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The Annual HoliGay Gift Guide

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Kissing Under The Mistletoe*

November 19, 2015
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Lives With Transgender
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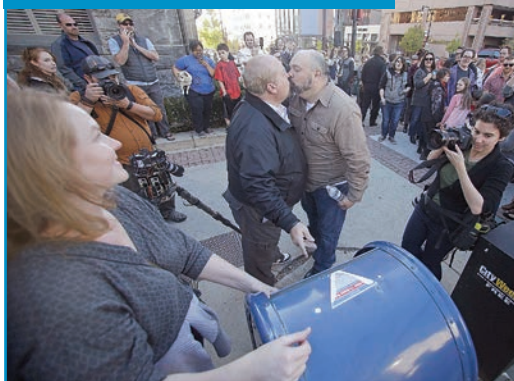


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BRIEFS

Federal Judge Says Love v Johnson Will Move Forward

DETROIT – A federal lawsuit filed by six transgender plaintiffs against Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson will continue after Federal Judge Nancy Edmunds denied the state's motion to dismiss the case Nov. 16.

The case was filed in May with the help of the ACLU, claiming the state policy is in direct violation of several constitutional rights. Edmunds found the privacy argument valid and declined to review the others.

Edmunds rejected arguments by state lawyers that the policy serves state interests of "maintaining accurate state identification documents" to "promote effective law enforcement" and ensuring "that the information on the license is consistent with other state records describing the individual.

"Indeed, as Plaintiffs point out '(b)ecause of the Policy, the sex listed on (their) licenses fails to match their appearance and the sex associated with their names.' In this way, the Policy undermines Defendant's interest in accurately identifying Plaintiffs to promote law enforcement," Edmunds wrote in her decision Monday.

The Secretary of State's office requires that information listed on a Michigan driver's license or ID matches the information on the applicant's birth certificate. This policy is particularly discriminatory, the ACLU argues, because that means trans men and women must have their birth certificates amended before a gender change can be recorded on their driver's license. If amending this information was easier, there wouldn't be a lawsuit. But the state of Michigan only recognizes a gender change when an individual has gone through sexual reassignment surgery, a very costly operation that many trans men and women do not want to undergo.

West Michigan Man Rejected As Organ Donor Because He's Gay

GRAND RAPIDS – A gay man on the west side of the state seeking to donate one of his kidneys to a child in need has been rejected as a possible candidate due to his sexuality, WZZM reports.

Davin Risk completed a series of preliminary tests at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and was medically cleared to be a donor when the family of a child in need rejected his organ because it was coming from a "high risk donor."

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention requires all those seeking to add their name as a donor fill out a questionnaire. One of the questions asks if the male-identified donor has had sex with another man since 1977. Since Risk is an openly gay male he checked yes, designating him as as high risk donor.

All donor recipients are informed as to why the organ comes from a high risk donor and two days later Risk received a phone call that the potential family had decided to not move forward with his donation.

"That was hard. It was actually the only time in my life that I had felt that less-than feeling that so many people in the gay community have stories about and I was never able to relate. That was really what I was being told. I'm medically cleared, the entire surgical team signed off on this, but because of my sexuality I was less than appropriate for their child. And that hurt, a lot," Risk told WZZM news.

Risk isn't giving up and is also registered with C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan and remains on the donor list for Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. He hopes that DeVos Children's Hospital will amend their survey so that the gay community is not specifically called out on the grounds of sexual behavior.

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News Analysis: The Pre-ballot Battle

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Two weeks ago Dana Nessel, the attorney who first brought the DeBoer case – one of four marriage cases decided by the Supreme Court in June which led to full marriage equality in the United States – announced that she was driving an initiative to place on the 2016 presidential ballot a question to expand employment protections for the LGBT community.

Nessel has argued that the time for waiting to push for such protections is long past.

Last year, following the November election, a lame duck Legislature tried to push a bill that would have amended Michigan laws to protect citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation only. The transgender community was left out of the legislation, because the GOP felt they had protections already. As a result, the LGBT and ally community rallied to kill that legislation – which incidentally was backed and being promoted at the time by Jim Murray, the president of AT&T Michigan, and in direct opposition to the company's own statements that it would only support a fully inclusive law.

This has been an ongoing legislative fight since former Holland Republican lawmaker Jim Dressel introduced an amendment to Michigan's civil rights law – The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, or ELCRA – in 1981. Dressel's reward for that move was to be promptly thrown out of office the following election. And as recently as last year, a Republican lawmaker – Frank Foster – who pushed for amending the law was also ejected by Republican voters in his northern Michigan district. He was replaced by an anti-gay evangelical Christian lawmaker.

Michigan history – indeed U.S. history – shows that the LGBTQ community has never proactively taken the question of civil rights for the community to a ballot. The community has always worked legislatively, then been forced to defend laws that have been passed. The results from such initiatives have been mixed – in the U.S. and locally.

Earlier this month Houston, Texas voters overwhelmingly rejected a local ordinance, dubbed the bathroom law by opponents. The issue? Fears, stoked by right-wing religious leaders, that the law would allow men to go into women's bathrooms and harass or harm women and children.

That's not a new tactic.

Michigan has seen similar hysteria

Cost estimates for a ballot initiative in Michigan range anywhere from \$18 to 25 million or more. One person familiar with ballot initiatives in Michigan told BTL that getting the initiative on the ballot was the “cheap” part of the proposal. A million dollars can easily get an initiative for the signatures to put the measure on the ballot. The real cost comes in countering opponents and defending the measure in the court of public opinion.



Dana Nessel

related to local nondiscrimination laws. In Hamtramck, ordinance opponents distributed campaign literature with a cartoon character clearly of a “man in a dress.” In Kalamazoo, opponents distributed hanging political literature with images of Dr. Julie Nemecek – a transgender woman who sued Spring Arbor University when that organization fired her for being transgender.

The ordinance lost in Hamtramck, but won in Kalamazoo – a sample that could indicate a ballot battle is not a slam-dunk when put before the voters.

But Nessel claims polling indicates the bathroom argument does not significantly move voters in Michigan.

Richard Czuba, president of Chicago based Glengariff Group, a marketing and strategic analysis outfit that handles many polls in Michigan, said he has been polling on LGBT issues with Michigan voters for nearly a decade. He told Between The Lines that support for protecting the LGBT community from discrimination is in the 70 percent area.

“We tested the bathroom message, and it had no real impact on the numbers,” Czuba said.

So why did it work so well in Houston? “They waited too long to respond,”

he said. According to his polling, he said, Michigan voters won't be duped by such messaging, because when they are reminded that the move is about job discrimination, voters invariably remain supportive of such a move.

Other polling and polling experts challenge that assumption.

“Rationality goes right out the window when you bring in a threat to the safety of women and children,” one veteran of battles for local ordinances in Michigan told BTL in background interviews.

Houston shows that when the campaign to challenge the local ordinance arose, supporters had a 70 percent majority as well. But the measure ended up losing 61 percent to 39 percent. That was after supporters spent over \$3 million to defend the law.

Cost estimates for a ballot initiative in Michigan range anywhere from \$18 to 25 million or more. One person familiar with ballot initiatives in Michigan told BTL that getting the initiative on the ballot was the “cheap” part of the proposal. A million dollars can easily get an initiative for the signatures to put the measure on the ballot. The real cost comes in countering opponents and defending the measure in the court of public opinion. That requires television and other media buys, and huge rallying of human capital to knock on doors and tell the LGBT story.

While all of this is playing out in the background, Nessel has been ignoring groups urging caution. On Monday she told Tim Skubick, capitol reporter for MLive.com, “We are full steam ahead. I won't talk to anybody about stopping.”

And so far she has gathered quite a team of supporters among Lansing's political elite: Czuba, GOP financier Richard McLellan, and politically connected PR guru Kelly Rossman McKinney.

See Ballot, page 20



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2015 Transgender Day Of Remembrance Honors 42 More Lost To Violence, Suicide

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – Once a year lesbian, gay and bisexual members of the LGBT community are called upon to stand in solidarity with the trans community and honor the lives of trans brothers and sisters who have been lost during the past year. The event is held every November to honor Rita Hester, whose 1999 murder kicked off the “Remembering Our Dead” web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil, the official website for the event states.

In 2015 alone, 22 trans men and women have been murdered with another 20 trans teens and young adults committing suicide. Of the 22 murdered, three of them were from Detroit. The Michigan LGBT community saw the loss of Ashton O’Hara, 25, who died July 14; Amber Monroe, 20, who died Aug. 8; and Melvin who was taken in October.

“The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes,” Transgender Michigan wrote. “It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, an action that the media doesn’t perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. Through the vigil, we express the love and respect for our people in the face of national indifference and hatred. Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers. Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who’ve died by anti-transgender violence.”

According to a survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 53 percent of trans people report being verbally

harassed or disrespected in places of public accommodation, such as hotels, restaurants, airports and government agencies. Additionally, 90 percent of trans and gender nonconforming people report experiencing harassment, discrimination or mistreatment at work.

“There are now more transgender homicide victims in 2015 than in any other year that advocates have recorded. At least 21 people – nearly all of them transgender women of color – have lost their lives to violence,” said HRC President Chad Griffin. “This kind of violence is often motivated by anti-transgender bias, but that is rarely the only factor. At a time when transgender people are finally gaining visibility and activists are forcing our country to confront systemic violence against people of color, transgender women of color are facing an epidemic of violence that occurs at the intersections of racism, sexism and transphobia – issues that advocates can no longer afford to address separately.”

Thursday Events

The Spectrum Center on the University of Michigan campus will hold a community conversation 7 p.m. Nov. 19 in the Connector (tunnel connecting the Union to West Quad.) The event will feature trans-identified speakers from the university and the Metro Detroit community and a moment of silence, followed by a candle light vigil and a finale performance. More information on the event can be found at www.facebook.com/events/1148520108509943.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland will hold a vigil at 7 p.m. Nov. 19. The event is an interfaith event and will be held the day before Trans Day of Remembrance due to scheduling conflicts. Visit the website here at www.facebook.com/events/891134847601047.

www.facebook.com/events/891134847601047.

Friday Events

The Gender Identity Network Alliance will host an event at the Central United Methodist Church in Detroit beginning at 7 p.m. Speaking at the event will be Victor Billione Walker of Ruth Ellis Center, Lilianna Angel Reyes of Affirmations and other community members. Providing music for the event will be Hannah Hartley and a local harpist. To RSVP, go to Facebook: www.facebook.com/events/1653401104931297.

Join The LGBT Network of West Michigan as they commemorate and hold a vigil at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 20 at the LGBT Network in Grand Rapids for the lives lost this year due to transphobic violence. Join West Michigan in a “Call To Action” vigil that will include an opening statement by Ember Kelley, a poetry reading, a 10-minute “speak out” session inviting 10 people to speak out, a vigil march and a closing statement by Mira Krishnan. For more information, visit the Facebook event.

The Center, the new LGBT community center in Muskegon Heights, will hold a candle lighting ceremony and name recitation of those lost in the past year beginning at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 20. Refreshments and fellowship will be available after the memorial. The Center is located at 2542 Peck St.

Sunday Events

The Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership will hold a Transgender Day of Remembrance event beginning at 5 p.m. at Kalamazoo College. Featured speaker includes Crispin Torres of Lambda Legal, the nation’s oldest and largest legal organization working for the civil rights of lesbians, gay men and people with HIV/AIDS. To RSVP visit the Facebook event at www.facebook.com/events/425463014326647.



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Congress Forms New Transgender Equality Task Force

The Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus has announced the creation of the new Transgender Equality Task Force to be chaired by Rep. Mike Honda (D-Silicon Valley).

“To this day, transgender people face formidable barriers in employment, housing, health, education and other areas. And to end the ongoing violence and discrimination transgender people experience, we need everyone’s help and support,” said Victoria Rodriguez-Roldan, Trans/Gender Non-Confirming Justice Project Director, National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, who attended Tuesday’s press conference that launched the task force. “We’re elated to see the formation of the Congressional Transgender Equality Task Force. We thank the LGBTQ Equality Caucus for their ongoing efforts to advance legislation that extends critical protections to LGBTQ people.”

The new Congressional Transgender Equality Task Force will work to develop legislation and other initiatives to ensure that transgender people have equal access and treatment under the law.

“This week, as we seek to raise awareness of the issues facing the trans community, it is important to renew our commitment to help trans individuals be free of the fear of violence or bullying just for being who they are,” said Honda. “It is my hope that by launching this workforce and holding a first-ever forum, we will reach some of my colleagues and encourage them to stand with the trans community. It is only through social change that we can truly elevate the conversation in this country and reach a place of true understanding and embrace all people for who they are.”



The Trans Sistās of Color Project hosted their first event last week in the form of the Detroit premiere of the web series "Eden's Garden," which features an all trans male cast. Pictured are TSOCP board member Lilianna Reyes, Seven King, star and creator of "Eden's Garden," and TSOCP Executive Director Bre' Campbell. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

Trans Sistās Of Color Project Launches With First Event, Outlines Plans

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's been a long time coming, but the Trans Sistās of Color Project is now a reality.

"It's been in development for about three years," said Bre' Campbell, executive director of the fledgling organization. "It was started to address the needs of trans women of color in Detroit. I wanted to be very intentional and make sure that all the different intersections of what it means to be trans are highlighted within the organization. So the main goal of the organization is to uplift and acknowledge the narrative of all trans women of color."

One of the TSOCP's first missions will be to help develop new and emerging leaders from within the trans community.

"There are very few very leaders in Detroit that are trans who are actually doing the work or have the opportunity to do it," Campbell said. "I want to make sure that trans women in Detroit have the opportunities and the skills that they need not only to survive but to be successful. So my main goal is to teach girls leadership skills and also mobilize the community so that they can start advocating for themselves."

Down the road, the TSCOP hopes to open a drop-in center or maybe even a shelter for homeless trans youth.

"A lot of LGBT nonprofits are organizing around different issues that affect trans women but in Detroit there are very few resources to deal with people's homelessness," said Campbell. "I feel that's something that the trans community has to do for itself. A lot of our experiences get erased in the work that's being done by a lot of nonprofits."

More than anything, the agency simply wants to make trans women of color in Detroit

visible.

"I feel we give a lot of press and attention to trans women who have been murdered," Campbell said. "It is important to talk about those stories, but a lot of times I feel that as trans women we don't get talked about unless something has happened to us. With more than 20 trans women who have been murdered in this country already this year, I feel that now is the time for the trans community to mobilize and become more visible and demand justice. But at the same time, I want to use this organization to make sure that all stories are told, not just the ones of trans women who have passed."

So why is it that those stories seem to so easily get lost in the LGBT community?

"Part of it is transphobia and part of it has to do with racism, and I think a huge part of it has to do with classism as well – because trans women come from so many different intersections," said Campbell. "I think all of those things play a factor. And I don't think that there's an overall education and awareness of trans people within the LGBT community. It's really amazing that there are still some LGB people who are really against the whole idea of people transitioning and using respectful pronouns and such."

"I think it's time for LGBT nonprofits and the people who support those organizations or causes to be more intentional in the ways in which they support other communities and be more intentional in the use of the word ally," Campbell continued. "There are a lot of people who claim to be allies, that will say that they support LGBT causes and organizations and still do things that I would consider trans phobic ... Even the jokes that I hear some people tell about trans women. We're not jokes at all."



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Southfield Swears In First Gay Mayor

BY AJ TRAGER

SOUTHFIELD – After a tiring campaign and a win earlier this month at the ballot box, Kenson Siver, the first openly-gay mayor of Southfield, pledged his oath of office before a crowded city hall Nov. 16.

“It feels wonderful (to be sworn in). As I said in my remarks earlier, it is a testament to the people of this city that they saw through the hatred, bigotry, homophobia and dirty tricks and elected their first gay mayor,” Siver told BTL following the first Southfield City Council meeting with him as mayor.

Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, former mayor of Southfield, introduced Siver as the next mayor of Southfield.

“A mayor is a person who – a lot of times people put a lot of names on it – they’ll say it’s the face of the community. It’s the person who stands up when someone needs to speak out or someone needs to stand up for the city and for the people. Some people call them a ribbon cutter. But do you know what is so significant about that? Every time we have economic development you will see your mayor standing there proudly cutting the ribbon. Some people say that the mayor is the one where the rubber hits the road because they get blamed for everything. But you know what, when he took that oath, he took it with pride,” Lawrence said.

The room erupted in a standing ovation as Siver took the podium to give his acceptance speech. In it he outlined some things that his administration is going to push for. He wants to continue working on improving Southfield’s roads, code enforcement and neighborhood appearances, as well as working on preventing blight in the city and improving and expanding many city programs that are already in place to

assist residents and Southfield’s youth. Swearing in newly elected members was the only item on Monday’s city council agenda. The meeting was adjourned and followed by a reception.

Also sworn in were council members Daniel Brightwell, Lloyd Crews, Donald Fracassi and Tawnya Morris. The council also elected Myron Frasier to serve as council president.



U.S. Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, D-Southfield, was in attendance as Kenson Siver is sworn in cheered on by the color guard. BTL photos: AJ Trager



Julian Castro, Secretary of Housing, spoke at the Best of the West event Saturday. The inaugural event attracted close to 500 people, 47 of which were part of the LGBTQA Caucus of the Democratic Party. BTL Photos: Todd Heywood.

Nearly 500 Dems Gather To Hear Castro, Others

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Nearly 500 Democrats and supporters gathered in the first major fundraising event in West Michigan Saturday night to hear Julian Castro, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Castro is regularly mentioned as a likely vice presidential choice if former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is selected by Democrats as the 2016 nominee.

Among the crowd were 47 people representing the LGBTQ and Ally Caucus of the Democratic Party. A turn out that earned chair Mark LaChey a shout out from Michigan Democratic Party Chair Brandon Dillon.

Also speaking was former state Sen. Gretchen Whitmer. Whitmer drew national headlines when she stood up against GOP efforts to allow religious based bullying in legislation to end bullying. She called the legislation “a license to bully,” which resulted in national attention on the state Legislature’s bill. Whitmer is rumored to be preparing a run for governor of Michigan.

U.S. Sen. Gary Peters was also present and in a firebrand



Former state Sen. Gretchen Whitmer and U.S. Senator Gary Peters addressed the crowd.

mood. He reminded the attendees that the 2016 presidential election was about much more than just who controls the White House. The Supreme Court, he reminded those attending, was in play. With several justices edging towards retirement, the next president could find themselves appointing two or three judges – and that could create an ideological shift in the make-up of the court. That shift could impact hard fought rights for the LGB community, such



as marriage; abortion rights; civil rights for minorities; and the Affordable Care Act. Peters told attendees that the change on the court could have a long lasting impact on the direction and history of the country.

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Refusal Of Service: Surprising Results Stem From Marriage Nondiscrimination Study

BY AJ TRAGER

YPSILANTI—An Oct. 26 presentation at the Equality Research Center at Eastern Michigan University showcased a study that asked Americans where they stand on the refusal of services to same-sex couples and interracial couples, and the results were shocking.

“Americans’ Views on Refusal of Service to Same-Sex Couples and Interracial Couples,” was presented by Landon Schnabel, a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University. In his talk at the Student Center located on the EMU campus, Schnabel revealed that a surprisingly large amount of Americans are in favor of refusing services to same-sex couples.

His study surveyed 2,000 people who were asked four questions based on a short story. Participants, who ranged in age from 18 to 92, were separated into two categories. Each participant read a story showcasing the denial of services by a wedding photographer to a couple, except half of those polled were given the example of an interracial couple while the other half read about a same-sex couple.

Schnabel’s findings suggest that Americans are more likely to support refusal to a gay couple than an interracial couple and Americans are more likely to support an individual refusing services than a corporation refusing services.

“That is something we all expected and it was the case,” Schnabel said after he revealed the difference between the support of an individual and corporate refusal of services. “But, and this was surprising, Americans are just as likely to support refusal to a same-sex couple for non-religious as for religious reasons. Regardless of whether it was a religious reason or not, a lot of people seem to think it is OK for a business who doesn’t agree with them to deny services.”

This finding was surprising to Schnabel and his coauthors who assumed religious reasons would be the catalyst in when and how strongly someone felt it was OK to refuse services to a same-sex couple. However, results from the study showed that it was personal bias above all other factors that contributed to one’s personal beliefs on whether or not a couple can be refused services.

“People’s own personal beliefs are shaping whether they think it is OK or not to refuse services. Religion doesn’t seem to be an important factor in these situations, it is more the person’s own religion or their own beliefs, not the



Landon Schnabel is a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University. He presented his talk on the comparison of refusal of services to interracial couples versus same-sex couples. Results from his study show that the refusal of services has very little to do with religious freedom. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

situation itself,” Schnabel explained. “If you’re highly religious or against same-sex marriage you are going to say it is OK to refuse services regardless of whether or not it was for religious reasons.”

To back up their responses to why they did or didn’t believe the denial of services was OK, many respondents who stated they were in support of denial of services to same-sex couples used a Libertarian or free market justification for refusal or discussed their own personal beliefs, Schnabel said.

“They most commonly emphasized that businesses have the right to choose their customers and that businesses should be run as their owners see fit,” Schnabel said.

Those that said they were against marriage rights and supported the refusal of services also used Libertarian arguments but instead of referencing a free market approach, they instead said business should have the freedom to not serve people they disagree with.

The study looked at how race, gender, age and political leaning affect personal beliefs on this topic. Schnabel and his coauthors found that when it comes to those with Republican leanings, 90 percent say it is OK to refuse services to gay couples for religious reasons, 80 percent say it is OK for an interracial couple to be refused services and 60 percent say it is OK for a corporation to refuse services for a same-sex couple.

Schnabel’s findings suggest that Americans are more likely to support refusal to a gay couple than an interracial couple and Americans are more likely to support an individual refusing services than a corporation refusing services.

Those with liberal or Democratic political leanings were in the 80th percentile for the support of providing services to all people.

Even though they are less likely to support same-sex marriage, black Americans reported that they do not support corporations refusing services to same-sex couples.

Surprisingly, education did not make much of a difference on whether or not the pollee agreed with refusing to provide services.

“You would think that people who have been to college would be less likely to be OK with a refusal of services. It doesn’t really change anything,” Schnabel said.

People that attend religious services weekly were found to be more likely to support the refusal of services, but religion did not specifically make a big difference. Schnabel and his team cross polled those that attend religious services weekly, sometimes and never. Self-identified Evangelicals were in high support of the refusal of services but not as high as Republicans.

“Public support for business service refusal to gay couples has little to do with claims for religious freedom. That’s how this is being debated in the courts. People are saying that ‘it is religious freedom, I should be able to refuse services.’ But it doesn’t seem to be that that is the key factor driving things here. And me and my coauthors think that the courts need to be talking about this and not about religious freedom,” Schnabel said in conclusion. “These people are just as likely to refuse services for non-religious reasons as they are for religious reasons. Without religious freedom as the justification, what is going to be the justification? People that think it is OK to refuse services are going to need to come up with a compelling reason besides religion for why it is OK to refuse services to same-sex couples.”

NEWS

Corbin: Arkansas Court Voted To Strike Marriage Ban

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—The Arkansas Supreme Court voted to find the state’s gay marriage ban was unconstitutional but never issued its ruling months before same-sex marriage was legalized nationwide, a former state justice said in a recently published interview.

Retired state Supreme Court Justice Donald Corbin said justices late last year had voted 5-2 to uphold a state judge’s decision that the ban violated the Arkansas and U.S. constitutions. Corbin said he had urged the court to issue an opinion before his term ended on Dec. 31.

The court dismissed the gay marriage case in June, hours after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

“I tried to encourage them to conference over the Christmas holidays,” Corbin said in the interview for an oral history of the court. “I had an opinion ready and I didn’t think it was right for us to take a two-week vacation or a one-week vacation and not get that case out.”

Corbin, who didn’t immediately return a call Nov. 10, is among several former justices who have been interviewed by the Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society. The interview, which was posted on the state court system’s website last month, was first reported Nov. 10 by the Arkansas Times blog.

Corbin’s comments are the latest in an unusually public dispute on the court over its handling of the gay marriage case. Former Chief Justice Jim Hannah and Justice Paul Danielson criticized others on the court in April for creating a separate case over which justices could hear the gay marriage appeal, a move the two called a delay tactic. Hannah stepped down from the court in August for unspecified health problems, and Danielson is not seeking re-election next year.

Justice Rhonda Wood, who joined the court in January, in July said justices this year had voted on a state-specific portion of Pulaski County Judge Chris Piazza’s May 2014 decision striking down the gay marriage ban, which said voters can’t approve an amendment that conflicts with other rights guaranteed in the state constitution. Wood said the court only planned on releasing that opinion if the U.S. Supreme Court didn’t legalize gay marriage nationwide.

In the interview, Corbin said he had a written opinion prepared for when the court issued its ruling but said the dissenting opinion was never written.

“It was a tough political issue, but legally it was a cakewalk,” Corbin said. “Anybody who knows anything about the law or had any training whatsoever as a constitutional lawyer would know that.”

Corbin called Piazza “courageous” for ruling in the gay marriage case, calling it a “very hot” issue.

“We were seeing polls taken showing that a vast majority of the people in Arkansas were opposed to same-sex marriage,” Corbin said. “It wasn’t one any of us were looking forward to getting.”

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> www.PrideSource.com

Creep of the Week

James Dobson

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

During a recent episode of James Dobson's Family Talk radio program, Dobson and his guests discussed the evils of trans-inclusive anti-discrimination laws. Such laws have been dubbed "Bathroom Bills" by the anti-LGBT right because they'd allow people to use bathrooms.



Dobson

Let me repeat that: The anti-LGBT right is upset about people using bathrooms. The problem is that they are pretty narrow minded when it comes to who counts as a person.

One of Dobson's guests was Tim LeFever, who is on the executive board of Privacy for All, a California-based group that "exists to protect privacy in restrooms, showers, locker rooms and changing rooms ... by asserting that individuals should use these facilities in accordance with their biological sex, rather than their gender identity."

In other words: it's all based on whether or not you're born with a penis or a vagina.

The opposition to trans-inclusive legislation hinges on a fundamental misunderstanding of what gender identity is. When folks like LeFever and Dobson picture a transgender woman, for example, all they see is a man in a dress, specifically a pervert looking to harm children. When your understanding of gender identity is so narrow and paranoid, it's no wonder this issue gets your panties in a bunch.

According to LeFever, bathrooms are "sex-separated because of our physical bodies."

I'm not sure what that means. I mean, it's true that you don't find urinals in the ladies' room because they're very hard to sit on. But that doesn't seem like a good enough reason to freak out.

Dobson says that gender identity isn't a real thing. It's all just based on a whim.

"The way you perceive yourself can change every six months!" declares Dobson. "You can be a boy at one time and a girl at the next time and it's not based on any biology."

I'm not sure who Dobson is speaking for, but I doubt he's declaring that he changes from male to female every six months. He's actually saying, "I'm an ignorant ass."

"I just read an example of a case where a girl was in the bathroom and the whole football team came in and took pictures, you know, selfies, if you will, over the top, of her in the bathroom," Dobson says. "I mean, have we gone absolutely nuts?"

LeFever responds, "I doubt that all the members of that football team were suffering from gender identity issues. They were gaming the system."

I agree with Dobson that such a thing would be pretty nuts, even if he doesn't understand what a selfie is.

I also agree with LeFever that this wasn't an issue of gender dysphoria. I doubt the football team declared, "We're girls right now!" and rushed into the bathroom with their iPhones. They weren't gaming the system, they were being sexist dumb fucks. We have plenty of evidence that young men are capable of doing terrible things to young women (Steubenville, anyone?). What Dobson's story doesn't prove is that this incident was made possible by an anti-discrimination ordinance.

The right's obsession with bathrooms is just weird. Yes, people should feel safe in places where they are most vulnerable and that includes toilets and locker rooms. But the idea that there is this Great Pervert Conspiracy to let bad guys put on a dress so they can watch women pee is totally insane.

Now that the right has lost the marriage equality battle, their priorities are, quite literally, going down the toilet. Let's hope they get plenty of shit for it.

New Business Group Will Promote Indiana LGBT Protections

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) – Another business group has formed to lobby for extending Indiana's civil rights protections to members of the LGBT communities.

The group calling itself Indiana Competes includes the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and will lobby the General Assembly to adopt protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment and public accommodations, The Indianapolis Star reported. It will focus on showing how the change could affect economic development efforts.

"It's very important that we understand the ramifications – long-term ramifications – when we deal with restricting rights or not affording everybody equal rights that it does hamper our

ability to attract talent," said Mark Fisher, vice president of government relations and policy development for the Indianapolis Chamber.

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce last week called for extending the civil rights law to bar discrimination against people based on their LGBT status.

The push for expanding the law has been growing since last spring, when the Legislature faced a backlash for passing the state's religious objections law, which social conservatives said was needed to protect the rights of those who object to gay rights for religious reasons but which critics said was really an invitation to discriminate against the LGBT community.

After a national uproar, the law was amended to address widespread worries that it could sanction

discrimination against gays and lesbians. Indiana's current civil rights law bans discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, or ancestry.

In September, Bill Oesterle, the former CEO of the consumer review service Angie's List, announced a new group called Tech for Equality that includes leaders of the state's technology sector. Freedom Indiana, a coalition of advocates for LGBT communities, also has begun lobbying for the protections ahead of the 2016 legislative session.

Pence and key leaders in the GOP-controlled Legislature have avoided discussing the matter publicly even while having private conversations with prominent business leaders who support LGBT rights.

Lambda Legal Calls For Comprehensive Protections For LGBT Hoosiers

Lambda Legal sent an open letter to Indiana Gov. Mike Pence Tuesday and leaders of the Indiana House and Senate urging them to include sexual orientation and gender identity to the existing categories that enjoy protection from discrimination under Indiana law.

"Any bill that gives businesses permission to discriminate against LGBT people in the name of religion, or that fails to protect transgender people is unacceptable. We hope Indiana's leaders have learned that legislating intolerance is bad for the state and moves us backward instead of forward," said Lambda.

The letter cautions state leaders not to pass legislation that includes carve-outs allowing service providers to refuse to serve LGBT people for religious reasons, or legislation omitting anti-discrimination protections to people who are transgender.

"Just as Indiana law currently prohibits discrimination against Hoosiers based on ancestry, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or status as a veteran, Indiana should prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity," said Jim Bennett, Regional Director for Lambda Legal's Midwest Regional Office based in Chicago. "Furthermore, any bill that gives businesses permission to discriminate against LGBT people in the name of religion, or that fails to protect transgender people is unacceptable. We hope Indiana's leaders have learned that legislating intolerance is bad for the state and moves us backward instead of forward."

From the letter:

"We wish to be clear: half-measures, such as amending Indiana's employment

discrimination law, but not its laws banning similar discrimination by service providers such as hotels or restaurants, or omitting protection from discrimination for transgender people, would be completely unacceptable to us, to LGBT Hoosiers and to others around the country anxious to see, after last year's display of intolerance, whether Indiana is committed to being a welcoming state for residents, employees, convention-goers and other visitors alike.

"LGBT Hoosiers have a right to expect protection from discrimination by the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to Indiana's existing civil rights laws. It's as simple as that."

Read the letter at www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/20151117_indiana-letter

► Ballot

Continued from p. 8

McLellan did not respond to inquiries for comment. But Rossman McKinney, who is a key partner in the establishment PR firm Truscott Rossman (the other partner is former Engler communications direction John Truscott), did talk to BTL.

She reflected much of the same talking points already issued by Nessel and her supporters – particularly as it relates to polling

– but when she was asked what the campaign was prepared to do in relation to the uptick in anti-LGBT violence that is usually associated with high profile political battles over LGBT rights, she was genuinely surprised that was a reality.

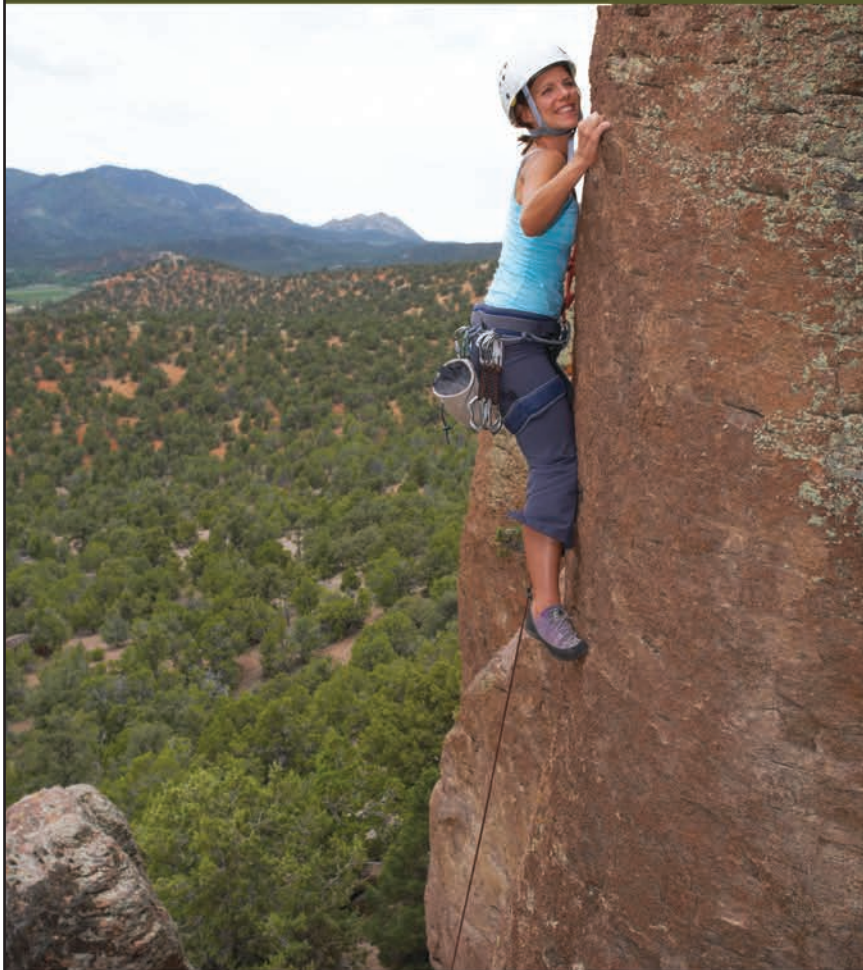
"No one on the team has brought that up or discussed it," she said by phone last week. "But you can rest assured I will be having that conversation right away."

Nessel is promising to file paperwork for the initiative with the

Secretary of State in the "next week or two," but is pushing up against a serious deadline. Depending on whether she wants to amend the state constitution or the state law, she would have to file all the signatures by July 11 or June 1, respectively.

To amend the constitution, Nessel and her team would have to gather valid signatures (meaning registered and qualified voters) from 315,654 Michiganders. To change the law, her team would need to collect 252,523 valid signatures.

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Show Us Your Left Behind, Mary!

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

About 137 years before Good Ol' Charlie Brown waited hopefully on Halloween Night for the Great Pumpkin to appear, William Miller, a Baptist preacher, convinced his flock that Jesus would return Oct. 22, 1844 to take them all to heaven.

Miller's message – based on his complex “calculations” of Bible verses from Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelations – gave comfort to these hardworking mid-easterner folks who had little schooling. Lots of simple faith. Abundant trust.

Miller and hundreds of his believers put on white robes and gathered on a starry-night hill, praying, singing, holding hands, waiting expectantly. They stayed up 'til dawn. Disappointed that Jesus & Co. never came to whisk them away. (Casting everybody else into the Lake of Fire.)

Brother Bill was beet red, to be sure. But today's 20th and 21st century “Millerites” soon took up where he left off, busy punching their own apocalyptic adding machines.

New dates for J. C. Superstar's return became 1914. 1925. 1950. 1975. 1989. (Ticket stubs nonrefundable.) A majority of fundamentalist, evangelical Bible believers expect the Left Behind Rapture to happen any day now.

If there's a lesson to be learned from these numbers games, it's Alpha – don't second guess air traffic, and Omega – maybe Jesus has no intention of returning to our purple mountain majesty above the fruited plains, doing the Democrats a big favor in the process.

But if you're on a mission to clone the world in your lottery image, the lessons to be learned from the past don't count. There are many brands of body snatching to prove the point: Seventh-Day Adventist, Mormon, Worldwide Church of God, Christadelphian, Jehovah's Witness, Southern Baptist, Four Square Gospel Church of the New Jerusalem Welcome Wagon in Christ (Klan County Synod).

Choose the wrong 3-in-1 oil, and it's tough going, Nicodemus. It's our way or the highway. And that ain't Route 666!

Make no mistake, today's anti-LGBT, Last Days death-defying scenario earns big bucks: movies, videos, bumper stickers, comic books, ex-gay shrink tanks and a slew of simple-sentence Left-Behind pulp(it) fictions, making some televangelists, like Pat Robertson, very, very rich. And paranoid.

True: everyone is – as yet – free to believe whatever they fancy. And many choose to believe nothing. God bless them! Unfortunately, those who subscribe to Armageddon Agenda America – theocratic, political, patriotic – are too often self-centered, cavalier in thinking, actions, priorities and treatment of others. Love the sinner, hate the sin BS.

In LGBT charity: wear their triple-A desert sandals and their polyester choir robes for a hot New York minute. Consider, their scriptural take on things.

“If Jesus is coming soon, why do I need to worry about the shrinking rain forest? Why do I have to bother about Great Lakes pollution, glacial meltdown, endangered species, overpopulation? Why give a fig leaf about AIDS funding, Head Start programs, Social Security, Planned Parenthood, women's health issues, Donald Trump?”

“I tithe, pew sit my fundament six days a week (resting on the seventh), update my prayer list every 30 minutes, do Weight Watchers so I'll look good when the final trumpet toots me home. Hallelujah!

“And gays! Land O' Goshen! Doesn't God just H-A-T-E fags. They're our misfortune. Tsk. Tsk. And it'll be too damn-, er, darned bad for those unsaved pinkos once I get my heavenly air-conditioned, appliance-free, Cloud 9 condo. Yes sir-ree-bob: to hell with everybody else! Jesus can't come soon enough for me.”

(And hopefully for Democratic America before November 2016!)

Charles@pridesource.com



Viewpoint

Supreme Court Takes Up Most Significant Reproductive Rights Cases In Decades

BY ELLIOT MINBERG

BY ELLIOT MINBERG

The Supreme Court announced Nov. 13 that it will decide on the constitutionality of severe restrictions adopted in Texas that threaten to make it virtually impossible for many women there to obtain safe and legal abortions. Coupled with the Court's recent decision to hear cases on whether certain employers can effectively deny their female employees the contraceptive coverage they are entitled to receive under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the 2015-16 Supreme Court term could well become the most significant for women's reproductive rights since the Court upheld the right to choose in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992 – and almost as significant as when the Court overturned a law banning contraception 50 years ago in *Griswold v. Connecticut*.

The Texas case, *Whole Woman's Health v. Cole*, concerns a law imposing restrictions on clinics

Both the clinic and the contraceptive cases are highly likely to produce divided 5-4 decisions that will be enormously important to women's reproductive rights. With four of the justices in their 80s during the term of the president elected next year, these cases once again demonstrate the crucial stakes in the 2016 election for reproductive rights.

so severe that they would reduce the number of clinics that perform abortions in the state from more than 40 a few years ago to just 10, including none at all in the 500 miles between San Antonio and the New Mexico border. The state has claimed that the limits, requiring extensive hospital-like equipment and doctors with hospital admitting privileges even for clinics that offer abortions only through oral medication, are important to protect women's health. These claims are belied not only by the medical evidence, but also by Texas politicians' statements, such as Gov. Rick Perry's vow to “pass laws to ensure” that abortions are “as rare as possible.”

That law clearly violates the 5-4 ruling of the Court in *Casey*, which upheld the basic right to choose of *Roe v. Wade*, and held that such laws must truly be important to protect women's health and not impose an “undue burden” on that right. Will the Court uphold and correctly apply *Casey* and continue to protect reproductive rights? Given the stark divisions on the Court, the answer may well come down to the vote of Justice Anthony Kennedy, the last member of the five-person *Casey* majority who is still on the Court today.

The Court has also agreed to hear

See Minberg: SCOTUS, next page

what many are already calling “Hobby Lobby II.” Last year, the Court ruled 5-4 that owners of for-profit companies like Hobby Lobby could use the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to raise religious objections and exempt themselves from providing contraceptive coverage to female employees as required by the ACA. To do so, the Court suggested that the companies could use the opt-out mechanism available to religiously-affiliated colleges and other nonprofits and inform the government of their religious objections, so the government could arrange for insurers to provide the coverage without cost to the employer. Now, however, many of these nonprofits are claiming that the opt-out mechanism itself violates RFRA. In other words, they want to not just refuse to provide contraceptive coverage to their employees, they also want to make sure the government cannot make other arrangements, so that the women will be deprived of contraceptive coverage guaranteed by the ACA.

Seven out of eight lower federal appeals courts have rejected these claims, ruling that simply telling the government of their objections and the identity of their insurer is not a “substantial burden” on nonprofits’ religious free exercise under RFRA and that the government has a compelling interest in providing contraceptive coverage. Justice Kennedy, who provided the fifth vote in Hobby Lobby, suggested in a concurring opinion that the opt-out was an appropriate accommodation. But if the Court upholds the nonprofits’ objections in *Zubik v. Burwell*, the result will be devastating to the ability of women to get contraceptive coverage, especially since for-profit companies like Hobby Lobby will likely make the same claim that religion allows them also to completely deprive their female employees of contraceptive coverage. Although not as coercive as the Connecticut ban on contraceptives overruled in *Griswold*, the result could well be even more devastating to reproductive freedom across the country, allowing employers to transform RFRA from a shield to protect religion into a sword to harm reproductive rights.

Both the clinic and the contraceptive cases are highly likely to produce divided 5-4 decisions that will be enormously important to women’s reproductive rights. With four of the justices in their 80s during the term of the president elected next year, these cases once again demonstrate the crucial stakes in the 2016 election for reproductive rights, as well as for so many other rights central to our liberty and freedom.

Elliot Minberg is senior fellow for People For the American Way and People For the American Way Foundation. This piece originally appeared on Huffington Post

Viewpoint Losing Heroes Often Win



BY JEROME POHLEN

In May 1961, Frank Kameny received notice from the United States Supreme Court. It was rejecting his legal petition challenging the federal government’s anti-gay employment policies. Kameny had been fired from his job with the U.S. Army Map Service more than three years earlier, and this was his final appeal. A Harvard-educated astronomer, he had struggled in poverty during the protracted fight, at times surviving on 20 cents of food a day. He lost at his first trial and every appeal thereafter. When his lawyer abandoned him, he was forced to write the petition to the Supreme Court himself. And now it was over.

But Frank Kameny never accepted defeat. Later he recalled his thoughts on being turned away by the high court: “I am right and they are wrong, and if they won’t change, I will have to make them.” He was, they were and he did.

Today the Wednesday-morning quarterbacks are questioning who “botched” the campaign to save the Houston’s Equal Right Ordinance (HERO), energy that would be better focused elsewhere. The opponents of HERO built their campaign on distortions and fear, neither of which will support their efforts forever. It is a bitter loss for the LGBTQ community and its allies, but if history is any guide, this story will have a happy ending. HERO will return to Houston, and activists will bring it to other cities and states as well.

Historically speaking, almost all of the LGBTQ community’s greatest advances have come in direct response to sucker punches like the defeat of the HERO ordinance. People who are otherwise uninvolved in politics, people who assumed that such ridiculous and cruel arguments as “no men in women’s bathrooms” would never fly with voters, have learned a hard lesson. And by resorting to such unacceptable methods, the opponents have painted a clear, bright target on their bigotry. A target at which LGBTQ activists can take careful aim.

This pattern has repeated itself over and over since the 1950s. ONE, a puny gay magazine published in Los Angeles, secured the right for all LGBTQ publications to be

Historically speaking, almost all of the LGBTQ community’s greatest advances have come in direct response to sucker punches like the defeat of the HERO ordinance (in Houston). People who are otherwise uninvolved in politics, people who assumed that such ridiculous and cruel arguments as “no men in women’s bathrooms” would never fly with voters, have learned a hard lesson.

sent through the U.S. mail, but only after the postal service impounded its October 1954 issue as “obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy.” (It wasn’t.) The Supreme Court sided with ONE, and national news reports did wonders for circulation.

The San Francisco Police Department was forced to establish a liaison officer for the transgender community – the first such officer anywhere – after it assaulted trans customers at Compton’s Cafeteria in August 1966.

The Metropolitan Community Church, the world’s largest LGBTQ Christian denomination, was founded by Rev. Troy Perry after his date, Tony Valdez, was arrested for same-sex dancing in a police raid at The Patch bar in Los Angeles in August 1968. God doesn’t care about gay people, Valdez told Perry, and Perry decided to prove him wrong. The police who raided the Stonewall Inn in June 1969 never expected to be challenged by the people they routinely harassed. Furious, abused patrons chased the squad back into the bar they raided, and today police in cities across the U.S., some of whom are openly LGBT, escort and protect Pride Parade marchers who commemorate the uprising.

What about Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, better known as PFLAG? It grew from the efforts of Jeanne and Jules Manford after they witnessed their son Morty being assaulted by the president of the New York firefighters union while the press stood idly by.

And one of the biggest “victories” for antigay forces, the Supreme Court’s 1986 *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision, was anything but. The 5-4 decision affirmed that the government could outlaw sexual acts between consenting adults, even in the privacy of their own homes. A defeat for gays and lesbians, right? But the LGBTQ community erupted in well-justified rage, which ultimately led to the first massive protest for same-sex marriage, the founding of ACT UP, and National Coming Out Day.

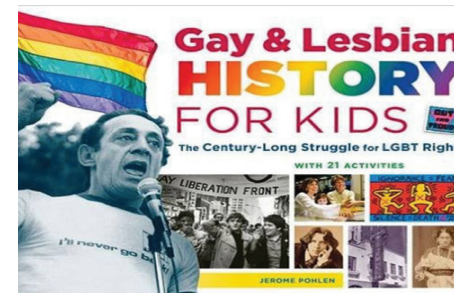
Still not convinced? Following the first serious challenge to state bans on same-sex marriage in the early 1990s, a case out of Hawaii, state Legislatures, the federal

government and voters enacted law after law to prevent a practice that was already illegal. These statutes were unjustified and redundant ... and just what the LGBTQ community needed to mount its challenges. Queer citizens who might have sat back thinking, “Not for me,” on marriage were suddenly engaged in the issue. By the early 2000s, the wave of legal challenges began to swell until a tsunami of pro-gay rulings washed away every last state statute and constitutional amendment giving special privileges to heterosexual couples. Thank you, DOMA defenders!

Frank Kameny, along with the equally tenacious activist Barbara Gittings and others, would march in picket lines outside the White House, Pentagon and Independence Hall four years before Stonewall. They would force the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. And when President Obama signed the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010, Kameny sat in the front row smiling. A year later, he passed away in his sleep on National Coming Out Day.

So, to the LGBTQ community and its allies in Houston and everywhere else, dry your tears, but stay angry. Remember Frank Kameny. You are right. Your opponents are wrong. And since they won’t change, you will have to make them.

Jerome Pohlen is the author of “Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights, with 21 Activities” (Published in October 2015 by Chicago Review Press). See BTL’s coverage of Pohlen’s book online at www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=73567.



Protest Of Mormon LGBT Policy Draws Hundreds

BY BRADY MCCOMBS

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) – Several hundred people with roots in the Mormon faith gathered in Salt Lake City on Saturday to renounce the church’s new policies targeting gays and their children in an event that marked the latest illustration of the fervor the rule changes have caused.

Billed as a mass resignation by Mormons, people filled out paperwork and dropped off the resignation letters at a church building. The large majority had stopped attending church years ago. But they said the new policy that bans baptisms for children of gay parents until the kids turn 18 and disavow same-sex relationships spurred them to come and formally cut ties and have their names removed from the faith’s membership rolls.

“We’re supposed to love our children like God loves us,” said Teresa Schofield, a former Mormon who stopped attending more than a decade ago. “To ask someone to turn their back on their own child or for a child to turn their back on a parent, that’s unnecessary.”

The rally came one day after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stood behind the policies issued on Nov. 5, while providing more explanation and clarifications.

Officials said the rules are intended to prevent children from being caught in a tug-of-war between teachings at home and church. They clarified that the rules apply only to children living primarily with a same-sex couple.

They also said that while the children of gay parents won’t be given the full spectrum of ordinances, they aren’t barred from attending worship services.

Mormon church spokesman Eric Hawkins said in a statement that officials hope the expanded clarification issued Friday will provide understanding and context to Latter-day Saints who were considering leaving the faith.

But the new guidance didn’t sway those in attendance at the rally, attended by at least 500 people. Speakers harshly criticized a new set of rules that also make gay marriages a sin worthy of expulsion.

“If you are hurting today, you are not alone. If you are angry today, you are not alone,” said Lauren Elise McNamara, one of the event organizers. “We are here for you and your families. Today we expand from members of a church that excludes to members of a world community that embraces. A world that is choosing love.”

The crowd included gay and lesbian couples as well as straight couples. Many came with children. They held signs such as, “Standing on the side of love,” and “These policies harm all of us.”

Connie Walker of Orem held a sign that read, “I’m resigning today because Jesus says



Mark Lindsay, left, and Tom Kerns kiss after mailing a resignation letter as Mormons gather for a mass resignation from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015, in Salt Lake City. A day after the Mormon church stood behind its new rules targeting gay members and their children, while issuing clarifications, hundreds of gathered in Salt Lake City to protest their displeasure with the policy changes. The attendees joined together in renouncing their membership with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

love everyone.” She is a straight mother of three kids who hadn’t been attending church for about eight years.

Coco Barth and Nichole Jensen, a lesbian couple who were both raised in the faith, said they have been thinking about formally renouncing their membership and were compelled by the policy changes to finally do it.

Barth, 19, said she came out as lesbian last summer and stopped attending church nearly two years ago. But she said the rule changes still stung her.

“My family is still all really Mormon,” said Barth, of Cottonwood Heights, Utah. “It’s going to affect my life a lot. Maybe my kids will want to go to church with grandma and grandpa? They will be treated differently.”

Across the street from the park where the rally took place stood one counter-protester who defended the church: Brandon Robertson. Dressed in a suit, the 20-year-old gay Mormon from Orem, Utah, held a sign with Bible verses and a picture of Jesus Christ and said people should stand behind what church leaders say.

About the new policies, he said, “It’s

coming out of place of love for these children. It’s giving them a grace period to make a decision on their own.”

The rules, issued to local leaders around the world, prompted a flurry of discussion on Mormon websites, with the idea of targeting kids ruffling even conservative Latter-day Saints who rarely question church decisions.

After the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision last summer to make gay marriage legal nationwide, church leaders wanted “to draw a firm line and encourage consistency among local leaders,” the Friday news release said.

In addition to providing a forum for people to renounce their membership, event organizers wanted to show people there is life after Mormonism, even in a place like Utah where more than half of the state is estimated to be practicing Latter-day Saints.

Micah McAllister runs a website with resources for ex-Mormons. He and his wife Sandy Newcomb, also an ex-Mormon, came to show their support. Like many attendees, they come from families where nearly everyone is still devout Mormons.

“There is community and other things out

“We’re supposed to love our children like God loves us. To ask someone to turn their back on their own child or for a child to turn their back on a parent, that’s unnecessary.”

- Teresa Schofield, a former Mormon who stopped attending more than a decade ago.

there that is better than what the LDS church is offering them,” McAllister said.

They said it’s not fair that children of gay parents are being singled out when the church commonly baptizes kids who have parents who aren’t following church doctrine and rules.

“They’re treating the gay community like they are criminals, and they are not,” Newcomb said.

Gay Missouri Student President: School Has Racism, Also Unity

BY SUMMER BALLENTINE

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) – When Payton Head ran as a gay, black man for student president at the University of Missouri – a school now known for one student’s hunger strike and other protests against the administration’s handling of racial bias and hostility on campus – he promised to “ignite Mizzou.”

“We’ve definitely done that,” Head, a 21-year-old senior from Chicago who is studying political science and international studies, told The Associated Press.

Recent racist incidents, including one directed at Head, and the perceived lack of response by administrators led to the hunger strike and a threatened boycott by the football team. Tensions seething at the school culminated early last week with the resignations of University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and Columbia campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

But despite the turmoil, Head is challenging a narrative that has come to define the university as a hotbed of hate and racism.

“The actions of a few members of our community don’t speak for the majority,” Head said. “The problem is when we have an administration, we have leadership who continues to send signals to these students that this kind of behavior will be tolerated on this campus.”

That “allows these incidents to keep occurring,” he said.

Head has spoken out publicly about his own experiences with racism during his time at the university, most recently in September.

He faced a turning point his sophomore year, when he said men in a pickup truck yelled racial slurs at him repeatedly as he was walking to a party. He said that was the first time he dealt with “blatant racism.”

“It broke my heart, because I was really trying to find my place at Mizzou,” Head said.

He said the event shook him so much that he considered transferring to a historically black college that had offered him a full ride. Instead, he stayed – motivated to push for change and social justice through student government.

He ran for Missouri Students Association president the next year. Head said he had been told he wouldn’t win because he’s black and at the time was not a member of a fraternity. To his surprise, he was elected in what turned out to be a record-setting election for voter turnout.

“Students want change, and students want an inclusive campus,” Head told reporters Nov. 8 near the campsite of the Concerned



Payton Head ran as a gay, black man for student president at the University of Missouri and won. Photo via Twitter.



Supporters gather after the announcement that University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe would resign Monday, Nov. 9, 2015, in Columbia, Mo. Wolfe resigned Monday with the football team and others on campus in open revolt over his handling of racial tensions at the school. AP via/Matt Hellman/Missourian.

Student 1950 group, where he joined members in calling for Wolfe to step down. Wolfe resigned the next day.

Head, who also has joined those students in protests and marches, has been both denounced and praised for how he has handled a difficult year.

He said he’s received hate mail and death threats recently, mostly in response to his criticism of the administration.

He’s also gotten blowback after posting on social media Nov. 10 about what police later said were unconfirmed reports of Ku Klux Klan members on campus in the wake of anonymous threats to students this past week, including a threat from one user to “shoot every black person I see.” University of Missouri police Maj. Brian Weimer said that day that there was no evidence that KKK

members were found in the area. Head has since apologized.

But Head added that he’s also received “amazing” support from students, with some thanking him when they see him on campus.

Maiya Putman, director of student activities for the Missouri Students Association, said Head is generally “well-liked and well-received” by students, citing his involvement in social justice issues. She said the past few weeks have been hard on him and that he’s handled the situation “the best way that he could.”

“This has been a really tumultuous and challenging year,” Putman said. “I don’t know how anyone else would have been able to handle everything he’s gone through.”

Head, whose term ends in January, said it’s been frustrating at times. He said he’s tried to convey to administrators for a year that black students, disabled students and many others deal with discrimination regularly.

He said his first meeting with Wolfe didn’t come until Nov. 6, days before students were to pick a successor for Head. The elections were rescheduled for this week because of the upheaval on campus.

With new administrators in place, Head has said tension likely will only heighten as some who might not have perceived racial issues on campus grapple with what has occurred.

At the same time, Head described the campus as “more united now than ever.”

Racism “does exist; it’s here,” Head said. “But also there is love.”

NEWS

White House Supports Anti-LGBT Discrimination Measure

WASHINGTON – The White House has come out in support of a federal measure outlawing discrimination against LGBT people.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest says the bill would provide comprehensive equal rights for LGBT Americans and also protect religious freedom. Earnest reports the Obama Administration had been reviewing the bill for several weeks and says the White House looks forward to working with Congress to ensure that the legislative process produces a balanced result.

The comprehensive bill, the Equality Act, would update the 1964 Civil Rights Act to extend long-lasting protections against discrimination in employment, housing, education, public accommodations and other areas to LGBT Americans. The bill was introduced in July by Democratic Sens. Jeff Merkley, Oregon; Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin; Corey Booker, New Jersey; and Rep. David Cicilline, D-Rhode Island.

“President Obama’s continued leadership on equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, women and communities of color is manifest today in his endorsement of the federal Equality Act. Even today, LGBT Americans in more than half the states can be turned away from jobs, housing and services with no clear, explicit protections under the law. Women and communities of color still do not have protection against discrimination in all instances of federal funding or public accommodations. We hope that Congress will follow the president’s lead by giving the Equality Act a fair hearing and consideration in this Congress,” said Karin Johanson, National Political Director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Earnest announced the administration’s support for the measure on Nov. 10, the same day President Barack Obama appeared on the cover of Out magazine.

The publication says Obama is the first sitting president to be photographed for the cover of an LGBT title.

Kylie Minogue On Her Hot Christmases, 'Loyal' Gay Fans & Her New Mistletoe Man

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

How does Kylie Minogue make the yuletide gay? “By singing about it,” she says, giggling the cutest Kylie giggle. And then she does just that – she sings.

The song? “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year,” which the Aussie icon spontaneously launches into via phone, putting special emphasis on those “gay happy meetings.” Opening her first holiday album, “Kylie Christmas,” the frosty favorite is one of 13 songs bound to bring a little extra joy to the world.

“Christmas is a fun time to be over the top, that’s for sure,” Minogue says, before stating what every gay man from here to the North Pole already knew: “I deal in glitter.”

First things first: Have you been naughty or nice this year?

Good question! I’d like to think I’ve been – how can I say this? (laughs) ... the right percentage of both.

How about that time you writhed on a medicine ball during your video for “Sexercise”?

(Laughs) That was a little bit naughty. But a lot of nice. We want nice.

What were your Christmases like as a kid?

Hot! Over the years, my family has embraced Christmas more so in Australian fashion – we haven’t totally let go of European or British tradition, which most people have a link to in that there is still a roast – even if it’s roasting outside, there’s still a roast in the oven. But I would say, same as the rest of the world. Get up, open your presents, run around. Eat too much. The only difference is, we end up in our swimming suit, jumping in the pool, standing around a barbecue.

Do you like a hot or cool Christmas?

I like them both. They’re so different. I don’t remember when my first cold Christmas was, but that I found it very weird. People who’ve never had a hot Christmas – because most of the world associates Christmas with the cold – just cannot get their head around it. Even when we were recording, all the Brits are going, “Don’t you think it’s weird recording in June, July, August? It’s summer.” I’m like, “Not really – makes sense to me.” I love it.

How did you make it feel like Christmas in the studio?

Basically we just decorated the studio. The studio was full of fairy lights and Santa hats and Christmas candles. We did not hold back.

Did you get dressed up for the occasion?

I went Christmas vibes – I didn’t go for full “sexy snow sleigh” album cover. We did have a sleigh in the studio. We had about five huge Christmas trees, giant crackers, toy soldiers and tinsel. Every day we were in there, it was more and more. It was really festive. It felt like Christmas. And I’m glad the world’s catching up – it’s been Christmas since June!

When it comes to presents: giving or getting?

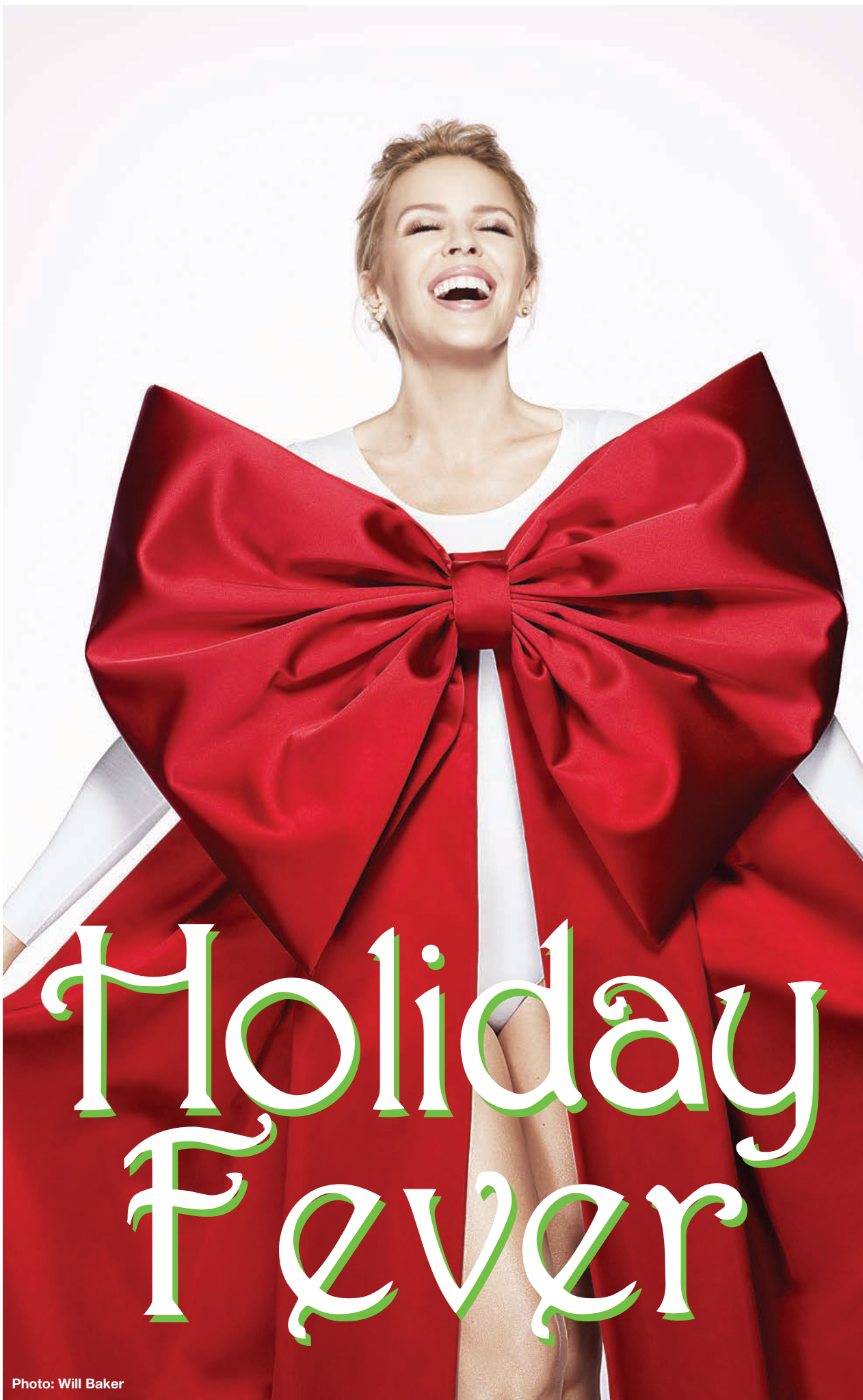


Photo: Will Baker

Giving. I know it sounds cliché, but I love when you've got something for someone and they're gonna understand your humor or get it, or it's something they wouldn't get for themselves. I especially like the wrapping.

Who are some of the gays in your life that you spend the holidays with?

There's normally a few around. I mean, my Christmas is different every year. Last year I was in Los Angeles. I feel really odd answering this question... like numbering them! (Laughs) Let's just say there's a smattering. More sparkle!

What is the craziest Christmas gift you've ever received from a fan?

Oh, I don't know. I can't think of one. Nothing that alarmed me. Maybe this year will be different now that I'm Miss Christmas.

If you could kiss anyone under the mistletoe, who would it be?

Awwww – that would be my boyfriend (actor Joshua Sasse), for sure! It will be our first Christmas together, so Christmas is even more special for me this year. I better order the mistletoe!

Get on that, Kylie.

Note to self: mistletoe.

What do you make of headlines that draw attention to the fact that he's 20 years younger than you?

I understand it's bound to happen because that's a fact, but I just cannot express to you enough that it just doesn't factor – it really doesn't. I mean, I was surprised myself, but who you're attracted to or who you fall in love with is beyond any kind of boxes that society puts you in.

And you know what, I hate boxes. I hate feeling that I'm restricted in any way, and definitely when it comes to love. You should love who you love.

Of course there's been those headlines, but people seem to also think that we look like we should be together, so it's not been as bad as it could've been... let's put it that way.

As a public figure, do you feel people are more prone to put you in a box?

Oh, definitely. I remember it happening from quite a young age, and it would drive me crazy. I started in TV as an actress and began singing, and they're so sort of close-minded: You're an actress, not a singer, and then I was known for singing and finally I *am* a singer and they don't understand that I still act. That was definitely the first time that that kind of notion hit me, and it just made no sense to me whatsoever.

In a broader sense, I hate being stuck in clothes, I hate being stuck in ideas. Maybe it's being a Gemini – I need freedom! It's like with the pony in the yard: If you close the gate, I will go wild; if you leave the gate wide open, I'm probably not going to leave. I just need to know that you're not closing me in with anything physical or mental. It's a very deep issue for me.

Christmastime evokes different emotions for different people. For you, what kind of emotions do the holidays trigger?

Excitement, then sheer panic because you think you're ready but you're not ready and then it all kind of creeps up on you. I think part of that panic is part of tradition, I guess. I would like to think this year I am officially ahead of the game. Also, wanting to be with family, if possible. And holiday – having a break. I would have to say one of the big pluses about a Christmas album is: At least I know when I'll be finishing with promotion. December 25 I'm done! My work here is done!

See Kylie, page 31



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Designing Below The Belt

Premium Underwear With Personality



Jerome Fulton, 28, has returned to Michigan after spending eight years in NYC to launch his first comfy and sexy underwear line designed for the man who “dares to go there, who isn’t afraid to be adventurous and is looking to add a little dash of spice to his wardrobe.” BTL Photo: AJ Trager

BY AJ TRAGER

CANTON – New York City is often described as one of the four fashion capitols of the world, along with London, Paris and Milan. Jerome Fulton, 28, moved to NYC when he was just 19 to pursue his degree in fashion. He transferred to the Fashion Institute of Technology after just two years at Western Michigan University to harness his passion for fashion into skills that would be most marketable in the fashion industry.

Fulton has neither a background in business nor a degree in marketing. While in fashion school, Fulton studied everything from entrepreneurship to pattern craft but found the marketing aspect of running his own business to be particularly difficult. He remained largely undaunted and just a few years later decided to invest in his own line of clothes – a design that is super comfortable, colorful, moves with the body and is a little sexy, too.

“I’m always buying new underwear, I like celebrity gossip and I like fashion,” Fulton joked describing his interests and how he chose the idea to make his own line of underwear. He wanted something that was fun, was fashion related and incorporated what he was already spending his money on – underwear.

“I was just having fun. I didn’t know that it would actually turn into anything other than just me and my little sewing machine,” he said.

His line of sexy, stretchy men’s boutique underwear didn’t get off the ground until

INFO

Below The Belt

>> <http://btbunderwearonline.com> or the Facebook page www.facebook.com/BTBunderwear

2014 when Fulton turned his ideas into a brand and designated his business as an LLC. The collection went on sale this year exactly at midnight, ringing in the morning of May 1. Fulton sold his first pair to a gentleman in Texas just one minute before the launch of his website.

“I think underwear has the power to alter and change your mood,” Fulton said. “When I put on a good pair of underwear, I feel sexy. You may not be able to see it but I’m walking around and I’m super confident all day under my suit or my skinny jeans. Like, I’m feeling sexy and you don’t know why. Underwear has that power. I don’t think a shirt can do that for you.”

Below The Belt is a company dedicated to changing the way men see underwear and even the way that they see themselves. Fulton designed the pieces to allow men to feel confident, comfortable and sexy by providing a style that combines new, hot trends and a cutting edge design for the man who “dares to go there, who isn’t afraid to be adventurous and is looking to add a little dash of spice to his wardrobe.”

“Underwear is the first thing you put on your body – or at least it is the first thing I put on. So that’s how I start my day and that is what sets the mood for what I’m



Alex Sanchez. Sanchez is the co-owner of Inferno, the cabaret bar and dance club located in Inkster. Sanchez gives his seal of approval on Below The Belt products and says that the product “makes you feel comfortable, keeps everything in place and you can tell that Fulton has really done his homework.” BTL Photo: AJ Trager

wearing,” Fulton described.

Buyers like products that are locally designed and made in America which is something Fulton prides himself on when it comes to his product. The fit, quality of construction and materials set Below The Belt apart from competitors like Haynes.

“I wanted to offer something fun but also luxurious at the same time,” he said.

Each piece in his collection has a custom woven 1.5 inch waistband that is super soft and moves with the body. The waistband, which shows off the brand name, doesn’t fold under like most underwear styles, he says, and is the key aspect to his product besides the elastic he engineered to wrap around the leg.

The elastic on each of the legs was designed to hold and keep everything in place while the cotton, spandex and polyester blend fabric moves and stretches with the body.

“It’s a pet peeve of mine when I have to continue to adjust my underwear throughout the day,” Fulton explained. “I don’t think anyone likes that.”

Gearing up to launch the brand, Fulton had to source all of the fabrics, meet with the manufacturers, get trims and threads and had to get the elastic made. He encountered some setbacks with the waistband, but he is very pleased with his “Classic Collection” that is currently available online.

Fulton wants to get the product in larger department stores but the first logical steps for him are to establish a web presence, develop a customer base and then take it to a larger department store.

Since the launch in May, Fulton has sold a few hundred pairs. He had a booth at Motor City Pride, which he said really helped to boost sales and have face-to-face conversations to see what the community’s reactions were to his hot, fearless fuchsia briefs and trunks.

“I get super excited whenever I get a sale,” Fulton

“I was just having fun. I didn’t know that it would actually turn into anything other than just me and my little sewing machine.”

- Jerome Fulton, whose new business launched this past year.

said. “Especially when it is someone that I don’t know. It’s great to see your friends in it. But when you get complete strangers, that’s amazing. My favorite part of it though was when my friend screen shot me a picture of someone’s dating profile and they were wearing my underwear in their picture. And it’s like people feel sexy in my product and they want to show that off; that makes them feel good, that means that they are being well received and that people like them. And that’s what I wanted.”

The line includes top of the line briefs, trunks and boxer briefs in four feisty colors: fearless fuchsia, graphic grey, rebellious red and teasing turquoise. Visit the website at <http://btbunderwearonline.com> or the Facebook page www.facebook.com/BTBunderwear to pick up a pair for you or someone on your holiday shopping list. Fulton is offering a 25 percent discount to all Between The Lines purchasers. Use promo code “SWIEE34RJ” when purchasing online.

Jerome Fulton is offering a 25 percent discount to all Between The Lines purchasers. Use promo code “SWIEE34RJ” when purchasing online.

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Detroit's AJ O'Neil Boldly Brews New Career Venture

BY AJ TRAGER

Members of the Metro Detroit community probably know AJ O'Neil, founder of Detroit Bold Coffee Co., as the owner and operator of AJ's Cafe in Ferndale. In 2012, O'Neil closed the cafe to pursue a more robust future with his love for not just drinking coffee but also selling and producing it.

With the belief that Detroit's economy can be supported by more than just the auto industry, he teamed up with Becharas Brothers Coffee of Highland Park, where O'Neil resides, and began roasting his brand of bean in 2007, just three blocks from the old plant.

"Detroit Bold was a very grassroots type of business that was made to take a stand on who we all are," O'Neil said.

O'Neil has always been community driven and says a coffee business is a "quintessential conduit" to conversation. Naturally, he wanted to base his business here, in Detroit.

"The trial of Detroit over these last few decades – in the decay and crime and all the other things – is really exclusively attributed to the lack of opportunity," he said. "No one can deny that that's been a disinvestment over so many years. When you have people that couldn't



AJ O'Neil, founder of Detroit Bold Coffee Co., was the owner and operator of AJ's Cafe in Ferndale until it closed in 2012. BTL photo: AJ Trager

With the funds gathered from this model, O'Neil believes that Detroit Bold can raise enough money to eventually open up three locations and serve as a franchise model to do this in challenged areas all over the country.

afford to leave or didn't want to leave, staying and trying to make an opportunity out of little, you're going to see things happen."

The beans used in Detroit Bold are 100 percent Arabica, a high-quality bean that grows in higher elevations. Compared to the Robusta beans used in Folgers or Maxwell House, Arabica beans have a slightly lower caffeine content and are known to hold a stronger, richer flavor.

"I realized when I was working at AJ's that we had a roaster that was quietly doing the work of keeping much of Michigan and the country caffeinated without anybody really realizing. As soon as I saw they were in Highland Park, I wanted to work with them (Becharas Brothers Coffee)," he explained.

O'Neil remembers how hard it was to open a cafe and also maintain and pay the bills. He started the Million Bag March as a campaign to help raise funds to build community-owned cafes in some of Detroit's more deserving neighborhoods.

Each bag of Detroit Bold is \$10 a piece. Five dollars goes toward production costs and the other \$5

goes directly into a fund to start up a cafe. Through the community outreach and networking he does at Eastern Market, O'Neil recently sold his 2,200th bag of coffee – a grand total of \$12,000 to be donated to the creation of a community cafe.

"Just beneath the surface of this grime, grit, crime-ridden, dirty place that they call Detroit," he said, "is the most friendly, wonderful, small town atmosphere that you'll ever find. You get that here (Eastern Market) every week, but you get that every day in Detroit."

With the funds gathered from this model, O'Neil believes that Detroit Bold can raise enough money to eventually open up three locations and serve as a franchise model to do this in challenged areas all over the country. He says his 10-year plan is very ambitious – and he's only in year three.

Detroit Bold Coffee can be purchased in all Meijer stores in Michigan, Kentucky and Ohio, as well as some Kroger locations. For a full list of where to purchase Detroit Bold Coffee, visit the website at <http://ajscoffeeworks.com>.

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► **Kylie**

Continued from page 27

How are some of these emotions presented on the album?

On the album, there's the kind of toasty just-wanna-cuddle-and-wear-cashmere-sweaters vibe, which I didn't have the last couple of years because I didn't have a boyfriend, so that's exciting. Then there's the more emotional, bittersweet ones where you're thinking about someone you love and you're not with them, and I have that pretty much every year because I haven't had a family Christmas in Australia for about six years and I'm not having one this year either. Then there's the ones where everyone's had a few drinks – Nana's had a couple sherries – and everyone's feeling very merry. Then it's nap time, and you start again.

Earlier this year, and after releasing "Kiss Me Once," you left your former management firm, Jay Z's Roc Nation.

I was getting used to a new situation, and I loved it for all of those reasons. If I compare ("Kiss Me Once") to making this album, it's an unfair comparison. Within the confines of Christmas, you can't do whatever you want – it's a Christmas album – but I did learn some extremely valuable lessons through that, and my time there was well spent.

How will what you learned from that experience influence your approach to the next mainstream pop album you do? Assuming it's pop...

Oh, it will be. I think when Christmas is done, the pop drug will come back... gosh, I mean, this album is pop-y anyway. But with "Impossible Princess," I got that out of my system, and then I did "Light Years" which had "Spinning Around," and then to "Fever," which was not quite as camp – it was more icy-pop. What I'm trying to say is that, after "Kiss Me Once" with Roc Nation, yes, I'll do things differently, but I kind of do that after every album anyway. But I wouldn't go around and work with so many people. I would try to be a little more streamlined. And I can say that because I did it and I learned a lot. Six of one, half dozen of the other.

When it comes to your career, your gay audience has been there every step of the way. It's clear we have a special relationship. After all this time, how would you describe that relationship?

Strong. Genuine. Definitely funny at times. (Laughs) We get the same jokes, put it that way. And I never take it for granted. But you, for a long time, have been very loyal, and I feel like we've had a relationship for such a long time – and it's a true relationship.

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Fashionably Festive Season 2015

Local Fashion Professional Shares Holiday Style Advice

BY AJ TRAGER

TROY— BC Cabangbang came out at 25 but knew at the age of 9 that there was something a little different about himself. Faith and family are key aspects of his life along with fashion and building community. After moving to the United States from the Philippines many years ago, Cabangbang was visiting his brother in Detroit and by complete coincidence landed a job at Hudson's as head of visual presentation. Now, years later and finally married to his partner of 25 years, Cabangbang works as a salesperson at Saks Fifth Avenue at The Somerset Collection. While his main position is in the men's department, Cabangbang considers himself a stylist. BTL sat down with Cabangbang to discuss some fun holiday fashion suggestions for the queer individual that wants to look fashionably trendy.

You used to own a business in Royal Oak called "Chosen By BC." Can you tell us about that experience?

It was interesting having my own store. I did work 24 hours a day and had to pick the trends, know the clientele and know how to stretch their imagination. I had to be on the trends, I had to balance moving forward and backward. The east coast and the west coast set the trends and us in the Midwest get it two years later. Gays tend to be the people that experiment on trends. A lot of trends start in the gay community. We are rebellious by nature. We like to be different and we make the statement and that's the reason some trends start in the gay community.

Tell us about Saks Fifth Avenue.

Our clients are the cream of the crop of Michigan. But I have clients that come all the way from Ohio, Lansing, Flint and Grand Blanc. It's a destination. When they come, they don't just show up at Saks to browse. It's the kind of store that is an aspirational store. When you reach a certain refinement in your life, you don't want to get a lot of stuff. You want to have some stuff that is special to you that you will love and will be special to you. We have Tom Ford, Versace, we have Alexander McQueen, we have Prada and we have every shoe that Carrie Bradshaw talked about in "Sex in the City."



What are some hot holiday trends?

We have wonderful tuxedo coats and blazers and dress up for the holidays. You are going to attend plays, attend the Fox or the opera – so a nice formal blazer would be great. Wool velvet is in and wine, burgundy and maroon are the festive colors for men and women. We have trend colors and silhouettes. It's the '50s silhouette. I know the fashion (from) then: it was tight jeans, tight pants. The younger you are, the trendier it is, the more you expose your socks. Happy socks are very in. For Christmas giving, if you know lawyers or doctors, a perfect addition to the stocking is fun, colorful socks. Men are learning to coordinate their tie with their socks.

What else should we wear this season?

Another thing that is also in is the merino wool sweater. New thing about them is the ones with a zipper. They used

to be used for just skiing. But we have the aspirational lifestyle. People want to look like they are skiing when they are not. It's designed for skiing, but they put it in layers, dress shirt underneath, and then they sit it down so they can expose their shirt and tie. Cashmere is always in. Leather hats with the fur underneath are in, too. That is trendy. I can't pull it off. But young people can pull it off. If you're stylish enough, girls and lesbians can pull it off because they can still be feminine and rugged at the same time, especially if they have some lipstick.

There are trends, but not every trend is applicable to you. You can always alter a trend so it works for you.



Set an appointment with Cabangbang at Saks Fifth Avenue in the Somerset Collection and get some professional advice for the 2015 holiday season.

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Adding Those In Need To Holiday Shopping Lists

COMPILED BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

The holidays can seem like a nonstop series of shopping and decorating, but there are always those less fortunate who get forgotten in the hustle and bustle. Here are a few examples of some local nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to add to your shopping list. (To learn more about LGBT-friendly nonprofits and service organizations, visit the Pride Source Yellow Pages at www.pridesource.com/directory.html.)

Tail Wagger's 1990

Looking to spread the holiday cheer to the often forgotten four-legged members of society? Livonia's Tail Wagger's 1990 is hosting a Thanksgiving food drive through Nov. 25, playfully advertised as a competition between "#TeamDog" and "#TeamCat."

The nonprofit animal wellness and preventative center isn't limiting its holiday outreach to Thanksgiving. Their "Pantry for Paws" program assists pet owners who have fallen on difficult times and cannot afford to feed their pets. They ask parents to consider getting their children's schools involved: "Please consider hosting a holiday drive this Christmas! We provide donation box and signage and make it easy and fun!"

For more information, call 734-855-4077 or check out www.tailwaggers1990.org.

Detroit Police

The Detroit Police Department's "Bridging the Gap Initiative" is hosting its third annual warm coat drive. The drive will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21 at Henry Ford High School, 20000 Evergreen, Detroit.

The event features entertainment and

members of the Detroit police, including Captain Steve Walton of the Sixth Precinct and Captain Jacquelin Pritchett of the Eighth Precinct. Contact P.O. T. Owens at rawlst919@detroitmi.gov with any questions.

Ruth Ellis Center

The youth social services agency that helps runaway and at-risk youth in Metro Detroit is known for its residential program for LGBTQ youth – in fact, it's the only organization in the country to have this service specific to LGBTQ teens experiencing homelessness.

REC will host their fourth annual "Bowl-A-Rama" at Hartfield Lanes Family Fun Center, 3490 12 Mile Road, Berkley. While REC takes donations for needed supplies throughout the year, this is a chance to donate much needed funds to the center while sharing in the holiday spirit with friends, family and LGBTQ youth in need. The event will feature an ugly holiday sweater competition, 50/50 raffle, silent auction and pizza and pop.

Bowl-A-Rama begins at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3. Tickets are \$25 for students, \$40 in advance and \$45 at the door. Contact Amy Flory for more information at 248-321-3635 or visit www.ruthelliscenter.org.

Michigan LGBT Non Profits

PrideSource.com offers resources to help find and contribute to other nonprofits this holiday season. To find other holiday events and fundraisers, visit the calendar at www.pridesource.com/calendar.html. Visit the Pride Source Yellow Pages at www.pridesource.com/directory.html for a directory of various nonprofit and outreach organizations in Michigan who can benefit from donations, volunteering and more.

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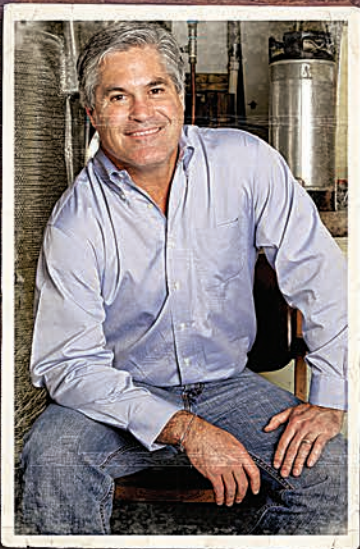
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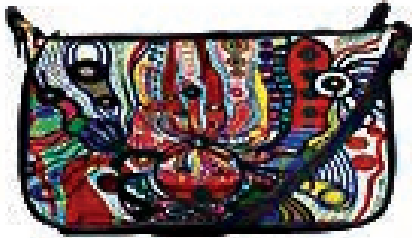
Don We Now Our 'Gay' Apparel... And Other LGBT Gifts This Season

BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

It's that time again: time to either excitedly purchase gifts for your loved ones, or begrudgingly put off the holiday gift buying task until you're frantically panning through your closet to regift the snowman soap dispenser your great aunt gave you two years ago. We've decided to make it easier on you by listing a few unique gifts that will seem like you planned this year's holiday gift exchange as far back as Santa himself.

Apparel

ArtWear Detroit offers unique gifts that are more than just clothing: they're also art. Part of the Detroit Urban Design Studio, ArtWear takes local artists' work and screen prints it on everything from hoodies to scarves to purses. Items currently for sale even include the art work of longtime BTL columnist Charles Alexander screen printed on bags, clothing and a metal cuff bracelet. The items range from \$22.50 for an accessory bag to \$82



for a women's pullover hooded sweatshirt made of heavyweight super-soft polyester fibers; a \$72, 65-inch silk chiffon scarf is also available featuring Alexander's "Praises of the Moon" piece.

Items can be purchased at www.detroiturbandesignstudio.com; Detroit Urban Design Studio is located at 790 W. Lincoln St., Birmingham. Items are also available throughout the Metro Detroit area, with shops and galleries listed on their website.

Though tailored to men, another option for any male member of your "Festivus" list is a gift that seems like a gag, but is truly unique: **Unzipped Citizen's** monthly subscription service for men's underwear. As the company says, "It's the perfect gift for the guy who doesn't like to shop, but still needs the essentials." The subscription starts at \$24.95 per month and features top brands curated from all over the world. As part of a special Holiday 2015 promo, a 12-month subscription purchase will include one month free and a free stocking stuffer of designer socks. Visit www.unzippedcitizen.com/ to purchase the subscription or other male underwear items.

Art-Themed Gifts

If your loved one prefers art to be seen and not worn, check out **Pewabic Pottery**. Pewabic in Detroit has long been a destination for unique art pieces, but you can be the one to bring that art into a loved one's home. As part of its "Earthy Treasures" series, the 2015 holiday giftware from Pewabic features radiant winterberry red glaze, a new trio of snowflake ornament designs and more. The shop, one of three historic Arts & Crafts era potteries still in existence today, even offers a Detroit Tigers "old English D" ornament for the sports fan in your life; the ornament retails for \$50. For the ever-burgeoning Michigan craft beer scene, a \$60 handcrafted pint glass is also available. Items can be purchased online at www.pewabicstore.org, in store at 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, or by calling 313-626-2000; some items are only available in store.



For art gifts with an even richer story, pick up some timeless art pieces by **Urban Ashes**. The Ann Arbor based shop creates unique picture frames and other home goods and furniture out of reclaimed wood, including frames hand-finished using a petroleum free finish. The business also employs Michigan's transitional and disabled labor force. To find pieces near you, visit www.urbanashes.com.

Sweet Treats

'Tis the reason for the season: cookies, candy and all things sweet. Wait, it's not the reason? Gift givers will still find smiles and nary a "regift" when gifting edible presents. Christmas cookies are traditional, but not everyone has the time to spend hours near an oven to provide them. Celebrated pâtissier Francois Payard's newest books and at-home macaron kits take the mystery out of at-home macaron making so anyone can enjoy them, regardless of their location. The kits, retailing at \$22 for the "Makecaron" kit for novices and \$49.50 for the more extensive "Macaron Kit,"

See Gay Gifts, page 40

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► Gay Gifts

Continued from page 38

offer gift-receivers the chance to make their own at home holiday concoctions. The latter kit in particular practically stocks a pastry chef's kitchen with included 2" piping bag, two 11mm plastic piping tips, food coloring gels, candy thermometer, pastry brush, dough scraper, macaron silpat and a USB drive with step-by-step instructions from "Mr. Macaron" himself. A cookbook, "Payard Cookies," is also available for purchase. To order, visit www.payard.com.

The tried and true gift for every occasion, a gift box of chocolates is rarely unused (or unwelcome) during the holidays. However, LGBT gift-givers can go beyond wrapping a red ribbon around a Hershey bar; even the "finer" chocolates like Ghirardelli and local Sanders can be surpassed for a more special gift.

Valrhona is offering such specialness with their limited edition chocolates for the holidays. The bean-to-bar company (which plants, harvests and processes all of its chocolates) has collaborated with designer Christian Lacroix in their 2015 Holiday Chocolates. Wrapped in LaCroix's signature lace pattern, these collections come in dark and milk chocolate. The Red Dark collection includes flavors like Earl Grey Tea, Arabica coffee from Ethiopia and Espelette. The pink



collection contains a mixture of milk and dark chocolates and includes cappuccino, salted caramel and Grand Cru chocolates. It retails at \$32 a box.

Additionally, Valrhona jumps on the subscription trend by offering a "La Sélection" monthly subscription chocolate service (ranging from \$142 for three months to \$248 for six months). The chocolate enthusiast on your shopping list receives monthly installments of Valrhona's best products like their caramelized milk chocolate, Caramelia (a Dominique Ansel favorite) and candied orange peels covered in dark Guanaja chocolate.

Visit www.valrhona-chocolate.com to purchase the gifts.

To keep the local angle for candy, **AG Chocolates by cek** in Jackson offers unique chocolates, including candy with screen printed images. A long time vendor at BTL's Same-Sex Wedding & Anniversary Expo, AG Chocolates offers a variety of reasonably priced and delicious chocolates. For \$19.99, a 15 count of handmade truffles make a great all-purpose gift from spouse to boss. The count goes up to 28 truffles for \$34.99 and 48 for \$54.99. For \$2.99, chocolate suckers (which can include custom images and messages), make great stocking stuffers.

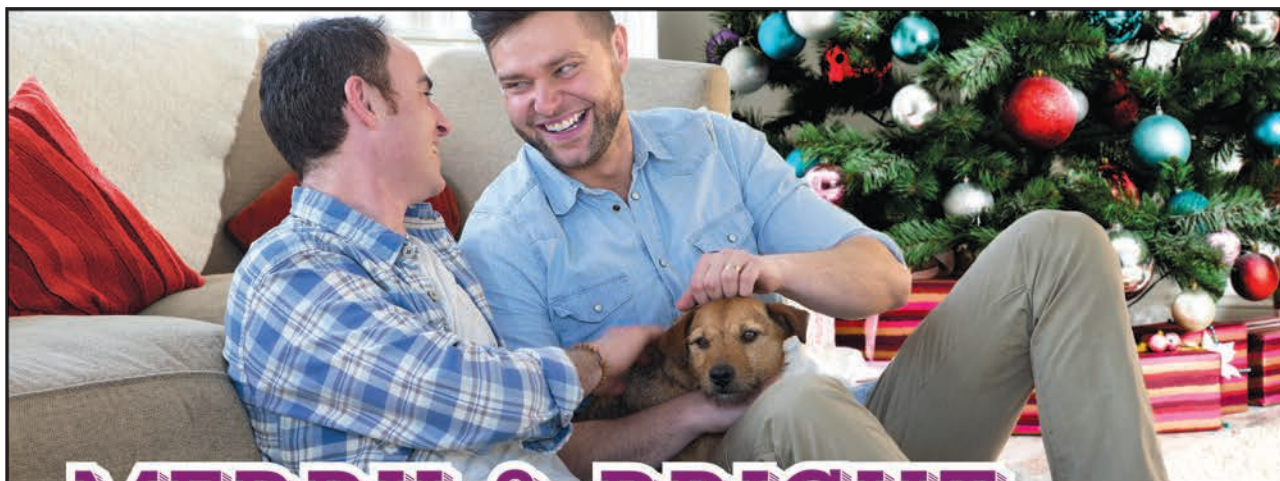
AG Chocolates by cek is located at 1920 W. North St., Jackson. They can be contacted at 517-917-3385 or chris@agchocolates.com.

Adult Gifts

They're not just for Valentine's Day anymore. Celebrate the holidays and the impending new year with a gift to keep you and your partner warmed up as the temperature continues to dip. **Fun Factory** offers high quality adult toys to serve as that stocking "stuffer," or that secret gift once the in-laws go home. Called the "BMW of adult toys" due to its combination of German engineering with joyful experimentation, the gifts are pleasure products that are both superior and unique in design. Two in particular, "Smartballs" and "B Balls," retail for \$24.99-29.99 and \$39.99 respectively. Each toy can be used by any gender-identifying individual in specific orifices, all designed to stimulate in a way that leaves your gift-receiver thanking you year round. Fun Factory products can be purchased at <https://us.funfactory.com/en>.

For an even more unique holiday gift... why not make your entire holiday party "romantic"? You can schedule a **Pure Romance** party by contacting Joanne Pierce at pureromancebyjoannepierce@gmail.com and make New Year's Eve particularly festive for you and your loved one(s).

For more LGBT and LGBT-supportive gifts, check out the advertisers in the Pride Source Yellow Pages online at www.pridesource.com/directory.html.



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Bookmarks: A Page Turning Holiday Gift Guide

BY KEITH ORR

The holidays are upon us. In the fast-paced world we live in, we make time to get together with friends. We share stories of the year, good food and drink and we share gifts. As one who is not a passionate shopper, I give thanks for this annual issue of *Between The Lines* to help me make sense of the Gift-Giving season.

Books are very special gifts. Sharing a favorite book is sharing a piece of yourself. At Common Language Bookstore we will help you find the perfect book. We have out-of-print classics and the latest in Feminist/LGBT literature. And if we don't have it in the store, we can get it in the store quickly, or ship it anywhere.

Here are some of our current favorites:



George

By Alex Gino

This delightful book fills an age void for middle grade transgender kids. George is in fourth grade. George also knows she is a girl. This is a big secret for George. She keeps

this hidden from everyone, including her mother, brother and best friend Kelly. The fourth grade is putting on a production of "Charlotte's Web." George reads for the part of Charlotte. Her teacher tells her that she obviously can't play a girl's part. As she and her best friend work on the play, George lets on that she really is a girl. George and Kelly come up with a plan to let George perform the part of Charlotte.

This is a great book for young transgender kids. It is also a great book for adults who want to understand what it is to be transgender at any age. The reader can't help but love George. I haven't been charmed by a kid's character since James Howe's "Totally Joe." Our identification with George gives empathy to what it is to know your gender when everyone else believes otherwise. I am sure this book will be banned in libraries across the country. Don't ban it from your reading list.

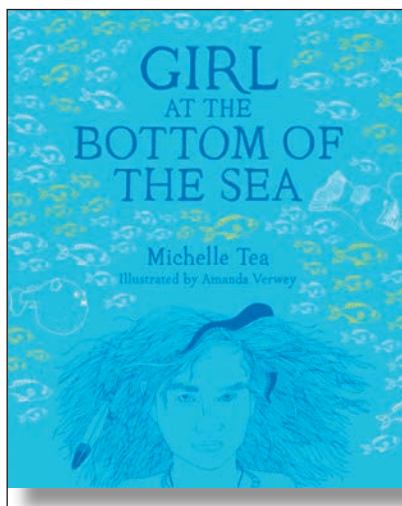
Girl at the Bottom of The Sea

By Michelle Tea

Michelle Tea is a goddess of queer literature. An author, activist and mentor to a generation of writers, she has written four memoirs, a novel and a collection of poetry. A couple of years ago she tread into very different waters, writing a young adult novel about a mermaid.

Sophie is a resident of Chelsea, Massachusetts (as is Michelle Tea). In the first novel, "The Mermaid of Chelsea Creek," we are introduced to Syrena, a trash-talking Polish mermaid. Syrena tells Sophie she has the power to save the world. In this sequel Sophie travels with Syrena to her native Poland. Along the way we learn of the source of Syrena's powers.

This medium is perfect for Tea's imagery and poetic use of language. Freed from the bounds of memoir, and what is real, Tea delivers a masterpiece of young adult fiction destined

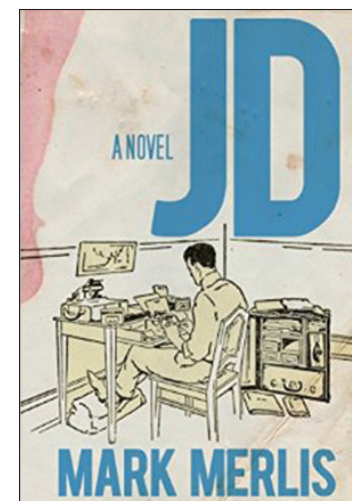


to take a queer place on the shelves which hold "Harry Potter" and "The Chronicles of Narnia."

JD

By Mark Merlis

"JD" is the title of Mark Merlis' book. It is also the title of a book by one of the characters in the book. Jonathan died many years earlier and left Martha as a widow shortly after the loss of their only son to the Vietnam War. Martha has built a life as a painter. Though she mourns her son, she has no such feelings for her deceased husband. Jonathan had been a part of literary salons, lusting after the participants and trawling bars for sex with working class men. He wrote erotic poetry and one great novel. The erotic nature of the work disgusts Martha. At the age of 75 she is approached by Philip, who wants to write a biography of Jonathan. She only agrees to work with Philip in order to preserve her and her son's heritage. And so she starts to read Jonathan's journals. Though Martha is the protagonist, it is the voice of Jonathan through the journals which is the heartbeat of the novel. This is Merlis' first novel in many years. It is a literary breath of fresh air and makes a poignant and satisfying gift.

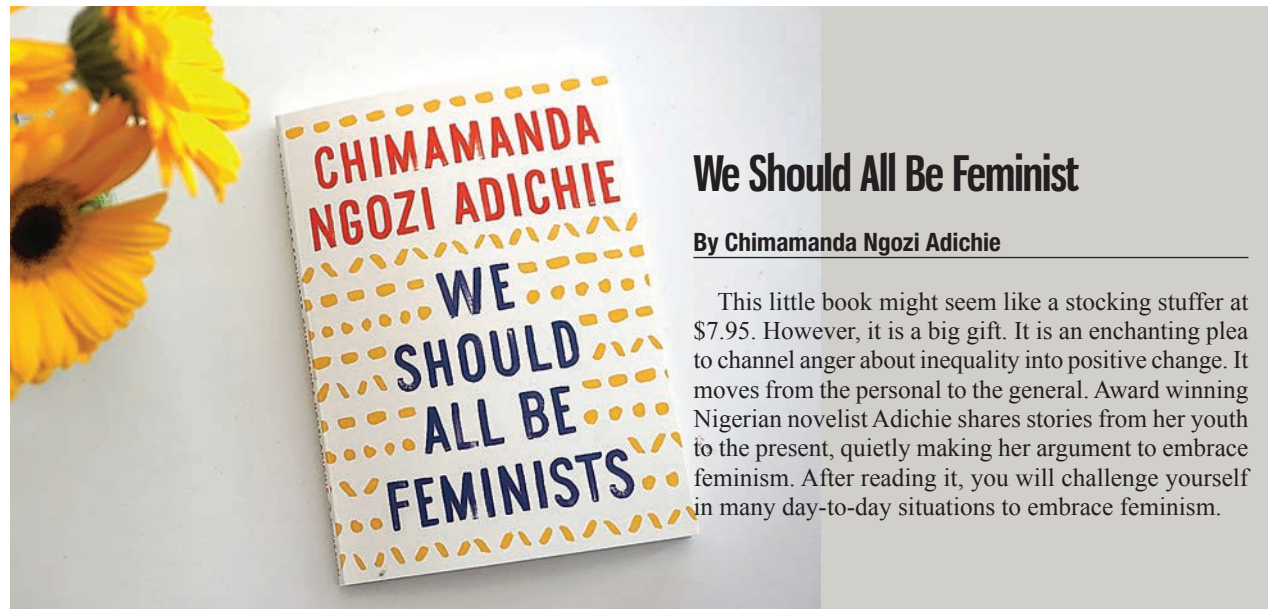


Keith Orr and his husband Martin Contreras are the owner-operators of Common Language Bookstore, one of the few surviving LGBT/Feminist Bookstores. They invite you to shop local and shop gay this holiday season. Visit www.glbtbooks.com.



Common Language Books: A Community Treasure

Keith Orr and Martin Contreras have provided a rare opportunity for all of us by investing in and keeping this Ann Arbor bookstore going. So much of the country no longer has an LGBT Bookstore to browse, connect and shop in. So be sure to keep them in mind when planning your holiday gift buying.



We Should All Be Feminist

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

This little book might seem like a stocking stuffer at \$7.95. However, it is a big gift. It is an enchanting plea to channel anger about inequality into positive change. It moves from the personal to the general. Award winning Nigerian novelist Adichie shares stories from her youth to the present, quietly making her argument to embrace feminism. After reading it, you will challenge yourself in many day-to-day situations to embrace feminism.

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6 Ways To Lessen The Gut-Busting Effects Of Your Thanksgiving Binge

BY MIKEY ROX

Thanksgiving is a holiday of gratitude and family, indulgence and indigestion. Embrace the former while ditching the latter with these actionable ways to limit your belly-bulging binge at this month's high-calorie celebration of appreciation and appetite.

Stop training yourself to overeat at holiday meals

Yes, Thanksgiving food is awesome. Especially if you have a mom or grandma (or whoever the cooking guru is in your family) who blows out that spread like fireworks at a Katy Perry concert. But remember that it's not the last meal you'll ever have, and it shouldn't be the first one of the day either. Start the holiday by having a sensible, healthy and filling breakfast – like an egg white-and-spinach omelette with turkey sausage and mixed berries – so you're not apt to snack all afternoon then dive into a piled-high plate of smorgasbord staples like you just got out of prison. Little piggies belong in a pen, not face-first in the pumpkin pie.

Drink water to trick yourself into feeling full

Just like you do (or at least should do) at restaurants when you're in danger of overeating, drink water before taking your seat for the main event. Baltimore-based certified strength and conditioning specialist Roy Pumphrey recommends "downing a giant glass of H2O about 30 minutes before the meal begins to help quell the hunger pangs for a fuller feeling."

Choose protein and greens over heavy carbs

Unless you're running a post-Thanksgiving marathon, there's no reason to stuff your face like Wilson Kipsang gunning for another medal. Fill your plate with the healthy proteins and greens available at your family's fete and limit the space on your plate for waist-widening comfort foods like mac-and-cheese and creamy mashed potatoes.

"Many of a food binge's adverse effects come from carbohydrate overloading and the subsequent 'carb



crash' that occurs due to spikes in our insulin levels," says Dr. Linda Anegawa, founder and medical director of OSR Weight Management. "I always advise my patients on Thanksgiving to go for lean white-meat turkey, green beans and salad, and avoid marshmallow-laden sweet potatoes, simple-carb dinner rolls and sweets."

Adds Pumphrey, "The protein will fill you more and be more satiating than stuffing or bread. Plus you'll feel less bloated and awful later."

Stay active (even on a holiday)

You exercise on ordinary days when your food intake is normal, so it only makes sense that you should fit in a workout before you settle in for this cornucopius supper.

"It is a busy time, but schedule into your calendar one hour of some type of physical activity daily," Anegawa advises. "This won't offset a giant food binge but it will help keep metabolism and appetite somewhat in check, and chances are you may not be as tempted to binge if you know you've put in the effort to exercise."

Mind your alcohol and choose drinks wisely

For some, alcohol at holiday time is a special treat; for others, it's a necessary coping mechanism to prevent a brutal bloodbath at the family manse. For

whatever reason you partake in libations, choose your drinks smartly and set a limit on how much you'll consume.

"If you must drink alcohol, enjoy a low-sugar, low-carb concoction," says Anegawa. "Steer clear of cocktails with loads of simple syrup, such as premade mixes, and instead enjoy a vodka tonic made with Stevia-sweetened tonic or a glass of dry chardonnay."

Red wine also is low(er) in calories compared to other types of booze, and packed with beneficial antioxidants when enjoyed in moderation. Two glasses is the sweet spot; any more than that and you're entering iffy territory. As a general life rule, drink one glass of water – flat or carbonated – between alcoholic drinks to prevent from getting sloppy and waking up with a killer hangover.

Plan a post-binge fast to burn fat

After you've had your fill and finished the meal, it's time to do damage control. As an alternative to exercise – because who wants to do that on a gluttonous gut? – prepare to fast for at least half a day.

"When you've just downed a big meal, making sure you fast for 16 hours right afterward is a good way to kick your body into fat-burning mode," according to certified personal trainer Rui Li. "The simplest way is to skip breakfast so that half of your time fasting is during sleep."

In other words, your body will start eating itself, which – let's be honest, ye of expanding pants size – is a welcomed change of pace.

Review: Ringwald's 'Streetcar' is 'Stellaaar'

BY DAVID KILEY

Walking into The Ringwald Monday night, I'll admit I was a little frightened. Being told "there are two intermissions" for "A Streetcar Named Desire" can be a bit daunting to a 21st century theater-goer. But from the moment I stepped into the theater space, I knew that I was in for something special.

Starting with the scenic design, Alexander Carr's massive set fills the entire Ringwald stage and spills over onto the house-right side of the room. We not only have the home of Stanley and Stella Kowalski – complete with outdoor balcony/porch – but we also see the stoop and front door of neighbors Steve and Eunice Hubbell. Within Stanley and Stella's abode there are tables and chairs, beds and dressers, kitchen cupboards, sinks and doors leading into bathrooms and out back, and a curtain that opens and closes. All of that set design gives us, the audience, a sense of another era, as do the costumes of Barbie Weisserman. Think pleated pants and short ties for the men and "house dresses" for the women. (One often forgets that "Streetcar" isn't a Stanley/Stella/Blanche three-hander, but also features an ensemble.) Blanche, of course, gets all the good stuff: a red robe with frills, a white summer dress worn with wedge heels, faux furs and rhinestone tiaras, revealing lace nighties. Surprisingly, Weisserman chooses not to put Stanley in the classic "wife-beater" tank, a testament to the refusal of this production – and its director Travis Reiff – to provide us with a stereotypical "Streetcar."

And neither does his cast. As Williams' tragic heroine, Blanche Dubois (Jamie Warrow) gives a truly compelling performance. Full disclosure: Warrow and I go way back to our college days at Wayne State. This being said, as a reviewer I applaud her work in this



REVIEW

A Streetcar Named Desire

Plays through Monday, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Monday nights with 3 p.m. Sunday matinees. Ticket prices are \$20 for Friday and Saturday performances, \$15 for Sunday shows and Monday nights are HALF OFF the original ticket price at only \$10 a ticket. The Ringwald Theatre is located at 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale.

production. As a friend who hasn't seen her onstage in 20-plus years, I couldn't be more proud. What could easily have turned into a caricature of a femme fatale Southern Belle, Warrow will not allow it. Yes, her Blanche Dubois is a femme fatale Southern Belle. She's got the accent and the swooning gestures, and she gives us a Blanche Dubois that anyone

who thinks of "Blanche Dubois" is going to dub as decent. But there's something real about this woman in Warrow's portrayal of her – something that is sad and desperate, and even a little pathetic, as her Blanche begins the downward spiral brought on by her dark past, and drinking.

As Blanche's sister, Stella, Meredith Deighton is a woman caught between the love she feels for her husband and the loyalty she has for her older sister. Her husband Stanley is a hot head. Blanche is a drama queen. In Deighton's performance, we see a woman who refuses to believe anything negative about the two most important people in her life. Little by little, as Blanche's secret past is revealed, we see Deighton's fight to accept the facts, and her disappointment in the man responsible for revealing them to her.

In the role of Stanley, Michael Lopetrone isn't quite the actor that one would expect to be cast – at least not at first glance. He isn't particularly tall or physically foreboding. But

once his Stanley's way of life is impinged on by the unexpected arrival of his wife's sister, and once he is called "common" and a "Polack," and he gets a few drinks in him – look out! Like with Blanche Dubois, there is such an ingrained impression of Stanley Kowalski in our culture, it's a wonder any actor would attempt to embody the character. In the moments leading up to Stanley's big "Stellaaa!" moment, I kept asking myself "How's this guy gonna do it?" And I have to say, Lopetrone nailed it. There was no macho bravado, no attempting at playing "Stanley Kowalski" à la Marlon Brando or anybody else before him. Lopetrone just opened up his mouth and cried out the word, like a wounded animal or a little lost boy looking for his mother.

Rounding out the principal players, Brandy Joe Plambeck as Harold "Mitch" Mitchell gives the most subtle and poignant of all the performances. While I haven't seen much of his work since returning to Michigan, when I think of Brandy Joe, I think "funny." Well, there is nothing funny about Plambeck's portrayal of Mitch. In fact, the guy is downright heartbreaking. Here we see a man who is desperate to fall in love, a man who wants nothing more than to make his momma happy by settling down with the right woman – a woman who he hopes in his heart will be Miss Blanche Dubois. Plambeck's Mitch comes off as a bit of a sad sack. It's okay. We feel for him. He's the underdog, a soft man who perhaps no woman might ever love. And in Plambeck's scenes with Warrow, we get a sense that Mitch and Blanche do love each other. They might even live happily ever after, forever and forever ... if only this wasn't a Tennessee Williams play we were watching at The Ringwald Theatre.

Thankfully, for us, it is.

David Kiley is an award winning journalist and publisher/editor-in-chief of EncoreMichigan, which he acquired in March 2015. To see more reviews and stellar theater coverage by Kiley and other writers, visit www.encoremichigan.com.

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Review: MOT's 'The Passenger' May Be Best The Company Has Ever Produced

BY DAVID KILEY

Following Michigan Opera Theatre's successful staging last month of fan-favorite "La Boheme," the prospect of a multi-lingual opera about the Holocaust might seem daunting – except to those who know the back-story and brief performance story of "The Passenger," which shall go down in MOT history as perhaps the best production they have ever mounted.

The story begins with Liese, a middle-aged German woman, aboard an ocean liner with her husband Walter, a diplomat with a new high-profile posting. Liese is suddenly struck and beset over the sight of a woman who looks familiar. The woman's face, though, is covered in a white scarf. Liese is so beside herself that she is forced to confide to her husband of many years that she was an SS guard at Auschwitz. The mysterious woman, she thinks, was a prisoner, named Marta, who Liese thought sure was dead – along with anyone else at the concentration camp who could out her as a death-camp guard.

The story then plays out on a brilliant two level, multi-dimensional set. At the top level, we have the ship, where Liese and Walter's journey and conversations are taking place, such as the worry over whether it could be Marta, and whether her disclosure about Liese would ruin Walter's career. Below, at stage level, is Auschwitz, with a series of set changes where flashback action takes place and

we see a younger Liese, Marta and all the other inmates enduring the impossible – yet all too true – treatment at the hands of the Nazis.

The opera was written by Soviet composer Mieczylsaw, himself of Polish-Jewish heritage, in 1968. The libretto is by Alexander Medvedev, based on a novel of the same name by Zofia Posmysz. The work was not allowed to be performed by Soviet authorities, and Weinberg never saw it performed during his lifetime – all the more a tragedy, beyond the subject material itself. It's first performance was in 2010 in Bregenz, Austria, and the stupendous production mounted by the Michigan Opera Theatre is the eighth company to put it on.

Weinberg reportedly was inspired to write the "The Passenger" by fellow composer, Dimitri Shostakovich, who told him of a radio play that was so well received it was turned into the novel "Passenger from Cabin Number 45," by Zofia Posmysz, a Polish-Catholic woman who had been imprisoned at Auschwitz.

The unfortunate short-hand description of "The Passenger" can sometimes be "a multi-lingual opera about the Holocaust." And if one hears that, it can be difficult to mount enthusiasm. But "The Passenger" is an experience in opera and theater not to be missed. Indeed, part of the brilliance and beauty of the music and story is hearing parts sung in the different languages of the characters – Polish, German, Russian and English.



REVIEW

The Passenger

Runs through Nov. 22. Ticket prices range from \$29-149. The Michigan Opera Theatre/Detroit Opera House is located at 1526 Broadway, Detroit.

Weinberg's music is ethereal. The feat of writing music for women inmates of Auschwitz that captures both their misery and defeat, yet their passion for their loved ones, and for each other, without it ever slipping into dirge is nothing short of brilliant. It helps that in the hands of director Rob Kearley and conductor Steven Mercurio, based on the original direction of David Pountney, the cast and ensemble are operating on the highest level this critic has ever seen at MOT.

MOT founder and artistic director David DiChiera set out to produce the play and raise extra money to do so based on seeing a video of the Austrian production. It is a testament to DiChiera's leadership and long-held passion for bringing modern, seldom-staged operas to Detroit in addition to the crowd pleasers.

Mezzo-Soprano Daveda Karanas plays the co-lead Liese. It is a role she will be known for after completing a production at the Lyric Opera in Chicago. From Detroit, she goes to the Florida Grand Opera to perform it. Karanas manages the transformation from middle-aged wife to a girl of about 20 as an SS guard. Her acting as the panicked diplomat's wife and the manipulative young guard combines with her sublime vocals for a special experience at the opera.

Adrienn Miksch embodies the character of Marta, so much so that she becomes the focus of Liese. The actress radiates on stage, and communicates to the audience during her performance and curtain call how special she realizes this part is, and how lucky she is to play it without ever over-playing it by an ounce. Her straight-tone singing, and her ability to float her notes is the stuff that stays with those who see it long after the curtain closes.

Lauren Skuce Gross, billed only as "Old Woman," is also a stand-out. The soprano plays a Christian woman inmate, and her devotion to her faith as she sings flawlessly comes through in

The feat of writing music for women inmates of Auschwitz that captures both their misery and defeat, yet their passion for their loved ones, and for each other, without it ever slipping into dirge is nothing short of brilliant.

every scene. Siberian-born soprano Anna Gorbachyova as Katja and Michigan's own Kristin Eder as Vlasta also perform exquisitely.

There were several wonderful decisions made by the director and conductor. One was to have musicians on the ship actually playing, rather than pretending and having the music coming from the pit. Another was to have a musician double for Tadeusz, a violinist and Marta's fiancée also in the camp, when he is forced to play a concert for the SS officers. Nothing faked. The whole production is tight as a drum with no loose ends.

The set works brilliantly. The use of rails on the stage to move different pieces around reminds us all too perfectly how train cars were used for such ugly, evil purposes during the Holocaust.

Bottom Line: This is an opera experience not to be missed. And in an age when terrorism over religion and race is in the headlines weekly, there is nothing dated about this story.

Running time for "The Passenger" is about 3 hours with a 20-minute intermission.

David Kiley is an award winning journalist and publisher/editor-in-chief of *EncoreMichigan*, which he acquired in March 2015. To see more reviews and stellar theater coverage by Kiley and other writers, visit www.encoremichigan.com.





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Water Works Theatre Company Receives Royal Oak Community Spirit Award

BY BTL STAFF

ROYAL OAK – Royal Oak’s own Water Works Theatre Company was recognized by the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce with its distinguished Community Spirit Award last month. The award was accepted by Water Works founder and lifetime Royal Oak resident Edward Nahhat on behalf of the company’s scores of volunteers during the Chamber’s annual Royal Oak Community Awards held at the Emagine Theatre/Star Lanes, 200 N. Main St. in Royal Oak.

For 15 years, the nonprofit Water Works Theatre Company has presented Michigan’s premiere outdoor professional theater festival, Shakespeare Royal Oak, at Starr-Jaycee Park. Fans have recognized the high quality of its shows and its outdoor youth education programs through increased attendance every year. This year, that same spirit is being honored by the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce. The Community Spirit Award is presented to an individual or organization that has made a positive difference or contribution to the



community.

“We are honored to be recognized,” said executive director Ed Nahhat. “The people of Royal Oak have always appreciated local artists, so to see the crowds gather with their lawn

chairs in our corner of the park in July and August makes us all feel we are making a positive difference in our community.”

In early spring, local actors audition to become part of Water Works’

professional acting troupe. Local artists are also hired to direct, design, build and manage the shows, which this year included the main stage production “All’s Well That Ends Well” and the daylight family show

“As You Like It,” which starred Anna Marck, a Royal Oak High School alumna and a recent graduate of Oakland University’s drama department.

“Ed Nahhat was my drama director at Royal Oak High School, and I’m thrilled that I had a chance to work with him through Water Works,” Marck said. “Last summer I was the Player Queen in ‘Hamlet,’ and this year I was honored to play Rosalind.”

Since 2001, Water Works has presented Shakespeare Royal Oak and other award-winning productions. Water Works enhances the quality of life in the community by offering Michigan’s only outdoor professional Shakespeare event in Royal Oak’s Starr Jaycee Park. Water Works’ mission is to provide a place to call home for local professional actors, designers, directors, teachers and other artists in a dynamic collaboration with skilled professional volunteers and other community supporters.

Learn more at www.waterworkstheatre.com.



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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Nov. 19

MAC Health 1 a.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), **Detroit**. michiganidscoalition.org

Criminal Expungement Law Clinic 9 a.m. Advance registration required. UDMercy School of Law Clinical Program, 438 Saint Antoine St., **Detroit**. 313-596-0258.

Faith Alliance Meeting 12 p.m. Welcoming new members who would like to be involved with the intersection of faith, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 2208 Winchell Ave., **Kalamazoo**. Kglrc.org

The Parent Network 6 p.m. This group aims to assist parents in understanding their child's identity, while also giving parents the opportunity to socialize with other adults who have LGBT children. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

12th Annual Wine Cellar 6:30 p.m. Join HARCAPM for an evening of live music, a tasting of the seasons best wines courtesy of Everyday Wines, delicious hearty appetizers from Bona Sera and hand-crafted chocolates and confections by Sweet Gem Confections. Tickets: \$50-60. HARC & APM, 2275 Platt Road, **Ann Arbor**. 734-572-9355 261. cmcullen@hivaidresource.org Hivaidresource.org/winecellar/

Friday, Nov. 20

MAC Health 11 p.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), **Detroit**. michiganidscoalition.org

Saturday, Nov. 21

Third Annual Warm Coat Drive 10 a.m. Detroit Police Department Bridging the Gap Initiative, 20000 Evergreen, **Detroit**. rawls1919@detroitmi.gov

Hear Me: A story slam devoted to true stories of the transgender community 6 p.m. Macomb Community College, **Warren**. 586-445-7502. valentej@macomb.edu

Annual Black Tie Awards and Homecoming 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$75. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, **Detroit**. 313-868-1347.

Sunday, Nov. 22

TransCend TransCend provides support and resources to the Southwest Michigan transgender community, their significant others, family, friends, and allies. Meetings occur twice per month on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Sunday. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

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

So You Think You Can Dance 7 p.m. Tickets: \$43+. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, **East Lansing**. 800-WHARTON. Whartoncenter.com

Tuesday, Nov. 24

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Editor's Pick

The Jim Toy Community Center is hosting new programs this fall. One such program, "LGBT Know Your Rights Project," runs from 3-6 p.m. every Wednesday.

JTCC is partnering with Outlaws at the University of Michigan and local volunteer attorneys to provide free, holistic LGBT-centered legal services and referrals. Are you struggling with a legal problem? No matter what the issue, JTCC's legal project is a great place to start.

To schedule an appointment, email your contact information to outlawslegal@gmail.com. Walk-ins or calls are also welcome on Wednesdays by calling 734-995-9867. JTCC is located at 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor.

Saturday, Nov. 28

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

Sunday, Nov. 29

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

Monday, Nov. 30

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 LGBTQIA/P 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 Kglrc.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

MUSIC & MORE

Classical

University Musical Society "Leif Ove Andsnes, piano" Sibelius Kyllikki Three Pieces, Op. 41 The Birch, Op. 75, No. 4. The Spruce, Op. 75, No. 5. The Forest Lake, Op. 114, No. 3. Song in the Forest, Op. 114, No. 4. Spring Vision, Op. 114, No. 5. Beethoven Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3 The Hunt Debussy La soiree dans Grenade from Estampes. Etudes Nos. 5, 6, and 11 Chopin Etude in A-flat Major from Trois nouvelles etudes. Impromptu in A-flat Major, Op. 29 Nocturne in F Major, Op. 15, No. 1 Ballad No. 4 in f minor, Op. 52. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 8 p.m. Nov. 20. 734-764-2538. Ums.org/performance/leif-ove-andsnepiano/

be pre-registered. For women 40+. Institute for Population Health, 9053 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 313-309-9303. lpophealth.org

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

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

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

Wednesday, Nov. 25

MAC Health 10 a.m. Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), **Detroit**. michiganidscoalition.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 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. michiganidscoalition.org

Queer People of Color 6 p.m. QPOC hopes to be a supportive radical environment for people of color that are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The coalition will support conversation about issues that face our community, build friendships and, furthermore, serve the greater Kalamazoo area. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Thursday, Nov. 26

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

Friday, Nov. 27

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

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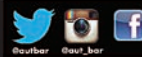
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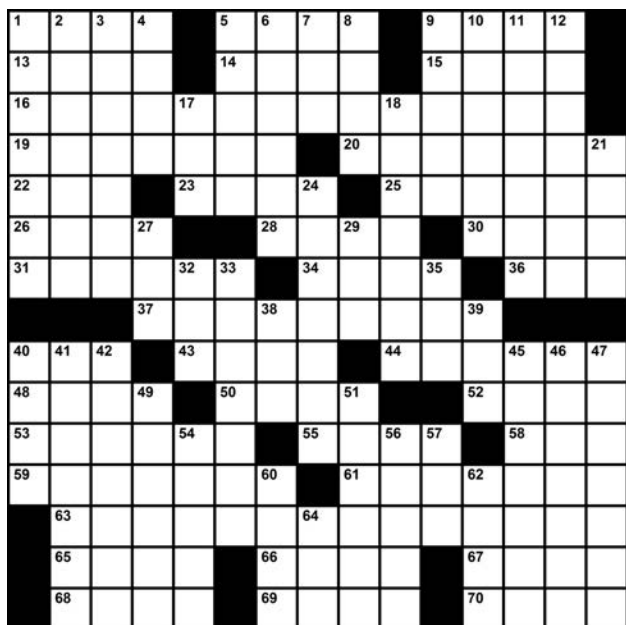
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Q Puzzle



- 36 Duncan's denial
 37 New CBS program whose main character is from Krypton
 40 It turns out its.
 43 "You bet!" in Yucatan
 44 Sleep with Kahlo?
 48 Honey-pot lover
 50 Chip off the old flock?
 52 Get as profit
 53 Bad weather culprit
 55 Highland dialect
 58 Arthur of "The Golden Girls"
 59 Bend over and take it
 61 Like the dawn
 63 What 37-Across is to Kara Danvers
 65 Macho man
 66 Rep in the 'hood
 67 Character in "No Exit"
 68 Game of observation
 69 Bugs Bunny's Broadway musical?
 70 S&M root
- about who she was, one of her friends thought she was this
 12 "ChiPs" costar Erik
 17 Sound of an inflated doll puncture
 18 Moby Dick, to Ahab
 21 "Showboat"'s "Nobody ____ But Me"
 24 "Evita" lyricist
 27 Sounds of disappointment
 29 Party in a fairy tale threesome
 32 "M-m-m!" to Sappho
 33 "Galavant" installment, e.g.
 35 Prefix with angle
 38 Tongue ending
 39 Jason of "Chasing Amy"
 40 Drilling org.
 41 Statues with big packages
 42 Some Byron poems
 45 Audrey Hepburn role
 46 Avoided tricks
 47 What Niles and Frasier do to patients
 49 Minor setback
 51 Bear or bull
 54 Like Michael Cera
 56 Napped leather
 57 It may follow directions
 60 Emulate Paul Cadmus
 62 Porter's regretful miss
 64 SEP, e.g.

Kara Mia!

Across

- 1 Stringed instrument of Shakespeare's day
 5 Home of Picasso's Stein portrait
 9 One and only
 13 Tight-assed
 14 Siberian river
 15 Three of Frida's family
 16 She plays the title character of 37-Across

- 19 Reaches the top
 20 Famous, to fifty million Frenchmen
 22 Sender of 1040 forms
 23 James VI, e.g.
 25 Kind of labor
 26 Place in a Robert Redford movie
 28 Ready for plucking
 30 Small amounts
 31 "My Fair Lady" song
 34 Moistened with spray

Down

- 1 LGBT literary awards
 2 Discover
 3 Addresses
 4 Peace Nobel Wiesel
 5 Notes from Barber's staff
 6 Cicero, for one
 7 Queen in "Romeo and Juliet"
 8 Obi-Wan player
 9 Mink ____ of "Cry Baby"
 10 Set straight
 11 When 37-Across "came out"

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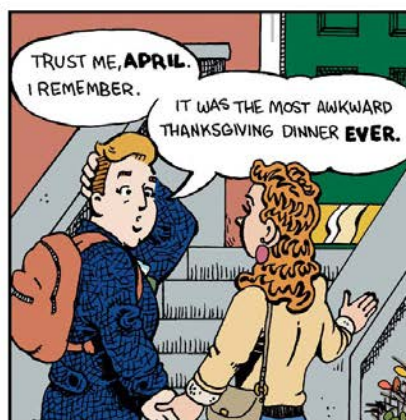
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Equality Michigan is working with state legislators to update the Ethnic Intimidation Act to include proper protections for the gay and transgender community.

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

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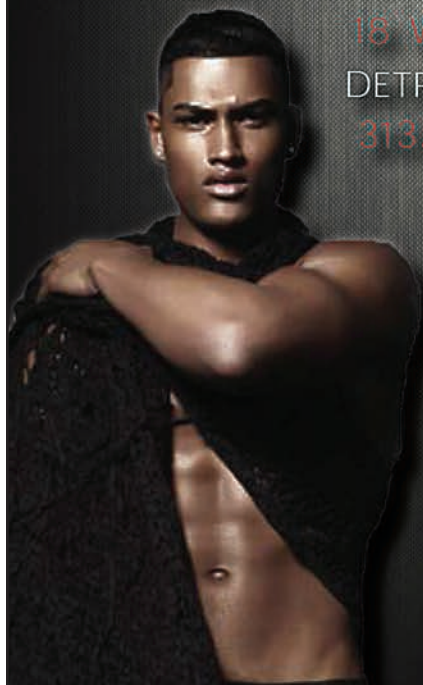


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- Affirmations, Ferndale
- MAC Offices, New Center



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Time: 1pm-6pm (By Appointment Only)	Time: 2pm-10pm (Walk-in or Appointment)	Time: 6pm-9pm (Walk-in or Appointment)	Time: 9am-noon 2pm-5pm (Walk-in or Appointment)	No Testing Available
Where: Ferndale MAC Office Only	Where: Detroit MAC New Center Office	Where: Ferndale Affirmations Location	Where: Ferndale MAC Office Only	

To make appointments or get more information, call:

1-888- A CONDOM (226-6366)

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