

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993



Detroit Dirty Show: Last Weekend Coming Up

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Photo: Justine Gabriel



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Coming Up
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February 18, 2016
VOL. 2407 | FREE



'Glee' Alum
Alex Newell on
Questioning His
Gender, Stealing
Church-Choir Solos
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Jax Anderson of Flint

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“ The advances won with enormous coordinated effort and financial resources from the LGBTQ movement in the last year are of little benefit to most of the young people we serve at the Ruth Ellis Center. In fact, these advances intensify the silent crisis for some LGBTQ youth in Detroit. **”**

- Ruth Ellis Executive Director Jerry Peterson

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Pewabic's latest exhibition now open

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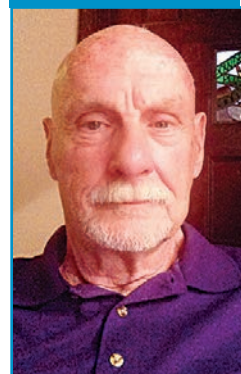
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Romantic Ad Campaign Promotes Akron Hot Spots for Couples

AKRON, Ohio (AP) – An advertising campaign wants people to fall in love in Akron and with the city too.

The “You Had Me At Akron” promotion launched Sunday suggests date-night spots around the city via brochures, a website and social media.

The Akron Beacon Journal reports the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation paid for the \$28,500 campaign.

Various couples, gay and straight, share some of their favorite locations as part of the effort.

Charlene DeJournett, a patient navigator for the Center for Holistic Health, participated with her husband, Robert, and says that “if you live in Akron, you ought to love Akron.”

Engaged couple Matt McCallum and Ben Manista say they enjoy going to music venues downtown.

Online: www.youhadmeatakron.com

School District Forms Transgender Access Policy

PALATINE, Ill. (AP) – A suburban Chicago high school district is considering a district-wide policy that would give transgender students access to school facilities.

The Daily Herald (bit.ly/1Kg4ixH) reports board members of Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 proposed the policy Thursday.

Last year, the district reached an agreement with the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights to give a transgender student at Fremd High School in Palatine access to the girls’ locker room.

The agreement saved the district from losing up to \$6 million per year in federal funding for violating discrimination laws. A districtwide plan is not required by that agreement.

Board members say they want see what other districts are doing and get input from principals.

Puerto Rican Judge Nominated as 1st Gay Chief Justice

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) – Puerto Rican judge Maite Oronoz Rodriguez has been nominated to head the U.S. territory’s Supreme Court as the first openly gay chief justice in the United States.

The 39-year-old was first appointed to

the high court in June 2014. She previously served as the commonwealth’s deputy solicitor general and chief legal counselor for the city of San Juan.

Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla announced her nomination as chief justice on Friday afternoon.

Gay rights activists hailed the move. Lambda Legal attorney Omar Gonzalez-Pagan on Saturday said the nomination was a significant step toward a judiciary that reflects the growing diversity of the United States.

Lambda is a nonprofit group that aims to achieve full civil rights for gay people.

Panel OKs Bill Adding LGBT Protections to Hate Crime Law

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) – A proposal to add protections for gay and transgender people to Utah’s hate crime law cleared its first test Feb. 11 when it was approved on a 5-1 vote by a Senate committee.

In addition to protections for LGBT people, supporters said the measure also beefs up the state’s existing hate crimes law, which they argued is difficult to enforce and makes it tough to seriously punish crimes intended to target someone based on race or religion.

Utah is one of 15 states with hate crime laws that lack protections for sexual orientation and identity, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

Under Urquhart’s proposal, someone convicted of a hate crime would face higher penalties for whatever crime they committed.

Texas AG Faces Ethics Probe Over Gay Marriage

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) – Already indicted on felony securities fraud charges, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton will face an ethics investigation for advising local officials they could refuse to issue same-sex marriage licenses on religious grounds.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled gay marriage legal in June.

The complaint was initially dismissed by the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas, but an appeals board appointed by the state Supreme Court reinstated it Feb. 2, saying the complaint alleges a “possible violation” of professional conduct rules.

The complaint against Paxton alleges he encouraged officials to break the law.

Texas Democrats renewed their calls for Paxton to step down.


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Start From Here Campaign Gains Support in Detroit

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Youth homelessness is no longer a silent crisis. A grassroots campaign, Start from Here, is giving the social problem a louder voice.

The campaign, founded by Allie Hoffman of New York City, was launched in Detroit on Feb. 1 with a lunchtime panel at the Madison Building followed by a kick-off concert at the Detroit Institute of Music Education. A diverse group of local musicians, advocates and community members came together to build compassion, spread awareness and elevate a group of high-impact organizations. They include the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park; a Safe Place for Youth in Los Angeles; Larkin Street in San Francisco; The Harbour in Chicago; and Chris Kids in Atlanta.

“These organizations, working the front lines, collectively serve thousands of young people every day. Our goal is to empower them to serve significantly more, with the greatest impact, until the point where we’ve provided the necessary opportunities for every youth in need,” says Hoffman, who has more than nine years of experience building social movements such as Gender Proud and Twenty Nine Years. They will be the recipients of all donations collected during the campaign, which are tax-exempt via a partnership with the Tides Foundation.

“We encourage everyone to help us create a brighter future for the millions of homeless youth by visiting our website, supporting these exemplary organizations and learning about this issue,” says Hoffman.

A panel of professionals opened a discussion with hundreds of local high school students, talking about the thousands of youth across the city of Detroit facing homelessness or housing instability. “Many of these youth are keeping their status a secret, or are afraid to talk at school or work about what they’re going through,” says Hoffman. “We should be talking about the challenges we all face, and applying resilience and perseverance to overcome them.”

Executive Director of the Ruth Ellis Center, Jerry Peterson, notes, “It is challenging to document a fixed number of homeless youth in Detroit because they are so often invisible. Detroit Public Schools has documented over 4,500 children who are homeless, many with their families. The Homeless Action Network of Detroit has estimated that there are around 3,000 unaccompanied youth who are homeless. A Youth Homelessness Task Force, formed by Councilwoman Mary Sheffield, is working to establish a more complete picture of homelessness among children and youth in Detroit.”



Panelists discuss homelessness as moderator and Ruth Ellis Center Executive Director Jerry Peterson, third from left, guides the discussion. Photo: Ann Markey

Panelists at the lunch were the city of Detroit Executive Manager Meghan Takashima, Moderator and Ruth Ellis Center Executive Director Jerry Peterson, Miss Colorado 2011 Blair Griffith, and Caleb White, founder of the Caleb White Project, a Detroit-based nonprofit dedicated to helping people in need. Griffith has used her title as a platform to advocate for homeless youth. “This is close to me,” she says. Following her mother’s massive heart attack, they were consumed by medical debt and were evicted from their home one month after she received her crown. “When I started traveling again, I was surprised to see the silent population that is out there. We have a one-sided vision of who we view or see as homeless.”

According to 13-year-old White, it could be a man with his 2-year-old son whose mother left him a year ago, it could be a young woman who is pregnant and scared because her parents kicked her out, or it could be a handful of men who risked their lives for their country. “I saw a need to make a positive difference in the lives of these people. I never expected the positive difference they would make in mine,” says White about the unique individuals he visits regularly at the homeless shelter. He took action for the first time at the age of 6 when he saw a man sleeping on a sidewalk. “I immediately wanted to build him a house. Together with my family, we collected enough food and clothes to help him make it through the winter months,” says White.

surviving with almost nothing.

“It’s important to help others, to look beyond ourselves. I’ve always worked within the queer community. I am queer, and I’m happy to keep helping,” Pegasus says. Other local musicians Flint Eastwood, Jena Irene Ascitutto and Britney Stoney performed on the DIME Underground stage in support of the campaign.

“Working with Start from Here and the Ruth Ellis Center has been great. I fully support what they do for the Detroit community and am honored to be a part of what they’re doing,” says Flint Eastwood’s Jax Anderson. Hoffman says this will be a four-month campaign that partners Start from Here with Crowdrise, a fundraising website for personal causes and charity. The goal is to raise \$40,000. The campaign will culminate in April with a major concert event at the Fillmore in Detroit; line-up and ticket sales will be announced in mid-March.

For more information, visit www.startfromhere.org.

Ruth Ellis Center puts LGBTQ youth homelessness in perspective

There are 1.7 million homeless youth in the U.S. Forty percent of them are LGBTQ, according to the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy. Mark Erwin-McCormick, Director of Development at the Ruth Ellis Center, explains some of the reasons for this statistic. “There is an increase in young people coming out at an earlier age. Families are not ready. As a result, these young people are being rejected and no longer feel safe in their home environment,” he says. This forces one in five LGBTQ youth into the state’s foster care system, which opens their doors to an estimated 13,000 youth at any given time, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Ruth’s House is one of only three licensed and contracted residential foster care facilities specifically for LGBTQ youth in the U.S. LGBTQ youths represent 5 to 7 percent of the nation’s overall youth population.

“We have a lot of work to do,” says Erwin-McCormick, adding that partnering with other organizations through the Start from Here campaign is a “powerful thing and we’re proud to be a part of it.” Ruth’s House serves young people in the foster care system by providing services in a home-like setting that meets the individual needs of the youth while they



Local musician Max Pegasus made a difference in the lives of his LGBTQ friends who were rejected by their families. “It’s what you do for your friends,” says Pegasus, who did a lot of work with homeless youth while working at the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor. Photo: Ann Markey

A homeless project was born. Since then, he and his crew hit the streets every year to collect donations. In 2015, they handed out 150 boxes of supplies to people in need.

“We don’t have to do great things, but little things with great love to make a big difference in the world,” says White.

Local musician Max Pegasus made a difference in the lives of his LGBTQ friends who were rejected by their families. “It’s what you do for your friends,” says Pegasus, who did a lot of work with homeless youth while working at the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor. His intense acoustic set during the panel brought tears to his eyes when he recalled coming to the U.S. from Colombia with his mother and

► Start From Here

Continued from p. 6

are in care. With an increase of transgender and gender nonconforming youth entering Michigan's foster care, the state has granted Ruth Ellis Center an additional license to accommodate up to nine youth at any given time, an increase from five.

"There is a large community of supporters," he says, but more is needed. Monetary gifts are welcomed each month through the Ruth's Angels program, which helps to feed, clothe, provide heat and keep the lights on at the center. In an effort to help families support their LGBTQ children and reduce the number of youth who runaway, get kicked out or end up in the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice systems, Ruth Ellis Center launched a new pilot program in partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protective Services and the Andrus Family Fund. This intensive effort to help families stay together is the first of its kind in the country.

In collaboration with Dr. Caitlin Ryan and the Family Acceptance Project, more than 300 Child Protective Service Investigators, social workers, and educators have been trained to identify cases where a child's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression may be factors in abuse and neglect investigations. Families are being referred to Ruth Ellis Center's Family Group Decision Making program for up to 13 months of intensive support services. Eleven families are currently working with Ruth Ellis Center since the pilot's launch in October 2015, far exceeding the projected outcomes for the first quarter of the pilot.

For more information about the Ruth Ellis Center, call 313-252-1950 or visit www.ruthelliscenter.org.

A champion of transgender and homeless youth

Daniella Carter, a New York City transgender woman, is one of many who are sharing their stories with the hope of inspiring action. Carter was placed in foster care at 18 months old. During a time when other children were blossoming, Carter was faced with sexual, physical and emotional abuse. She spent her high school years sleeping on the subway, and on the streets where she became a victim of rape. While many would lose hope and their will to survive, Carter used her pain, caused by repeated traumas, as her source of motivation to advocate for LGBTQ youth. She has appeared on MSNBC, ABC, Daily News, People Magazine and in the Wall Street Journal. Carter was recognized on the 2015 Trans 100 list. She has worked with her mentor, Laverne Cox, and was featured in the Emmy-award-winning MTV & Logo TV documentary "Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word." Carter is helping to build a



"It is challenging to document a fixed number of homeless youth in Detroit because they are so often invisible. Detroit Public Schools has documented over 4,500 children who are homeless, many with their families."

— Executive Director of the Ruth Ellis Center, Jerry Peterson



foundation, Gender Global, which aims to empower youth, provide assistance and motivate families, employers and friends to be more supportive of transgender identified individuals. Her dream is to lead a foundation that will help put a stop to violence and discrimination against transgender people. For more information, visit www.gofundme.com/nhqjdo.

See a video of Carter in action at www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPMuhi71V-I.

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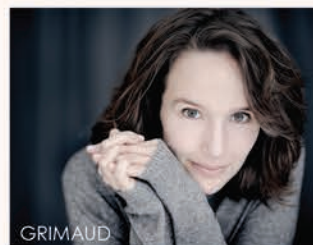
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Anti-LGBT Justice Antonin Scalia Dies, Tension Over Replacement Begins

BY LISA KEEN

Antonin Scalia, the U.S. Supreme Court justice most hostile to equal rights for LGBT people, has died, and a threat by Republicans in Congress to block President Obama from naming his replacement promises to escalate the nation's already bitter political civil war.

"Justice Scalia was a gleeful and influential political culture-warrior as well as ... a towering figure who cast a dark shadow on the law and on the lives of many Americans," said Evan Wolfson, who headed up the national Freedom to Marry group. "More than just a dependable 'No' vote on the constitutional and civil rights of gay people and others, he reveled in disparagement and incendiary attacks that influenced many judges, politicians and lawyers, and epitomized the prejudices and exclusion we were working, fortunately with some success, to overcome."

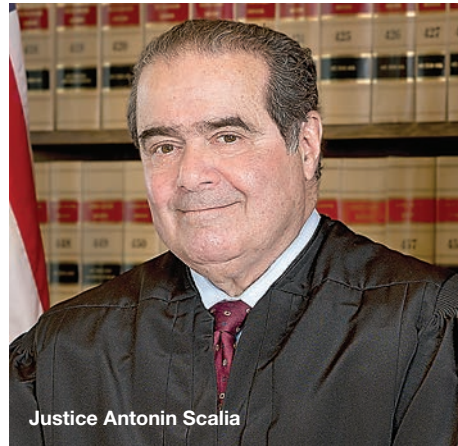
Such was the spirit of reaction by most LGBT legal activists to the news Saturday evening that Justice Antonin Scalia was found dead earlier that day in his hotel suite at a private resort in west Texas. The news sent shockwaves through the legal community and the current field of presidential candidates.

Within hours of news of Scalia's death, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell issued a statement saying the Senate should not consider a nominee "until we have a new president," and during Saturday night's GOP debate, most of the remaining six candidates agreed. But President Obama made clear that he intends to fulfill his duty to name a replacement, and LGBT legal activists have good reason to feel confident that Obama will nominate someone who will recognize the right of LGBT citizens to enjoy the protections of the U.S. Constitution.

Many political observers say they believe it is unlikely that Congress will allow the seat to remain open for the 12 months or more it would take for a new president to assume office. And it's a big gamble for Republicans to presume that the GOP's eventual presidential nominee will win in November.

If Congress does stall the nomination process, the Supreme Court will operate with eight justices. That scenario could potentially improve chances of positive outcomes on LGBT-related cases, given that Justice Anthony Kennedy often votes with the court's more liberal wing on LGBT cases.

"It is already apparent that one result of Justice Scalia's passing will be to focus public



Justice Antonin Scalia

attention on how important the Supreme Court is to the lives of all Americans, which I think is a good thing," said Jon Davidson, national legal director for Lambda Legal.

Davidson said he expects history will judge Scalia "quite harshly" when it comes to the rights of LGBT people, women and people of color.

Davidson's colleague, Jenny Pizer, Lambda senior counsel, said Scalia's "contempt for gay people will look increasingly anachronistic – and disturbed – over time."

"I believe his strongest influence has been as a trumpeter, calling to rally the Religious Right," said Pizer. "His intemperate tone has seemed intended to inspire anger and alarm among those working for reactionary causes ... (G)iven how frequently his dissents have been cited as authority by the lower courts, he certainly has had influence in slowing LGBT legal progress that way, as well as by motivating political outrage against, and defiance against, liberal court decisions."

Justice Scalia was the current Supreme Court's most staunch conservative, and one who often wrote dissenting opinions to the court's most historic rulings on LGBT-related cases. Appointed to the court by President Reagan in 1986, Scalia always voted against the interests of gay people in cases before the court, beginning with the 1987 decision, 5 to 4, allowing the U.S. Olympic Committee to ban Gay Games from calling itself the Gay Olympics. He also joined the unanimous decision in 1995 to allow St. Patrick's Day parade organizers in Boston to exclude a gay contingent, and was with the majority 5 to 4 decision in 2000 to allow the Boy Scouts of America to revoke the membership of an Eagle Scout because he was gay.

What really marked Scalia as anti-gay were

his dissents to pro-LGBT decisions. They began in 1996 with his vigorous complaint in dissent to a 6 to 3 majority opinion in *Romer v. Evans* – a majority opinion that struck down a Colorado law that had barred any political subdivision in the state from prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. Scalia derided the majority for saying the state law was driven by "animus."

"Of course it is our moral heritage that one should not hate any human being or class of human beings," wrote Scalia. But, he said, "one could consider certain conduct reprehensible – murder, for example, or polygamy, or cruelty to animals – and could exhibit even 'animus' toward such conduct. Surely that is the only sort of 'animus' at issue here: moral disapproval of homosexual conduct..."

In 2003, Scalia led the dissent against a 6 to 3 majority in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which had struck down state laws banning consensual intimate relations between adult persons of the same gender. Scalia said the Texas law, which made it a felony for two adults of the same sex to engage in sexual relations in the privacy of their bedroom, simply sought "to further the belief of its citizens that certain forms of sexual behavior are 'immoral and unacceptable.'" Other such behaviors, he said, included "fornication, bigamy, adultery, adult incest, bestiality and obscenity."

Almost 10 years later, in response to a question at an appearance before an audience at Princeton, Scalia suggested he made such extreme comparisons because they were "effective."

"I don't apologize for the things I raised. I'm not comparing homosexuality to murder. I'm comparing the principle that a society may not adopt moral sanctions, moral views, against certain conduct – I'm comparing that with respect to murder and that with respect to homosexuality."

And Scalia led the dissent in other major LGBT-related cases before the Supreme Court: *U.S. v. Windsor*, which in 2013 struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act ("...even setting aside traditional moral disapproval of same-sex marriage (or indeed same-sex sex), there are many perfectly valid – indeed, downright boring – justifying rationales for this legislation.")

In the most recent LGBT case, *Obergefell v. Hodges* last year, Scalia led the dissent once again, saying he thought the national public debate over marriage for same-sex couples

“Justice Scalia was a gleeful and influential political culture-warrior as well as ... a towering figure who cast a dark shadow on the law and on the lives of many Americans. More than just a dependable 'No' vote on the constitutional and civil rights of gay people and others, he reveled in disparagement and incendiary attacks that influenced many judges, politicians and lawyers, and epitomized the prejudices and exclusion we were working, fortunately with some success, to overcome.”

– Attorney Evan Wolfson, who headed up the national Freedom to Marry group

was "American democracy at its best."

Because Scalia was in dissent on landmark LGBT decisions in recent years, his hostility to LGBT people was held in check to some extent. But he was still seen by LGBT legal activists as an unapologetic rabble-rouser for lower court judges and right-wing political figures who shared his disdain for LGBT people.

"His opinions about LGBT people were particularly harsh, and he wrote about them in openly disparaging terms that perpetuated the most damaging and vicious stereotypes," said Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "One that particularly stands out is his dissent in *Lawrence*, when he wrote that, 'Many Americans do not want persons who openly engage in homosexual conduct as partners in their business, as scoutmasters for their children, as teachers in their children's schools, or as boarders in their home. They view this as protecting themselves and their families from a lifestyle that they believe to be immoral and destructive.'"

"(B)y voicing such extreme views," said Minter, Scalia "gave a stamp of legitimacy to anti-LGBT bias and other deeply reactionary positions and, in that way, pulled the court's jurisprudence to the right."

Florida Gay Rights Bill Won't Advance After Senate Stalemate

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) – It took a decade for Florida's Republican-dominated Legislature to even listen to a bill to give LGBT people civil rights protections. When it finally did, the legislation was dead on arrival.

What little hope gay rights advocates had that an anti-discrimination bill would move forward withered Feb. 9 when the Senate Judiciary Committee remained deadlocked on the measure a day after voting 5-5 on the bill. A procedural measure kept the bill technically alive, but its sponsor and other supporters know there's almost no chance the issue can be revived this year.

"We are going to prepare and strategize to keep the fight alive and going next year," said Democratic Sen. Joseph Abruzzo of Wellington. "We will have a different Senate when we come back."

The fact that the bill (SB 120) was even heard was a big step for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocates.

"What we've seen here is a debate that hasn't been seen up to this point. This is a positive first step. We have Republicans

who are coming and fighting for this issue," said Patrick Slevin, campaign manager for a coalition of businesses pushing for the anti-discrimination law.

Although there are signs that some Republican attitudes are changing on gay rights – two Republicans voted for the bill in the Judiciary Committee and Republican Rep. Holly Raschein is sponsoring the House version of the bill (HB 45) along with nine GOP co-sponsors – it took only five Republicans to stop it from advancing.

On Feb. 9, Senate Democratic Leader Arthenia Joyner pleaded for the Republican opponents to advance the bill, saying that the issue was too big to be decided by one committee.

"Let the full Senate get the opportunity to hear debate and to make this decision. This is the time to step up and do what I consider is just and right," she said. "Some fights need to be at the 40-person level on the floor of the Florida Senate, and this is one of those. Too often we shut the door too soon and not allow all of us to be heard."

VA Senate Passes Protections for Same-Sex Marriage Opponents

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) – The Virginia Senate has approved legislation proponents say would protect businesses and individuals that oppose same-sex marriage on religious grounds.

The GOP-controlled voted Friday to approve the measure after a heated and tense debate where senators invoked both Virginia's role in enshrining religious liberty into law and its long history of racial discrimination.

The debate is likely all for show, as

Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe has already vowed to veto the bill.

Republicans said the legislation aims to prevent government entities from denying things like grants, contracts and licenses to individuals and businesses that oppose same-sex marriage.

But Democrats said the measure would give such individuals and businesses a license to discriminate against LGBT citizens.

West Virginia House Approves Religious-Exemptions Bill

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) – Amid growing opposition from the business community, West Virginia's Republican-led House of Delegates cleared a bill Thursday that proponents say would ensure freedom of religious expression and opponents say would sanction discrimination.

In a 72-26 vote, delegates approved the measure that would let people cite religious objections to state actions in certain court proceedings.

The bill resembles laws in 21 states that are largely modeled off existing federal law. However, newer laws have garnered attention after the Supreme Court ruled to legalize gay marriage.

The most high-profile example has been Indiana, which may have lost out on \$60 million from groups that decided not to hold conventions in Indianapolis because of a similar law, according to the tourism group Visit Indy.

On Feb. 11, more than a dozen Democrats voted with the Republican majority, while a handful of Republicans opposed it.

The proposal moves to the Senate, where Republican Senate President Bill Cole hasn't taken a position on it.

"That's going to be a tough one," Cole told reporters Monday. "There's no question."

Proponents said the bill protects freedoms

See West VA, page 11



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Fair Michigan Had \$1 Million on Hand

BY TODD A. HEYWOOD

The now suspended campaign to amend the Michigan constitution to provide civil rights protections for women and the LGBT community had just over \$1 million in cash on hand earlier this month when it filed its campaign finance reports.

The report shows the ballot committee had \$1,011,851 in cash on hand. But \$1 million of that came as a loan from co-chair Dana Nessel's brother, and Dallas real estate developer, Ariel Nessel. Another \$10,000 was donated by the Glengariff Group, a polling firm that also donated \$47,000 in in-kind services to the campaign. The remaining cash on hand was raised through a handful of donors – with Sybil Offen of Plymouth donating \$1,700, Debra Bennett of Haslett donating \$100, Emily McAllister of Plymouth donating \$50, and Chad Cyrowski of Ferndale donating one dollar.

The report also shows the campaign – in addition to the \$47,000 in-kind donation from Glengariff Group – received \$249,652.34 of in-kind contributions from campaign loyalists. Truscott Rossman, a public relations and communications firm in Lansing which handled publicity on the project, provided \$49,275.84 worth of services, and Dykema law firm, which co-chair Richard McLelland works at, provided \$35,876.54 in services. Nessel's own law firm provided \$50,000 of legal services, while Howard Edelson, for Edelson Group of Ann Arbor, provided \$67,500 in services.

Nessel has told other news agencies she intends on starting her own nonprofit educational and political organization to address LGBT equality issues, so it is unclear what will happen with the current cash on hand in the committee's possession. Regardless, \$1 million will either have to be paid back to Nessel's brother or written off.

Equality Michigan Elects New Board Officers, Plans Million Dollar Year

BY AJ TRAGER

DETROIT – In a swift move that helps set the stage for the upcoming year, Equality Michigan and Equality Michigan Action Network, the advocacy arm of the LGBT advocacy and anti-violence organization, announced Feb. 12 that its Boards of Directors have each elected a new slate of officers.

The Equality Michigan Action Network elected Michigan State Sen. Rebekah Warren as chair, Gary Reed as the vice chair, Dr. Mira Krishnan as treasurer, Sean Rhaesa as secretary and Tim Atkinson as member-at-large.

Serving on the Equality Michigan board is Dave Wait who was re-elected as board chair; newly-elected as the vice chair is Michael Rowady, and Jim Murray is the member-at-large. Both Krishnan and Rhaesa serve both boards concurrently.

“We all know that expanding civil rights protections for the LGBT community is important for the future success of our state, but the Legislature has been slow to act,” said Warren in Equality Michigan's Feb. 12 press release. “This struggle is a political one now, and I am proud to take a leadership role in an organization that will act aggressively to ensure that all our citizens enjoy equal protection under the law.”

Michigan has a long way to go before the state can be considered LGBT-inclusive. The organization plans to continue its work seeking amendments to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA), which would add sexual orientation and gender identity and expression to a list of protected classes in the state. It will also work on bipartisan measures in the workforce and legislative sector to increase LGBT support throughout the state.

Executive Director of Equality Michigan, Stephanie White, told BTL that the appointment of Reed and Warren will be advantageous to the advocacy work in Lansing. For her, the strength of the board comes from the diverse perspectives and experiences of its serving members. The board now consists of both high profile Democrats and Republicans.

“I think our board needs to represent the people, be representative of the larger LGBT community and needs to represent diverse views and perspectives on how to achieve LGBT rights so we can make sure we are coming together with the best ideas possible. It's important to have people who are strategic thinkers. For me, the biggest benefit is having these political folks,” White told BTL.

Warren is a Democratic lawmaker serving Ann Arbor who was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2006 and is now in her second term as state Senator. She is known for her ability to work with her colleagues in the Republican party to pass critical legislation without compromising her values.

Reed, who is a partner at Kandler Reed Khoury & Muchmore, is the former executive director for the Michigan Republican State Committee and served as deputy director of the Senate Republican Caucus Services. He is known for his ability to find common ground among political leaders of all stripes and find successful solutions to difficult issues.

“If we are going to pass an ELCRA expansion and defeat any religious intolerance bills, those two people know as well as anybody in Lansing how to do that. Having Jim Murray and Gary Reed, who are two highly connected and respected Republicans, will help to build bridges and make the connection for other Republican lawmakers and give courage to the Republican lawmakers who do want to do the right thing and are unsure of how to do it. Jim and Gary can help them get through it, make decisions and make sense for them as politicians who need to get reelected but also want to do the right thing and move our state forward,” White said.

The bottom line, White said, is that EQMI wants to expand civil rights and that involves dealing with the people in power.

White pointed out the organization is committed to and invested in social justice and progressive values, as it works against all kinds of oppression including misogyny, racism and classism as well as fighting against homophobia.

Over the next year Equality Michigan hopes to raise and spend close to a million dollars, White told BTL. She acknowledged that it is an aggressive goal but is hopeful that LGBT and ally community members are interested in invigorating and strengthening the organization, especially as the November election draws ever closer.

EQMI is unrolling a multi-year plan to pass an ELCRA expansion. This year EQMI will focus on building the infrastructure needed in the state LGBT movement and in the organization. They have already started working with community centers in the state to take advantage of the 2016 election cycle by training volunteers to identify pro-equality voters.

The organization will be launching new collaborations and coalitions around equality

issues in the near future. Already this year EQMI has partnered with LGBT Detroit and the KGLRC to launch a Queer People of Color Caucus. EQMI is working with the National LGBTQ Task Force and the Michigan Inclusive Justice Coalition, as well as working with people of faith, to do equality organizing.

White emphasized it was going to take education and lots of effort to get ELCRA protections in the state. She hopes that through the education process, the Michigan Legislature will finally take up the issue.

“We've seen unprecedented rates of change as communities come to embrace gender and sexual diversity. There is still so much to do. I am so happy to be able to share my experience with Equality Michigan as we continue to aspire to a Michigan where all of us truly belong,” said board member Mira Krishnan.

Thirteen members currently serve on the boards of EQMI and the EQMI Action Network. The organization's bylaws allow for up to 30 individuals to serve. In addition to appointing the 2016 officers, the board decided to provide a one-year extension for current sitting members who may have served for multiple years. This move is to ensure the board maintains some continuity, making sure the change is orderly and healthy.

White said that the community should expect to see another wave of changes near the end of 2016 as the organization works to establish an orderly rollover of its board members.

Currently serving on the Equality Michigan board is: Dave Wait, director of Michigan DECA; Rebekah Warren, state senator; Gary Reed, partner at Kandler Reed Khoury & Muchmore; Joy Geng, former manager at Ford Motor Company; Chuck Otis, former marketing executive at UPS; Clif Levin, former Friend of the Court attorney at Wayne County Circuit Court; Tim Atkinson, who also serves on the board of Perceptions; Seth Davis, president of Strategic Alliance Group; Mira Krishnan, director of Children's Services at the Hope Network; Kerene Moore, attorney at the Legal Services of South Central Michigan; James Murray, president of AT&T Michigan; Sean Rhaesa, general manager of the Associated Newspapers of Michigan Wayne; and attorney Michael Rowady.

Currently serving on the Equality Michigan Action Network Board is Warren, Reed, Otis, Levin, Atkinson, Krishnan and Rhaesa.

Visit the EQMI website for more information <https://www.equalitymi.org>.



Kentucky Legislators Consider Creating 2 Marriage Licenses

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) – Kentucky lawmakers want to create two marriage license forms, one designed for gay couples and another for straight couples, in a move critics say harks back to the “separate but equal” days of the civil rights movement.

One marriage license form would note the “bride” and “groom” and the other form would note “first party” and “second party.” Bill sponsor Republican Sen. Stephen West of Paris said couples, both gay and straight, could use either form.

The bill also removes the name of the county clerk who issued the license and would require couples to note their gender, no matter what form they chose, for the benefit of historians and genealogists who use marriage license records for research purposes.

The proposal cleared a Senate committee Wednesday with bipartisan support. It comes five months after Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis spent five days in jail for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples because of her religious beliefs, despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that effectively legalized gay marriage nationwide.

Davis did not attend Wednesday’s hearing, although West said he did seek her input when writing the bill.

Former Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear changed the marriage license form after the Supreme Court ruling to remove references to “bride” and “groom” and replaced them with

“first party” and “second party.”

“The (county) clerks seem to want this. They have clients and customers who would prefer the other form,” West said. “No one is precluded.”

Chris Hartman, executive director of the Fairness Campaign, said he is concerned the bill would offer disparate treatment of gay couples.

“Separate has seldom been equal,” he said.

One solution, offered by Democratic state Sen. Morgan McGarvey of Louisville, was to have one form with a box next to a person’s name to check “bride,” “groom” or “spouse.”

“You can avoid confusion and avoid the potential for any disparate treatment of groups,” he said.

Leslie County Clerk James Lewis, vice president of the Kentucky County Clerk’s Association, said he has no problem with McGarvey’s idea. West said he would consider amending the bill.

Bevin, in one of his first acts as governor, issued an executive order in December that removed the names of county clerks from marriage licenses. But Bevin said he wants the Legislature to make the change permanent by passing a law.

West’s bill now heads to the Senate floor. Democratic House Speaker Greg Stumbo said the House would likely pass its own version, meaning the proposal’s final approval could drag on until the end of the session in April.

► West VA

Continued from p. 9

to express religious beliefs, unless there’s a compelling state interest to restrict them. They said it essentially doesn’t change how the law currently works in West Virginia and doesn’t go as far as the Indiana law did.

“This bill will, if not eliminate, at least reduce the chilling effect of the way our society has become so paranoid about expressing the devotion that we feel to what is the foundation of this nation, and that’s religion,” said Del. John Shott, R-Mercer.

Opponents say the bill sanctions discrimination – particularly targeting gay marriage – and could put seven cities’ nondiscrimination policies for gay and transgender people in jeopardy. The state doesn’t include sexual orientation or gender identity in its employment and housing protections, so some cities have instituted their own.

They also pointed to backlash in Indiana, which ultimately scaled back its law after national scrutiny.

“We can forget about being open for

business,” said Del. Shawn Fluharty, D-Ohio. “We’re open for bigotry after today.”

Meanwhile, the list of business groups publicly expressing concerns about the bill continues to grow. They include AT&T; Dow Chemical Company; West Virginia American Water; chambers of commerce for Charleston, Huntington and Morgantown; and the Marriott and the Embassy Suites in Charleston.

“Dow has proudly called the U.S. home for the past 118 years, and on behalf of the more than 25,000 Dow women and men nationwide, we support full inclusion of our LGBT colleagues,” said Kevin Kolevar, Dow Chemical vice president for government affairs and public policy. “We should be focusing on policies that make West Virginia more competitive and economically sound, instead of taking actions that divide us.”

Democratic Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said he “would have to consider a veto” if the bill passes, citing the state’s tepid economy and Indiana’s experience.

“That should have sent a signal to West Virginia of what the consequences may be if you pass a divisive bill like that,” Tomblin told The Associated Press.

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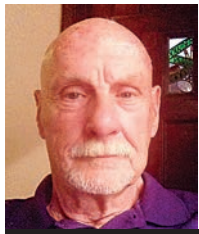
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Your Anal Probe, or Mine? Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Our benighted Michigan Legislature has in its bedroom, busybody, biblically invasive wisdom recently diddled over wording keeping anal sex – with or without lubrication or condom usage – a felony meriting 15 years in prison. (Where presumably anal sex is nonexistent!)

What can one expect of a collective political, throw-back mentality for whom the Christian missionary position is the be all and – pardon a play on words – the end all of sexual expression?

Somehow in the midst of this insanity that places Old Testament law above America’s SCOTUS-validated Constitutional Right to privacy of intimate sexual expressions among consenting adults, married or otherwise, I recall to mind a joke somehow apropos to this discussion.

“A gay man goes to a proctologist for the proverbial finger wave. During the course of that digital manipulation, the doctor feels what he deems to be an intrusive object encased in the well-practiced sphincter of his patient. He deftly removes it.

“It’s an ‘American Beauty rose.’ Stunned, the doctor retrieves another. And another. A dozen! ‘Where in hell did these come from?’ he asks. ‘I don’t know,’ says the gay man visibly annoyed. ‘Wasn’t there a card?’”

Of course no one is fooled by the legislative diddling. Nor is it a laughing matter. Their acknowledgment of the now outdated Michigan Sodomy Law is aimed at gay men, lesbians, trans persons and just maybe one or two experimenting – truly disgusting, eternally damned – deviant, unsaved heterosexual adults.

Good Christians know that, say for example, no woman in her right mind would go anal. Or oral. No non-Christian lip service. Ever!

(The Old Testament story of Lot’s wife turning into a pillar of salt for looking back at Sodom City is often repeated as a warning. Omitting conveniently the deviant bit about Lot having incest with his daughters.)

Truth of the matter is that anal sex is being increasingly practiced among straight couples: married, unmarried or engaging in polyamorous sexual romps. According to a recent Cosmopolitan article, “Is Everyone Having Anal Without Me?” quoting the Journal of Sexual Medicine: “Forty percent of women, ages 20 to 24, have tried anal sex, up from 16 percent in 1992.”

Not that good Christians would ever read Cosmopolitan magazine, the stylist trend setter among smart, sexually savvy women for more than 75 years.

A Google check of recent Cosmopolitan anal sex articles, its joys, its challenges, its prevalence among its 3 million-plus readership includes: “A Complete Guide to Anal Sex”; “Anal Sex Tips From Experience”; “The 10 Biggest Misconceptions About Anal Sex”; “8 Anal Foreplay Tips for Beginners”; and, at my advanced age, a favorite of mine, “I Want to Try Anal Sex: Tips for Newbies.”

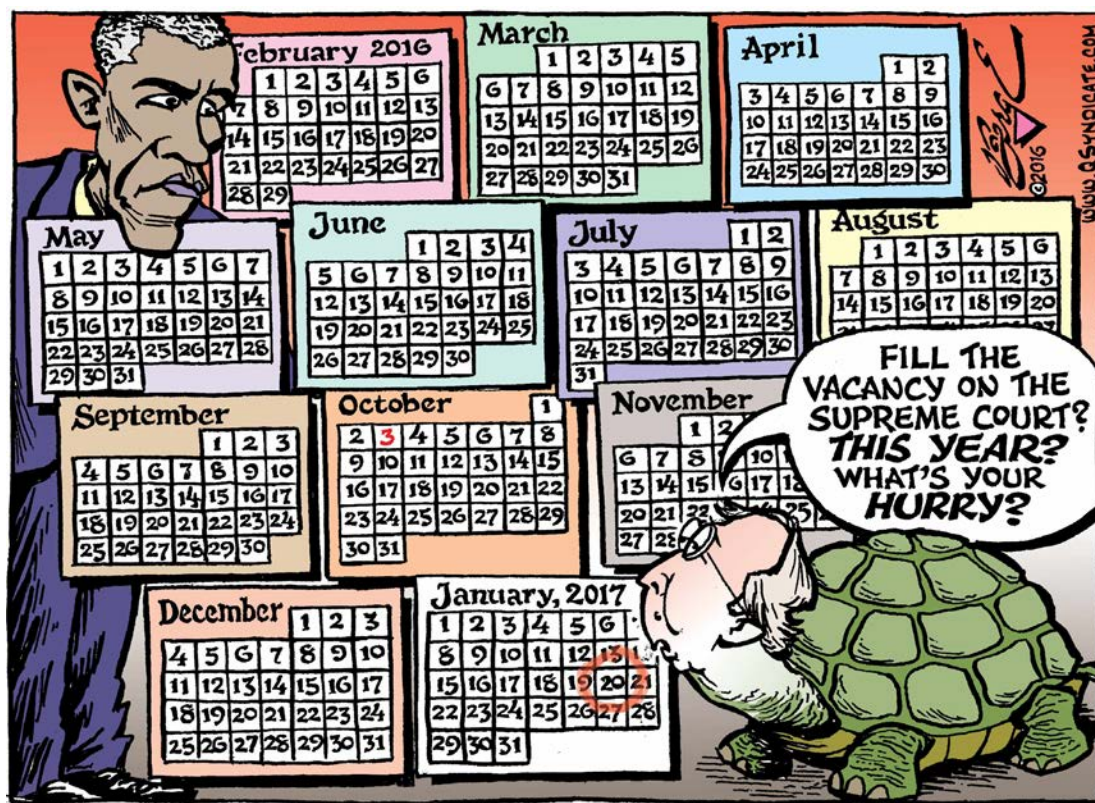
Typical advice from “A Complete Beginner’s Guide to Anal Sex” includes item 10: “If you despise it, never do it again. It shouldn’t take a few hellish mounts to finally decide it’s not for you. If you hate it, you hate it, and that is fine.

“I didn’t hate it, and it was psychologically gratifying to watch my partner’s mind being blown. I’d do it again as a ‘special’ occasion thing, like an anniversary, or Flag Day.”

Vogue magazine not to be – pun intended – behind the times offers: “Is Anal Sex No Longer Taboo?”; “The Rise of Anal Sex”; “Anal Sex. Why bend over boning is now in vogue.” Vogue’s readership: 1,237,939. (Flag Day, anyone?)

Back to a dozen “America Beauty” wilted roses. There was indeed a card. It reads, “We can’t fix your Michigan roads. We can’t take any blame for poisoning Flint’s water. We can’t save your damned public schools. But we can bugger, er, bug you!”

Charles@pridesource.com



The Nation Reacts to Justice Scalia’s Death

“Justice Scalia served on the Supreme Court for nearly 30 years of our history fighting to make a case for LGBT equality and, during that time, we had several strong disagreements. Despite his not being a friend to our community or to the causes of racial and reproductive justice, Justice Scalia was a staunch defender of important aspects of the Constitution, especially rights to free speech and against unreasonable search and seizure.”

- Jon Davidson, legal director for Lambda Legal

“If I were president now, I would certainly want to try and nominate a justice and I’m sure that, frankly, I’m absolutely sure that President Obama will try and do it. I hope that our Senate is going to be able to ... do something about it. This is a tremendous blow to conservatism, a tremendous blow, frankly, to our country. I think it’s up to Mitch McConnell and everybody else to stop it. It’s called delay, delay, delay.”

- Donald Trump

“For almost 30 years, Justice Antonin ‘Nino’ Scalia was a larger-than-life presence on the bench – a brilliant legal mind with an energetic style, incisive wit and colorful opinions. He influenced a generation of judges, lawyers and students, and profoundly shaped the legal landscape. He will no doubt be remembered as one of the most consequential judges and thinkers to serve on the Supreme Court. Justice Scalia dedicated his life to the cornerstone of our democracy: The rule of law. Tonight, we honor his extraordinary service to our nation and remember one of the towering legal figures of our time.”

- President Barack Obama

Excerpts from Scalia’s Dissent in Obergefell v. Hodges

“Today’s decree says that my Ruler, and the Ruler of 320 million Americans coast-to-coast, is a majority of the nine lawyers on the Supreme Court. The opinion in these cases is the furthest extension in fact – and the furthest extension one can even imagine – of the Court’s claimed power to create ‘liberties’ that the Constitution and its Amendments neglect to mention. This practice of constitutional revision by an unelected committee of nine, always accompanied (as it is today) by extravagant praise of liberty, robs the People of the most important liberty they asserted in the Declaration of Independence and won in the Revolution of 1776: the freedom to govern themselves.

“When the 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868, every State limited marriage to one man and one woman, and no one doubted the constitutionality of doing so. That resolves these cases.

“Buried beneath the mummeries and straining-to-be-memorable passages of the opinion is a candid and startling assertion: No matter what it was the People ratified, the 14th Amendment protects those rights that the Judiciary, in its ‘reasoned judgment,’ thinks the 14th Amendment ought to protect.

“But what really astounds is the hubris reflected in today’s judicial Putsch. The five Justices who compose today’s majority are entirely comfortable concluding that every State violated the Constitution for all of the 135 years between the 14th Amendment’s ratification and Massachusetts’ permitting of same-sex marriages in 2003.”



OPINION BY JERRY PETERSON

A Silent Crisis: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in Detroit

A silent crisis is growing among us. During a period of unprecedented advances in rights and acceptance for some LGBTQ folks across the United States, the silent crisis present in the lives of far too many LGBTQ youth in Detroit has deepened – especially for LGBTQ youth of color experiencing homelessness. Since the mid-'90s, the LGBTQ movement has focused heavily on civil rights and legal protections which have largely benefitted white people with resources while ignoring the imperative to fight for social services and resources for disenfranchised members of our own community. The class and privilege divide between the haves and the have-nots is wider than ever and alarmingly present in the LGBTQ community.

The advances won with enormous coordinated effort and financial resources from the LGBTQ movement in the last year are of little benefit to most of the young people we serve at the Ruth Ellis Center. In fact, these advances intensify the silent crisis for some LGBTQ youth in Detroit. I witness the harmful effects of the angry backlash of rejection from conservatives and people who don't understand LGBTQ identities, adding more stress and increasing risk for LGBTQ young people who continue to be demonized because of who they are. The increased visibility and focus on LGBTQ rights motivates some people to become more accepting while others become even more entrenched in rejection and oppression, leading to physical and emotional violence and unsafe conditions for LGBTQ youth. Those who are homeless are especially impacted, as are those in foster care and the juvenile justice system – far more often than most people imagine.

The dedicated staff at the Ruth Ellis Center works tirelessly to address the traumatic impact family rejection, unemployment, homelessness, couch-surfing, racial profiling, systematic oppression, discrimination and sexual exploitation have on LGBTQ young people who have precious few supports or protections. These young people deserve our advocacy and support – not to be demonized and blamed for their circumstances or, more fundamentally, for who they are. The question we must ask regarding homeless LGBTQ youth in Detroit is not, “Why do *they* make bad choices?” or, “How can their families reject them?” but rather, “What can *we* do about the social conditions of prejudice, fear and discrimination that limit their choices and prevent deserving young people from experiencing advances similar to the rest of the LGBTQ movement?”

The first questions blame those who are

powerless to fix the root causes of the crisis and exonerate the perpetrators of oppression. The second moves us toward accepting responsibility for doing what we can to change the status quo. We must look beyond our own comfort zones and come together as caring adults, local activists, funders and service providers working collaboratively with LGBTQ youth to expand their options for social support and access to resources. Responses to these invisible challenges for LGBTQ youth have tended to be dictated by conventional, mainstream ideas about home, stability and relationships. We have to come together to reimagine what home, family and community can be.

The Ruth Ellis Center was formed in 1999 to help LGBTQ homeless youth specifically, creating a full-service drop-in-center, mental health services and Ruth's House, a state-licensed foster care residential program for up to nine LGBTQ youth at a time. As important and life-giving as these services have been, we have to press on to address the deeper needs for support and stability to succeed in life. That's why we are expanding our services this year to open the Ruth Ellis Health & Wellness Center, which will provide mental health, substance use disorder and primary health care to LGBTQ young people who don't have access to care anywhere else. Watch for the public launch of the capital campaign soon.

Another approach to LGBTQ youth homelessness launched in 2015 focuses on prevention, stressing the importance of working with individual families to keep young people from becoming homeless in the first place. But the Ruth Ellis Center cannot fix these problems alone. To solve this crisis, average citizens must find their voice to break the silence! Talk about these issues with your friends, educate yourself, become an agent of change within your own circles. Befriend families that are fearful of accepting their LGBTQ children and show compassion and empathy for their fear; stop demonizing, blaming and labeling them. Is that really the way to produce positive change in people?

This silent crisis has not developed in a vacuum; rather it reflects broader instabilities and failures in families and institutions across our community. Nonprofit services are vital, but the community must come together to address the complex root causes of homelessness and other barriers to success among LGBTQ youth. Step out of your comfort zone and become part of the solution.

Jerry Peterson is the executive director of the Ruth Ellis Center.

Creep of the Week

Log Cabin Republicans

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

As a kid, I loved Log Cabin pancake syrup. Not only that, but I thought real maple syrup was gross.

Then I grew up. And I no longer believed the dumb things I believed when I was young and stupid – like corn syrup with brown dye being superior to the real thing. Hey, you live and you learn, right?

Unless, of course, you're a Log Cabin Republican. Then all you want is the fake stuff. And by fake stuff, I mean the delusion that if you keep supporting Republicans, then Republicans will one day support you back. All evidence points to the contrary. And yet LCR just can't quit the GOP.

The reason? Log Cabin Republicans don't really care about LGBTQ rights. Their concerns really aren't much different from Republicans who live in more modern housing: amassing money and power and to hell with anyone who doesn't have it.

You don't have to look any further than the current slate of Republicans vying to get the party's nomination for president. All of them are vocally anti-LGBT. And yet Log Cabin Republicans would rather see someone like Trump or Cruz get elected than see a Democrat win.

You don't have to look any further than the current slate of Republicans vying to get the party's nomination for president. All of them are vocally anti-LGBT. And yet Log Cabin Republicans would rather see someone like Trump or Cruz get elected than see a Democrat win.

Case in point: LCR recently released a rather bizarre anti-Clinton ad that took her to task for her slow-roll when it came to LGBTQ rights.

The ad begins with ominous music and the words, “Was Hillary Clinton a gay rights advocate when it counted?” over a black screen. Then it cuts to a 2004 interview where Clinton says, “I do not support gay marriage.”

The ad seems to be suggesting that 2004 was “when it counted” and that, for some reason, now it doesn't count at all.

What was so special about 2004? Was it because President George W. Bush, a candidate that they supported in 2000, was voicing support for an anti-gay marriage amendment to the Constitution? LCR got their feelings so hurt that they chose not to endorse GWB in 2004.

And, yeah, it does really suck that Clinton didn't support LGBTQ people years ago. She absolutely should have. But Log Cabin Republicans seem to be the only people who find it unforgivable. Everybody else is like, “Fucking finally, Hillz.”

And let's not forget that even though Clinton smugly told Chris Matthews in 2002, “No,” when he asked if New York should recognize gay marriage (a clip LCR uses in the ad, though it comes after two clips from the magical year of 2004), she's light years ahead of all of the Republican candidates on issues of equality.

So is Bernie Sanders, who is also featured in the ad in a 2015 clip from “The Rachel Maddow Show.” “It's great that people evolve and change their minds,” he says, “but it's important to stand up when the going is tough.”

So is LCR endorsing Sanders? No. They're just using him to illustrate how much they hate Clinton who was, according to their ad, “Wrong on gay rights when it mattered.”

Because it doesn't matter now I guess. We might as well elect Ted Cruz, amirite?

LCR's YouTube description for the ad, by the way, reads, “On LGBTQ rights, Hillary Clinton has led from behind.”

Which more aptly describes LCR. And not just because of the obvious gay joke.

As LCR touts, “Gay and lesbian Republicans have chosen to transform the GOP from the inside.” Which is true. And let us never forget the sad fact that being Republican is a choice. Pray for them.

Pistons Pride Night Coming March 6

AUBURN HILLS—The Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce has teamed up with the Pistons to promote Motor City Sundays on March 6.

Motor City Sundays give fans and the Pistons a chance to showcase their shared pride in celebration of all things Detroit and family.

The Detroit Pistons will wear their Motor City Pride jerseys exclusively for all Sunday home games, the Chamber announced. Doors will open early for Sunday tip-offs to give families and friends a chance to wrap up the weekend together and enjoy a Detroit Pride-centric game night experience.

The Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber has reserved Club 300 for all LGBT attendees who wish to network and enjoy the game. Tickets for the 300 club space at the March 6 game are \$60 and include all you can eat and drink. Beer and wine are included.

“This Pride night is different from the rest because we will all be together in a suite with great food, drinks and conversation,” says Kevin Heard, board president of the Chamber. “We host these events to meet other members of our community that are doing phenomenal things. Business owners, executives and advocates all come out to not only enjoy the game but also have conversations and create strategy on how to make the city more inclusive.”

To purchase tickets for the March 6 game, go to pistons.com/pridenight. Use the promotional code: pride.

For more information, contact Abe Alcodray at the Pistons by phone at 248-371-2014 or email at aalcodray@placenet.com.

Look for upcoming announcements about the Chamber’s second annual Red Wings Pride night and other group nights.

Upcoming Event Focuses on Gay Marriage, Existing Discriminatory Laws

“Did you know that it is still legal to fire employees for being LGBTQ in over half of U.S. states?” That’s the tagline for the Holocaust Memorial Center’s upcoming event, “Congrats on your gay marriage! You’re fire!” The event begins at 7 p.m. on Feb. 23.

In this special learning event, the center will explore both the judicial process that led to the historic gay marriage ruling by the Supreme Court and discriminatory laws still impacting LGBTQ individuals. The center will investigate texts, contemporary and ancient, Jewish and secular, to launch conversations about the evolving approach to LGBTQ issues, and will also hear from a panel comprised of local young-adult Jewish LGBTQ individuals.

The event is presented in partnership with the Jewish Bar Association of Michigan, the Jewish Gay Network, the Holocaust Memorial Center, Hillel of Metro Detroit and the Cohen-Haddow Center for Jewish Studies at Wayne State University.

The Holocaust Memorial Center is located at 48123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. This event is part of “The Well’s CSI: Coffee. Study. Interpret.” series, and is made possible in part by funds granted by The Covenant Foundation. The statements made and the views expressed, however, are solely the responsibility of The Well.

COMMUNITY

Dirty Show Features More LGBT Art, Gender Bending Performances

BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

The Dirty Show, Detroit’s annual erotic art show, has one more weekend left before visitors must wait until next February for the risqué festivities. The show kicked off its 17th year this past weekend with special guest artist Colin Christian’s 3-D fiberglass work as a focal point. His cartoonish female figures can be found along a back wall nearby to the performance stage.

Thought The Dirty Show has been observed as both tamer and more heteronormative in recent years, this year’s edition featured a fair share of LGBTQ+ work.

Michael Breyette of Worcester, Massachusetts had a set of gay-focused paintings: “A view from the top” and “Crave.” Both were still available for purchase by Sunday’s show for \$600 each. Ross Johnston’s mixed media work, “You Watching Him,” was also available for \$450. The work depicts a man coyly looking up during sex, with a presumably male partner penetrating him; the perspective of the work leaves the viewer in the role of the penetrating lover.

Samantha Thorp of Brakenridge, Pennsylvania had an MSM-centered acrylic on canvas work, “Put a Ring on It,” for \$175. Also still for sale at \$175 was Minneapolis’ own Marc Debauch’s “Blood Dawn.” The print featured a vampiric male-on-male coupling, complete with sex in a coffin. Keeping with the vampire theme, Dennis Osborne of Rodeo, California depicted a lesbian pairing – complete with fangs and blood – in “Once Bitten, Twice Smitten.” The mixed media work is available for purchase for \$350.

Plenty of local artists turned out more LGBT-focused art. BTL columnist Charles Alexander had two works on display, still available for purchase at \$175 each: “Erotique One” and

“Erotique Two.”

Another local gay standout was Jack O. Summers’ medieval penis icon, dubbed “The Gay Icon” and still for sale at \$125; Summers spoke with Between the Lights before opening weekend about his mixing of the profane and the religious.

Another local presenting standout LGBT art was Ypsilanti’s Trevor David Castor. “Sweet Release” and “Ready”



are graphite and watercolors on paper, both still available for \$450. “Ready” depicted a man looking alluringly out of the picture while orally toying a buttplug.

Though many of the more woman centered works at the show are arguably for a heteronormative male gaze, many works tastefully dipped into the dynamics of queer women without being exploitative. Hazel Park’s Revered Todd had a photo work, “The Kiss #1 and #2,” delicately framing images of two women kissing with “both sets of lips.” SameSource out of Los Angeles had a black and

white photo, “Better than Two in the Bush,” depicting three women in stockings from behind, with one in the center making her affection known for the women on either side; this is still available for \$500.

Queer and genderfluid work was still present and found beyond the galleries, though a framed work included “He Who Sneaks In At Night And Steals Your Women,” a soft pastel/mixed work by Detroit’s Jennifer Erny depicting two genderqueer individuals surrounding a seemingly Satanic figure in the middle. The work is available for \$950.

Two performers in particular, Willy Q and Ms Mr Jr, brought a gender-bending twist to the otherwise woman or woman-presenting stage. The bearded but artfully made up Ms Mr Jr came out early in the night, bedecked in an ornate outfit that was undressed in a burlesque show that included the use of castanets. Willy Q’s genderqueer performance utilized makeup, a full body stocking and a corset, with a burlesque undressing done with the use of voguing.

Local drag queen DeAngela Showshannon also performed among other drag acts.

Chris Harder, a gay porn “stud,” put on arguably one of the most uproarious strip performances of the night with his homage to pornography’s “the pizza boy” trope.

The last weekend of the Dirty Show will be held from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, Feb. 19 and Saturday, Feb. 20 at the Russell Exhibition Center. The center is located at 1600 Clay St., Detroit. Tickets are \$30 in advance; a cash bar will be on premises. Parking is \$10 minimum. There is a food stand in the center. Entrance is for those 21 and over with valid photo ID. For tickets or to find out more, visit www.dirtyshow.org.



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OUT OF CHARACTER

'Glee' Alum Alex Newell on Questioning His Gender, Stealing Church-Choir Solos & Red Lobster

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Maybe Alex Newell's star-making moment – the “Dreamgirls” showstopper “And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going,” which the 23-year-old gloriously belted out on “The Glee Project,” before nabbing a spot on Fox's “Glee” – was meant to be. After all, as a fiery kid in church choir, Newell was not about to let some lesser singer steal any church-choir solos from him. To get his point across, he would scream “at the top of my lungs.” He would throw things. Until that solo was his, no, Newell was not going.

“If I wanted it bad enough, I would throw a hissy fit until they'd just give me the solo,” he recalls, reliving the early onset of his now-famous 'tude.

With a new EP, “Power,” to his name, Newell opens up about his reputation as a diva, being mistaken as transgender and – who can blame him? – his meltdown over nearly missing out on singing a “Sister Act” song.

Which church solo are you most proud of stealing?

What was that stupid song that I wanted... oh my god, yes! It was “Oh Happy Day” from “Sister Act.” I wanted that solo and they gave it to someone else and I was soooo livid. I was like, “She can't even sing it! I can sing it so much better than her!” I remember yelling at my aunt in the sanctuary after everybody left and she was like, “You need to calm down,” and I was just like, “NO! I'm not gonna calm down. That solo is mine. I should have it,” and I got it. (Laughs)

What's an Alex Newell hissy fit like now?

Now, an Alex Newell hissy fit is being extremely quiet and not giving anything. Nothing but silence. I'll just look at you and be quiet, or I won't look at you and I'll be quiet, or I won't make direct eye contact and I'll just walk away – that's when you know

I'm genuinely angry at you.

So honestly I don't even know how you're alive at this moment because I'm assuming you watched Beyoncé during the Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime show.

Absolutely! And then I immediately turned the game off.

Of course you wouldn't miss Beyoncé – she's one of your all-time favorites.

Oh, she's my idol.

What is it about her? How does she inspire you as a performer / singer / fashionista?

Honestly, she's so just so... she's made herself a verb, she's made herself an adjective, she's made herself such an entity – a force of nature. She literally almost fell (during the halftime show) and without missing a beat got right back up and didn't miss a single count – that in itself makes anyone want to look up to her. She stands for so much. She means what she's singing now, and she's telling a message and a story.

In your own career, how are you influenced by that?

I guess just work ethic, and also her singing – having so much passion behind what she's singing. You can feel her, you can feel what she's singing when she's singing it, and I feel that's something I want to convey as well.

But you've been doing that for years.

Oh stop it! Stop, stop. (Laughs)

Who were your musical influences when you first discovered you were into music – before Beyoncé even existed?

Oh my goodness – I mean, was there a before Beyoncé? I'm not that old! Whitney Houston was giant for me because we kind of had the same background of growing up in church and all of that. Chaka Khan, Donna

Summer, Aretha. Even gospel artists like Yolanda Adams, Karen Clark and Kirk Franklin. Just like... voices. People who can sing. Patti LaBelle, Mariah Carey. I've always gravitated toward voices, whether it be someone screaming in my face, a hard R&B or pop ballad, or even opera and musical theater. I'm always inspired by people who can sing and don't give any... I won't say that word....

Feel free to say whatever you want.

Like Jennifer Holliday gives zero fucks about her vocal cords and I live for it.

How much were you inspired by your influences on your debut EP? Because I hear Whitney influences on “This Ain't Over.”

Absolutely. I mean, just like melodic riffs and runs that she always did and executed so perfectly. Vocal acrobatics – just that. And the passion behind it, where you're singing something that you actually believe in as well and you make yourself believe that everyone believes it at the same time. That's what Whitney was, and I pulled that in there (for the EP). There's some Donna Summer in there too. Just some of my greats. I tried to emulate them without imitating them.

What do you make of people who refer to you as a diva?

Sometimes it's a compliment. But it doesn't mean best in their craft anymore. It has this attitude about it, like “I'm a diva because I'm



fierce
a t

what I do” not because “I’m the best at what I do.” So, that bothers me a little bit. It doesn’t mean prima donna anymore; it means, “I can wear a leotard on stage and give a subpar show,” rather than, “I can get on the stage and murder everyone”—not murder everyone in the sense of killing them, but murder my performance and be the best at what I do. Be the prima donna, be No. 1, First Lady of the Stage. It’s like calling yourself your race: “I’m black.” OK, great. Good for you. Moving on. It’s just claiming the obvious.

You broke a lot of ground as Unique on “Glee,” which helped to start a conversation regarding gender and trans issues, both of which are now in the forefront. What does it mean to have been one of the first trans characters on television?

It was a great platform and such a great show, but to have a role come into your life that means something – that actually changes the way people view society – it’s just great. Just to know that I was a part of something that’s bigger than me makes it even better. Sometimes you get those roles twice, sometimes once, so I’m just happy I had mine so early in my career.

Do people ever misidentify you as the character in real life?

Absolutely, and still to this day. I was at some AIDS benefit and I was walking the carpet and this one man literally looked at me and said, “So, your character is great, but how far along are you in your transition?” I was just like, “Excuse me? No, no, no, no. My character is transitioning. I’m not. I’m just a little black gay boy from Massachusetts.” But that means I’m probably just doing my job that much better. And I’m not angry about it. I’m not bitter about it, that people don’t separate character from real life. It just... it happens.

Did the show have you questioning your own gender at all?

Sometimes I’d be like, “Am I (a woman)? No, no, no.” I can’t sit and say that I haven’t, but for a better part of the last three years I was literally playing a woman and sometimes I’d wake up and be like, “I have to put this dress on,” and you go into a routine and I would mentally be preparing myself and waking up mentally prepared as Unique. I was like, “Oh my god, I have to stop this. I have to separate.” But yeah, I’ve done a lot of self-discovery. And I guess I’ve never really seen myself as a woman. Yes, I physically have seen myself as a woman, but when I think about 30 years in the future, I don’t see myself transitioning into a woman. I see myself as a gay male with my husband and my children and living that life. I guess that’s how I’ve confirmed it with myself, which could change. I don’t know. Who knows. I could have another cathartic self-discovery down the line.

PERFORMING

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When did you know you were gay?

I didn’t know what “gay” was; I just knew that I liked boys. Oh my god – I was boy crazed. I still am boy crazed! Like, I can’t... I just can’t... I’ve looked into it (girls) and I can’t. But as a child, if you go to church seven days a week (who you’re attracted to is) probably gonna be one of your friends from church. It was never – because all the boys were ugly and the girls were trying to be prettier than me. (Laughs) It was so much competition. My obsession with boys is how I’ve always known I was gay – and I wasn’t about to get cooties from all the girls.

Have you always been as comfortable in your own skin as you seem to be?

Yes and no. There was always this insecurity of not having a father growing up. It’s different just having a single parent. You have an insecurity, because the majority of people around you have both of their parents, so I was a little bit shy for that reason. You’re not socially accepted because you have mommy day and daddy day and your mom shows up for both. So I guess I always was a social outcast, in my own mind rather, and I don’t think I was that confident.

Now look at you. You and Adam Lambert are touring, which has to be the gayest billing of the year.

No – it’s gonna be the gayest event of *life*. Two gays on the road! How fabulous!

What can people expect?

Two hours of screaming the entire time and just singing in your face and just great vocals and runs. We might just explode by the end of the night every day.

What about incorporating a Beyoncé cover? Which song of hers would you do?

I mean, I’m literally about to sing “Formation” wherever I go now because I just want to say (a la Beyoncé), “If you fuck me right, I’ll take you to Red Lobster.”

Do you eat at Red Lobster?

I’ve never been to Red Lobster a day in my life.

But you’ll eat there now?

Unless Beyoncé is there herself, no.

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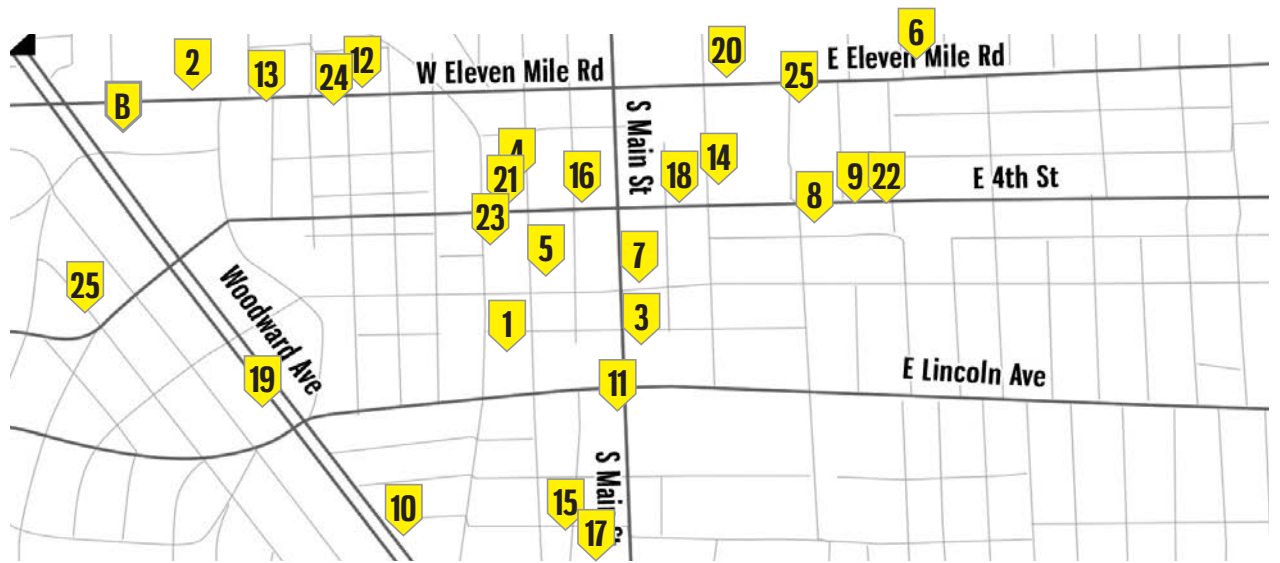
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Stagecrafters Takes Audience Through Sensitive Subject

ROYAL OAK – “The purpose of drama is to project ourselves into everything we fear and everything we resist and everything we are revolted by,” says “How I Learned to Drive” author Paula Vogel. Her Pulitzer-winning drama not only makes the audience feel slightly uncomfortable but allows them to question familial impact, and reflect on the process of healing and survival. The play is presented in Stagecrafters’ black-box studio theatre, 2nd Stage, through Feb. 21 at the Baldwin Theatre in downtown Royal Oak.

Told in a mixture of flashbacks, monologues and narration, “How I Learned to Drive” chronicles the inappropriate seven-year relationship between an uncle and his teenage niece. Set in 1960s rural Maryland, Li'l Bit (Rachel Keown of St. Clair Shores) recounts driving lessons and her relationship with Uncle Peck (Josh Allor of Mount Clemens), her family’s dysfunction and the emotional impact on her life thereafter. The story’s non-chronological order reinforces the metaphorical twists and turns of driving through life. Because of the subject matter, this play is rated M for mature content.

Director Jerry Haines of Berkley was drawn to direct the play because of the questions it evoked. “There is never a time we should fault the victim in cases of molestation, but we mustn’t overlook the circumstances or history surrounding some cases. We hear about the cycle of abuse – is that a contributing factor in this situation? Why does the victim not tell, but pursue and continue the relationship? How much does family dynamics and dysfunction affect the abuse with both the abuser and the victim? I want audiences to enjoy the drama and the performances, but I want them to think about and question the circumstances,” says Haines. “How I Learned to Drive” opened in New York in February 1997 and ran off-Broadway for 14 months. The play won several awards including the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, an Obie, a Drama Desk Award and a New York Drama Critics’ Award.

Show tickets are \$18 for all performances. Students may purchase half-price tickets for the Thursday, Feb. 18 performance. Tickets may be purchased online at stagecrafters.org (online handling fees apply) or by phone at 248-541-6430 using Visa or MasterCard. All

seats are reserved and there are no refunds or exchanges on individual tickets. If shows have not sold out, tickets can be purchased at the box office one hour prior to the performance. The Baldwin Theatre is located at 415 S. Lafayette in downtown Royal Oak. The show runs approximately two hours including one intermission.



Uncle Peck (Josh Allor of Mount Clemens) uses “driving lessons” to start an inappropriate relationship with his niece Li'l Bit (Rachel Keown of St. Clair Shores).

Show dates and times are as follows:

Thursday, Feb. 18 at 8 p.m. (Half-price student night)
Friday, Feb. 19 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 21 at 2 p.m.

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

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Editor's Pick

The Ann Arbor Art Center is hosting its Eighth Annual Artini, a fundraising event benefitting the center. Once again, the finest downtown bars and restaurants in Ann Arbor will compete to create the city's most artful martini on Feb. 19 from 7-10 p.m.

New sponsors this year are Alex Milshteyn Real Estate Associates and Two James Spirits of Detroit as the beverage sponsor.

This year the winner of Artini will be decided by a panel of hand-selected jurors that are unaffiliated with the participating venues. These jurors include Andy Mohr (Two James Spirits), Alex Milshteyn (Real Estate Associates), Jorge Avellan (WEMU), Yen Azzaro (of studio Chin-Azzaro), Horace Bomar (long-time Art Center supporter) and Jessica Webster (MLive).

Artini will take place between 7 and 10 p.m. on Feb. 19 in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$55 and non-refundable. Attendees must be 21 or older by Feb. 19.

UMS "Sir Andras's Schiff: The Last Sonatas" Tickets: \$30-\$65. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 16 - Feb. 18. 734-764-2538. ums.org/multiperformance/sir-andras-schiff-the-last-sonatas/

UMS "Sir Andras Schiff: The Last Sonatas" After his stunning performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations two seasons ago, Sir Andras Schiff returns with a project called "The Last Sonatas." Performed over the course of a week, this mini-festival includes the final three sonatas of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 16 - Feb. 18. 734-764-2538. www.ums.org/multiperformance/sir-andras-schiff-the-last-sonatas/

Concerts

Unlimited Sky Production "Jazz Cafe at Music Hall Celebrates Black History Month Jazz Music Series ft. Sky Covington & Club Crescendo" Tickets: \$10. Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. Feb. 18. 313-887-8500. skycovington.net

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

UMS "National Theatre Live: Christopher Hampton's Les Liaisons Dangereuses" Tickets: \$12-\$22. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 7 p.m. Feb. 24. 734-764-2538. ums.org/performance/nt-live-les-liaisons/

Other

Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University "ReEntry" Tickets: \$5-13. Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. Feb. 26 - Feb. 27. 800-WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

Shows

Ford Piquette Avenue Plant "2016 Piquette Plant Autorama!" Our complimentary hot cocoa bar will be available! Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, 461 Piquette, Detroit. 10 a.m. Feb. 26. 313-872-8759. fordpiquetteplant.org

Great Lakes Builders "2016 Great Lakes Builders Show" Sponsored by the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Southeastern Michigan, this statewide industry trade show promises to be an enriching experience for professionals in the residential construction and remodeling industry as well as those interested in getting into the business. Exhibits and seminars happening throughout the show. Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi. Feb. 17 - Feb. 18. 586-752-6381. www.novihomeshow.com

UMS "The Triplets of Belleville Cine-Concert" Tickets: \$26-\$54. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 19. 734-764-2538. ums.org/performance/the-triplets-of-belleville/

UMS "The Triplets of Belleville" A decade after it was first brought to the screen, Benoît Charest revives his music to the Oscar-nominated film The Triplets of Belleville with a remarkable cast of musicians. Kidnapped by mysterious, square-shouldered henchmen, a Tour de France cyclist

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 18

Disgust and Dynamics of LGBT Politics 5:30 p.m. Presented by Jim Toy Community Center board member and University of Michigan Political Science Ph.D. candidate, Logal Casey. Equality Research Center, 900 Oakwood St., Ypsilanti. www.Emich.edu/equality/about/index.php

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

Friday, Feb. 19

Artini Martini Crawl 7 p.m. For 21+. Tickets: \$55. Ann Arbor Art Center, Ann Arbor. www.annarborartcenter.org

TRUE's Annual Valentine's Day Dance 7 p.m. For LGBTQ+ and allied teens. TRUE, 469 N. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing.

Sunday, Feb. 21

Livingston County PFLAG Monthly Meeting 2 p.m. Please join us for our monthly support group the third Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. Livingston County PFLAG, 200 W St Paul St., Brighton. 517-548-0839. LivingstonPFLAG@aol.com www.facebook.com/pflaglivingston

Monday, Feb. 22

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

Tuesday, Feb. 23

Congrats on your gay marriage! You're fired! 7 p.m. Join us for this special learning event where we will explore both the judicial process that led to the historic gay marriage ruling by the Supreme Court and discriminatory laws still

impacting LGBTQ individuals. We will investigate texts, contemporary and ancient, Jewish and secular, to launch conversations about our evolving approach to LGBTQ issues, and will also hear from a panel comprised of local young-adult Jewish LGBTQ individuals. Holocaust Memorial Center, 48123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. 248-553-2400 x24. www.facebook.com/events/170247270664422/

Wednesday, Feb. 24

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

Friday, Feb. 26

2016 Special Autorama Tours 10 a.m. Visit the building where Henry Ford designed the Model T! Tours last approximately 1.5 hours and include a short movie. Admission is \$10 adults, \$8 seniors, \$5 students and children under 12 are free. Ford Piquette Plant, 461 Piquette St., Detroit. 3138725759. info@fordpiquetteplant.org fordpiquetteplant.org

Saturday, Feb. 27

Erotic Poetry & Music Festival 8 p.m. An eclectic celebration of the erotic arts! Features music, poetry, art, vendors and more! \$10 and a portion of proceeds benefit Paws with a Cause. Static Network, 715 E. Millwaukee, Detroit. 313-873-2955. info@staticrecords.com www.facebook.com/events/446601412209837/

Sunday, Feb. 28

A2CTs Annual Chili Cook-Off 2 p.m. Adults: \$20 for 10 chili tastings and 3

beer samples, Chili only \$10. Kids ages 5-10 \$5 for 5 chili tastings, kids under 5 are free. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, 2019 W. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228. manager@a2ct.org www.A2ct.org/events/chili-cook-off

Monday, Feb. 29

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>

Thursday, March 3

Brackets For Good Online Tournament Starting Feb. 26, online donations to help your favorite nonprofit organization advance in Brackets For Good and get one step closer to \$10,000 can be made by visiting annarbor.bfg.org. \$1 equals 1 point. Brackets For Good, Ann Arbor. www.annarbor.bfg.org

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

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The Berman "Shuffle" Tickets: \$37-39. Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 18. 248-661-1900. www.theberman.org

UMS "Sir Andras Schiff: The Last Sonatas" After his stunning performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations two seasons ago, Sir Andras Schiff returns with a project called "The Last Sonatas." Performed over the course of a week, this mini-festival includes the final three sonatas of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. 825 North University Avenue, Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 20. 734-764-2538. ums.org/multiperformance/sir-andras-schiff-the-last-sonatas/

Editor's Pick



Check out Pewabic's latest exhibition in Detroit, "This is the living vessel: person. This is what matters. This is our universe." Curated by Anders Ruhwald, artist-in-residence and head of ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art, the exhibition includes works from Jeremy Brooks, Kathy Butterly, Nicole Cherubini, Marie T. Hermann, Howard Kottler, Matthew Bennet Laurents and Roberto Lugo.

The vessel has long functioned for the ceramic artist as the canvas does for the painter. This exhibition examines how the ceramic medium currently carries the question of identity and self-expression by focusing on work that has its basis in the vessel and the underlying metaphor of the body/person. Join us as we focus on seven individual artists' drive to explore their place in the world through clay.

Pewabic is located at 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit. For more information, visit www.pewabic.org.

named Champion is spirited across the ocean to the teeming metropolis of Belleville. His near-sighted grandmother and faithful dog follow his trail and are taken in by a trio of eccentric jazz-era divas. This beloved animated film is told almost exclusively through vaudevillian slapstick, but the real star is the red-hot jazz score by the acclaimed Canadian film composer and guitarist Benoît Charest, who leads his eight-piece orchestra in a live performance of his original score for the film. The group immediately transports audiences to the exciting streets of 1920s Paris and Le Jazz Hot. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Feb. 19. 734-764-2538. www.ums.org/performance/the-triplets-of-belleville/

THEATER

"Chesapeake" by Lee Blessin An absurdly hilarious tale of politics, performance art, and pooches. Pay What You Want, Suggested Donation of \$20. Theatre Nova, The Yellow Barn, 416 West Huron Street, Ann Arbor. Through Feb. 28. 734-635-8450. theatre-nova.org

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

I Am Going To Dance For You Now This dance concert features thesis research by Sara Yanney and Rachel Miller of Wellspring, Cori Terry & Dancers. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, free for children 8 and under. Payments are CASH ONLY at the door. The first half of the concert is appropriate for all ages. The second half of the concert has some adult content. Wellspring Theatre, Wellspring Theatre @ The Epic Center, 359 S. Kalamazoo Mall, Ste. 204, Kalamazoo. 8 p.m. Feb. 27. 317-652-0591. Sarayanneychan.com/i-am-going-to-dance-for-you-now

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

Civic/Community Theater

Auditions for Barefoot in the Park
Auditions. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 21 - Feb. 22. 734-971-2228. www.A2ct.org/audition

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

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






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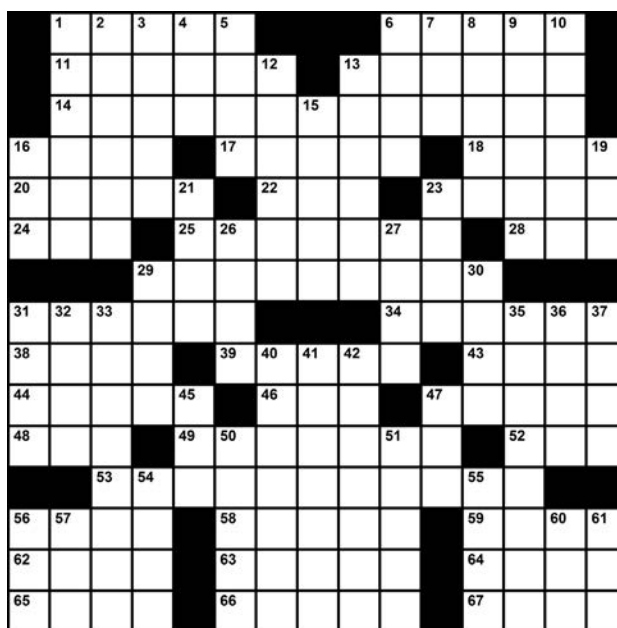
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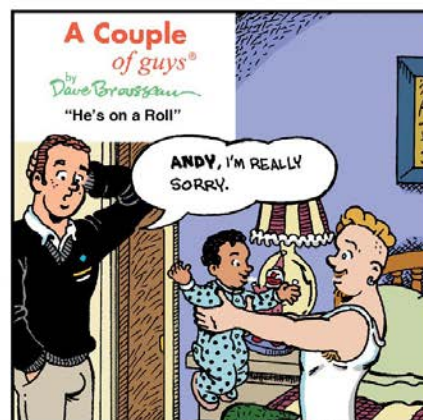
- 1 Broadway prompter's job
- 6 Chicken hawk and falcon
- 11 "Evita" composer ____ Lloyd Webber
- 13 Seek a Hail Mary
- 14 She plays Martha, a hotel maid in "Addicted to Fresno"
- 16 The New York Liberty's org.
- 17 Still in the closet, perhaps
- 18 "____ I say ..."
- 20 Hägar's comics wife
- 22 Place east of Eden
- 23 Houston hurler
- 24 Fruit sugar ending
- 25 Rainbow pennants at a pride parade, e.g.
- 28 Unusual power
- 29 She plays Shannon, a hotel maid in "Addicted to Fresno"
- 31 Lincoln-Douglas event
- 34 Shagged
- 38 R.E.M.'s "The ____ Love"

- 39 Liberace's choice of fur
- 43 Sondheim's Sweeney
- 44 Resell, as tickets
- 46 Part of the work wk.
- 47 Sweaty place
- 48 Musket attachment
- 49 Makes a lame excuse?
- 52 Like the "fruit loop" section of a city
- 53 She plays Kelly in "Addicted to Fresno"
- 56 Result of excessive rough play
- 58 2008 "Survivor" locale
- 59 Bottoms' description of tops?
- 62 Way off the highway
- 63 Train that comes quickly
- 64 Barcelona boy
- 65 Elliot of the Mamas and the Papas
- 66 Food, clothing, shelter, and sex?
- 67 Hairy twin of Genesis
- 12 Stable sound
- 13 Eagle, at times
- 15 In the midst of
- 16 British TV doctor
- 19 Pacifier
- 21 Go up against
- 23 On the ocean
- 26 Fruity drinks
- 27 Director Norman of "Longtime Companion"
- 29 Housing for Leopold and Loeb
- 30 "Rubyfruit Jungle" novelist ____ Mae Brown
- 31 Amount of AZT, e.g.
- 32 Suffix with prefer
- 33 Limbs of hairy gay guys?
- 35 Olympic diver Greg
- 36 "Love Is Not All" poet St. Vincent Millay
- 37 Time of decision
- 40 Having a cool head
- 41 Energetic subject of a queen?
- 42 Loeb's partner
- 45 Chem. pollutant
- 47 Where commuters get off (abbr.)
- 50 Instrument of the Phantom of the Opera
- 51 Bones below elbows
- 54 They call balls
- 55 Belt
- 56 Chelsea's mom, initially
- 57 Battery size
- 60 Radclyffe's lady
- 61 Small amount

Down

- 1 Event for Queer Palm films
- 2 Lacking Viagra?
- 3 Where to see Tom, Dick, or Harry
- 4 Piece-loving org.
- 5 Tale of adventure
- 6 "Gay Priest" author Malcolm
- 7 Possible commitment ceremony vow
- 8 Splits
- 9 Indicate
- 10 Allan of Minnesota and others

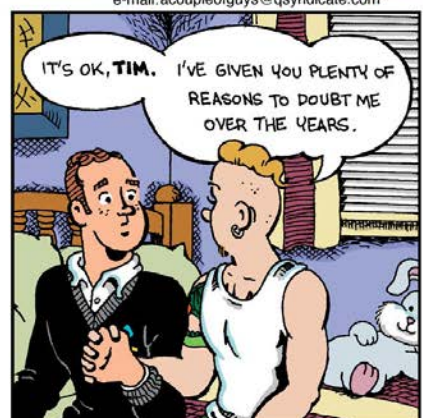
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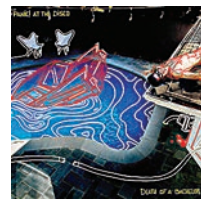
Sia, Panic! at the Disco



Sia, 'This Is Acting'

Before she rebranded herself as a behind-the-scenes scribe for mainstream pop giants, Sia reveled in authenticity. Every feeling was pure – and even if it didn't reflect her life, you believed it could. Remember "Breathe Me"? There was a big sigh, and then she broke you into a million sad, empowered pieces as she came clean one key change at a time. These days, having constructed a persona that's distant and vague, that same Sia hides behind actual veils so as not to reveal too much of herself, generating hits for radio heavyweights like Adele and Beyoncé. So what happens when they and other pop stars pass on your songs? If you're Sia, you record them yourself. Once again, Sia, following "1000 Forms of Fear," is larger than life. It's a role she's fine at playing – her distinctive warble packs a powerful punch – but it has become apparent that the same mask concealing her face is also obscuring the fact that Sia is a gifted storyteller full of things to say about herself. So if this is, indeed, acting, the bump-and-grind windup "Move Your Body" is either an Oscar winner... or a Razzie contender, depending on how you look at it. Same with "Sweet Design," a very Bey-during-"B'Day" banger, with Sia singing contrived lines like, "Word travels fast when you've got an ass like mine." Not that Sia doesn't have a great ass, but it's a hard, silly sell for an artist not known for

such boasts. Her strengths lie in underdog anthems like "Bird Set Free," where she pushes through the cage door and unleashes herself, singing, "I find myself in my melodies." There are 11 other songs after "Bird Set Free," none of them great, leaving you thinking: If only they, too, could find her essence again. *Grade: C-*



Panic! at the Disco, 'Death of a Bachelor'

You know how it goes with pop bands: Eventually the frontman becomes this red-hot superstud star whose spotlight-stealing ways make everyone forget the names of the other band members... or that they exist. Just ask Adam Levine. Unlike Levine, though, Panic! at the Disco's most delicious dish, Brendon Urie, knows it's time to seize his solo status and move on. So with "Death of a Bachelor," he has. On his own, but still under the Panic! moniker, Urie doesn't reshape the band considerably, at least not for now, not while he establishes himself as the Brendon Urie Band. It's clear from this solo release, though, that all his shameless pop dreams are coming true, which is to say Urie is fixated on being your power-pop god. Boisterous rock booms throughout the album's front-end, but so much of it is empty-calorie ear

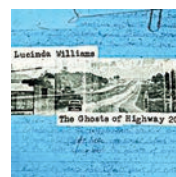
candy that fans will be longing for days of yore, when Ryan Ross and the rest of the band's pre-breakup lineup were also a part of the creative process. With "Death of a Bachelor," where's the ambition that once set Panic! apart from other dude bands? The band's delightfully wonky wordplay? Not on "Victorious," the album's first cheapshot of a single, a glossy grab stuck on a sound that's highly commercial and mind-numbingly insipid. It rolls right into the grungy piano-interrupted "Don't Threaten Me with a Good Time," better but typical. "Crazy=Genius" at least breaks the been-there-done-that mold with a fun old-timey swing sound, and it's good to hear Urie take it down several notches on "Impossible Dream." Still, though, "Death of a Bachelor" is a backwards evolution for a man still conceptualizing what it means to be on his own. *Grade: C*

Also Out



Elton John, 'Wonderful Crazy Night'

No, Elton John hasn't had one too many – that face of his, all blithe and framed by pieces of an erupted rainbow to further emphasize the piano man's state of euphoria, is just his face. It's the face of a married man. It's the face of love. It's the face of "I have nothing to prove." And so on Elton's 33rd album, "Wonderful Crazy Night," he doesn't. He's Elton John, and, at this point, isn't that enough? A unicorn of an album, Elton lets himself go, jetting back to his beginnings for a blissed-out, '70s-inspired rock 'n' roll romp where he beams and bounces. From the ebullient title track to the coda's lovey-dovey lyric "you're an open chord I'm gonna play all day," Elton's shine is affected and infectious.



Lucinda Williams, 'The Ghosts of Highway 20'

Lucinda Williams is living. You can hear it in her voice, wrinkled and drunk. But death looms on the alt-icon's latest, soused in the smoky Americana sound she's forged for more than three decades. She's knocking on the "Doors of Heaven," riffing her way to the finish line with a surprisingly not-macabre Southern-rooted rollick. It's a striking contrast to "If There's a Heaven," a pained elegy. Death evokes childhood nostalgia on the wistful memoir "Louisiana," as Williams recalls growing up and experiencing both the "sweetness" and the "rough." Now 63, Williams comes to a powerful understanding on "The Ghosts of Highway 20" that you can't have one without the other.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS - COMMUNITY SERVICES

Michigan LGBT Resources

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BTL Pet of the Week - Meet Mustang

Meet Mustang! This 1-year-old pit bull is an easy going you man! He loves to meet people and is sure to greet them with a big puppy kiss! The adoption fee includes sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations, the MHS Adoption Guarantee and much more. For more information, visit or call the MHS Detroit Center for Animal Care at (313) 872-3400 and provide the pet ID number, 823124.

Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Denzel hires Tony Kushner for 'Fences'

Denzel Washington is directing the film adaptation of the late August Wilson's 1985 play, "Fences." This makes sense, as the 2010 Broadway revival starring Washington and Viola Davis earned the pair Tony Awards. Washington – and probably Davis, too – will also star in the film, which concerns race relations examined in the context of one black man's dream deferred: He wanted a career in baseball and wound up collecting trash. Wilson's work is more than ripe for the screen, and now his original, not-quite-finished screenplay draft is getting the Tony Kushner treatment. The Tony-winning playwright wrote "Angels in America" and is working closely with Washington on the final product, which means it has prestige picture written all over it. And true to the subject matter, there's been some criticism over Kushner's inclusion (he is white, and Wilson was often critical of white directors and writers taking "custody" of black stories), but when you're chosen by Denzel Washington you tend not to refuse. Expect more conversation on this subject as the project rolls toward completion.



Viola Davis

They're making a documentary about Manolo Blahnik's shoes

"Hello, lover," said Carrie Bradshaw, famously, to a pink, feathery pair of what were probably Manolo Blahnik shoes. And if they weren't they should have been. More than any other pop culture branding device, "Sex and the City" raised the profile of Blahnik's sky-high heels, well, sky-high. And though Louboutin has stolen a bit of the maker's thunder in recent years, that isn't stopping filmmaker Michael Roberts from working on a much-needed documentary on the legendary designer. Its awesome title is "Manolo (The Boy Who Made Shoes for Lizards)," and it will feature some of the biggest names in fashion and entertainment to sing the man's praises, from Anna Wintour, Andre Leon Talley, Paloma Picasso, Iman, Rihanna, Naomi Campbell, and Isaac Mizrahi, to, yes, "Sex" creator Candace Bushnell. When it's ready you'll want to walk, not run, to see it, lest you break a heel.

It's time to enlist in 'Model Wars'

You miss "America's Next Top Model." You know you do. So what do you do to console yourself besides watching endless runway shows on Apple TV's M2M channel? You chant and pray for "Model Wars" to make it past the pilot stage, that's what. Now, normally, pilots are not all that newsworthy. You may, in fact, never see them, since they can be killed in the quiet confines of a TV development executive's office. But sometimes that pilot goes to series. And just from a conceptual standpoint we want this one to make it. It's from "Reality Bites" screenwriter Helen Childress and based on Robert Lacey's book "Model Woman: Eileen Ford and The Business of Beauty." Ford began as a model, then founded the Ford modeling agency, and this nighttime soap would be set in a world very much like the one she built. "In the late 1970s." Let that float around your fashion-brain for a moment: Jerry Hall, Lauren Hutton, Studio 54, Andy Warhol, severe outfits, Bianca Jagger, "Eyes of Laura Mars," everything that was great about that era and none of the horrible Reagan aftermath. It has the potential to be a very shiny, glamorous "Mad (Wo)Men." And we need that now. More than ever.

Romeo San Vicente shakes his little tush on the catwalk. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

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