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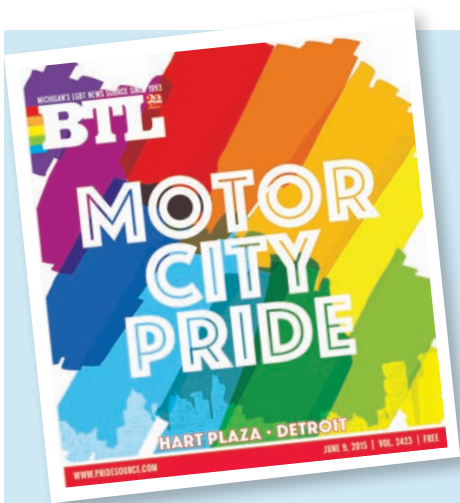
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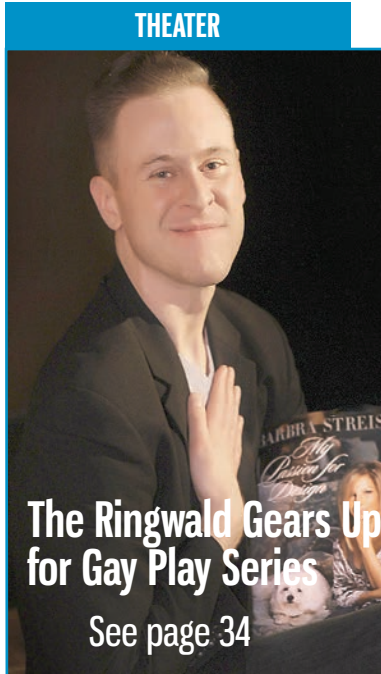
Complete Motor City Pride Coverage



PRIDE PROFILE

Affirmations Executive Director Susan Erspamer Talks About the Future

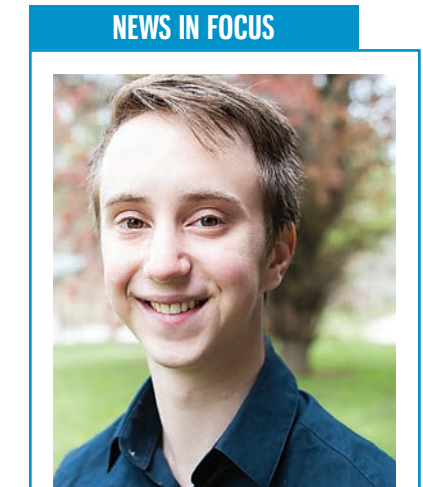
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NEWS

Mich. House Legislation Could Gut Local Human Rights Ordinances

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING – In a one upmanship with the state Senate, a group of 20 Republican lawmakers in the House have introduced an even more draconian piece of legislation revolving around access to bathrooms.

The new legislation, introduced late last Thursday and referred to the House Oversight Committee, would require people to use restrooms in any government facility that corresponds with their gender as recorded on their state identification card. In other words, a transwoman who has not yet reached a point where she can legally change her gender marker on her license would be required to use public restrooms at any government building corresponding to her gender assigned at birth, not her gender identity.

The legislation defines bathrooms subject to the act as those owned and operated by schools, colleges, universities, city, township, county and state governments. The Senate legislation introduced May 25 only addresses use of bathrooms in K-12 facilities.

Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project, said the law is very similar to North Carolina's recently enacted legislation. That law caused a firestorm across the country earlier this year, and last month resulted in the Obama administration filing a federal lawsuit against the state to rescind millions of dollars in federal funding.

Federal courts and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Education have consistently found in favor of transgender students excluded from using bathrooms and other offerings from public entities based on their gender identity.

"It's very serious," Kaplan said, noting if the legislation were to be passed and signed into

The legislation defines bathrooms subject to the act as those owned and operated by schools, colleges, universities, city, township, county and state governments. The Senate legislation introduced May 25 only addresses use of bathrooms in K-12 facilities.

law it constitutionality would most certainly be challenged. He said he would also expect federal action against the state in such a situation as well.

Supporters of such bills across the country argue the legislation is necessary to protect the privacy of women and children. Kaplan said that is untrue.

"It does nothing to protect anyone's privacy," he said.

Kaplan noted that backlash to North Carolina's law included economic impacts from businesses who withdrew developments and conferences. He indicated passage of this law in Michigan could impact "the economic well-being of our state."

The House bill would also gut local human rights ordinances, like the one passed by the Lansing City Council in 2006 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression.

Lansing City Council woman Carol Wood, who chairs an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity which is reviewing and updating Lansing's ordinance condemned the legislation.

"Now the State of Michigan is looking at passing legislation that could nullify the very essence of what the City adopted in 2006," said Wood. "We are a community that has embraced and accepted our differences; where now you have the State willing to promote and legalize bigotry."

"It is unfortunate that members of the Michigan House are attempting to legislate a problem that does not exist," said Amy Hunter, director of the ACLU's Transgender Advocacy Project. "That this bill has been introduced reflects a basic misunderstanding on Rep. Runestad's part of what gender identity is. The fact is that transgender women are women and transgender men are men, period. Barring trans people from using public restrooms and other facilities is the

"It is unfortunate that members of the Michigan House are attempting to legislate a problem that does not exist."

- Amy Hunter, director of the ACLU's Transgender Advocacy Project.

See Anti-gay House Bill, page 8

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► Anti-gay House Bill

Continued from p. 6

very definition of discrimination and would effectively exclude them from participating in public life.”

The bill's sponsors include a who's who of radical anti-gay politicians. Among them: Gary Glenn (R-Midland), president of the American Family Association of Michigan and author of Michigan's Marriage Amendment. Glenn has a long history of attacking the LGBT community, including refusing to refer to transwomen by their chosen names, instead deliberately misgendering them. Thomas Hooker, a Republican from Byron Center (which incidentally has a dark history of antigay animus which resulted in the firing of a gay high school teacher, Gerry Crane, who ultimately died of a heart attack), introduced legislation in 2011 which would ban state funding for gender reassignment surgery for persons incarcerated in the state's prisons. Levering Republican Lee Chatfield knocked Petosky Republican Frank Foster out in a primary last summer – in part because Foster had backed a weak piece of legislation which would have extended Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to protect on the basis of sexual orientation. Foster refused to include gender identity in his legislation, and his bill ultimately died in committee without a vote. Chatfield, who was the darling of right wing political types like Jack Hoogendyk and Dave Agema, has since come under fire when it was revealed his wife had an abortion. Chatfield and his wife are both staunch pro-lifers.

State Reps. Who Introduced the Bill

The legislation was introduced late Thursday afternoon by State Reps. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake), Hooker (R-Byron Center), Gary Howel (R-North Branch), Glenn (R-Midland), Triston Cole (R-Mancelona), Chatfield (R-Levering), Joel Johnson (R-Clare), Bruce Rendon (R-Lake City), Pat Somerville (R-New Baltimore), Tom Barrett (R-Pottersville), Hank Vaupel (R-Fowlerville), Jim Tedder (R-Clarkston), Aaron Miller (R-Sturgis), Nancy Jenkins (R-Clayton), Ray Franz (R-Onokama), Ken Goike (R-Ray Township), Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township), Lana Theis (R-Brighton), Phil Potvin (R-Cadillac) and Peter Lucido (R-Shelby Township).

Ferndale Wedding a First for a Pride Festival in Michigan

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Three couples wed Saturday at the Married With Pride ceremony in the Community Art Gallery of Ferndale. Organizers of Ferndale Pride say they are the first to be wed at a Michigan Pride event since the Supreme Court granted marriage equality for gays last June. The ceremony was performed jointly by Mayor Dave Coulter and Deacon Angela Lippard of Christ the Good Shepherd Independent Catholic Community.

“It was an honor to perform the ceremony,” said Lippard. “I know that there are a lot of ministers and a lot of affirming churches in the area that these couples could have chosen so the fact that they chose to participate in Ferndale Pride, and also that they were willing to take time out to meet with me to let me get to know them so I could make the ceremony more personal, was very moving to me.”

Brittany and Brittney of Waterford, who met on the online dating site Plenty of Fish, have been together just over a year. “The second that she pulled up to pick me up for our date and I got in the car and saw her, I was like, ‘I found the one,’” said Brittney.

The couple said they chose to marry at Ferndale Pride to cut down on costs. “We have pretty much been planning our wedding for a couple months now and no matter what it was going to be in the \$10,000 range, and we're in our mid-20s, still trying to establish ourselves, so we're not going to be able to afford that for a few years,” Brittney said. “That's why we were like, ‘We can get married at Ferndale Pride. We can do this for us now and do the whole family thing later.’”

Melissa and Melinda of Whitmore Lake also met online about a year ago, this time through Match.com. They said they had been talking marriage since late last year. “It started out in December,” recalled Melinda. “I was asking her if we could do promise rings and she said, ‘No, I want to do engagement rings.’”

Michael and David from Lansing have been together for 34 years, having met while both served in the Navy. They chose to get married at Ferndale Pride to avoid the fuss of a traditional wedding. “Now that it's legal, we just wanted to do it and get it over with,” Michael said. Lippard wanted to pay homage to Michael and David's longtime commitment and singled them out in the ceremony. “Today we celebrate the love you found over 30 years ago,” she said before the couple exchanged rings. “We know the relationship you have built together has been holy and sacred. And now we witness you making your commitment again in marriage.”



Brittany and Brittney of Waterford pose after the ceremony with their rings. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael.

“We've done commitment ceremonies in Ferndale for many years and those were wonderful. But to get to do legal, real marriages is long overdue, and I'm just honored to be a part of it.”

– Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter

“Two of the couples had been together for only a year,” Lippard explained. “So I did want to emphasize that the couple that has been together for 30 years that what they had was totally sacred. I just helped them make it legal and reaffirmed their commitment to each other.”

Several local vendors helped make the big day special for the three couples. Blumz by JR provided boutonnieres and corsages; Nan & Audrey Photography took photos; Apple and Tree Bakery brought a wide selection of miniature wedding cakes; and RockSugar enhanced the gallery with special wedding touches all purchased from local vendors.

Sommer Realy of Level One Bank, inside which the gallery is located, said she was happy to provide the space for such a momentous occasion. “It was actually just an idea that we had to be able to give toward the Pride event,” she said. “Darren (Bolsby,

branch manager) and I put our heads together and I enlisted my husband to offer some creative advice and we said, ‘What a great place for a wedding.’”

Bolsby concurred. “We just wanted to give back to the community,” he said. “We do art shows, workshops for small business, and our community is a very diverse community and this fits right in with everything that we embody here at the gallery and the bank. And to be able to give something like this back, that is so special to me. It was totally an honor to be able to do it.”

Coulter said he was honored to be a part of it as well. “This is a milestone,” Coulter said. “We've done commitment ceremonies in Ferndale for many years and those were wonderful. But to get to do legal, real marriages is long overdue, and I'm just honored to be a part of it.”



BTL Photo: Andrew Potter



BTL Photo: Andrew Potter



BTL Photo: Andrew Potter



Megan Carnell and her friends Adam Seizemore, Jonathan Snavelly, Christian Schneider and Brett Jones. Carnell ran for Miss Michigan Leather Pride in 2015 and is running again this year. She believes the women in leather culture are underrepresented and she decided to run to ensure female visibility. Part of her responsibilities as Miss Michigan Leather include being in the Motor City Pride Parade and teaching a class or two on the kink scene. BTL Photo: AJ Trager



James SoLegendary, Alan Jones and Corey Clerk taking in the day at Ferndale Pride. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

Ferndale Kicks Off Michigan's Pride Season

BY AJ TRAGER

FERNDALE – Nine Mile Road in downtown Ferndale was packed June 4 as thousands gathered to celebrate the 2016 Ferndale Pride festival. Saturday started out fiercely hot with some clouds; by the end of the night, Pride-goers were drenched in rainfall but the party continued well into the evening.

The festival expanded this year to include parts of West Troy Street, which allowed for the 100 vendors to have more space and brought more visibility to the stores located in Ferndale. Organizations such as Stand with Trans, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, Transgender Michigan, Equality Michigan, CARES, the University of Michigan-Dearborn and the Hillary Clinton campaign all held booths and spent the day networking with folks and making connections.

Headliner Sick of Sarah and Natalie Cole's Drag Show, Lezbinati, Katie Stanley, For Ghosts, Scarlet Lies, Candace Sosa and Telephon9 took to the main stage near Woodward Avenue and a secondary dance stage was set up on the opposite end of the Pride strip on Nine Mile which hosted DJs Ace Franco, Dav, Octavia and Selina Style as well as The Greatest Ease Circus, a circus dance troupe.

This year was the city's first

Pride since a ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States swept marriage equality across all 50 states. That broad decision has changed the lives of hundreds within the LGBT community, especially couples who have been together for years, maybe even decades, who are now granted the right to wed. On top of the dance and party festivities, three lucky couples joined together in marriage at Ferndale Pride, officiated by Angela Marie Lippard, Deacon at Christ the Good Shepherd.

"I think as the night goes on, it will get busier," Valerie Roberts said around 2 p.m. She was there with her youth, Miki Roberts, and their friend Breejen Chandler. Miki and Chandler both attend the gay-straight alliance at Berkley High and were excited to be out for Pride. This was Miki's first Pride and they were extremely enthusiastic despite encountering a small group of nonviolent protesters.

"This is awesome. There's rainbows everywhere and there are just people doing their thing," Miki said. "The people protesting this left earlier. These people were like, 'Repent for your sins.' I'm not Christian, so they weren't going to intimidate me with their extremism," Miki said.

This was Chandler's second Pride celebration. They attended Ferndale Pride last year and were pleased to have time to celebrate without getting drenched.

"I stayed in Affirmations the whole time last year, so it was cool," Chandler said. "But this is the one time a year when everyone is just themselves and no one really judges them. It's really cool that there are a lot of religious booths for people that want a church that is accepting. Even though I'm not

religious, I appreciate what they do for other people."

For Sonsia Belfiore and Jasmine Allen, Pride is all about visibility. They were seen carrying behind them the bisexual pride flag. Belfiore identifies as pansexual, and Allen identifies as bisexual. Many believe those two sexualities are the same, but the community remains divided on the issue.

"I don't judge based on physical characteristics and gender isn't important," Belfiore said. "I know a lot of bisexuals identify that way and I don't see too much of a difference, but it makes sense to me."

As a dancer, Allen likes to stay around the music when she attends Pride festivals. She's practiced in ballroom dancing and enjoys upbeat and fast paced tempos like the ones found in the tango.

"This is my first time in a few years. Before, I would always go to Motor City Pride. Today, there are a lot more people than there has been in the past," Allen said. "People be a little timid, but not everybody is comfortable with each other. I like it, though. I think it's important to come out to Pride to support each other. If we don't see each other, then we won't know they're there."

For some, Pride is a celebration of their activism and visibility; some come to celebrate their identity and indulge in the party.

Good friends Natalia Allport and Becca were seen strolling together for most of the day in black shorts with vibrant accent colors. Allport was pleased to see a higher attendance from last year, given all the rain.

"I came out to meet some people

See **Pride Kick-Off** page 10

► Pride Kick-Off

Continued from p. 9

because I have a lot of friends that are here. I came out to show myself out because I'm fabulous," Allport said. "I just noticed that it's a bit busier. Last year there wasn't as many people here and I'm pretty sure that was because of the rain. There's definitely more people here than last year."

Many people know the gay leather community, or have seen men dressed up in puppy masks and collars. But not many know about the women within the leather community. Megan Carnell ran for Miss Michigan Leather Pride in 2015 and is running again this year. She believes the women in leather culture are underrepresented and she decided to run to ensure female visibility. Part of her responsibilities as Miss Michigan Leather include being in the Motor City Pride Parade and teaching a class or two on the kink scene.

"I basically had to represent the title and the Michigan's women community at as many events as I could. I had to go onto Great Lakes Leather and compete for Miss Leather Pride. At Great Lakes there were six women, and I came in first runner up by less than a point. It was a lot of fun. I made a lot of friendships that weekend, and I couldn't be happier with how I represented Michigan. All three of the Michigan contestants got runner up," Carnell said.

James SoLegendary brought his friends Alan Jones and Corey Clerk from Flint. The group was searching for a place to grab a drink before walking around to engage vendors. It was SoLegendary's fifth Ferndale Pride.

"I like coming to Pride. It's always a good atmosphere. You see different types of people. And you have to come on out and support the LGBT cause."

Jones and Clerk drove all the way from Flint to attend Ferndale Pride. They are in a new relationship and decided to spend their day checking out how Ferndale celebrates Pride.

"I hope everybody who comes out has fun," Jones said.

The festival also included the Hot Daddies Contest, a community art gallery at Affirmations, free HIV and STI testing, the Arts and Crafts Bazaar, a Pride prom for youth, a Rainbow Run, drag show, Bears in Speedos car wash, and a presentation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

For more information on Ferndale Pride, visit www.ferndalepride.com.



For Sonia Belfiore and Jasmine Allen, Pride is all about visibility. They were seen carrying behind them the bisexual pride flag. BTL Photo: AJ Trager



BTL Photo: Jason A. Michael

Ferndale Pride a Little Wet, but Mostly Wonderful

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The storm clouds gathered and a few errant raindrops fell throughout the day, but Mother Nature withheld her fury and Ferndale Pride went off mostly without a hitch. That is until later in the day when a constant sprinkling persisted causing the crowd to thin out slightly. Still, those that stayed were not deterred.

"The bands played till the very end," said Julia Music, chair of Ferndale Pride. "We didn't have any lightning so we were able to keep them on. They all had audiences. There was even crowd surfing from (headliners) Sick of Sarah while they were playing. People were dancing in the streets until 10 p.m. under rainbow umbrellas."

The rain aside, Music said she was very happy with this year's Pride. "Overall, Pride was another success," she said. "We received a lot of messages, particularly from the transgender community, that people felt welcome and included in their Pride in every way."

Music estimated that 15,000 people were in the city for Pride events throughout the weekend. She also said that one of the highlights of the Pride weekend was what she called the first legal wedding ceremony at a Michigan Pride event since the



BTL Photo: Jason A. Michael

Supreme Court legalized marriage for gays last year.

"The wedding was beautiful," said Music. "The three couples who got married couldn't have been happier. One of the couples had been together for over 30 years."

Melissa Kurily, who recently moved to Ferndale, was a first timer at Pride this year. "It's pretty awesome," she said of the festival. "I wish it was nicer weather,

but it's still pretty awesome. I like the energy and everyone is super friendly and really nice and supportive. I moved to Ferndale from Waterford and it's just such a change. People on the street will talk to you and be nice to you and be supportive of whatever you want to do with your life."

Bob Shimmel from Wyandotte said he comes to Pride every year without fail. "I enjoy it," Shimmel said. "I meet all my friends that I haven't seen in a long time."

Ann Arbor residents Xavier Kimbrough and Ricky Bicknell said they had been to Pride before but not for a few years. "I think that there's a pretty good amount of people here," Kimbrough said. "I think there are a lot of important vendors here, too."

Bicknell said he wished he hadn't had to travel so far to celebrate Pride. "I love it," he said. "There's a lot of diversity here ... a lot of LGBT people who are just out and about and enjoying the day. I like that. I wish that we had this in Ann Arbor. We have the Washtenaw County Family Picnic but we don't

have a Pride, we don't have a parade, we don't have a street festival – even though we have a ton of gay people. So it's upsetting. But this is great."

Chelsea Charles of Detroit had been to Ferndale Pride several times in the past. Asked if organizers could do anything to improve the festival, she had this to say: "They need to make it never rain – unless it's raining men."

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Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

After five years of faithful, heavy-duty service, the battery in my expensive gift Shinola wristwatch just stopped on me.

I should have known it was going to happen because its second hand for the past several weeks hesitated, stopping completely for millisecond, before lunging forward by five-minute notches at a time.

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I took the watch in for replacement at my nearby outlet, but was told I'd have to return the next day, as the technician wasn't working on that particular Thursday. (Probably enjoying the long overdue, 80-degree sunshine.) I said I'd return. Replacement of battery is free, I was assured.

An annoying and curious thing happened during the course of my day's remainder. Until finally, embarrassed by my automatic behavior, I took my watch off.

My embarrassment? I found that every half hour or so – sometimes at five or 10 minute intervals – without thinking, without rhyme or reason, I kept looking at my watch as if to get my bearings for where I was and for what was expected next on my day's unplanned, retirement free agenda. Did I have enough time? And for what?

In several of those instances I reminded myself that my Shinola pacesetter was not working. The battery was dead, dead, dead. To no avail. I automatically kept checking to see what time it was, is or might be. Most disconcerting!

If such engrained behavior isn't problematic enough, I have come to realize that as a senior citizen in a busy metropolitan city of unprecedented opportunity and equally unprecedented chance for unexpected mayhem, I am totally dependent on knowing with certainty three things: where my cell phone is; where my personal keys are; and whether or not I have my wallet and credit cards with me.

I call these three conditions of contemporary existence “my Trinity of personal salvation.” I panic if any item of the three is out of place or missing. When I say “panic,” I'm not exaggerating. Without my cellphone, for example, I have no meaningful contact with friends, the outside world, my frequently begrudging ATM. Or 411.

There was a time when one could find a pay telephone on most city corners. Today such coin-operated mediators between self and substance are antiques at best, archaic boxes for graffiti, or, only-in-a-pinch, cruising shelters in a thunderstorm.

At my age I can remember when technology was limited to the finger-dial-your-number telephone – “It's your nickel, sir!” – and the living room upright radio for entertainment, news, social enlightenment.

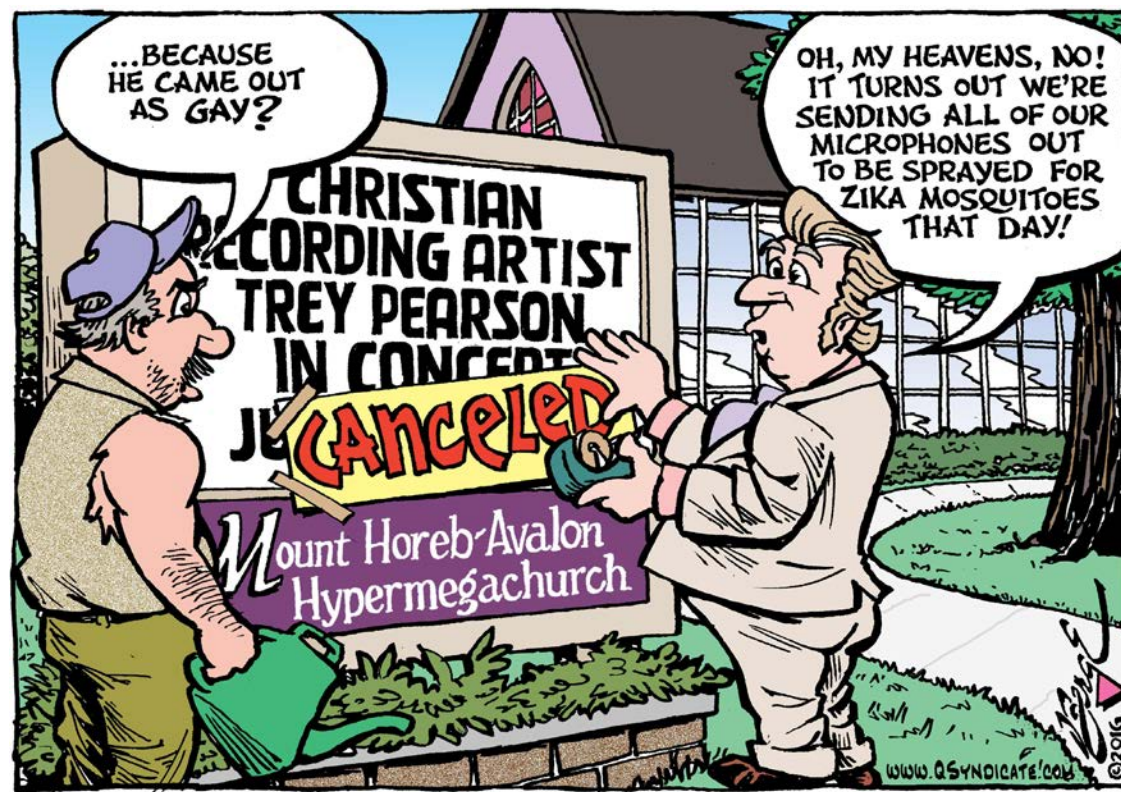
And, as a kid, the magical enjoyment through the mind's visual input to the inventive sounds of Saturday's weekly “Let's Pretend.”

I remember also seeing my first black-and-white TV set. The screen was no more than 8 inches by 10 inches, while the 6 foot by 5 foot console that housed it took up most of the corner of my landlady's living room. (Gay note in passing: I had my first “crush” on a regular of the 1948 weekly “Paul Whiteman Show.” Whiteman was a popular band leader.)

Today's smartphone has made brainiacs of us all. Ask and ye shall receive! Whatever info your Global Positioning System-programmed, curious little minds beg to know. Google, Yahoo, Wikipedia will give you instant knowledge. What you do with it is your own damn business. Just don't get caught with your panic down.

And, whatever you do – for heaven's sake, and your own sanity – don't misplace or lose your cellphone. Your keys. Or your wallet. (Your intellectual virginity is optional.)

Charles@pridesource.com



BY STEPHANIE WHITE

From Protest to Politics

Viewpoint

In 1965, gay civil rights leader Bayard Rustin wrote an essay that appeared in the February issue of Commentary Magazine, “From Protest to Politics.” In it, he noted the significance and promise of the civil rights movement's shift in strategy from a focus on survival and full access to American society, to one that could tackle deeper systemic issues.

“Already Southern demonstrators had recognized that the most effective way to strike at the police brutality they suffered from was by getting rid of the local sheriff – and that meant political action...”

“... the civil rights movement is evolving from a protest movement into a full-fledged social movement – an evolution calling its very name into question. It is now concerned not merely with removing the barriers to full opportunity but with achieving the fact of equality. From sit-ins and freedom rides we have gone into rent strikes, boycotts, community organization and political action.”

This shift from outside resistance to moving inside the system in order to shape the levers of power is also

occurring in Michigan's movement for LGBTQ rights – and has been for some time. You can see the fruits of those decades of labor in the existence and leadership of our openly gay lawmakers, the inclusion of our issues in discussions of public policy from the president on down, and in the funding streams that support our health and community needs.

One place where that shift is particularly clear is at our Pride celebrations. What began as a dangerous and defiant exercise in the right to just be visible and to exist without violence is now largely a show of social and political clout. Where once people were afraid to be seen and recognized, we now walk alongside community leaders and lawmakers who regard our events as “must attend.”

For the segment of our community that is lucky enough to live fairly free and openly, we may not feel that we need a Pride celebration in the same way we did earlier in our lives. For many of us now, it is an opportunity to visit with friends, reconnect with our community, and to remember where we've come from and how far we have yet to go.

And that distance we still have to travel makes our Pride celebrations as relevant as ever. With lawmakers in Lansing blocking passage of bills that would outlaw discrimination against us, and some even introducing farther-

reaching discriminatory measures, our resistance to being silenced is still an important show of strength. Even more importantly, with key parts of our community under physical attack and daily vilification in the media, our visibility is clearly still a dangerous act of defiance. For those of us who face that risk, this is an opportunity to strengthen ourselves for the future fights.

And, for all of us, the ritual of coming together, standing in solidarity, building and affirming our community gives us a kind of oxygen that we need. Looking forward to this weekend's Motor City Pride, I can't wait to breathe in that sense of community and to revel in our growth and evolution.

As an indicator of that evolution, this year Motor City Pride is welcoming Gretchen Whitmer as our Grand Marshal. A former state Senator and the Minority Leader for the Senate Democratic Caucus, Gretchen has long been an ally and fierce champion of our rights. She, like so many others, recognizes the LGBTQ community's shift from protest to politics and is welcoming us to the arena. With so much work left undone, it's great to have the power that political action can bring to our fight to win full, legal and lived equality. I look forward to seeing you all at Pride.

Stephanie White is the executive director for Equality Michigan.



Happy Pride Month

BY KEITH ORR

Happy Pride Month. I am a proud gay man. I hope you find Pride in your queer identity. Pride in our queer identity is important.

We are different in ways other than our sexual partners. There is a reason our community is at the vanguard of popular culture. The feminist movement's agenda has always been pushed by the lesbian community. The entire post World War II literary movement was arguably shaped by gay and lesbian authors. The direction of classical music was led by Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein.

I have been writing and talking about the genesis of creative thought since my high school valedictory address, but I still can't tell you why our community has its own culture. I can tell you we have a unique and diverse culture which we should celebrate year-round.

We have a lot to be proud of as members of the LGBT community. June 26 is the first anniversary of the Supreme Court's Marriage Equality Decision. A branch of the U.S. Military now has an openly gay leader, Eric Fanning, as Secretary of the Army. Gay musicians and actors are discovering they can be out and still practice their art and be appreciated by a wide fan base. Unions are protecting LGBT citizens in the workplace. We have a president who has evolved into a champion of our causes, most recently standing up for transgender students across the nation.

While we can, and should, be proud of these accomplishments, we have a long way to go. Marriage Equality doesn't help the homeless trans woman whose life is in danger every night. The repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell doesn't help the gay middle school kid whose life is filled with relentless bullying. It's easy to be full of the spirit of Pride Month while you are dancing in Hart Plaza this weekend. Our greater challenge is to remember our Pride when we aren't surrounded by other queers.

Can a lesbian talk to her co-workers on Monday morning about her weekend up north with the girlfriend? Can a gay man talk about going to the Tigers game with his husband? Can a trans woman go to a reunion of her naval submarine shipmates, from an era when women weren't allowed on submarines? These are tests of our LGBT Pride.

Does dancing your ass off help the homeless trans woman or the bullied kid? I think the answer is "yes." Being around other queer folk is the way we become confident enough that we can project our Pride in parts of our life which are not as affirming.

Straight people have their life affirmed every day in movies, television, newspapers, music, in their families, and in their workplace. We need spaces which affirm our lives. There aren't many

Viewpoint

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such spaces. Community centers, bookstores and bars make up the majority of our safe spaces. There aren't a lot of community centers. There aren't many bookstores. And bars aren't an option for everyone. One month each year we get "pop up safe spaces." Michigan has Pride festivals all over the state. Whether it is in Marquette or Detroit, Grand Rapids or Ferndale, Traverse City or Kalamazoo, we can be proud of our diversity.

Again, I am a proud gay man. I am also a Michigander. It is less easy to be proud to be a Michigander in these challenging times. As we celebrate the one year anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality, we must not forget that the suit was vigorously opposed by Gov. Rick Snyder and Attorney General Bill Schuette.

As we watch the return of property values following the great collapse of 2008, we cannot forget that Michigan still allows housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The economic recovery is slowly adding jobs. Unless you belong to a union, those jobs are not protected if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. These protections should be enshrined in Michigan's civil rights act, known as the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. While we suffer discrimination in the workplace and the marketplace, our Legislature wants to enshrine discrimination into law with Religious Freedom Acts. Hateful bathroom bills are being proposed.

Perhaps we need a "Republican Legislators Pride Month" so they can learn how to create law and policy they can be proud of. I don't see this happening, so we have to kick them out so we can have a Legislature we can be proud of. Pride Festivals are fun. Just as important as the fun is the energy, activism and pride we take home with us from those festivals.

We need pride not only in ourselves, but in the width and breadth of our community. We need to celebrate our diversity and channel our community's vast resources to effecting change in our home state. I want all of us to be able to say, "I am a proud member of the LGBT Community." I also want us to be able to say, "I am a proud citizen of the state of Michigan."

Keith Orr is an activist, musician and proprietor of Common Language Bookstore in Ann Arbor with his husband, Martin Contreras.

Creep of the Week

Tim Wildmon

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Happy Pride Month, everybody! Or as right-wingers like to call it, End Times.



Tim Wildmon

As you may know, President Obama has once again issued an official proclamation that June is Pride Month and that for 30 glorious days all flags shall be rainbow, all marriages shall be gay, and only

transgender people will be allowed to use public restrooms.

Alas, not everybody's happy about that. Take American Family Association President Tim Wildmon, for example. He's, like, totally grossed out by Obama's support for LGBT people. So grossed out, in fact, that he and a couple of his buddies, AFA Public Policy Analyst Abe Hamilton III and AFA Executive Vice-President Ed Vitagliano, filmed a little gripe fest video.

The video's shot in what appears to be the AFA break room. It's especially cute that the video identifies the subjects as Abe, Tim and Ed, as if they're just three regular joes shooting the shit in their polo shirts and Dockers next to an enormous coffee grinder that looks like it was stolen from a Trader Joe's.

"Well, it's June. So it's LGBT Pride Month all over America, maybe all over the world, I'm not sure," Wildmon begins the conversation.

Hamilton, standing to the left and holding a copy of what is presumed to be Obama's Proclamation declaring June LGBT Pride Month, points out that Obama has been throwing June LGBT wolves ever since 2009.

Vitagliano then chimes in that this whole thing is "pure politics."

"In this proclamation the president states ... that you should not be fired for who you are or who you love," Vitagliano says. "I would like to see the president also add, 'You also should not be fired for what you believe.' Because the only ones I know that are getting fired in this country in 2016 are Christians because they oppose that proclamation and the ideas behind it."

Exactly. Christians can hardly hold a job at all in America. It's an epidemic.

Why can't we return to the kinder, gentler days when people could tell gays to go straight to Hell out of sincerely held religious beliefs? North Carolina knows what I'm talkin' about.

"You know one of the real ironies of this proclamation is the president here cites the need for more funding for HIV/AIDS," Wildmon says. "But, unlike Michelle Obama, who advocates that children stay off the sodas, he doesn't advocate behavior change. When it comes to homosexual behavior effecting

Why can't we return to the kinder, gentler days when people could tell gays to go straight to Hell out of sincerely held religious beliefs?

your health, why doesn't he say, 'Stop doing what you're doing and you won't get AIDS?'"

I think we all know that "doing what you're doing" means anal sex, which Wildmon, who apparently didn't get the memo that HIV/AIDS isn't something only homos get, and his friends are obsessed with talking about.

Also, I must've missed the part of the proclamation that says, "Everybody bear back without condoms, woo hoo!"

Last time I checked, the president appointed the head of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Tom Frieden, in 2009. The CDC website has a very comprehensive section about HIV/AIDS including a Risk Reduction Tool that allows users to investigate the risks of various sex acts whether their partner is HIV+ or HIV- and whether a condom is being used.

The site minces no words in a section for men who have sex with men: "Anal sex is the riskiest type of sex for getting or transmitting HIV." The CDC is hardly advocating unsafe sex.

That said, I have a feeling that Wildmon and his pals are not aware of the CDC site. If they were they'd be complaining that Obama's promoting sexual debauchery simply by acknowledging that there exist men who have sex with men. No doubt any tax payer money being spent on keeping homos from dying goes against their "sincerely held religious beliefs."

Bigotry Puts a Heavy Burden on Transgender Youth

BY AMY LYNN SMITH

It's hard enough being in high school, no matter who you are. Figuring yourself out is part of the experience of growing up, and it's not easy for anyone.

It's even more challenging for young people who might be outside the mainstream in some way – which still, sadly, includes being LGBT. It's especially difficult being a young person who is transgender, when far too many people just don't understand what that means.

Now consider that transgender people of all ages are caught up in the backlash following the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage. Transgender people are increasingly the target of those who oppose LGBT equality. Look no further than the anti-LGBT law passed in North Carolina to see how that's playing out.

Even worse, Michigan's trans youth are under attack. After the State Board of Education issued draft guidance to make schools safer and more supportive for LGBTQ students, there has been fierce and ugly pushback, including the introduction of a so-called bathroom bill by state Sen. Tom Casperson. This legislation forces transgender students to out themselves and use the restroom that matches the gender they were assigned at birth, even if it conflicts with the gender they identify with and present to the world.

It seems unlikely that Casperson has given a single thought to the painful burden this would place on transgender youth, like 17-year-old Hunter Keith, who came out as transgender in eighth grade. His family has been completely accepting as has everyone at his school, Frankel Jewish Academy in West Bloomfield.

Keith knows how fortunate he is not to have to struggle with the decision of which bathroom is okay for him to use – which also means deciding which bathroom will protect him from harassment or even violence. When a young man goes into the girls' room at a typical high school, there could be trouble. That's something Keith doesn't have to face.

"I use a unisex bathroom at school because that's the most comfortable for me," he explains. "But I have gone in the guys' bathroom at school and no one has said anything."

Keith says that if he were forced to use the girls' restroom at school, he'd be angry. "I'd probably just hold it all day," he says.



Coleen Young, whose daughter, Heather, came out as transgender when she was 26 after struggling with her gender identity for years, encourages parents of transgender children to be supportive.

“There’s a fear that comes from no one knowing who you are. By having such a big secret, you’re one of the most vulnerable kids in school. So it’s hard to concentrate on formulas or remember what those people did back in 1792 when the most important thing in life is being afraid.”

- Reid Ellefson-Frank, age 17



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Hunter Keith

For Reid Ellefson-Frank, using the restroom was just part of the discomfort he felt at a Michigan school that wasn't affirming of LGBTQ students.

"I didn't pass well at the beginning of my transition, so it was keep your head down and get out of there as fast as you can," says the 17-year-old young man. "There was the constant sense of fear – whatever I was doing, whoever I was with or wherever I was – there's a fear that comes from no one knowing who you are. By having such a big secret, you're one of the most vulnerable kids in school. So it's hard to concentrate on formulas or remember what those people did back in 1792 when the most important thing in life is being afraid."

To place Ellefson-Frank in a more supportive learning environment, his parents enrolled him in Bard College at Simon's Rock in Massachusetts, a boarding school for academically advanced 11th and 12th grade students.

Not every young transgender person has the kind of accepting family these teens have, and that's part of the problem. With no one at home or at school to turn to – or a place where they can feel safe – transgender youth are at risk of not only violence, but emotional duress.

"Trans people are successful with their transition and make it if they have supportive parents," says Coleen Young, whose daughter, Heather, came out as transgender when she was 26 after struggling with her gender identity for years. "The 40 percent rate of trans people that have attempted suicide breaks my heart. It's so important for parents to support their kids. It does so much to make their kids happy and successful."

Young's protective nature, as both a mother and a retired teacher, has long motivated her to help create safe spaces for LGBTQ youth.

"If you haven't been around trans people it can be hard to understand," Young says. "So I'd urge anyone who doesn't understand to talk to transgender people. Let them tell their story. Even if you don't understand or agree, they still deserve the respect any other individual deserves."

The interviews for this story were originally conducted for an ongoing series on the lives of transgender people at Eclectablog.com.



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Presidential Proclamation for LGBT Pride Month

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WASHINGTON D.C. – Since our founding, America has advanced on an unending path toward becoming a more perfect Union. This journey, led by forward-thinking individuals who have set their sights on reaching for a brighter tomorrow, has never been easy or smooth. The fight for dignity and equality for LGBT people is reflected in the tireless dedication of advocates and allies who strive to forge a more inclusive society. They have spurred sweeping progress by changing hearts and minds and by demanding equal treatment -- under our laws, from our courts, and in our politics. This month, we recognize all they have done to bring us to this point, and we recommit to bending the arc of our Nation toward justice.

Last year's landmark Supreme Court decision guaranteeing marriage equality in all 50 States was a historic victory for LGBT Americans, ensuring dignity for same-sex couples and greater equality across State lines. For every partnership that was not previously recognized under the law and for every American who was denied their basic civil rights, this monumental ruling instilled newfound hope, affirming the belief that we are all more free when we are treated as equals.

LGBT individuals deserve to know their country stands beside them. That is why my Administration is striving to better understand the needs of LGBT adults and to provide affordable, welcoming and supportive housing to aging LGBT Americans. It is also why we oppose subjecting minors to the harmful practice of conversion therapy, and why we are continuing to promote equality and foster safe and supportive learning environments for all students. We remain committed to addressing health disparities in the LGBT community -- gay and bisexual men and transgender women of color are at a particularly high risk for HIV, and we have worked to strengthen our National HIV/AIDS Strategy to reduce new infections, increase access to care and improve health outcomes for people living with HIV.

Despite the extraordinary progress of the past few years, LGBT Americans still face discrimination simply for being who they are. I signed an Executive Order in 2014 that prohibits discrimination against Federal employees and contractors on the basis of

sexual orientation or gender identity. I urge the Congress to enact legislation that builds upon the progress we have made, because no one should live in fear of losing their job simply because of who they are or who they love. And our commitment to combatting discrimination against the LGBT community does not stop at our borders.

Advancing the fair treatment of all people has long been a cornerstone of American diplomacy, and we have made defending and promoting the human rights of LGBT individuals a priority in our engagement across the globe. In line with America's commitment to the notion that all people should be treated fairly and with respect, champions of this cause at home and abroad are upholding the simple truth that LGBT rights are human rights.

There remains much work to do to extend the promise of our country to every American, but because of the acts of courage of the millions who came out and spoke out to demand justice and of those who quietly toiled and pushed for progress, our Nation has made great strides in recognizing what these brave individuals long knew to be true in their hearts -- that love is love and that no person should be judged by anything but the content of their character. During Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, as Americans wave their flags of pride high and march boldly forward in parades and demonstrations, let us celebrate how far we have come and reaffirm our steadfast belief in the equal dignity of all Americans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2016 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. I call upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.

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- A woman does not dress or talk in a feminine manner.
- A man dresses in an effeminate manner or enjoys a pastime (like crocheting) that is associated with women.
- A female employee dates women instead of men.
- A male employee plans to marry a man.
- An employee is planning or has made a gender transition from female to male or male to female.

WHO IS PROTECTED?
All private sector and state/local government employers with at least 15 employees.

Examples of sex discrimination involving sexual orientation include:

- Denying an employee a promotion because he is gay or straight
- Discriminating in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, such as by providing a lower salary to an employee because of sexual orientation, or denying spousal health insurance benefits to a female employee because her legal spouse is a woman, while providing spousal health insurance to a male employee whose legal spouse is a woman.
- Harassing an employee because of his or her sexual orientation, for example, by derogatory terms, sexually oriented comments, or disparaging remarks for associating with a person of the same or opposite sex.

HOW DO I REPORT WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION?
Please contact Lolita Davis, Enforcement Supervisor and Outreach & Training Coordinator at (313) 226-3783 or Lolita.davis@eeoc.gov
EEOC will investigate complaints of employment discrimination, harassment and retaliation and may act to stop it and seek remedies on your behalf for free. Visit www.eeoc.gov to find out more about laws against employment discrimination.

The anti-discrimination laws give you a limited amount of time to file a charge of discrimination. In general, you need to file a charge within 300 calendar days from the day the discrimination took place. Regardless of how much time you have to file, it is best to file as soon as you have decided that is what you would like to do.

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Why Affirmations? Erspamer Discusses the Future of Michigan's Largest LGBT Center

BY AJ TRAGER

FERNDALE – Seven months ago, Affirmations – Michigan's largest LGBT community center – announced the appointment of Susan Erspamer as the new executive director and leader of the organization. At the time of the announcement, Frank Aiello, Affirmations board president, said Erspamer “has the breadth and depth of experience that Affirmations needs in its next leader.” But many within the community were unsure about Erspamer's leadership as she faced criticism for not having strong ties to the local LGBT community.

So, who is she? And why did she choose Affirmations?

Erspamer came out in college, but she remembers navigating early romantic experiences as a senior at Stevenson High School in Livonia in the '80s. Thirty years ago it was uncommon to discuss what it meant to be lesbian or gay, and there certainly wasn't an Affirmations to help bring LGBT people together. Many LGBT brothers and sisters had to go it alone, and Erspamer was one of them.

Much like other LGBT individuals, she tried to “fix” her sexuality by dating men and thought that it was just a matter of finding the right one. Turns out it's not, and shortly after she stopped.

“While in college I had cans and bottles thrown at me. I was on my own for all of it. That was one of the reasons for ‘why Affirmations’. I don't want other kids to go through that,” she told BTL.

For the past 21 years Erspamer has worked as an executive in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Prior to joining Affirmations she served as the vice president of chapter programs at Alzheimer's Association-Greater Michigan Chapter, which has a \$5 million budget and 65 employees. During her tenure she was instrumental in strategic planning, reorganization, diversification of revenue streams and outcome-based programs. She also managed grant funding implementation.

Affirmations

It seemed like a tsunami had run over



Susan Erspamer, executive director of Affirmations, sits in the board meeting room. Erspamer is a Michigan native and has spent 21 years as an executive in the profit and nonprofit sectors. She is a wife and mother of two. BTL Photo: AJ Trager

It seemed like a tsunami had run over Affirmations at the end of 2015.

Affirmations at the end of 2015. Eight months before Erspamer took the helm the board hired Darrious Hilmon to serve as executive director, but Hilmon abruptly left the organization in October without much of an explanation. With his departure went some of the senior staff who he had hired. The leadership team at Affirmations was left small, but definitely committed.

“The staff that stayed, the program staff, they're just exceptional. They stayed because of the mission and they do a great job,” Erspamer said. “When the other staff left, it gave me an opportunity to look at what we

needed and where we needed to go.”

Starting off her tenure short on staff, Erspamer quickly began restructuring the organization, adding in stability via employees. However, until she could hire Katie Koch as director of development and Ryan Fowler as the office and facility coordinator, Erspamer helped cover many responsibilities at Affirmations including cleaning overflowing toilets and other day-to-day responsibilities.

“So out of those challenges was a silver lining that I got to do all sorts of different job

See Affirmations, page 22

“ We are looking at who we are bringing into the center. We want to bring in people for more than just needs-based programming. That's some of the feedback I've heard, too, that the center needs to have a purpose beyond individuals needing assistance.”

– Susan Erspamer



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"There really is a difference"

► Affirmations

Continued from p. 20

functions here. I'm able to understand the organization – what it takes to run it on all levels from first hand experience,” Erspamer said.

She has one last hire – the accounting and finance position. Until she can find the right person for the job, the center has hired a temp staff member to cover those responsibilities. According to Erspamer Affirmations has set up a solid grant and foundation schedule for the remainder of 2016 and is looking ahead to 2017.

Getting Acclimated

For the 2016 Spring Bash celebration, an annual Affirmations fundraiser, Erspamer decided to focus her comments on the past, present and future. “You have to know where you’ve been and embrace it,” she said. “We know where we are and what we’re doing, but our planning has to involve the future. And that’s what I love doing. I like being in the moment, but my head is already in 2017.”

In order to get more acclimated with the political and social climate affecting LGBT individuals in Metro Detroit and to better understand the history of Affirmations,

Erspamer met with many the community who have been longtime activists and leaders. She has made it a point to speak with volunteers, past and present supporters, current and former board members, and a few former staff members. She’s focused on engaging in conversations and has had in-depth meetings

Just a few months after she took the helm, a community meeting was held at Affirmations to discuss issues with transparency and community concern over the direction the center was taking.

with all of Affirmations’ community partners including Ruth Ellis Center, LGBT Detroit and Equality Michigan. While Erspamer has met with many people, she said she still hasn’t reached everybody.

Just a few months after she took the helm, a community meeting was held at Affirmations to discuss issues with transparency and community concern over the direction the center was taking.

“I felt really good after that community meeting because I heard what the community wants. I know that there was a lot of build up to it. I was a little nervous, but I was

excited about it because all these people came to Affirmations because they care about Affirmations,” Erspamer said.

The community meeting was tense. Over the course of the past seven months Erspamer has discovered how the passion for the center may differ from the passion for other

organizations.

“This passion that we feel – that I feel and have experienced – could be interpreted as negative but like I said, it’s positive because there is care about the center, about one another and what the focus should be,” she said.

Affirmations provides a safe environment for LGBT and ally folks to come and relax while enjoying the many services the center has to offer. Beyond being a safe space, the center is committed to providing educational, entertainment-based and intersectional programming for all ages and LGBT identities.

Affirmations provides opportunities for education at the center, but has plans to extend that coverage outside the center walls.

In the upcoming year Erspamer said the center will focus on expanding its services for LGBT older adults by collaborating with SAGE Metro Detroit. During that time Erspamer wants the center to develop a drop-in center for older adults and expand social and education programs including an LGBT 101 “learning lab” for general education on LGBT identities.

“We are looking at who we are bringing into the center. We want to bring in people for more than just needs-based programming. That’s some of the feedback I’ve heard, too, that the center needs to have a purpose beyond individuals needing assistance. That’s very important, but what else can we do for individuals that want to come to the center? We have to come up with a reason for them to come,” Erspamer told BTL.

Affirmations has an annual budget of \$942,388. A current list of staff and board members can be found on the website www.goaffirmations.org as well as the organization’s by-laws.

The next community meeting is expected to take place at the end of June.

Learn more at www.goaffirmations.org



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LIVE NATION



Motor City Pride Returns to Downtown Detroit this Weekend

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's that time of year again. The rainbow flag will be waving high over Hart Plaza when Motor City Pride comes to downtown Detroit June 11-12. The festival will be open Saturday from 1-8 p.m. and Sunday from noon-7.

"What I enjoy most is seeing how the festival brings a diverse group of individuals together to celebrate each other while working for equality for everyone in Michigan," said Motor City Pride Chair David Wait. "The need to come together is just as important this year with the legislation that is happening around the country and the push back that the State Board of Education is getting for establishing equal protections for students in our schools."

Michael Gipson, deputy director of Equality Michigan, the agency that produces Motor City Pride, agreed.

"While I know some people think that Prides are passe or no longer feel a need to have them, there's still very much a need to show our political power and to show our solidarity and unity as a movement to those who would deny us our rights - and to each other."

It's also a way for Equality Michigan to reach the community directly, Gibson said.

"What I appreciate about Motor City Pride is the opportunity to engage our constituents about what it is that Equality Michigan is doing. I think it's an opportunity to clarify what our policy priorities are and what we're doing on the ground and it's also an opportunity to register people to vote. And this year we definitely need everybody registered and voting. So I'm excited about those aspects of Motor City Pride."

Sunday Pride Parade

One highlight of the weekend is the Pride parade, which takes place Sunday at noon. The parade starts at the corner of Fort and Griswold Streets and proceeds to Cobo Center and then back to Hart Plaza.

"Each year I look forward to the parade the most," said Wait. "It moves me to see how it brings so many people together to show their support for the movement. The lineup continues to grow with new groups, organizations and companies that support our quest for equality."

This year's grand marshal is scheduled

to be former Michigan Senate Minority Leader Gretchen Whitmer, who many say is likely to run for governor in 2018. Whitmer was a member of the Michigan House of Representatives from 2000 to 2006. She became a member of the State Senate in March 2006 replacing Virg Bernero who was elected Mayor of Lansing. In 2010, Whitmer was chosen by her colleagues to be the senate Democratic leader. Most recently, Whitmer was selected to replace Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunning III who was forced to resign after being arrested on prostitution charges.

Wait said the parade helps attract allies to the cause of LGBT equality.

"We have found that this is one of the best ways to build a connection with our allied community," he said. "This will be the fifth year that we have brought the parade back. Both the participation and audience has grown each year. I have seen several parade applications from new groups and companies that we'll be adding to this year's parade lineup."

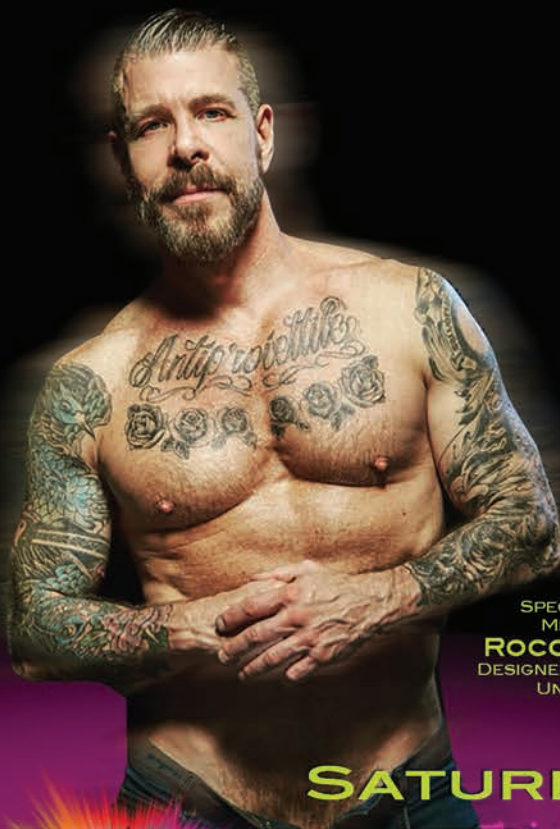
Many undoubtedly come to Motor City Pride for the entertainment. Over 200 entertainers will perform on five different stages. Among

them are Kim Chi, a runner-up on the just-ended season eight of RuPaul's Drag Race, Adore Delano, who made the top three on season six and Jeffery Austin who finished in fourth place last year on The Voice. Other entertainers include Johnathan Celestin, a Washington, DC-based vocalist who has been featured in the touring company of several hit Broadway shows, R&B singer Shadina, Ann Arbor based vocalist and trans activist Jaimie Wilson, out country singer Steve Grand, dance duo Jason Maek & Zaena, Detroit soul singer Alise King, Toledo's own Sam Tolson and the Sing OUT Detroit chorus.

"Just as we have a diverse community with a variety of interests, we do not bring just one headliner, we bring in a variety of acts - both national and local - that will appeal to the many different interests of the LGBT community," said Wait. "The entertainment committee has been working hard to bring together a great mix of entertainers to perform at the festival."

For more information on Motor City Pride, visit www.motorcitypride.org.

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Singer Seeks to Deliver a 'Message of Encouragement' During Motor City Pride



BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Johnathan Celestin loves performing at Pride festivals.

"It's always big energy and lots of love," said the Washington, D.C.-based singer. "I think a lot of time people come to Prides to celebrate. It's a celebration and that's important. But a large part of my show is that I aim to impart to people a message of encouragement. There are a lot of people going through a lot of things. So I try to make sure while I'm there I impart some kind of encouragement. I want to leave people with that. I want people to remember how I made them feel."

Born and raised in Virginia, Celestin, like a lot of singers, came up in the church. "I came from a religious household growing up," he recalled. "My father was predominantly the spearhead behind that whole experience. We grew up going to church quite often during the week. So it's always been a part of me. I think I'm more spiritual than religious, like 99 percent of the rest of millennials. I think there will always be things that I will carry with me from being a church boy."

From an early age, Celestin was not only singing but playing the piano as well. He wrote his first instrumental when he was just 9 years old. "I likened myself to be a pianist when I was younger," Celestin said. "It was like a minute and a half song I wrote sitting at the piano. It was pretty dark and almost tragic. But it was like me materializing the pain that I was going through at that time as a 9-year-old boy. My parents had just separated. So music had always been that therapeutic outlet for me. I've always used music to assuage any woes I've been through."

At 20, Celestin moved to New York with \$200 in his pocket and a dream in his heart. He lived in a hostel in Harlem rent-free in exchange for cleaning up the place. He worked retail while he auditioned for Broadway shows, and eventually made it into a couple of national tours for shows such as "Smokey Joe's Café" and "5 Guys Named Moe."

He also did commercial jingles for national brands such as McDonalds, Old Navy and Target. "I like doing jingles because I get to stretch my vocal

vocabulary and my delivery," said Celestin. "I could be singing a Top 40 song and then I could be crooning a jazz song in the next submission. It keeps me on my toes and keeps me trying new things."

After about six years in the city, Celestin went back to school, studying political science with a concentration in international relations at prestigious Columbia University. It was while at Columbia that he released his first EP, titled "... and then the rolling stone fell in love..." in 2012.

"I had never felt like I had a home," Celestin said, explaining the title. "Not in a negative sense, like I was homeless, but I always felt I was able to go wherever a gig took me. I toured a lot with theater shows and I never felt beholden to any one place. I was always a bit of a rolling stone. And my father, ironically enough, was very much a rolling stone. His father, too. So it was almost generational. Funny enough, very much in the same way his story probably unfolded, I fell in love and when I fell in love it was the first time I felt I had a home. I wanted to be somewhere."

Eventually, Celestin took a day job and put music on the back burner for few years. But now he's back and ready to refocus on touching people through song. "My musical style is pretty open right now," said Celestin. "It's very R&B-pop, very visceral of all music, honest, vocal heavy. My music for the most part showcases my vocals. But I'm actually looking to open up my palette in terms of the type of music I'm doing. My new single, which is coming out in a month or so, is called 'Quicksand.' It has small elements of EDM (electronic dance music) in it. I'm trying to fuse more sounds together."

After "Quicksand," Celestin plans to release two more singles before the year's end and plans an entire album to follow. And he's glad to have reconnected with what he feels is his purpose. "Life is beautiful and complex and at the risk of sounding cliché, we're all put here for a reason and a purpose," he said. "It's important that you follow that purpose and never silence your inner voice. Whether it's in a relationship or a professional move, never silence that voice. Always take it seriously."

Johnathan Celestin will be performing at Motor City Pride www.motorcitypride.org on the Pride Stage at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, June 11.



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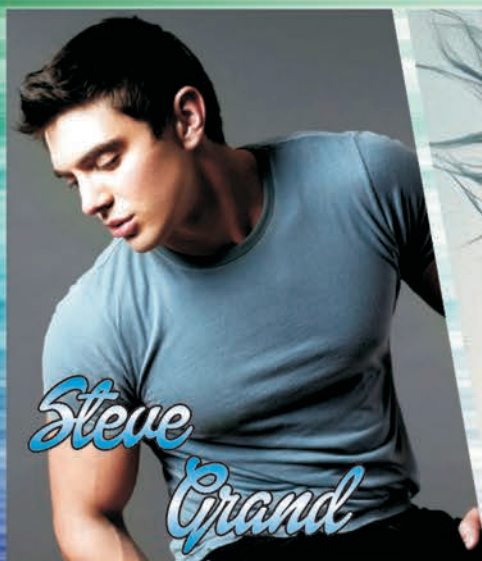
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- 2:30 p.m. SYNCZ Crew & Friends
- 3:30 p.m. Shadina
- 4:30 p.m. Johnathan Celestin
- 5:30 p.m. Motor City Drag Review featuring Sabin
- 5:45 p.m. Kim Chi
- 6:15 p.m. Adore Delano
- 7:00 p.m. Motor City Drag Review featuring Sabin

Sunday, June 12

- 12:30 p.m. Jason Michael
- 1:30 p.m. Sing OUT Detroit
- 2:00 p.m. Motor City Drag Review
w/ Mr & Miss Motor City Pride 2016
- 3:15 p.m. Sam Tolson
- 4:00 p.m. Alise King
- 4:45 p.m. Jason Maek & Zaena
- 5:30 p.m. Steve Grand
- 6:15 p.m. Jeffrey Austin

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- 3:15 p.m. Poetry/ Spoken Word
Averett Robey
Tiran Burrell
Nadine Marshall
Jason B. Crawford
- 4:00 p.m. March of the Ant
- 5:00 p.m. Poetry/ Spoken Word
Nice Demere
Damon "Magic" F
Intellect (Detroit F
J. Anthony Trimbl

5:45 p.m. Young Kaii

6:30 p.m. Markita Moore

Sunday, June 12

- 1:00 p.m. Sandy Mulligan and
- 2:00 p.m. Beautiful Showcase
- 3:30 p.m. Ricky Simone
- 4:30 p.m. RayGiftedKeys
- 5:30 p.m. Sandra Valls

THE UNDERGROUND

Saturday, June 11

- 1:00 p.m. MASDAFAN
- 2:00 p.m. DJ Jason M
- 3:30 p.m. DJ Digi Mar
- 5:00 p.m. DJ John Cr
- 6:30 p.m. DJ Jace

Sunday, June 12

- 1:00 p.m. MASDAFAN
- 2:00 p.m. DJ Selina S
- 3:30 p.m. DJ Marquis
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Sunday, June 12

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Michael Christian · Teddy · Kendall Harding
Emma Sapphire · Sir Walt · Monica Beverly Hillz
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Detroit Soul Singer Declares That Now is Her Moment

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's an age old story: Alise King got her start singing in church.

"When I was about 12, I discovered that I had a voice," said King, who grew up on Detroit's east side and graduated from Kettering High School. "Of course I started singing in the children's choir at church."

But by the time she was in the ninth grade, she had moved on to bigger things – and another church. "I wanted to explore going to a church other than with my family," said King, who switched to a friend's church. "I started singing in the choir and after about a month I was asked to direct the choir. So I started directing my first choir when I was 14 years old."

While still a teenager, King branched out and started singing secular music as well. "I've always loved secular music," she explained. "There was no transition between the two because I've always enjoyed music as a whole. I've never separated the two. Whatever feels good to me feels good to me. It's all in how you interpret it."

At 19, she joined her first band, the HTS



Alise King will be performing at 4 p.m. Sunday on the Pride Stage at Motor City Pride. Photo: PassionEyesPhotos.com

band, where she was befriended by another singer named Nita B. "I was kind of a tomboy," King said. "I have nine brothers. I was the girl who wore the flat shoes and the

“ I could write a song about a bird sitting in a tree – and I have. **”**

pants all the time. You wouldn't catch me in heels at all. Then I started going to these gigs and Nita said, 'You've got to dress the part and be a diva. So take that and define what diva means to you.' Not long after that she passed away, and I found out what diva meant to me. I define it as 'Divine Instrument Vocalizing Her Ability.'"

See King, page 32

Newcomer Sam Tolson in 'No Rush' to Sell Her Soul

Ohioan Seeks to Stay Authentic

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Sam Tolson is an oddity.

A native of Toledo, Ohio, she didn't grow up singing. Never sang in church. Never really sang anywhere in fact. Until, that is, the beginning of 2012 when she suddenly decided to make a YouTube video of herself singing "Fallin' for You" by Colbie Caillat.

"Honestly, I really never sang at all before that," said Tolson. "I never participated in choir or anything. Nobody could ever get me to sing. I was super shy. And then it just kind of happened. My whole family was shocked because I'm such a quiet person."

Not so quiet anymore. Since that initial video, Tolson has been taking music quite seriously, putting her songs up on iTunes and even producing music videos of them.

"I do a lot of writing," Tolson said. "I write all the time ... songs, stories, anything like that.



Sam Tolson will be performing at 3 p.m. Sunday on the Pride Stage at Motor City Pride.

I feel like that's what really got me into music. I had always been associated with people who did music. A lot of my friends were in bands and things like that. But honestly it was just

a very random thing that happened when I started singing."

Tolson cites The Weeknd and Ellie Goulding as her musical influences. "They are my favorites by far," she said. "I like The Weeknd for the R&B side of his stuff and Ellie for her lyrics."

Now booked on a summer tour of Pride festivals across the country, Tolson's path to reach this point hasn't always been easy. In January, a fire ravaged her home music studio. "Next to my house my dad has a garage," Tolson explained. "Back when I started music in 2012 we kind of revamped the inside and put all my music stuff out there. I was out there the night the fire happened at about 9 o'clock and then I ended up leaving to meet up with my girlfriend at the bar. Then my mom called me at about 2 a.m. crying. I could barely understand her. By the time I got home, everything was in flames. There was nothing left of it."

Undeterred, Tolson kept pressing on. Her latest single, "No Rush," was released just this week. "'No Rush,' which I co-

See Tolson, page 32



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► King

Continued from p. 31

Today, King has her own band and she plays all over town, including a recent gig as the opening act for musical legend George Clinton and Parliament Funk at MotorCity Casino Hotel's Sound Board. She is also working on her first EP, which she plans to call "In the Key of Soul."

"What people can expect from this EP is everything that I am, everything that I've been working for," promised King. "It took me a while to accept that I deserve the gigs or the opportunities that I was getting. The music business is very harsh, and if you don't look a certain way or have a certain body type they make you feel like you're not worthy. So it took me a while to get to that point. Now, with the people I have around me, my wife included, I've realized I deserved those opportunities."

A prolific songwriter, King has written more than 200 songs to date. "I love love, so I write a lot about love," she said. "I love positivity. I love anything that's uplifting. I love to make people smile, to encourage people. But I understand that sadness is a part of life as well so I'm a broad writer. I can write about anything. I could write a song about a bird sitting in a tree – and I

have. Inspiration comes in many forms and shapes and sizes and when it hits you, it hits you. I carry about a pen and a pad with me at all times."

So having written that much material, how will King possibly select the songs to include on her EP? "It depends on how I feel in the moment, what's going on in life," said King. "Some of the songs I've written I have not used and some I may never use. Just like when I walk into an event or a gig, I could have a complete set list of what I'm going to sing. But once I feel out the atmosphere, or feel out the people, that could change. So right now I have a list of songs I want on the EP, but I could go to the studio Tuesday and have a different feeling and change the songs. It's all about a feel."

As of now, King plans to release the song "My Moment" as her first single. "I feel that everyone has a time and I feel that right now, in this moment, I feel that this is my time," she said. "So with this EP I'm kind of baring my soul and everyone gets to see who Alise King is behind the music."

Alise King will be performing at 4 p.m. Sunday on the Pride Stage at Motor City Pride.

► Tolson

Continued from p. 31

wrote with Chris Curran, is the first song I actually wrote every part of and had a say in every little detail," said Tolson. "I'm super happy about it. It's definitely different for me."

Different, Tolson said, because it's full of sexual undertones – something that was challenging for her when it came time to shoot the video. "The guy that I wrote it with was like, 'If you're willing to make it sexual, go with it,'" Tolson recalled. "In a way it's kind of shitty because that's just how the music industry wants things to be. But at the same time, I have to do what I like. So instead of making it this huge unrealistic thing I created a storyline of spending a day with someone. I tried to make it a little more artistic. But the boundaries are pushed because there's a shower scene and it implies certain things.

"As a person, I'm not really like that," Tolson continued. "I'm very closed off, very quiet, very to myself. I'm very introverted. But I wanted to show I was growing as an artist and even as a person. My girlfriend probably wants to kill me. No, she's actually been great about it. My mom kind of hassled me a little bit. But that's her job."

Ready to debut her new song, Tolson said she is excited about playing Motor City Pride. "I love the people who come to Prides. The vibe there is just completely different from any other kind of show I've ever done. Everyone is just sweet and happy. That's my favorite part about Prides. I go and hang out for the day. I hang out with people who come up to me and have a drink with them. I just feel like with every other

show you can't really do that. They don't have that vibe."

Sam Tolson will be performing at 3 p.m. Sunday on the Pride Stage at Motor City Pride.

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Dance Premiere Helps Put Detroit on 'Worldwide Grid'

David Bowie Tribute to be Performed by Complexions Contemporary Ballet

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The New York Times called him a “person of relentless reinvention” and he was widely known as a musical chameleon. David Bowie transcended musical genres, fashion trends and cultural norms to become an iconic figure in music and, indeed, pop culture. Now, five months since his passing at age 69, the Music Hall has commissioned a tribute to Bowie to be performed by the New York-based Complexions Contemporary Ballet. The world premiere of this work will take place Saturday, June 18.

Complexions “is a perfect fit for what I wish for Detroit,” said Vince Paul, artistic director of the Music Hall. “I’ve brought the company in 10 times. We use the medium of dance to articulate that idea – that Detroit is ready for dance. I operate on a level of affecting change and I use the performing arts for affecting change ... With the Bowie project, this is a global artist that also affected change.”

Dwight Rhoden, the founding artistic director and resident choreographer of Complexions, claimed credit for conceptualizing the Bowie tribute. “I wanted to do a David Bowie tribute and because we were booked into the Music Hall and I know Vince very well, I went to him and said, ‘What do you think about being a part of the creation of this new work?’ He was already thinking about Bowie but he hadn’t come up with a project yet. So it was kind of a meeting of the minds.”

Rhoden said he is a longtime fan of Bowie’s. “I love so many things about who he was as an artist,” he said. “Up to his dying day he was creating. (Bowie’s last album was released a week before his death.) And I think that’s just remarkable. He was an artist who could create so many characters and personas. He was an artist who was genre bending. In terms of music, he did everything. I’m just attracted to all of that.”

Still in the process of creating the choreography for the tribute, Rhoden said he is enjoying the task. “I’m having a great time with it,” he said. “Bowie’s music is very multi-textural. So I’m looking at the lyrics, number one. I want to

service the lyrics. But also I want to bring a visual to the music in a way that has never hopefully been done before in a dance choreographically.”

The most difficult part of the process so far, said Rhoden, has been selecting the song list. “There are so many choices,” he said. “I

love note to Bowie in a way, the love of his work, the love of his spirit,” Rhoden said. “The range that this man had is just immense. And I’m hoping they take away my appreciation for that huge artistic range. Bowie is an artist who really defies categorization. I love an artist that you can’t put in a box, and Bowie is that kind of artist.”

Thanks to Bowie’s incredible fan base, news of the tribute is traveling across the world. “You can find articles about this commission in Pakistan and I kid you not,” said Paul. “It absolutely has gone global. It would take you hours to get through all the links because the world seems to have a higher respect for Detroit as a cultural capital than we have of ourselves.”

Paul said that’s something he hopes to help change. “I want to keep Detroit on the worldwide grid,” he said. “And this commission is helpful in reminding the world that Detroit is an artistic place. It’s a creative place. It’s a place where we’re constantly inventing and evolving the performing arts.”

The world premiere takes place June 18 at the Music Hall, 350 Madison St., Detroit. Visit musichall.org or call 313-887-8500.

“It’s kind of a love note to Bowie in a way, the love of his work, the love of his spirit. The range that this man had is just immense. And I’m hoping they take away my appreciation for that huge artistic range. Bowie is an artist who really defies categorization. I love an artist that you can’t put in a box, and Bowie is that kind of artist.”

– Dwight Rhoden, the founding artistic director and resident choreographer of Complexions.



think the biggest challenge is trying to string together a certain number of his songs in a 35 to 40-minute time frame and really still be able to find that artistic arc.”

Though difficult to verbalize, Rhoden attempted to explain how he matches movement to music. “Say I’m working on ‘Moonage Daydream’ or ‘Lazarus,’” Rhoden started. “I go in with a feeling inside. I don’t turn the music on immediately. I start to work through movement that I think will work with the music and kind of conjure up images that are at the forefront of the music I’m working on.”

“I choreograph large, long phrases of movement then I kind of etch on it,” Rhoden continued. “The musicality of the movement is everything and everyone hears musicality. So then you have to get your dancers, your people, to hear it the way you want it to be seen through the movement.”

Though the audience is likely to be composed largely of Bowie fans, Rhoden said he hopes attendees will feel even more fondly towards Bowie by the time they leave. “It’s kind of a

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The Ringwald: Something Else to Feel Pride In

Gay Play Series returns June 17-27

BY AMY J. PARRENT

It's Pride Month, and time to celebrate with – what else – some theater. Lucky for everyone, The Ringwald Theatre has rolled a seven – the seventh annual installment of the Gay Play Series (aka GPS). GPS offers entertainment from B to B (La Streisand to Midler), including second runs of popular past shows and two nights of one-acts by some of Michigan's best playwrights.

“We began the Gay Play Series in 2010 and have done it every prideful June since,” said media director Brandy Joe Plambeck. “Although we often do gay-themed productions, we wanted to have a festival highlighting new gay works as well. Many of the local theaters have a play festival of some nature. We wanted to put our own Ringwald twist on it.”

The two weekends of GPS kick off Friday, June 17 with Richard Payton resurrecting his Blanchette Deveraux character (from “Thank You for Being a Friend – The Unauthorized Golden Girls Musical”) to host an evening of Golden Girls Trivia.

And what is the enduring appeal of “The Golden Girls” anyway? Plambeck said, “I think that the TV show is at core about a group of friends who have become one another's family. I think that a lot of gay men can relate to that. It is very much a precursor to 'Sex in the City' with a group of gals who each represent a different type of personality – the wise one, the slutty one, the naive one, the grouch – and we like watching them relate to one another as well as the men who come in and out of their lives.”

Productions manager Dyan Bailey said “The Golden Girls” was always an advocate for the LGBT community, tackling a lot of topics that other mainstream shows (especially in the '80s and '90s) wouldn't approach. “The comedy is so strong, it crosses generations and genders,” she said. “They are my grandmothers. Certain things people can strongly identify with and two of those things are talking about sex and food.”

Richard Payton is one of the MVPs of the GPS, as he'll also appear in a one-night encore of the one-man show he starred in at The Ringwald last January, “Buyer & Cellar,” as one of the actors in a staged reading of “The Newparts Project,” and in a tribute to Bette Midler.

In the one-man show “Buyer & Cellar,” Payton plays a struggling actor who gets a job working in the basement of the Malibu home of a superstar singer, during which time they sort of bond. Like two regular people.



Richard Payton returns for one night only in the critically acclaimed production of “Buyer & Cellar” at The Ringwald Theatre. Photo: Courtesy of The Ringwald

“The play is a great love letter to Streisand,” said Plambeck. “Richard is so amazingly talented, each of the characters that he approaches is filled with such humanity and life.”

Dyan Bailey agreed. “Buyer and Cellar is a one-person show, told as monologues,” she said. “He does go in and out of character voices when telling his tale, but I wouldn't say it's a portrayal of Babs. I would say it's a great show and Richard Payton at his finest. If you missed it before, you would be a damn fool to miss it this time around.”

In “The Newparts Project,” a new comedy by Julia Lynn Marsh, the few remaining residents of Newparts, Colorado – a line cook, a receptionist and a manager who really pays the bills with phone sex – decide to raise money (and the town's profile) by hosting a festival.

A porn festival.

The Ringwald has previously worked with Marsh on her one-woman play, “Please Give Me Your Money So I Can Buy a Vagina.” And their partnership has grown ever since. “We did a reading of her web series, 'Alphabet Soup' last year and are excited to bring another one

of her works to life this year,” Plambeck said.

The show will be followed by a discussion on casting for transgender characters. The night will be capped off by a free event featuring Dustin Gardner and a slew of celebrities called “Dustin's Big Gay After Show.”

Both weekends also feature two nights of one-acts. Block A includes plays by Alex Dremann (directed by Michelle LeRoy), Dyan Bailey (with director Lauren Bickers), Dale Dobson (Gary Lehman directing) and Brandy Joe Plambeck (with the writer directing). Block B offers one-acts from Emilio Rodriguez (directed by Michael Lopetrone), Brian David Walker (Joe Bailey directing), Dave Davies (Nuverre Naomi directing) and Jack Bates (directed by Topher Alan Payne).

Plambeck sees a theme among some of the one-acts. “With the popularity of 'Big Bang Theory' and 'Star Wars,' nerd culture' has really blown up in the last couple of years, and it was apparent in the submissions we received this year,” he said. “Dale Dobson's 'Party of Men' is about a group playing Dungeons & Dragons. 'Man in Peril' by Alex Dremann puts a twist on the popular superhero scenario.”



The 2016 Gay Play Series runs at The Ringwald Theatre June 17-27.

PREVIEW

2016 Gay Play Series

- 8 p.m. Friday, June 17: Golden Girls Trivia
 - 8 p.m. Saturday, June 18: 2016 Original One Act Plays
 - 3 p.m. Sunday, June 19: 2016 Original One Act Plays
 - 8 p.m. Monday, June 20: Richard Payton in Buyer & Cellar
 - 8 p.m. Friday, June 24: The Newparts Project by Julia Lynn Marsh
 - 11:30 p.m. Friday, June 24: Dustin's Big Gay After Show (free)
 - 8 p.m. Saturday, June 25: 2016 Original One Act Plays
 - 3 p.m. Sunday, June 26: 2016 Original One Act Plays
 - 8 p.m. Monday, June 27: Closing Ceremonies; 3 Queer Tenors in Bette Midler: Live at the Continental Baths
- \$10 per event, or \$30 Festival Pass

The Ringwald Theatre
22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale
>> www.theringwald.com

Audience members will vote for their favorite script, with the winner having an additional performance at the closing ceremonies on Monday, June 27.

That's also the night for “Vince & Richard Perform Bette Midler Live at the Continental Baths.” “It features Ringwald darlings Vince Kelley and Richard Payton performing some of the biggest bathhouse hits that made the Divine Miss M truly divine,” said Plambeck. “It's sure to be quite the fabulous evening.”



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Summer Pride Calendar

COMPILED BY SHELBY CLARK PETKUS

JUNE 8-25

**LGBT Pride Month Exhibit of
Charles Alexander's Art**
Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit
313-831-1250.

JUNE 10

Kalamazoo Pride
6 p.m.
Arcadia Creek Festival Site, Kalamazoo
pride.kglrc.org

**Adore Delano: Official Motor City
Pride Pre-Party at Necto**
9 p.m.
Necto, 516 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor
Featuring "RuPaul's Drag Race" Top 3
contestant from Season 6.
www.facebook.com/
events/1241908435829150/



Motor City Pride takes place this weekend in Hart Plaza

JUNE 11

Kalamazoo Pride Brunch
10 a.m.
The Union, Kalamazoo
Featuring Michigan state Rep. Jon
Hoadley. Tickets: \$35
jay@kglrc.org or 269-349-4234

**Motor City Bears' Annual Car
Wash**
11 a.m.
22635 Woodward Ave., Ferndale
www.motorcitybears.com
Suggest donation: \$5

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Motor City Pride

Equality Michigan (See pgs. 25-28)
2 p.m.
Hart Plaza, Detroit
www.motorcitypride.com
Tickets: \$5

Kalamazoo Pride

2 p.m.
Arcadia Creek Festival Site, Kalamazoo
Pride.kglrc.org

Sing Out Detroit: Lights, Camera, Action! From Broadway to Big Screen

7:30 p.m., Lamphere High School, 610 W. 13 Mile Road, Madison Heights
Sing Out Detroit rolls out the red carpet for this tribute to the best music from Broadway to Big Screen.
248-943-2411 or www.singoutdetroit.org
Tickets: \$15-20.

Motorball

9 p.m. 18+
St. Andrew's Hall, Detroit
www.motorball.org

JUNE 12

Dykes on Bikes Motor City Pride Ride & Booth

12 p.m.
Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale
Meet in Affirmations back parking lot, then ride to Motor City Pride.
www.dykesonbikesdetroit.org

Motor City Pride Parade

Noon
www.motorcitypride.org
Join us as thousands gather in the streets of Detroit to celebrate and make our presence as a community known. Floats, Queens, Cars & more. The parade brings together a fantastic cross section of groups, companies and entertainers for an exciting march to Hart Plaza!

Motor City Pride

Equality Michigan
Noon
Hart Plaza, Detroit
www.motorcitypride.com
Tickets: \$5

JUNE 13

Michigan LGBT Health Summit

7:30 a.m.
Double Tree by Hilton Bay City - Riverfront, Bay City
The agenda will focus on best practices from industry experts, innovative projects and transformative programs centering on providing quality care for the LGBT population in Michigan.
http://gaybe.am/lhs



Kim Chi will perform at MotorCity Pride this year

JUNE 17

Second Annual White Party
Part of Grand Rapids Pride.
www.grpride.org/fest/

JUNE 18

Hand in Hand Opening Event
11:30 a.m.
Part of Grand Rapids Pride.
www.grpride.org/fest/

Grand Rapids Pride Festival Street Fair

Noon
Calder Plaza, Grand Rapids.
www.grpride.org/fest/

Motown Invitational Classic Annual Detroit River Boat Cruise and Tea Dance

12:45 p.m.
Stroh's River Place, Jefferson Avenue at Detroit River
Three hour riverboat cruise to raise funds for Michigan's oldest and largest LGBT bowling tournament. 21+.
313-727-4101; www.mictournament.org
Tickets: \$25.

Motor City Bears Bingo and Dinner Fundraiser

4 p.m.
Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale
www.motorcitybears.com
To benefit Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Center.

The First Annual Grand Rapids Pride Concert on the Calder

6 p.m.
Calder Plaza, Grand Rapids
www.grpride.org/fest/

Continued on page 38

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SAT. JUNE 25 AT 8:00PM

SAT. JUNE 18 AT 8:00PM

SUN. JUNE 26 AT 2:30PM

SUN. JUNE 19 AT 2:30PM

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► Pride Calendar

Continued from p. 37

JUNE 19

First Annual Grand Rapids Pride Family Concert on the Calder

Calder Plaza, Grand Rapids
www.grpride.org/fest/

JUNE 21

Perceptions' Pride Awards Banquet

6 p.m.
The Andersen Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Drive, Saginaw
The 8th LGBT and Ally Pride Awards Banquet honors people and a business who have worked on LGBT equality. Cost: \$20-30 per person.
www.perceptionsmi.org/prideBanquet.php

JUNE 24

Holland PRIDE Film Festival

7 p.m.
Park Theatre, Holland
Featuring the film "Prodigal Sons."
www.hollandpride.org

JUNE 25

Holland PRIDE Film Festival

11 a.m.
Holland Civic Theatre, Holland

Featuring the films "Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine," "La Mission" and "The Imitation Game."

www.hollandpride.org/

Second Annual Summertime Tie Dye (And Clothing Donation Picnic)

1 p.m.
Patriarche Park, 1100 Alton Road, East Lansing
Humans United for an Equal Society (HUES) hosts this event – bring white or light colored clothes to dye and they will provide music, snacks and the dye. Clothing donations will benefit the Ruth Ellis Center and Gateway Community Services in Lansing.
www.facebook.com/events/1555549934746336/

Flint Pride in the Alley

2 p.m.
Buckham Alley & Rutherford Ramp, Flint
\$5 suggested donation
The intent of this event is to celebrate diversity in Flint. Affirm gay and transgender individuals, increase viability and to build a sense of community.
www.facebook.com/FLINTGAYPRIDE

Motor City Bears Italian Night Charity Dinner

5 p.m.
Zion Lutheran Church, 143 Albany, Ferndale
Charity dinner and silent auction to benefit Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Center.
www.motorcitybears.com



Michigan LGBT Health Summit

Pride Pick

Michigan LGBT Health Summit: Meeting the Primary Care Needs of the LGBT Population

The Michigan Primary Care Association will host its first Michigan LGBT Health Summit June 13 at the Doubletree Hotel in Bay City, Michigan.

The summit will include panels and breakout sessions that will focus on best practices from industry experts, innovative projects and transformative programs centering on providing quality care for the LGBT population in Michigan. The keynote address will be delivered by Dan Lentine, MPH, partnerships liaison for the Office of Policy, Planning & External Relations, Division of STD Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who will talk about the national efforts to transform care for the LGBT population.

Registration costs \$50 for students, \$155 for non-FQHC partners and \$140 for FQHC. For more information contact Lindsey Naeyaert, clinical specialist with the Michigan Primary Care Association, at lnaeyaert@mpca.net or 517-827-0874. More details can also be found at <http://gaybe.am/lhs>.

JUNE 27

National HIV Testing Day

Visit www.pridesource.com/directory.html, www.pridesource.com/calendar.html or pick up a copy of the Pride Source Yellow Pages to find testing events in your area.

JULY 10

Dykes on Bikes Harsens Island Ride

12 p.m.
Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale
Meet in Affirmations back parking lot, then ride to Harsens Island along St. Clair River.
www.dykesonbikesdetroit.org

Continued on page 40

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XTL Youth Leadership Development Program
 A six month program that works with 15 youth, ages 13-20, throughout Metro Detroit to learn valuable leadership skills and advocacy for issues facing LGBTQ youth. **This program has two meeting sites youth can choose from: Detroit and Ferndale.** Youth receive monthly stipends and transportation stipends.
 Contact Lilianna Reyes, lreyes@goaffirmations.org to **join the new group beginning in July 2016.**

XTL Youth Workforce Development Program
 A six month program that works with 12 young people, ages 13-24, throughout Metro Detroit to teach them workforce skills. They operate a youth inspired store (Recess: Store, Cafe, and Lounge). Youth are mentored by a Business Advisory Council from representatives from local businesses, financial institutions, automotive industry, and many more. Youth receive monthly stipends and transportation stipends.
 Contact Lilianna Reyes, lreyes@goaffirmations.org to **join the new group beginning in July 2016.**

Drop-In Center
 The Youth Drop-In Center provides a safe place for youth, ages 13-20, to engage their peers for networking, fun, and learning. **Open Fridays & Saturdays, 4pm-9pm.** The Center has an XBOX 360 and games, pool table, board games, WIFI, Netflix, and much more.
 Contact Tevin Giles, tgiles@goaffirmations.org for more information and to subscribe to monthly calendars.

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► Pride Calendar

Continued from p. 38

JULY 23

Great Lakes Bay Pride

Perceptions
Noon
Veterans Memorial Park, Bay City
www.greatlakesbaypride.org/

JULY 26-31

Hotter Than July

LGBT Detroit hosts this week long event celebrating black LGBT pride in Detroit.
lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

JULY 27

Hotter Than July: Fine Arts Reception

6 p.m.
Carr Center, 311 E. Grand River, Detroit
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Hotter Than July: Official Opening Party

9 p.m.
Woodward Bar and Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave., Detroit
\$5
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Pride Pick



hotterthanjuly/ for updates and for information on other HTJ events.

Hotter Than July 2016

Detroit's Black Gay Pride is here!

The 2016 Hotter Than July celebration will feature nearly a week of activities for the LGBT community beginning July 26 stretching to July 31.

The pinnacle event of the festival, the Palmer Park Picnic, will kick off the weekend at 10 a.m. July 30. The picnic receives over 20,000 guests who gather to celebrate culture, self-empowerment and identity.

Check www.lgbtdetroit.org/

JULY 28

Hotter Than July: Play

7 p.m.
Details TBD
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

JULY 29

Hotter Than July: Annual Gathering on LGBTQ Issues

8 a.m.
University of Michigan Detroit Center, 3663 Woodward Ave. Detroit
Registration is required.
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

JULY 30

Hotter Than July: Palmer Park Picnic
10 a.m.
Palmer Park, Detroit
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

JULY 31

Hotter Than July: Worship Service
10 a.m.
Whosoever Ministry, 2930 Woodward Ave., Detroit
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Hotter Than July: Sunday Brunch

Noon
\$25
Location TBD
313-285-9733 or www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

AUG. 5

OUTFest & Pride Picnic
www.a2outfest.com

AUG. 6

OUTFest & Pride Picnic
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AUG. 7

OUTFest & Pride Picnic
www.a2outfest.com

Windsor-Essex Pride Fest Parade
11 a.m.

This year's festival focuses on bringing all different segments and groups together to celebrate the accomplishments we have made in the Windsor-Essex region and Canada as a whole.

Ouellette Avenue & Elliot Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, Canada
www.wepridefest.com

AUG. 12

Motor City Bears Turkey Point Camping Weekend
7 p.m.

Ontario, Canada
Visit www.meetup.com/motor-city-bears/ for more information.
www.motorcitybears.com

AUG. 13

Transgender Pride in the Park
Noon

Donald Red Geary Park, Ferndale
An event featuring free food, free fun and great friends held every year by Transgender Michigan. Hot dogs and other stuff provided – please bring a side dish if you wish.
www.transgendermichigan.org

Dykes on Bikes Cement City Ride
12 p.m.

Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale
Meet in Affirmations back parking lot, then ride to Cement City in Lenawee County.
www.dykesonbikesdetroit.org

AUG. 26

White Party
Michigan Pride
7 p.m.

Adado Riverfront Park, 300 N. Grand Ave., Lansing
www.michiganpride.org
Tickets: \$20-25.
White or silver attire.


AUG. 27

Pride Parade
Michigan Pride
12 p.m.

200 N. Grand Ave., Lansing
www.michiganpride.org
The march will be held rain or shine and should last approximately 30 minutes.

Michigan Pride Festival in Old Town
Michigan Pride
12 p.m.

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www.michiganpride.org
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Angela V. Viviano, MSN, FNP

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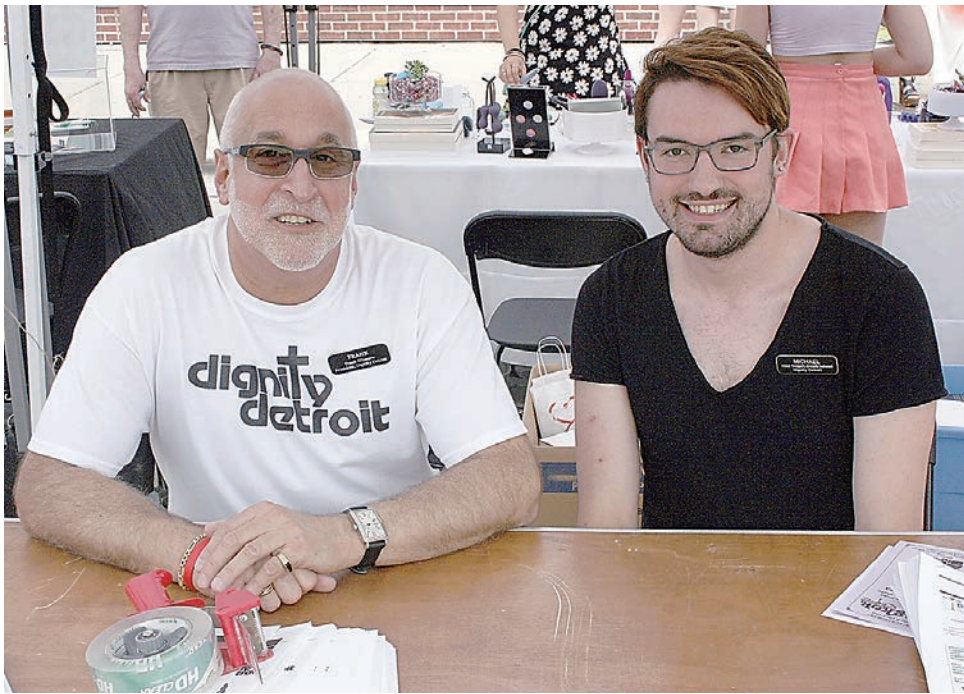
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Frank D'Amore and Michael Tabaczynski man the Dignity Detroit booth at Ferndale Pride.
BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

Local Faith Leaders Speak Out Against 'Religious Freedom' Laws

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It was the crowning glory of the modern gay rights movement. Last June the Supreme Court granted gays the right to marry. And so many mistakenly thought the battle had been won and that equal rights for gays would be the law of the land. If only it were so.

Suddenly, in the wake of the Obergefell v. Hodges ruling, so-called "religious liberty" laws that sought to enshrine the right to discriminate against LGBT folk in the name of religion began popping up all across the country. These laws seek to allow medical professionals the right to refuse to treat LGBT people, to allow business owners the right to refuse them service and essentially allow anyone who claims religious exemption the right to refuse to deal with those who fall under the rainbow banner.

Even before the ruling – and perhaps in anticipation of it – Michigan saw the proposal of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It passed the House in a 59-50 vote along party lines, but it stalled in the Senate. Though Gov. Rick Snyder had long promised not to sign a stand-alone RFRA, he saddened many in the LGBT community when just weeks before the Supreme Court ruling he signed into law legislation that allows faith-based adoption

agencies to cite religious beliefs as reason to not serve potential adoptive parents.

According to CNN, 21 states have enacted religion freedom laws since 1993 and 10 additional states are currently considering similar legislation. It's a trend that clearly targets LGBT families and aims to ensure their continued second-class citizen status. "Discrimination is pernicious, subtle and everywhere," said Liz Hoban, pastoral director of Christian education for the Congregational Church of Birmingham-United Church of Christ. "We have to be on our guard and scrutinize all the bills and laws – everything that comes through – and be looking for discrimination and put a stop to it."

Frank D'Amore, president of Dignity Detroit, said this is a last ditch effort by conservatives that is likely to fail. "Being that the Supreme Court finally recognized marriage equality they've decided to go this route," D'Amore said. "They're going to keep trying and trying and trying, but I don't think it's going to go anywhere."

States that have enacted such legislation have often faced huge backlashes, including boycotts and loss of support from business leaders. The laws will likely face legal

See Worship, page 44



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► **Worship**

Continued from p. 43

challenges down the road, but for now most remain firmly in place.

“I think people need to start realizing that hatred toward different groups of people has nothing to do with religion,” said Michael Tabaczynski, also of Dignity Detroit. “Religion is about loving one another, treating everybody with dignity and respect. I think people are just trying to find any which way they can find to continue discriminating against gays.”

Ben Gabel, director of service and social justice for Birmingham Unitarian Church, said those who seek to do so are getting religion wrong. “Using religion as a means to discriminate against other people is not a religion that’s doing it well,” he said. “I think the purpose of religion is to see how we can improve the lives of others, social justice, and how we share compassion and love for others. So when we embody religion around hatred, that is not a religion that is doing it well.”

Particularly upsetting to Hoban is the law signed last year by Snyder that allows faith-based adoption agencies to discriminate against potential gay parents. “I am totally opposed to any obstructions to adoptions by caring parents,” she said. “We have a world with many children who don’t have parents and it’s unconscionable that we would obstruct people from helping or advocating for children who so badly need that help.”

In the end, said Hoban, the persistence of LGBT people and their allies will pay off. “We won a battle and we will continue through every hurdle and through every difficulty to continue to win rights and equality and justice for the community,” she said. “We must not lose courage, and that is why the communities of faith are so important for buoying up people and helping them continue in the struggle.”



Christian Rock Star Trey Pearson Comes Out as Gay

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) – Christian rock star Trey Pearson has come out as gay in a magazine interview.

Pearson is the lead singer of Everyday Sunday. In a letter published online by Ohio-based (614) Magazine, Pearson writes that he has come to be able to admit to himself and his family that he’s gay even though he “never wanted to be.”

Commenting on the letter to the magazine, Pearson calls his announcement “freeing,” but adds that he has lost some of the closest people in his life. He says some “church people” act like the worst people he has ever experienced. He says he’s starting over in many ways, “but it’s also starting out lonely.”

Pearson also praises his wife for her support. The couple has two children together.

Pearson writes that he has come to be able to admit to himself and his family that he’s gay even though he “never wanted to be.”

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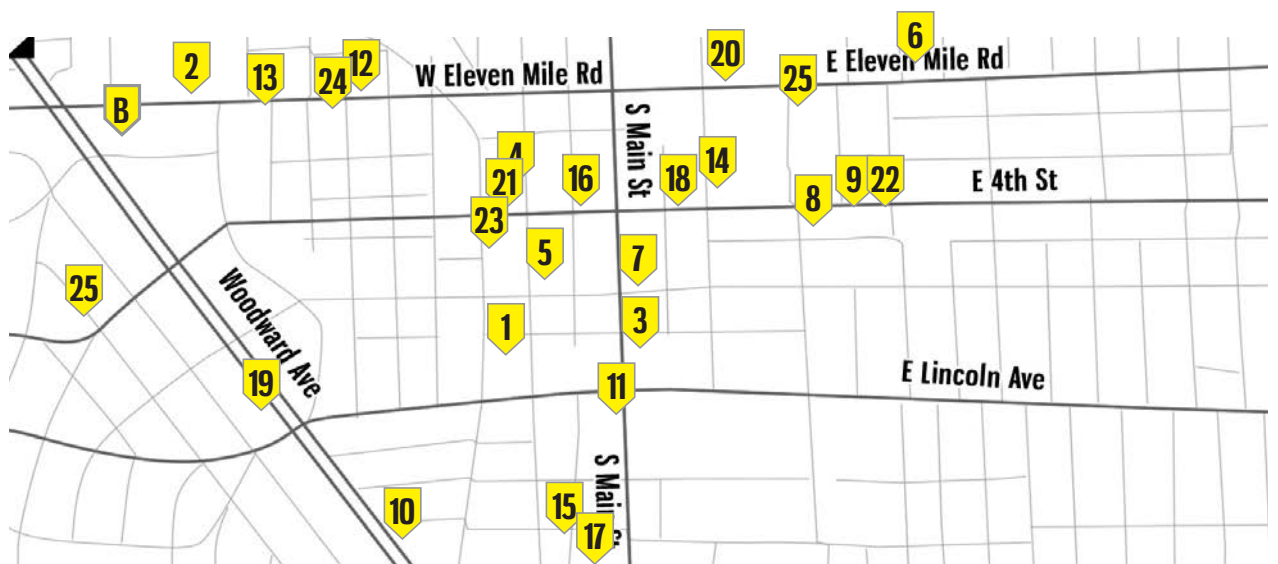
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Mix & Mingle 5:30 p.m. Socialize and relax with iHeartMedia's Boji at this weekly downtown happy hour featuring delicious food and drink specialties from The Fountain Detroit. Channel 955, 800 Woodward Ave., Detroit. www.campusmartiuspark.org/events

Healthy Moves: Strength & Cardio

Boot Camp 6:30 p.m. Join the Bedrock Wellness Center to work up a sweat and build muscle. Quicken Loans, 662 Woodward Ave., Detroit. www.campusmartiuspark.org/events

Men's Film Group 6:30 p.m. Men's Film Group, for men ages 18 and up, features a variety of films followed by discussion. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. mensgroup6@gmail.com www.goaffirmations.org

Naked Men's Yoga 6:30 p.m. Naked Men's Yoga, Ann Arbor. massage4@aol.com http://groups.yahoo.com/group/michigan_mens_clothing_optional_yoga

Friday, June 10

Good Rainbow Genes An LGBT Pride Month exhibit of the art of well-known Detroit artist and Between the Lines columnist Charles Alexander. A meet-the-artist reception with refreshments will be held on Thursday, June 16 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. 313-831-1250. www.scarabclub.org

Adore Delano: Official Motor City Pride Pre-Party at Necto 9 p.m. Featuring "RuPaul's Drag Race" Top 3 contestant from Season 6. Necto, 516 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. www.facebook.com/events/1241908435829150/

Saturday, June 11

Kalamazoo Pride Brunch 10 a.m. Featuring state Rep. Jon Hoadley. Tickets: \$35. Kalamazoo Pride, Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. jay@kgllrc.org kgllrc.org

Motor City Bears Car Wash 11 a.m. Join the Motor City Bears for the 10th Annual Motor City Bears in Speedos Car Wash. Motor City Bears, 22635 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. motorcitybears@gmail.com motorcitybears.com

Kalamazoo Pride Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, Kalamazoo. www.Kgllrc.org/pride

Lights, Camera, Action! From Broadway to Big Screen 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15-20. Sing Out Detroit, 610 W. 13 Mile Road, Madison Heights. 248-943-2411. www.singoutdetroit.org

Women's Dance 8:15 p.m. DJ Megan Lansing Lesbians, 201 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing. www.meetup.com

Battle of the Boy Bands 9 p.m. Special Throwback Fevre Saturday event Battle of the Boy Bands. Boy Band Event RDNC Celebrate the music of all of your favorite Boy Bands. Red Door Night Club, 22901 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-541-1600. info@reddoorclub.com www.reddoorclub.com/events/battle-of-the-boy-bands/

Sunday, June 12

Motor City Pride Tickets: \$5. Free for under 12. Equality Michigan, Detroit. www.Motorcitypride.org

Paddle Group 1 a.m. Bring a kayak, canoe or whatever floats. The paddle group hits the watersheds known as Brighton, Huron-Clinton, Irish Hills, Jackson, Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas. They paddle for two to three hours most Sundays. Life jackets are required. Yak season is April through October. Yak Womyn, Ann Arbor. sapphosis@yahoo.com

Motor City Pride Parade 12 p.m. Equality Michigan, Detroit. www.Motorcitypride.org

Rent 2 p.m. On June 5, the cast will be joined by Dr. Peter Gulick, staff of the Lansing Area AIDS Network and Lansing area residents living with HIV for a talk back about HIV then and now. On June 8, the Lansing Area AIDS Network has bought out the house as a fundraiser. Curtain is 7 p.m. and will feature a mingle with the cast following the show. A pre-show event is also being planned involving Rep. Jon Hoadley, D-Kalamazoo. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. 517-482-5700. www.Riverwalktheatre.com

Monday, June 13

Michigan LGBT Health Summit: Meeting the Primary Care Needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender Population 7:30 a.m. The agenda will focus on best practices from industry experts, innovative projects and transformative programs centering on providing quality care for the LGBT population in Michigan. Michigan Primary Care Association, Bay City. 517-827-0874. Inaeyaert@mpca.net http://gaybe.am/lhs

Tuesday, June 14

Healthy Moves: Fitness in the Park 6:30 p.m. Work out with Pulse Fitness as they offer a wide range of exercises. Quicken Loans, 662 Woodward Ave., Detroit. www.campusmartiuspark.org/events

Wednesday, June 15

LGBT Cancer Support Group 6:30 p.m. This LGBT support group provides social and emotional support for LGBT persons with cancer, their partners, LGBT family members and friends. Gilda's Club Metro Detroit, 3517 Rochester Road, Royal Oak. 248-577-0800. www.gildasclubdetroit.org/calendar/lgbt-cancer-group-19/

See Happenings, page 50

Editor's Pick

GO COMEDY!
ALL-DRAG IMPROV SPECTACULAR
Hosted by Minnie Woodward

The Go Comedy! All-Drag Improv Spectacular

Hosted by Minnie Woodward

Saturday, June 11

8 p.m. & 10 p.m.

Tickets: \$18

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Happenings

Editor's Pick

Thursday, June 16

Ladies who love Ladies Night The hottest lesbian DJ Team, \$3 Drafts from all 18 taps all night, \$3 Jack Fire and Jack Honey drinks from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. served by the Jack Girls. Pronto!, 608 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak**. 248-544-7900. www.facebook.com/prontorestaurantRO/

Meet Author Micheala Lynn 7 p.m. Join Bella Books lesbian romance author Micheala Lynn for a talk and reception. Following her debut novel, "Jagged Little Scar," Lynn will introduce her latest novel, *Joie de Vivre*. Refreshments will be provided. Schuler Books & Music, 2660 28th St., **Grand Rapids**. 616 942-2561. micheala@michealalynn.com www.michealalynn.com

Rehearsals for Metro Detroit LGBT Chorus 7 p.m. New members welcomed year round. One Voice Chorus uses singing to promote understanding outside of the LGBT community, and unity within it. One Voice Chorus, 1589 W. Maple Road, **Birmingham**. detroitonevoice@yahoo.com <http://onevoicechorus.net>

Friday, June 17

Second Annual White Party Grand Rapids Pride, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Gay Play Series (GPS) 8 p.m. Don't miss the kick off event honoring everyone's favorite Miami foursome, The Golden Girls. Richard Payton will resurrect his Blanchette Deveraux character to host an evening of Golden Girls Trivia. Tickets: \$10. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com (See story p. 34)

Saturday, June 18

Ypsi Pride Ypsi Pride, **Ypsilanti**. www.visitann Arbor.org

Grounds Crew Workfest 10:30 a.m. Come help prepare the grounds for a family reunion. Work as much as you can. Simple foods and water will be provided. Lansing Lesbians, 14371 McCrumb Road, **Eagle**. www.meetup.com

Hand in Hand Opening Event 11:30 a.m. Grand Rapids Pride, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Grand Rapids Pride Festival The LGBT Network of West Michigan, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Outdoor Games 12 p.m. Games offered in the park include table tennis, chess, checkers, beanbag toss, and more. Quicken Loans, 662 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. www.campusmartiuspark.org/events

Motown Invitational Classic Detroit River Cruise 12:45 p.m. Dancing, two cash bars - a tea dance down the Detroit River. \$25 per person/limited seating to 250 persons. Tickets Now available at Just 4 Us, Steven B's Barbershop and Menjos! 21+ Motown Invitational Classic, Jefferson Avenue, **Detroit**. 313-727-4101. billhav2003@yahoo.com www.nictournament.org/Events.aspx

Bingo and Dinner Fundraiser at Affirmations 4 p.m. Join us for bingo & dinner at Affirmations to benefit Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Center. Motor City Bears, 290 West Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. motorcitybears@gmail.com motorcitybears.com

Grand Rapids Pride concert on the Calder 6 p.m. Grand Rapids Pride, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Gay Play Series (GPS) 8 p.m. The original One Act Festival begins with four plays: *A Man in Peril*, *You Too?*, *Party of Men*, and *Wallpaper*. Tickets: \$10. A \$30 festival pass is available. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

Sunday, June 19

Grand Rapids Pride family concert on the Calder Grand Rapids Pride, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Gay Play Series (GPS) 3 p.m. The original One Act Festival continues with four plays: *Angel of the People Mover*, *Bobo Island Fairies*, *Happy & Gay*, and *Not Our Town*. Tickets: \$10. A \$30 festival pass is available. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

MUSIC & MORE

Benefits/Social Events

Quicken Loans "Grand Circus Park Gala" This second annual event benefits historic Grand Circus Park featuring live music with jazz songstress Nicole New and DJ Tom T. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served, and classic lawn games will be available to play in the park. Grand

Circus Park. See website for location details, Detroit. 6 p.m. June 16. www.campusmartiuspark.org/events

Comedy

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase "Comedian John Heffron" Special engagement tickets: \$25. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. June 17 - June 18. 734-996-9080. www.aacomedy.com

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase "Comedian Dave Landau" Tickets: \$12-\$14. Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. June 10 - June 11. 734-996-9080. www.aacomedy.com

Concerts

AEG Live "A\$AP Ferg & Tory Lanez" Tickets: \$25-\$125 for the Level Up Tour. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. June 16. 248-399-2980. www.romtlive.com

Complexions Contemporary Ballet "A Tribute to David Bowie" Tickets: \$30. This world premiere of a new ballet pays tribute to the genre and gender bending innovation of one of the truly prolific rock stars of our time, David Bowie. Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison Ave., **Detroit**. 8 p.m. June 18. 313-887-8500. www.musichall.org

DTE Energy Music Theatre "Florence + The Machine" With Of Monsters and Men. DTE Energy Music Theatre, Clarkson. 7:30 p.m. June 11. www.ticketmaster.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Eric Comstock & Barbara Fasano" Summer Standard Time. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. June 11. 734-763-4186. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House "PD9 Township Jazz Project" Music of the Great South African Jazz Artists. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. June 10. 734-763-4186. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

The Carr Center "Evenings in Paradise" Showcase of musical performances and entertainment by local and national jazz and R&B favorites. Paradise Valley Beatrice Buck Park, See website for location details, Detroit. June 7 - Aug. 25. www.downtowndetroitparks.com

Americana and alt-country stars Yarn come to Ann Arbor's The Ark June 21 in a special free show.



Since their start in 2007, Yarn's original Americana sound has developed into music that seekers of the unique see as the soundtrack to their lives. Yarn's albums have spent time in the top five of the charts of the Americana Music Association and Radio & Records, recognized by the AMA's and R&R radio charts, spending time in the top 5 at their highest point.

Yarn has become one of the hardest-working and harder-touring bands for this generation's digital natives

and new music followers. Their 2013 release "Shine the Light On," featured songwriting from John Oates (Hall & Oates), and at The Ark show they bring their first new album since then, "This Is the Year."

Doors are 7:30 p.m., performance at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, June 21. The show is free, but nonperishables are accepted for Food Gatherers. The featured sponsor is Zingerman's. The Ark is located at 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-761-1800 or visit www.theark.org.

Festivals

Blind Pig "Fuzz Fest III" Three nights, two stages, more than 30 bands. Tickets: \$10, under 21 \$13. Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. June 9 - June 11. 734-996-8555. www.blindpigmusic.com/

Kerrytown Concert House "Minifest: Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival In Residence" A classical performance by some of the world's finest chamber musicians. Tickets: \$15-\$35. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. June 17 - June 26. 734-763-4186. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Film & Video

Cinetopia Film Festival "Tyrus" This Michigan premiere highlights the beauty of life painted onto the screen through the incredible palette of the 105 years-young Tyrus Wong. Following the screening, Leonard Maltin will be joined by award-winning Disney animator Andreas Deja to discuss the amazing work created by the studio. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 1 p.m. June 12. 734-668-8397. www.cinetopiafestival.org

Cinetopia Film Festival "Classic Disney Shorts" Sit back and enjoy a curated collection of the best shorts from the wonderful world of Disney.

Following the screening of these iconic Disney short films, Leonard Maltin will give a behind the scenes talk about the animators and illustrators who brought these stories to life. Redford Theater, 17360 Lahser Road, Detroit. 2 p.m. June 11. 313-537-2560. www.cinetopiafestival.org

LGBTQIA teens. Suggested donation: \$20. Theatre Nova, The Yellow Barn, 416 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor. June 17 - July 10. 734-635-8450. www.theatrenova.org

Professional

Dreamgirls PG-13. Tickets: \$22-24. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through June 26. 248-541-6430. www.stagecrafters.org

Heathers the Musical Tickets: \$10-25. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. Through June 13. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Ann Arbor Farm & Garden "Ann Arbor Garden Walk" This year features seven beautiful gardens. Go to our website for maps and descriptions of each garden. Advanced tickets are \$15 or \$20 at any of the gardens. Ann Arbor Farm & Garden, Ann Arbor. June 11 - June 11. 7349943586. www.annarborfarmandgarden.org/garden-walk.html

Cranbrook Academy of Art "John Glick: A Legacy in Clay" More than 200 pieces representing all phases of Glick's work, from the early vessels and tableware dating to Glick's time as a student at Cranbrook, to his conceptual ceramic sculptures from the last decades will be on display. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. June 18 - Nov. 30. 877-462-7262. www.cranbrook.edu

Detroit Institute of Arts "Dance! American Art 1830-1960" Works by artists including Diego Rivera and Andy Warhol, plus video demonstrations from Joffrey ballerina Amber Neumann and Detroit's own Hardcore Detroit. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 5 - June 12. 313-833-7971. www.dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "The Open Road: Photography and the American Road Trip" Tickets: \$12.50 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for youth. Catch the conversation about the exhibition's themes with photographer Justine Kurland, DIA curator of photography

THEATER

Matrix Theatre Company's 25th Anniversary Extravaganza The Extravaganza will honor Dr. Shaun Nethercott, our founder; celebrate our past work and future plans; enhance Matrix's visibility in the community. There will be a banquet dinner, strolling dessert reception, silent auction, live program and more!. Matrix Theatre Company, Gem Theatre, Detroit. 6 p.m. June 16. 313-967-0999 ext. 7. www.matrixtheatre.org

Benefits and Fundraisers

Sutton Foster Ovation Awards Tickets: \$10. An exciting night of performance and competition hosted by Kirk Montgomery of WLX Channel 10. Wharton Center, Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 7 p.m. June 12. 800-WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

Civic/Community Theater

Alone With Friends Tickets: \$20. This new romantic comedy from award-winning Detroit playwright Margaret Edwartowski explores the relationship between a writer and her muses. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through June 25. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Dreamgirls The Dreamettes perform the showstoppers "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" and "I Am Changing." Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Through June 26. 248-541-6430. www.stagecrafters.org

Spin Detroit playwright Emilio Rodriguez gives us a hip-hop love story where spoken word poetry and teen romance collide in this fast-paced and funny play set in a homeless shelter for



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Nancy Barr, and exhibition curator Denise Wolff on Thursday, June 16 at 7:30 p.m. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 17 - Sep. 11. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

Detroit's Pioneer Building "PIONEERS" Curated by Peter Gahan, this varied exhibition features painting, photography, mixed media, glass work, encaustic, drawing and fiber. Cass Cafe, 4620 Cass Ave., Detroit. April 16 - June 25. 313-831-1400. www.Casscafe.com

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

Kerrytown Concert House "Suchness" Photographer Aura Glaser shares her journey with a camera guided by intuition, inspiration, and joy. The gallery reception is Thursday, June 16 at 5 p.m. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. June 3 - June 29. 734-763-4186. www.kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lawrence Street Gallery "Nature's Song" Lawrence Street Gallery presents Nature's Song, a solo exhibition of member artist Helena Kuttner-Glasson's Fine Art For Small Spaces. The opening

reception will be held Friday, June 3 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave, Ferndale. June 1 - June 30. 248-544-0394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Detroit City/Detroit Affinities" Works by Annette Kelm Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 3 - Aug. 28. 313-832-6622. www.mocaddetroit.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Uncalibrated" Works by Nancy Mitchnick Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 3 - July 31. 313-832-6622. www.mocaddetroit.org

PNC Financial Services Group "Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia" Tickets: \$10 for the general public, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for students with ID. Free for ArtMembers and children 12 and under. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. June 18 - Oct. 9. 877-462-7262. www.cranbrook.edu

Robert Kidd Gallery "Continuum" An informal and insightful conversation with Lois Teicher begins promptly at 4:15 p.m. on Saturday, June 11 to coincide with the artist's solo exhibition. Robert Kidd Gallery, 107 Townsend St., Birmingham. June 3 - June 18. 248-642-3909.

Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce "Clay, Glass and Metal Show" Exhibitor Contact: Mark Loeb, Integrity Shows Artists. Washington Ave., Washington Ave. (between 4th and Lincoln), Royal Oak. June 11 - June 12. 248-547-4000. www.integrityshows.wix.com/royal-oak-cgm

Solo Exhibition by artist Futura "New Horizons" Artist Reception, Saturday, June 18 at 6 p.m. Library Street Collective, 1260 Library St., Detroit. June 18 - Sep. 3. 313-600-7443. www.lscgallery.com

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Catherine Opie: 700 Nimes Road" This exhibition presents new and recent work by Los Angeles-based artist Catherine Opie, one of the essential figures in contemporary photography. Beginning in 2010, Opie spent six months taking photographs at the Bel Air, California, residence of Elizabeth Taylor. The exhibition includes 50 works drawn from two series, "Closets and Jewels" and "700 Nimes Road." A. Alfred Taubman Gallery, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. June 11 - Sep. 11. 734-647-0524. Umma.umich.edu/view/exhibitions/2016-opie.php

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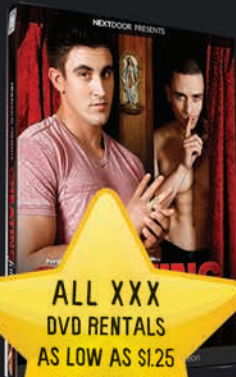
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BTL Pet of the Week - Enzo

Say hi to Enzo! This 1-year-old Shepard mix is a fun and playful guy! He loves to snuggle and will seek you out for puppy hugs. The adoption fee includes sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations, the MHS Adoption Guarantee and much more. For more information, visit or call the MHS Detroit Center for Animal Care at (313) 872-3400 and provide the pet ID number, 827987.



5 Reasons Why Being a Gay Extrovert Is Sometimes The Pits



The Frivolist

BY MIKEY ROX

Being gay *and* an extrovert seems to go hand-in-hand. Many of us have an innate ability to connect with others that makes being outgoing look effortless, but the truth is, sometimes we need a break just like the rest of the world. Take a breather and reflect on everyone else's obsession with you with these five reasons why being an extrovert is sometimes the pits – even though you wouldn't have it any other way.

1. You're expected to be 'on' from the minute you pop out of bed

I wouldn't say that I'm *_not_* a morning person – I like to think I'm fairly agreeable when I wake up – but I also work from home on a regular basis and generally take my time getting ready for the day, which probably contributes to my upbeat demeanor. But even when I have an off day, people notice, and I'm sure you'll recognize the same. Just try keeping to yourself the first couple hours at the office and see what happens. By noon, an all-hands meeting will be scheduled to discuss how your personality is affecting productivity, your cube mate will have a doctor's appointment on your calendar, and your mother will be blowing you up on text because your boss called with concern. Alas, this

crisis can be avoided; you just have to grin and bear it on life's rainy days too.

2. Your straight pals rely on you to be their social director

When I go out on the town, I'm usually the axis of my group. It's not that I surround myself with wallflowers either; all my friends are perfectly social, yet they seem to like it when I take the wheel. We go to sporting events, shows, bars, restaurants – all the typical things you do with friends. Not only am I the one planning the activities, but it also happens that I'm literally and physically the center of attention. I'm smack dab in the middle of the situation so everybody can benefit from my wit and charm equally while not worrying about having to work so hard for laughs themselves. It's tiresome, and it's resulted in canceled plans more than once when I'm not up for being everybody's tour guide/comedian/camp director.

3. The fate of your friends' weddings is in your hands

I'm asked one specific question by nearly every bride to whose wedding I'm invited: "You're gonna dance, right?" You see, over the years I've built a reputation of being a mover and shaker on the dance floor – so much so that that

reputation precedes me, and even before I accept the invitation I'm expected to be part of the evening's entertainment. There have been a few weddings, however, where I just wasn't feeling the boogie. Perhaps the music wasn't right, maybe I was a little hungover from the previous night's festivities, or, and this is the most likely scenario, I didn't feel like being a show monkey for a free buffet and a slice of stale cake. Just let me be. Just once I'd like to select a couple overpriced kitchen items from the gift registry like the rest of the guests and be allowed to sit at my assigned seat while getting blitzed on the open bar as I cry inside about how I'll never find someone to love me. You know, like a normal person.

4. People are worried about your health and safety if you take a break from social media

True story: I'm currently traveling as I write this column and I haven't had time to post my quippy and, oftentimes, *hourly* observations on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as much as my friends and followers are accustomed. Hand to God, earlier today I received a message from one of my social media contacts asking me if I'm OK because I "haven't posted in days." In reality, I updated my status about 24 hours ago, but he's about to call in a missing person's report because I'm enjoying my vacation. Next time I'll send out announcements so people can prepare.

5. Basically if you don't have rainbows shooting out of your butt at all times, the world might end

Don't get me wrong here. Even though I'm probably sounding a little complain-y, I'm glad I'm an extrovert. I mean, I can't imagine what it's like being a gay introvert who inevitably gets treated like the extrovert everyone else wants you to be because me and the rest of the constant attention seekers in the LGBT community have ruined anonymity for you. But even though it seems easy being us, we have a lot of the same insecurities, feelings of isolation, and even loneliness. We're just better at hiding it, mostly by bending over backwards to please other people – or else. Frankly, I wish rainbows did shoot out of my butt just so I didn't have to talk so damn much. Wouldn't that be nice? I'm sure my hangers-on would agree – if they could ever get a word in edgewise.

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BTL is celebrating marriage equality by running announcements of your wedding, commitment vows, anniversary or engagement. Simply send us your pics and a description, up to 50 words, and we will run it as space permits in BTL! Send to editor@pridesource.com

A Tension Getter

Massage Therapy

by David Rosenberg
(734) 662-6282

Therapeutic Massage gets rid of back, neck and shoulder pain



2 Downtown Locations

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209 West Kingsley

Berkley
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(just west of Greenfield)

(Couple blocks west of main, between Ashley & 1st.)

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Tuesdays & Saturdays at 8pm
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Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 662-6282

Find me on the Internet at
<http://www.trymassage.com>

Naked Men's YOGA



Meets in Ann Arbor

TUESDAYS AND SATURDAYS 6:30-7:30 PM

Contact Dave at massage4@aol.com
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/michigan_mens_clothing_optional_yoga

Shop The Rainbow

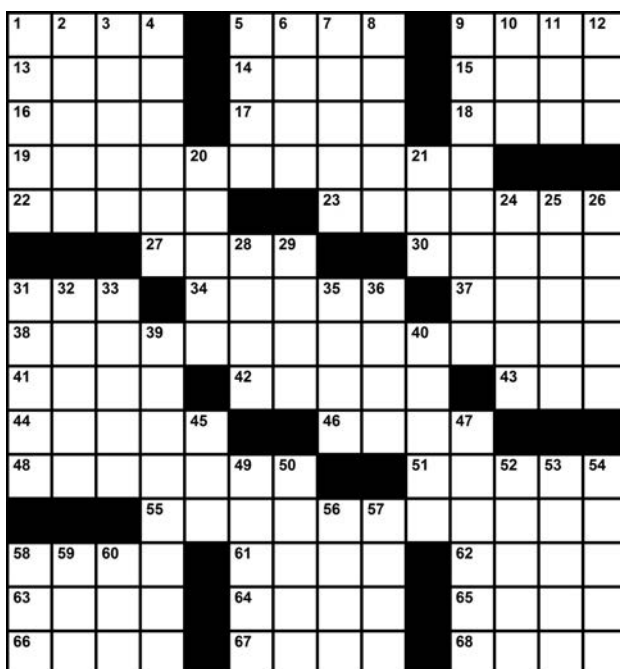
BTL
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There are hundreds of businesses that advertise in BTL and welcome everyone.

Invest in equality and work with businesses that support Michigan's LGBTQ community!

Q Puzzle



Trans-sylvania

Across

- 1 Whack, off, or delight
- 5 Bit of salt, for Stephen Pyles
- 9 Rubber-stamp
- 13 "Hi" to Lorca
- 14 Man, as a cruising goal
- 15 "Six Feet Under" box material
- 16 Gomer's "anti"
- 17 Coldcock
- 18 Barry Humphries' Dame

- 19 With 55-Across, upcoming TV movie with Laverne Cox
- 22 "___ little silhouetto of a man ..."
- 23 Large phallus painter
- 27 Isle of exile in Brando's "Desiree"
- 30 Quite a bargain
- 31 Lance in a robe
- 34 "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina," e.g.
- 37 Guy into bottoms?
- 38 Character played by Laverne Cox

- 41 Bro of Jacko
- 42 Pillow covers
- 43 Queer
- 44 Train that comes quickly
- 46 It's hard and woody
- 48 Book that mentioned Adam but kept Steve a secret?
- 51 "Les ___" of Broadway
- 55 See 19-Across
- 58 Some eagle feathers
- 61 Composer Thomas
- 62 Cub slugger
- 63 Scat queen Fitzgerald
- 64 Pal from Down Under
- 65 Genie portrayer Barbara
- 66 Bedfellow
- 67 Creature in a "Star Wars" sequel
- 68 Comes out with

Down

- 1 She had her hand up Lamb Chop
- 2 HRC's equal sign, and others
- 3 Gertrude's partner
- 4 Doodle in a musical
- 5 Gossip
- 6 Memo start
- 7 Sucking sound
- 8 Painter Matisse
- 9 Lily Tomlin's Ernestine, for one
- 10 Dan Savage memoir, with "The"
- 11 Beebo Brinker creator Bannon
- 12 Oral vote
- 20 Where Franklin, Winston, and Josef had a threesome
- 21 Place for future Lts.

- 24 ___ music (do Britten's job)
- 25 Satisfied fully
- 26 Words said from one's knees, perhaps
- 28 Just says no
- 29 Ornament in "Cleopatra", perhaps
- 31 Where to see Tom, Dick, or Harry
- 32 Brief moment
- 33 When to have sex
- 35 Alice's insect tour guide in Wonderland
- 36 "All ___" (1984 Tomlin film)
- 39 Be able to say, "I'm not myself"?
- 40 The way we word
- 45 "___ was saying ..."
- 47 Lip service?
- 49 Start of Caesar's boast
- 50 The Scarecrow's "viscera"
- 52 Mary's _The Mary Tyler Moore Show_ girlfriend
- 53 Film director Joseph
- 54 Lake ballet dancers
- 56 Gay Talese's "___ the Sons"
- 57 Have on too much perfume, e.g.
- 58 Some like it hot
- 59 The whole shebang
- 60 Not in the pink

Find solution to this puzzle at
www.pridesource.com



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Thank you for being one of the many customers who make up our thriving and diverse community. Kroger is proud to serve you and to support *Motor City Pride*.

