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A woman with her hair styled up, wearing a white wedding dress with a beaded bodice and a full, ruffled skirt. She is holding a large bouquet of white flowers. The background is a solid dark grey.

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COMING SUNDAY



Sunday, March 20
Come Celebrate Marriage Equality

BTL Sixth Annual Wedding
& Anniversary Expo

www.BTLWeddingExpo.com

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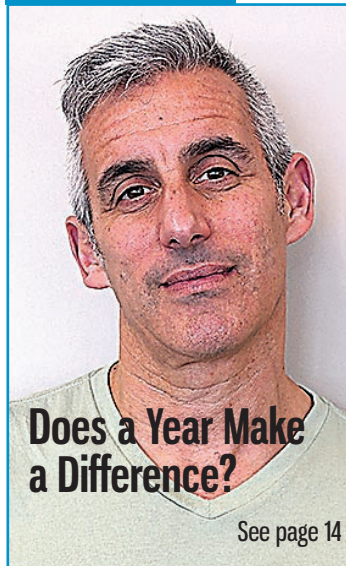
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The world premier of "Accidental Activists," a new documentary about April and Jayne Deboer-Rowse's three-year battle for marriage equality, will be April 2 in Detroit.

VOL. 2411 • MARCH 17, 2016
ISSUE 956

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

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Phone 734.293.7200

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MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association
National Gay Media Association
Q Syndicate



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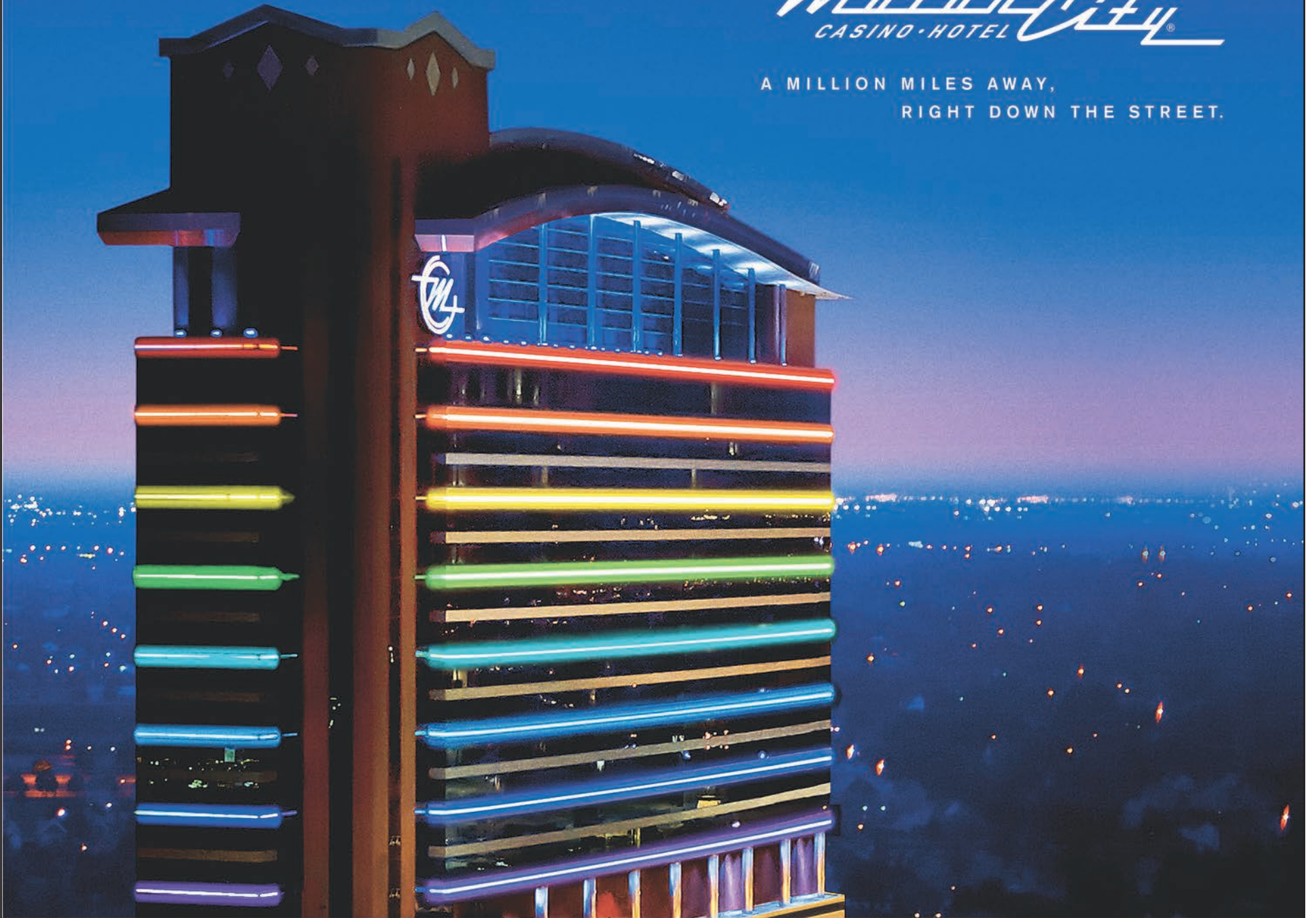
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PUBLISHERS LETTER

You're Invited! Come Celebrate Marriage Equality at Sunday's Expo

BY JAN STEVENSON AND SUSAN HOROWITZ

All of us at Between The Lines are totally excited about the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo at the MotorCity Casino Hotel from noon to 5 p.m. this Sunday, and we are hoping that you will join us for this fabulous celebration of marriage equality.

We see in the mainstream news every day an increased backlash to same-sex marriage equality – bakers refusing to make wedding cakes for same-sex weddings, politicians using us as campaign fodder to bolster their conservative bona fides. It is important for us to keep up the pressure against the forces that want us to disappear from society. But it is even more important for us to recognize our friends, thank them and rally around them as they support us.

There will be more than 110 vendors at the expo this Sunday – bakers, photographers, banquet halls, hotels, cruise lines, travel agencies, caterers, wedding planners, officiants and churches, adoption agencies – all ready and willing to work with LGBT couples to make our celebrations the best possible. These are our friends. These are the companies and business people who value us not just as potential customers but also as full celebrants of marriage equality. They are happy for and with us.

All of us have been involved in weddings and the wedding industry, as florists, hairdressers, professional service providers, and of course as members of the family and wedding party. But it is new for us to be the actual principles in our own wedding. Like everyone, we will have our unique family participations in our wedding ceremonies and receptions – some more supportive and

involved than others. We have a lot to learn and explore and a lot to offer as we plan our celebrations. The expo gives us the chance to meet and talk with the professionals that do this every day – the ones that know how special we are as couples and to each other. We are throwing one excellent party Sunday and we invite everyone to join us. There will be lots of food and drinks, live entertainment, three fashion shows including gowns, tuxedos and this year we have added a Honeymoon fashion show with seductive lingerie and underwear. Attendees will have chances to win tens of thousands of dollars worth of amazing prizes including a Caribbean cruise, theater and concert tickets, vacations, jewelry, beauty and health products and more!

Come join us to celebrate marriage equality at the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo from noon to 5 p.m. this Sunday at the MotorCity Casino Hotel. It's just \$10 to enter and there's a ton of free parking. Go to www.BTLWeddingExpo.com for tickets and for more information.

We can't wait to see you Sunday afternoon!

Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz
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Carrying His Cross

West Michigan Pastor Protests for LGBT Inclusion

BY AJ TRAGER

PARCHMENT – Every evening Rev. Mike Tupper puts on a thick hat, a pair of gloves and insulated pants and crawls into two sleeping bags nestled inside a winter tent. He’s been sleeping outside in the Michigan cold since Nov. 30 in protest of how the United Methodist Church treats LGBT individuals.

“Individual local churches are going to let anybody come and worship and are going to encourage people to come and worship. But in their books – in the policy of the church – they will not allow any same-sex weddings to happen in the church, they will not let pastors do same-sex weddings, they will not ordain LGBTQ people. They have in their books that homosexuality is not compatible with Christianity,” Tupper told BTL.

By the time he reaches his final destination, Tupper will have spent 175 days sleeping outside in various cities around the country. He’s traveled to Indianapolis, Des Moines, Lansing, Marquette and will travel to Raleigh, Baltimore and Topeka. His final stop will be at the General Conference in Portland, Oregon on May 10. The General Conference meets every four years and is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. Tupper hopes that his protest will make a difference and influence church policy to broaden inclusion to all LGBT people.

Tupper became an ordained pastor 35 years ago and has preached around the country. He worked on a mission in Kentucky helping the poor in Appalachia by starting his own school and house-church and eventually landed in Parchment where he has been a pastor for four and a half years.

Tupper has plans to finally retire in June. However, he is experiencing significant backlash from his church due to some actions he has taken in support of LGBT unions.

A lot of things changed for Tupper seven years ago when his daughter, Sarah, came out to him and his wife, Lori. Sarah provided them with a book of her experiences living as a lesbian in today’s world.

“I knew about the LGBT life,” he told BTL. “But I finally saw it through the LGBT lens. Sarah’s lens.”

Tupper married Sarah and her wife, Ali, on Aug. 17, 2014 in Baltimore, Maryland.

“I’m not an advocate type of guy. I have never done any of this type of thing before. I’ve been a local church pastor all my life. I’ve been real low key and not wanted to stir up any trouble or that type of thing,” Tupper explained. “But when my daughter told me that she and Ali were going to get married, she said, ‘Dad, you’re going to have to think about whether you are going to participate in this or not and recognize that if you do, there are going to be consequences.’ And I prayed about it, and I felt like the Lord wanted me to help.”

The day after signing his daughter’s marriage license and officiating her wedding, a complaint was filed within the church. “I felt like I needed to do this for my daughter,” he said.

A lot of things changed for Rev. Mike Tupper seven years ago when his daughter, Sarah, came out to him and his wife, Lori. Sarah provided them with a book of her experiences living as a lesbian in today’s world.

It was then that he began to understand the implications of the church policies and how they intimately affect LGBT United Methodists. He continued to advocate for LGBT inclusion on the west side of the state, in specifics the West Michigan Conference, throughout the next year.

“When I first got started in advocacy a year and a half ago, as I thought about Sarah’s wedding, I thought about the scripture that I was focused on. It was about this time of year. We are in the season of Lent, which is all about preparation, but a lot of Lent focuses on the cross and Jesus going to the cross type of thing. For me, that scripture is Jesus saying, ‘I must go to the cross and I invite you as followers to carry your own cross.’ And for me it meant that I needed to sacrifice in some way. And I needed to be willing. And the cross



Rev. Tupper shows off his sign to BTL during a pit stop interview in Kalamazoo. Tupper is half way through his journey, sleeping outside during the harsh Michigan winter, to protest the the United Methodist Church’s discriminatory policy against LGBT Methodists. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

meant that I need to be willing to give up my ministry of credentials if that’s what they ask for,” he explained.

After being forced to resign as a pastor in July 2015, Tupper’s friend Rev. Benjamin David Hutchison of Cassopolis finally married his longtime-partner Monty Hutchison. Tupper was one of 30 pastors that came out in support of their union and was one of nine pastors to receive a formal complaint, which was officially his second offense.

The first complaint was thrown out because it was his first offense; however, it will not be as easy to dismiss the second, Tupper told BTL. The bishop passed the complaint on to Rev. Elbert Dulworth, a sort of prosecutor for the church, on Oct. 15, 2015. The case is still pending. Tupper has a very real chance of losing his license to practice.

Tupper’s camping journey started in

Marquette. Driving to the northern city was the scariest experience of his entire life, Tupper says. He anticipated getting arrested, as he placed his tent on someone else’s property.

“You just invite God to speak, and then you just wait and you let God give you visions, symbols or give you direction,” he said.

But it’s not the loss of his license that Tupper fears most – it’s that his gesture, his “sacrifice,” his symbol of devotion, has the possibility to not make any change within the church policy.

“I am just never sure if I am ever going to make a difference. I sleep out there every night and wonder if this is going to really help anybody, ya know?” Tupper asked.

To find out more information about Tupper, visit his website at www.opendoorsumc.com.



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Equality Michigan Announces New Interim Director of Victims Services

Equality Michigan announced the appointment of Leah Taraskiewicz as the Interim Director of Victims Services. For the last three years, Taraskiewicz has served as a victims advocate, working closely with Yvonne Siferd, the longstanding, previous Director of Victims Services who has recently transitioned out of EQMI for a return to private practice. Taraskiewicz will lead the Department of Victims Services while a search for a permanent director is launched and a successor is brought on board.



Leah Taraskiewicz

“I am incredibly thankful to Yvonne for her many years of service to our community and guidance to this department. She has now organized for Leah to step in and seamlessly continue this vital work,” said Stephanie White, Executive Director. “Our community owes Yvonne a big debt of gratitude for selflessly giving so much of herself over the years.”

“And now I couldn’t be more excited to have Leah step into this key role as we continue to build a new Equality Michigan team of high-quality, professional talent that can lead us in achieving our political and social service goals,” White continued. “Leah not only brings compassion and fresh leadership to our victims services work, she also brings her analytical thinking on how to create policies, procedures and systems that ultimately better serve survivors of violence and discrimination in Michigan. We’re lucky to have her in this time of transition.”

Prior to her recent appointment, Taraskiewicz participated in various anti-violence movements, specifically work to end domestic violence and sexual assault over several years. Taraskiewicz worked previously as a community educator at the DC Rape Crisis Center and for the Prevention Education Team at HAVEN in Oakland County. In these positions, she focused many of her efforts on uplifting the needs of LGBTQ survivors and worked on public health prevention efforts that would serve LGBTQ communities.

“I am thrilled to be able to contribute to the Equality Michigan team in this new capacity. I plan to use this opportunity to further our commitment to supporting survivors of violence and discrimination by realigning the department’s focus on creating synergy with the rest of Equality Michigan’s work. I am looking forward to setting the stage for the next great director to come lead our efforts even further,” said Taraskiewicz.

With a demonstrated history of fighting oppression, especially around issues related to gender and racial justice, Taraskiewicz brings an abiding passion for intersectional social justice and deep experience advocating for survivors of violence, traits essential for this transitional leadership role. She is a graduate of Michigan State University with a degree in International Studies.

Discrimination Linked to Increased Stress, Poorer Health

BY BTL STAFF

WASHINGTON – Nearly half of U.S. adults report they have experienced a major form of unfair treatment or discrimination, including being unfairly questioned or threatened by police, being fired or being passed over for promotion or treated unfairly when receiving health care. These acts of discrimination are associated with higher reported stress levels and poorer reported health, according to the survey “Stress in America: The Impact of Discrimination” released March 10 by the American Psychological Association.

Nearly half of adults report experiencing a major form of discrimination. The survey, conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of APA among 3,361 adults in August 2015, found that nearly seven in 10 adults in the U.S. report having experienced discrimination, and 61 percent say they experience day-to-day discrimination, such as being treated with less courtesy or respect, receiving poorer service than others, or being threatened or harassed.

Younger generations, women, adults with disabilities, and adults who are LGBT also report higher average stress levels and are more likely than their counterparts to say that their stress has increased since last year.

“It’s clear that discrimination is widespread and impacts many people, whether it is due to race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation,” said Jaime Diaz-Granados, Ph.D., APA’s executive director for education. “And when people frequently experience unfair treatment, it can contribute to increased stress and poorer health.”

Black adults are among the most likely to report experiencing some sort of discrimination. More than three in four black adults report experiencing day-to-day discrimination and nearly two in five black men say that police have unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused them. Black, Asian, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native

adults report that race is the main reason they have experienced discrimination.

For many adults, even the anticipation of discrimination contributes to stress. Three in 10 Hispanic and black adults who report experiencing day-to-day discrimination at least once a week say that they feel they have to be very careful about their appearance to get good service or avoid harassment. This heightened state of vigilance among those experiencing discrimination also includes trying to prepare for insults from others before leaving home and taking care of what they say and how they say it.

The results from this year’s Stress in America survey also suggest that there are significant disparities in the experience of stress itself, and that stress also may be associated with other health disparities. The nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of adults who report that their health is only “fair” or “poor” have a higher reported stress level on average than those who rate their stress as “very good” or “excellent.”

“Stress takes a toll on our health, and nearly one-quarter of all adults say they don’t always have access to the health care they need,” said Cynthia Belar, Ph.D., APA’s interim chief executive officer. “In particular, Hispanics – who reported the highest stress levels – were more likely to say they can’t access a non-emergency doctor when they need one. This year’s survey shows that certain subsets of our population are less healthy than others and are not receiving the same level of care as adults in general. This is an issue that must be addressed.”

The report uncovered some good news about stress management related to discrimination. Despite their stress, 59 percent of adults who report experiencing discrimination feel that they have dealt quite well or very well with it and any resulting changes or problems.

In addition, many adults report having a positive outlook, and survey findings point to the strong impact of emotional support. Having

“It’s clear that discrimination is widespread and impacts many people, whether it is due to race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation.”

– Jaime Diaz-Granados, Ph.D., APA’s executive director for education.

someone they can ask for emotional support if they need it, such as talking about problems or helping them make a difficult decision, appears to improve the way that individuals view their ability to cope with discrimination. Adults who experienced discrimination and had emotional support are twice as likely to say that they coped quite or very well compared with those adults who experienced discrimination but did not have emotional support (65 percent vs. 37 percent of those who report not having emotional support).

Since 2007, the survey has found that money and work are consistently the top two sources of significant stress (67 percent and 65 percent in 2015, respectively). This year, for the first time, the survey found that family responsibilities were the third most common stressor (54 percent), followed by personal health concerns (51 percent), health problems affecting their family (50 percent), and the economy (50 percent).

While average reported stress levels in the U.S. have increased slightly in the past two years, adults are more likely than in past years to report experiencing extreme stress. Twenty-four percent of adults report these levels, compared with 18 percent in 2014. This represents the highest percentage reporting extreme stress since 2010.

To read the full Stress in America report or download graphics, visit www.stressinamerica.org.

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Brian, age 45, California

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Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

A Bushwack of Jeps

A pleasure of English is the imaginative, poetic use of collective nouns. Such fanciful verbal pedigree goes back to the 15th century. A pride of lions. A murder of crows. A dray of squirrels. A wedge of swans. A pass of asses.

These word weavings were originally used as terms of the hunt. No knight, Robin Hood, King Arthur, squire or scholar was thought learned unless knowing the collective nouns for fish, fowl, four-legged beast.

No Lady-in-Waiting worth modestly blushing was without hope of encountering a prancing of unicorns, while gracefully sidestepping a furnace of dragons.

Here's a sampling that you may or may not know, depending upon the cocktail parties you do, or do not, get invited to. A barrel of monkeys. A deceit of lapwings. A truculence of moving men. A flap of nuns. A fidget of altar boys. A discretion of priests. (Or indiscretion, as the case may be.)

Did I say cocktail parties? More like parish picnics after Lent and St. Patrick's Day. Here's more: A whiplash of potholes. A samba of shopping carts. A sneer of butlers. An indifference of waiters. A blarney of bartenders. A handful of gynecologists. A quincunx of objects.

By the way, quincunx is scientific, not sexual: "Any group of five objects placed in a square, with four of the objects at the square's corners, and one at its center." In other words, a geometric orgy.

For those with salty taste, shake these on your next tossed Caesar salad: A freeze of virgins. A spread of centerfolds. A keyhole of voyeurs. A rack of sadomasochists. A herd of harlots. A lubricity of nymphomaniacs. A rictus of beauty queens. (Or, bingo drag queens, if you prefer.)

Oh, yes! "The Encarta Dictionary" defines rictus as "a fixed openmouthed grin or grimace, especially an expression of horror." ("Wipe that rictus off your face, Big Boy! Be thankful my quincunx seats five.")

Source for these delightful items is "An Exaltation of Larks: More Than 1000 Terms" by James Lipton. The \$14.95 Penguin paperback reprint is illustrated with – if I may improvise herewith – a giggle of graphics, a funning of old time lithos.

Mr. Lipton has done an heroic job of lassoing these energetic nouns, many of which are contemporary: An espresso of Italians. A doldrum of reruns. An embarrassment of beepers. A babel of cellphones. (Or – improvising again – an earful of iPhones.) A generation of sperm banks. An up-yours of New Yorkers. He missed corralling "a bushwack of Republicans."

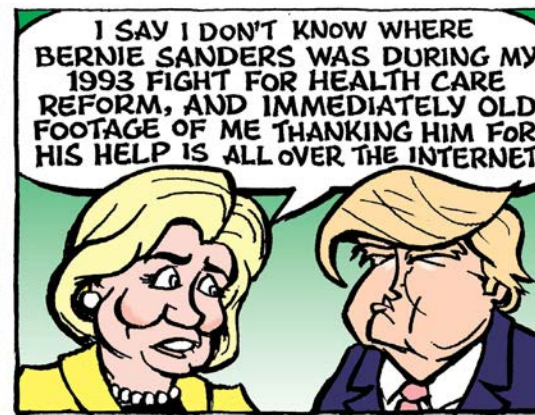
Lipton lists only one LGBT collective noun: a falsetto of transvestites. (His book dates pre-Stonewall: 1968.) To rictus, er, rectify this high-pitched oversight, here's more improv to improve an imagined improbability: A strappado of leathermen...

A courting of U-Hauls. A whirligig of dildos. A rosebud of bottoms. A tattoo of tops. A braggadocio of butches. A curtailment of crossdressers. A lingoing of lesbians. A mildew of closet queens. A changeling of T-persons. A intersection of bisexuals. A salutation of P-FLAGers.

For devilish kicks: A flea bag of Fundies. A miasma of homophobes. A bankrupting of televangelists. A whiplashing of Bible belters. A dumping of Trumps. A erasure of Rubios. A delusion of Cruzs.

An incarceration of voters...

Charles@pridesource.com



Viewpoint



BY JAY KAPLAN

Does a Year Make a Difference?

For the many years that same-sex couples were not able to marry in Michigan, this has caused collateral damage to LGBT families. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the context of parent-child relationships

As we celebrate this year's same-sex marriage expo, never have the words, "what a difference a year makes!" rung so true. On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court in Obergefell v. Hodges held that it was unconstitutional for states (like Michigan) to deny same-sex couples the right to marry as well as to deny recognition of marriages between same-sex couples in other jurisdictions. This year, same-sex couples can not only attend the marriage expo and decide which vendors they may want at their marriage ceremonies, they can also be assured that they have the actual legal right to be civilly married in the state of Michigan and to have

their relationship be recognized in all 50 states. That is much to celebrate and rejoice about.

As monumental and historic as the marriage equality decision is and was, it does not resolve a host of other important public policy issues impacting the LGBT community and our struggle to achieve true and meaningful equality in the state of Michigan. We also remain vigilant regarding any attempts to roll back progress on LGBT rights as part of the backlash in response to the obtaining of marriage equality.

Among issues that should be addressed and resolved include:

– Amending our state and federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity: Despite the fact that a majority of Fortune 500 companies have LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination policies, and despite the fact that more than 40 Michigan local communities have LGBT-inclusive human rights ordinances, in most places in Michigan it remains

See A Year, next page

legal to be fired from a job and denied housing and medical services (along with other public accommodations) because you are LGBT. Yes, in Michigan, because you are LGBT, you could be married on a Sunday and fired on a Monday. We must continue our efforts to get our elected officials to pass comprehensive civil rights legislation that protects us from discrimination.

– Efforts to use religion as a basis to justify discrimination: Several weeks before SCOTUS issued its marriage equality decision, the Michigan Legislature passed and Gov. Snyder signed into law a provision that permits faith based foster care and adoption agencies that have contracts with the state of Michigan – paid for by Michigan tax payers – to refuse to work with families and refuse to make placements of children based on the agency’s religious beliefs, even when that may not be in the best interests of the child. The impetus behind such legislation was to permit these faith based agencies, acting on behalf of the state, to refuse to work with LGBT families. Such laws are clearly unconstitutional, yet this type of legislation is cropping up all across America. Michigan legislators have also introduced a broad range “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” (RFRA) that would permit individuals, who are not engaging in religious activity, to discriminate against others in employment, housing and public accommodations because of their religious beliefs. Once again, part of the motivation behind these bills is to allow people to openly discriminate against LGBT people.

For the many years that same-sex couples were not able to marry in Michigan, this has caused collateral damage to LGBT families. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the context of parent-child relationships. Because couples could not marry, only one partner was recognized under Michigan law as a parent to the child the couple was raising. In the event of a break-up, the legal parent controlled all decisions regarding child custody and parenting time. Sometimes, in a particularly hostile break-up, the legal parent would unilaterally take the children away from the other parent, denying him or her the opportunity to see or have contact with the children they raised. The only way to challenge this is to be recognized as an equitable or de facto parent. For almost 20 years Michigan courts have limited the use of this doctrine to a legal marriage and because same-sex couples could not marry, they were denied this protection and many gay parents lost the ability to see or have contact with their children. Marriage equality does not help these parents whose relationships with their same-sex partner/legal parent ended before the right to marry was available in Michigan. It is wrong to deny co-parents, who have established bonded relationships with children they have helped to raise with their former partners, the right to have continued contact and relationships with these children. Seldom is this ever in the best interests of the children. And

As monumental and historic as the marriage equality decision is and was, it does not resolve a host of other important public policy issues impacting the LGBT community and our struggle to achieve true and meaningful equality in the state of Michigan.

yet we continue to see LGBT legal parents who do just that, because they can, in an attempt to erase the existence of their former partners. This needs to change either through legislation or through a court ruling.

– Access to health insurance coverage for transgender people: Many health insurance companies participating in Michigan’s insurance marketplace have blanket exclusions for medically essential transgender health care. In addition, Michigan’s Medicaid policy prohibits payment for medications related to gender identity conditions. This is clearly discriminatory and in violation of the federal Affordable Care Act, and yet our state continues to allow it to happen by essentially doing nothing.

– Updating state pension policies: Most state pension policies limit the named beneficiary to spouses or children. For years, since same-sex couples could not marry, they could not name their long-time partners as beneficiaries on their pensions. For many same-sex couples who can finally marry in Michigan, some state pensions prohibit naming a beneficiary post-retirement. If a retiree was prohibited from marrying their partner at the time of retirement, once they marry their partner they should be allowed to name their spouse as beneficiary to their pension. This requires a law that takes into account the circumstances of same-sex couples who were unconstitutionally denied the right to marry.

– A large part of the backlash to marriage equality has targeted the transgender community. There are efforts to deny transgender people the right to use public restrooms and to participate in educational and athletic activities in accordance with their gender identity and gender expression. All members of the LGBT community, including allies, must speak out against such proposed policies and work towards ensuring that transgender people are afforded the same opportunities as cisgender people in both education and public accommodations.

Jay Kaplan is the staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project. He can be reached at jkaplan@aclumich.org.

Creep of the Week

One Million Moms

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

A lert! Alert! All One Million Moms to their battle stations! A new TV show has a gay. I repeat: a new TV show has a gay. Until President Ted Cruz makes such defilements of the small screen a Federal Hate Crime against Christians, we must join our 2 million hands together and Pray the Gay Away!

The particular gay is the character Kenny O’Neal on the new ABC sitcom “The Real O’Neals,” a show about a Catholic family. To make matters worse, Kenny is played by openly gay actor Noah Galvin and the TV show is loosely based around the life of Notorious Gay Dan Savage. Which makes this a gay trifecta and is probably a sign of End Times.

Or it could just be yet another in a long line of likely short-lived mediocre sitcoms that deal with all kinds of family trials and tribulations.

But one can never be too sure! Which is why One Million Moms (a group that boasts 83,957 Facebook “likes” but doesn’t let math get in the way of its mission) says that “This Jesus-Ridiculing Show Needs to Go Dark Right Now” and is urging its members to contact Simply Orange (a Coca Cola product) and shriek at them for daring to run commercials during the depravity of “The Real O’Neals.”

“The Real O’Neals’ mocks Christianity and insults Catholicism,” One Million Moms laments on their website. “One Million Moms (1MM) recognizes this show ridicules people of faith, and Christians across America are offended by it.”

Yeah! Cue Twisted Sister’s “We’re Not Gonna Take It!” Because if there’s anything Catholics never do, it’s poke fun at themselves! Humor is the devil’s work!

Things that 1MM singles out as depraved include the fact that Jesus appears to Kenny, and only Kenny, during a scene at a family restaurant and the fact that Kenny’s mom encourages him to try having sex with a girl.

Other things 1MM failed to mention but were probably also aghast at: Kenny’s girlfriend wants him to have sex with her and gives him a big box of condoms. When he goes into

the bathroom to put one on, a beefy shirtless dude appears in the mirror and encourages him to “come out.” In a panic Kenny flushes the condoms down the toilet which causes it to overflow. The ceiling below begins to drip and then collapses, complete with condoms, onto the priest who is visiting downstairs.

One Million Moms (a group that boasts 83,957 Facebook “likes” but doesn’t let math get in the way of its mission) says that “This Jesus-Ridiculing Show Needs to Go Dark Right Now.”

Ha! So funny! Are you laughing so hard? Or are you, too, wondering how the ceiling could have become so damaged so quickly from an overflowing toilet? It’s not realistic, I tell you! Why aren’t One Million Plumbers taking to the streets over this show?

Seriously, though. As David Windsor, an executive producer of the show, told the Huffington Post, “At the end of the day, you are going to realize that (the show) is about this family that just loves each other. And faith is an important part of their lives.”

I get that 1MM is upset because it’s their job to be upset. But part of what they’re mad about is the fact that a Catholic family is being portrayed as dysfunctional, and yet they’re still Catholic. If every family had to renounce their Christianity every time the parents got divorced or a child came out as gay, anorexic or a kleptomaniac (and the O’Neals are all of those things), there would be no Christians left.

Aside from the significantly less than 1 million self-righteous members of 1MM, of course.

2016 Will be a Difficult Year for Trans Rights

BY BTL STAFF

The LGBT community is up against heavy opposition in the upcoming presidential election year. Less than a year ago the LGBT community rejoiced in its big win for marriage equality, winning a series of cases that spread across the country and landed a seat before the U.S. Supreme Court. But all of that excitement must come to an end as 44 anti-trans bills are being considered by 16 states across the country.

According to a new report by the Human Rights Campaign titled “Anti-Transgender Legislation Spreads Nationwide, Bills Targeting Transgender Children Surge,” trans people are under attack like never before. Last year was considered a “transgender tipping point” by many political pundits who saw an increased level of public awareness surrounding trans issues. However, it appears that this year will be the exact opposite as those who fear the LGBT community position themselves for retaliation.

In 2015 alone, 125 anti-LGBT bills were introduced in state Houses. Twenty-one of them targeted transgender individuals, but none of them became law. This year, anti-trans bills addressing gender-affirming health care; the creation of state-sanctioned avenues of anti-trans discrimination; and the denial of trans access to bathrooms, locker rooms, and athletic teams consistent with their gender identity have popped up in full force.

HRC is tracking the 175 anti-LGBT bills across the country and has found 44 of them to specifically target the trans community. As of Feb. 19, there are 29 bills to police bathrooms and locker rooms, two determining health and healthcare, three pertaining to anti-trans marriage and three regarding discrimination; there are also two birth certificate bills and five First Amendment Defense Acts.

“This deeply disturbing trend is a stark reminder of just how vicious and deplorable opponents of equality are in their relentless attacks against our community,” said HRC President Chad Griffin. “HRC will continue to work with our state and national partners to vigorously oppose and work to defeat legislation that threatens the fundamental human rights of transgender people. As we work to defeat these discriminatory bills, we will also continue our efforts to advance critically-needed protections at the state, local and ultimately the federal level for LGBT

people all across this country.”

The South Dakota Legislature has approved legislation that would’ve prevented trans students in public schools from using restrooms and other facilities consistent with their gender identity. The measure was approved by both the state House and Senate but was ultimately vetoed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Last week Democrats from the Missouri state Senate filibustered for over 39 hours to fight a religious freedom bill that would make

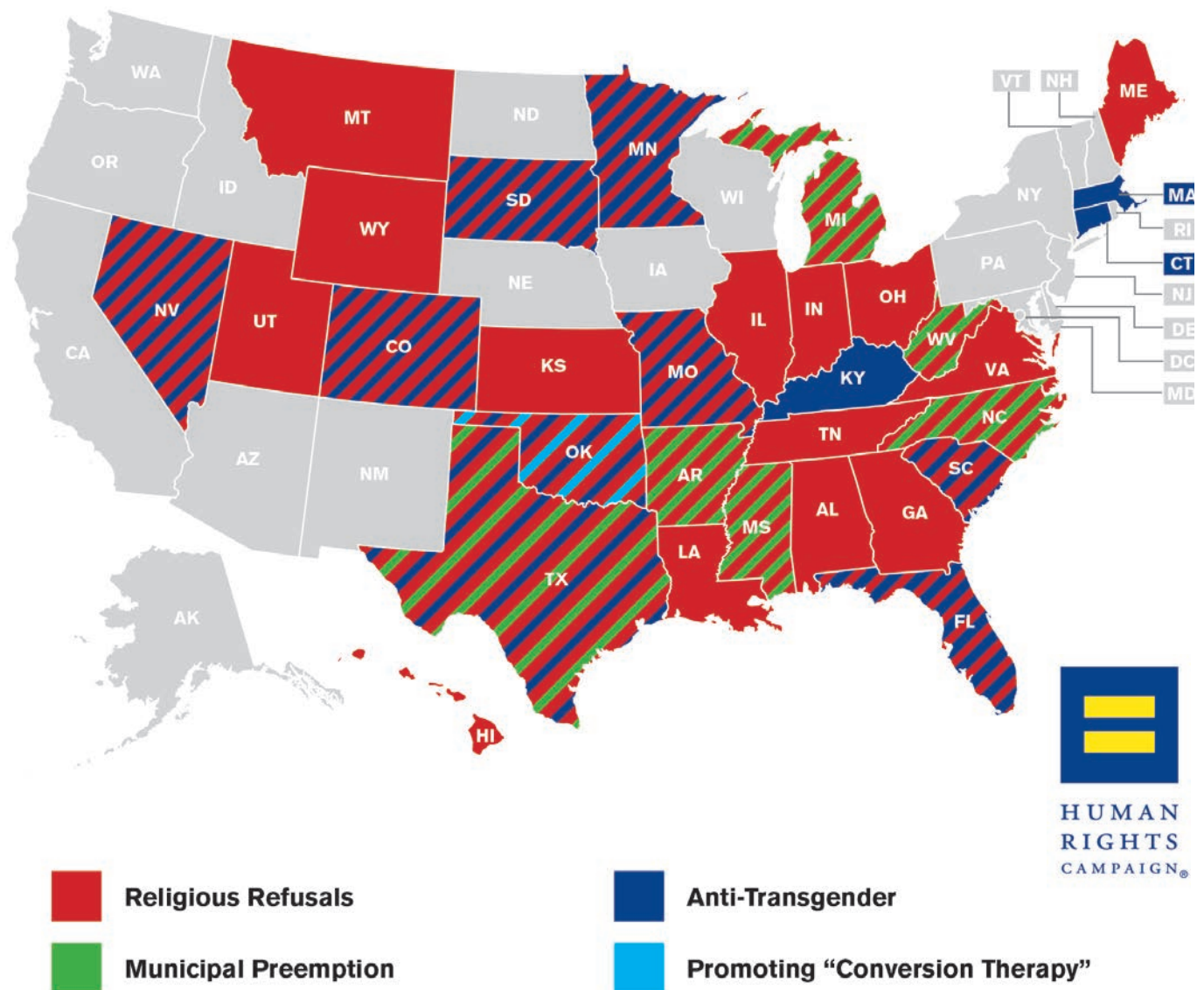
it legal to discriminate against the LGBT community based on “deeply held religious beliefs.” That bill has been passed to the state House for consideration.

Twenty-three of the 44 anti-trans bills filed this year are leveled at trans children in schools and school athletics. Research shows that allowing trans kids to access the space consistent with their gender identity – something compelled for years by laws in 17 states as well as in hundreds of cities and

school districts across the country – have not resulted in problems. However, forcing trans youth to use sex-segregated facilities contrary to their identity poses real harm on those students.


“Fear and a lack of understanding of transgender people are driving these egregious measures, which are addressing phantom problems, and have the potential of risking the safety, security and well-being of transgender people, including children, across the nation,”

Types of Anti-LGBT Bills Introduced in 2015 State Legislatures



“ This deeply disturbing trend is a stark reminder of just how vicious and deplorable opponents of equality are in their relentless attacks against our community. HRC will continue to work with our state and national partners to vigorously oppose and work to defeat legislation that threatens the fundamental human rights of transgender people. ”

– HRC President Chad Griffin



**PREVIEW 2016
PRO-EQUALITY AND ANTI-LGBT
STATE AND LOCAL LEGISLATION**

In many ways, U.S. politics will be defined in 2016 by the presidential election. For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans, however, there's a great deal at stake in state legislatures and city councils across the country.

With a landmark marriage ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015, same-sex couples and their families across the country are guaranteed equal recognition within marriage and family law. In a majority of states, though, even today there are no clear state laws protecting residents and visitors from anti-LGBT discrimination in employment, housing and business services. The existing patchwork of legal protections for LGBT people in the United States leaves millions subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination. That's why the Human Rights Campaign is working with lawmakers and advocates to pass the Equality Act in Congress, as well as strong anti-discrimination protections at the state and local levels.

At the same time, opponents of equality are advancing state legislation targeting LGBT people, eliminating local non-discrimination protections and explicitly authorizing anti-LGBT discrimination by individuals, businesses and even taxpayer-funded agencies.

With regard to state and local legislation, we expect to see in 2016 more of what defined 2015 – many anti-LGBT bills introduced in dozens of states.

ANTI-LGBT STATE LEGISLATION IN 2015

State lawmakers introduced more than 115 anti-LGBT bills in 2015. The largest number of these were bills that aimed to authorize individuals, businesses and taxpayer-funded agencies to cite religion as a reason to refuse goods or services to LGBT people. Other anti-LGBT bills sought to restrict access to bathrooms by transgender people and to eliminate the ability of local governments to protect LGBT residents and visitors. It's important to underscore that many of these bills would also have negative consequences for other groups of people.

115+
ANTI-LGBT BILLS
INTRODUCED IN 2015

Stephen Peters of the HRC wrote in the release of the 2016 report.

Thankfully none of these anti-trans measures have made their way to Michigan. However Sen. Ted Cruz, a GOP presidential candidate from Texas, announced he has appointed Rep. Gary Glenn, R-Bay City, as legislative co-chair of his Michigan campaign.

Glenn, who is president of the Michigan American Family Association, is known for his anti-LGBT stance and was integral in getting the 2004 Michigan Marriage Amendment, determining marriage as just between a man and woman, passed.

The HRC has compiled two reports discussing at length the legislative climate for 2016. You can find them here <http://gaybe.am/proeq> and <http://gaybe.am/antitg>



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Conversation Sparked Couple's Relationship, Communication Keeps It Strong



Antonio and Jeffrey.



BY AMY LYNN SMITH

Antonio Johnson-Seals used to say he never wanted to get married. In fact, even though he had to pursue his now-husband, Rev. Jeffrey Seals, before he would agree to go out with him, he still told him he wasn't interested in getting married.

But once the couple fell in love, all that changed.

It didn't happen overnight. The couple met five years ago on a boat ride, and it wasn't smooth sailing right away.

"Jeffrey acted like he didn't want to be bothered, so I had to make myself known to him," Antonio says. "I had another friend of mine reintroduce me to him. I was determined. I got his phone number and called him. After that, it was there."

Jeffrey had his reasons for being hesitant at first. He'd been involved with someone who had passed away six months before and he was still clearing his head, he says.

"When Tony called me, I was happy to be talking to someone," he recalls. "For me, the major thing in meeting a person is the conversation first. If I can talk to you longer than 15 minutes or an hour, I'm good. Most people don't want conversation."

That was once true for him, Antonio says, but that changed when the couple met. "Jeffrey showed me another way of dating," he explains. "He taught me about conversation and going out and having fun as opposed to just jumping into bed. That's what I was used to, but Jeffrey said we were going to get to know each other and we did."

One connection they discovered right away was their

shared faith. Jeffrey is part of Whosoever Ministry in Detroit in addition to his job as a system administrator. Antonio says Jeffrey's faith was part of his charm from the beginning.

"One of the things that attracted me to Tony is someone accepting you for who you are," adds the 53-year-old Jeffrey. "Someone who is trying to help you grow into a better person, but not trying to change you. Our shared faith has been very important."

In fact, Jeffrey proposed to Antonio in church. "It was so surprising and I love it because it shows our community that we're happy, that it can be done," says Antonio, who is 47 and president of LGBT Detroit, in addition to being a Human Resources recruiter. "It shows people in our black community that we can sustain one another."

That sense of community extended to their wedding celebration, which started with an official ceremony in Washington, DC, on Jan. 18, 2014. Then they returned home and reenacted the entire ceremony – tuxedos and all – along with a reception for family and friends in April 2014. Bringing both of their families together created a party with more than 300 guests.

"This was the first time I'd had my whole family in one place in years," Antonio says. "Having them there with me, when we exchanged vows here, I kept thinking I was going to cry – and I'm not a big crybaby. It meant so much to me to have my family there for such a touching moment."

Jeffrey agrees that uniting their families was meaningful. "Having his father accept me as a son-in-law was really nice," he says. "He just loves me and vice versa. It means a lot that our families accept our relationship, on both sides."

Even in the faith community, acceptance isn't always automatic. According to Jeffrey, this lack of acceptance is often simply a lack of understanding. So he listens, lets people complain that he and Antonio shouldn't be together because it's a sin, but doesn't debate with them.

"You believe what you believe," he says. "But once they're around us, people can see it's a strong love and they want that in their own lives. It's much more show than tell with us."

Although they were married before the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide, the couple believes the decision has changed the way they see their relationship.

"It's caused me to be more who I am, as far as being a gay man, and to feel more comfortable with myself," Jeffrey says. "I grew up in a generation where we had two separate lives, and now I'm blending them into one. I never pretended to be straight, but I'm more out now."

Open communication – especially with each other – is central to their relationship, Antonio adds, even if they don't always agree.

"I can be a wild child sometimes, but he keeps me on track and you can't get offended by what your husband says," he explains. "If I know you love me, I can get past it. He ain't going nowhere and neither am I."

“Having his father accept me as a son-in-law was really nice. He just loves me and vice versa. It means a lot that our families accept our relationship, on both sides.”

- Jeffrey

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CHRIS CHALMERS, DIRECTOR OF SALES & MEMBERSHIP

Couple's Marriage Proves That True Love Transcends Gender Identity

BY AMY LYNN SMITH

Amy and Cindy Hunter of Kalamazoo have one of the greatest love stories of all time.

They'd known each other for nearly 18 years – as friends through the people they were married to – before they reconnected in 2003, both divorced from their previous spouses. It took less than three months for them to realize they were the ones who should have been married all along, and they tied the knot on June 27, 2003.

Since that day, their love has only grown deeper, even after a major revelation three years into their marriage. In fact, the truth ultimately strengthened their relationship.

Amy confessed a secret she'd kept from everyone – and had even tried unsuccessfully to hide from herself: For her entire life, including when she married Cindy, she had been living uncomfortably as the male she'd been assigned at birth. But deep in her heart, Amy knew herself to be a woman.

"I loved Cindy too much to live my distorted existence anymore," Amy says. "Ever since I'd tried to tell my mother the truth at age 4 and was beaten for it, I'd kept my authentic self a secret, and it wasn't fair to anyone who came into contact with me. I knew if I didn't tell Cindy the truth and live authentically, I'd descend into hell. Once that realization was made, I had the first peace of mind I'd ever remembered feeling."

Cindy admits the news was a surprise, especially since she didn't know anything about transgender people at the time, and that she felt a little cheated. After all, she'd fallen in love with a man she would never see again once Amy began transitioning. But after some soul-searching, Cindy had an epiphany, too.

"I understood that Amy wasn't in a position to tell me before we were married – she needed to be in a stable relationship before she could be in a place to think about it, identify it

Cindy was often asked about her sexual orientation after the couple told their friends and family about Amy's transition. They'd both lived as heterosexuals until then, and they realized they didn't need to define their sexual orientation.

and move forward," Cindy says. "She spent her whole life trying to suppress those feelings."

While living as male, Amy was married twice before Cindy, with both relationships ending badly, she says, because she couldn't live authentically. After each relationship ended, she descended into alcoholism as a way to hide from the pain of not being able to express who she really was. After she and Cindy got engaged, Amy began drinking again, out of fear and in a futile attempt to run away from the truth. But out of her love for Cindy, Amy got sober – and has stayed that way – and was finally able to confront her truth.

"I realized it was inordinately arrogant on my part not to let Cindy make a decision about how she felt about me and our relationship with full light of the facts," Amy says. "I loved her too much to try to live distorted anymore. And it may sound corny, but it was out of my love for Cindy that I was able to confront exactly who I was."

Amy says that Cindy's willingness to simply listen and understand the depth of what they felt for each other was what was most important. "I'm not sure what I would have done if she'd said she had to walk away," Amy says. "I honestly feel like her willingness to see past gender and sexuality and all of that saved my life."

From the beginning, Cindy knew she wasn't in a position to

make a quick decision about their relationship. The couple attended counseling to learn more about what they would go through together and to sort through their feelings. Ultimately, Cindy listened to her heart.

"I really had to stop and think, 'How do I feel about this person?'" Cindy says. "But Amy was still the same person, and I wanted to go through her experience with her. We stay together because we love each other – that hasn't changed."

Cindy was often asked about her sexual orientation after the couple told their friends and family about Amy's transition. They'd both lived as heterosexuals until then, and they realized they didn't need to define their sexual orientation.

"I don't consider myself a lesbian," says Cindy, who is now 58 and works as director of music at First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo. "I'm attracted to Amy the same way I was before, but we decided we didn't need to place ourselves in a category."

After her transition, Amy admitted to herself that she'd been attracted to both men and women in the past – but now only has eyes for Cindy, whom she has remained legally married to. "For me, there's an intimacy that comes with a deep love for somebody that transcends sexuality," she says.

In many ways, the journey Amy and Cindy went on together – learning what being transgender and being your authentic self really means – fueled a desire on Amy's part to help others gain the same level of understanding.

Although there's an increasing awareness of transgender people in Michigan and the rest of the country, it's not always positive. Discrimination against LGBT people still exists – especially in states like Michigan, which doesn't have nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. Transgender people are even more likely to face discrimination than gay, lesbian and bisexual people.



Cindy and Amy Hunter

High rates of violence against transgender women of color are particularly troubling, as are the recent rash of "bathroom bills" being introduced and passed in states nationwide. These bills claim to be about protecting women in restrooms from men masquerading as women – which is how the bills' proponents incorrectly characterize transgender people – but they are nothing but a blatant effort to spread misinformation and fear.

"This proliferation of the 'men in women's bathrooms' trope has always been used against inclusive nondiscrimination efforts," says Amy, 55, who heads up the ACLU of Michigan's Transgender Advocacy Project (TAP). "It's been refined and honed to a fever pitch since marriage equality. Educating people, and raising the comfort level of the public and policy makers, is how we go forward as a community."

One central aspect of TAP is helping to elevate the voices of transgender people, to increase familiarity and empathy among others who simply may have never

met a transgender person – like many of Cindy's friends and coworkers after Amy transitioned.

"Amy may have been the first transgender person any of those people had a conversation with," Cindy says. "It makes a difference when you have a conversation with someone. You realize they are not any different from the rest of us."

That's the level of understanding Amy hopes to achieve through TAP and her related activism, especially after the painful struggles she faced for so many years.

"Not long after I started the transition process, I told Cindy in tears, 'I don't want anyone else to have to go through 40 years of not being able to be who they are, like I did,' and she said, 'Now I understand,'" Amy says. "That has motivated me ever since. The only way to end the marginalization of transgender people is to confidently and authentically insert our voices where we can make a difference, and to reach out our hands and pull others along with us."

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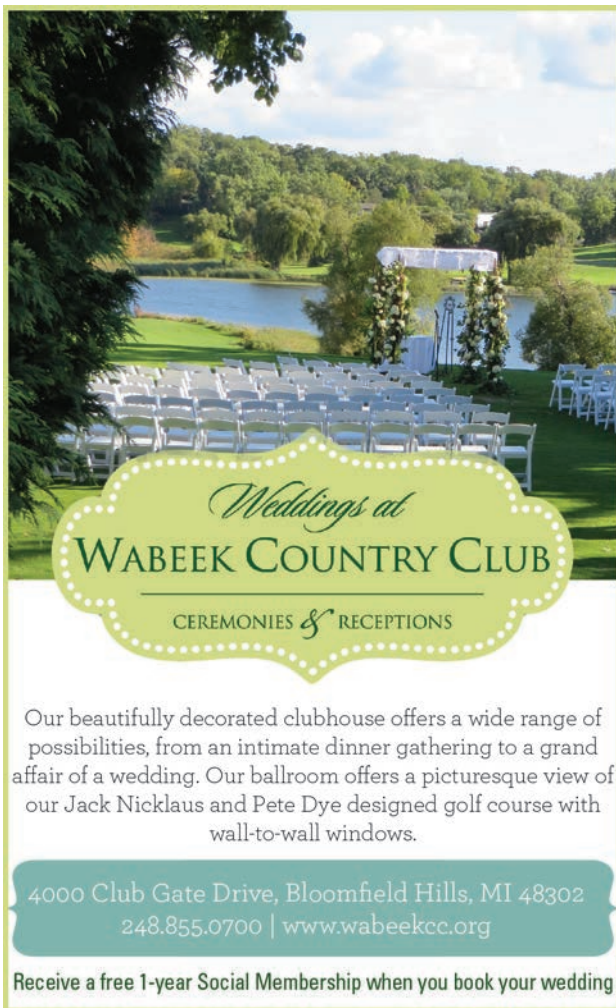
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Couple's Great Love Makes History, In More Ways Than One

BY AMY LYNN SMITH

Ken Siver and Zack Ismail's eyes met across a crowded dance floor 18 years ago.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

The date was Aug. 16, 1998. The place: Backstreet Nightclub in Detroit. Ismail, who is now a 42-year-old nurse anesthetist, says it was only his second time going to a gay bar. "I was trying to figure myself out," he says.

Siver, the 70-year-old mayor of Southfield, says that for him, it was love at first sight. "I walked up to him and we've been together ever since," he says.

Ismail admits he felt the instant connection, too. It's clear in the way they finish each other's sentences and echo each other's thoughts.

"We just click," they say, almost in unison.

They've never seen their age difference as a barrier. In fact, that's just one of many things on which they agree.

"Zack wasn't interested in anyone his own age," Siver says. "He was looking for someone more mature."

"He's young at heart," Ismail adds about Siver.

In some ways, they thrive on their differences, believing it's important to maintain their individual interests. For example, Siver admits he's not great with technology but Ismail is a whiz. Ismail doesn't prioritize community activism and politics the way Siver does, although he supports his efforts.

The common thread, however, is shared values.

"That's the basic connection," Siver explains. "We both always try to do right by everyone, to be helpful and positive."

Something else they share is a sense of humor.

"With a relationship, you have to laugh every day," Ismail says. "We're very good at that."

After their many years together, Siver and Ismail were among the 300 same-sex couples who were married on March 22, 2014, the one-day window when same-sex couples were legally able to marry in Michigan after U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman struck down the state's prohibition on gay marriage.

Siver says he fully expected Attorney



Ken Siver and Zack Ismail were legally married on March 22, 2014.

The couple joined the festive line of couples at the Oakland County Courthouse waiting to be married by Brown. The demand was so high that Brown began performing group ceremonies, which is when Siver and Ismail decided to ask their friend Dave Coulter, mayor of Ferndale, to marry them instead.

General Bill Schuette to close the window — a move that was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2015 legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide. Still, the couple wanted to be part of the historic day.

The night before, Ismail had already gone to bed when Siver saw that county clerks, including Oakland County Clerk Lisa Brown, would be open on that Saturday so couples could start getting married.

"I downloaded the marriage application, planning to talk to Zack about it in the morning," Siver remembers.

"Then I slept in."

"I'm an early bird, so I woke him up and said, 'Let's go to Pontiac and get married,'" Ismail says.

The couple joined the festive line of couples at the Oakland County Courthouse waiting to be married by Brown. The demand was so high that Brown began performing group ceremonies, which is when Siver and Ismail decided to ask their friend Dave Coulter, mayor of Ferndale, to marry them instead.

"We are so appreciative of Lisa

See **Couple Makes History**, page 26

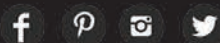
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► Couple Makes History

Continued from p. 24

Brown's pro-marriage equality stance and everything she did," Siver says. "But we were very happy to be the first couple married at Affirmations in Ferndale, with state Rep. Jeremy Moss as one of the witnesses."

It was a beautiful day, Ismail adds. "I didn't know I could be so emotional," he says. "When Dave said, 'I pronounce you husband and husband,' I thought, 'This is actually happening!'"

The couple wasn't surprised when the one-day window closed, and waited patiently for the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling. In the meantime, they were grateful to be among the first couples to have the right to marry in Michigan.

"We were part of history," Siver says. "I think what was most memorable for me was standing in line at the Oakland County Courthouse. A lot of gay people have wonderful spirit, to counteract all the negativity and hate. That was a joyous day."

Ismail adds that it was in that line that he discovered some of his co-workers are gay. "We share a wedding date," he says. "It makes our friendship that much better."

Now that marriage equality is settled once and for all, Siver and Ismail believe the future is bright for LGBT equality in all areas of life.



Ken Siver and Zack Ismail were legally married on March 22, 2014 by Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter.

"The train is barreling down the tracks – not just in Michigan, but all over the country and around the world, toward full equality for gay people," Siver says. "Look at someone like (Republican Oakland County Executive) L. Brooks Patterson. He's said he supports marriage equality and the addition of LGBT people to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act."

With hearts full of optimism for the future, the couple still remembers their first meeting like it was yesterday.

"He was at one end of the dance floor and I was at the other and we met in the middle," Ismail says. "And here we are."

"I would wish this on anyone," Siver adds. "Zack is my great love."

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Despite having been together all these years, the couple says the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2015 legalizing same-sex marriage changed everything for them. Ann Cox reflected, "It forced me to come out to my family, I wish I'd done it a long time ago."

The New Normal: Couple Rejoices Over Marriage Legalization

BY AMY LYNN SMITH

Deb and Ann Cox met 25 years ago and have been a committed couple for almost as long. But it wasn't until they decided to get legally married in 2015 that Ann finally told her family she's a lesbian.

"My sister said, 'It's about time – I've been waiting for you to call and tell me this,'" says Ann, who is 70 years old. "When my brother came to our wedding he said, 'I love you, bud. I don't care what you do.'"

Deb, who is 63 years old, wasn't really out to her family, either. "We thought they knew more than they did," she says of their families.

Despite having been together all these years, the couple says the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2015 legalizing same-sex marriage changed everything for them.

"It forced me to come out to my family," Ann says. "I wish I'd done it a long time ago."

Deb says she looks at her rings every day and feels amazed. "I feel more normal – there's no other way to say it," she explains. "I've been dreaming of a big wedding all my life and didn't even realize the sadness I had for giving it up. Not having to give it up – being able to live that dream – has changed me inside."

The couple, who lives in Waterford, Michigan, met in Indiana and moved to Michigan in the late 1990s. They had a commitment ceremony in 1999, which

Ann thought would be the closest they'd get to being married in Michigan. "I got surprised," she says of the marriage equality decision.

An associate pastor with Metropolitan Community Church Detroit, Deb performed many marriage ceremonies on March 22, 2014, the one-day window when Michigan's same-sex marriage ban was overturned before a stay on the judge's decision was put in place, prompting action at the Supreme Court level.

"I called Ann to see if she wanted to get married and she said, 'No, I want to do it when everybody else can do it,'" Deb says. "That's what equality is all about. Waiting until everyone has the right. That's what we were fighting for and I'm glad we waited. The ceremony and marriage were a dream come true."

The couple is looking forward to the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo hosted by Between The Lines, where Ann has worked in advertising sales for 13 years. Michigan's LGBT community will come together to celebrate marriage equality – and all the moments in their lives together. There's no doubt the event will reinforce the happy memories of their wedding last year.

"The one that sticks out in my mind the most was two of our little flower girls from Ann's family," Deb says. "They stood between us and sang, 'Ann and Deb, sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g!' They wouldn't move until we kissed. I was blown away, because it was just normal to them."

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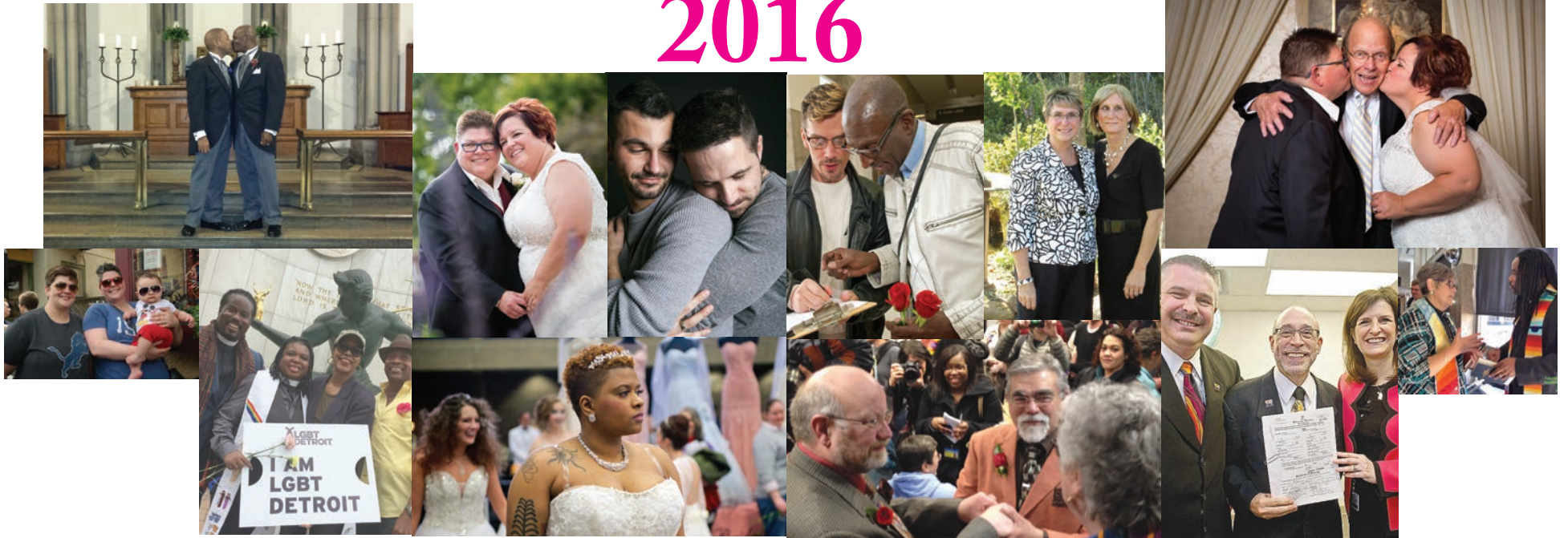
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Celebrating Marriage Equality 2016



The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo Celebrates Progress and Looks to the Future of Equality

BY AMY SMITH

Between The Lines launched The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo six years ago not necessarily to throw a party, but to advance the cause of LGBT equality.

As it turns out, they did both.

This year's expo will be a special celebration, following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in June 2015 legalizing same-sex marriage. The event will be a party, no question. But it will also mark a renewed commitment to the ongoing pursuit of lived equality for the LGBT community – the ideal of erasing anti-LGBT discrimination in every area of life.

According to Jan Stevenson, co-publisher of Between The Lines and co-producer of the event with her co-publisher and wife, Susan Horowitz, the event was born out of activism.

"Six years ago we got a call from the catering manager at the Marriott in Livonia, who was outraged that LGBT couples were telling her that other venues were turning them away," Stevenson says. "I told her that happened all the time – and she said she wanted to do an LGBT wedding expo and asked if we would help."

Although Stevenson and Horowitz were excited about the prospect of a fun event, it was about more than that.

"It was work we'd already been doing, and a response to blatant discrimination we were

seeing against LGBT couples," says Horowitz who, along with Stevenson, has a long, proud history of activism. "And that discrimination is not going to be eradicated because of marriage equality. We're hearing even more stories of wedding vendors going on the offensive with the 'religious freedom' tune, and as long as there are people like Kim Davis and bakers who don't want to bake cakes, you're going to have injustice against people who just want to get married."

In Michigan, for example, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) does not protect LGBT people against discrimination in employment and housing. Activists are working hard to update ELCRA to expand those protections.

As the pursuit of progress continues, The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo will celebrate the LGBT community's achievements so far – and all the special events in their lives, including weddings, baptisms, graduations and more.

"The expo is about feeling respected," Horowitz says. "It's about celebrating with the people and vendors who won't trample over our sacred moment."

Stevenson and Horowitz bring a unique combination of activist engagement and event planning experience to the expo. The couple, who were married 12 years ago in Canada, met while serving on the board of the National

LGBTQ Task Force. Stevenson was also the executive director of Affirmations in Ferndale for six years and chaired the first Human Rights Campaign dinner in Michigan. Horowitz was the co-founder and first executive director of NewFest, New York's LGBT film festival, from 1989 to 1994, and was the 1983 Grand Marshal of NYC Pride and worked with the NYC Pride Committee for 19 years, producing the annual NYC Pride Guide.

Needless to say, these women know how to throw a party – and this year's Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo is going to be the biggest and best yet.

It will be hosted this year at MotorCity Casino Hotel, the biggest venue ever for the expo, which means room for many more inclusive vendors, with more than 100 booked. The expo will span the hotel ballroom and Sound Board theater, with activities throughout the space including cooking, makeup and jewelry shopping demonstrations, plus live entertainment and fashion, all emceed by the very entertaining Jason Bowen.

"We don't want to pull people away from talking to the vendors, because that's why they're there: to find vendors who will be happy to work with LGBT couples and families," Horowitz says.

All are welcome to the expo, whether or not they identify as LGBT. The expo will continue to be Detroit's only LGBT-specific destination

for couples planning their wedding to meet with inclusive vendors. But it will also be a place where couples and families that care about equality can meet with LGBT-friendly vendors that can help them celebrate all the special occasions in their lives: anniversaries, vow renewals, graduations, bar and bat mitzvahs, adoptions, baby showers, and more.

From the beginning, though, the expo has been a popular event for the LGBT community, drawing more and more attendees and vendors each year. Stevenson says they quickly learned that vendors appreciated their expo's fun approach.

"A lot of vendors found traditional bridal shows to be a little stuffy – and it's almost always the bride and other women, where our expo is a mixture of men and women," she says.

In addition, attendees consistently give the expo high marks, Stevenson says, complimenting it for being well-organized and -presented.

"Attendees and vendors tell us they felt they really connected with each other – and that it's a warm, approachable fun event," she explains. "In the LGBT community, that can be kind of a foreign thing, so attendees really appreciate talking with vendors who are excited to work with them."



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Host with the Most to Emcee LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo Sunday

Over Fifty Prizes, Including 2 Cruises, Will Be Given Away During the Expo

BY AMY LYNN SMITH

If you're going to put on a really big show, you want an emcee who can pull it all together with style.

Enter Jason Bowen, the charming, funny and entertaining master of ceremonies who will add extra pizzazz to every aspect of The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo on March 20 at MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. Bowen is a professionally trained actor and singer – not to mention a magician, stilt dancer and experienced emcee. A former cruise director for Norwegian Cruise Lines, Bowen was the “Face of Entertainment” aboard the Norwegian Jade in the Mediterranean Sea.

“I’m very comfortable with a microphone in front of a group of people,” he says. “I’m thrilled to be at the helm of this event – something that’s personally important to me.”

Bowen is quick to point out that as

emcee, he’s not really the star of the show, although he’s played plenty of leading roles including Harold Hill in “The Music Man,” P.T. Barnum in “Barnum,” and Frederick in “Young Frankenstein” in the acclaimed production presented by Stagecrafters at the Baldwin Theater in Royal Oak.

But for The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo, Bowen sees his role as being the liaison between everyone there, onstage and off.

“I’m there to make sure things go smoothly and to congratulate the people performing,” he says. “I’m also there to help – the vendors, the people who are there planning events – and to make sure everyone has a great time.”

Bowen always enjoys being part of live events, but this day will be extra special. “People will be there planning exciting events in their lives and they’ll be on a high,” he says. “Because of the U.S.

Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, our country is going in the direction it should have been going in for a long time.”

With talent like Bowen at the helm, there’s no question that a good time will be had by all at The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo. After all, even when Bowen has performed marriages – he’s an ordained minister, too – he gets in on the fun.

“I’ve married a couple of my friends and then I started leading dancers and lining up shots,” he says. “People were like, ‘Who is this pastor?’ and my friend, the bride, replied, ‘It’s fun!’”



Jason Bowen

Run of Show

Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo Show Highlights and Events

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12:40 to 1:10 – Fashion Show featuring the beautiful gowns from B. Ella Bridal

1:15 to 1:35 – Double Trouble DJs perform in Sound Board

1:45 to 2:10 – Fashion Show featuring the fabulous Tuxedos from The Tux Shop in Birmingham

2:15 to 2:35 – Bluewater Kings Band performs in Sound Board

2:40 to 3 – Honeymoon Fashion Show featuring lovely lingerie and men’s underwear from Underclothes and Busted Detroit

3:20 to 3:40 – Fashion Show featuring the beautiful gowns from B. Ella Bridal

4:15 to 5 – Motif Singers perform in Sound Board

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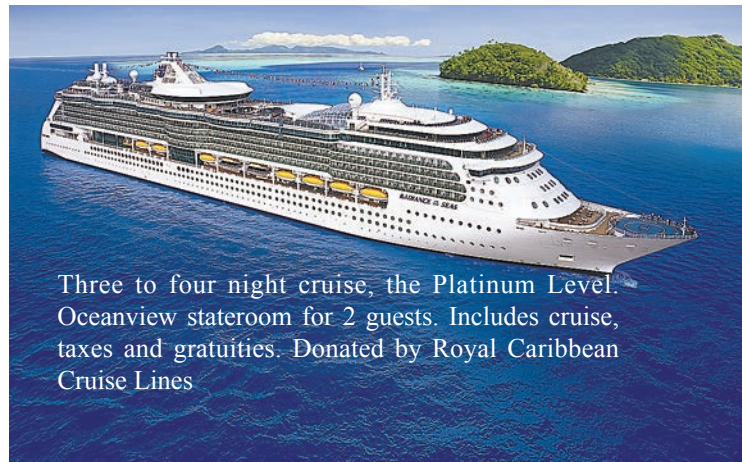
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Expo Prizes Galore!

Dozens of gift certificates, prizes, travel packages, beauty items and vacations will be awarded to attendees at the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo March 20 at MotorCity Casino Hotel. All Expo attendees are automatically entered to win! Some prizes are being raffled, while others can win by entering contests, so be sure to pay attention to our wonderful emcee Jason Bowen. He'll be calling out the names of the lucky winners throughout the show.

Here are just some of the fabulous prizes that will be given away to lucky Expo winners:

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Dinner for eight aboard the elegant **Detroit Princess Riverboat**.

MotorCity Night Out April 17. Includes elegant dinner for four in MotorCity Casino's Four Diamond Restaurant, Iridescence, four tickets to **Margaret Cho** in the Sound Board Theater and an invitation to the meet and greet with Margaret Cho.

Beauty Gift Basket donated by Saks Fifth Avenue Troy.

Two tickets to **Adam Lambert** at the Fillmore Detroit March 25. Includes Dinner for two at Angelina's Italian Bistro in Detroit.

Four tickets to "Love Letters" with Ali McGraw and Ryan O'Neal, April 12 at The Fisher Theatre.



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Gown by Priscilla of Boston Custom headpiece design by LaValle Photos by Harry Vitanis



B. Ella Bridal provided models with their gowns once again in 2015. They will return again as one of our Gold Sponsors and produce a new show March 20 at MotorCity Casino Ballroom. BTL file photo: Andrew Potter

Local Businesses Say 'I Do' to LGBT Community

Same-sex Wedding Expo Partners With Inclusive Vendors

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to legalize same-sex marriage in June 2015, some of the world's most valuable brands and businesses took over social media with marriage equality posts. Kellogg's wrote, "Love, the same at every table."

Burt's Bees wrote, "We love love of every kind."

Visa wrote, "Love. Accepted everywhere."

The Gap wrote, "Equality is always in style. We've been proud supporters since 1969."

Mentos wrote, "Two of the same is beautiful."

American Airlines wrote, "We're on board. Diversity strengthens us all and today we celebrate."

These companies, and many more such as Apple, Adidas, Google, Maytag and Absolut Vodka, were not afraid to isolate their right-wing consumer base to come out in loud support of same-sex marriage. This is what the LGBT community deserves from businesses that are licensed to serve the public – equal treatment and respect – and that is what they

can look forward to at The Ultimate LGBT Wedding and Anniversary Expo. Hosted for the sixth year by Between the Lines and Pride Source Media Group, the event features more than 100 vendors at maximum capacity, special guests and plenty of surprises, all in Motor City's state-of-the-art ballroom and Sound Board Theater.

The inclusive vendors on site will showcase everything couples need to plan their upcoming celebrations, including weddings, anniversaries, vow renewals, graduations, bar and bat mitzvahs, adoptions, baby showers and more.

Now is an important time to celebrate businesses, especially local businesses in Michigan that vocally support equality for the LGBT community and everyone else.

The political climate is polluted with news of "religious liberty" advisory councils forming to advocate for discrimination against LGBT Americans, and anti-LGBT "marriage and family boards" attacking same-sex marriage rulings by the Supreme Court. Furthermore, it is still not against the law in 29 states to discriminate against an LGBT person wanting to buy something from a store.

Such a repugnant fact motivates LGBT-friendly vendors, such as B. Ella Bridal in Plymouth, to continue extending themselves to the community.

"Our LGBT customers and friends are influential and essential to our success," says owner and creative director Brittany Blase, who has been involved with the expo since its inception. Blase has more than 10 years of experience providing happy, stress-free experiences for many couples in love. "Our whole goal is to make it easy for you to say yes," she says about helping soon-to-be brides select the perfect wedding gown. "We have a closet of fabulous dresses. Our shop tends to have unusual items."

Blase and her team will bring a large number of those interesting looks to the expo for guests to see and touch. "This is the year of the ball gown. We are seeing a lot of long-sleeve dresses also. Many high-profile designers are adding more beading to make dresses really sparkle again." On the heels of tastemakers in the industry, Blase is "excited" to feature more daring styles and editorial looks during the bridal fashion show. Models will walk the runway wearing Watters, Wtoo, and Eve of

Milady, to name a few. Another vendor leading in terms of innovation is Saks Fifth Avenue in Troy. Their Made-to-Measure program offers personalized tailoring and customization on an appointment basis for dress shirts, suits, sport coats, trousers, tuxedos and more. Creating that "killer suit" is a piece of cake with a trained fashion consultant or expert fitter.

Speaking of cake, Browndog Creamery and Dessert Bar in Northville is helping many LGBT couples reinvent what weddings should look like with non-traditional dessert options.

Owners and partners Paul Gabriel and Brian Scherle will attend the expo for the first time to share their unique small-batch ice cream, craft desserts and custom cakes created by their pastry chefs. The rapidly expanding micro-creamery offers dairy-free, vegan and allergy-friendly cakes upon request.

"We are excited to bring our business to the LGBT community," says Gabriel, adding that samples will be available for expo guests to indulge in. This might be the time to forgo traditional chocolate or vanilla cake and try hummingbird or lemon chiffon cake. What about salted caramel, Bavarian cream or sweet honey buttercream? Ice cream

lovers can get their fix with Browndog's famous ice cream cart, which is available for weddings. Some of the staple flavors are triple vanilla, salty dog, bourbon pecan, chocolate hammer, cookie monster, and blood orange coconut ice. Gabriel and his culinary team are experimenting with ice cream cakes. "They present their own unique set of challenges," he says, but "if you can imagine it, we can make it. The sky is the limit."

Abracadabra Jewelry in Ann Arbor is no stranger to supporting same-sex couples. Since 1974, they have specialized in creating one-of-a-kind pieces that celebrate all unions being as individual as their love.

"Making the rest of the wedding world an all-inclusive place has been a gradual process, but a few years from now we hope the conversation will be totally unnecessary. When someone walks into our store, we aim to create an environment that's welcoming to everyone. We believe in the right of all loving couples to be married and aim to give everyone an exciting experience in choosing the perfect piece of jewelry for their special occasion," says Pippa Creffield, jewelry designer and media director at Abracadabra Jewelry. "Our newest designer, Alex Sepkus, handcrafts his own tools to create luxurious textures on his bands. There's a special appeal to couples



The latest trend, a "naked" cake, is complete with a well-done crumb coat. Browndog and Dessert Bar features a rustic cake for LGBT couples that want something simple yet beautiful.

that want to wear the same style, but a little different, so coordinating colors or textural elements is a great way to go."

Creffield says there is a departure from the traditional formula of an engagement ring and wedding band for more carefree, unconventional pieces. "There's no rule that fine jewelry has to be formal. Pieces that mix earthy, organic materials with precious metals are easy to wear, one-of-a-kind, customer favorites," she says about her own line, Pippa Jayne Designs. "There's no guidebook that answers the question of who proposes to whom or who will wear a diamond ring, and we love it," she says. "People simply want to wear something intimate and personal as a symbol of their love, and we're here to help commemorate that."

To capture that moment is Kreativ Imaging in Warren, a visual arts studio specializing in lifestyle imagery. LGBT couples looking to create memories in the form of photos are encouraged to establish a connection with these photographers. They integrate the latest advances in digital photography, cinematography, design and print to produce a multidimensional visual narrative of life's most precious moments.

See Local Businesses, page 40

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► **Local Businesses**

Continued from p. 39



Angie Martell
of the Iglesia
Martell Law Firm

Protecting Your Family

The expo is a great opportunity for LGBT couples to think about and finalize their wedding details. Remember that even though LGBT couples can still get married in Michigan, there are no civil rights protections statewide. “As you plan, it is important to protect yourself and your family. You may have marital rights, but someone can refuse to rent you a room for your honeymoon,” says Angie Martell of the Iglesia Martell Law Firm, PLLC in Ann Arbor. Martell, who will be

available to speak with LGBT couples during the expo, has been an LGBT lawyer for more than two decades. She has been a cooperating attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

“I participate every year in Lavender Law where thousands of LGBT lawyers and allies meet to discuss the legal landscape we face and address how to navigate through legal issues to find solutions for our clients. While Obergefell gave us the ability to marry and recognized our marriages nationwide, it unfortunately created a line in the sand. If you marry, you have rights as a couple, and if you don’t, you may not have rights. What Obergefell has done is open the doors to the possibility of equality, but we still have a long way to go,” she says.

Martell’s firm understands the complexities of the issues the LGBT community is up against. “We understand because we stand in your shoes. We understand and are connected to the pulse of issues in our movement. We understand how complex the trajectory still is regarding LGBT issues and are aware of all the issues we still must address and navigate,” she says, adding that lawyers “often create bad law



One of Abracadabra Jewelry’s best-selling artists, Kelim Jewelry Design, offers beautiful pieces finished in a delicate bead blasted texture. Pippa Creffield, Jewelry Designer and Media Director, says this is a “fabulous” choice for bridesmaids and groomsman gifts.

when they aren’t well-versed or understand the legal trajectory.”

While choosing a lawyer that is culturally competent is important, do not forget the fun stuff that LGBT couples have to celebrate because inclusive vendors are not afraid to support our community. The expo will feature demonstrations throughout the venue along with live entertainment and an impressive

array of prizes for attendees, including a cruise for two donated by Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, dinner for four at Iridescence and tickets to see Margaret Cho donated by Motor City Casino, two tickets to see Adam Lambert at the Fillmore Detroit plus dinner at Angelina Italian Bistro donated by the Fillmore and Angelina’s, and much, much more.

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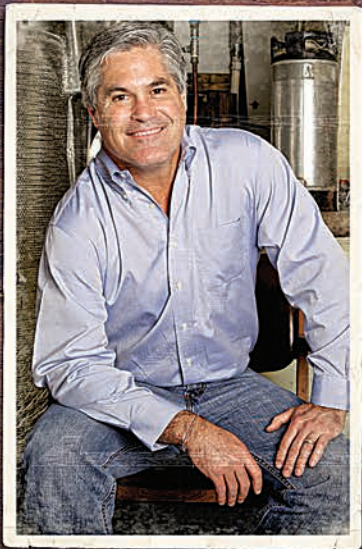


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'Gay Wedding Cakes': More Than Just a Dessert

BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

The "gay wedding cake" has practically become a symbol in the climb to same-sex marriage. From Religious Freedom Restoration Acts to grassroots "Protect Religious Freedom" movements, segments of the United States population have worked to put a stop to same-sex weddings both before and after Obergefell v. Hodges (the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court Case that made same-sex marriage legal in the country). The primary method these people seem to use is to cut vendor ties – officiants have backed out from performing ceremonies last minute, reception halls have denied service, and perhaps most famously, bakers have failed to bake wedding cakes.

One such major case was with Aaron and Melissa Klein of Oregon's Sweet Cakes by Melissa. They turned away a lesbian couple in 2013 who wanted a wedding cake. "I believe marriage is a religious institution ordained by God," Aaron claimed. The women filed discrimination complaints, and the Kleins were found to have violated the state's anti-discrimination laws. The bakers were fined \$135,000 and ended up closing their business; the couple was awarded damages.

The news story went viral, often being noted as what LGBT couples were up against in attempts to get married before marriage was legal in their state, let alone recognized federally. Now, while hurdles to being treated fairly remain for many same-sex couples, LGBT people looking to get married can look to a future of more inclusive vendors – including at The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo at Motor City Casino in Detroit Sunday, March 20. Inclusive



vendors – including bakers like Good Cakes and Bakes, Sweet Dreams Bakery and Browndog Creamery & Desserts – will be available to help present one of the traditional focal points of a wedding: the cake (and the cake cutting!)

One of the most talked about things after a wedding is the cake. Was it good? Bad? Was it a sheet cake from a grocery store? Was there even cake?

There are several ways to make sure your cake is remembered fondly, but the best way? Make it "gay."

1. Use a gay(-friendly) baker

BTL offers their Pride Source Yellow

Pages to help you track down an accepting baker who works in Michigan. Check out this resource at www.pridesource.com/directory.html, or do "in person" cake tastings at BTL's Same-Sex Wedding & Anniversary Expo March 20.

2. Rainbow

Though it may seem like an obvious move, incorporating the all-inclusive coloring of the LGBT rainbow can be a "tasteful" nod to LGBT rights and culture. Many bakers are familiar with the concept of "layering" different colored batter on top of each other to form the multi-color layers. If you're

See Cakes, page 44



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► Cakes

Continued from p. 42

making the cake yourself, look into the many tutorials online for “patterned” cakes. Brightly colored cake a bit too much? Opt for the subtleness of multicolored blossoms to accent a traditionally white or ivory cake.



3. Invest in same-sex wedding toppers

Don't get turned off from the heteronormative

offerings from many mainstream wedding vendors – multiple options exist online. Check out Etsy for independent artists who can make toppers that look like you and your partner. TwoBrides.com and TwoGrooms.com are also good resources for same-sex wedding toppers. Otherwise, check out vendors at BTL's Same-Sex Wedding & Anniversary Expo March 20, where everyone from halls to wedding vendors may provide options for your cake top. Otherwise, a monogram of your initials, a bunch of flowers, or other “non-human” toppers are always options.

4. Nix the groom's cake

The groom's cake originated in Victorian England and made its way to the American South before taking over the whole U.S. wedding market in recent years. The groom's cake essentially served as the cake to be cut for groomsmen and bridesmaids. If you bristle at the term “groom,” plan on going without attendants or if you see no reason to keep up this tradition, stick with the main wedding cake. Or alter the tradition even further – include two groom's cakes or two bride's cakes. After all, who doesn't want more cake?



5. Nix the cake completely

Many LGBT couples choose to go the non-traditional route after years of the term “traditional marriage” being used to take away LGBT rights. In light of more offbeat ventures, such as different clothing, food and ceremonies, try changing up the tradition of cake, too! Opt for more individual items, such

as cupcakes or cake pops for guests, or break away from cake altogether: Pies, donuts and donut holes are some of the many different choices landing on LGBT wedding dessert tables. Vendors like Jeff Zak's Catering are particularly skilled in this venture – check them and other cake and dessert vendors at BTL's Same-Sex Wedding & Anniversary Expo March 20.

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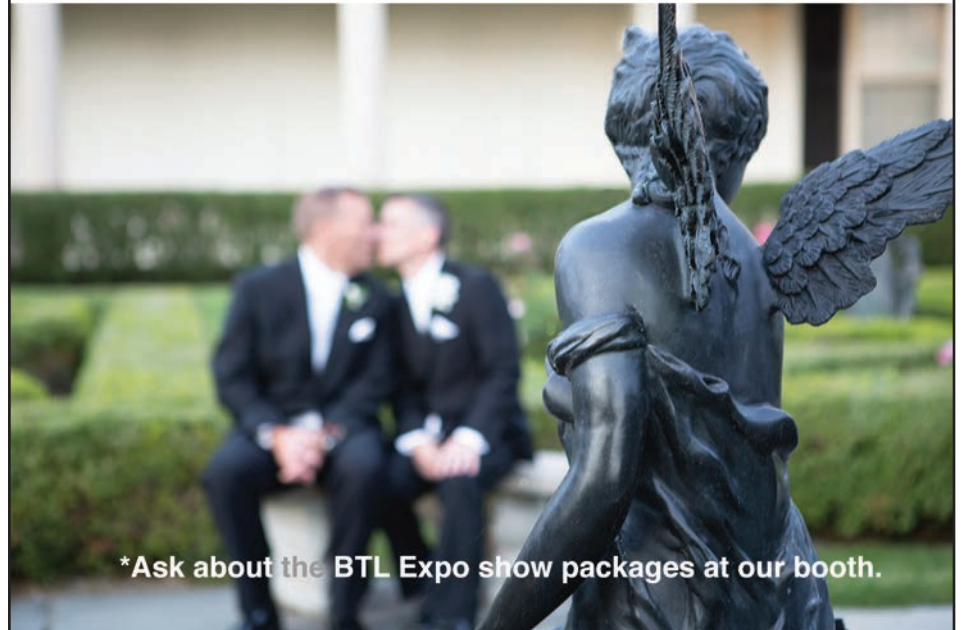
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Ask Lambda Legal: It's Tax Season

BY SUSAN SOMMER

After DOMA was struck down in 2013, the federal government recognized marriages of same-sex couples for tax purposes, although, in violation of the Constitution, many states did not. Following the Supreme Court's watershed decision in Obergefell v. Hodges ending state-level marriage discrimination, we received questions from around the country about the income tax filing process and how Obergefell has affected same-sex couples.

Filing taxes is serious business, and everyone's circumstances are different. You should consult a qualified tax advisor to help navigate your personal filing. The following information was jointly developed by Lambda Legal, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Freedom to Marry, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE). View the full guide here: marriageequalityfacts.org.

How will the Supreme Court's marriage ruling change how much I owe in my state income taxes?

The Supreme Court's ruling means that states cannot purport to require married same-sex couples to "pretend" they're not married for state tax purposes. Same-sex spouses who were married at the relevant time for determining marital status for tax filings must file both their federal and state income tax returns as married (whether jointly or separately).

Whether a couple who gets married or whose marriage is now recognized in their home state will owe more or less for any particular tax year depends on the couple's specific situation, which may also change from year to year. A qualified tax advisor can help you calculate what makes most sense for you.

For federal income tax returns and in some states that have graduated tax rates, joint filing tends to favor married spouses with very different incomes, such as where one spouse earns little or no income and the other earns income to support the family. Joint filers in this situation will generally, but not always, owe

less income tax than if they filed as married filing separately or as single (unmarried) taxpayers. Where both spouses are high earners, being married may result in owing more income tax than had they remained unmarried. These differences tend to be less pronounced on state income tax returns when compared with federal. A tax advisor can help you determine how getting married would impact your income tax as well as whether, if married, you would be better off filing jointly or separately.

What tax-related steps might a newly married or newly respected couple consider taking?

If you earn wages as an employee, you may want to consult a tax advisor about whether to change your filing status and claimed allowances on Form W-4 and the state equivalent, which may affect your withholdings. It may also be important to consult a tax advisor if you pay estimated income taxes on a quarterly basis about whether to change the amount of these payments.

I paid more in state taxes than I should have because my marriage wasn't recognized. Should I file for a refund?

Because already married couples have been filing their federal income tax returns as married persons, they may know that they have overpaid their state income taxes because the state did not respect their marital status. There are state-specific procedures for seeking a refund. We recommend consulting with a tax advisor to determine if it makes sense for you to pursue a refund claim, including assessing whether it's cost-effective to do so.

For additional IRS Resources, go to <http://gaybe.am/irsmc> and <http://gaybe.am/irscu>.

If you have any questions, or feel you have been discriminated against because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, contact Lambda Legal's Help Desk at 1-866-542-8336, or see www.lambdalegal.org/help.

Susan Sommer is Lambda Legal Senior Counsel and Director of Constitutional Litigation.

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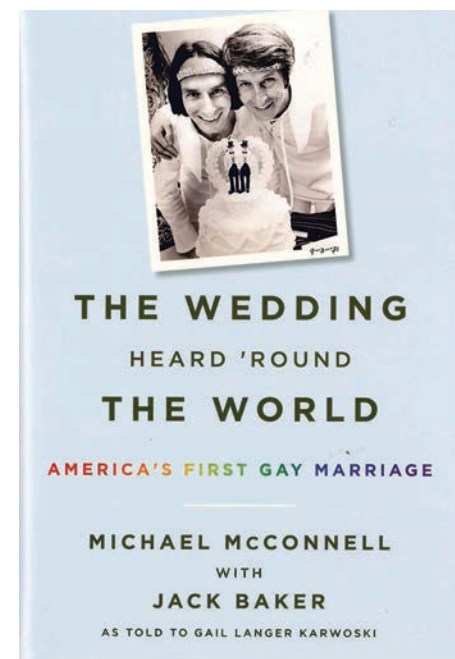
New Book Documents Life Of First Gay Couple To Get Married In America

A book published this year, "The Wedding Heard 'Round The World: America's First Gay Marriage," tells the story of Jack Baker and Michael McConnell, America's first legally married same-sex couple, who exchanged vows on Sept. 3, 1971 before a Methodist minister in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Their long campaign for marriage equality and insistence on equal rights for all citizens helped to establish the marriage equality movement that secured marriage rights for all American citizens on June 26, 2015 and serves as inspiration for those struggling with acceptance in a less-than-equal world.

William N. Eskridge Jr. of Yale Law School calls the book "one of the great love stories of the past century," and says that their journey "jump-started the movement for LGBT marriage equality. The librarian and the law student – Mike and Jack – are all-American pioneers. Anyone interested in gay rights – or in romance – should read this book."

McConnell and Baker currently live in Minneapolis. They both retired in 2010 after years of working within the library, law and engineering fields.

The story was penned by Gail Langer Karwoski, an author and educator residing



in Georgia, who met the couple a year after their marriage; she transcribed Baker and McConnell's recounts of their lives together.

"The Wedding Heard 'Round The World: America's First Gay Marriage" is available in hardcover. For more information and to purchase a copy of the book, visit www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/the-wedding-heard-around-the-world.

To Marry Or Not? That Is the (Legal) Question

An Arbor attorney Angie Martell has created a comprehensive analysis of the legal issues facing same-sex couples in Michigan as they approach the altar of marriage. What is clear is that many couples will want to consult a lawyer before getting married. The complete document is available on www.pridesource.com, and here are just some of the highlights:



Marriage may not be a benefit to a same-sex couple in all circumstances. Married couples may inquire, "What difference does it make that Michigan now must recognize our marriage?"

For federal tax purposes, marriage affects receipt of Social Security and unmarried couples are not eligible for one another's Social Security. But many questions remain, including if a spouse died before Obergefell was decided on June 26, 2015, is the surviving spouse eligible now for survivor's benefits? A divorced spouse may qualify for Social

Security based on the ex-spouse's record.

Michigan married couples file state income taxes based upon their federal filing status. Marital status may create benefits or burdens depending on a couple's personal and financial circumstances. Same-sex married couples must file their income taxes jointly or as "married filing separately." If the couple marries, the

Medicaid "spousal impoverishment rules" would allow some of the couple's resources to be preserved for the healthier spouse's use.

Couples considering marriage might want to enter contractual agreements as well such as pre- and post-marital agreements, REA protections for spouses and cohabitation agreements (Preferably, "Partnership Agreements").

See the complete document at www.PrideSource.com.

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DeBoer-Rowse Film to Premier at FREEP Film Fest; Trans Films Reflect Both Hope and Tragedy



“Accidental Activists”

DETROIT – The world premier of “Accidental Activists,” a new documentary about April and Jayne DeBoer-Rowse’s three-year battle for marriage equality, will be April 2 in Detroit. Created by Detroit Free Press photographer and videographer Mandi Wright,

the film chronicles their journey all the way from couple’s initial lawsuit that sought joint custody of their adopted children to the case’s expansion into the centerpiece of the fight that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in the historic case that brought marriage equality to the entire country.

Titled “Accidental Activists,” the film follows the twists and turns of the legal struggle that would turn these unassuming moms into the most unlikely of activists. The world premier will be 5 p.m. April 2 and 2 p.m. April 3 at the Marvin and Betty Danto Lecture Hall at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The April 2 screening will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by Free Press columnist Brian Dickerson that will include April and Jayne DeBoer-Rowse and their attorneys Dana Nessel and Robert Sedler. The April 3 screening will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by BTL co-publisher Jan Stevenson.

came from and her search for femininity in wardrobe, makeup and voice to her reception in a small-town community and how she handles her eldest’s wedding. Trisha calls it being “on the fence” – a fluid concept, with plenty of room for so-called normalcy. This is a powerful look at the complicated nature of the spectrum of gender identity and the question of what love is through a focus on one person’s, and one family’s, story. This will be the Metro Detroit premiere. The screening is 8 p.m. April 2 at the Emagine Theatre in Royal Oak, followed by a panel discussion moderated by trans activist Amy Hunter, Trans Project coordinator at the Michigan ACLU.

‘Treasure’

Subtitled “From Tragedy to Transjustice, Mapping a Detroit Story,” Treasure is the story of the death of Shelly Hilliard, an African-American transgender teen who was brutally murdered and mutilated in 2011. The documentary by Detroit writer-filmmaker dream hampton is an unblinking look at what happened to Hilliard and the overwhelming pain it caused her mother and sisters. But it also focuses on the efforts under way locally to help young people like her who often face prejudice from the outside world, rejection at home and poverty that drives them to prostitution. There will be a panel discussion with film subjects and community representatives after the screening. The film will show at noon Sunday, April 3 at the Marvin and Betty Danto Lecture Hall at the DIA.

For tickets and more information about these and other FREEP Film Festival films go to <http://freepfilmfestival.com>

‘From This Day Forward’

Trisha Shattuck came out to her daughters as a transgender woman when they were in elementary school; she told her wife, Marcia, early on in their relationship. They’ve now been married for 35 years in a partnership that has been at times strained and at others joyous. For her children, it made for an even more embarrassing adolescence than the norm, but all four Shattucks appear to have come through, mostly unscathed, on the other side. “From This Day Forward,” set largely in northern Michigan, ably delves into how Trisha transitioned (and continues to transition, seemingly on a daily basis), exploring everything from where her name

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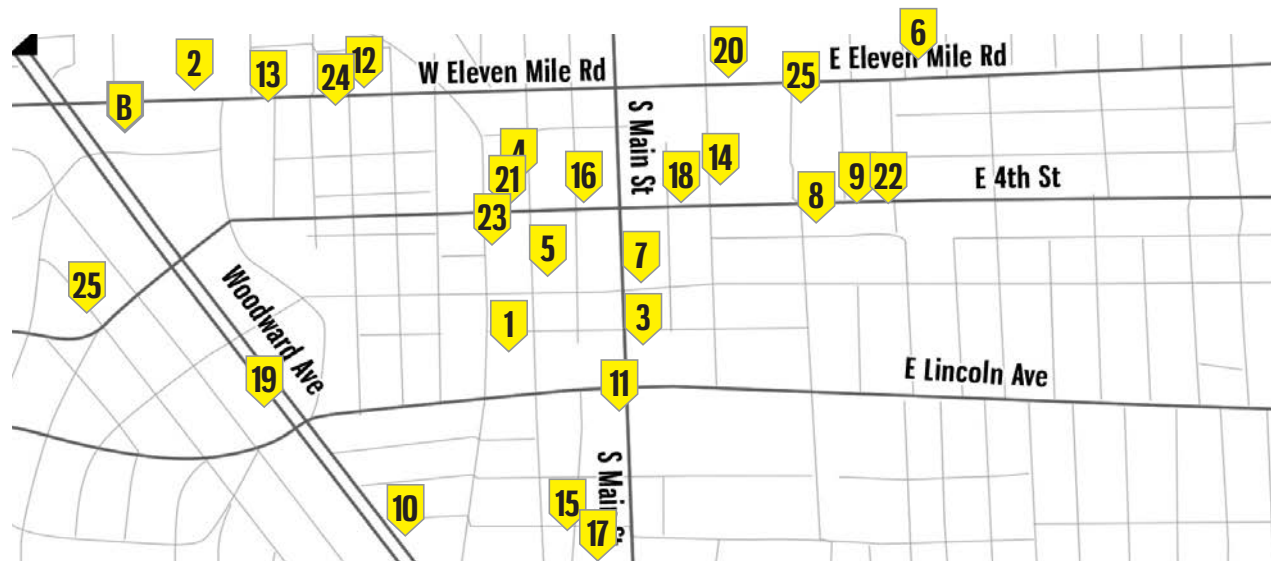
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Lawyers From Controversial Netflix Documentary Make Royal Oak Appearances

BY BTL STAFF

An evening of conversation with two of the most compelling figures featured in the Netflix documentary “Making a Murderer” comes to Royal Oak this weekend. Attorneys Dean Strang and Jerry Buting will participate in a moderated discussion regarding the operations of the criminal justice system, as well as the broader implications of the Steven Avery case. Katrease Stafford, a breaking news reporter for the Detroit Free Press, hosts.

“Making a Murderer” is a 10-part Netflix documentary that premiered Dec. 18, 2015. The show quickly found word-of-mouth popularity amongst the media-streaming platform’s audience. Written and directed by Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos, the show discusses the story of Steven Avery, a Manitowoc County, Wisconsin man who served 18 years in prison for sexual assault and attempted murder but was then exonerated in 2003. He was shortly after arrested in connection with the murder of Teresa Halbach and convicted in 2007. The series, filmed over 10 years, was the first Netflix creation to be released both on Netflix streaming and on YouTube.

“Making a Murderer” is a 10-part Netflix documentary. The show quickly found word-of-mouth popularity amongst the media-streaming platform’s audience.

Strang, one of the attorneys appearing at the Royal Oak Music Theatre for the evening, was one of Avery’s attorneys for the Halbach trial. He’s stated in the past that the filmmakers for the documentary “did a good editorial job.” The Huffington Post said in January, “Strang noted that the trial went for six weeks and featured approximately 200 to 240 hours of evidence. Strang took the position that showing the full trial would be too long for audiences and that only the most significant

points on both sides could be shown.”

Buting, another defense lawyer for Avery, publicly spoke out later than Strang, but has commented on Avery not seeing the documentary. “He has not seen it himself – but he’s certainly aware of it. I saw him shortly before it aired in mid-December and I know his family is probably overwhelmed as well with the kind of response that occurred,” he



Attorney Dean Strang was one of Steven Avery’s attorneys.

told Fox 6 Now in Manitowoc County earlier this year.

Both lawyers have attracted a fan following, especially in light of the pro-Avery light of the documentary that has resulted in thousands of signatures on petitions trying to release the man. Buting told Fox 6 Now of the almost comically over-the-top fanfare for him and Strang: “It’s silly really. But I’m surprised at any of the crush type of interest. Just to give you an idea, before this started, I had eight people on my Twitter following me. I’ve got 25,000 now.”

The evening is presented by the Detroit Free Press and the Freep Film Festival. Two shows will be held on Saturday, March 19 at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Tickets start at \$55. The shows are for 18 and over. As of press time, the 5 p.m. show still has space and the 8 p.m. show has sold out.

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Editor's Pick

A good fit for the hopefully-changing-soon season, "Detroit Weather: 365 Days" is no playing at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The exhibit features a 90-minute video by Susan Goethel Campbell. The exhibit will run through April 16.

The two-channel video comprises thousands of still images taken every minute, 24 hours a day, for

one year, enabling the viewer to see how weather patterns come and go and move in all directions. "Detroit Weather: 365 Days" was recently acquired for the DIA's collection with support from museum patron Ruth Rattner. This exhibition is on view in the DIA's special exhibition galleries off of Rivera Court.

The DIA is located at 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For more information on the DIA or exhibits, call 313-833-7900 or visit www.dia.org.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Friday, March 18

Thunder from Down Under 8 p.m. Tickets: \$23-40. Sound Board - Motor City Casino, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 800-745-3000. www.Soundboarddetroit.com

Saturday, March 19

Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs 8 p.m. Alan Cumming comes to Detroit for an intimate one-night performance of his celebrated cabaret act, Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs. Presented by Cabaret 313 at the Music Box of the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, the show covers a wide range of music and styles from Miley Cyrus to Noel Coward. Don't miss this special edition performance by the extraordinarily talented and beyond eclectic Alan Cumming. Join Cabaret 313 45 minutes before show time. Light food and beer/wine available for purchase. Cabaret 313, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-405-5061. cabaret313@gmail.com cabaret313.org

Sunday, March 20

The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo 12 p.m. Tickets: \$10. Between the Lines, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 866-782-9622. www.Btlweddingexpo.com

Monday, March 21

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

Tuesday, March 22

Genderqueer Family Memoirist Time TBD. Michigan State University, East Lansing. www.Transgresspress.org

Friday, March 25

Adam Lambert With special guest Alex Newell. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. www.Ticketmaster.com

Saturday, March 26

Hustle & Flo's First Annual Ballroom & Steppers Affair 8 p.m. Drink set-up sold. \$20/person at door. All participants must pre-register. Just email hustleflo4244@gmail.com with Name, City, State, Dance style- (Beginner ballroom, advance ballroom, free style

or stepper, trioquad) and Song choice. Hustle & Flo Productions, 8599 N. Lilley Road, Canton. 734-329-4556. Hustleflo4244@gmail.com

Thursday, March 31

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

Faith & LGBTQ Townhall 6:30 p.m. Pastor Frank Turner, from the Believers Congregation in Novi, will be the Keynote and Moderator for the event. Refreshments will be served. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.Goaffirmations.org/programs-services/community-events-activities

Hunkapella 8 p.m. Tickets: \$38-48. Olympia Entertainment, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611. www.Olympiaentertainment.com

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Ann Arbor Film Festival "David O'Reilly". Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 5:10 p.m. March 17. 734-668-8397. www.Aaifilmfest.org

Royal Oak Music Theatre "A Conversation on "Making a Murderer"" 18+. Tickets: \$55+. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. March 19 - March 19. 248-399-2980.

www.RoyalOakMusicTheatre.com

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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

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agua de luna (psalms for the rouge) 18+. Matrix Theatre, Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. Through March 20. 313-967-0999. www.Matrixtheatre.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Film Festival "DIY Workshops" Free. University of Michigan North Quad, Space 2435, Ann Arbor. March 15 - March 19. www.Aaifilmfest.org

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

DIA "Dance! American Art 1830-1960" The exhibition is organized by the DIA and presents more than 90 paintings, sculptures, photographs and costumes brought together for the first time to celebrate and explain the important place of dance in American culture. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. March 20 - June 12. 313-833-7900. www.Dia.org

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



Editor's Pick

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is gearing up for this year's series with a run of free DIY workshops in downtown Ann Arbor. Experience techniques of early video art with Lynne Goeringer, a professor of film studies in the MSU Film Studies Program. "Video as a Medium: the Materiality of Low-Tech Video Art" will help you better understand the world of historical and contemporary video art practices through hands-on exploration. This workshop

begins at 10 a.m. on March 18.

Who said experimental films are only for grown-ups? Join AAFF at their family friendly workshop "Shoot, Scratch and Stomp: Let's Play With Film!" presented by Joel Rakowski and Barbara Twist. The show runs from 2-5 p.m. on March 19.

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is the longest running independent and experimental film festival in North America, internationally recognized as a premier forum for film as an art form. The AAFF receives more than 3,000 submissions annually from over 70 countries and serves as one of a handful of Academy-Award qualifying festivals in the United States.

Both workshops will take place at the University of Michigan North Quad, Space 2435, Ann Arbor. The series is free. For more information, visit www.aaifilmfest.org.

DIA Exhibit Looks at Vibrant History of Dance

BY BTL STAFF

The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) will present its new multimedia exhibition, "Dance! American Art 1830–1960," from March 20 to June 12. The exhibition is organized by the DIA and presents more than 90 paintings, sculptures, photographs and costumes brought together for the first time to celebrate and explain the important place of dance in American culture. Works are from the DIA and other leading American and international museums as well as from private collections.

The artworks explore dance through diverse segments of American culture, including sacred dances of indigenous North Americans; the history of African-American dance forms; paintings from the turn of the 20th century featuring international female dance superstars; works by Harlem Renaissance artists who challenged negative stereotypes and sought to create and sustain a vibrant cultural identity; and modern objects that demonstrate a fluid dialogue between visual artists, dancers and choreographers.

"This is the first major exhibition to explore visual art related to American dance. Dance has such a rich history and has touched all segments of American society," said Salvador Salort-Pons, DIA director. "This exhibition is not only about the representation of the art of dance; it explores how artists were inspired by how Americans move, how they interacted with each other and experienced the rhythm of music."

Among the works featured are "The Jolly Flatboatmen" by George Caleb Bingham, John Singer Sargent's "La Carmencita," Winslow Homer's "Summer Night," Andy Warhol's "Silver Clouds," Mary Cassatt's "Bacchante" and nine watercolors by Diego Rivera. Other artists in the show include William Merritt Chase, Florine Stettheimer, Thomas Hart Benton and Faith Ringgold.

American artists were captivated by the personalities, expressiveness and ideas represented by dance performance. The exhibition explores these ideas through several themes: dances that trace back to Indigenous Americans, Africans and Europeans; dance morphing, enduring and continuing through generations; artists who represented dance to point to societal changes; people dancing together in social settings like nightclubs and parties; dances during distinct eras, such as the Lindy Hop, Jitterbug, Swing and Charleston; dancers as celebrities; and collaborations between artists and dancers.

Seven videos highlight dance performances

that include historic footage and contemporary dancers discussing and demonstrating American ballet, tap and Detroit's dance legacies. These include Haleem Rasul and members of Hardcore Detroit; Michigan native Amber Neumann, currently with the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago; Russ Tallchief, Osage Nation, director of Student Engagement, Inclusion and Multicultural Programs, Oklahoma City University; Francesca Harper, performer and artistic director, The Francesca Harper Project; and Thomas F. DeFrantz, chair of African and African-American Studies and professor of Dance, Duke University, who served as creative director for the videos.

"In addition to the outstanding works of art, it was important for me to have the



"The Jolly Flatboatmen," George Caleb Bingham, 1846, oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

voice and expertise of dancers within the exhibition itself," said Jane Dini, associate curator of American Painting and Sculpture, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and curator of the exhibition. "They help illustrate how dance as an artistic form had an enormous impact on the fine arts, especially painting and sculpture."

Exhibition tickets are \$14 for adults, \$10 for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb county residents, \$7 for ages 6–17, \$5 for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb county residents ages 6–17, and free for DIA members. Admission is free every Friday. School groups need to register in advance. Tickets at dia.org or 313-833-4005.

The exhibition has been organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Support has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support has been provided by the Marjorie and Maxwell Jospay Foundation and an ADAA Foundation Curatorial Award and the Association of Art Museum Curators.

The DIA is located at 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Visit www.dia.org for more information.

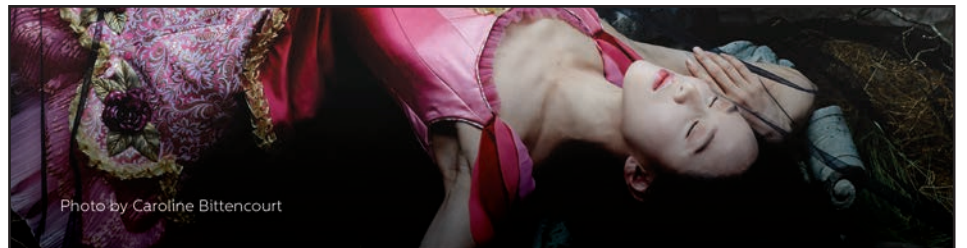


Photo by Caroline Bittencourt

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The Frivolist 9 LGBT Books To Bide Your Time Until Summer

BY MIKEY ROX

Reading list getting stale as we head into spring? Freshen it up with these nine LGBT novels, anthologies and web serials to make the winter blues melt away.

Kept

by Jim Arnold

Young gay men George and Connor get more than they bargained for when they're caught up in a Palm Springs real-estate scam that casts a dark and deceptive shadow on the otherwise serene desert scene in this neo-noir mystery novel.

The Best Party of Our Lives: Stories of Gay Weddings

by Sarah Galvin

Galvin, who was previously author of the Wedding Crasher column in "The Stranger" newspaper, expands her audience with this series of essays derived from real interviews with same-sex couples that mimic the course of a wedding, from the point of popping the question and planning the big day to the romance and relief of the honeymoon.

Rob's Rebellion

by Margaret Fieland

In this adventure-packed sci-fi romance, Colonel Rob Walker risks his already-teetering familial relationships to negotiate a treaty between the Terran Federation and the Aleyni as new and unexpected relationships emerge.



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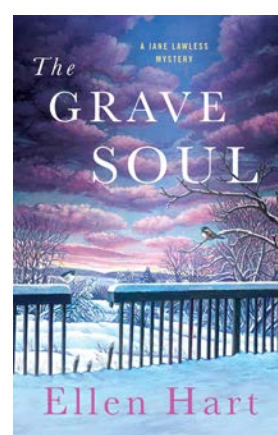
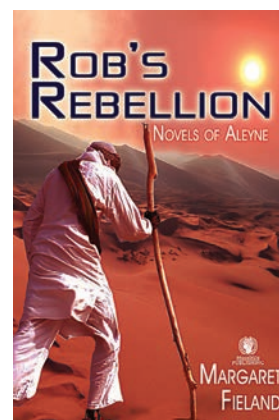
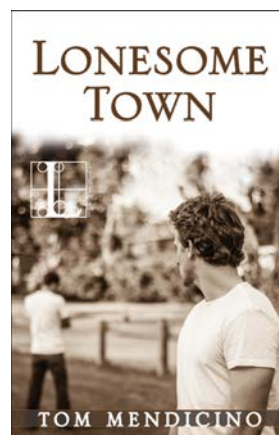
by Sarah Beth James

Jack, whose mother died when he was young and whose father doesn't care much for him, clings to childhood sweetheart Stephen until infidelity drives a wedge in their relationship, ultimately pushing the vulnerable and unstable young man into drugs, drinking and a church that wants to help him "pray the gay away."

Working Boys

by Milton Stern

While technically not a book in the tangible sense, the online serial novel "Working Boys," released in piecemeal by author Milton Stern, is a murder mystery of the erotic kind – a game of Clue among escorts, if you will – that features all the hallmarks of a classic homo whodunit, like kidnappings, meth addicts and dead bodies that drop like your Calvins. Chapters one through 18 are currently available; a new chapter is published every month.



Bundled Up

by Annabeth Albert

All three of Albert's "Portland Heat" novellas – "Served Hot," "Baked Fresh," and "Delivered Fast" – are published together for the first time in this collection of novellas that offer tasty takes on gay dating, sex and romance in Oregon, all set in the city's cafes, restaurants and bakeries to further whet your appetite.

The Grave Soul

by Ellen Hart

Hart's "Jane Lawless Mysteries" continue – this is volume 23, in fact – with Guthrie Hewitt, who plans to propose to local girl Kira Adler. But when a Thanksgiving trip home with Kira makes him uneasy – a result of her murderous nightmares – Hewitt enlists Lawless to crack the case.

Crooked Letter i

edited by Connie Griffin

Sixteen first-person narratives – coming out stories from a cross-section of LGBT southerners – comprise this revealing and remarkable collection of essays that provide a glimpse of what life is like for our brothers and sisters who grow up in the Bible Belt: how they cope with prejudice and injustice and subsequently find the courage to overcome it.

Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. He splits his time between homes in New York City and the Jersey Shore with his dog Jaxon. Connect with Mikey on Twitter @mikeyrox.

Lonesome Town

by Tom Mendicino

In the sequel to Mendicino's adult novella "KC, At Bat," lovelorn protagonists Kevin "KC" Conroy and Charlie Beresford cross paths as young adults both struggling to find their place in the world. Five years older and wiser, the once-familiar-but-confused friends try to reignite an old flame fueled by a more mature, if not skeptical, perspective.

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The OutField: Sports Equality Foundation Empowers Out Athletes

BY DAN WOOG

In a career spent chronicling the lives of LGBT athletes, Cyd Zeigler has discovered one consistent thread: Coming out empowers others to do the same.

“No matter what the level, when one person comes out, other people follow,” says Zeigler, co-founder of the Outsports website. “And that leads to very definite changes in their sport.”

In fact, Zeigler adds, the act of coming out trumps everything else being done in the LGBT sports world. “Sensitivity training, awareness campaigns – nothing else compares to the power of coming out.”

But over the years he noticed that despite the good works and strong efforts of a variety of LGBT sports organizations, no one was working in that space. “There seemed to be a lack of heart in pushing more people to come out,” Zeigler says.

That’s going to change.

Last summer in Provincetown, Zeigler chatted with Patrick Davis. The CEO of Ben Cohen Worldwide – which manages the StandUp anti-bullying foundation named for the rugby World Cup champion – was looking for new projects. Zeigler mentioned the importance of coming out as an empowerment tool.

The pair got to work. Last month marked the official launch of the Sports Equality Foundation. Focused solely on the mission of helping LGBT athletes come out, the organization is funded with a \$100,000 commitment from the board.

Davis is one co-chair. Kathleen Hatch – former president of a collegiate recreation association – is the other. The board includes Zeigler; out high school basketball coach Anthony Nicodemo of Yonkers, New York; openly gay UCLA softball coach Kirk Walker, and Alison Doerfler, executive director of the Hands On Network.

The foundation’s board is aided by a list of high-powered advisory members, including openly gay NBA basketball player Jason Collins; Major League Baseball’s first ambassador for inclusion Billy Bean; trans sportswriter and activist Christina Kahr, and Connor Mertens and Brian Sims, who came out to their college football teams.

Another advisory board member, Howard Bragman, is a public relations professional who aided athletes like Michael Sam, Cheryl Swoopes, Esera Tuaolo and John Amaechi – and movie star Meredith Ann Baxter and country singer Ty Herndon – as they came out publicly.

From the moment the Sports Equality Foundation was launched, Zeigler says, “people got it.” From Fortune 500 corporations offering assistance to high school athletes saying “wow!,” people realized that “this is the key that unlocks the door, in sports and society.”

Zeigler reiterates that the foundation’s work will focus on concrete measures that help LGBT athletes come out... and stay out.

“We’re not going to be putting out training manuals or making video campaigns,” he says. “Other organizations are doing that. That’s their space, and we won’t step on their toes.”

Instead, he says, the Sports Equality Foundation will fund projects like their first one. Next month, MLB holds its annual Diversity Business Summit in Phoenix. The two-day event brings job seekers together with major and minor league club owners and executives. The goal is to help members of minorities find jobs in baseball front offices.

“It’s so important to place people who are already out in settings where they can be out and effect real change,” Zeigler says.

The expense of the summit is beyond many young job seekers. So the foundation will fund travel for a dozen LGBT students and others. That’s a concrete example of the type of action the Sports Equality Foundation plans to take.

Another is funding equipment needs. Amateur athletes – even pros – often spend thousands of dollars on things like skis and bicycles. If the foundation can help with those expenses, openly gay sports figures can concentrate on training and competing. And by being out and successful, they can serve as important role models for others.

The universe is enormous. The Sports Equality Foundation will help any out (or coming out) LGBT athlete, from youth and high school to college, pro and recreational. The level does not matter. Realistically though, Zeigler says, because of ages, stages in life and numbers, much of the organization’s work will probably do with college athletes.

Zeigler has been heartened by the strong response following the foundation’s launch. On the Monday before the Super Bowl, the owner of Hi Tops – a San Francisco gay bar – asked if he could hold a fundraiser. Four days later, the place was packed. Michael Sam and Rick Welts (openly gay president of the San Francisco Warriors) stopped by.

The Sports Equality Foundation may be on to something big. There is a place in the LGBT sports world for education and advocacy. But there’s also a place for the simple act of coming out – and then being out.

“Sports is an important key to unlocking minds and hearts in our shifting culture,” co-chair Hatch says. “The coming-out cycle perpetuates itself and drives broader cultural change. We have a deep belief in the incredible power of the individual.”

Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach and gay activist. His latest book is “We Kick Balls: True Stories from the Youth Soccer Wars.” He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Jussie Smollett is going to outer space

You see him being cute and musically talented on “Empire” every week, as he implores his homophobic father to love him, possibly to will him that vast record industry fortune. But the next time you see Jussie Smollett in a non-Cookie-Lyon-adjacent position, he will be tackling a bigger and badder nemesis, aka that alien from “Alien,” in the next installment of Ridley Scott’s ongoing space monster franchise. “Alien: Covenant,” in production now and fairly secretive about all other details, is due in 2017 and will co-star Smollett. The up-and-comer will join cast members Michael Fassbender, Katherine Waterston, Billy Crudup, Danny McBride, Demian Bichir and Carmen Ejogo as they deal with the development of the terror that will eventually become the world’s most gruesome headache for 1979’s Sigourney Weaver (we’re still in Prequel Land, in case you forgot). Spend the next year catching up on the others if you need to. Skip “Prometheus” if you want. Most people seem to think you should.



Jussie Smollett

Alexander McQueen: The Movie

The short, shining career and tragic death of fashion designer Alexander McQueen – a sad story fueled by glamour, success, excess, drugs and suicide – seemed tailor-made for the kind of cautionary biopic Hollywood loves to make. So now they’re making it, and acclaimed queer filmmaker Andrew Haigh (“Weekend,” “45 Years”) will be the man behind the camera. A screenwriter is in place, as well: Chris Urch, the hot playwright whose career is on the rise these days thanks to great reviews for “The Rolling Stone,” will work on the script, and there are no shortage of dramatic details. McQueen, the son of a taxi driver, ascended to fashion royalty, designing for David Bowie and Prince Charles, launching his own line while privately dealing with depression and drug dependence. He committed suicide in 2010, shocking the fashion world. Fortunately, Urch and Haigh are the sort of creative team that will handle this sensitively, giving the late legend the tribute he most deserves. In pre-production now, cameras are slated to roll by year’s end.

Watch out for Lena Waithe

You were probably unaware that Lena Waithe existed until you saw her on Aziz Ansari’s hilarious sitcom “Master of None,” where she plays one of his friends, a character that may be the funniest, coolest, baddest lesbian TV has ever delivered. In fact, you might remember her now but still not know her name. That should be changing fairly soon, because behind the scenes, Waithe has been quite busy. She was a writer for “Bones” and a producer on the gay-inclusive “Dear White People.” And now she’s got her own pilot set up at Showtime, a coming-of-age drama about a young black man who must raise one of his children alone. Tequan Richmond (“Everybody Hates Chris”) will star alongside Aisha Hinds (“Under the Dome”), Alex Henderson (“Empire”) and Olivia Dawson (“Empire”). The series will be co-produced by Common, whose got brand name recognition. Because cable television is one of the places where female creators of color get a better shot at success than the notoriously slow, white and male world of mainstream Hollywood movie studios, there’s a better shot we’ll see the final result. Fingers crossed.

Vauxhall and Di

So there’s a story floating around, one that may or may not be fully true, and it involves Princess Diana sneaking out of Kensington Palace at night dressed as a man, accompanying her friend Freddie Mercury on a trip out to a gay bar, and getting away with it. And come on, you want that story to be real in such a major way that whether or not it actually happened is kind of irrelevant, right? Right. That’s why it’s been turned into a stage musical. The brand new baby production, known as “Royal Vauxhall,” from creator Desmond O’Connor, is still in the nightclub performance stage, but it’s already leaps ahead of the current jukebox musical trend thanks to original songs and a scrappy sense of purpose, one where obscure but relevant gay cultural history is brought to light (or perhaps invented wholesale). Nobody knows where this is going, but it all feels very “Hedwig”-esque, possibly moving on to a huge, appreciative audience when a visionary investor comes aboard. Like they always say, “Print the legend” – it’s just more fun.

Romeo San Vicente lives his own legendary status every day.

Advertisement for the Michigan HIV/STD Hotline. It features a graphic of a telephone handset with a speech bubble saying "Hello? I've got a question." The phone number 800 872 2437 is displayed in large, colorful digits. Below the number, it says "The Michigan HIV/STD Hotline. Live weekdays, 10 am - 6 pm." Several colorful speech bubbles contain questions: "How long should I wait before testing?", "Where can I find free testing?", "Should I take PrEP?", "My partner is positive but undetectable. How risky is sex?", and "I just found out I have HIV. What should I do now?". At the bottom, it says "You Have Questions, We Have Answers" and provides online resources: "Find Us Online! www.miunified.org" and social media handles for Facebook (@www.facebook.com/HIVSTDHotline) and Twitter (@michiganhotline). A footer note says "Volunteer Opportunities - Want to help improve the health of your community? Volunteer with the hotline today! The Michigan HIV/STD Hotline is a program of Unified - HIV Health and Beyond".

Advertisement for PrideSource Magazine. It features a photograph of two men, one with his arm around the other's shoulder, both smiling. Overlaid on the image is the text: "Find hundreds of great LGBT friendly resources. Digital edition available at pridesource.com". Below this, in large yellow text, it says "Coming Out June 2016 April 15 Publication Deadline For Advertising and Listings 734-293-7200 x. 22". At the bottom, it says "INTRODUCING ... PRIDESOURCE MAGAZINE From the Publishers Of Between The Lines & Pridesource.com A New Lifestyle & Resource Publication For SE Michigan's LGBT Community". A small image of the magazine cover is shown in the bottom right corner.




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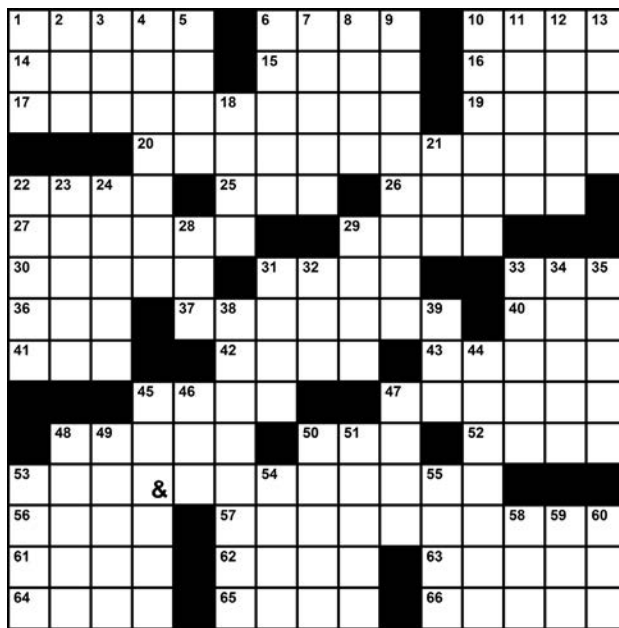
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- 25 Halloween mo.
- 26 Black to Bonheur
- 27 Dwarf tree in the land of the samurai
- 29 Watch a NY Liberty game here
- 30 With 37- and 43-Across, start of a B.D. movie set in Asia
- 31 Use your tongue
- 33 Neighbor of Kan.
- 36 "Heather Has ___ Mommies"

- 37 See 30-Across
- 40 Charlottesville sch.
- 41 "Oy" follower
- 42 Alison Bechdel cartoon character
- 43 See 30-Across
- 45 Barenaked Ladies' "Am ___ Only One"
- 47 Bathtub Madonna, e.g.
- 48 Sri ___
- 50 Harry of the Mattachine Society
- 52 "Nuts!"
- 53 B.D. Wong TV show about fighting crime
- 56 Slangy suffix
- 57 Time long ago
- 61 Queer spelling of a word for ice house
- 62 Tops a cupcake
- 63 Vanilla, in the sack
- 64 Ending with Pride
- 65 Triangle ratio
- 66 Peter the Great, and more

Down

- 1 Tic ___ (sometimes fruit candy)
- 2 Bill written by Alice Paul
- 3 Football center?
- 4 City in a Dionne Warwick hit
- 5 Victim of Jacob's tricks
- 6 Seminal computer
- 7 Layer's lair
- 8 Chelsea Pines and others
- 9 "Being There" novelist Jerzy
- 10 Come between parties, perhaps
- 11 Kind of bear
- 12 Like a flaming queen?
- 13 It's sent from animals
- 18 "Star Trek" counselor Deanna
- 21 Persona for one of the Village People
- 22 "I Love Lucy" venue
- 23 "My Fair Lady" composer
- 24 Diplomatic agent
- 28 E. Lynn Harris' "___ Way the Wind Blows"
- 29 "Showboat"'s "Nobody ___ But Me"
- 31 "The Black Clark Gable" Diggs
- 32 Indiana Jones's quest
- 33 Homeland of Princess Aida
- 34 Circuit party, for example
- 35 Motel name in an A&E series
- 38 Oscar nominee for "The Hours"
- 39 Ordinal for John Nash
- 44 Bursts in
- 45 1997 Kevin Kline flick
- 46 Boxing ref's end to a butt-whipping
- 47 Part of DOS (abbr.)
- 48 Inevitable online claim
- 49 Soldiers that get off
- 50 Macho dudes
- 51 End of a Stein quote
- 53 Son of Eric the Red
- 54 Prefix meaning "tenth"
- 55 One of three pieces
- 58 Org. that comes when you break down
- 59 Title for Ian McKellen
- 60 Scores by David Kopay

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MINGLE.
REPEAT.

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UPCOMING SHOWS

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March 18
9pm - Ben Sharkey

March 19
9pm - Boogie Dynamite



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