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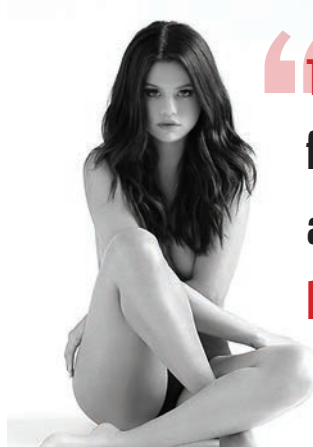
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Erin Anderson standing with Tashia Pickett on the right and Megan Brooks on the left. BTL photo: Alexander Godin



“The word ‘religion’ is a very complex thing. It’s something you have to follow, and that’s not what faith is. Anybody who has a higher power, anybody who has anything they believe in: **If you don’t know how to love other people, I don’t believe in it. It doesn’t work that way.**”

– Selena Gomez
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VOL. 2344 • OCTOBER 29, 2015 • ISSUE 937

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

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Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association
National Gay Media Association
Q Syndicate



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BRIEFS

Affirmations Launches New Leadership Development Institute For LGBT Professionals

FERNDALE – Affirmations is gearing up to launch a new leadership development program in 2016 called the Leadership Exploration and Development Institute, which will provide LGBT mid-level professionals with education, training, networking and mentoring opportunities.

The Affirmations L.E.A.D. Institute will help individuals enhance their personal and professional leadership skills, build interpersonal networks and position themselves in leadership roles in the Metro Detroit area.

“Professionals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender may face unique challenges in the workplace,” says Frank Aiello, board president of Affirmations. “It’s important that we create a safe and encouraging forum for emerging LGBTQ professionals to develop their leadership skills while addressing some of these issues.”

The L.E.A.D. Institute will enroll two cohorts of 15 LGBT professionals ages 30-45 through a competitive application process. Applicants should have two-plus years of leadership or management experience in the public, private or nonprofit sectors and have received at least a bachelor’s degree. Those applying will need two letters of recommendation, a track record of their volunteer efforts or civic engagement in the community and be able to fully commit to the six-month program.

Curriculum for the robust program was developed by Bill Huffaker, global director of talent acquisition at General Motors and board member for GM PLUS, GM’s employee resource group for LGBT employees.

L.E.A.D. curriculum will include self-exploration, interpersonal networks, community service and development of a leadership plan. The 6-month program will consist of monthly meetings beginning in January.

Module One will kick off the program with a discussion on authentic leadership and will explore the LGBT identities of the participants as community and organization leaders. February will cover career management and how to address going forward. In March, participants will discuss support networks and how to explore social networking and how trusted advisors can help achieve career aspirations. April will cover mindfulness and how concepts like resilience and wellness can help sustain

learning, growth and achievement of career potential. In May, L.E.A.D. will cover how to “pay it forward” and will encourage participants to multiply their leadership in the community for causes they care about. June will culminate in a capstone project for each fellow.

For more information on the L.E.A.D. Initiative and to download the program information packet, go to www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/lead-institute. Applications for the program are due no later than 5 p.m. on Nov. 16.

Financial support for the institute has been provided by General Motors. Additional support will be provided by a volunteer advisory panel of local professionals from organizations like Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Wayne State University, PrideSource Media Group, MGM Grand Detroit, Deloitte and PNC Bank.

Book With Gay Character Banned From Monroe Book Fair

MONROE – The latest installment of the popular “Captain Underpants” series by author Dav Pilkey has been banned from the Arborwood Elementary School book fair after book publisher Scholastic Books warned the school district that one section might be controversial.

“Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-a-lot” will not be available for students due to a scene at the end of the story when the book’s main character Harold meets his grown-up self and finds out he’s gay and has a husband. While the gay theme is not the primary plot line, Scholastic Book reviewers consider the book inappropriate for the elementary students’ age group despite the panel reviews conducted by experts at Scholastic Books who deemed the novel appropriate for book fairs such as Monroe’s.

ClickOnDetroit News reported that some parents feel it unfair to deny access to children – some of whom may live in same-sex families – and feel parental control to be unnecessary.

“If you’re in this world, they should know about that regardless. I mean, (parents) should have that conversation before it’s brought up,” Kimberly Rose, a parent who opposes the decision to ban this book from the fair, told ClickOnDetroit.

Scholastic has reported that they have received a few complaints from individual families across the country who have purchased the book but have not yet received any complaints regarding book fairs.

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Houston: LGBT Nondiscrimination Ordinance Gets Ugly

National Significance Seen As Battle Replaces Marriage

BY JUAN A. LOZANO AND DAVID CRARY

HOUSTON (AP) – After a drawn-out showdown between Houston’s popular lesbian mayor and a coalition of conservative pastors, voters in the nation’s fourth-largest city will soon decide whether to establish nondiscrimination protections for gay and transgender people.

Nationwide, there’s interest in the Nov. 3 referendum: Confrontations over the same issue are flaring in many places, at the state and local level, now that nondiscrimination has replaced same-sex marriage as the No. 1 priority for the LGBT-rights movement.

“The vote in Houston will carry national significance,” said Sarah Warbelow, legal director of the Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBT-rights group. She noted that Houston, with 2.2 million residents, is more populous than 15 states.

The contested Houston Equal Rights Ordinance is a broad measure that would consolidate existing bans on discrimination tied to race, sex, religion and other categories in employment, housing and public accommodations, and extend such protections to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people.

The outcome is considered uncertain. Two recent polls commissioned by Houston TV stations showed supporters of the ordinance with a slight lead, but each poll indicated that about one-fifth of likely voters were undecided.

Opponents contend the ordinance would infringe on their religious beliefs against homosexuality. Copying a tactic used elsewhere, they also have labeled it the “bathroom ordinance,” alleging that it would open the door for sexual predators to go into women’s restrooms.

“Even registered sex offenders could follow women or young girls into the bathroom,” says an ad produced by Campaign for Houston, which opposes the ordinance.

The measure’s supporters denounce these assertions as scare tactics, arguing that such problems with public bathrooms have been virtually nonexistent in the 17 states that have banned discrimination based on gender identity.

Mayor Annise Parker, whose election in 2009 made Houston the largest U.S. city with an openly gay mayor, is among those expressing exasperation.

“The fact there is so much misinformation and not just misinformation, just out and out ludicrous lies, is very frustrating,” Parker recently told reporters. “I’m worried about the image of Houston around the world as a

tolerant, welcoming place if this goes down.”

Parker has vented some of her frustration on Twitter in tweets criticizing former Houston Astros player Lance Berkman. In ads for Campaign for Houston, Berkman said the ordinance would “allow troubled men who claim to be women to enter women’s bathrooms, showers and locker rooms.”

Parker, who is completing her third and final term, has encountered criticism herself. When opponents sued the city – seeking to force a referendum on the ordinance after the city council approved it in May 2014 – city attorneys tried to subpoena sermons from five pastors who opposed the measure. The pastors said the request violated their religious freedom, and the city later dropped the effort.

The lawsuit eventually reached the Texas Supreme Court, which in July ruled the conservative activists should have succeeded in their petition drive to put the issue before voters.

In a sermon last month, Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, one of the nation’s largest churches, called the ordinance “totally deceptive” and urged his congregation to vote against it because “it will carry our city ... further down the road of being totally, in my opinion, secular and godless.”

Richard Carlbom, campaign manager for Houston Unites, which supports the ordinance, said the measure is not simply about anti-LGBT discrimination but about multiple forms of bias. Between May 2014 and September

2015, most discrimination complaints in the city related to race and gender; only about 5 percent involved LGBT discrimination.

Several national LGBT-rights groups have deployed staff in Houston to support the ordinance, including Freedom for All Americans. Its CEO, Matt McTighe, praised Houston’s cultural diversity, but said it was the only one of the 10 largest U.S. cities without LGBT non-discrimination protection.

For years, the top priority of the gay-rights movement in the U.S. was winning nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage. When that occurred via a Supreme Court ruling in June, there was broad agreement among activists that the next priority should be obtaining nondiscrimination protections in all 50 states.

At present, Texas is one of 28 states with no statewide protections, although many municipalities in those states have adopted local nondiscrimination policies. Of the other 22 states, 17 prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and public accommodations, and New York will soon join that group. Four states have less sweeping protections.

LGBT activists would like to replace this patchwork of laws with a comprehensive federal nondiscrimination law, and such a measure – the Equality Act – was introduced in July. But it’s given no chance of passage in the current Republican-controlled Congress; none of its more than 200 co-sponsors are

from the GOP.

Faced with that reality, LGBT-rights supporters are waging a state-by-state, city-by-city campaign to extend anti-bias protections.

“We’re now at a moment where we’re having conversations with more conservative parts of the country – it’s not easy,” said Sarah Warbelow. “These are educational efforts – bringing people along on what it means to provide protections for the LGBT community and helping people understand that the sky doesn’t fall when you do that.”

At the state level, activists consider Pennsylvania the most likely to join in establishing statewide protections.

LGBT nondiscrimination has been on the Pennsylvania legislature’s agenda for more than a decade but there’s never been a floor vote, largely due to Republican opposition. Now there’s growing GOP support for the latest measure, introduced in August, and supporters believe it will prevail if skeptics can be assured it won’t erode religious liberties.

“I’m confident that if this bill is given a vote in the Senate and House, it will pass,” said state Sen. Pat Browne, a lead Republican sponsor. “The people we represent believe this is something we should do.”

In Indiana, prospects are unclear for a Democratic plan – backed by many major corporations – to push for statewide LGBT protections. The topic has been divisive since the spring, when Republican Gov. Mike Pence and the GOP-controlled Legislature incurred a backlash for a religious objections law that critics said would allow businesses to discriminate against LGBT people.

In the absence of a statewide law, several smaller Indiana cities – including Pence’s hometown of Columbus – recently joined Indianapolis and Bloomington in adopting local LGBT protections. Similar efforts failed in the cities of Goshen and Elkhart.

There’s been action recently in several other states. In September, Fayetteville became the fifth Arkansas municipality to pass an LGBT nondiscrimination ordinance in defiance of a new state law aimed at prohibiting such local protections. In Alaska’s largest city, the governing assembly of Anchorage passed an ordinance Sept. 29 by a 9-2 vote. In Arizona, an ordinance was approved in Sedona.

Other cities across the U.S. will be watching Houston on Nov. 3, said James Douglas, a supporter of the ordinance who is president of Houston’s NAACP chapter.

“All those cities that are smaller than us are looking to us because they want to be like us,” Douglas said. “And we want to give them a perfect example of what a major, diverse city ought to look like.”

A look at state laws addressing LGBT nondiscrimination

In the absence of a federal law banning discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people, there is a sharp split among the states, with some enacting such protections and a majority opting not to. According to LGBT-rights advocacy groups, here’s the latest breakdown:

- 28 states have no explicit statewide protections for sexual orientation and gender identity: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming.

- 17 states and the District of Columbia prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and public accommodations: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico,

Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington.

- Three states prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations: New Hampshire, New York, Wisconsin. The laws in these states don’t encompass gender identity. However, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is issuing an executive order that will soon extend protections to transgender people.

- Massachusetts prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment and housing and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in public accommodations. There’s an effort underway to extend the public accommodation protections to transgender people.

- Utah prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment and housing. Its law doesn’t cover public accommodations.

- From the Associated Press



Winning Our Rights

OPINION BY STEPHANIE WHITE

It's time. If there's one thing that LGBT people in Michigan can agree on is that it is clearly time we updated our statewide nondiscrimination law to include all of us. You know it's time, I know it's time and 70 percent of voters know it's time. Even Gov. Snyder agrees. In his last State of the State address he called on our Legislature to look at expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) to finally outlaw discrimination in our state based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

So how do we get there? The good news is that we aren't the first state to develop a strategy to win our rights. There are many lessons to be learned from around the country on what works and what doesn't.

The bad news (or at least sobering news) is that there are no quick and easy paths, only long hard work. Luckily, we aren't starting from scratch. But there are still a few years of work to put the pieces in place and get our lawmakers in Lansing to be ready to do the right thing.

The only sure way we know we can win is by a multi-year process that includes:

- 1) Winning over more and more friends in the Legislature who will stand with us;
- 2) Strengthening the skills and capacity of organizations all across the LGBT movement to work smarter and in coordination towards our common goal;
- 3) Educating and engaging our allies such as the labor movement, the business community and faith communities, among others;
- 4) Correcting the fears and misconceptions that the general public now has about what expanding our rights means, or doesn't mean, for them.

Thankfully, the Board of Directors for Equality Michigan just recently reaffirmed the organization's commitment to making this work our top priority. They charged me and the rest of the staff with developing the multi-year plan that brings together all of the parts of the LGBT community across our state to work as one united movement. And although I've only been in the role for one week, I've already heard from organizations far and wide that they are ready to work together, and are eager for a central plan.

But, you may ask, why don't we just put it to a vote? Lots of us have looked at that 70 percent public approval and felt encouraged.

One of the lessons learned from history is that the high approval rating can be easily eroded when the opposition starts attacking our community and trying to drive wedges between us. We have to spend between \$3-7 for every \$1 they spend just to have a chance at winning a popular vote.

We want to believe that our friends and neighbors will support us this time, but unfortunately we don't really know if they will. It is a gamble. And like most gambling, it could produce a big payoff, or it could produce a painful cost. The people who will pay that cost are the members of our community who are already most vulnerable: trans people, poor people, and disproportionately, people of color. That's why we have to first invest in our coalition and first educate the public before we are ready to withstand those attacks. And then, if we decide to proceed, the people who are most vulnerable must be the ones who help us make that decision.

One of the lessons learned from history is that the high approval rating can be easily eroded when the opposition starts attacking our community and trying to drive wedges between us. We have to spend between \$3-7 for every \$1 they spend just to have a chance at winning a popular vote. That can quickly add up to \$15-20 million. And then there's the moral question of letting the public vote on our basic rights. We call foul (rightfully so) when they vote to deny our rights, so it's hard to ask them to grant us our rights. Many in our community won't support that strategy, leaving us divided. And, finally, if we lose, we know from history that we have closed off the path to equality for many years. A huge cost to all of us.

The winning path to protecting our basic rights is longer than any of us would like. But the leadership in our community is smarter, more sophisticated and bigger than ever. And, most importantly, we are united in our commitment to working together until we can stop saying, "It's time," and start saying, "It's done!"

Stephanie White is the executive director for Equality Michigan and Equality Michigan Action Network, the LGBT political rights organization for the state of Michigan.



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Gay Ghosts On Parade Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

For five dynamic years – 1940 to 1945 – Detroit was America’s Arsenal of Democracy, a vital source of war material. First for England’s defense. Later, for our own.

Automotive factories focused on round-the-clock, nonstop production of bombers, tanks, jeeps, planes. Plumb and popular vocalist Kate Smith kept patriotically singing “God Bless America!”

Soldiers, sailors, marines, WACs – Women’s Army Corps – passed through Detroit before shipping overseas. Many had been inducted and processed in Quonset huts on Wayne University’s campus.

A result of wartime migration to a big city like Detroit (population 1.3 million) was the popularity of gay bars. Detroit had four downtown near old City Hall. And the First Police Precinct Jail!

As the Allies began to beat the Axis, a mood of cautious celebration took hold in Detroit’s gay bar clubs. Downtown side streets Farmer and Bates, offering Rio Grand, Silver Dollar and LaRosa’s bars, became less secretive. More carefree obvious.

Many small town inductees, stopping off briefly in the Arsenal of Democracy, found to their naive surprise – and secretly happy relief – that they weren’t the only ones who were “well, you know” gay! For them it was a golden opportunity. Who knows? We might not be alive tomorrow.

Older gays were quite willing to play host, provide weekend housing, food, drinks, conversation, hugs and – at a time when good gals just didn’t give head – provide friendly lip service to straight servicemen.

As the Allies began to beat the Axis, a mood of cautious celebration took hold in Detroit’s gay bar clubs. Downtown side streets Farmer and Bates, offering Rio Grand, Silver Dollar and LaRosa’s bars, became less secretive. More carefree obvious. (Nearby Palais bar was dyke heaven.)

When Halloween 1944 swished around, the Grand Night of Enchantment became an opportunity for celebration. Following the end of Prohibition in 1933, getting in drag was accomplished without too much hoopla for once a year.

During the war years, Detroit’s non-military gays – those 40 or older, or those classified 4F with “homosexual tendencies” – along with straights who had flat feet (not necessarily because of high heels) kept the home fires burning and factories going 24/7.

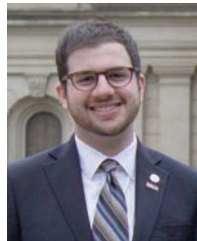
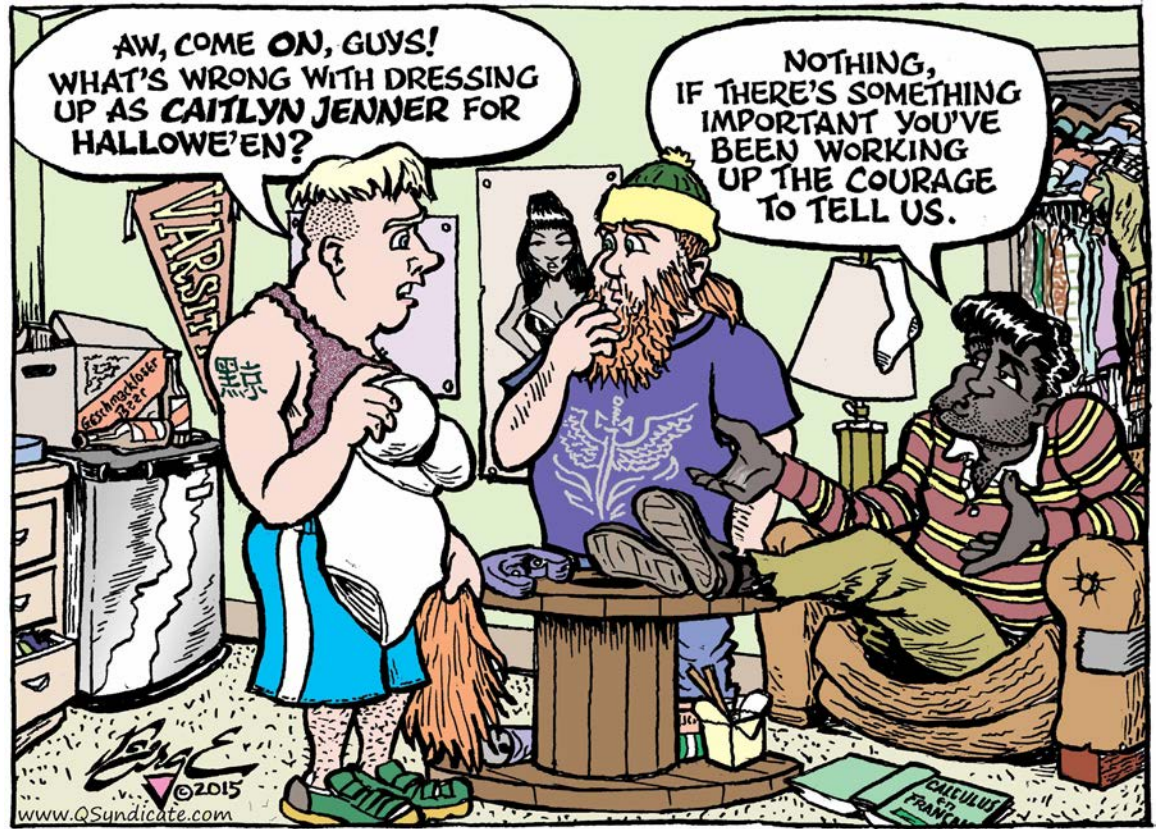
These “left behinders” – no relation to recent biblical “right behinders” – were in a party mood. The war in Europe was winding down. Finally! So, why not celebrate? What better time than the only day when cross dressing is permitted without penalty, threat of incarceration, or, if your makeup’s thick enough, likelihood of recognition.

The first Halloween display of queens numbered 25 or 30. Those in other costumes, about 50. Some wore rhinestone tiaras and sequin embroidered titles across their ample, canary-seed-filled boobies. Miss Victory Garden. Red Cross Rita’s Revenge. Rosey Rivet Me. Miss Harry James’s Trumpet (pin-up Betty Grable’s band leader husband). It was great fun. Cops looked the other way.

Each year after World War II’s end, Halloween was planned to outdo the last. Gatherings grew large. More flamboyant. Sometime in the early ‘50s, streets were cordoned off. Hundreds came to see and applaud. “Ooo!” and “Ahh!” at the queens who arrived in convertibles. Everybody behaved.

In 1969, the year of the Stonewall Riots, things got out of hand. Rednecks threw rocks. Tossed bottles. Shouted, “FAGS!” Ripped gowns. The party was over. Insulted – and very, very smart – gays moved northward to seemingly safer Diplomat and Woodward bars.

Once home to the Motor City’s first Gay Pride Halloween “Parades,” Farmer and Bates Streets are now bare-assed naked. Silent. Haunted. Forgotten. Rest In Pride.



BY JEREMY MOSS

Viewpoint

The Southfield That I Know

“I have one last question for you. What’s your position on gay marriage?”

“I’m in favor of it,” I said.

“Why would you be in favor of it? I firmly believe that marriage is between a man and a woman,” he replied, inquisitive but stern.

“Well for many reasons, but mostly because I’m gay and would like to get married someday. And if being against marriage equality is among your priorities then I don’t think I’m your candidate,” I said.

“Oh, hmm,” he said, not expecting that answer from me after a lengthy conversation on other key issues at his doorstep. “Well, when you win your election, come back to my house because I’d like to discuss this further with you.” And that was it.

When I ran for State Representative last year, my campaign team and I knocked on roughly 10,000 doors and that was the only anti-gay comment I directly heard. And it wasn’t even

that bad – from a person who largely acknowledged I was likely to win my election anyway. That’s because the Southfield that I know has always been a welcoming and inclusive city, which the Detroit Free Press recently said is “known for its diversity of race, religion and sexual orientation,” with strong relations between neighbors of differing backgrounds.

When I served on the Southfield City Council prior to being elected as State Representative, then-Mayor Brenda Lawrence, Councilman Ken Siver and I pushed for an anti-discrimination ordinance that included LGBT protections – a piece of legislation that won near universal praise from Southfield residents who came to the council meeting earlier this year to speak in favor of it. Strong support for our ordinance came not just from gay Southfielders but from allies in the black community who understood discrimination all too well.

Barbara Talley, a former

councilwoman and Southfield’s first African-American elected official, urged for the ordinance’s passage saying, “Discrimination is a hellhound.” Attorney Robert Willis, who petitioned the city for discrimination protections against racism 25 years ago, said that his initial decades-old request for “equal access did not include gay and transgender. That needs to be corrected.” That’s the Southfield that I know.

The racist and homophobic tone of the current mayoral race in Southfield, however, is not the Southfield I know. This has been the dirtiest city election that I’ve ever witnessed. First came the flyers littered in our neighborhoods that encouraged residents to “Get the blacks out of Southfield” and vote for white candidates, including Ken Siver who is running for mayor. Those fliers were, of course, not endorsed by the candidates featured

See Moss: Southfield, next page

Welcoming A Globally Inclusive Community

BY THOMAS "TJ" ROGERS AND MICHEAL IGHODARO

Globally, there are more than 75 countries that criminalize homosexuality and nine that impose the death penalty. Yet in such places, LGBT people – lawyers, doctors, human rights defenders, business owners, students – courageously stand up to advocate for just laws that protect human rights, won't create or exacerbate public health concerns, and promote inclusion and freedom of expression. And through it all, they experience unimaginable persecution.

The few who are fortunate enough to flee to the United States for safety become asylum seekers. (Note: An asylum seeker is an individual with a well-founded fear of persecution from the government or an entity the government cannot or will not control on account of one's race/ethnicity, nationality, political opinion, religious affiliation or membership within a particular social group.)

On Oct. 15, LGBT Freedom and Asylum Network (LGBT-FAN) released "Stronger Together: A Guide for Supporting LGBT Asylum Seekers" in Washington, D.C. with the support of the National LGBTQ Taskforce and the Human Rights Campaign. This publication, which is the first guide of its kind in the U.S., not only highlights a service-gap, but also provides a crucial roadmap on how to better provide safe and respectful services to LGBT asylum seekers.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), we know that in 2014 there was a 44 percent increase in asylum applicants in the U.S. What we don't know is how many of those applicants are seeking safety due to persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Echoing a recommendation made by the Center for American Progress, it is imperative that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Executive Office for Immigration Review begin collecting and publishing such data.

Here in Detroit, Freedom House offers shelter, legal aid and all comprehensive services free of charge to asylum seekers. In other cities around the U.S., groups/organizations are emerging to meet the needs of LGBT asylum seekers too.

Data aside, a bigger issue remains: access to life-saving services.

There are very few organizations providing services to this courageous, yet vulnerable, population. Here in Detroit, Freedom House offers shelter, legal aid and all comprehensive services free of charge to asylum seekers. In other cities around the U.S., groups/organizations are emerging to meet the needs of LGBT asylum seekers too, including: Center for Integration and Courageous Living, and Chicago LGBT Asylum Support Partners (Chicago); Center Global (Washington, D.C.); and Better Together and Housing Works (NYC).

Recognizing that this is a community need, LGBT-FAN was formed in 2012 as a national coalition dedicated to supporting LGBT asylum seekers. While priority is placed on increasing capacity of providing direct services to and meeting the immediate needs of LGBT asylum seekers, there is also an emphasis on advocacy. And here's why: imagine ... you were born and raised in a country that criminalizes your

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on them and were "a dirty trick to try to incite people of color to go to the election in November and vote black" and against the candidates on the flier, according to Patricia Haynie, President of the Martin Luther King Task Force.

Then came the homophobic attacks against Ken, who is openly gay. His campaign signs were defaced with the words "fag" and "sodomite" spray-painted on them. That vandalism drew swift condemnation from nearly everyone in our community, except for Ken's opponent who "chalked it up as the cost of running for office," according to the Detroit News. Being called a fag and a sodomite should not be part of the cost of running for office and should not be tolerated by anyone. That type of attitude shared by Ken's opponent – who has an anti-LGBT history of her own – could change the city that I know into an

The racist and homophobic tone of the current mayoral race in Southfield, however, is not the Southfield I know.

intolerant city that I won't recognize.

That's why this election in Southfield is so critical and why Ken Siver has earned my strongest endorsement to be our next mayor. Some may seek to use dirty political tricks to tarnish our city's long-held reputation as a community that embraces its diversity, but Ken will strongly promote the Southfield that we know. I urge all Southfielders to elect Ken Siver.

State Rep. Jeremy Moss is a Democratic politician currently representing the 35th District, which includes Southfield.

Creep of the Week

Julio Gonzalez

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Oh, Florida. You just love being horrible, don't you?

It's not enough that if you do a Google news search for "Florida man" you end up with headlines like, "Florida Man Attacks Karaoke DJ Over Mic Sound, Police Say" and "Florida man dies after fight at strip club."



Julio Gonzalez

Now if you Google a specific Florida man, Rep. Julio Gonzalez,

R-Venice, you get headlines like, "Florida lawmaker drafts law to legalize refusing service to gay people" and "Venice lawmaker's 'religious freedom' bill rankles gay rights groups."

I think "rankles" is a little tame, but, yes, there is definitely some rankling going on.

See, Florida used to be one of the worst states in the nation for LGBT people. Not only could same-sex couples not get married there, but Florida wouldn't let gays and lesbians adopt children, either. Thanks to the Supreme Court things have changed in the marriage department, and the adoption ban was struck down by a lower court in 2010. Alas, it's still legal to discriminate against LGBT people in areas like employment and housing, but nobody's perfect amirite?

Clearly some folks are seeing red over the rainbow, but lucky for them the state has plenty of lawmakers who are scheming to make Florida Anita Bryant-friendly again.

And so it's no surprise that the same kind of odious "religious freedom" legislation we've seen pop up in other states in response to the pro-marriage equality Supreme Court ruling would wash ashore in Florida.

HB 401, the "Protection of Religious Freedom" bill, seeks to provide "immunity from liability for health care facility, health care provider, person, closely held organization, religious institution, business owned or operated by religious institution, or private child-placing agency that refuses to perform certain actions that would be contrary to religious or moral convictions or policies."

Gonzalez claims that there's no ill-intentions behind the bill. "This is not about discriminating," he told the

Herald-Tribune while someone no doubt mumble-coughed "bullshit" nearby. "This is making sure the state stops, at a narrowly crafted level, from intruding into somebody's liberties."

Narrowly crafted my ass. The bill clearly seeks to cover the state in a broad cloak of legal discrimination against LGBT people in just about every area imaginable. Never mind the fact that LGBT people are "somebodies" who have liberties that are clearly being intruded upon here.

Also, hello? Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and Tampa all made The Advocate's "2014's Gayest Cities in America" list. Gays represent a big chunk of change in Florida's tourism industry.

The bill clearly seeks to cover the state in a broad cloak of legal discrimination against LGBT people in just about every area imaginable.

Gonzalez can't even give a clear reason such a bill is needed.

"There have been various situations where there are increasing possibilities of subsections of society having their religious freedoms encroached on," Gonzalez told the Herald-Tribune.

Ah, so clear! Such a "narrowly crafted" statement. I can't even imagine what a more specific sentence would even look like.

The Herald-Tribune noted, "Gonzalez could find no instances in Florida of businesses being challenged in court for not offering products or services to same-sex couples." Oh, but there was that one baker in Colorado, though!

According to Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida, "This extreme bill doesn't affirm existing law; it goes much further than that. In addition to churches, it would allow individuals, for-profit businesses, health care providers, nonprofit adoption agencies and others to discriminate against anyone they want, for personal reasons."

And that's just what "religious or moral convictions" the bill seeks to protect over civil liberties of LGBT people: personal reasons. The fact that Florida still doesn't include LGBT people in its anti-discrimination laws already speaks volumes. Gonzalez's bill would turn that volume up to 11.



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► Globally Inclusive

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identity and makes it illegal to not report to the government a person known to be LGBT. You live in a country where religious leaders preach you're an abomination. You were persecuted and tortured by members of your community ("mob justice") only to be placed under illegal detention where you're persecuted and tortured by your own government.

Now, fast-forward to your arrival in another country, where you've literally fled to for your life.

You, as many other asylum seekers, may not even know about the legal protection of "asylum." Therefore, you miss the arbitrary one-year filing deadline, meaning you fail to submit an application for asylum within one-year of arrival at port of entry. On the other hand, even if you know about asylum, if you've been brought up in a society that has tortured you, depriving you of your dignity and rights, how likely are you to freely open up to legal counsel or the government? Think about it. So, it goes without saying: the one-year filing deadline for all asylum seekers should be lifted in order to increase access to this life-saving legal protection.

While the U.S. has long been a leading voice for the respect of the rights of all people in the global community, and provides vital direct support to LGBT communities in countries with hostile laws, those of us working with LGBT asylum seekers here at home wonder: "What about when they get to the U.S.?" It's crucial that our campaign for equality not only extend to our brothers and sisters around the world, but in turn be reflected in our policies towards LGBT asylum seekers here in the U.S. If we in the American L-G-B-and-T (and ally) community truly care about human rights and equality, then our concern mustn't stop at our borders – and certainly must not be based on one's nationality or place of residence. Let's remove the additional level of isolation too often faced by LGBT asylum seekers who may not have the support of their own ethnic community, by welcoming, embracing and supporting them. Let's be truly inclusive.

Thomas "TJ" Rogers works at Freedom House Detroit and presently serves as program manager, where he is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the organization. Some of his duties include program development, supervision and case management. Rogers also assists with fund development and event planning. Passionate about advocacy, and with over four years of firsthand experience providing direct services to asylum seekers, Rogers works to generate awareness about the plight and courage of asylum seekers while encouraging individuals and organizations to increase their support. In Spring 2015, Rogers was featured as one of five LGBT Detroiters in



On Oct. 15, LGBT Freedom and Asylum Network (LGBT-FAN) released "Stronger Together: A Guide for Supporting LGBT Asylum Seekers."

It's crucial that our campaign for equality not only extend to our brothers and sisters around the world, but in turn be reflected in our policies towards LGBT asylum seekers here in the U.S. .

Pride Source, Michigan's LGBT Magazine, for his efforts to bridge the gap between the U.S. LGBT community and LGBT asylum seeker/asylee community. He is also a proud member of Amnesty International.

Micheal Ighodaro joined AVAC in the fall of 2014 as a program and policy assistant. He supports AVAC's program activities including maintaining contact with grantees and providing technical and administrative support for special projects and strategic initiatives. Micheal is a passionate advocate for LGBTI rights and HIV prevention. Originally from Nigeria, Ighodaro had to flee his country after he was attacked due to his sexual orientation and work. Prior to joining AVAC, he worked in HIV prevention and care for the LGBTI community around Africa for many years.

He has also worked with Housing Works and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission in New York. Ighodaro is a member of several HIV/LGBT advocacy groups around Africa. He has spoken before the United Nations, the U.S. Congress and State Department. Ighodaro was recently awarded as a world refugee Champion of Change by President Barack Obama. His work has appeared in the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, New York Times and several UN news outlets. Micheal is currently a student of The City University of New York.

Cover Story

Punting With Pride

With every tackle, every touchdown, the women of the Detroit Pride football team are making their own rules on femininity, family and fun



"I love it, even with the injuries," says team member Tashia Pickett. BTL photos: Alexander Godin

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

When you're watching the girls of the Detroit Pride football team, you won't see gender – just a love for the game.

"When people say girls can't play football, I say come out to one of our games," says team member Erin Anderson. "If what they think is still true after, I tell them that I will pay for their ticket."

Proudly, she adds, "I haven't had to pay for one ticket yet."

Detroit Pride is one of nearly 36 active full tackle football teams in the Independent Women's Football League (IWFL) – a national organization founded in 2000 to create a safe and supportive environment for women to play football. Kicking off its first season as a team earlier this year, Detroit Pride has already made a name for itself with a championship win. And they are only just getting started as a team, says Anderson.

"Being an athlete all my life, the sport had come very easily to me. But seeing these women, who have no experience, become very successful at what they do is remarkable," she says. "They get hit really hard and they keep on coming. They are so hungry to learn and it is amazing to see that. And it is really cool to see women out there kicking butt."

Anderson, a K-8 teacher when she's not on the field, explains the girls of Detroit Pride come from all walks of life and that is what makes being on the team such a unique experience.

"When you come in, it doesn't matter if you've been on the team since day one or one minute, you are a part of the family," she says. And if you're part of the Detroit Pride family, you're going to learn how to take a hit.

Currently, Anderson holds the team record in terms of serious injuries after tearing both of her Achilles tendons. And while other players can report bumps and bruises, the risk of injury never seems to outweigh the fun of the game.

"Once you're out there with us, we are all talking and cheering you on," says team member Megan Brooks about the adrenaline rush of the game. "I just try and plan ahead, be prepared and do the best that I can so that I can do the best out there and be careful as well."

As a nursing student, Brooks admits eventually her career may logically tell her not to participate in such an injury heavy game. But until then, she says she'll take her chances.

"I love it, even with the injuries," says team member Tashia Pickett. "My first game here, I caught a face mask to the ankle and that hurt like hell. But it's like, once you play your adrenaline gets pumping. I don't feel it. So we get to comparing once we get out of our uniforms who has the biggest marks."

Pickett explains, she's always been a football fan, but gender stood in her way.

"I used to cheer for the high school Eastside Raiders and my dad was a coach. I asked him if I could play, and he was completely against it. That's what made me go to basketball,"

she says. "It's like, of course everybody says things you can't do, because they've never seen it done."

As a team, Anderson says, Detroit Pride is a prime example that not only can girls play football, but also they don't play around when it comes to the game.

"I tell my kids I play football and my younger boys are like, 'Girls can't play football.' And I'm like, 'Yes they can.' And I show them the videos and they are like, 'Woah.' So their views of women have changed. Even my older girls see that there are no limitations because of gender," says Anderson. "So that's another reason why I wanted to join Detroit Pride – to show my kids that there are no limitations, regardless of who you are, what you are; there are no limitations if you want to be something."

To learn more about Detroit Pride football call 313-605-1575 or email info@detroitpridefootball.com

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The Developing World Of Sexual Therapy

Fall BODY
& FITNESS

BY AJ TRAGER

In her latest book “Understanding Patients’ Sexual Problems: A Reference Handbook For Healthcare Professionals,” Grace Blodgett, Ph.D. begins her preface by saying, “Healthcare professionals demonstrate varying levels of knowledge, understanding, experience and perceptions about the topic of sexuality in the patient care arena. Unfortunately, a great deal of the information about sexuality they bring to the clinical arena is often full of misconceptions and insecurities about their own sexuality, as well as that of the patients for whom they provide care.”

Sexual Therapy is often described as the treatment of sexual dysfunction when there is no medical reason or complement to medical treatment. Individuals or couples who seek out a sexual therapist often ask about premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, low libido, unwanted sexual fetishes, sexual addiction, painful sex, lack of sexual confidence and a variety of other issues that can affect the satisfaction or enjoyment of one’s sexual experiences.

However, like many specialty arenas in the medical field, sexual therapy is taught within the confines of the binary, cisgender heterosexual health model. Many therapists are not often educated in LGBT identities and the specific disparities that factor into the LGBT experience. Sexual therapy is gaining popularity and more and more mental health professionals are choosing to pursue sexual therapy; however, there is still a lack of sexual therapists focusing on LGBT identities.

“Sexual orientation is considered by most researchers to be fixed through life, and efforts to change one’s sexual orientation usually fail,” Blodgett writes at the beginning of Chapter 2: Sexual Behaviors And Techniques According To A Person’s Sexual Orientation. “However, sexuality is considered to be on a continuum, and sexual expression changes over time.”

Joe Kort, Ph.D., LMSW, works as a sexual therapist in Royal Oak. He appears on the first page of Google search results when typing in “Sexual Therapy LGBT” and is known in the therapist community for his work with sex therapy and sexual identity issues, including out-of-control sexual behavior; responsible non-monogamy/monogamy; childhood sexual, physical and emotional abuse; mixed-orientation marriages; coming out; and depression and anxiety. Kort began his practice in 1985 and has published multiple books on gay love and has been featured in The Huffington Post.

“As a gay person and having to examine my own sexuality and the things I like, the things I don’t like, negotiate with people (whereas straight people don’t need to do that necessarily), but as a gay person – even

lesbian – you sort of have to find your own rhythm. A lot of therapists early on, maybe 30 years ago, would see gays, lesbians and bisexuals as sexual. For them, they didn’t want to deal with the sexuality or they didn’t want to understand it, so clients would come to me and say, ‘When we started talking about sex, I couldn’t see my therapist anymore because he or she couldn’t help me.’ And that got me more and more interested in talking about and dealing with it,” Kort explained.



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“There are other ways of being sexual than just vaginal intercourse; there’s role play and fantasy. For gay and lesbian couples it’s already on the table. They’re already thinking and talking like that because we’re forced to have to look outside the box. We don’t fit into that heterosexist model so we have to find our own way and often we find it through ourselves.”

– Joe Kort, Ph.D.

Kort finds it more comfortable to introduce non-heterosexist types of sexuality with gays and lesbians than he does with his heterosexual clients, partially due to how the LGBT community has sex. There are many different ways to be physically intimate with a partner and Kort is critical of the ideology that says the only way to have sex is through penetration or vaginal intercourse.

“There are other ways of being sexual than just this vaginal intercourse; there’s role play and fantasy. For gay and lesbian couples, it’s

already on the table. They’re already thinking and talking like that because we’re forced to have to look outside the box,” he explained. “We don’t fit into that heterosexist model so we have to find our own way and often we find it through ourselves.”

Kort is skeptical of many sexual therapists who list themselves as being able to assist LGBT clients on PsychologyToday, a leading resource for people to find a local therapist, or in this case, a sexual therapist. He believes

face. And the dynamics are so different. So it bothers me that they don’t feel like there is something to dig into more. It’s like any cultural competency.”

Michigan does not require schools to teach sexuality education; however, the state does require schools to provide sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS education. This policy allows for some districts to educate LGBT and heterosexual youth with abstinence only programs or use sexual education language that stands silent on LGBT youth sexual expression, often times continuing the narrative that being LGBT is less than human.

“It’s as if we (LGBT) are invisible, like we don’t exist,” Kort said. “The reality is it isn’t necessarily homophobia but erotophobia. It’s the fear and disgust of sex. And just disinterest in learning about it. I think it drives a lot of what our culture is all about. We say we’re sexual but then when we talk about sex, practicing it and doing it, people get very judgmental and moralistic. I think that’s what a lot of the religious hate is all about: the fear of sex because it’s complicated, messy, smelly, and that’s not what we want to talk about.”

When discussing sexual activities, Kort likes to remind clients, particularly heterosexual men who approach him with their love of anal play, that body parts do not have a sexual orientation. He says lots of LGBT couples do not have sex and that the lack of sexual contact does not make them straight. It’s attraction. Some people regularly have physical intimacy and others just don’t.

“The healthcare environment that exists in America today is such that honest, direct and healthy discussions between healthcare professionals and patients about patient sexuality issues are extremely difficult at best,” Blodgett writes. “This difficulty is the result of social beliefs that a person’s sexuality is a private issue as well as the lack of education among healthcare professionals about sexuality and how to discuss it with patients.”

These difficulties are a result of persistent influences from history, culture, religion and even turmoil that influence all aspects of healthcare and interpersonal conversations between people.

Thanks to the internet the world knows so much more about what people are doing, what they’re thinking and wanting, Kort said. And still though the sex therapy field is small – growing, but it’s small. Kort sees an obvious need for more sexual therapists and more sexual therapists that focus on serving the LGBT community. He says most therapists haven’t dealt with their own sex lives and that they don’t know how or where to talk about sexual health with their clients.

“I think because I was gay I was forced to

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Positive Thoughts: Q&A With Mondo Guerra

Fall **BODY & FITNESS**

BY ORIOL R. GUTIERREZ JR.

Mondo Guerra is a fashion designer who first came to fame in 2010 as a contestant on the eighth season of the reality television show “Project Runway.” Although he didn’t win, Guerra was a fan favorite, even before he disclosed his HIV-positive status on the show. At that moment he also took on the role of HIV/AIDS activist.

Guerra went through a whirlwind of media attention. Since then, his celebrity profile has certainly increased. He won the debut season of “Project Runway All Stars” and became a mentor on “Under the Gunn” (a spinoff series named after “Project Runway” host Tim Gunn). His designs include apparel, accessories and jewelry.

Guerra has also found a way to connect his design career with his advocacy. In addition to being a spokesperson for “I Design,” an HIV/AIDS media campaign sponsored by Merck, Guerra is a spokesperson for “Dining Out for Life,” an annual fundraiser sponsored by Subaru, in which restaurants donate proceeds to local HIV/AIDS groups.

Five years after publicly disclosing he has HIV, Guerra explains how his life has changed and shares his goals for the future.

What prompted you to get tested for the virus in 2001 at the age of 22?

When I was younger, I believed, like every young person, that I was invincible. I was not making the best decisions. I could feel there was something different about me. So I got tested, and my test came back positive.

After the diagnosis, I was devastated. I grew up in a Latino household and community, and there was never any discussion about HIV/AIDS, so it was definitely scary to me. I did not know how to deal with it.

When I was newly diagnosed, I was very ashamed and afraid. I didn’t really seek any support. I hate to say this, but in a lot of ways, looking back now, being raised Roman Catholic, I felt like it was some kind of punishment.

I stayed silent about my positive status even up to when I was in the hospital with pneumonia over Christmas in 2009. With my family and friends visiting me, I asked my doctors not to disclose any information.

They were walking into a room with a bed where I was hooked up to this and that, and in my heart and mind I was dying of AIDS. I still didn’t talk about it. I hit rock bottom, and I knew I had to start taking better care

of myself.

I started taking medical advice and the proper treatments that I needed, and I got better very quickly. I had goals. For such a long time before I was in the hospital, HIV was defining who I was as a person and also as a creative.

The creative part of me was dying, so I had no reason to live. This creativity, the outlets where I was able to express myself, I used them to escape, a way to get through the day. This emotional and spiritual support is an important part of keeping me going.

Tell us about your decision to disclose on “Project Runway” in 2010.

My revelation on “Project Runway” was life-changing. It came from fear and turned into a huge sense of responsibility. I walked out on that runway in such a mood, but two hours later I was like, “What are people going to say?”

I was completely scared, so it wasn’t until four days before the episode aired that I told my parents. My parents still live in the home that I grew up in. At the dinner table, we have assigned seating that has never changed.

We had dinner. I knew in my heart – which was beating a million miles an hour – that I just had to come out with it, so I told my parents. “I know” was the first thing my mom told me, that motherly instinct I have always heard about. We talked some more, then my mom said, “I am proud of you.”

That helped me to talk about HIV/AIDS more.

I get very emotional about it still because I felt the love that came from the table that night, and it hurts me still because I didn’t trust them and that made me feel bad.

Speaking of your family, your mom and aunts inspired some of your eyewear.

My eyewear collection is inspired by family and friends. There is a whole set of eyewear

that is named after my mom and her sisters. It is my way to give back to them, because they have been so supportive and inspirational. It is the least I can do.

I’ve had the great opportunity to have a reality show competition pivot me into some visibility for my designs. It has been such a blessing to have a crossover between my creative work and my advocacy.

Any collaboration that I do at this point must have some kind of way to give back.

So I’m glad that part of the Swee eyewear proceeds goes to amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research. It just makes sense to me to be able to do that for others.

What’s next for you?

Right now, I am focusing on restructuring my business. I would love to focus more on my fashion. Advocacy remains dear to me, so I would like more ways to do this crossover of my interests.

I am working on a new show where I am allowed to communicate about HIV and my creative work. I’m not very sure on the direction of it, but it’s important for me to give inspiration and information to young people.



“I was hooked up to this and that, and in my heart and mind I was dying of AIDS. I still didn’t talk about it. I hit rock bottom, and I knew I had to start taking better care of myself. I started taking medical advice and the proper treatments that I needed, and I got better very quickly. I had goals. For such a long time before I was in the hospital, HIV was defining who I was as a person and also as a creative.”

**TRIANGLE
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Addressing LGBT Health Disparities

Fall BODY & FITNESS

Fenway Institute, CAP To Record Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity Data In Electronic Health Records

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Fenway Institute and the Center for American Progress will soon begin addressing the disparities affecting LGBT people in health care by including sexual orientation and gender identity data in requirements for electronic health records certified under the Meaningful Use program.

These changes will allow medical health professionals to record, change and access structured data on sexual orientation and gender identity to better assist LGBT individuals when they seek out health care. The new requirement is part of the 2015 Edition “demographics” certification criterion and will add sexual orientation and gender identity to the 2015 Edition Base Electronic Health Records Technology.

The requirement will help those within the patient’s care team have more information on the patient that can aid in identifying interventions and treatments most helpful to the

LGBT patient. It will also help to replace outdated and offensive terminology and endorses tested sexual orientation and gender identity question designs as best practice questions for health care providers and institutions to consider adopting for their electronic data collection efforts.

“Including sexual orientation and gender identity in the Meaningful Use incentive program is one of the most important things our government has done to promote better understanding of LGBT health disparities and interventions to reduce them,” said Sean Cahill, director of health policy research at the Fenway Institute.

In 2014, representatives from Beaumont, CHE Trinity Health, Henry Ford Health System, Oakland County Health Division, St. John Providence Health System, diversity and inclusion professionals, LGBT community organizers and LGBT community members met for the first time as the newly formed Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Health Equity Council of Southeast Michigan to begin the process on identifying and addressing issues that put LGBT people at risk for poor health outcomes.

The group is coordinated by Affirmations and is the first of its kind in the state which aims to systematically impact the health of local LGBT communities.

Jerry Peterson, executive director of the Ruth Ellis Center, was one of many to attend the meeting which brought together 50 professionals all focused on improving LGBT-related health concerns.

“I do know about the standards that Fenway is using, and I knew about the process. I do think it is an excellent step forward. While policy change and the federal government forcing change from the top is a good thing, it does not address the issue that most communities have insufficient resources to train medical personnel, particularly frontline staff who do assessments and ask these questions in an appropriate way. It is a vital step



“While policy change and the federal government forcing change from the top is a good thing, it does not address the issue that most communities have insufficient resources to train medical personnel, particularly frontline staff who do assessments and ask these questions in an appropriate way. It is a vital step forward in the overall process to have medical record technology that supports gathering the information. But it does not automatically spell an immediate improvement for primary care for LGBT folks.”

— Jerry Peterson, executive director of Ruth Ellis Center

forward in the overall process to have medical record technology that supports gathering the information. But it does not automatically spell an immediate improvement for primary care for LGBT folks,” Peterson said.

Fenway Health has been working to help people in all neighborhoods, including the LGBT and HIV/AIDS affected communities, since 1971. In 2013, AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts joined the Fenway Health family, allowing both organizations to improve delivery of care and services across the state

and beyond.

LGBT people are often invisible in care settings. This invisibility masks disparities and impedes the provision of important health care services for LGBT individuals, such as appropriate preventive screenings; assessments of risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; and effective interventions for mental and behavioral health concerns, particularly those that may be related

See LGBT Health Disparities, page 20

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Kicking Detroit's Smoking Habit: Breaking The Cycle

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT—Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S. According to the Center for Disease Control it kills more than 480,000 Americans each year. Among LGBT individuals smoking is significantly higher than their heterosexual counterparts. In a 2013 study conducted by the CDC, the prevalence of smoking in the LGBT community was 26.6 percent compared with 17.6 percent of heterosexuals. Many believe aggressive marketing of tobacco products to the LGBT community and the prevalence of added stressors from prejudice and stigma are why smoking rates are higher.

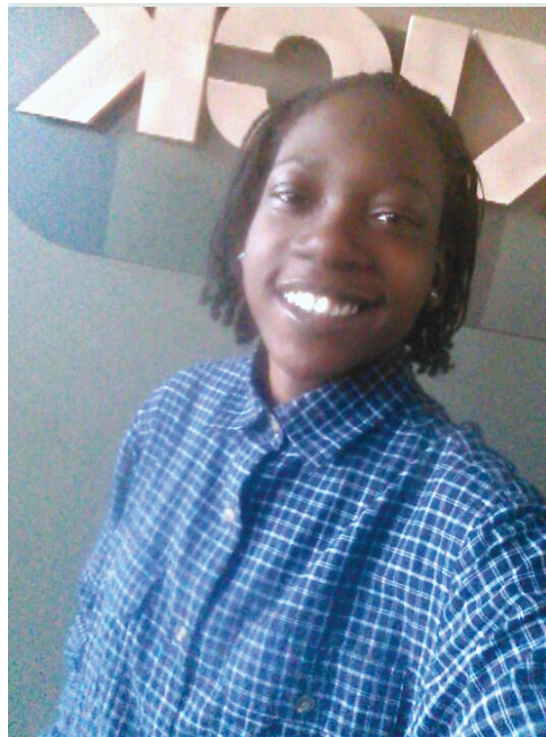
LGBT Detroit, formally known as KICK, is committed to lowering the smoking rates of LGBT individuals in the Motor City. Kunto Howard, 24, project coordinator for “Breaking The Cycle,” joined the organization two years ago.

Through data based research, Breaking The Cycle addresses issues of substance abuse and recovery in the LGBT community and provides educational forums and small group sessions to create spaces where individuals can conquer addictions. Breaking the Cycle is a state of Michigan licensed program for substance abuse focusing on nicotine replacement therapy.

Howard says smoking rates for the LGBT community in Detroit are 50 percent higher than the general population, with people living with HIV smoking at rates 70 percent higher than the general population, with many factors attributing to the higher rates of use by the LGBT community.

“It’s a big disparity. A lot of people don’t even know that we are a targeted community, because we have an entirely different set of stressors. These tobacco campaigns are not our friends and they don’t care about our health – they care about us buying into their industry. They integrate our culture with tobacco ad

Kunto Howard, 24, project coordinator for “Breaking The Cycle,” a program of LGBT Detroit, is working to help people stop smoking. Howard says smoking rates are significantly higher in the LGBT population. Aggressive marketing along with stress from stigma and prejudice for LGBT people adds to the problem.



messaging. And that’s another way I try to combat tobacco use. I show the pros and cons with tobacco ads messaging and how it affects our community,” says Howard.

LGBT Detroit has partnered with AIDS service organizations in the area as well as CHAC, Teen HYPE, AIDS Partnership Michigan, Michigan AIDS Coalition and is currently working on opening up more services to local high schools and universities.

Quitting

It’s generally difficult to quit smoking based on physical and mental withdrawal symptoms. When discussing how to quit, Howard highlights behavioral strategies to help people become more aware of their habits and routines and makes a point to discuss

lifestyle changes.

“Habits are hard to break, and as human beings we are habitual people. So my way of getting smoking down in the LGBT community is to come from a social support system,” Howard says.

Howard helps each individual plan out their day and identify what activities can be substituted for smoking. Howard asks questions like: Why do you need a cigarette? Who were you with when you last had one? Can you count to 10 and see if you still need a smoke? What activities can you substitute while in the car and you want a smoke?

Part of the program looks at how to prevent a soon to be ex-smoker from falling off the wagon and buying another pack.

According to the CDC, smoking-related illnesses in the U.S. cost more than \$300 billion a year, including nearly \$170 billion in direct medical care for adults and \$156 billion in lost productivity. Smoking increases the risk of contracting lung cancer, heart disease, chronic bronchitis and other smoking-related diseases.

Howard explains that each subset of the LGBT community experiences different rates of smoking. “We all go through our separate disparities.”

Within the LGBT community, bisexuals smoke at much higher smoking rates than lesbians or gays. Howard believes visibility plays a big role in this.

“When you don’t have as much visibility, there are a lot of things that affect that – the mental issues, feeling alone and depressed and feeling like you don’t necessarily fit into a community. Bi-attractual isn’t an

identity that is taken seriously. And if you think about the reasons, there are different

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reasons, but they all still deal with stigma. We do have stigma within our own community,” Howard stresses. “We are talking about cessation and prevention. But with that conversation starting and moving all the way down to stigma, health, disparity and social disparities, all of these things are intertwined and intersect with one another.”

Two months ago Howard quit smoking Black & Milds. Howard had a health scare including an irregular heart beat. They decided that enough was enough and quit smoking. The added risks of smoking were not worth whatever positives Howard experienced from it.

“My life is worth it. I didn’t come into this world as a codependent from smoking or any substance, and I’m not going to let it lead my life. I’m only 24 and I want to see 34,” Howard explained. “I want to see life. Tobacco is not going to win. Addiction is not going to win.”

Howard believes that pursuing personal research and education helped cut down cravings – even leading to the decision to not light up at all. Taking a puff is often about managing stress, but Howard believes nicotine tricks the brain.

For many, the decision to quit is not as clear cut as it was for Howard. And one has to want to quit in order to succeed at cessation. But a good, strong support system is always beneficial, especially for something as difficult as quitting smoking.

“It’s not a one day thing. Rome wasn’t built in a day. Even now, for me, I still have cravings. Habits can really be embedded in us in ways that we have no idea until we start looking at it,” Howard said.

According to Howard, the best way to help someone who is attempting to quit is to offer continuous support and to celebrate the successes along the way. However, if they do fall back into the cycle, Howard advises reminding loved ones that even one day without a smoke is a success.

Follow LGBT Detroit’s campaign to Break The Cycle on their Facebook and on Twitter by searching for the hashtag #BreakingTheCycle. LGBT Detroit holds bi monthly meetings about tobacco use and prevention every first and third Monday from 6-8 p.m. LGBT Detroit is located at 41 Burroughs St., Suite 109 in Detroit. For more information, contact Howard at 313-285-9733 or by email at aliciahoward@lgbtdetroit.org.

Michigan Non Profit Resource

Have You Experienced Discrimination?

If you or someone you know has experienced discrimination, intimidation, harassment or violence because of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity,

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Equality Michigan is working with state legislators to update the Ethnic Intimidation Act to include proper protections for the gay and transgender community.

To get involved in the movement for better hate crimes law, contact policy@equalitymi.org.

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All the while, I could hear my inebriated gay peers hissing in hushed tones around me, "She's a messsss!" It was mortifying. A frustrating double standard was revealed between gays who kept up a believable facade of health and those of us that no longer bothered. I was a castoff from my own kind.

Getting & Staying Sober

Leaving Self Medicating Behind **Fall BODY & FITNESS**

BY CHRISTOPHER TREACY

It felt like I was circling the drain. I got stuck in a vicious cycle, allowing some evil mechanism within me to destroy everything I tried to achieve while it simultaneously lied to me and told me it was all harmless.

Eventually, I just stopped trying to achieve things altogether.

I may have been born in 1970, but the reality is that I'm just turning 28. I began drinking regularly when I was 15, and that's the maturity level I was still at when I quit drinking for what will hopefully be the last time, nearly 13 years ago.

Those of us that identify as recovering alcoholics can attest: in the beginning, booze offered a miraculous and magical transformation – and that's no exaggeration. Talk to other drunks in recovery, and they'll pinpoint a moment in time when alcohol turned a switch within them, thus solving a huge problem which, up until that point, had them writhing in non-specific agony... like a bug flipped on its back.

Often described as being "uncomfortable in my own skin," alcoholics will tell you they grew up fearing others, feeling alone in a crowd and lacking in self-esteem. There's a disconcerting, widely shared feeling that we were all absent on a special school day when our peers received a handbook with directions about living life. We all had different home environments, but shared a common suspicion: something essential was missing.

In one fell swoop, alcohol changed all this. The lessons of the mysterious, aforementioned handbook were revealed. The missing link was located. Hooray.

Basically, drinking did things for me that nothing else could. Alcoholism runs on one side of my family, and I do indeed believe it's a hereditary disease. But I was only vaguely

aware of what that meant when I started. And it didn't go well at first, but I was undeterred.

I drank too much too quickly, got sick, behaved like an ass, and got into trouble. Never once did I think, "Yikes, maybe this isn't for me." On the contrary, drinking was somehow a destination for me prior to the first sip, and bad outcomes merely presented a challenge: I must learn to do this better. And so I did.

From 15 to 30 years old, I pursued drinking the way many straight men pursue sports. The fact that athleticism bored me no longer mattered; I'd found my game and developed impressive skills. I made new friends. We hung out and drank. As a suburban, 1980s teen, a passable fake ID could be made on the library copy machine. By 16, I was spending weekend nights in a local bar, drinking cheaply, and having a blast.

There were drugs, too, and my involvement with them got me expelled from my public high school. I was shipped off to a boarding school in Vermont, which only helped me hone my craft, delightfully under-supervised up in the middle of nowhere. When I got to college, I felt like I'd truly arrived. I slept with whoever would have me, gender notwithstanding, and I functioned famously through the haze. It was all part of the challenge.

But right around college graduation, I became riddled with anxiety. Alcohol began making its slow, painful transition from asset to liability. Faced with pursuing a career, I chose instead to work "begrudgingly and at half-steam" (from AA literature).

My peers made strides, fell in love and bought houses. I opted to run around in the bars where plenty of solace could be found from other gays who were adjusting about as well as I was. Bars are where so many of us establish our sexual identity, and they can be a great resource. But that sense of comfort can turn into quicksand. Suddenly, you realize



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you've been stuck on a stool for a few years.

With only one exception, boyfriends were fleeting. I bitched about it, but the truth was that I didn't want anyone getting too close, lest they see how pathetic I was becoming. Copious amounts of daydreaming (and lost time due to frequent blackouts) transpired instead, while I developed a "work hard, play hard" ethic waiting tables.

My employment sell-by date averaged nine months, by which time I would have gotten busted skimming money or stealing liquor. I lied, cheated and stole to keep it all going. My appetite for drugs increased, eventually landing me with a nasty cocaine habit that took a wrecking ball to any semblance of functionality I'd previously established. I

Too many people believe that getting sober is just about quitting drinking and using drugs. While that surely plays a large role in the process, the real work of sobriety is in re-learning how to live without those things once you've put them down.

spent multiple nights in jail, repeatedly getting picked up wobbling around Boston's theater district, blind-drunk and looking to score. I made my way into a few crack houses and developed a depraved after-hours persona that I worked hard to obscure, even from other drinking buddies.

I prided myself on staying skinny and showing up to work regardless of the damage – blackened eyes, split cheeks, broken eyeglasses. Drama seemed to find me. All the while, I could hear my inebriated gay peers hissing in hushed tones around me, "She's a messsss!" It was mortifying. A frustrating double standard was revealed between gays who kept up a believable facade of health and those of us that no longer bothered. I was a castoff from my own kind.

And by the time I turned 30, I couldn't hide that drinking was calling all the shots even if I'd wanted to. Sober alcoholics often refer to this as the moment "when booze stopped working." The magic was over, the switch was broken, and yet I still craved to drink. True, I'd developed other addictions along the way, but alcohol facilitated all of them.

The most frightening realization came when I continued to drink despite being determined not to: I had no choice anymore. I had to find a way not to have that first drink, since it seemed like the only way to prevent all those other awful decisions from getting made. I needed to develop faith in something beyond myself (and beyond booze) that could help keep me from drinking, and it took a while for me to stop kicking and screaming long enough to find it.

Too many people believe that getting sober is just about quitting drinking and using drugs. While that surely plays a large role in the process, the real work of sobriety is in re-learning how to live without those things once you've put them down.

Alarming new findings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

about our community struggles with addiction show that we're just as mired in this struggle as we've ever been. Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation director Buster Ross recently summarized the new research, reporting that when and if we wash up for treatment, we're much more likely to come with additional baggage, including a history of physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. Additionally, we're dogged with cross addictions and mental health problems, and are more inclined to repeatedly seek treatment, speaking to a lower success rate of ongoing sobriety.

Curiously, coming out to a more accepting world isn't necessarily having the impact on our self-medication issues that one might assume. Studies suggest that LGBTQ youths

come out faster than previous generations, potentially rushing the internal process of acceptance. The assumption has always been that if the culture is at peace with us, then we're okay also... but that may not mirror one's interior dialogue at all.

Furthermore, research coming out of Texas Tech University's Department of Psychological Sciences and the Chicago Health and Life Experience of Women (CHLEW) supports the idea that fluid sexuality may actually be a trigger for what's deemed as 'dangerous drinking' in women. It's an extension of something called Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which examines the discomfort that arises when our behaviors don't align with our beliefs and attitudes. Self-medication is one way of coping with these inner discrepancies, but folks predisposed to alcoholism can get stuck in a pattern, unable to emerge with a revised self identity. Instead, they just keep drinking.

As gay men and women looking for ways of understanding how we fit into the world around us, we're presented with challenges that mimic those of the budding alcoholic: we feel apart, lonely... at a loss. At a time when our straight friends are dating and engaging in various rites of passage, we're searching for ways just to feel comfortable in our skin. Almighty alcohol creates a warm, fuzzy camaraderie – a buffer – that seems like a huge problem solver. But there are no real shortcuts, and that's something we have to discover individually. Unfortunately, a huge derailment sometimes ensues.

Find A Meeting

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► LGBT Health Disparities

Continued from p. 15

to experiences of anti-LGBT stigma and discrimination.

According to authorities such as the Institute of Medicine and The Joint Commission, collecting sexual orientation and gender identity data in health care settings is essential to providing high-quality, patient-centered care to LGBT individuals, as well as an important part of efforts to better understand and address LGBT population health disparities.

Training clinical staff is essential in how to provide culturally competent and affirming care to LGBT patients. Part of that care

includes asking patients about their sexual orientation and gender identity in an efficient, effective and respectful manner that aims to further help the patient, instead of used as a means to “other.”

“Fenway is the premiere program nationally. As we’ve been looking at our own health and wellness center, Fenway is an example,” Peterson describes.

Peterson says that there is still much to do in Michigan surrounding health disparities and LGBT treatment within the health system and that it is the collective voice of allies and LGBT people that will help bring about that shift. He says that until members of the LGBT community can walk into a health

Fall BODY & FITNESS

► Sexual Therapy

Continued from p. 12

talk about it. I think LGBT people were forced to talk about it because it’s unnatural for us to do it the way we are taught,” Kort said.

“Understanding Patients’ Sexual Problems” is currently available on Amazon and discusses a variety of topics for healthcare professionals to better understand how sexual health education for medical and nursing professionals is inadequate, yet critical in understanding LGBT patients’ needs and problems; early problem recognition and stigma-free, therapeutic and effective intervention; what conversations LGBT patients should have with their healthcare professionals; and treating patients of all ages and sexual orientations with respect inside and outside the healthcare arena.

Blodgett grew up in the outskirts of London, England, and attended nursing school at The Royal London Hospital. After emigrating to the U.S. at the end of 1967, she worked as a nurse, educator, medical/surgical nursing director, head nurse and as director of nursing for medical services and post-intensive care services until she opened the University of Phoenix, Hawaii Campus in Oahu where she partially developed and fully implemented undergraduate and graduate degree programs in nursing, business, counseling and teacher education.

care provider’s office and be treated fairly and equally, many LGBT people will feel uncomfortable approaching doctors when they have an illness.

“Definitely appropriate care for the trans community is still a real issue,” Peterson said. “I know people who leave Wayne County and go to Ann Arbor. There is insufficient resources for the trans community. And in general there is a lack of culturally competent care.”

The new requirements are currently slated to take effect in 2018, which offers a critical window of time for work to provide technical assistance to providers, health systems and vendors relating to the collection of these data. With generous support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Fenway and CAP have been providing technical assistance to health system stakeholders from across the U.S. who are in the process of adding sexual orientation and gender identity questions into their EHR systems. As part of this project – titled “Do Ask, Do Tell” – Fenway and CAP have developed an online toolkit for collecting sexual orientation and gender identity data in electronic health records that can be accessed at www.doaskdotell.org.

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THE GAY WORLD OF SELENA GOMEZ

Pop Star Talks Lesbian Rumors, (Maybe) Dating Gay Men & Nick Jonas

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Selena Gomez is alive, revived and relieved.

After photos turned up in 2014 of Gomez scrub-a-dub-dubbing with gal pal Cara Delevingne, who's openly bisexual, what transpired? Gay gossip, of course.

Gomez doesn't care, she says, "because they weren't talking about other people in my life for once, which was wonderful."

In fact, regarding the blogosphere buzz, Gomez, 23, tells me she "loved it," a testament to the entertainer's true-to-herself, not-really-caring-what-you-think-anymore persona. That same perspective is reflected in all the dizzying late-night pillow talk throbbing throughout her sexually liberated and self-reflective second studio album, "Revival."

For a small-screen darling who grew up under the watchful eye of Disney, Gomez's openness both on the album and in conversation is refreshing. After recently revealing that she was diagnosed with the autoimmune disease lupus in 2013, she concurs that, yes, this is her coming out party of sorts. (Actually, the way she puts it is, "werk!")

And so it is, as Gomez speaks candidly about other aspects of her life: "absolutely" questioning her sexuality, growing up around her mom's gaggle of mimosa-sippin' gays and — cue the awws — her admiration for ex-flame Nick Jonas' "love and compassion for everyone."

Growing up in Grand Prairie, Texas, what was your introduction to the gay community?

You have to understand: My mother is absolutely fantastic and she worked at a modeling agency when I was a very young girl, so every Sunday I would have brunch with her and all of her gays, and I just remember a lot of mimosas. It was the best. So, I've been around it my whole life and, you know, I love it. I have to tell you: On my 16th birthday my mom had a bunch of drag queens come out and they sang "Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)" and it was sooo funny.

As someone raised Catholic, accepting the LGBT community was never an issue for you then?

Not at all. Look: There's a huge difference in how I was brought up; the word "religion" is a very complex thing. It's something you have to follow, and that's not what faith is. Anybody who has a higher power, anybody who has anything they believe in: If you don't know how to love other people, I don't believe in it. It doesn't work that way.

Have you ever met a Selena Gomez drag queen?

Yes! I had one who did one of the viral videos of "Love You Like a Love Song" (Willam Belli's "Love You Like a Big Schlong"). (She did a nasty version of it, which was hysterical, and I went to the Logo NewNowNext Awards and I got to meet her, which was amazing. Honestly, I feel like that's when I made it — genuinely! I emailed it to my mom and she emailed it and CC'd everybody.

You say Selena drag queens were the true measure of success for you. But isn't it true that you're not truly famous until you've been the subject of a gay rumor? And last year, the tabloids had a field day with photos of you and Cara Delevingne.

I've made it!

How did you react to those rumors?

Honestly, I loved it. I didn't mind it. Especially because they weren't talking about other people in my life for once, which was wonderful. Honestly, though, she's incredible and very open and she just makes me open. She's so fun and she's just extremely adventurous, and sometimes I just want that in my life, so I didn't mind it. I loved it.

Have you ever questioned your sexuality?

Oh, I think everybody does, no matter who they are. I do, yeah, of course. Absolutely. I think it's healthy to gain a perspective on who you are deep down, question yourself and challenge yourself; it's important to do that.

Your friend Demi Lovato played a lesbian on "Glee," starring as Naya Rivera's love interest. Who would you choose as an onscreen lesbian love interest?

That's a long list! Suki Waterhouse — she's a model; she was Bradley Cooper's girlfriend.

As a performer, when were you first aware you had an LGBT following?

My first single was when I was 16 and that went to No. 1 on the Dance Club charts, so that was my introduction. I don't think people really knew me, so I don't know if it was a following necessarily, but once I hit "Love You Like a Love Song" status, that's really when I started realizing it. And it was the best!

My concerts used to be little kids, and then seeing the entire front row being all these guys who were wearing neon T-shirts and just losing their minds – it's incredible. And then you see the jocks in the other corner throwing their boxers on stage. It's like, "Oh gosh." It's amazing.

You say "oh gosh" like it's a problem.

(Laughs) Well, it is a little bit, come on.

Do you keep your gay fans in mind when you create music, particularly with *Revival*?

Absolutely. One-hundred percent. Even with my earlier stuff, I've always tapped into it, and at the end of the day I'm a full-on pop artist, so I wanted the tracks to be incredible because I know how important that is. But on top of that, having the lyrics be equally as important was something I needed to do for this album. I think it just kind of came together really well. I spent a year on it and I poured everything I had into this album, and I was thinking of everyone. I was thinking of my diehard fans from everywhere.

Have you ever dated or fallen for a gay man?

Honestly, I don't have that story, but two of my best friends do and it's very "Will and Grace"-like, which I love. But no, I haven't actually experienced it – wait, maybe that's not fair to say. Maybe I won't know? Maybe I *don't* know? (Laughs) I just thought about that. Oh my gosh. I'm thinking about my whole life now.

Nick Jonas, Justin Bieber, Taylor Lautner: Aesthetically speaking, you have good taste in men. How jealous do your gay guy friends get of the people you've dated?

Oh gosh, they're more into it than I am. Honestly! Part of the reason I probably went out on a few dates is because of them. They're just like, "Go! Go!" I'm like, "No!" They're all about it, for sure.

So your gay friends are your matchmakers?

All the time. Whoever I'm with or like or don't like, they're all about dissecting it and putting me with other people.

It must be fascinating for you to see Nick Jonas become such a gay icon. His outreach... his underwear pics...

And his (gay) characters that he's been playing! "Scream Queens" and the other show, "Kingdom," which I thought was super rad. We actually talked about it at dinner one time. He's incredible, and I think it's amazing.

I've known him for years – we were 14 when we met – so it's crazy, because I actually knew him at a different time in his life. Now, to see him have this amazing perspective on life is awesome. I'm really proud of him.

Are you surprised by the way he's connected with the gay community?

Yeah, for sure! Not in a bad way, but I was like, "Thank you." It was kind of incredible for somebody to step out of their zone for a minute. It's really incredible to see what he's done.

It's incredible to not really be in a judgmental place and to really let down all of your guards. I just think you have to really let go, and you do have to find this in your heart. He clearly has had a love and compassion for everyone, and I think that's great.

The cover of your album, where you're basically naked, is pure empowerment. You seem very comfortable in your own skin.

Every other day it changes, but this year is a very important year for me. A lot of discovering and exploring who I am. It was exciting for me while also being a little complicated; I had dealt with certain body issues and things like that. Once the album was put together and I went through so many different emotions, I knew that this was my moment to really share my heart, because there are so many people who follow or look up to me who are dealing with so much in their own life. I just want to give my all to it – give all of myself literally.

Are there any gay people in your life currently who helped you on your journey to self-actualization?

Yes, one of my dearest – his name is Gweny. He's been on my Instagram many times – featured on my Insta! (Laughs) But he's very sweet and unbelievably confident. He's a dancer, so he knows how to move his body. Even when I dance, sometimes I'll ask him to dance with me in the mirror so I can be comfortable in my movements. Sometimes I get a little self-conscious and don't think I'm a great dancer and he's able to pull me out of my head instantly. Also, I'll wake up one morning and he'll be cooking breakfast, and all of a sudden "The Sound of Music" is on and it just makes my life happy. He'll just run into my room and cheer me up and yeah, he's been a huge part of the last four years of my life. He's changed my life.

You have had to become an adult in front of the whole world. For you, how hard is it to grow up in the limelight?

The worst part about it is the lack of forgiveness. When you're a quote-end quote "child star," it's just unfair to be able to throw things at people when they don't even know who they are yet. So that's the

See Selena, page 25



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Cheryl Wheeler Featured At The 30th Annual Women In The Arts Festival

The 30th Annual Women in the Arts Festival will be held Nov. 13-14 at the Edgewood United Church in East Lansing. This festival is a celebration of women artists that features a variety of artists, musicians and poets as a symbol of the festival's commitment to support women in the creative pursuits. Each year this volunteer-run organization creates space for women to showcase their talents.

This year's festival is headlined at 8 p.m. Friday night by Cheryl Wheeler. For those unfamiliar with this artist, it has always seemed as if there were two of her, always in a tussle for control of the mic. There is poet-Cheryl, writer of some of the prettiest, most alluring and intelligent ballads on the modern folk scene. And there is her evil twin, comic-Cheryl, a militant trend defier and savagely funny social critic. The result is a delightful contrast between poet and comic. The show will be co-produced with Lansing's premier folk music organization, the Ten Pound Fiddle. Tickets are \$20 (\$18




Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, is a WITA day stage standard.

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Saturday's program features a diverse array of entertainment, starting with Lansing based rock group Scary Women

at 1 p.m., the Lansing Women's Chorus, Sistrum, at 2 p.m., Kate Peterson (half of nationally touring Nervous But Excited)

See Festival, next page

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at 3 p.m. and the Ferndale indie-pop duo Joan of Arc at 4 p.m. Scary Women Scary Women is a rock and roll quartet out of Lansing, Michigan which formed in the spring of 2015 and now plays at bars, record shops and festivals throughout the area. Members are Jennifer Gower-Toms (bass, keys & vocals), Amy Starr (guitar & vocals), Tammy Cook (guitar & vocals) and Kelly Jo Garland (drums & vocals). They play mostly originals (upbeat rock with a sinister edge) and cite musical influences ranging from Patti Smith to Gillian Welch to Bikini Kill. They chose the name Scary Women because of their love, respect and admiration for loud and proud women.

Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, is a WITA day stage standard! They are composed of friends, community and the cooks behind the festival Sistrum Cafe! An amazing women's chorus, Sistrum creates music that inspires, empowers and entertains.

Kate Peterson is a festival favorite and also half of the nationally touring folk duo Nervous but Excited. Kate has played WITA many times since she got her start in Lansing in 2003. In that time she has traveled the world playing music, but will always call Lansing home.

Jane of Arc, comprised of Chelsea Carter and Elida Quesada, began making sweet music together in late 2007. It began in a cozy basement apartment in Detroit

with two acoustic guitars and a modest drum kit. They have since uploaded themselves into Southeast Michigan and beyond, hoping to one day become a major minority to change Michigan music. This unique female indie-pop duo is in the market to take listeners on a journey with original songs that will get people stomping their feet in one moment and wandering down memory lane the next. Their first full length album entitled "Freedom in Falling" layers beautiful arrangements of carefully blanketed instrumentation and vocals. The album started with a small noise, and with time and tender care, has become a catalog of sensory explosions. Each song takes indie-acoustic-pop enthusiasts on a journey through the uncertainty, fear and liberation of experiencing love and enduring loss.

Another key highlight of this annual festival is a large Artists Market, with more than 40 artists and craftswomen offering items ranging from pottery, glass art, fiber art, paintings and jewelry to massages, personal care products, homemade jellies and jams, books, coffee, women's music and much more. Be sure to take advantage of the delicious food being served up in the Sistrum Café! The Artist Market will be open 5:30-9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13 and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14. An array of interesting and thought



Cheryl Wheeler

provoking workshops will be held Saturday afternoon for Women in the Arts Festival attendees. Tickets for the Artist Market and workshops are \$5 and will be available at the door. The Edgewood United Church is located at 469 North Hagadorn, East Lansing. All tickets are on a "more if you can, less if you can't" sliding scale.

For more information, contact producer@witafestival.com.

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► Selena

Continued from page 23

only frustrating part, because, ultimately, that's life. Everybody goes through things, and more than anything, I think it's just the judgmental part. But I enjoy it. I love my life, and I'm so thankful for it. I have been able to experience life in a different way, and even though there are some low moments, it's incredible to do what I do.

You've credited Taylor Swift as not just a friend but someone you admire. How often do you and her shake it off at the gay clubs?

Oh my gosh – how chic! And all the time. Taylor and I literally will have mini dance parties with all of her dancers who are 100 percent gay (laughs) – and it's the best feeling ever! It is so fun, and we just lose our minds.

So wherever you and Taylor are, it's always a gay club? Even in her apartment?

Yeah, in New York! On tour! Backstage! The whole thing.

What is the most common misconception people have of you?

Lack of credibility. I understand that I come from Disney or whatever, but I feel like I've just scratched the surface of what I wanna do

in film and music, to be honest. Even though I've been doing it for a while, I don't feel like I have really gone there yet, and that's fine. I think I gotta grow into it and make mistakes and learn and whatnot, but I do feel like that (credibility) is the one thing that people don't give me enough of.

Do you ever Google yourself?

I have, yes. It's very dangerous. I can't do it often. I didn't do it after the album came out because I didn't know what the reviews were gonna be, and I mean, I can't do anything about it now – the album is out – so I have to be confident in what I released. But yes, I have, of course. If people text me things or if I hear people talking about stuff, yeah, I'll do it.

What is the craziest thing you've read about yourself?

What have I *not* read about myself at this point?! My gosh. I think I've been pregnant 15 times. That's always been the craziest thing for me, which is my favorite. I'll be at the beach and have the flattest stomach or not, and regardless, I'll be pregnant. It's the most hysterical thing to me.

To debunk any rumors of a 16th baby – are you pregnant right now?

No, nope – definitely not! (Laughs)

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Thursday, Oct. 29

Voices of Freedom 5:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$100-950. Freedom House,
200 Temple St., **Detroit**. www.freedomhousedetroit.org

Capuchin School Night Out 6 p.m.
Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 1401 Abbott St., **Detroit**. 313-579-2100 x202. events@thecapuchins.org www.cskdetroit.org/events/capuchin_school_night_out

GenSilent 6 p.m. Free film screening and panel discussion. U of M-Dearborn and LGBT Older Adult Coalition/GEMD, 19000 Hubbard Drive, **Dearborn**. 313-593-5052. jonalars@umich.edu

Campus Life Storyteller's Lounge: Justice 9 p.m. Part of OUTober. EMU LGBT Resource Center, **Ypsilanti**. www.umich.edu/lgbtrc

Saturday, Oct. 31

Angels' Night Volunteer Campaign Angels' Night, **Detroit**. 313-224-4415. www.angelsnight.org

Sunday, Nov. 1

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

Monday, Nov. 2

LGBTQ Health Clinic - Community Meetings 4 p.m. Health Emergency Lifeline Programs (HELP) is developing plans for an LGBTQ focused health center. We want to know what the community thinks, wants and needs to create an accessible, welcoming place for high quality health and wellness services. Space is limited to 40 people at each event. Light refreshments will be served. Health Emergency Lifeline Programs, 19363 Livernois, **Detroit**. 313-832-3300 x18. help@helpoffice.org

Jazz in the Gallery 7:30 p.m. A local jazz ensemble, led by pianist and vocalist Brandon Perkins, rehearses and holds casual jam sessions in the Pittmann-Puckett Gallery every Monday evening. Jazz in the Gallery is open to the public. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Rd., **Ferndale**. (248) 398-7105. khug@goaffirmations.org <http://goaffirmations.org/programs-services/community-events-activities>

Tuesday, Nov. 3

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

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

Wednesday, Nov. 4

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

Senior Koffee Klatch 1 p.m. A discussion and networking group for people 45 and older. Various discussion topics, social outings, bake-offs, and potlucks are incorporated throughout the year. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Rd., **Ferndale**. khug@goaffirmations.org <http://goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups>

LGBT Know Your Rights Project 3 p.m. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. www.jimtoycommunitycenter.org

Suits and City sponsor - Lansing Community College 5:30 p.m. Suits and the City is the Lansing area's premier LGBTQIA professional social networking organization since 2004. Members gather at a different



Editor's Pick

The Museum Of Contemporary Art Detroit is currently showing "United States of Latin America" as part of its fall exhibitions. The exhibit is curated by Senior Curator at Large Jens Hoffmann and Guest Curator Pablo León de la Barra. The show is based on an ongoing conversation between two curators, Jens Hoffmann and Pablo León de la Barra, who for a number of years have exchanged research and information about artists, artworks and the overall

development of the art world from Mexico to Argentina and the many countries in between. The exhibition brings together more than 30 emerging artists from Latin America, many of whom will be exhibiting in the U.S. for the first time. "United States of Latin America" features a wide range of works in a variety of mediums and individual artworks that touch upon themes such as geography, history, urbanism, memory, colonialism, architecture, war, modernism, social inequality, regionalism and power. It allows the viewer a glimpse into a reality that may seem geographically near, but is in many ways far away and unfamiliar.

"United States of Latin America" will be on view through Jan. 3, 2016. MOCAD is located at 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For more information, visit www.mocadetroit.org.

venue each month. The mission of SUITS AND THE CITY is to promote a sense of community among LGBTQIA professional persons in the Mid-Michigan area and to promote the advancement of LGBTQIA owned and friendly establishments through networking, information and events. Suits and City, 500 E. Michigan Ave., **Lansing**. www.suitsandthecity.org

Affirmations Run Club 6 p.m.

An informal group of runners and walkers of all abilities. Seasoned marathoners, beginner walkers, and everything in between! Everyone is welcome, just show up! Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. jproctor@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/community-events-activities

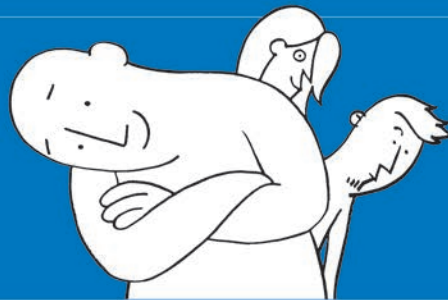
MAC Health 6 p.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), 290 W. Nine Mile

Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.michiganidscoalition.org

Yours Truly, John Waters 7 p.m. A different John Waters film every week. Michigan Theatre, 233 State St., **Ann Arbor**. 734-668-TIME. www.michigantheater.org

See Happenings, page 28

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Garbage Keeps It 'Queer' In Royal Oak

BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

Hailed '90s alt-rock band Garbage filled the Royal Oak Music Theatre almost to capacity Oct. 19 as they performed for the first time in the city. The Wisconsin-based band, with Scottish lead singer Shirley Manson, had only played once before in the area – a 2012 concert in Detroit.

The show opened with Torres, a Georgia-based singer who played a short set of alt-rock evocative of '90s dream pop. The singer, born Mackenzie Scott, oscillated her vocals between strong, haunting moans to more punky screams in her closing song. Manson would later specifically note Torres as, "The singer you can say, 'You saw them here first.'"

After a fairly short break following the opener, a screen projection of a mish-mash of clips from the 1990s was shown before Garbage made their entrance. The short video highlighted the evolution of not only the band during the period, but culture and technology as a whole. The montage served as a precursor for Manson's early announcement that the show would only play their music through 1996 in honor of the 20th anniversary of their self-titled first album.

"I know that might leave some people disappointed," Manson admitted, but the crowd roared in enthusiasm for the more classic Garbage tracks. "We'll be playing

some more obscure tracks, B-sides, too."

The band initially opened with a B-side – "Subhuman" – with lights strobing so brightly that the band appeared as silhouettes. After only brief pauses between songs, the band transitioned into songs, like their early hit "Queer," before Manson would finally pause to talk with the crowd. The seemingly ageless Manson gyrated around the stage throughout the almost two hours of performance, at one time noting to the crowd, "I don't know about you, but I'm sweating up here like a motherfucker!"

The entirety of their debut album was then performed in addition to other B-sides like "Girl Don't Come," an "ode to the difficulty of achieving the female orgasm when it just isn't right with someone," said Manson. Creative arrangements made familiar songs like "Vow" and "I'm Only Happy When It Rains" new again, and "Driving Lesson" and "Butterfly Collector" were other B-sides that made the set, including a tribute to Manson's friend – Vic Chesnutt – with a cover of "Kick My Ass." The cover was initially recorded by the band for Sweet Relief, a charity dedicated to helping musicians in need. Garbage's only number one hit in the U.S. – fittingly, "#1 Crush" – would later round out the B-side inclusions in the show and finish the first set; the single gained fame from the "William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet" soundtrack.

Manson has been known for her

outspoken support of the LGBT community, including within Garbage songs like "Androgyny" off of their 2001 "Beautiful Garbage" album, and this was no exception during her Royal Oak show. During some banter – to which Manson acknowledged, "I like to talk! I like to connect! I know some of you may be creeped out, but I don't give a fuck!" – the pink-haired singer discussed the band's previous show in the area. She recalled someone contacting her online before the show, expressing desire to propose to his boyfriend during the band's Detroit stop. Manson was moved and agreed to the set-up, though she joked with the crowd, "That was a one-time thing. I'm no priest!" Said couple were then recognized in the crowd by Manson, who joyfully said, "And they're here tonight!" to applause from the crowd. She also expressed strong feelings for "always supporting the LGBT community" and being grateful "that we can love who we love."

After a brief break following "#1 Crush," Garbage came back and broke their earlier promise of performing only music before 1996, playing tracks off of their 1998 "Version 2.0." In addition to "I Think I'm Paranoid," Garbage would then close the show with "When I Grow Up." Manson didn't stop her "connecting," even at the end, as she changed the lyrics to the final song to, "When we grow up, we'll turn the tables" as she gestured to the crowd.

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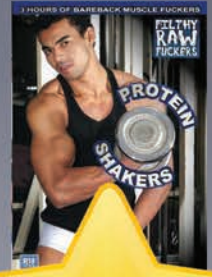
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m.
Children's Ministry 11 a.m.



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► **Happenings**

Continued from page 26

Thursday, Nov. 5

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

Brandi Carlile 8 p.m. Tickets: \$32-50. Sound Board - Motor City Casino, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 800-745-3000. www.Soundboarddetroit.com

MAC Health 11 p.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), Detroit. www.Michiganaidcoalition.org

Friday, Nov. 6

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

ACLU Michigan Annual Dinner 6:30 p.m. Special guest: Charles Blow ACLU Michigan, Dearborn.

ABBACADABRA - the ultimate ABBA tribute! 7:30 p.m. This ultimate tribute promises to continue the momentum by performing the groups greatest hits in full ABBA fashion and flair. All ages. Tickets: \$28. City of Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division, 32332 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. 248-473-1848. www.Regrec.fhgov.com

Saturday, Nov. 7

StoryCorps OutLoud Initiative StoryCorps recognizes the profound historical importance of capturing the stories of the LGBTQ community and the urgent need for this work to happen now. StoryCorps OutLoud Initiative is a multi-year initiative dedicated to recording and preserving LGBTQ stories across America. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, Kalamazoo. www.Kglrc.org

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

60th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee Gala Fundraiser 6 p.m. A benefit for Stagecrafters, featuring celebrity guest of honor, Jeffrey Sellar. Stagecrafters, Royal Oak.

Sunday, Nov. 8

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

Fortune Feimster 7:30 p.m. 18+. Tickets: \$20. Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, Royal Oak. www.Comedycastle.com

Monday, Nov. 9

Annual Jewish Book Fair The oldest and largest Jewish book fair in the nation. Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. 248-661-1900. info@theberman.org www.Jccdet.org/bookfair

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

MUSIC & MORE

The Ark "Wild Child w/sg Elliot Moss" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct. 31. 734-761-1800. www.Theark.org

The Ark and AEG Live "Dave Rawlings Machine". Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Nov. 1. 248-399-2980. www.Royalokmusictheatre.com

The Magic Bag "Madisen Ward & The Mama Bear" Tickets: \$15+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 7 p.m. Oct. 29. 248-544-3030. www.Themagicbag.com

University Musical Society "Chicago Symphony Orchestra" Beethoven Symphony No. 5 in c minor, Op. 67/Mahler Symphony No. 1 (Titan). Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 29. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/chicago-symphony-orchestra-2/

University Musical Society "Tenebrae" Alonso Lobo Versa est in luctum Luis de Victoria Tenebrae Responsories (selections) Gregoria Allegri Miserere mei, Deus Juan Gutierrez de Padilla Missa Ego flos campi (without Credo) Max Reger Der Mensch lebt und bestehet Johannes Brahms Fest- und Gedenksprache, Op. 109 Anton Bruckner Ave Maria Bruckner Virga Jesse Bruckner Christus factus est Brahms Drei Motetten, Op. 110 Reger Nachtlid. St. Francis of Assisi, 2250 E. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Oct. 30. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/tenebrae-2/

THEATER

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

Julius Caesar Performances are Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday-Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$11-22. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. Oct. 29 - Nov. 1. 734-971-2228. www.A2ct.org/shows/julius-caesar

Julius Caesar Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. Oct. 29 - Nov. 1. 734-763-3333. www.A2ct.org

ART 'N' AROUND

DIA "30 Americans" Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 1 - Jan. 18. 313-833-7900. www.Dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Sweet are Your Charms: Portrait Sculpture from Ancient Mesopotamia" Lecture by Trudy Kawami, Ph.D. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 6 p.m. Nov. 4. 810-234-1695. www.Flintarts.org

Flint Institute of Arts "French Twist: Masterworks of Photography from Atget to Man Ray" Featuring 100 vintage prints. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Oct. 1 - Nov. 8. 810-234-1695. www.Flintarts.org

MOCAD "United States of Latin America" Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 23 - Jan. 3. 313-832-6622. www.Mocadetroit.org

robert kidd gallery "Kevin Tolman: New Paintings" Artist Kevin Tolman poses a paradox: The deafening power of a quiet canvas. robert kidd gallery, 107 Townsend St., Birmingham. Oct. 17 - Nov. 7. 248-642-3909. www.Robertkiddgallery.com

UMMA "The Art of Tyree Guyton: A Thirty-Year Journey" University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 22 - Jan. 3. 734-763-4186. www.Umma.umich.edu

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

Editor's Pick

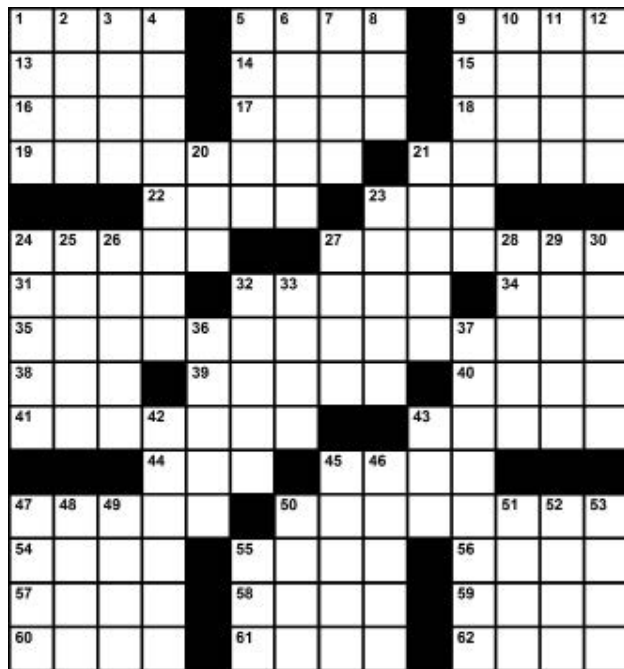


The University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Education, Health and Human Services, together with UMD's Women's and Gender Studies program, the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging and SAGE, will present the film "Gen Silent" in Dearborn. The evening will feature a film screening and panel discussion.

The event invites guests to "join us as we follow the lives of six LGBT seniors who must hide their sexuality in order to survive in the care system."

The film begins at 6 p.m. and will be shown in UMD's Fairlane Center South-Michigan Rooms, 19000 Hubbard Drive, Dearborn. Admission is free. For more information, contact Jonathan Larson at jonalars@umich.edu or 313-593-5052.

Q Puzzle



- 35 With 50-Across, group that Meredith Grey could join if she got rid of her roomers
 38 "Can't Get It Out of My Head" rock gp.
 39 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde 2"
 40 Palindromic male name
 41 The guy you're seeing?
 43 Ponders
 44 They could come from Uranus
 45 Susan B. Anthony dollar, e.g.
 47 She was a roomer at Meredith Grey's house
 50 See 35-Across
 54 "___ Baldwin Doesn't Love Me"
 55 It brings out the flavor in your meat
 56 De Matteo of "Desperate Housewives"
 57 Triangle ratio
 58 Reed in a Ned Rorem work
 59 Word from a pen
 60 What fluffers give
 61 "Perry Mason" star Raymond
 62 Catches on to
- 10 The whole shebang
 11 Tara portrayed Collette
 12 Opponent of Tinkerbell
 20 Metal container
 21 Shoreline opening
 23 Like Christopher Rice's stories
 24 Surfer's need
 25 ___ Gay
 26 Scouting job
 27 Shortens leaves of grass
 28 Oral pleasures at a gay bar
 29 Cook in a wok, maybe
 30 Some opera queens
 32 Ridges on Melissa's neck
 33 Words said with a nod
 36 Mount the soapbox
 37 Elvis song about a real bitch?
 42 Freed from frost
 43 To me, to Hirschfeld
 45 Pink, for one
 46 Movie like Rock Hudson's "Gun Fury"
 47 S/M unit
 48 Foundation for Humanity name
 49 Warrior Princess of the boob tube
 50 "Seinfeld" character from Pakistan
 51 Canal traveled by New York ferries
 52 Let out
 53 Competitor of Barneys
 55 Have a brawl

Roomer Has It

Across

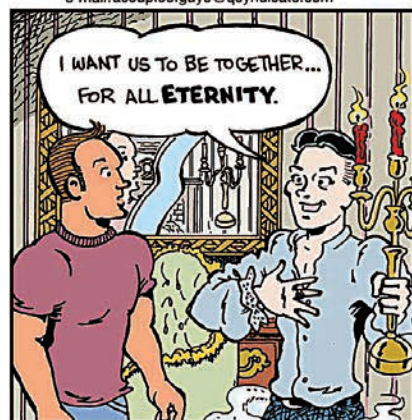
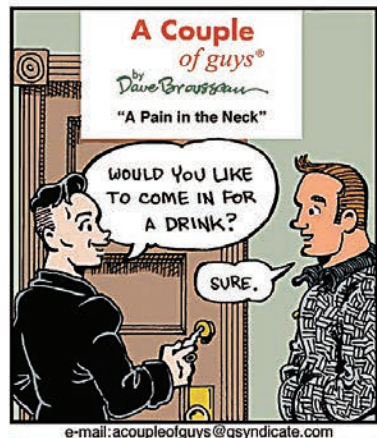
- 1 First man to say to a man, "You slay me!"?
 5 Hard blow
 9 Bean and Burke waved theirs around
 13 Item on a docket
 14 "June Is Bustin' Out All ___"
 15 "Exotica" director Egoyan
 16 "Doggone it!"
 17 Go down

- 18 Zip
 19 She was a roomer at Meredith Grey's house
 21 She was a roomer at Meredith Grey's house
 22 Peters out
 23 Bambi's aunt
 24 Producer Neil
 27 Singer Etheridge
 31 R.E.M.'s "The ___ Love"
 32 Pansy, e.g., to Pasolini
 34 Silver screen computer

Down

- 1 Current band of the past?
 2 Roseanne, once and again
 3 Morales of "Jericho"
 4 Cole Porter song from "Paris"
 5 Singer David
 6 Maurice of "Bewitched"
 7 Sultry Horne
 8 Threesome for Michelangelo
 9 Japanese battle cry

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