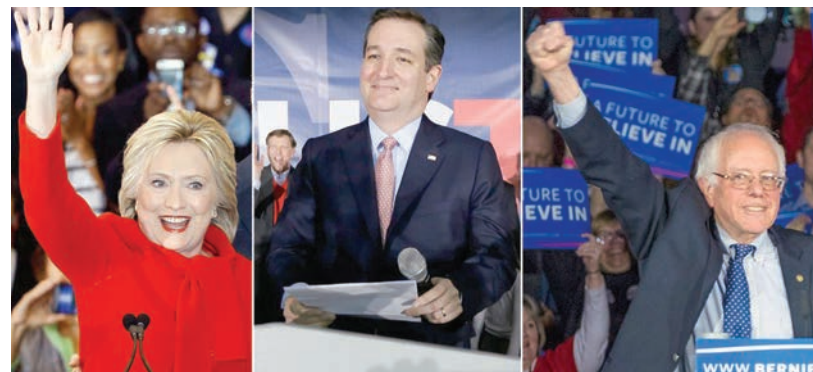


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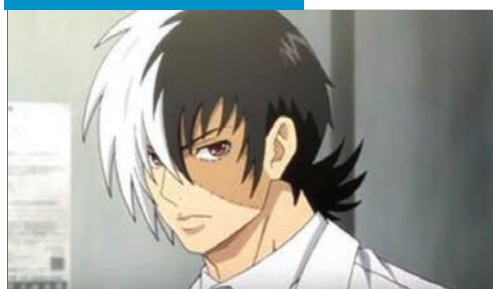
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NEWS BRIEFS

Chelsea Adopts Nondiscrimination Protections

BY AJ TRAGER

CHELSEA—In a 4-1 vote by City Council, on Jan. 19 Chelsea became the 42nd city in Michigan to adopt a nondiscrimination ordinance, furthering protections for LGBT residents in the area.

The ordinance (Ordinance No. 175) received its first reading on Jan. 4. Directly following the reading the council requested two changes be made to the language. The ordinance now includes language regarding an administrative policy for appointing representatives to the city’s Human Rights Commission, of which the ordinance establishes, and now includes a provision requiring that a copy of every resident complaint be provided to City Council.

“It is the intent of the city that no individual shall be denied equal protection of the laws; nor shall any individual be denied the enjoyment of his or her civil or political rights or be discriminated against because of actual or perceived age, color, disability, familial status, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, disability status, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran status or weight,” Ordinance No. 175 reads.

The new legislation includes definitions of familial status and gender expression and identity. The ordinance also spells out specific exceptions and exemptions. Two council members, Jane Pacheco and Peter Feeny, were absent from the meeting. Mayor Jason Lindauer voted against the ordinance.

The push to adopt the ordinance began in the spring of last year when Chelsea resident Anthony Shakeshaft and his husband Tom Toon approached the council with the idea. The couple has been together for over 20 years and are the first gay couple to marry in Washtenaw County — married on March 22, 2014.

“It’s great to know that a traditional community like Chelsea welcomes and values diversity,” Shakeshaft told BTL. “This was particularly evident during the process as there was tremendous support from our community and City Council.”

Toon and Shakeshaft shared an international relationship, spending time both in Michigan and the U.K. Last year Shakeshaft made Michigan his permanent address and the couple began fighting to have their marriage recognized and for that union to provide Shakeshaft with a green card. Following the marriage equality decision in June of last year, Shakeshaft was the first individual in the state to receive a green card on the basis of same-sex marriage, Shakeshaft said.

The new nondiscrimination ordinance will go into effect 20 days after publication in the city’s newspaper.

Ozone House to Host Annual Event Benefitting LGBTQ Youth

Ozone House will host its third annual Home Sweet Home: A Night of Wine, Chocolate and Cheese Feb. 11 in an effort to support services for LGBTQ youth who face homelessness or housing instability. Ozone House is the only youth shelter in Washtenaw County and has gained national recognition for its programming that is safe for all youth who seek support.

The fundraiser will take place at the “Bubble Room” in Ann Arbor’s Vinology Wine Bar and Restaurant. The unique and popular event features food, wine, artisan cheese, chocolate desserts and an eclectic mix of people. The evening will include a brief program on the state of LGBTQ youth.

The current state, according to Patrick Gaulier, Ozone House’s case manager, shows that, “LGBTQ youth are overrepresented among the homeless youth population. While they make up 10 percent of the general youth population, they comprise up to 40 percent of the homeless youth population. They’re much more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors, attempt suicide and they struggle with depression and PTSD. The Home Sweet Home event is an important fundraiser to help provide safety and support for this vulnerable population of young people.”

All net proceeds from the evening will benefit Ozone House’s Kicked Out Fund for LGBTQ homeless youth services.

Home Sweet Home will begin at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11 at Vinology Wine Bar and Restaurant. Vinology is located at 110 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$75 per person. For more information, visit www.OzoneHouse.org/home or call Allie at 734-662-2265.

Foster Runs For Canton Board

CANTON TWP — Director of Policy and Outreach at Equality Michigan, Sommer Foster, announced her run for Canton Township Board of Trustees.

Foster is one of seven candidates seeking a seat on the Board. She has served on the Canton Library Board of Trustees and currently serves as Vice President of the Canton Democratic Club and as Vice Chair of the 11th District Democrats. Foster worked with Trustee Sneiderman and LaJoy to bring a human rights ordinance to the township.

She is currently seeking 400 petition signatures to open her campaign committee. Foster would become the only black member of the board, if elected.

According to the last U.S. Census, Canton’s population spiked 18.1 percent. Foster is fighting an uphill battle to be just one of three Democrats to be elected to the township Board in decades.

Foster can be reached at sfoster@equalitymi.org.

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Emily, a former volunteer at the Welcome and Service Desk who moved to Michigan from Oregon in 2013, was glad to see that there was so much passion and emotion in the room. BTL photos: AJ Trager.



Liz Lamoste, standing, is a long-time supporter of the center. She called on the board to show more organizational transparency by providing the public with access to Affirmations' bylaws and other documents including financial reports. In addition, she would also like to see a change in the demographics of the board.



Affirmations first executive director, Jan Stevenson brought historical context to the discussion and told new executive director, Susan Erspamer, "I also know that when you make a mistake in that seat, sometimes it can feel like people are not very forgiving." Talking directly to Erspamer, Stevenson said, "I really appreciate that you had the courage to make the change and that you made the changes that you did."



Youth Program Manager, Lilianna Reyes, believes that despite all the changes in staff and program management, Affirmations is still a place of active inclusion. "For Affirmations to see who I am as a person, then to see my skill and to grow that and allow me to have a true voice," Reyes explained. "I have a real voice at Affirmations; I'm not a token. I really make change for LGBT people of color and for youth."

Community Calls for Transparency at Affirmations, Board Promises Change

BY AJ TRAGER

FERDALE – Approximately 30 community members came out to the Jan. 27 Affirmations Board of Directors meeting to share their current worries and concerns over board leadership and the direction the center is taking. It was one of the largest community turnouts the board has seen in some time.

Over the past year the center has gone through a lot of changes, including hiring former Executive Director Darrius Hilmon, who stepped down after just eight months on the job. The past year also saw major staff turnover both before and after Hilmon arrived. And just before the end of 2015, Affirmations announced the termination of its longest program, the Helpline. The move disappointed many individuals in the LGBT community who, as a result, have called for stronger leadership and more transparency from the organization. The latest board meeting provided a highly accommodating platform for the community to share its concerns.

After a brief presentation on the closing of the Helpline by Lydia Ahlum Hanson, director of programs at Affirmations, the board meeting shifted over to public comment.

Request For Transparency

First to speak before the body was Liz Lamoste. Lamoste, a long-time supporter of the center who outlined her concerns

for the center in a recent op-ed published in BTL, called on the board to show more organizational transparency by providing the public with access to Affirmations' bylaws and other documents including financial reports. In addition, she would also like to see a change in the demographics of the board.

"In terms of not only synthesizing feedback, but systematically giving it some power, I think it is worth it to contemplate. And maybe this is already happening in board nominations that are taking place, but room for additional diversity both in terms of age, race, all gender orientations and socioeconomic status for board participation – either for participation in governing the board or creating some kind of community advisory council. All these comments were made with increasing transparency and community focus in mind," Lamoste said.

Tyler Beltz, former Affirmations peer educator, who also served as an intern for former executive director Hilmon, spoke directly to the needs of youth who utilize the center. Beltz called for more fair and open leadership in the organization and for Affirmations to provide the youth with an opportunity to share their voices and experiences.

"I grew up in a community where residents joined hands to create strong systems and safeguards ensuring that no one person slipped through the crisis cracks. I grew up in a community where voices offering progress

or dissent were heard and respected, even considered. I knew of a community where mentorship was a torch passed on from one group of community leaders to another. And I learned to love a community where positive changes were welcomed, not dismissed. Despite this dynamic history, over the past few years I have witnessed and personally experienced a decline in these core values," Beltz said.

He went on to discuss a situation when he came to Affirmations looking for a safe space and instead experienced harassment from his LGBT peers.

Affirmations donor George Westerman questioned where the vision of the center was and where the donor money, including his money, was being allocated to.

"I am sad because I am wondering what Affirmations has to offer me anymore. It's sad for me because I have put in an investment of time and money to the organization and my concern is that the organization has become less transparent," he said.

The Helpline

Many community members including Michelle Fox-Phillips and Bill Hagel discussed their concerns over the closing of the Helpline and how they felt the program was a crucial service to the metro Detroit LGBT community. Fox-Phillips was concerned that for those calling the Helpline in a crisis, being

► Affirmations

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rerouted to another organization could do more harm than good and that the Helpline was directly needed to assist in those crisis calls.

The Helpline was receiving 20 calls a week before its closure, though a good number of those calls were hang ups or callers searching for “sexy talk” rather than access to LGBT resources. The Helpline number will still be available and routed through Affirmations in 2016, but now callers are prompted with an extension that will link them to a list of services.

Jan Stevenson, the first executive director of Affirmations and current co-publisher of BTL, remembered a time when the Helpline would serve 800 calls a month ranging from “sexy talk” callers to individuals seeking crucial help.

“Times change. So does technology,” Stevenson said to the room. “It makes sense to me that if you’re only getting 20 calls a week, that it makes sense to reallocate resources to

for awhile. I did my time, you know. I know it is really hard to sit in this chair. It is a very public place to be. Some days I would walk around and felt like I had a target on me and I also know that when you make a mistake in that seat, sometimes it can feel like people are not very forgiving.” Talking directly to Erspamer, Stevenson said, “I really appreciate that you had the courage to make the change and that you made the changes that you did.”

Response from Affirmations

In response to the community dialogue, Board President Frank Aiello asked the community to have patience as the board tries to stabilize and promised that the concerns that were discussed will be addressed quickly by the board.

“As the board chair I take very particularly to heart the comments about transparency. That is a place that we certainly can improve, not by way of excuse – capacity has been a challenge,” he said.

Youth Program Manager, Lilianna Reyes,



“I am very glad that the community has shown up to this meeting and I am excited to meet you all,” she began. “I have been listening to everything you have been saying, and I have been taking notes. As far as transparency, I strongly believe the organization needs to have transparency and it needs to start with me.”

— Affirmations Executive Director Susan Erspamer

something that would be more technologically reasonable. That doesn’t mean that every single person that needs help is going to be able to get it as they need it. You aren’t gods.”

Tensions Over Executive Director Discussed

Stevenson went on to describe the current climate at Affirmations and the seemingly tumultuous energy surrounding the center. Newly hired Executive Director Susan Erspamer had recently been involved in a controversial custody battle with her ex partner. Many within the LGBT community reacted negatively to Erspamer’s original decision to argue a precedent that has been used against members of the gay community. Erspamer has since changed her position, legal counsel and legal strategy moving forward in the case.

Stevenson said, “I know the organization has gone through a lot in the last couple of years. And I sat in the executive director chair

believes that despite all the changes in staff and program management, Affirmations is still a place of active inclusion. Through her leadership, a small number of qualified and motivated youth have benefited from the Youth Workforce Development Program where they have learned necessary skills to navigate the workforce. The first program was completed with a 100 percent retention rate and is expanding to provide training for 30 more youth in the city.

“As a trans person of color, I support Affirmations because it supports me,” she said.

Reyes holds a master’s degree and openly discussed her experience in workplace discrimination.

“For Affirmations to see who I am as a person, then to see my skill and to grow that and allow me to have a true voice,” Reyes explained. “I have a real voice at Affirmations; I’m not a token. I really make change for LGBT people of color and for youth.”

After many community participants left,

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Fair Michigan Ballot Initiative Suspended

Media Reports LGBT Community 'Infighting' to Blame

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Michigan Information and Research Services, Inc – known as MIRS – reported Jan. 29 that a controversial ballot initiative to amend the state constitution will end.

Dana Nessel, a Detroit area lawyer best known for her representation of the DeBoer family which led to a favorable US Supreme Court ruling for marriage equality last year, told public television's Tim Skubick that the campaign is "being suspended." Nessel, with GOP attorney Richard McLellan, were co-chairs of the Fair Michigan ballot initiative.

"2016 presented a real, unique opportunity to give Michigan voters the chance at long last to update and expand our constitution to prevent discrimination and ensure everyone is treated fairly after too many years of legislative inaction," said Nessel. "We had the right language at the right time, backed by detailed research that demonstrated Michiganders of all political affiliations, backgrounds and communities across the state would have been behind this effort. Unfortunately, politics got in the way and created barriers to long-term success.

"All worthwhile civil rights battles must start somewhere and this effort is no different. Unfortunately, women and the LGBT community will not receive equal protections under the constitution in 2016, but this does not mark the end of my efforts to amend the constitution to guarantee that everyone is equal. I am committed to solving this critical problem in Michigan," added Nessel.

Controversy from the Start

Nessel's announcement in October that she would run a ballot initiative to extend protections for the LGBT community through an amendment to the constitution was met with controversy. The state's leading organizations representing the community, as well as national organizations, questioned the wisdom of such a move. The fear was that while polling data showed support for LGBT equality as high, when voters were subjected to negative messages regarding the community, that support collapsed.

That was particularly true in relation to the transgender community, and activists feared a political smear campaign similar to that used in Houston, Texas to kill a local human



A community meeting drew over 130 people to Washtenaw Community College Dec. 7, 2015. Most of the LGBT community was concerned about moving ahead with a ballot measure in 2016, feeling it was premature given the data. BTL file photo.

rights ordinance would appear in Michigan. That campaign smear painted the transgender community as predatory threats to women and children.

Nessel and her supporters were frustrated by the foot dragging delays in the legislative process and saw the ballot process as a quick path to victory on the extension of equal rights for the community. But advocates had noted that while the legislative path was slow, headway was being made. Equality Michigan earlier this month announced a multi-year, multi-prong strategy to flip the Legislature from opponent to supporter of the initiative. A loss at the ballot, it was feared, would damage that work.

MIRS reported the business community, which has been a key ally in getting Republican Gov. Rick Snyder on board, was unwilling to support the initiative with the cash necessary to win at the ballot in November.

'Infighting'

Some media reports have implicated so-called "infighting" in the community as the reason the business community was unwilling to step up on the effort. However, the situation

was much more mundane.

Last month, Stephanie White, executive director of Equality Michigan, told BTL that what happened was a discussion on strategy. That is backed by previous reporting.

"Before we go down this path – and maybe it is the path we should take – we just really need to research it, think through it and see what lessons we can learn from around the country," said White in a Nov. 4 interview with BTL.

That quote was contained in a larger story related to 17 national and local LGBT organizations and three state lawmakers issuing a letter urging caution on a ballot measure.

"We all support the need to advance inclusive and comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for the LGBT community of Michigan. We agree with Governor Snyder that it's time to update Elliott-Larsen so that Michigan can be a competitive destination for top talent," the joint statement reads. "No one who wants to work hard and provide for themselves and their families should face discrimination. We share this important goal and believe that it is best achieved by working together. Victory in Michigan requires thoughtful planning and, most importantly,

sitting down with all of the many communities and groups whose support and engagement will be essential to successfully updating our laws. Any attempt to move forward without a clear path to victory is ultimately a disservice to the LGBT people who live in Michigan and risks dividing our community and others who deserve protection from discrimination."

Michigan Public Radio has also reported that somehow Freedom for All Americans, which came in with polling models showing a ballot initiative might lose in Michigan, "called the shots." While the organization certainly is focused on a national strategy and is targeting key states to push a national LGBT equality agenda forward, those involved with the calls for "thoughtful planning" said that decision was made before FFAA became involved.

Despite repeated requests by Between The Lines, Sara Wurfel, a spokesperson for Fair Michigan, refused to provide an accounting for how much money the group had on hand to pay for signature collection. The group had until July 11 to collect 315,654 signatures of registered voters to qualify for the ballot in November.



The keynote address was delivered by Sean Kosofsky, executive director of the Tyler Clementi Foundation. BTL photo: AJ Trager

MDE Announces LGBT Guidance Policy, Tyler Clementi Foundation Calls for 'Upstanders'

Creating 'Climate Change' in Classrooms

BY AJ TRAGER

TROY – Educators, school administrators, activists, students and others working in the state school system gathered Jan. 29 for the fifth annual Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Initiative, a conference to discuss the next steps required in creating safe and inclusive climates in classrooms, schools and school districts.

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health, GLSEN Southeast Michigan chapter, Ruth Ellis Center and presenters from educational institutions such as the Wayne State University College of Education, WSU School of Medicine, Oakland University, Dakota High School, Seaholm High School and the Michigan Department of Education all attended the conference to participate in 16 different workshops or group discussions.

The day-long event was kicked off by John Austin, president of the Michigan State Board of Education, who announced SBE support and leadership in efforts to bring forward new policies and practices to better meet the needs of LGBT youth in Michigan.

“Michigan needs to embrace all our young

people and create environments in our schools and communities that helps them feel safe, welcomed and able to tune in and learn,” said Austin. “Our educators are looking for guidance on the best practices and policies that can meet the needs of transgender students. I thank you for working with us at the state to provide this needed guidance.”

Austin has asked the superintendent, with the help of Michigan educators, to develop new policy guidance to school districts based on the best research and practice in the field.

“It is terrific that a growing number of students are comfortable coming forward with the fact that they have a non-traditional gender and sexual identity; but our schools are looking for guidance on the services and support they need, on issues ranging from bathroom use to counseling and teacher training,” said Austin.

Under state law, Michigan schools are required to implement model anti-bullying policies to protect the rights of LGBT students. These policies were first promulgated by the SBE in 2003 but have since diminished unsafe learning environments for LGBT youth. The state has a long way to go before bullying and

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Clinton Narrowly Wins Iowa Caucus; Cruz Wins for GOP

BY LISA KEEN

There were some interesting LGBT moments in the days running up to Monday's Iowa caucuses: caucuses in which Human Rights Campaign-endorsed Democrat Hillary Clinton appears to have essentially split the vote with U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders; and an early favorite among some Log Cabin Republicans, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, finished surprisingly strong.

Former Secretary of State Clinton had won 49.9 percent of the Democratic delegates in Iowa Monday night, while Sen. Bernie Sanders appeared to have won 49.6 percent. As of the morning of Feb. 2, Clinton's campaign declared victory prior to the Iowa caucus official results. Later that day, she was deemed the winner with 22 delegates; Sanders had 21 delegates.

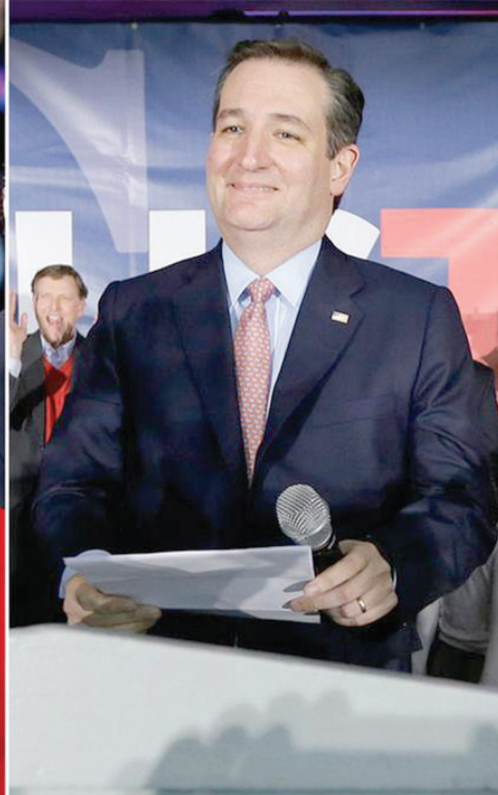
U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas won the Iowa caucuses by securing 29 percent of the votes for the Republican nomination. Real estate mogul Donald Trump came in second with 24 percent, followed by Rubio with 23 percent.

Cruz had anti-gay Iowa activists Bob Vander Plaats and U.S. Rep. Steve King on stage with him as he made his victory speech Monday night. On that stage, Cruz praised the 48,000-plus Iowans who voted for him at the caucuses. He said the campaign was about getting back to Judeo-Christian values.

Rubio's strong third place showing in Iowa may have been due in part to his being endorsed by the state's largest newspaper, the Des Moines Register. But it was certainly one of the more stunning LGBT moments when the endorsement from the Register chided Rubio for wanting to fight "the battles of the past" against same-sex marriage. Following the Iowa Supreme Court's ruling that required equal treatment for same-sex couples, the Register all but called for a movement to recall the court's justices.

Other LGBT moments in the later days of the Iowa campaign included Duck Dynasty star Phil Robertson, who supported Republican Ted Cruz, railing against marriage between same-sex partners as "wicked" and "evil," and Republican frontrunner Donald Trump reiterating his already stated disagreement with the U.S. Supreme Court striking down state bans on such marriages.

Cruz didn't explicitly mention the Supreme Court ruling against state bans on marriage for same-sex couples, but he told CNN Sunday that, as president, he would on "Day One" reverse all of President Obama's "illegal" executive orders. Rubio repeatedly promised the same. Although the executive orders have not been deemed "illegal," President Obama has signed executive orders to



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prevent discrimination against LGBT people in employment by federal contractors and in hospital visitation policies.

All three Democratic candidates have repeatedly voiced their support for equal rights and dignity for LGBT people.

During her speech to supporters late Monday night, Clinton said she knows her administration can "protect our rights – women's rights, gay rights, voting rights, immigrants' rights, workers rights."

Sanders' speech Monday night focused on income inequality, tuition-free college and climate change.

Donna Red Wing, a longtime LGBT activist nationally and now executive director of the statewide LGBT group One Iowa, said both Clinton and Sanders had strong support in the LGBT community there.

"I certainly cannot gauge where the LGBT community is around the top Democratic candidates," said Red Wing last November. "Sanders has an amazing ground game and people in the community love him for his

long-time and unwavering support of LGBT equality. Clinton, on the other hand, also has a great many supporters in the community and an exceptional campaign, one that is gaining traction."

By Jan. 19, Clinton picked up a key endorsement.

The Human Rights Campaign board endorsed Clinton, saying she had "unveiled the most robust and ambitious LGBT plan any candidate for president has ever laid out" and has a "long record as a champion for LGBT rights both in the U.S. and, notably, around the globe."

Later that week, HRC President Chad Griffin joined Clinton at a campaign event in West Des Moines and introduced her to a rally and, according to the Des Moines Register, said, "All of the progress we've made and all that we're still fighting for – all of it – is on the ballot this year."

The Register said Clinton told the crowd of about 900 supporters, "We have to end the travesty that under our Constitution, you can

get married on Saturday and because of it, fired on Monday."

Meanwhile, Log Cabin Republicans stepped up its campaign against Clinton, posting a video of her comments in 2002 and 2004, saying she did not support marriage for gay couples.

"Democrats and members of the LGBT community have given Hillary Clinton a pass on past transgressions and even allowed her to rewrite the history of the gay rights movement; Log Cabin Republicans will not," said Log Cabin national president Gregory Anthony. "It's time for the people of Iowa – and the country – to know that when it mattered, Hillary Clinton was wrong on gay rights."

Both the Republican and Democratic fields shrank even before the caucuses were over Monday night. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee suspended his campaign for the Republican nomination.

Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley announced he was suspending his campaign for the Democratic nomination. O'Malley, like Clinton and Sanders, had a strong record in support of LGBT equal rights.

Now the smaller fields move to New Hampshire, where the first 2016 presidential primary takes place next Tuesday, Feb. 9. Clinton has an "LGBT Granite Staters for Hillary" organization in place there, that includes the state's first openly gay state senator, David Pierce.

► **SOGI Conference**

Continued from p. 9

anti-LGBT mindsets are eradicated from the school system. The SBE will issue additional LGBT policy guidance in the next several months.

The keynote address was delivered by Sean Kosofsky, executive director of the Tyler Clementi Foundation. Ever since Tyler Clementi took his life in 2010 after enduring much harassment for being gay, his family has been dedicated to creating a new story of inclusion, dignity and acceptance for other LGBT youth and focuses its work on bullying and how best to address the needs of vulnerable populations, especially LGBT youth.

LGBT youth experience bullying on the internet and not just at school, Kosofsky said, and introduced the concept of being an “upstander,” or someone who intervenes when they witness someone being bullied. Kosofsky said that this is one of the main ways the culture can help shift what it means to perpetuate a culture that influences bullying.

“All social science says that we don’t intervene,” he said. “We all say, ‘It’s not my problem.’ We all rationalize why we aren’t helping. It is human nature to not intervene.”

Reporting an incident of bullying to the internet moderators or to someone else in school or a place of employment can really make an imprint on the person being bullied. Kosofsky said that one never knows what someone else is going through.

“Reaching out to someone who is enduring something difficult is so transformative,” he said.

In an effort to not duplicate current programs assisting in the LGBT youth sector, the Tyler Clementi Foundation has designed some budding programs to help bridge the gap in care for LGBT youth experiencing bullying.

The foundation has partnered with a New York law school to provide free legal assistance and possibly litigation in cases of bullying, in a new program called the Tyler Clementi Institute for Internet Safety. The program will be launched online sometime in the next few weeks.

Sean Kosofsky introduced the concept of being an “upstander,” or someone who intervenes when they witness someone being bullied.

“We believe that the burden for preventing bullying has been placed exclusively on the schools. We think the parents can help, too,” Kosofsky said.

In another program, the Foundation has also started reaching out to parents. Partnering with an employment assistance program based out of North Carolina, which does trainings all over the world, the foundation will educate and train parents at their workplace to recognize if their child is the bully or the one being bullied.

Kosofsky was hired as the Foundation’s first hired position last fall. He served as the director of policy for the Triangle Foundation (now Equality Michigan). Kosofsky helped introduce and build support for the eventual passage of Michigan’s anti-bullying statute, Matt’s Safe Schools Law.

Executive Director of Equality Michigan, Stephanie White, served as emcee for the event.

The conference is a project of the School of Education and Human Services at Oakland University. The SOGI Initiative aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment; to create a more supportive and inclusive campus climate that encourages the suggestions of all students, staff, faculty and administrators regardless of sex, gender identity or sexual orientation; to increase awareness of the realities that face LGBT people; and to advocate for the larger LGBT community. The initiative provides supportive, educational outreach and community events and facilitates networking opportunities for LGBT and allied individuals. To learn more and to get involved in future events, go to www.oakland.edu/sogi.

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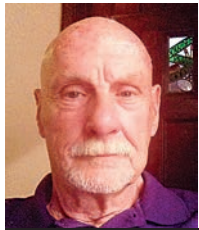
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Private Journal, 25 Years Away?

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

JAN. 4, 2041 – Another same-sex couple has been “relocated.” My neighbors two doors down. Gus who did a wonderful job of gentrifying that old house on Wells Street.

Didn’t really get to know them, but they always waved. Yelled hello. Just gone! Last week, two others. Tom and Martin. Belonged to our block club. Gadabouts, but great gardeners. Just vanished. Very strange.

Within days their condoplex – furniture, everything – was “appropriated” by Theocratic America Party members. Last night there was a front-yard burning of books, antique CD collection. Antique albums of Garland, Streisand, Lady Gaga (whoever she was).

Come to think of it, as much as I didn’t like them – too secretive, if you ask me – Margo and her longtime partner Ella – in their mid-70s – are missing. A nosy neighbor at Cafe & Pot whispered to me that they were taken away in a black van about 3 a.m. last Sunday. Screaming.

I mind my own business. But something’s going on, not only in this small town, but our capitol as well. Anyone with half a brain could see it coming. 2026: all same-sex marriages voided, constitutionally made illegal. 2027: gays, lesbians, trans must declare themselves, and register for one-year of mandatory church/state sponsored reparative therapy.

If caught in the slightest compromising behavior – say holding hands – LGBT people are subject to further RT for as long as it takes, and – a big money for the state! – at their own expense.

2027: All Political Pervs must get listed with 3-D photo, fingerprints, GRINDR contacts, on the America First Perv Watch List.

2024: Pervs are barred from teaching, practicing law, medicine, acting on stage or hologram touch-and-feel videos, wide-screen movies. New Hollywood’s in a panic!

And! “All known, avowed, militant Outers” (Theocratic America Party derogatory term for non-curable sexual deviants) “must wear a rainbow armband, and observe a weekly 6:30 p.m. body WiFi monitoring curfew.”

July 4, 2041 Journal: Today I learn at a TA-sponsored church picnic that recalcitrant Outers are being relocated to Canyon Center West. My friend Martha (sworn to hush-hush to these cursive written journal pages) has several suspect acquaintances.

She received a smuggled-out postcard: “Having a trying time. Overcrowded. Bad ass place. Health concerns. Miss family. Prayers. D. L. ‘Bro’ Jones.”

July 30, 2041: TAP President Mitt Harkinback spoke on Total Faith All Channels America about the concessions we have to make during TA’s 10 Year Plan. Called for a “unity of vision: a need to be vigilant for any behavior or opinion, covert or otherwise, that’s unpatriotic, anti-state, going against political and/or America’s theocratic, biblical good. It’s the duty of every thinking citizen to report any abomination of loyalty.”

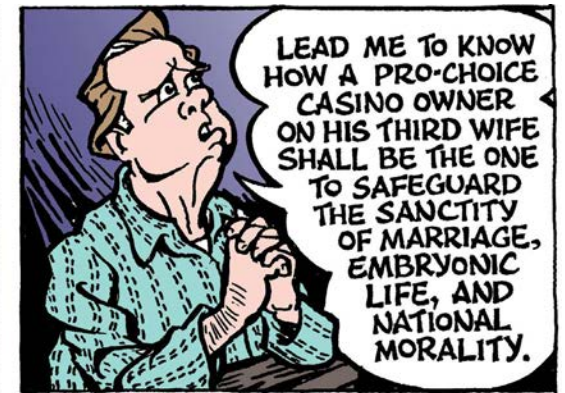
Oct. 31, 2041: Picked up the Banner of Victory, unfortunately our only news source. This item caught my eye. “Washington, D.C. has become the first zone to be ‘LGBT Outer free.’ This thorough ‘cleansing’ is the result of thousands of undercover reports, well-coordinated psychological efforts, low-visibility, rapid roundup strategies.

“RT accounts for much of this outcome; so much so that, as approved therapy for brain rewiring, it will be used – along with mind altering religious techniques – for other anti-America First asocial tendencies.

“Those Outers not responding to RT are relocated to fasting and in an off-limits Grand Canyon concentration camp area. ‘Rest assured,’ stresses President Harkinback, ‘no government tax monies are used to support these aberrant lifestyle incarcerations.

“Many may perish. That’s their choice. God and country first! LGBT Pervs, last. If at all.”

Charles@pridesource.com1



Viewpoint



OPINION BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Stalls for Change: We Need Safe Communities, Not Urinary Segregation

Having spent several joyous days in the land of gender neutral bathrooms (a.k.a. Creating Change in Chicago), I am even more astounded than ever by the fear-based, hate-driven and incredibly stupid bathroom wars continually waged against the LGBTQ community. It is incredible that we as a society, here in 2016, are more concerned about where we pee than creating safe communities.

Remember those first bathrooms we encounter as a child – when you had to go, you had to go, and the only impediment was that family member taking a bit too much time while you were dancing about in the hallway. There was time for play and bonding in the bathroom. I can remember washing both of my parents’ hair, making crazy styles out of the bubbles from the shampoo like they had with me and I later

did with my son. I can remember heart-to-heart conversations with my mom sitting on the toilet stool while she bathed and her lectures to me while sitting on the same toilet stool as I showered trying to get my head together after a night of partying. I can remember sharing secrets with friends in the school bathroom. And let’s not forget those “meetings in the ladies’ room”!

But I also remember being told of the boogie man in the bathroom; being told not to go by myself and to be on the lookout for scary people. And it wasn’t just for little girls – I remember my brother begging to go to the boy’s bathroom and not to be dragged into the ladies’ room with my mom or my sister. Something just wasn’t safe.

Then there were the stories of segregated bathrooms under Jim Crow Laws and racial segregation.

These laws meant that black people were legally required to use public bathrooms marked “for colored only.” Stories about living under Jim Crow, driving past gas station rest stops to find a “colored” bathroom – even a field – to relieve oneself, were a reality for my grandparents and a part of the family history.

Even being born and raised in Michigan didn’t spare my mother from bathroom harassment. Her entry into the work force at a factory exposed her to separate but unequal facilities and sexual harassment around normal human bodily functions by her male coworkers. As much as we want to believe that bathrooms are just public facilities, we have to recognize that sometimes they are not safe spaces. And it is these fears that hate mongers prey upon and use as fodder to demonize anyone perceived as the

See Stalls for Change, next page

Calling Out Insensitive, Anti-Semitic Protest

BY MARK SEGAL

When I was a boy of 13, my grandmother took me to my first civil rights demonstration to teach me about racism and social justice. She knew those issues well: Our family fled from the pogroms in Russia, others in our family perished in the Holocaust and Grandmom even fought for women's rights.

On that day, I marched with Cecil B. Moore and Robert N.C. Nix. Five years later, in 1969, I'd be a member of New York's Gay Liberation Front and, in the name of justice, we'd march with The Black Panthers to free Angela Davis from her arrest and detention, chanting, "Hey hey, ho ho, House of D (New York's Women's House of Detention) has to go." But last week, when I heard LGBT activists at the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference in Chicago using part of that slogan against our own community, it was a sad day. And it sickened me to the pit of my stomach.

Creating Change is the largest gathering of LGBT activists across the nation. Typically, all issues affecting our communities are discussed, with people being able to agree to disagree with respect. But a major controversy happened this year. And what usually is and should be a place for dialogue became unsafe. This incident was at the very least insincere, and at its worst anti-Semitic.

A Wider Bridge, which promotes ties between LGBT Americans and Israel, was scheduled to have a reception at Creating Change. But some conference participants complained about an event featuring a group with ties with Israel. Presto, the Task Force cancelled the event.

► Stalls for Change

Continued from p. 12

other – whether it is African-Americans, gays, trans folks, immigrants, you name it.

Individuals who cling to the belief of gender-segregated bathrooms claim they are protecting us from predators while upholding some outdated paternalistic viewpoint. They believe that some of us need protection – protection from "the other" breaking down barriers of their status quo, challenging their belief systems and perceptions.

While reading trans activist Willie Wilkinson's book, "Born On The Edge of Race & Gender: A Voice For Cultural Competency," I was tickled by his account of the baby shower where his mother had done the "ring test." Friends hung her wedding ring on a piece of string and held it over her pregnant belly. The ring swung like a pendulum and the results indicated she was having a boy. At birth the doctor looked between the child's legs and announced a girl, but the ring's prediction had actually been correct – Wilkinson was just born into the wrong package.

I was tickled because I had recently attended a lesbian shower and they did the same thing – using the "ring test" as a back up to the sonogram

This led to a debate about anti-Semitism, apartheid and political correctness. Eventually, conference organizers did the right thing and reinstated the session. After all, this conference was about "creating change," and change occurs with communication. However, the event led opponents of Israel to protest; such protesters essentially urge people to boycott any LGBT event relating to Israel, not due to its LGBT laws, but because of how it treats Palestinians. They use terms like "apartheid" and "racism."

Here's what they don't state. While Israel is welcoming to LGBT people, Palestinian law criminalizes homosexuality. If you call the Palestinian Authority at the UN Office and ask about LGBT rights, as I did, you'll be treated to hang-ups (first call), laughter and a, "Don't you understand our culture?" question (second call) and finally, "We don't talk about that." A fourth call offered a phone number in the Palestinian state for me to call.

The protesters want us to support people who laugh at and criminalize us. They don't explain that LGBT Palestinians escape to Israel for protection. It is so unsafe that the group fighting for Palestinian queer rights is located in Israel. Why? The Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip has declared homosexuality punishable by death. Hamas co-founder Mahmoud al-Zahar has said, "You in the West do not live like human beings. You do not even live like animals. You accept homosexuality. And now you criticize us?"

I've visited and written about the region on many occasions. In fact, I spent time with the first out LGBT organization in Beirut, writing

See Anti-Semitic Protest, page 15

photo. Maybe instead of worrying about gender, we should be concerned about healthy children and a safer world.

You see I am concerned about safety – safety for our elders; safety in all our communities; safety in our schools; safety for my trans sisters and brothers to simply live their authentic lives; safety for immigrants from false rhetoric and illegal detention; safety from gun violence; and safety from our drinking water. I want to live in a safer world – period! But we will not have a safer world by standing on the necks of others. One of the great things about this year's Creating Change Conference was the opportunity to interact with and observe guests at the hotel from outside the LGBTQ community. Best overheard comment from an over-50, heterosexual woman to her husband: "Gender neutral bathrooms make sense. There's always a line for the ladies' room. I just went in and peed."

Gender-neutral bathrooms work! Now let's get busy fighting the real issues by building a truly safer world.

Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. You can follow her writing and activities at www.mychangeiam.com and on www.twitter.com/mychangeiam.

Creep of the Week

Donald Trump

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Well, Iowa is over and Donald Trump emerged victorious. That is, if what he was



Trump

I predict that if Trump doesn't win New Hampshire, he'll quit the race like a baby wearing a wig. And he'll find some way to blame Megyn Kelly.

Ted Cruz is a terrible candidate. So is Trump. A friend of mine asked me who I thought was more terrifying, Cruz or Trump. I responded that I didn't think comparing the GOP's candidates based on how terrifying they were made any sense since each individual person is a horror show in his or her own way. Not only that, but I think the very act of claiming that one terrible candidate is worse than another terrible candidate implies that there's a level of acceptable terribleness. This mindset can make voters lazy and apathetic.

Case in point: Michigan's Gov. Rick Snyder, the man who poisoned an entire city. Back in the 2010 Republicans Primary there were a lot of terrible choices. More than one Democrat said to me, "Well, Snyder isn't as bad as some of the others." Voter turn out sucked. And look where we are now.

When it comes to LGBT issues, Trump is far more tolerant than his rivals. But that doesn't mean he's fully supportive of LGBT rights. Nor does his half-hearted support redeem him as a person. He's still terrible.

A big sticking point is his opposition to marriage equality. Trump calls himself a "traditionalist" on the issue of marriage, even though he has been married three times.

In 2011 in the New York Times, Trump expressed his distaste for marriage equality using a bizarre golf analogy. "A lot of people – I don't want this to sound trivial – but a lot of people are switching to these really long putters, very unattractive," he said. "It's weird. You see these great players with these really long putters, because they can't

I didn't think comparing the GOP's candidates based on how terrifying they were made any sense since each individual person is a horror show in his or her own way.

sink three-footers anymore. And, I hate it. I am a traditionalist. I have so many fabulous friends who happen to be gay, but I am a traditionalist."

Okay, so on the issue of long putters and marriage equality: they're unattractive, weird and he hates them. All because he's a traditionalist. Got it.

On Jan. 31, in an interview with Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday," Trump said that he would like to see a reversal of marriage equality in the U.S.

"If I'm elected, I would be very strong in putting certain judges on the bench that I think maybe could change things, but they got a long way to go," Trump said. "I mean, at some point we have to get back down to business. But there's no question about it, and most people feel this way. They have ruled on it. I wish that was done by the states. I don't like the way they ruled. I disagree with the Supreme Court from the standpoint it should be a states' rights issue, and that's the way it should have been ruled on, Chris, not the way they did it. This was a very surprising ruling. And I can see changes coming down the line, frankly."

And just in case Trump's point was lost in his rambling answer, Wallace asked, "Sir, are you saying that if you become president that you might try to appoint justices to overrule the decision on same-sex marriage?"

"I would strongly consider that, yes," Trump replied.

Granted, this is what all the GOP candidates would try to do. If any of them get elected president and get to appoint Supreme Court justices, it would be a disaster. LGBT rights, women's reproductive rights, voting rights. All down the drain.

So while some think Trump is the lesser of many evils, the truth is he's just as evil as the rest.



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Transmissions

Can You See the Real Me?



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Every so often I like to take a step back from the issues of the day and spend a moment or two on what is known as “transgender 101.” I know that not everyone who might casually wander across this column is transgender, or even may have the slightest glimmer of what it’s all about. That said, I hope that everyone might get a little something out of this.

One of the most important things to understand about transgender people, beyond anything else, is this: when we live in our preferred gender identity, or opt to express gender in any manner of our choosing, we are being authentic to ourselves. You are seeing the person we really see ourselves as.

What you see then is our authentic selves, presenting in a gender identity that feels right to us. We’re not trying to deceive. Indeed, it’s quite the opposite; we’ve dropped the pretense of fitting into a gender identity that doesn’t fit us.

There are those out there, especially in the fights against public accommodations for trans people, who will tell you that it is a simple matter to identify as trans, and that allowing transgender people to use the restroom of their appropriate gender will open the floodgates for others to claim to be transgender in a bid to harm others.

To date, there are no truly credible examples of this happening in the fashion our foes would claim.

We have usually spent a significant portion of our lives coming to this conclusion. It is rare that we might come to such a decision without a fair amount of soul searching and introspection. Many of us will try anything else we can before we opt to transition. It’s just not a simple decision.

To the average non-transgender person, the notion of changing their gender is a non-issue. They’re perfectly happy to remain what they were assigned at birth – usually due to the configuration

of their genitalia – and have not felt any significant displeasure with their gender identity. To such folks, they have always been a man or a woman, and expect to be such for the rest of their lives. The issue of their gender is moot.

Indeed, even if they opt to appear as the opposite gender for, say, a film role such as Eddie Redmayne’s portrayal of “The Danish Girl,” they understand that this is simply a role they are portraying.

In 2003, a largely discredited psychologist, J. Michael Bailey, released his equally discredited book, “The Man Who Would Be Queen.” In the book, Bailey discussed the theory of “Autogynephilia” developed by sexologist Ray Blanchard.

They remain male or female, and – unlike the mangled story that is “The Danish Girl” – appearing as a gender opposite the one they identify with does not change their core gender identity.

Unfortunately, many might take their own sense of gender and opt to apply it to trans people, assuming that transfolks have this same innate gender identity that corresponds with their primary sexual characteristics, and that they have somehow “gone astray” at best – or are attempting to deceive at worst.

In 2003, a largely discredited psychologist, J. Michael Bailey, released his equally discredited book, “The Man Who Would Be Queen.” In the book, Bailey discussed the theory of “autogynephilia” developed by sexologist Ray Blanchard.

In Blanchard and Bailey’s world, transsexuality as we know it does not exist. Instead there are people who are “homosexual transsexuals” who seek genital reconstruction to attract straight men into (presumably) gay relationships, and “autogynephiliac transsexuals” who are sexually aroused at the idea of having a female body. This is what you see presented in the aforementioned “The Danish Girl,” by the way.

I should add that, yes there is such a term as “autoandrophilia,” though

Blanchard doesn’t seem to think that exists. In a 2013 Vice interview, Blanchard stated, “I proposed it simply in order not to be accused of sexism.”

In this notion of “autogynephilia,” trans lives are stripped of legitimacy. Even though Blanchard has generally supported genital reconstruction surgeries for transsexuals, this notion of trans identity being little more than a fetish over having a female body – or, of course, wanting surgery to “fool straight guys” – says that the lived experiences of a lot of transgender people is to be discounted.

“An autogynephile does not necessarily become sexually aroused every time he pictures himself as female or engages in feminine behavior, any more than a heterosexual man automatically gets an erection whenever he sees an attractive woman,” said Blanchard in the Journal on Sex and Marital Therapy in 1991. “Thus, the concept of autogynephilia – like that of heterosexuality, homosexuality or pedophilia – refers to a potential for sexual excitation.”

In short, it doesn’t matter if you actually got sexually excited, but you might have.

These same standards are not applied to non-transgender people, mind you. When a somewhat limited test for “autogynephilia” in non-transgender women was administered in 2009, it put forth that “autogynephilia” is simply too broad to be taken seriously, and only exists to negatively portray transgender people as fetishists.

One more thing: I mentioned that whole bit above about wanting medical transitions in order to “fool men.” What Blanchard and many others are saying here is, again, that we’re here to deceive you, rather than showing you who we truly are. I’d be remiss to mention that this assumption of transgender deception is the exact same thing that crops up in a majority of anti-transgender murders.

Yet when we tell you we are male or female, we are being honest: this is who we are, the real us. Understand that, and you’ve taken a step into deeper understanding of what it means to be trans.

Gwen Smith is the real deal: accept no substitutions. You’ll find her at www.gwensmith.com.




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► Anti-Semitic Protest

Continued from p. 13

about lesbian women in Jordan and the oppression in Egypt, among other topics. I know the people on both sides well. I was embraced in Beirut and spit on in Jerusalem.

I was at Creating Change to speak about my just-published memoir, which speaks of my numerous arrests and nickel rides fighting for social justice. In many of the cities on my book tour, a young LGBT person asks, "What can we do today to create activism?" So I appreciate many in that crowd at the protest who were there wanting to do something. Unfortunately, they weren't given the facts. They were misled into what became an ugly anti-Semitic rally.

The first question we should ask protest organizers is: If you're suggesting a boycott of Israel because of non-LGBT issues, why not speak out about Palestine's anti-gay laws? Why not explain that many LGBT people have had to escape anti-gay violence in Palestine? If you were fair, the position should be to boycott both, but instead you single out one. And that one place has become a safe haven for LGBT Palestinians. That is anti-Semitism, with a dose of self-hatred. Supporting those who wish LGBT people – us – dead is the definition of self-hatred.

The next question to ask protesters is even simpler: Why are you not protesting the anti-LGBT position of the Palestinian state? Do you approve of the draconian laws of Putin's Russia, or those of Uganda? Palestine is equally as, if not more so, anti-gay as those countries.

Then there's the issue of racism. That same term has been used to describe our country by the "Black Lives

The first question we should ask protest organizers is: If you're suggesting a boycott of Israel because of non-LGBT issues, why not speak out about Palestine's anti-gay laws? Why not explain that many LGBT people have had to escape anti-gay violence in Palestine? If you were fair, the position should be to boycott both, but instead you single out one.

Matter" effort. Have you called for an international boycott of the United States? No, you single out one entity: Israel, the Jewish State. Yes, "Jewish." We all know why Israel was created, as a safe haven for Jews. We also know how Palestinians have fought Israel, at times suggesting it be wiped off the face of the earth, along with its people, the Jews. Yasser Arafat coined that into a slogan: "From the (Jordan) River to the Sea." To Jews, that slogan represents extermination. Now, imagine being a Jew in a room with 200 people outside banging on the doors yelling that slogan, or wrapping a Palestinian flag over the head of a Jew trying to make his way into the room. That is what happened in Chicago. Windy City Times did a great job of capturing most of the demonstration on video (ow.ly/XByz1).

Many of us would gladly protest Israeli treatment of Palestinians – I myself support a Palestinian state, the so-called "two-state solution" – but that is different than supporting the Palestinian government that wants you put to death if you're LGBT and live on the Gaza Strip. But trapping Jews in a room yelling what is as close to a death slogan as there is ... Does that conjure something? Look up "Kristallnacht." Insensitive at the very least.

It's great to see this generation wanting to protest injustice, but they need to

understand the issues and the lessons of our early fight for equality. Fight first for our community's rights, since if we do not, nobody else will. LGBT Palestinians can't speak out in their homeland, and your protests only embolden those who keep them from speaking out.

The Task Force acknowledged its mishandling of the situation and said it will work to prevent future incidents. While they may have been unprepared, protest organizers are the ones who need to apologize – not just to those in that room who were forced to leave through a back door for safety, but to the entire LGBT community for their insensitivity and for supporting those who support our oppression.

The term these individuals use is "pinkwashing." From this time on, pinkwashing equals self-hating anti-Semites.

We members of Gay Liberation Front have varied views on Israel and Palestine, but one thing we would never do is act with such insensitivity and suggest support for those who wish to put LGBT people to death or eradicate an entire race of people. Shame on you!

Mark Segal is the nation's most-award-winning commentator in LGBT media. His memoir, "And Then I Danced, Traveling the Road to LGBT Equality," is available online or at your favorite bookseller.

far as transparency, I strongly believe the organization needs to have transparency and it needs to start with me."

Call to Action

A volunteer sheet circulated during the meeting for individuals to sign up and be a part of the Affirmations' volunteer staff.

The board also reminded the audience that there are still open seats on the board for community members who want to consider joining the board.

Emily, a former volunteer at the Welcome and Service Desk who moved to Michigan from Oregon in 2013, was glad to see that there was so much passion and emotion in the room.

"In Portland you can forget that

there are straight people in the world. Coming here I felt like a fish out of water. I didn't know where my people were. So I was very grateful to have Affirmations," she said. "I hope you all know that the emotion and passion in the room is a really good thing. And it is because we need you to be here and we are invested in you being here – having a vital service."

"I think there is some tough work to do to figure out what is the relevance of an LGBT center in 2016. Because we have marriage equality and we don't necessarily need gay bars anymore because you can pretty much be gay in any bar," she continued. "We can be out a lot easier these days, so what is going to be the purpose of having the center?"

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► Affirmations

Continued from p. 7

Erspamer spoke to the board, as per the meeting agenda. Along with reacting to the community comments, she also outlined some of what the center plans to do in 2016. Erspamer announced that an annual report would be starting in 2016 and soon they will begin a strategic three-year plan, including a new brand designed by students from the Center for Creative Studies.

"I am very glad that the community has shown up to this meeting and I am excited to meet you all," she began. "I have been listening to everything you have been saying, and I have been taking notes. As

Gay Rights Advocates Criticize 2 Dozen Oklahoma Bills

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) – Gay rights advocates in Oklahoma are calling on Republican leaders to repudiate more than two dozen bills that they say unfairly target members of the LGBT community.

Freedom Oklahoma Executive Director Troy Stevenson said Tuesday that 18 bills remain active from last year. Another nine have been filed ahead of the 2016 session that he says discriminate against the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Among them is a bill by Coalgate Republican Sen. Josh Brecheen that would cut off state funding to schools that allow students of one sex to use restrooms or changing rooms designated for the opposite sex.

Others dubbed “religious freedom” measures would protect people from discriminating against gay people if such discrimination was in accordance with a “sincerely held religious belief.”

Ministers Seek to Invalidate State Law on Marriage Licenses

FRANKLIN, Tenn. (AP) – Three Williamson County ministers are seeking to invalidate portions of Tennessee’s marriage statute.

A lawsuit filed Jan. 21 notes Tennessee law requires marriage license applicants to be male and female.

Last year’s U.S. Supreme Court decision struck down state laws that exclude same-sex couples. The suit argues that means Tennessee law pertaining to marriage licenses is invalid.

Tennessee law also requires a valid license before a marriage is solemnized. According to the lawsuit, the minister plaintiffs are concerned they may be breaking the law by solemnizing marriages for which there is no valid license.

Attorney and former state lawmaker David Fowler filed the lawsuit in Williamson County Chancery Court on behalf of the ministers and two others. The suit also seeks to prevent the county clerk from issuing all marriage licenses.

Indiana, LGBT Organizations Wrestle with Senate Bill 344

BY BTL STAFF

INDIANAPOLIS – On Jan. 27, the Indiana Senate Rules and Legislative Procedure Committee advanced Senate Bill 344; the committee voted 7-5 to send the bill to the full Senate after cutting off testimony from a number of LGBT Hoosiers as well as business and faith leaders. However, on Feb. 2, lawmakers in the Indiana General Assembly failed to allow a vote on the measure.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana felt that, “while fundamentally flawed, (the measure) would have opened the door for updating Indiana’s civil rights law to protect Hoosiers based on sexual orientation and gender identity.”

Jane Henegar, executive director of the ACLU of Indiana, said, “It is extremely disappointing that lawmakers did not allow a vote to occur on the Senate floor today regarding an update to our civil rights law, an update that could have finally put to rest the question of equal protection for LGBT people in Indiana. Lawmakers left this crucial issue unanswered despite our tireless efforts to help fix the deeply flawed legislation, and despite strong support across the state from faith leaders, business leaders and public officials interested in moving Indiana forward.

“As Hoosiers and as Americans, we need to stand against discrimination and resolve this issue that has divided our state and inflicted real and persistent damage. Doing nothing has never been an acceptable option. Hoosiers need full protection from discrimination now. As important members our community, gay and transgender people need to be able to work, live and take care of themselves and their families without fear of discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. We will continue to fight during this legislative session to update our civil rights law and undo the damage done to our state by last year’s RFRA.”

However, some of this response differs from many LGBT organizations who felt SB 344 was wholly discriminatory. Lambda Legal, for example, is calling on Indiana’s LGBT people, allies, business leaders, athletes and advocates to re-engage in the fight against SB 344.

“Senate Bill 344 provides such a broad license to discriminate based on religion that it is nothing short of a Super RFRA,” said Camilla Taylor, Counsel in the Midwest Regional Office of Lambda Legal. “This bill also does not even pretend to protect transgender Hoosiers, excluding them entirely, which is completely unacceptable. The sheep’s clothing barely covers the wolf. Like last spring, we need all hands on deck. As written, SB 344 is designed to hurt LGBT people in Indiana. Anyone who supports this bill doesn’t have the best interests of the LGBT community



in mind.”

“Allowing this bill to take even one step forward is an appalling mistake and a betrayal of all Hoosiers,” adds Taylor. “Legalizing discrimination robs Indiana of business and opportunity, and worsens the state’s already muddled reputation. We are just starting to understand the extent of the damage caused by last year’s RFRA, which according to media reports cost the City of Indianapolis an estimated \$60 million in lost opportunities. It is clear that Indiana hasn’t bounced back from last year’s fight -- far from it. The Governor can claim that Indiana is a welcoming state, but businesses clearly know better because they are choosing to set up shop elsewhere.”

Senate Bill 344 extends very limited civil rights to lesbian and gay people in employment, housing and public accommodations but the bill also includes broad religious exemptions that give businesses and publicly funded social service agencies legal permission to discriminate against LGBT people in Indiana. Furthermore, SB 344 completely excludes any protection for people who are transgender.

“Senate Bill 344 must be amended to ensure all Hoosiers, including transgender Hoosiers, are protected from discrimination. It is completely unacceptable in its current form,” Matt McTighe, executive director of Freedom for All Americans, said. “We will continue working alongside the business community and folks from all walks of life to amend the bill and prove that Indiana is open and welcoming to all.”

“Indiana has a long way to go before it’s truly open and welcoming to all,” McTighe said. “Until everyone is protected from discrimination, including LGBT Hoosiers, the state’s reputation will continue to suffer.”

The Senate Committee rejected an

amendment proposed by Democratic Senate minority leader Timothy Lanane that would have eliminated these damaging religious exemptions and would have provided protection from discrimination to transgender people. Among the amendments accepted to SB 344 was an amendment to allow anti-abortion organizations to exclude lesbian and gay people. Another would allow nonprofit organizations, with no affiliation to a church or faith, to discriminate if they offer religious-centered programs, even if they receive state-funding. The last amendment repeals both the RFRA passed last year, and the “fix,” which prevented the RFRA from being used as a defense to discrimination claims, and replaced it with a standard favoring religious defenses to discrimination claims.

“Once again, Indiana lawmakers are trying to pass a bill that unacceptably leaves LGBT Hoosiers at continued risk of discrimination, and now even includes dangerous RFRA-like language attached as an amendment that strips away last year’s so-called ‘fix,’” said HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow. “S.B. 344 is deeply flawed across a number of areas, but most importantly, it would leave transgender Hoosiers behind. With the new amendment attached, it could now also allow anyone to wield religion as a sword of discrimination. We implore the Indiana Legislature to abandon this dangerous legislation, and instead seek to pass fully inclusive non-discrimination protections that would truly safeguard LGBT Hoosiers and visitors from discrimination.”

“Lawmakers still aren’t listening. Tonight, they took a bad bill and made it worse for LGBT people in our state who have to live each day in fear that they could be fired, denied housing or turned away from a public place for who they are,” said Chris Paulsen, Freedom

BTL  
Join The Conversation

Bill Would Toss Adoption Preference for Heterosexual Couples

BY BOB CHRISTIE

PHOENIX (AP) – Democrats in the Arizona Legislature want a law that requires judges to give preferences to married heterosexual couples in adoption stricken from the books.

The legislation introduced in both the Senate and House removes current language giving preferences to a husband and wife over others in adoptions. Backers say the U.S. Supreme Court's decision last year legalizing same-sex marriage bans laws giving preferences to heterosexual couple over gay couples.

Sen. Steve Farley, D-Tucson, also said single parents shouldn't be given second-tier status on adoptions so the proposal completely eliminates preferences for married couples. He said single parents are just as qualified and sometimes more so to be good parents.

He also points to the approximately 19,000 children in state foster care as a reason to change current law.

"Anyone who would argue that it's better off to leave a foster kid in a group home instead of in a loving family, even if it happens to be a mom and a mom or a dad and a dad, is arguing out of their own ideological interest not out of the interest of the kid," said Farley, the lead Senate sponsor.

The Senate version, Senate Bill 1171, is assigned to the Health and Human Services Committee chaired by Sen. Nancy Barto, R-Phoenix. She opposes Farley's bill.

Committee chairs can prevent bills from being heard by not placing them

“As confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court last year, married same-sex couples must be treated equal to opposite-sex couples in all respects. We want to hear from any same-sex couples in Arizona who receive discriminatory treatment in adoption services because the law right now clearly prohibits that, even without the proposed amendments.”

– ACLU spokesman Steve Kilar said in a written statement.

on hearing agendas.

Barto said Thursday that Arizona lawmakers passed the law to ensure children can be raised by a mother and father.

"These other decisions in law that our elected representatives have chosen to make, these changes preferring a man and a woman in terms of adoption and other things, those have not been addressed by the Supreme Court," Barto said. "Those are still up to the states. And they should be based on the social science, which is what the original laws making them so were based on."

"Until the social science indicates otherwise, a man and a woman, a mother and father, are the best place for a child to be raised," Barto said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona disagrees with Barto that the Supreme Court decision doesn't apply to adoption preference laws.

"As confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court last year, married same-sex couples must be treated equal to

opposite-sex couples in all respects," ACLU spokesman Steve Kilar said in a written statement. "We want to hear from any same-sex couples in Arizona who receive discriminatory treatment in adoption services because the law right now clearly prohibits that, even without the proposed amendments."

Phoenix attorney Stephen Dichter, who works with straight and gay couples on adoptions, agrees a preference for heterosexual couples is unconstitutional under the Supreme Court decision. He also said the law is just a guideline for judges that can be ignored, and he's never seen it come into play.

"What I've seen and sensed about these judges is that they are really happy to put children without a parent into a situation in which they have two parents," Dichter said. "I haven't seen a thing that suggests that they (cared) whether they are male, female, one of each or whatever."

The house version, HB2392, hasn't been assigned to a committee.

► Indiana

Continued from p. 16

Indiana campaign manager.

"Senate Bill 344 continues to fall far short of ending legal discrimination against LGBT people in our state. As amended, it repeals the Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act but replaces it with substandard protections that omit transgender people entirely and provide religious carveouts that undermine the very purpose of the civil rights law. We will continue to work with lawmakers to fix this bill, but we are disappointed that they have not made the substantive changes we know a majority of Hoosiers want to make our state open and welcoming to all people."

An additional nondiscrimination bill – Senate Bill 100 – was also on the agenda in committee that night. While seeking to update Indiana's civil rights law, it would override existing municipal civil

rights protections, write broad religious exemptions into law, and undermine existing protections for other protected characteristics such as race and religion, among other serious problems.

The morning of Jan. 27, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee did not have any testimony or votes on Senate Bill 66, also known as Super RFRA, which means the bill is dead for the legislative season.

The bill would have made it legal for any business or individual to ignore local laws that are already on the books to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals from discrimination.

McTighe released the following statement regarding the positive hearing: "Senate Bill 66 would have dealt a devastating blow to Indiana's already damaged reputation. While we are pleased to see this discriminatory bill died a well deserved death, it's important to remember that LGBT Hoosiers and

visitors are still not protected from discrimination throughout most of the state. In fact, with the passage of last year's religious exemption bill, it is still legal to fire someone, kick them out of their homes or deny them public services based solely on their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is wrong."

Bills that would provide the protections the LGBT community urgently needs have been introduced, but have so far seen no movement. Lanane has introduced legislation – Senate Bill 2 – that would amend the state's existing nondiscrimination laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity, among other categories.

Republican Sen. Ron Altig has also introduced similar legislation – Senate Bill 170 – that would update the state's nondiscrimination laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity. An incredible 70 percent of Hoosiers support passing LGBT nondiscrimination protections.

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Daydream Come True

Author Jonathan Harper on His Foray into Queer Short-Story Fiction

BY GREGG SHAPIRO

Jonathan Harper's debut short story collection "Daydreamers" is the kind of book that you'd hope it'd be: a fantastic introduction to a creative and original voice in fiction. The stories are populated with an arresting assortment of characters, including repo men, tattoo artists and suspension artists, role playing gamers, friends, family and those occupying the grey area between friendship and kinship. Throughout the stories is a pulsing undercurrent of sexual tension and dilemma that keeps the pages turning. BTL recently spoke with Harper about his writing, "the queering of the suburbs" and Gillian Anderson.

Congrats on the publication of your debut short story collection "Daydreamers"! What does the publication of the book mean to you?

I'm still in a state of disbelief. Actually, I'm terrified. I spent so much time loving the process of writing it: all the solitude, imaging the stories and then getting to live through them. The finished book was always a hypothetical, which may or may not get published. I realize now that I never really thought of this as a book others could interact with. Now that it's here, I have no idea what to expect. I just hope that if someone reads it, they find some sort of connection.

As a writer of short stories, do you have a favorite short story collection?

"Bad Behavior" by Mary Gaitskill. I bought a copy when I was 21 and it was the first book to make me hold my breath. I reread it every few years and even though my reaction to it has changed over time, I still feel empathy for her characters. I met her once at a reading. While getting my book signed, I called her "ma'am." She did not approve (laughs).

Who are some of your favorite short story writers?

My reading is scattered and I really admire a lot of different writers for different reasons. Just to name a few: Flannery O'Connor, Stephen Elliott, Angela Carter, Jameson Currier, Nuala Ni Chonchuir ... the list goes on. I also slept with a copy of Jeff Mann's "The History of Barbed Wire" under my pillow for two months.

What was involved in the process of selecting stories for "Daydreamers"?

During grad school, one of my professors said that I wrote about people struggling

between who they want to be and what the world will allow them to be. I was so touched by that. Beforehand, I kind of knew what I was trying to accomplish. I worked within these loosely defined themes of identity and isolation. There was a lot of sexual imagery and very passive characters who sort of let things happen to them. After that conversation, I became much more focused on what my characters actually wanted.

When I first started assembling this collection, it took me a long time to get organized. Before I could put together a table of contents, I ended up writing a lot of notes about the project as a whole. I knew I wanted to write about people struggling against their communities. I also wanted characters who daydreamed of being someone else or having

extraordinary things happen to them. Then, the stories fell into place.

Were there more than these nine stories, and if so, do you foresee compiling the remaining stories into another collection?

Probably not. The majority of these stories were first written in my 20s and now I'm in my mid-30s. It's difficult to edit work that was inspired by a previous part of your life. The further away you get from your inspiration, the harder it becomes to rekindle with it. I don't want to say I lost touch with these pieces, but I kept wanting to rewrite them from a different perspective or in a different style, and the more you tinker with a story, the more you risk losing the original urgency. I'm not opposed to revisiting old work, but I'm ready for a clean slate.

Are there any characters in "Daydreamers" that you have continued to or plan to write about more?

I think the question I would have to ask myself is, "Do any of these characters have more room to grow?" A lot of "Daydreamers" is about stagnation. My protagonists generally cling to some idealist notion from childhood that prevents them from maturing. None of them get clean endings. They either realize they are at least partially responsible for their current situation or rationalize it away. To continue to tell their stories might not be worth it. Very few of them have achievable goals.

Is there a character or characters in any of the stories that are fictional representations of you? If so, which characters are closest to you?

The short answer is no. I don't want the burden of having to accurately portray myself in fiction. I want my characters to act in a way that's meaningful to the plot and sometimes that means keeping enough distance to remain objective. Settings and circumstances, however, are a completely different story.

I try to avoid making generalizations, but I do think a lot of fiction writers are reflected in their characters. We invent these people, give them personalities and names, and then throw them head-first into conflict. What they encounter is what the writer cares about – what frightens or intrigues us or what we obsess over. In my story "Nature," I put this very weak-willed boy, August, on the edge of his cousin's circle of friends. They're into BDSM and body modification. It's a community he doesn't belong in, which is what makes it so alluring for him. I may or may not have personal experience with this. There were at least a dozen drafts of this story. In some versions, August was emotionally destroyed and in others he thrived. I think we project part of ourselves on our characters. The more choices they have to make, the more consequences they suffer and the more we learn about ourselves.

You seem to know a lot about role-playing games in the story "No More Heroes." Are you writing from experience?

Oh dear (laughs). Yes, I am well acquainted with this subject matter. When I was young, I was definitely one of those kids who lived in his imagination long after it was encouraged. I read fantasy novels, watched anime and played D&D (Dungeons & Dragons). On top of that, people started figuring out I was queer, which made me an outsider amongst outsiders. I





Author Jonathan Harper reading at the official book release party at One More Page Books in Falls Church, Virginia in March 2015.

“I try to avoid making generalizations, but I do think a lot of fiction writers are reflected in their characters. We invent these people, give them personalities and names, and then throw them head-first into conflict. What they encounter is what the writer cares about.”

suffered a lot of rejection but also received a surprising amount of acceptance. It’s funny how when I play now, I get this surge of child-like delight. But the next day, I get very self-conscious over it. There’s a lot of shame built up from an awkward childhood.

This was a difficult story to write. It was fun to geek out on the page, but I worried people wouldn’t take this subject matter seriously. You can’t write a story about a game without showing it, but you don’t want it to eclipse the actual characters, who are meant to be ridiculous but also fragile and hopefully sympathetic. For me, this story was about the friendships I had with straight boys growing up and what brought us together.

I was telling a friend about it and he mentioned Sam Lipsyte’s story, “The Dungeon Master,” that was published in *The New Yorker*. I rushed home and read it online. At first, I was horrified. Lipsyte’s story was amazing and shameless and he beat me to the punch (laughs)! Our stories are very different, but they have similarities, and his is far superior. I almost abandoned mine, but then I felt inspired. Gaymers exist as well and I think we deserve stories too. This might be a topic I write about again in the future.

One of the things that stood out about the stories is that they are set in regions, the DC suburbs, for instance, that don’t often find their way into LGBT fiction. What role does place play in your work?

I knew early on that I wanted to write about the queering of the suburbs. That doesn’t mean I avoided other settings – I just wrote about what I knew. Most of my life, I’ve lived on the edge of a big city, looking in on it thinking, “That’s where my people are.” A lot of us viewed the suburbs as a temporary holding cell. Very few of us got out and made it into the big city.

The story “Costume Dramas” contains several references to Gillian Anderson. Where does she fall on your list of favorite actresses and what is your favorite Gillian Anderson role?

I really do like Gillian Anderson. My friend, Eileen, and I have been holding *Period Piece* Mondays for several years now and Gillian has been in several of our shows. She’s a brilliant actress who does a lot of great work that I don’t think she gets a lot of credit for. The one show I’m watching now is “The Fall” and it’s just incredible and horrific. So, I figured, why not make a shout-out to someone I admire. Maybe she’ll send an autographed photo! (Laughs)

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Editor's Pick



Following four sold-out shows in November, Ann Arbor Civic Theatre and the Civic Improv Ensemble are excited to announce the second Improv Showcase of their 2015-16 season. The Civic Improv Ensemble was founded in April 2015 by directors Shelly Smith and David Widmayer with the goal of building a sustainable improv comedy performance and education program at Ann Arbor Civic Theatre.

After two rounds of auditions, over 30 actors were cast in three new performance troupes: CSI: Ann

Arbor (directed by Shelly Smith), Luxury Possum (directed by Jen Delisi) and Dearly Beloved (directed by David Widmayer). The troupes each focus on a different style of improv comedy, ranging from game-based improv (a la "Whose Line Is It Anyway?") to long-form scenic improv (popularized by iO Chicago and Upright Citizens Brigade). Each of the four shows in the upcoming Winter Showcase will feature completely unique improvised sets inspired by audience suggestions.

All three Civic Improv troupes will be performing at 8 and 10 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5 and Saturday Feb. 6 in the A2CT Studio, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$10 and are available by phone at 734-971-2228 or in limited quantities at the door. Audience members are encouraged to call ahead for tickets, as all four shows sold out at the Fall Showcase. In addition to shows at A2CT, the three troupes are slated to perform at theaters around southeast Michigan, including Barefoot Productions in Plymouth and Pointless Brewery & Theatre in Ann Arbor.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 4

Throwback Thursday 7:30 p.m. Different movie each time. Tickets: \$12. The Berman, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield**. 248-661-1900. www.Theberman.org

Friday, Feb. 5

Taylor Mac: A 24-Decade History of American Popular Music: 1960s-1980s 8 p.m. Tickets: \$40-\$50 UMS, 911 North University, **Ann Arbor**. 734-764-2538. umstix@umich.edu www.Ums.org/multiperformance/taylor-mac-a-24-decade-history-of-american-popular-music-1960s-1980s/

Saturday, Feb. 6

KGLRC Winter Gala and Fundraiser Wonderful entertainment, fantastic food and cocktails as well as sought after silent auction items from your favorite local businesses. Tickets: \$25-55. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 314 S. Park St., **Kalamazoo**. www.Kglrc.org

Wine, Women & Song XIV

8 p.m. Tickets: \$20-50. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 734-763-4186. www.Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Monday, Feb. 8

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

Tuesday, Feb. 9

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Testing 5 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.Goaffirmations.org

Wednesday, Feb. 10

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

Affirmations Run Club

6 p.m. An informal group of runners and walkers of all abilities. Seasoned marathoners, beginner walkers,

and everything in between! Everyone is welcome, just show up! Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. jproctor@goaffirmations.org www.Goaffirmations.org/programs-services/community-events-activities

Saturday, Feb. 13

Valentine's Day Women's Dance 8:15 p.m. Lansing Lesbians - L2L, 201 E. Grand River Ave., **Lansing**.

Monday, Feb. 15

Happy Hour 4 p.m. Come join us for happy hour and Man Crush Monday. Grenadier Club, 3101 McDougall, **Detroit**. 313-910-6867.

Thursday, Feb. 18

Equality Knowledge Project Speaker Series 5:30 p.m. Different speaker and presentation each time. Equality Research Center, 329 King Hall, **Ypsilanti**. 734-487-3032. equality.emu@gmail.com

Paula Poundstone

7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$38+. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, **East Lansing**. 800-WHARTON. www.Whartoncenter.com

MUSIC & MORE

Classical

UMS "Igor Levit, piano". Hill Auditorium, 825 North University Avenue, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 6. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/igor-levit/

Comedy

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre "Four Performance Showcase" Tickets: \$10. A2CT Studio Theater, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 5 - Feb. 6. 734-971-2228. www.A2ct.org

Concerts

The Magic Bag "The Mega 80s" 21+. Cover: \$10. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. Jan. 15 - Feb. 6. 248-544-3030. www.Themagicbag.com

Dance

UMS "Camille A. Brown & Dancers" Tickets: \$26-48. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 13. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/camille-a-brown-dancers/

UMS "Camille A. Brown & Dancers" Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 13. 734-764-2538. www.Ums.org/performance/camille-a-brown-dancers/

Film & Video

Michigan Theater "CineManga Film Series" Different anime or Japanese film each Wednesday night. State Theater, 233 State St., Ann Arbor. Jan. 13 - April 27. 734-668-8397. www.Michtheater.org

Other

MARVAC "Detroit Camper & RV Show Celebrates 50 Years" Check out aisles full of new 2016 recreation vehicles including folding campers, motorhomes, travel trailers, truck campers, fifth wheel travel trailers and toy haulers. Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi. Feb. 10 - Feb. 14. 586-752-6381. www.Marvac.org

THEATER

Butler Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through March 13. 313-868-1347.

The Odd Couple Tickets:



\$19-43. The Purple Rose Theatre, Purple Rose Theatre, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through March 30. 734-433-7673. www.Purplerosetheatre.org

College/University Theater

Love's Labour's Lost By William Shakespeare. Hilberry, Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through March 13. 313-577-2972. www.Hilberry.com

Professional

Avenue Q Tickets: \$22-24. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through Feb. 7. 248-541-6430. www.Stagecrafters.org

Chicago Starring John O'Hurley. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Feb. 9 - Feb. 14. 313-872-1000. www.Broadwayindetroit.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Cranbrook Art Museum "Empire by Andy Warhol" The presentation at Cranbrook Art Museum is shown in relation to "Lou Reed, Metal Machine Trio: The Creation of the Universe." Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Dec. 1 - March 13. 877-462-7262. www.Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Art Museum "Lou Reed, Metal Machine Trio: The Creation of the Universe" Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Dec. 1 - March 26. 877-462-7262. www.Cranbrookart.edu

Flint Institute of Arts "From Heart to Hand: African American Quilts from the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts" Throughout history, quilts have held an important and cherished place in our culture, particularly in the American South. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Jan. 24 - April 10. 810-234-1695. www.Flintarts.org

Editor's Pick



The Flint Institution of Arts exhibition, "From Heart to Hand: African American Art from the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts," will be on view through April 10. Throughout history, quilts have held an important and cherished place in American culture,

particularly in the South. Though materials techniques of quilt making may be common, quilts, as process, as art and as image, embody very fabric of the country.

In late 20th century several communities in Alabama, including Gee's Bend and Eutaw, received national attention as a result of the scholarship that focused specifically on the historic context of quilts in the rural environment, and this scholarship also inspired a new appreciation for their aesthetic appeal. This exhibition features a collection of 30 colorful creatively designed quilts by African-American quilt makers, primarily from West Alabama, and includes examples of pieced quilts, appliqué, as well as the improvisational techniques and use of unconventional that are common practice for contemporary quilt makers.

FIA is located just two blocks off I-475 in the Flint Cultural Center between the University of Michigan-Flint and Mott Community College. Admission to the galleries is free to members and children under 12. Adult admission is \$7; senior citizens and students are \$5. Visit www.flintarts.org or call 810-234-1695 for more information.

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State Theatre Launches New CineManga Film Series

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR – The Michigan Theater, in partnership with the University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, kicked off its new film series, CineManga, on Jan. 13. The 16-week series takes place each Wednesday night at the State Theatre through April 27, and brings beloved films drawn from the pages of Japanese manga to the screen. Select films will be introduced by UM professors or the manga aficionados from Vault of Midnight, giving viewers additional insight into the captivating world of Japanese comics.

“The UM Center for Japanese Studies is very excited to continue to work with the Michigan Theater to bring the best of Japanese cinema through this unique perspective of manga-to-film to the Ann Arbor area. The film series this year brings together a vast range of live action and anime films that highlight the diverse ways in which manga has informed filmmaking going back to the 1960s,” stated Jonathan Zwicker, associate



Still from “Black Jack,” which plays Feb. 10.

professor of Japanese Literature and director of the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan.

Additional series support comes from Vault of Midnight comic shop, which will host a pop-up shop at the State Theatre, offering all the featured

and related manga to encourage further immersion into the worlds being seen on the screen. Special discounts will be available on purchases made at the theater, with a portion of the proceeds

See State Theater, page 25

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► State Theater

Continued from p. 23

going to the Michigan and State Theaters.

“We are beyond pumped that the Michigan Theater has put together this one-of-a-kind curatorial project that highlights the best our industry has to offer in manga, paired with some of the best films of the past 30 years. We could not be more proud to be a part of the CineManga Film Series,” said Nick Yribar, co-owner / partner of The Vault of Midnight.

To add to the CineManga experience, the State Theatre concession stand will sell imported concession items from Japan, offering film-goers the opportunity to sample some of the favorite movie treats enjoyed by Japanese audiences. These include Matcha Green Tea Kit Kat bars, EveryBurger Bourbon-Baked Wheat Chocolate Cookies, Pocky biscuit sticks, Hi-Chew candy, and other unique treats. The State Theatre is located at 233 State St., Ann Arbor. Visit www.michtheater.org for more information.

The schedule for the rest of February includes the following films:

Feb. 10: “Black Jack” (1996)

Black Jack may not have a medical license, but that hasn’t stopped him from becoming the world’s most in-demand surgeon. Gifted with incredible surgical abilities, he operates for anyone who has enough cash. Behind this is another mission: to protect humanity from a race of superhuman beings who want to destroy all of mankind. Working through his extraordinary cases he investigates where these evil beings came from and how they can be stopped.

This series features films drawn from the pages of popular Japanese manga (comics).

Presented in German and Japanese with English subtitles.

Feb. 17: “Bunny Drop” (2011)

Celebrated Japanese actor turned writer/director SABU delivers this live action drama, based on the manga of the same name by Yumi Unita. Daikichi (played by Japanese Academy Award-Winner Matsuyama Ken’ichi) is an unmarried office worker who ends up living with the 6-year-old illegitimate child of his dead grandfather. This girl then helps bring a new definition to family while her family comes together to determine her fate.

Presented in Japanese with English subtitles.

Feb. 24: “Boruto: Naruto the Movie” (2015)

Masashi Kishimoto’s manga series has spawned numerous anime films, of which this is claimed to be “the last.” But is it? It is long since the end of the Shinobi War and Naruto Uzumaki is the Seventh Hokage of Konohagakure in this new era. His son, Boruto, is raised in the Hidden Leaf Village. Having heard stories of his father’s heroic efforts before him, he goes on a quest to be trained and surpass the honor his father brought upon his line.

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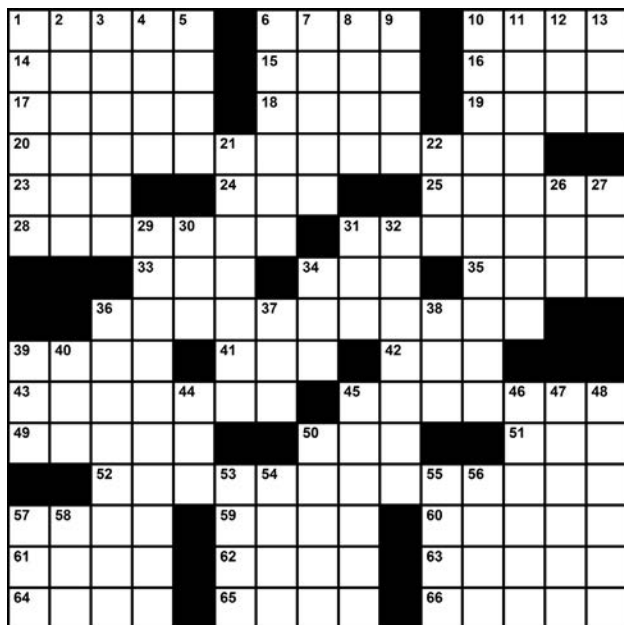
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Q Puzzle



- Cole
 39 Son of Adam and Eve
 41 Ballerina's perch
 42 Mean Amin
 43 Ann-___ of "Grease"
 45 They may act up
 49 "___ little silhouetto of a man ..."
 50 Dusk, to Dickinson
 51 "Cool" amount
 52 Iconic song that Natalie Cole sang with her dad
 57 Anderson of TV and film
 59 Peter Nero's 88
 60 Porn director Francis
 61 Ballet skirt
 62 Ready to eat, like a fruit
 63 Tough to climb
 64 Deity in Kahlo's land
 65 Colony dwellers
 66 Well-hung, e.g.
- 12 Crime lab study
 13 Cartoon squeal
 21 Secrete white stuff
 22 Suffix for Juan
 26 NBC sketch source
 27 Cause of Venus envy?
 29 Rupert Everett's Dr. Claw, e.g.
 30 T, as in Torah
 31 He was a knockout at the gym
 32 Straying from the inclusive norm, perhaps
 34 Absorbed, as a loss
 36 To this, to Evan Wolfson
 37 Simple sack
 38 Puts the finger on a bad man
 39 Mate in Montreal
 40 U. degrees
 44 Eng. flyers
 45 Witherspoon's favorite cups?
 46 One who comes slowly
 47 Easter flowers
 48 Yawning Disney dwarf
 50 "Aida" setting
 53 Stew veggie
 54 Leather strap for a stallion
 55 New Age composer John
 56 Butch's part in a choir
 57 Ford of old
 58 Yves's "yes"

Easy to Remember

Across

- 1 Deep throat problem
 6 "Lawrence of Arabia," e.g.
 10 He "Looks Like a Lady" to Aerosmith
 14 Style Tracy Turnblad's hair
 15 Vegetable soup bean
 16 Shakespeare's Hathaway
 17 Kofi of the UN
 18 Debtor's slips
 19 Neighbor of Minn.
- 20 Area of concern for Natalie Cole
 23 Bowie collaborator Brian
 24 Dildo batteries
 25 Closemouthed
 28 Prisoner's term
 31 Extremely hard
 33 Brewing tank
 34 Maugham's "Cakes and ___"
 35 AfterEllen.com and others
 36 Area of concern for Natalie

Down

- 1 Hotties in a gay bar get these
 2 Rent payer
 3 Ill will
 4 Morales of movies
 5 Elizabeth of "Transamerica"
 6 Half-brother of Chaz
 7 Upright, but probably not erect
 8 Don of radio
 9 Playbill list
 10 "I Will Survive" genre
 11 Secret target that may be hairy

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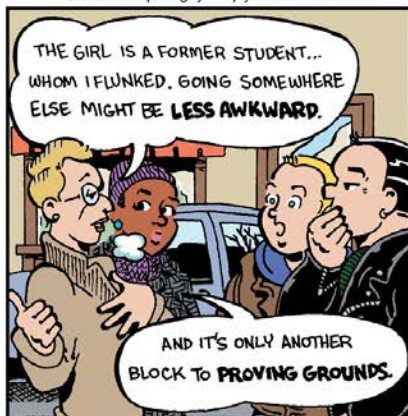
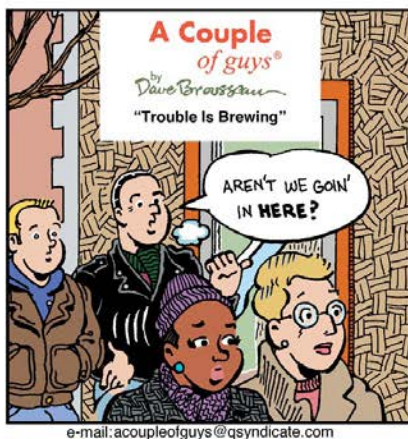
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

They finally cast that Mapplethorpe movie

Which Mapplethorpe movie, you ask? Answer: Exactly. Can you keep track of all the people who want to make a movie about Robert Mapplethorpe and/or Patti Smith's memoir "Just Kids," which is about her and Robert Mapplethorpe? Would you believe us when we tell you that one of these projects is actually moving forward and has two lead actors? Maybe? OK, then here it is: Matt Smith, who is nerd-famous for playing Doctor Who in the BBC series "Doctor Who," is taking the title role in "Mapplethorpe," alongside "Girls" star Zosia Mamet as Patti Smith, for writer-director Ondi Timoner. Timoner is the acclaimed filmmaker behind 2004's "Dig" and 2015's "Brand: A Second Coming," the somewhat controversial Russell Brand documentary (he participated in it and now dislikes it). Next questions: Will it really happen? Will someone else beat this one to the punch? Will Mariah Carey suddenly just decide to direct her own quickie version for Lifetime? We'll be waiting. Impatiently.



Zosia Mamet. Photo: kathclick

'Gaycation,' all I ever wanted

It was only a matter of time before VICE made its next big leap, from the Internet to actual television. Enter the Viceland Channel (possibly not the name they're going to keep), which launches very, very soon, with a variety of programming for people who barely sit in front of TV screens at all. But here's a good reason to park it on the couch: "Gaycation," Ellen Page's travel show. That's right, Ellen Page is getting her own "Taradise," only this one will take its host around the world to see what LGBT life is like in other countries. We're hoping it includes the footage of Page confronting homophobic Republican Presidential candidate (yes, we know, redundant) Ted Cruz at that state fair, because that was amazing. Perhaps even slightly more amazing than watching Tara Reid jump up and down blowing a whistle at a party in Ibiza. OK, actually, the same amount of amazing. Will watch. Sometime in late February, we hear.

Best news of 2016 so far: Cynthia Nixon as Emily Dickinson

Repeat this news aloud to yourself and get very excited: Cynthia Nixon is going to be in another movie that is not at all related to "Sex and the City." That's the first bit of glad tidings. The next is that she will play reclusive American poet Emily Dickinson. And finally, she will be doing it for the incredible British director Terence Davies ("The Deep Blue Sea," "Distant Voices, Still Lives," "The House of Mirth"). "A Quiet Passion," which we assume is about the poet's later, primarily housebound years (Nixon is 48, Dickinson died at age 55, and quiet melancholy is a Davies trademark), co-stars Jennifer Ehle and Keith Carradine, and will have its world premiere at next month's Berlinale. You'd think that by this point in her acclaimed career Nixon would have already been allowed to sink her teeth into a good period biopic of an important woman, but you'd be wrong. Well, now is that time. Introverts and literary enthusiasts, this is your "Star Wars." Begin counting down to its American release.

Romeo San Vicente never realized you wrote such bloody awful poetry. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

Todd Haynes joins a psychedelic '70s rock cult

For over 25 years, queer filmmaker Todd Haynes has created meticulously detailed worlds that often intersect with fantasies about rock 'n' roll ("Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story," "Velvet Goldmine," "I'm Not There") and the painful realities of women's lives ("Mildred Pierce," "Carol," "Safe" and, well, "Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story"). This makes his next project feel like the perfect fit: a TV series based on the story of the early 1970s grooviest free-love-rock-and-roll-health-food cult, The Source Family. Led by the charismatic Father Yod, the Los Angeles-based Source Family had a band, a restaurant, astoundingly shiny outfits, and, as is often the case, internal dissension. Haynes' TV project is in its infancy, so don't expect anything anytime soon, but this news is, as they once said, "far out." In the meantime, your homework assignment is waiting for you on Netflix, the documentary feature "The Source Family." You need this.

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