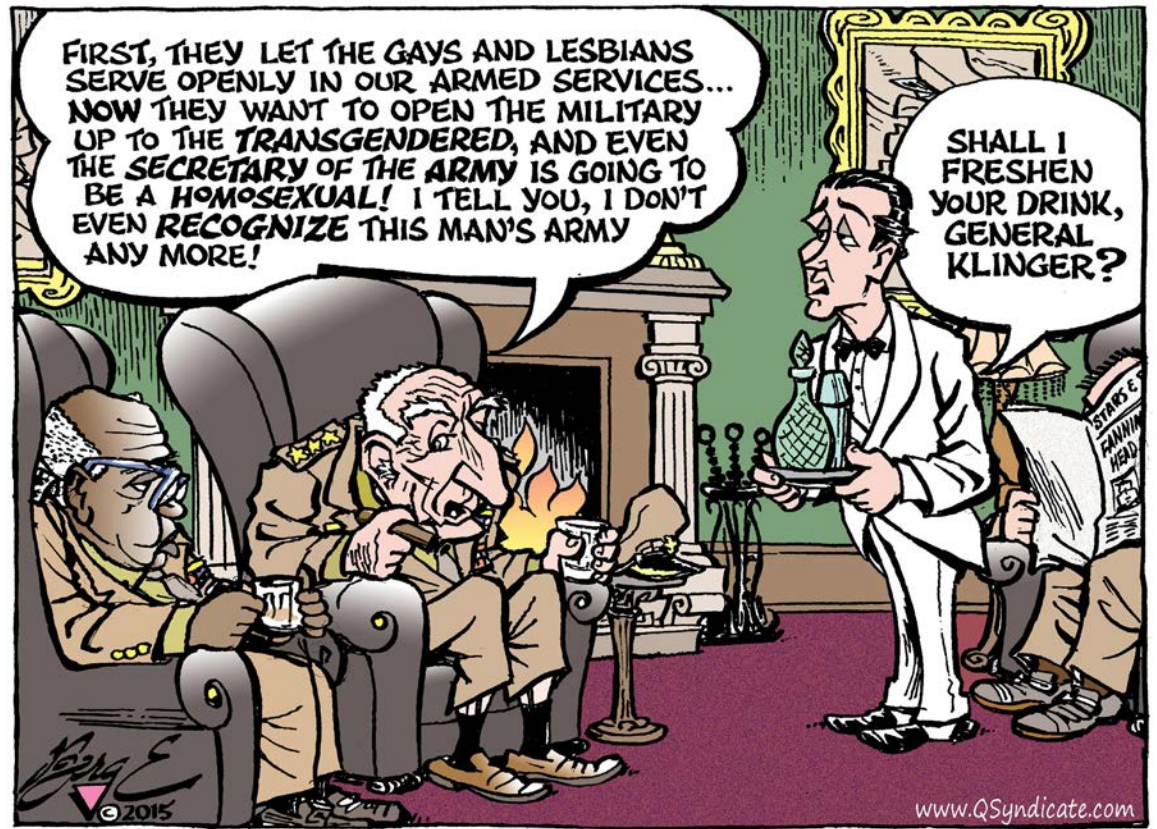
Alone in my cluttered art studio these days, I often light a candle and watch shadows dance softly, silently, so sadly empty, on my walls. Images of the past appear. Wink. And vanish.

Paul has been married for 45 years to Susan, "a wonderfully understanding wife." Jonya died of a heart attack aboard ship during a return visit to Amsterdam. Tom, who in 1972 was told that because he had an abused pancreas his next drink "would be it," ignored the warning. He was 36.

Ernie and I are in touch. He lives in Florida, the president of a successful video arts recording company. He has been with his third partner, Tom, for over 40 years. Joe, a local struggling actor, died last year.

Me? I'm still burning my candle at both ends. And – if you really must know – my vanilla-flavored wick has waxed somewhat shorter. But it flickers ever so brightly. Now and then.

Have a rainbow day. Charles@pridesource.com



Transmissions

Rocky Road

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Sometimes I am reminded that I'm not a spring chicken. Indeed, I've been public as a transwoman for 22 years now, and that is still less than half my life. I've got a bit more gray in my hair than I'm altogether comfortable with and a growing crop of wrinkles to my skin.

Recently, another trans friend of mine – one who was yet to start pre-school when I was coming out to friends and family – was relating to me something she'd seen another older transwoman doing.

The argument stemmed from that underground classic of 1975 cinema, "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." For the uninitiated, the film – and before that, a play – is a parody of schlocky sci-fi films, featuring a "mad scientist" character with a penchant for women's lingerie.

The movie itself spawned a near-religious following of fans who would attend midnight showings

for decades, pelting the screen with props, shouting "call back lines," and generally behaving like a freak while surrounded by scores of others letting their freak flag fly. This was a youth culture growing out of the era of Ziggy Stardust, simultaneously moving forward from and disillusioned by the hippies. "Rocky Horror" was like the weekly church ritual for this subculture.

The film also gained a lot of trans devotees. Here was a movie with a main character hailing from "Transsexual Transylvania," parading across the screen in bold makeup and a black-and-glitter body brief. Costuming was welcomed at showings, even expected, allowing one to be accepted in public while donning their own crossgender look.

It was a big deal in the 1970s and 1980s, and that seemed to be the point this other older transwoman seemed to want to make to my younger friend. Unfortunately, that isn't how it came out: Rather, she branded this younger transwoman

and her friends as "dumb" for not enjoying "Rocky Horror."

Sometime around 1982 I first saw a private showing of "Rocky Horror," courtesy of a bad VHS copy of a bad VHS copy off a showing of the movie. I was entranced by the movie, and amazed by the seemingly pervasive attitudes of both my friends who took me, and the others present.

I would see the film again the next night, and many other times since. Eventually, I scored my own scratchy VHS bootleg a few years before an official release became available. As a result, I cannot tell you how many times I have seen "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," but I'm sure it's scores upon scores of times.

As much as I can sing along with "Superheroes" or rattle off call-backs throughout the floor show, however, I also know that those young transwomen are not dumb, and that they very much have a

See Transmissions, next page

► Transmissions

Continued from p. 14

point.

The story is problematic if we look at it with modern eyes. The main character is a cross-dresser who is also a sex-obsessed sociopath who ends up – sorry for the spoiler – dead in the final reel. Frank N. Furter is just not going to make the realest of positive transgender role models, nor can the film be considered a positive one for transgender people on its own. This knowing that the film was also made while Richard O'Brien, its screenwriter, was dealing with his own gender identity.

While many who attended those showings were a sort of family, and usually very accepting, the crowds also included plenty of people there simply to “sneer at the queers.”

That was all we had. Perhaps it's a bit like being on a desert island with only a coconut tree to sustain you: you'll develop quite a taste for that particular fruit.

We live in very different times today, and transgender people are not strangers on far-flung isles. In the 40 years since the movie came out, we have developed true role models amongst ourselves. We have gained rights that we did not have in 1975, from local laws about wearing cross-gender clothing to Title VII protections under the law. We have movies and television shows to choose from, that represent many forms of gender identity and expression

far beyond the few scraps we could dig up way back when. If those are not enough, too, we have the wealth of the World Wide Web to points up hither and yon, providing panoply of possibilities.

So where does “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” belong today?

For those of us old enough to remember that first strange taste of a broader world, it will always have a fond spot in our hearts. This movie was one of those things that gave us hope, showed us possibility, or otherwise kept us going from week to week. I'm reluctant to toss it on the dustbin of history, knowing that it was vital to so many back then. Without what it provided then – problematic or not – we would not be where we are now.

At the same time, this is not 1975, and we cannot look at “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” as part of the world of today's transfolks any more than we can expect to see polyester leisure suits on the runways.

I can remember the joy I had at midnight showings, and that isn't going to go away. Yet I can also acknowledge that is a part of my history, and not something I expect everyone today to live through. We don't expect people to use a typewriter when a computer is available, nor should we expect every transperson to have our same experience.

I may be older now, but I hope to never be so set in my ways to not acknowledge change.

Gwen Smith never was in a shadow cast. You can find her on Twitter at @gwenners.



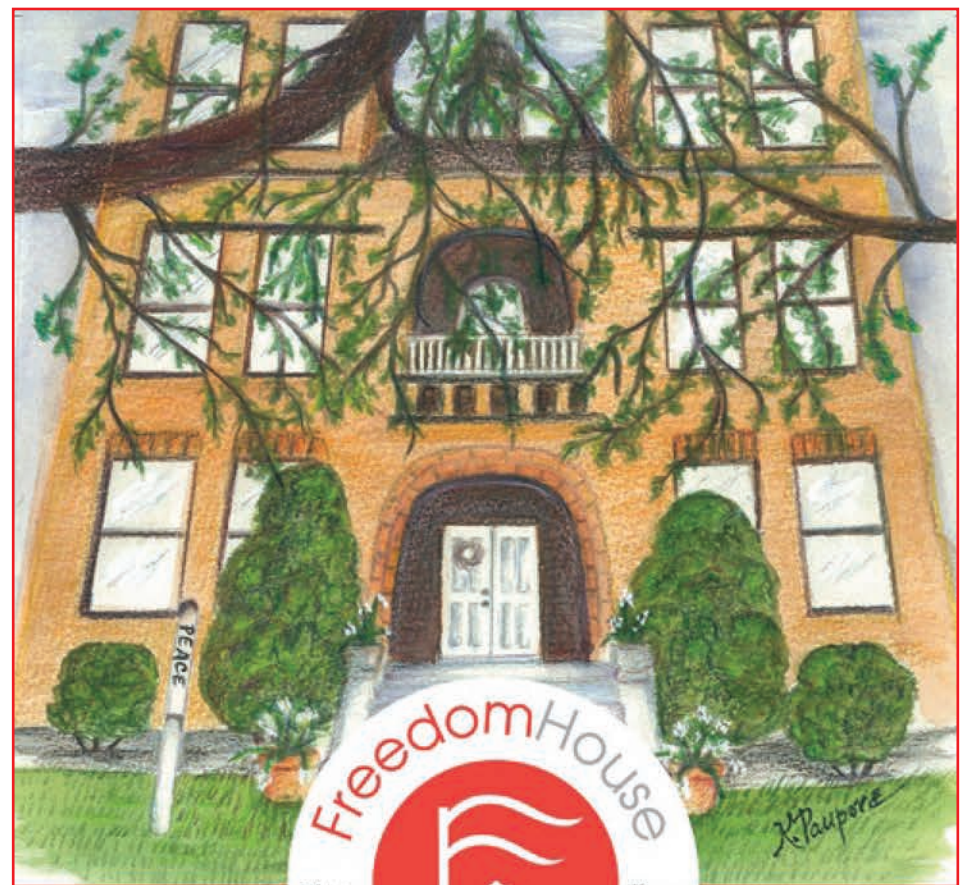
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Fiorina Shines, Bush ‘Contorts’ To Right, Walker And Perry Gone

BY LISA KEEN

People posting on the Log Cabin Republican’s Facebook timeline last Wednesday night overwhelmingly agreed that business executive Carly Fiorina was the winner. Of the 117 responses to the open thread question, “Who won the debate?” last Wednesday night, 50 said former Hewlett-Packard CEO Fiorina and 27 said U.S. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida. The next closest tally – 11 – was for pediatric neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

The tally from the national LGBT Republican group mirrored the reactions of most observers. And by Monday, Sept. 21, support for Fiorina had catapulted her into second place, behind real estate mogul Donald Trump. A CNN poll of 444 registered voters nationwide in the four days after the debate showed 24 percent support Trump, 15 percent Fiorina, 14 percent Carson, and 11 percent Rubio. All the other candidates, including Jeb Bush at 9 points, were in the single digits.

Most observers commended Fiorina for answering often complex foreign policy questions with informed, detailed and decisive answers. For instance, when asked how they would deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin sending military arms into Syria, Trump said he’d “talk” and “get along” with Putin. Fiorina said she’d rebuild the Sixth Fleet and the missile defense program in Poland, conduct military exercises in the Baltic states, and send a few thousand more troops into Germany.

Many also liked how she handled Trump’s remark to Rolling Stone magazine that he couldn’t believe anyone would “vote for that” – referring to Fiorina’s face. CNN moderator Jake Tapper invited Fiorina to “feel free to respond what you think about his persona.” Rather than take the bait to return the insult to Trump, Fiorina said, “I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said” – a line that drew a boisterous cheer from the debate audience.

Not everyone was praising Fiorina after the debate. Stamp Corbin, publisher of San Diego LGBT Weekly, posted an op-ed in his paper, noting the “ridiculous hypocrisy” of

The candidates took on the issue of whether Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis should be able to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Fiorina calling out opponent Donald Trump for making an unkind remark about her face. He was referring, not to her response at the debate but, to a campaign ad, “Look at this Face.” The ad shows the faces of many women with Fiorina saying in the background that these are the faces of leadership.

Corbin said he found Fiorina’s response hypocritical, given that she “mocked” U.S. Senate opponent Barbara Boxer’s hair as “so yesterday” during their race in 2010.

“Such a double standard,” wrote Corbin. “Fiorina can say nasty things about Boxer’s hair but her mug is off limits? Ridiculous.”

Corbin co-chaired an LGBT arm of the first Obama for President campaign.

Bush Leans More To The Right

While Fiorina’s performance and her boost in the polls were the big news out of last Wednesday’s debate, there was considerable sparring over at least one LGBT-related issue during the five-hour-long, two-tier event.

The candidates took on the issue of whether Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis should be able to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The only real news that emerged from that was Jeb Bush’s step to the right to agree with Mike Huckabee.

“I think there needs to be accommodation for someone acting on faith.”

- Jeb Bush



Republican presidential candidate, businesswoman Carly Fiorina, right, leads fellow candidates Scott Walker, second from right, Jeb Bush, center, and Donald Trump as they take the stage prior to the CNN Republican presidential debate at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015, in Simi Valley, Calif. AP Photo/Chris Carlson

Bush told reporters earlier this month that Davis “is sworn to uphold the law” but that there “ought to be big enough space for her to act on her conscience...” CNN moderator Jake Tapper noted that candidate Mike Huckabee had called the detention of Davis for contempt of court as tantamount to the “criminalization of Christianity.” He then noted that Bush had said Davis was “sworn to uphold the law” and asked Huckabee if Bush is “on the wrong side of the criminalization of Christianity?”

Huckabee said, “No,” and then launched into a heavily opinionated discourse about the Kentucky controversy. Among other things, he claimed the U.S. Supreme Court “legislated” a new pro-same-sex marriage law “out of thin air.” (In fact, the court determined that existing state laws banning same-sex couples from marriage violate the U.S. Constitution.) And he claimed the government “made accommodations” for religious beliefs in the treatment of Muslim

male prisoners but not to Davis, who said she was asserting her Christian beliefs in denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

“What else is it other than the criminalization of her faith and the exaltation of the faith of everyone else who might be a Fort Hood shooter or a detainee at Gitmo?” asked Huckabee. Neither of these cases had religious accommodation.

“I’m not telling you that, Governor,” said Tapper. “But Governor Bush is, because he disagrees. He thinks Kim Davis swore to uphold the law.”

“You’re not stating my views right,” said Bush. “I think there needs to be accommodation for someone acting on faith. Religious conscience is a first freedom. It’s a powerful part of our Bill of Rights. And, in a big, tolerant country, we should respect the rule of law, allow people in this country – I was opposed to the (Supreme Court) decision, but we – you can’t just say, ‘Well, they – gays can’t get married now.’ But this woman, there

should be some accommodation for her conscience, just as there should be for people that are florists that don’t want to participate in weddings, or bakers. A great country like us should find a way to have accommodations for people so that we can solve the problem in the right way. This should be solved at the local level. And so, we do agree, Mike.”

Gregory Angelo, president of the national Log Cabin Republicans group, said he found that answer “confusing.”

“There are contortions that certain candidates are twisting themselves into unnecessarily with the Kim Davis issue,” said Angelo.

But overall, said Angelo, the candidates last Wednesday “merely reinforced statements made in the past.”

“I have noticed one thing that differentiates (this debate) from 2012 – it’s the willingness to talk about LGBT issues and a degree of sympathy and respect that was sorely missing from 2012 cycle.”

Creep of the Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Bust out the rainbow M16 assault rifles because things are about to get FABULOUS! The United States Army is about to become the world's biggest pride parade thanks to President Obama's nomination of Eric Fanning for secretary of the Army.

The only thing you need to know about Fanning is that he's a gay! What other qualifications does one possibly need to essentially be the CEO of the U.S. Army?

Well, lots, actually. And Fanning's credentials are pretty impeccable. He's currently serving as the undersecretary of the Army and his list of qualifications is so long it would take up my entire column space. But if you ask Mike Huckabee, R-Will Never Be President, Obama just picked the first guy to come up on Grindr.

On Sept. 19, Huckabee took to Facebook to criticize Fanning's nomination.

"It's clear President Obama is more interested in appeasing America's homosexuals than honoring America's heroes," the Huckster wrote. "Veterans suicide is out-of-control and military readiness is dangerously low, yet Obama is so obsessed with pandering to liberal interest groups he's nominated an openly gay civilian to run the Army. Homosexuality is not a job qualification."

I'm not sure what Huckabee means when he says that Obama is all about the gays at the expense of "America's heroes." Is he saying that Obama should have nominated a military officer instead? The secretary of the Army is a civilian position, which Huckabee should know. I guess he's saying that the mere act of nominating a homo is a dishonor to our troops.

But it's not like Obama just nominated Nathan Lane. Even Fox News saw through Huckabee's homophobic bullshit.

On a Fox Business morning show, host

Sandra Smith asked Huckabee what his deal was with criticizing Fanning since he "is widely seen as very qualified for the job."

"He may be very qualified for the job," he said, "and if he is, then nominate him because he's qualified to lead the Army, not because of his sexual orientation. Why are they making such a big deal and talking about it?"

By "they" he means the Obama administration. There is, of course, no evidence that Fanning was nominated because of his sexual orientation nor is there any evidence that Obama just can't shut up about how gay Fanning is.

Huckabee, on the other hand, cannot shut up about it.

"I had people who were gay who worked on my staff, who have served in my administration when I was governor. I never went around saying, 'Hey, I've got some homosexuals that are working for me.' What's the point? If they're qualified, hire them."

Oh, so Huckabee has worked with known homosexuals, eh? Well then he couldn't possibly be homophobic.

"I just think this president is so into symbolism, so into trying to prove to everybody that he's this open-minded guy," Huckabee said, "maybe he's trying to make up for the fact that until, gosh, what, just three years ago, he still took the position that many of us do, and that is that marriage, for example, is a biblical issue, and it is between a man and a woman. He had this sudden revelation that it is not that way anymore."

In other words, Obama is trying to



Mike Huckabee

“I just think this president is so into symbolism, so into trying to prove to everybody that he's this open-minded guy.”

- Mike Huckabee

make nice with the gays by throwing them a nomination or two.

"I just feel like that the president has made this such an agenda," Huckabee continued, "and the agenda for the military is to focus on the best qualified people, because we're talking about life and death issues. And if he thinks Eric Fanning is the best for the job, nominate him, but leave his sexual orientation out of it."

You hear that, Fanning! Back into the closet for you, for the good of the country. And so Huckabee can find something else to obsess about other than how super gay you are.

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Report: Unique Challenges Faced By Older Gay Residents

BOSTON (AP) – Aging lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents in Massachusetts face unique challenges, according to a report released Sept. 17 by a special legislative commission.

The report offers a number of recommendations to address the needs of LGBT seniors, including the development of inclusive elder housing communities and protections against discrimination for transgender people in nursing homes and other health facilities.

The 20-member commission was created in 2013 by lawmakers and then-Gov. Deval Patrick, and has been called the first statewide panel of its kind in the nation.

While Massachusetts was the first state to legalize gay marriage, the report notes that many of its older LGBT citizens came of age in far less tolerant times.

"The lives of today's older lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people were molded under conditions of intense homophobia, both during their formative years, as well as throughout much of their adult lives," the commission wrote.

The stigma attached to homosexuality caused many LGBT people to become estranged from their families and have difficulty holding jobs, the report said. As a result, many lived on the margins of society and even now feel reluctant about seeking mainstream services available to other elders.

LGBT seniors are also less likely to have children, close family members or partners who can assist with daily living tasks and help them make important health care decisions. The report calls for improved training for elder service staffs on the "unique experiences and needs of LGBT seniors."

Though the state's record on gay and lesbian issues is largely progressive, it has fallen short in a key area of housing, the commission said.

"Boston and other Massachusetts cities are lagging behind Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco, which have all developed vibrant housing initiatives that are friendly and inclusive of LGBT older adults," the report stated. "Unfortunately, Massachusetts has nothing like this."

Poll Shows Clear Public Opposition To Allowing Employees To Discriminate Against LGBT Couples

WASHINGTON – Amidst the constant media coverage of Kentucky clerk Kim Davis and her refusal to issue same-sex marriage licenses citing religious freedom, a recent poll conducted by the Human Rights Campaign shows that a majority of Americans do not support allowing government officials or public employees to discriminate against LGBT couples on religious grounds.

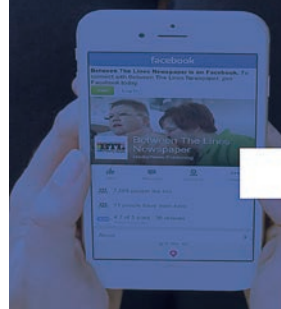
The survey was conducted in a period of four days in early September and consisted of 1,000 phone interviews. Survey results show that more than two-thirds are opposed to governmental employees denying service to LGBT people on the basis of their personal religious beliefs. A 60 percent majority of voters also said that they would be less likely to support a candidate for president who supported legislation that allowed for this behavior.

"The overwhelming majority of public officials across the country are issuing marriage licenses to all couples, including same-sex couples, because upholding the rule of law is the right thing to do. Now it's clear that the American people agree, and will have no patience with public employees who want to use their private religious views as an excuse to deny equal treatment to LGBT people under the law," said JoDee Winterhof, HRC senior vice president for policy and political affairs. "These results are a clear warning that members of Congress who want to move forward with so-called 'religious liberty' bills do so at their own peril."

The survey found that a 60 percent majority of voters would be less likely to support a candidate for president who supported legislation that allowed for this behavior. A bipartisan 68 percent of those polled oppose allowing government employees the ability to deny service to LGBT people; however, 24 percent of respondents would support allowing government employees to cite their religious beliefs as a reason to deny service to LGBT people.

While Republican candidates running for president have been split on the circumstances surrounding Davis' refusal to do her job, many have been much more vocal in support of the so-called "First Amendment Defense Act," which would allow government employees to cite religious objections and argues that they would not be required to serve same-sex couples.

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HIV Pill-Lawsuit: Man Claims Bias Over Use Of HIV-Blocking Drug

BOSTON (AP)—As a gay man, the Boston attorney thought he was doing the responsible thing when he asked his doctor to prescribe Truvada, a drug hailed as a way to halt the spread of AIDS. But when he tried to get long-term care insurance, Mutual of Omaha turned him down, saying it does not offer coverage to anyone who takes the drug.

Now, the man is planning to sue the insurer, alleging he was discriminated against because he is gay. He filed a complaint Wednesday with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the first step in a lawsuit.

The man, who is identified only as John Doe in the complaint, said he wants to make sure that he and anyone else taking Truvada can get long-term care insurance, which covers daily, extended-care services for people with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

He also wants to ensure that people are not deterred from using Truvada because they fear they will face discrimination.

"I was shocked. I really was," Doe told The Associated Press in interview at the offices of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, a Boston-based legal group that is representing him. He spoke on condition of anonymity because his complaint contains private medical information.

"I thought maybe they misunderstood me. I'm HIV-negative. I'm not HIV-positive. I was taking Truvada as a prophylactic."

Bennett Klein, director of GLAD's AIDS Law Project, calls the decision "nonsensical."

"It's really based on the stereotypes and the fears that are out there, that somehow gay male sexuality is inherently risky and unhealthy," Klein said. "We have a lot of bias about gay male sexuality in our society."

Truvada was first approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2004 to be used in combination with other medications to treat people with HIV. In 2012, the FDA made it the first drug approved for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of HIV infection in uninfected people.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says taking Truvada consistently has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV transmission in people who are at risk by up to 92 percent.

Critics of Truvada say widespread use could lead to an increase in condom-less sex and new HIV infections because people will forget to take the pill it every day.

Mutual of Omaha declined to comment on the complaint.

"We have not seen the complaint and it's our practice not to comment on potential litigation," said Jim Nolan, a company spokesman.

Doe, a 61-year-old attorney and businessman

The man, who is identified only as John Doe in the complaint, said he wants to make sure that he and anyone else taking Truvada can get long-term care insurance, which covers daily, extended-care services for people with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

who lives in Boston, said he began taking Truvada about a year ago after discussing it with his doctor. He said he has lost dozens of friends to AIDS and cannot understand the rationale behind rejecting his application for long-term coverage when Truvada is believed to reduce his risk of HIV. His long-time partner also is HIV-negative.

"I lived through the Holocaust of people dying from AIDS. I was doing my little part to stop that," he said.

He said he received a letter in April from a chief underwriter for Mutual of Omaha denying his appeal. "We do not offer coverage to anyone who takes the medication Truvada, regardless of whether it is prescribed to treat HIV infection, or is used for pre-exposure prophylaxis. This in accordance with our underwriting guidelines," the letter said, according to the complaint.

Doe alleges that Mutual of Omaha discriminated against him based on sexual orientation and disability, in this case, an assumption that Doe will in the future contract HIV, a health condition covered by the state's antidiscrimination law.

Dr. Kenneth Mayer, a professor at Harvard Medical School and director of HIV Prevention Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, said he doesn't understand why Mutual of Omaha would reject an applicant for long-term care insurance because he is taking Truvada.

"The last thing we want to do is discourage people from using this preventive medication," Mayer said. "The goal is to eradicate the number of new HIV infections."

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THE RIOT'S RIOT

'Stonewall' Actor, Director Talk 'Whitewashing' Controversy, Emotional Brick-Scene Shoot & Onscreen Sex

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Blowback from a mere two-minute-and-twenty-three-second trailer of "Stonewall" stormed the web in early August. It was intense. Like the historic brick-throwing, slur-lashing brawl that broke out in New York City outside a Greenwich Village gay bar in 1969, it provoked an uproar. And also like the Stonewall riots, the melting pot of people the film sought to represent felt... unrepresented.

"To all considering watching the newest whitewashed version of queer history," began self-proclaimed 18-year-old "transwomyn of color" Pat Cordova-Goff via the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, alleging the movie's cast lacked diversity. As she declared her resistance to openly gay action-turned-indie director Roland Emmerich's fictional interpretation based around the events leading up to a landmark moment in LGBT history, the Stonewall riots, she rallied a fervent army of fellow boycotters. Twenty-four *thousand...*

and counting.

The issue, according to Cordova-Goff and other opponents: Its ivory lead, Jeremy Irvine as small-town-turned-big-city rebel Danny Winters, is white.

And it's true. He is not black. He is not Puerto Rican. He is not female. But the "Stonewall" ensemble, Irvine insists, is a "wide, diverse cast." The 25-year-old English actor fully acknowledges he expected a passionate reaction to the film, particularly because "we're doing a story that is so important to so many people."

Irvine, though, did not foresee the kind of pre-release revolt from those who claimed "Stonewall" underemphasized the trans community and queer women of color, deeming the film a "whitewashed" take on an otherwise mixed-minority historical occurrence.

"That was a surprise; I never expected to hear that," says Irvine, spotlighting

Danny's band of fellow rioters: Marsha P. Johnson (Otoja Abit), a black transwoman who co-founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries with prominent trans activist Sylvia Rivera, and a lesbian credited by some as initiating the riot, calling on others to "do something." Breakout actor Jonny Beauchamp also stars, playing self-proclaimed "street queen" Ray / Ramona, a composite of both Rivera and jailed protester Raymond Castro.

Emmerich insists his dramatization, inspired by a distant friend's real-life experience and also Emmerich's own, is "inclusive"; that Irvine's Danny is the lens through which we see these events unfold. "I think it's cool when a white kid learns from a Puerto Rican and a black kid," he continues, "and is a better person afterwards. Becomes a true friend."

Regarding the controversy: Emmerich says that, while shooting "Independence

Day: Resurgence," "they kept it away from me."

"Only for so long, however," he continues. "After a while, you kind of know what's going on. I was shocked. Luckily, I had some gay activists, like Larry Kramer, speak up for us." (Kramer, the 80-year-old writer and HIV activist, addressed Emmerich on Facebook: "Don't listen to the crazies," he wrote. "And thank you for your passion.")

So: Why did Emmerich cast a white, as he calls him, "catalyst character"?

He says, simply, "You have to put yourself a little bit in, and I'm white."

"Stonewall" was never intended to focus on race but rather it was meant to trace the beginnings of the gay rights movement, the steps we've made and the steps we haven't.

For Emmerich, the director behind major blow-up-everything blockbusters such as "Independence Day," "Godzilla" and "Day After Tomorrow," it's a passion project — a

piece of work so close to his heart he self-financed the film with friends and even stepped in as director when no one else would.

“Nobody wanted to do it,” he reveals, “and I was stubborn, and then I got it done.”

Irvine was unfazed that, according to an Instagram post from out screenwriter Jon Robin Baitz, “no studio would give a cent to (this movie). Including the studios he (Emmerich) has made a great deal of money for.”

With unconventional starring stints in films such as 2012’s “Great Expectations” and “Beyond the Reach,” the actor’s own projects have mostly been off the beaten path. “I’m on the side of anyone who thinks that we should have a bit more risk-taking with mainstream cinema,” says Irvine, who starred in Steven Spielberg’s emotional juggernaut “War Horse.” “It’s played far too safe.”

Regarding “Stonewall,” Emmerich was determined to make this movie, studios be damned. “I said, ‘I’m not going away from my kids; I’m standing up for them.’”

His “kids,” of course, include Irvine and Beauchamp, and the rest of the young, colorful core cast. But Emmerich’s “Stonewall” doesn’t seek to just tell its characters’ stories—the director, along with Baitz, had his eye on the bigger picture. His pursuit: to tell the story of LGBT youth everywhere.

“Roland was always talking about the homeless kids who we don’t know about today,” Irvine says. “This little group of fictional characters represents those who weren’t made famous by the movement.”

When Emmerich became involved with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, he made a disheartening discovery: 40 percent of LA homeless youth are LGBT. Personally struck, he dug deeper and realized that history was repeating itself.

“I was like, ‘Oh my god,’” he recalls. “At the same time, I read a lot about the Stonewall riots and found some kind of parallel – a group of homeless kids were very part of this riot too. The unsung heroes. I said, ‘Maybe I have to help.’”

Emmerich threw himself into the project, researching the riots, and also, along with producers, interviewing several Stonewall vets. Limitations manifested quickly. As Irvine states, “Finding actual survivors is very difficult. This was just before the AIDS crisis, so actually finding people who were there is tough. And first accounts do vary – I mean, it was a riot.”

Their varied play-by-plays hindered the

filmmakers’ fact-finding, a realization that led Emmerich to this conclusion: “Nobody knows what really happened that night.”

“You always have to take their stories with a grain of salt,” he says. “It’s like when there’s a traffic accident and you ask five witnesses and they tell you five different stories.”

When the final film was cut, those same sources were the first to screen it. Emmerich says they were “very, very surprised and complimentary about how right we got it.” And they knew this wasn’t a documentary. They knew Emmerich’s vision: “I’m always saying I made a movie about the unsung heroes of Stonewall. I wanted to give those kids a voice.”

Because he found “the whole thing incredibly moving,” Irvine was on board immediately. “The script had me in pieces when I first read it,” he admits. Blown away by the writing and eager for the role, he hopped on a London-bound plane from

Budapest, where he’d been filming another project, and showed up at Emmerich’s door, a scratch pad full of Stonewall notes in hand. “I really chased it,” Irvine says. “The script was by far the best thing I’d read in months. It wasn’t a difficult decision to go after it.”

But still, Irvine was nervous. Would they get it right? He knew the LGBT community’s expectations would be inevitably high,

and he says, “There’s a responsibility involved to do a story justice.”

When shooting in NYC on Christopher Street (the mayhem originally unfolded there, in front of the Stonewall Inn) didn’t pan out as hoped – there were too many people, and not enough time – the crew used an indoor facility in Montreal, leaving Emmerich questioning its true-to-life authenticity.

“I panicked every day,” he remembers.

During the weeklong riot shoot, feelings were intense. Lots of reflection. Lots of commemorating. “That whole sequence was a very emotionally charged piece to shoot,” recalls Irvine, who throws the brick in the film, mirroring the famously charged real-life moment. “We’re shooting with a lot of actors and people on the set who have a very personal relationship to the story. Very meaningful to them.”

Others emotions (and, ahem, things) were

“I’m on the side of anyone who thinks that we should have a bit more risk-taking with mainstream cinema. It’s played far too safe.”

See Stonewall, page 23



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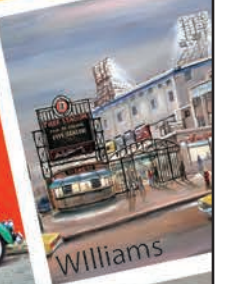
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(Left) Otoja Abit as Marsha P. Johnson and Jonny Beaucamp as Ray / Ramona. Photo: Philippe Bossé

► Stonewall

Continued from page 21

present while Irvine shot his gay sex-scene debut with Jonathan Rhys Meyers, whose character represents one of the earliest gay rights groups in the U.S., the Mattachine Society, and crushes hard on Irvine's new-kid-on-the-block character. Eventually they end up in bed. And with their clothes off.

"It was my first gay sex scene in a film, and hey, to be honest, if you're gonna do it, Jonathan Rhys Myers is not a bad choice," says Irvine, noting he's only filmed one other sex scene, guy-on-girl, before. "I'm pretty green to all that. And Jonathan obviously did 'The Tudors,' and so he said, 'Just relax. I used to do, like, 10 of these a day.' So he was very cool. He took my hand. Took me through it."

"Jonathan totally took charge," adds Emmerich.

As he reflects on directing the scene, the director chuckles, admitting to making special accommodations for Irvine ("I kept it really short for his relief") because "oh my god was he nervous."

Two men getting hot and heavy – Irvine just felt pressure to, you know, get it right.

And with Stonewall too, of course. To prepare, Irvine powered through a stack of books and also listened to producer-conducted interviews.

"I didn't know a huge amount about (Stonewall) before I read the script and did all my research," he admits. "I was quite ashamed at how ignorant I was about the Stonewall Movement."

Now the public will see the end-result, the culmination of a passionate director and his equally-as-passionate cast – and not for two minutes. For two hours. Emmerich expects more scrutiny, but shrugs it off.

"I don't know what they will say," he says. "They will probably find other stuff to criticize. I always say a movie's a movie and it is what it is. We all are really super proud of it."

Echoing the latter sentiment, Irvine is pleased to be a part of "Stonewall," a project that he believes will put nearly a half-century of gradual progress – from the riots to the Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality – into perspective.

"I hope that the movie brings home how important that period of history was," he says. "If we can bring that more to the forefront of people's thoughts, then the film has done what it's meant to do."

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UDM Theatre Company Takes A Message Of Love On The Road

BY AMY J. PARRENT

“You have to love yourself. It’s our prayer everyone can hear that.”

That is University of Detroit Mercy’s Greg Grobis describing the theme of the award-winning play “The Whale,” a co-production of UDM’s Theatre Company and Ferndale’s Ringwald Theatre. But in a way, it’s also the mantra of every actor.

An actor is often limited – and frustrated – by the types of roles they can play. But the goal of UDM’s theater program has always been to teach its students how to work within that restriction.

If you’re 22, there’s not much chance a Broadway show will cast you as a 50- or 70-year-old. So the company approach is to cast students within their age range and life experiences.

“When you graduate, that’s how you’re going to get hired,” said Grobis, who is assistant professor of performing arts and director of marketing and management for the theater company.

To accommodate that casting method, UDM also uses age-appropriate professional actors in most company productions. Working with older pros enriches the students’ experiences in other ways.

“Students have to perform at levels of professionals, to meet expectations that are raised,” said Grobis. “And this also grows their professional network.”

This season a new course has been charted that takes students even farther out into the world of professional theater. In addition to working with the Ringwald, later this season the company will co-produce the Michigan premiere of “Low Hanging Fruit” with Matrix Theatre Company at Boll Family YMCA in downtown Detroit. The powerful play about female vets of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is a provocative piece heightening awareness of PTSD.

“What Matrix does fits with the social justice mission of UD Mercy,” said Grobis. “Their mission is practically a rewording of UDM’s.”

“We’re not only partnering with pros who come to our theater, we’re going to their spaces,” he

continued. “It’s providing more experience for more students, and getting out of the limitations of performance spaces and venues we’ve been in.”

Ringwald artistic director Joe Bailey, who also stars in “The Whale,” said, “Lately we’ve been talking more about getting into educational outreach. I think (The

can see the effect the veteran pros have on students.

“It’s incredible to have someone come in, say the same thing you’ve been saying for two years – and suddenly the students get it,” he said. “It’s an awesome joy to work with professionals, doing work that’s not standard. It’s cool that UDM has always done that.”

Ferndale establishments to discuss the play or just meet people. (Several restaurants, including Dino’s Lounge, The Emory and The Loving Touch, are offering discounts to anyone who produces a ticket for that night’s production.)

Other efforts to make the play-going accessible have included reaching out to Affirmations and

weight of the role, but (imagining) how do you get to be 600 pounds?”

Bailey said, “I’m a bigger fellow anyway. But this is going to double the size of me. The way it’s written I don’t move a lot onstage. At first I thought, ‘Oh cool, I’m not going to have to do a lot of blocking.’ But there’s also a challenge of not being able to use my body. It adds a whole other layer to everything.”

And how does Bailey illuminate the mind of a despondent man? “I can’t be Debbie Downer for 90 minutes, that’s not interesting,” he said. “I’d just disappear in the couch. I’m not just seeing him as fat, depressed. Everybody has love in them, hope. To engage all those qualities is the task with which I have been given.”

The production also includes noted actress Linda Rabin Hammell, Greg Ettleman and Savannah Wright.

Grobis said there is humor in the play. But the show has made him cry at rehearsals, and he was only half-joking when he said he’d like a sponsor for selling tissues in the lobby.

“It’s a tear jerker,” he said. “I connect personally. What do we do (with tragedies)? Do we just give up? There is hope if you look for the light. You’re worthy of love.

“That’s what the script explores,” Grobis said. “When you see this, you see the love everyone has for him that he doesn’t see, although he has love for everyone else. When the play is over we want you to go call someone and tell them you love them.”



Ringwald and UDM) can do things for each other that we didn’t do previously. And their audience base won’t have to travel far (to The Ringwald).”

The new approach also means students experience a more professional run of several weekends. “In having to come back a third and then a fourth weekend, we’ll be seeing how the growth of character (interpretation) continues, and how it becomes consistent,” said Grobis, who is directing “The Whale.”

It also provides more opportunities for the student crew who can be rotated in and out.

In addition the approach also develops professional mentoring. For instance, The Ringwald’s executive director, Jamie Warrow, who costars in “The Whale,” is also serving as a mentor/acting coach to the UDM students. Grobis

The Whale

“The Whale” of this show is a 600-pound gay man from Idaho named Charlie. His health failing, and having lost his husband to a tragic death, he’s reaching out for love and acceptance from others, including an estranged daughter.

“It’s about a man that is lost in anxiety, and his love for other people,” Grobis said. “Mix into it LGBT issues – being gay, but having religious institutions (judging) you. But whether you’re gay or straight or bi, the whole spectrum, whether you’re Democrat or Republican – you’re going to see humanity in this. In this intimate space, the audience will be right there with the character processing what’s going on.”

The producers are also actively encouraging informal after-show gatherings at local

the Ruth Ellis Center, and offering special theater industry night tickets. Grobis joked that the theater’s motto is “Fill it early and fill it often.”

He described the writing of playwright Samuel D. Hunter – a MacArthur Fellow – as phenomenal. “When I read this, I instantly knew this was a show I wanted to do,” Grobis said.

The script, with callbacks to “Moby Dick” and the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale, also dovetails with The Ringwald’s theme this year, a Season of Classics.

For Bailey’s extremely obese character, costume designer Melinda Pacha has created what Grobis describes as a “state-of-the-art fat suit,” which includes an internal cooling packet.

Grobis said the title character is a daunting role – “not just the

INFO

The Whale

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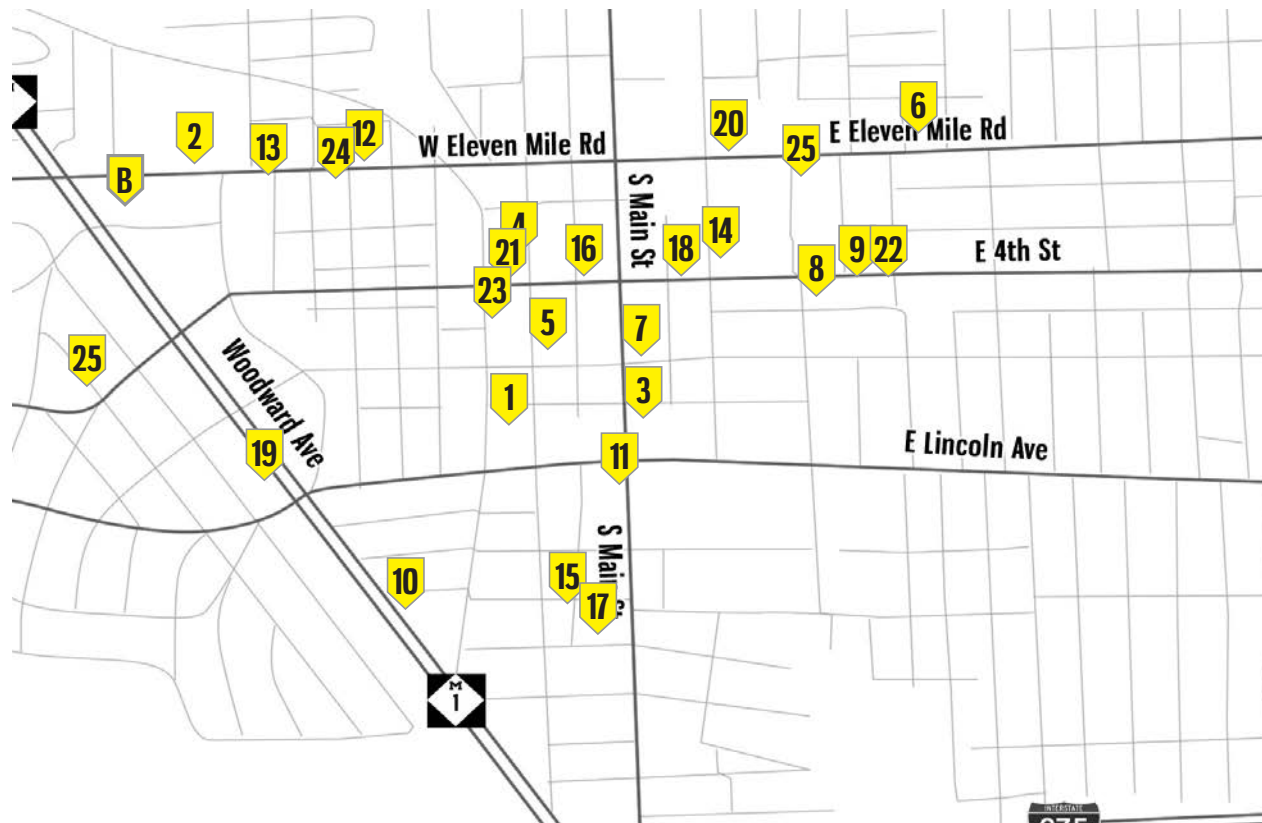


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Monster Broadway Hit Electrifies Baldwin Theatre

BY BTL STAFF

ROYAL OAK – Madcap antics, high-energy dance and a toe-tapping musical score compose the perfect formula for a musical comedy to kick off Stagecrafters' award-winning 2015-16 Main Stage series. The new Mel Brooks musical "Young Frankenstein" is the musical stage adaptation of Brooks' 1974 black-and-white film of the same name which parodies the 1930s horror movie genre. The show began Sept. 11 and runs through Oct. 4 at the historic Baldwin Theatre in downtown Royal Oak.

Dr. Frederick Frankenstein (Jason Bowen of Madison Heights) inherits his family's estate in Transylvania which was left to him by his infamous mad scientist grandfather. Upon his arrival, Frederick meets hunchback Igor (Jeff Weiner of Royal Oak), curvy research assistant Inga (Erika Fell of Royal Oak) and the mysterious housekeeper Frau Blücher (Kathryn Stewart-Hoffmann of Ferndale). Inspired by a dream, Frederick finds himself in the mad scientist shoes of his ancestors when he succeeds in bringing a corpse back to life, thus creating The Monster (John Forlini of Mt. Clemens). When The Monster escapes, hilarity abounds! For those familiar with the movie, all of the classic lines are still in place, but accompanied with lively, off-color musical numbers and dance, amazing costumes and an incredible set.

Director Richard Wilson (of Royal Oak) deems this show as not your typical musical, but rather a comedy with musical numbers. "This show is campy humor at its finest – it's bawdy and full of innuendos. Nothing is said



Taking a moment away from their experiment to pose for a "Franken-selfie" are Inga (Erika Fell of Royal Oak), Dr. Frederick Frankenstein (Jason Bowen of Madison Heights), Frau Blücher (Kathryn Stewart-Hoffmann of Ferndale), and Igor (Jeff Weiner of Royal Oak). Photo by Paul Tamm.

outright, but mature audiences will pick up on the campy genius of Mel Brooks' script and score. The stage version follows the classic movie fairly well. The big difference is the addition of the musical numbers!" says Wilson.

"Young Frankenstein" (book by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan and music and lyrics by Brooks) premiered on Broadway in November

2007 and closed in January 2009. The original cast included Roger Bart (Frankenstein), Megan Mullally (Elizabeth) and Sutton Foster (Inga). The musical won five Broadway.com Audience Awards including Favorite New Broadway Musical.

Blackfinn Ameripub of Royal Oak provided a special pre-glow for the opening performance of the Royal Oak run of the show, with

beverages courtesy of Stagecrafters.

Show tickets are \$22 on Thursdays and \$24 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets may be purchased online at www.stagecrafters.org (online handling fees apply) or by phone at 248-541-6430 using Visa or MasterCard. All seats are reserved and there are no refunds or exchanges on individual tickets. If shows have not sold out, tickets can be purchased at the box office one hour prior to the performance. Student, military and senior discounts are available for specific performances. The Baldwin Theatre is located at 415 S. Lafayette in downtown Royal Oak. Young Frankenstein is rated PG-13 and some scenes may not be appropriate for young audiences. Strobe lighting and theatrical haze will be used in the special effects.

Remaining show dates and times are as follows: 8 p.m. Sept. 24, 25, 26 and Oct. 2-3, and 2 p.m. Sept. 27 and Oct. 4.

Stagecrafters, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit community theater, is in its 60th year of providing opportunities for members of the community to develop their talents and to volunteer their time to create an enriching, quality theatrical experience through its Main Stage, 2nd Stage and Youth Theatre productions. At the Baldwin Theatre since 1985, Stagecrafters has been named Best Community Theatre by Hour Detroit, Real Detroit Weekly and Daily Tribune. Stagecrafters offers shows that appeal to a wide variety of ages and interests and prides itself on providing professional quality shows at affordable prices, making the performing arts accessible to individuals in our "regional" community.

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Trivia with Terry and Thirsty Thursday Half off beer and well drinks with student ID. \autBAR, 315 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com

MAC Health 2 p.m. Mondays by appointment only. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), **Ferndale**. www.Michiganaidcoalition.org

Connections 6 p.m. Open to all LGBTQ and Ally youth from 13-18. Join us to meet other LGBTQ and Ally teens and socialize in a safe space. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. www.Kglrc.org

Confessions Adult Story-Telling 7 p.m. The city of Detroit lacks a safe, inclusive space for adults to learn about sexual wellness and expression. Spark Plug Detroit aims to fill that gap in a manner which is welcoming of all people. Free and open to the public. Spark Plug Detroit, 2900 E. Grand Blvd., **Detroit**. shannon@sparkplugdetroit.com www.Sparkplugdetroit.com

Friday, Sept. 25

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

Meet and Greet Happy Hour 7 p.m. Metro Detroit Bisexual Men's Group, 215 S. Main St., **Royal Oak**. 586-306-5572.

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

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Editor's Pick

Pianist and composer Charlie Albright opens the Detroit Symphony Orchestra season with a recital concert program at the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center. The performer is a 2014 Avery Fisher Career Grant winner and is recognized for improvisations that recall the Romantic-era composer-pianists.

The New York Times praised Albright for his "jaw-dropping technique and virtuosity meshed with a distinctive musicality." The 27-year-old musician is considered on the rise to international stardom.

Albright will perform at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 25. An afterglow will follow in the Atrium. The Max is located at 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$10-45 for the performance. To order tickets, call 313-576-5111 or visit www.dso.org.

Funky Ferndale Art Fair 120 artists. Food. Fun. Twice as funky as the average fine art fair. Funky Ferndale Art Fair, Nine Mile and Woodward, **Ferndale**. www.Funkyferndaleartfair.com

The BAM spends a day on the lake 1 p.m. Canoe Trip to Fireworks Island and a visit to the Belleville Area Museum all in one day! Join us for an intriguing day featuring a presentation by the Huron Watershed Council and a look at the newest museum exhibit - Lake Life: The Creation and Recreation of Belleville Lake. Cost: \$10-22. Belleville Area Museum, 405 Main St., **Belleville**. www.Facebook.com/events/869163716489726/

Mitten Mavens Roller Derby vs. Dead River Roller Derby 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$0-12. Lansing Capital Roller Derby, 7868 Old M-78, **East Lansing**. marketing@mittenmavens.net www.Mittenmavens.net

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

Sunday, Sept. 27

Salsa Night Salsa lessons. \$1 tacos. \autBAR, 315 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com

It's Easy Being Green: A Sustainable Living Expo 12:30 p.m. It's Easy Being Green is a day-long learning, local buying, and eating celebration of living a life that's better for the planet and not so hard on the wallet. From supporting efforts to reduce your carbon footprint to learning homesteading skills for living a more hands-on, DIY life, It's Easy Being Green has you covered! Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave., **Ann Arbor**. www.acebook.com/events/677018942398030/

TransCend TransCend provides support and resources to the Southwest Michigan transgender community, their significant others, family, friends, and allies. Meetings occur twice per month on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Sunday. Kalamazoo

Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. www.Kglrc.org

Pride NA 6:30 p.m. Confidential and anonymous. Open to all individuals impacted by addiction. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. www.Kglrc.org

B.F.'s! 7 p.m. Tickets: \$12 in advance only. Slipstream, 460 Hilton, **Ferndale**. 248-298-9617. www.Slipstreamti.com

Monday, Sept. 28

LGBT Sexual Assault Survivors Groups 5:30 p.m. Any member of the LGBT community, age 13-24, who is a survivor of sexual assault is welcome. This group is open to all LGBTQIAP individuals who have experienced any form of sexual assault in their lifetime. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-345-5595. nschneider@ywcakalamazoo.org www.Kglrc.org

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

Tuesday, Sept. 29

Karaoke and Half Off Wine \autBAR, 315 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com

MAC Health 2 p.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), **Detroit**. www.Michiganaidcoalition.org

Free STI & Rapid HIV Testing 5 p.m. Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Trichomoniasis, Syphilis. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.Goaffirmations.org

Dynamic Duo 10 p.m. 21+. Free. Menjo's, 928 McNichols Road W, **Detroit**. 313-863-3934. www.Facebook.com/dynamicduoact

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Free Pool and \$1 Off Beer \autBAR, 315 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-994-3677. www.Autbar.com



Editor's Pick

Viral violin sensation Taylor Davis comes to Ferndale's The Magic Bag Oct. 7. Davis is a classically trained American violinist, arranger and composer, whose passion for video game and film music led her to launch her widely popular YouTube channel "ViolinTay" in 2011. As of January 2015, Davis' channel has attracted over 700,000 subscribers and 85 million video views.

The majority of her cover videos feature a wide variety of video game, film and anime themes. Davis has recently begun releasing her own original music starting with her first single "Nebulous" in July 2013, and plans to release a full album of original music in February 2015. Davis has released five full length video game, anime and film cover albums, a full length Christmas album and over 20 singles. Davis arranged and produced all of the fully orchestrated backtracks that accompanied her violin solos for her first

three albums. She now collaborates with other producers and arrangers on many projects but also continues to fully produce some of her music.

Taylor Davis stops by the Magic Bag on Wednesday, Oct. 7 for an extraordinary night of music. Doors are 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$15 in advance. The Magic Bag is located at 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. For tickets or more information, call 248-544-1991 or visit www.themagicbag.com.

See Happenings, page 32



Maxim Vinogradov (Brad) and Jackson Abohasira (Jack) star in the coming-of age tale “BFs!” at Slipstream Theatre Initiative in Hazel Park. Photo: STI

Teen Actors Are Totally Convincing In ‘BFs!’

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

I have to hand it to the young actors who are currently starring in “BFs!” – the impressive two-hander at Slipstream Theatre Initiative in Hazel Park. For almost two hours, the story unfolds in a bedroom that’s in a performance space barely the same size as the living room inside my typical 1950s suburban ranch (yes, *that* small!), where Maxim Vinogradov (Brad) and Jackson Abohasira (Jack) must age their characters four years while struggling to come to terms at their own speeds with their sexuality – all while performing mere inches away from the 28 or so voyeurs sitting quietly around them.

Even the most seasoned veterans of the stage would find such a scenario a bit intimidating. But these two teenage performers (one a senior in high school, the other a college freshman) understood the need to “keep it real” – that is, to not play to the back of the house, but to act as naturally as one possibly can in a setting that demands total intimacy of its performers.

The result, then, were performances that seemed so real and so authentic that it was easy to forget one was watching a play – but instead were peering in on private conversations between best friends since seventh grade.

Although I was not there in an official capacity, I nonetheless found myself looking at the play through the eyes of a critic. In particular, I kept close watch on the reactions of each actor when he wasn’t the one speaking. Did noises and movement in the room distract him? Was he totally “into the moment” and truly listening to the other actor? Were his eyes connecting with those of his fellow actor? Because the slightest deviation could ruin the moment in such an intimate performance space, how successful were these boys – these young men – in sustaining their characters throughout a two-hour span of time, I wondered?

Only once did an actor break – albeit for a second, and so did many in the audience – thanks to a door that unexpectedly slammed shut in the back of the house. (Did someone leave the room, I wondered?) For the rest of the time, these actors performed a miracle: They transformed themselves into Jack and Brad, alone in Jack’s bedroom, sharing their experiences, their hopes, their dreams and their fears as only best friends can.

Because I’m familiar with the source material – the play is based on a book, the autobiographical “Band Fags” written by Frank Anthony Polito – I entered the theater curious how Polito took a novel with a plethora of interesting characters and whittled it down to only two people. Would anything important get lost in the translation? Would it get boring *hearing* about these other folks rather than watching them tell their own parts of the story directly to us?

Not at all. In fact, the story unfolded quite well, with the boys filling in whatever information was needed for us to understand who everyone was and how they related to the plot. If there was anything important missing, I sure didn’t detect it – nor did I hear anyone asking plot-related questions as they

PERFORMING

BFs!

Slipstream Theatre Initiative
20937 John R. Road, Hazel Park
313-986-9156
www.slipstreamti.com
\$12 in advance
8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 25
8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26, Oct. 3
7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27, Oct. 4

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Thursday

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Thirsty Thursday
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drinks with Student ID



Sunday

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See BFs, page 34

Dynamic Duo Sings With Detroit

BY BTL STAFF

Entertainers Gerianne Ditto-Harvey and Eric Swanson have been singing together for over a decade but only recently decided to perform as a duo act. The result is a night of fun that can be seen bi-weekly at The New Menjos Complex in Detroit. Each night begins with Gerianne and Eric warming up the crowd with various selections of musical theater, jazz, Disney and pop music. As the night progresses the duo throws in a bit of stand-up and opens the guest microphone up to singers who come up to sing a solo selections.

Ditto-Harvey and Swanson met while attending Adrian College together back in 2003. Over the years the two have collaborated on numerous artistic projects including several Broadway style reviews, tours and recordings; currently they work closely together with their Top 40s band Motif (www.motifband.weebly.com).

The pair decided to start up the act because they saw that no such act performing in the Detroit area. Inspired by a singalong night experienced at New York's famous gay bar Marie's Crisis, they thought the idea would be well received on the home front. So far, nights have included massive singalongs to "Rent," "Aladdin," "Hair," power '80s anthems, and so much more. Each night, the duo ends with the room joining in "Hair's" "Let the Sunshine In."

The Dynamic Duo can be seen at 10 p.m. on select Tuesday nights at Menjos. This event is free and open to those 21 and older. Menjos is located at 928 W. McNichols Ave, Detroit. No cover and "no judgment." Safe and secure parking. Additional information can be found on the Dynamic Duo's facebook page, www.facebook.com/dynamicduoact.

The Dynamic Duo will play Sept. 29, Oct. 13, Oct. 27, Nov. 10, Nov. 24 and Dec. 15.

► Happenings

Continued from page 30

Fall Detroit Camper & RV Show 2 p.m. Tickets: \$0-10. MARVAC, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi. 313-600-5812. www.marvac.org/marvac-rv-shows.html

MAC Health 6 p.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.michiganidscoalition.org

Thursday, Oct. 1

Madonna: Rebel Heart Tour Live Nation, 19 Steve Yzerman Dr., Detroit. 313-396-7000. www.livenation.com

Margaret Cho: The Psycho Tour Murray & Peter, 7096 E. 14 Mile Road, Warren. 586-268-3200. www.andiamoitalia.com

Bright Half Life 7:30 p.m. Deep in the heart of every true love lies the truth of its inevitable end. Time Out New York calls this Critics' pick "Romantic! Virtuoso!" For sheer loveliness, you won't surpass Tanya Barfield's exquisite BRIGHT HALF LIFE" and the New York Times says "BRIGHT HALF LIFE shows the volatility in a long-term partnership, the joy and desolation, the hurt and help - all intermingled, all at once." Straight from its New York run, this shatteringly romantic play swirls us through decades in an instant with soul mates Erica and Vicki, as they explore marriage, children, skydiving and the infinite space inside the moments of a life together in this play. Theatre Nova, 416 W. Huron Street, Ann Arbor. 734-635-8450. a2theatrenov@gmail.com www.artful.ly/theatre-nova/store/events/6413

Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me 8 p.m. Tickets: \$30-125. NPR, 825 N. University

Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-761-1800. www.a2sf.org

Friday, Oct. 2

Big 80s Flashback Bash! 9 p.m. Cover: \$6. Helps the Hater Kitty Rescue Army. Static Network, 1254 Michigan Ave., Detroit. 313-961-4668. info@staticrecords.com www.pjslagerhouse.com

Saturday, Oct. 3

Ghoultide Gathering 8 a.m. Cost: \$5-20. Ghoultide Gathering, 20501 W. Old US 12 Highway, Chelsea. 269-553-1852. ghoultidegathering@gmail.com www.ghoultidegathering.com

Seventh Annual Bras for a Cause 6 p.m. A unique live and silent auction benefit for Gilda's Club. All ages. Tickets: \$50-55. Gilda's Club, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 248-399-2980. www.royaloakmusictheatre.com

Harvest of Hope Benefit 6:30 p.m. Biggest fundraiser of the year for Ozone House. Tickets: \$150. Ozone House, 2955 Packard Road, Ann Arbor. 734-662-2265. www.ozonehouse.org/harvest

MUSIC & MORE

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Charlie Albright" Tickets: \$10-45. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 25. 313-576-5111. www.dso.org

Funky Ferndale Art Fair "Funky Ferndale Art Fair" 120 artists. Food. Fun. Twice as funky as the average fine art fair. Downtown Ferndale, Nine Mile and Woodward, Ferndale. Sept. 25 - Sept. 27. www.funkyferndaleartfair.com

Go Comedy! Improv Theater "The Sunday Buffet" Our newest Launch Group, Future Kids, joins three of the finest improv troupes in the area

performing scenic long-form improv comedy. Tickets: \$10. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Sept. 20 - Sept. 27. 248-327-0575. www.facebook.com/GoComedy

Go Comedy! Improv Theater "Ferndale 2 Nite" A night of the best in local stand-up comedy. Tickets: \$10. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 8 p.m. Sept. 24. 248-327-0575. www.facebook.com/GoComedy

Go Comedy! Improv Theater "Name This Show (FREE!)" A free, no holds barred, late night improv show. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Sept. 18 - Sept. 26. 248-327-0575. www.facebook.com/GoComedy

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Kacey Musgraves". Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Oct. 1. 248-399-2980. www.aeglive.com

The Ark "Brad Phillips" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 29. 734-761-1800. www.theark.org

The Ark "Noah Gundersen" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Sept. 24. 734-761-1800. www.theark.org

The Magic Bag "Bobby Whitlock from Derek & The Dominos and Coco Carmel" Tickets: \$20. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 8 p.m. Sept. 29. 248-544-3030. www.themagicbag.com

University Musical Society "Sphinx Virtuosi". Rackham Auditorium, 915 East Washington St., Ann Arbor. 4 p.m. Sept. 27. 734-764-2538. www.ums.org/performance/sphinx-virtuosi/

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

Nunset Boulevard The Little Sisters of Hoboken have been invited to sing at the Hollywood Bowl. They are thrilled at the prospect until they arrive and realize that they are booked into the Hollywood Bowl-A-Rama, a bowling alley with a cabaret lounge. Tickets: Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd, Marshall. Through Oct. 24. 269-781-4293. www.turkeyville.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Detroit Artists Market (DAM) "The Change We Want To See: Artists Reflect on Detroit." Detroit Artists Market, 4719 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sept. 11 - Oct. 17. 313-832-8540. www.detroitartistsmarket.org

MOCAD "Interchange Art + Dinner Series" Tickets: \$200+. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 18 - Sept. 24. 313-832-6622. www.mocadetroit.org

Riverwalk Theatre "Mary Jobin, Oil Painted Landscapes". Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Aug. 1 - Sept. 30. 517-482-5700.

UMMA "Jem Cohen: Life Drawing". University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 15 - Nov. 29. 734-763-4186. www.umma.umich.edu

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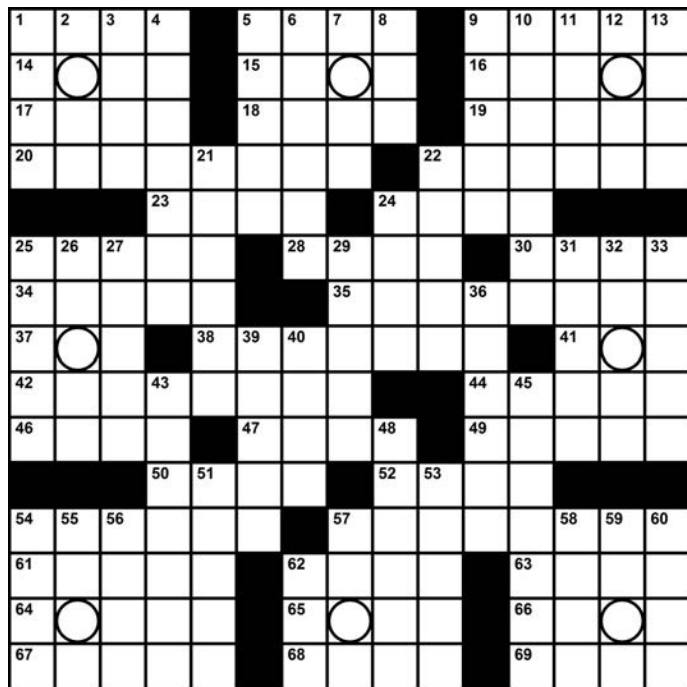
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- Affirmations, Ferndale
- MAC Offices, New Center

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To make appointments or get more information, call:
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MAC MICHIGAN AIDS COALITION
www.michiganidscoalition.org

Q Puzzle



- 37 Great service from Mauresmo
- 38 The USA, to Monika Treut
- 41 Prefix with room
- 42 Vanessa, who was married to Tony Richardson
- 44 General drift
- 46 In addition
- 47 Org. that could help you see Uranus
- 49 Gay rodeo fans may come in them
- 50 Conversant about
- 52 Car from Sweden
- 54 Janet, who was married to Adrian
- 57 Liza, who was married to Peter Allen (or, her dad)
- 61 Yellow Brick way and others
- 62 Abominable snowman
- 63 Superman portrayer Dean
- 64 Shoreline opening
- 65 Going full tilt
- 66 Traci Des Jardins, for one
- 67 Jury members that may be, well, hung
- 68 High place with a flat top
- 69 Pisa's river
- 8 Where to look for the "gay gene"
- 9 Rainy country for Eliza Doolittle
- 10 Like some nails
- 11 Kind of IRA
- 12 A girl named Frank
- 13 Cause of the Tin Woodsman's rust
- 21 Doris Day to Rock Hudson, often
- 22 Neat ____ (half of the Odd Couple)
- 24 Precollege ed
- 25 Stiller's partner, once
- 26 Rise to the top
- 27 Actor Robert and family
- 29 Places for erections
- 31 Risky fellatio partner?
- 32 Erect
- 33 "Great balls of fire!"
- 36 Lane of "The Birdcage"
- 39 Bruce Wayne kept Dick in one
- 40 Wolfson of Freedom to Marry
- 43 Head for the bottom
- 45 DeMornay of "Risky Business"
- 48 Given this situation
- 51 Newsgroup messages
- 53 "West Side Story" girl
- 54 Worker on Broadway
- 55 Tops
- 56 Jodie Foster's alma mater
- 57 Portion (out)
- 58 Cowardly lion actor
- 59 Property right
- 60 411
- 62 Orange veggie

Bearded Ladies

Across

- 1 Publisher and friend of Moss Hart
- 5 DC tourist district
- 9 Jack, known for licking it clean
- 14 "June Is Bustin' Out All ____"
- 15 "La Traviata" solo
- 16 Taking it lying down
- 17 She played Glinda in "The Wiz"
- 18 Sourpuss
- 19 Prudential rival

- 20 Fran, who married Peter Marc Jacobson
- 22 Carrie, who married Bryan Lourd
- 23 Debtor's slips
- 24 Marine birds
- 25 Mothers, to Verlaine
- 28 Fairy story
- 30 Double-reed instrument
- 34 Bring to bear
- 35 Carol, who married Charles Lowe

Down

- 1 Word before cock
- 2 At any point
- 3 Director Norman of "Prelude to a Kiss"
- 4 Sitcom with John Mahoney
- 5 Peru's ____ Picchu
- 6 Police response to gays in public, once
- 7 One with a tricky tongue

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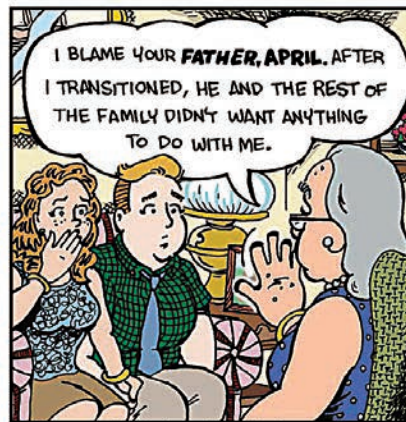
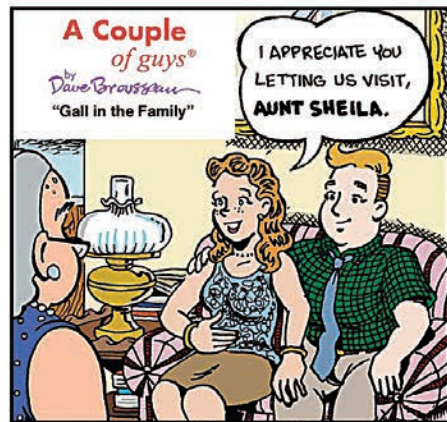
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BTL Pet of the Week

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► BFs

Continued from p. 31

left the theater. (You can often gauge the potential success of a show or lack thereof by eavesdropping on audience comments after a performance, and in this case, everything was positive. However, it should be noted that many at Saturday night's performance were friends and neighbors of Polito's, which might skew their reactions. Heck, I even discovered that one of his neighbors is an old friend I hadn't seen in over a decade, which made the night even more special!)

For a show that was a last-minute

addition to the Slipstream schedule, Polito should be quite pleased with the results. (It was the Michigan premiere – but not for the lack of trying: He had shopped the script around town for quite a while, but with no bites.) And director Bailey Boudreau should be equally proud of his production. His insightful eye kept the emotions real, his set was a perfect replica of Polito's childhood bedroom, and his use of the limited space kept his audience engaged in the production at all times.

(In all honesty, it probably kept some of us TOO engaged – especially me, who was evicted from my original choice of

seats when I got up to say hello to my long-lost friend, only to ultimately end up in a musical-chairs-like scenario in which I was left with one of the few seats still available when the show began. So where was that? Right next to Jack's desk and wall calendar, where I found myself pretty much rubbing shoulders with him at the start of many scenes, and where at one point Brad was at my feet with a lit candle holding a séance. Luckily for me, my ancient stage training kicked in, and I stayed deathly still whenever the action was close by so that I wouldn't steal the focus. It was tempting, though, to blow out that candle...)

The Frivolist Put These 17 Shows on Your Fall Premiere Calendar

BY MIKEY ROX

Pop the corn, grab a blanket and cozy into your favorite couch cushion for this selection of new-season shows featuring LGBT characters we can root for.

'The Real O'Neals,' CBS

The O'Neals have a secret; several of them, in fact – not the least of which is 14-year-old Kenny's confession that he's gay, which he reveals in front of his family's church congregation. Upfronts for the Martha Plimpton-starring vehicle show initial promise, but it's the boycott by the American Family Association that should seal the deal.

'DC's Legends of Tomorrow,' The CW

Scheduled to premiere midseason, "DC's Legends of Tomorrow" (from out exec producer Greg Berlanti) will feature a host of familiar superheroes, including at least one crossover character, Sara Lance, a bisexual crime fighter who died on sister series "Arrow," but is now resurrected through the mythical Lazarus Pits as "White Canary."

'Grandfathered,' FOX

John Stamos, who ages just as well (or better) than a fine wine, helms this half-hour comedy about a still-in-his-prime bachelor who finds out he's a father – and a grandfather – all in a day. Kelly Jenrette stars as his lesbian assistant restaurant manager Annelise.

'Rosewood,' FOX

Private pathologist Dr. Beaumont Rosewood (Morris Chestnut) runs a for-hire autopsy agency with his toxicologist sister Pippy (Gabrielle Dennis) and her DNA specialist fiancé Tara (Anna Konkle) in this Wednesday-night crime procedural.

'Faking It,' MTV

Aside from making the most popular boy in school, Shane, gay, and giving him a hot MMA-fighter love interest, Duke, to make out with, "Faking It" also warrants your DVR space for introducing TV's first intersex character, Lauren, who will spend this season handling the fallout of being outed by her ex-boyfriend – who we can only hope meets the business end of a choke hold.



'Supergirl,' CBS

There's no indication that there's anything LGBT about this new series initially, but it's produced by Greg Berlanti, so there's high-flying probability that we'll see some diversity soon. It's already well on its convention-shattering way with Mehead Brooks ("True Blood") playing former "Daily Prophet" photographer James Olsen.

'Best Time Ever With Neil Patrick Harris,' NBC

Doogie has turned his perennial hosting prowess into a full-time gig (at least for a short season of shows) with this primetime party that will feature comedy, music, games and more.

'Modern Family,' ABC

Tensions are rising for semi-newlyweds Cam and Mitchell, the latter of whom admitted to losing his job at the end of season 6. Can

'Nashville,' ABC

Nashville's Will Lexington is the hottest gay cowboy since, well, you know.

'Undateable,' NBC

The highly underrated multi-camera comedy "Undateable" will return to NBC this fall for its third season (didn't know about the first two seasons, did ya?) with – get this – all live episodes. As if that's not enough to pique your curiosity, perhaps bear-tastic bartender Brett can.

'The Walking Dead,' AMC

The body count will continue to rise in season 7 as Rick Grimes and group try to strike a survivable balance within the fallen Alexandria society while facing a new threat of the Wolves. Here's hoping that boyfriends Aaron and Eric get a decent storyline before one of them bites the dust.

'Couples Therapy with Dr. Jenn,' VH1

When you can't bear witness to an actual train wreck, "Couples Therapy" is a solid stand-in, this season starring "Drag Race" alums Carmen Carrera and Adrian Torres.

'American Horror Story: Hotel,' FX

Lady Gaga stars as Elizabeth the Countess, bisexual owner of the Hotel Cortez, which will see its fair share of LGBT characters pass through its door, including roles filled by Angela Bassett, Denis O'Hare, Finn Wittrock and Cheyenne Jackson.

'Empire,' FOX

Gay heir to the Empire Records fortune, Jamal (Jussie Smollett) gives "Empire" its LGBT street cred, but it's family matriarch Cookie (Taraji P. Henson) who makes us want to put those jams on repeat every single week.

'Younger,' TVLand

You'll have to wait until January to catch the second season of TVLand's sleeper-hit "Younger," starring Sutton Foster as a 40-something divorced mother pretending to be a 26-year-old editor's assistant, but it's worth scheduling on your DVR in advance. The indispensable Debi Mazar provides the show lesbian realness while too-tempting tattoo artist Nico Tortorella's eye candy gives us something to suck on.



the oddest gay couple on TV weather the storm? Yeah, probably, and hopefully with a lot of hilarity.

'How to Get Away With Murder,' ABC

Sure, Connor Walsh is a stereotype of a gay man who uses his sexuality to his advantage, in "How to Get Away With Murder" – but, really, who's complaining? Less shirt, more sex, please.

'Todrick,' MTV

Quadruple-threat Todrick Hall – the YouTube sensation famous for his full-scale productions of gay-ified Disney covers – gets his comeuppance in this docu-series about – what else? – the making of said full-scale productions.

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