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Remembering Jeffrey Montgomery

N.C., Presidential Politics & HB2

Victory for Michigan LGBTQ Students



Idina Menzel, p. 26



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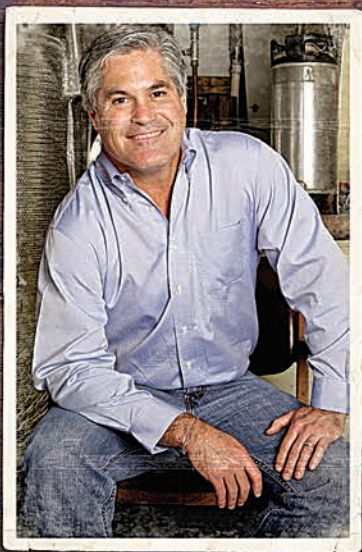


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20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association
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Q Syndicate



EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 12
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 24
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Senior News Editor

Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 10
kate@pridesource.com

Assistant Editor

Shelby Clark Petkus, shelby@pridesource.com

News Writers

Todd A. Heywood
Jason Michael
AJ Trager, ajtrager@pridesource.com

CREATIVE

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Contributing Writers

Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown,
Emell Derra Adolphus, Todd Heywood,
Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Amy Lynn Smith

Cartoonists

Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter
Alexander Godin

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 22
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 13
anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 16
donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Bullying Prevention Conference Coming Up

BY BTL STAFF

Bullying is not a “childhood rite of passage” as it was once viewed historically. Nor does bullying “make kids tougher.” In today’s society, the reality is that bullying has devastating effects on young people such as avoidance, loss of self-esteem, increased anxiety and depression, and sometimes suicide.

In an effort to educate and raise awareness about bullying prevention, the International Bullying Prevention Association will host Michigan’s first annual Bullying Prevention Conference on Oct. 1 at Beaumont Hospital’s Royal Oak Campus to coincide with National Bullying Prevention Month.

The campaign, held during the month of October, was founded in 2006 in the U.S. by PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center to unite communities nationwide.

Educators, counselors, parents and community agency staff from the Midwest region are encouraged to attend the conference to discuss bullying and peer aggression. Workshops will cover topics ranging from the legal aspects of bullying and identity-based bullying to the long-term impacts of bullying on health to best-practices for preventing and alleviating teasing, bullying and harassment. Strategies and solutions will be developed to take back to attendees schools and communities.

Patti Agatston, Ph.D., a national cyberbullying expert and IBPA president, and Anne Collier, founder of the iCanHelpLine, will open up the conference with a keynote and discussion on “Cyberbullying and Digital Citizenship Strategies.”

Jessie Fullenkamp, Youth Services Director of the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park will facilitate a session titled, “Recognizing

SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression) to Create Safety with Youth.”

The presentation will focus on the REC Family Acceptance Project’s research on the importance of primary caregivers demonstrating certain behaviors toward their LGBTQ child and reducing other behaviors to increase the child’s positive health and safety outcomes. The specific intersection of this presentation with bullying prevention is related to parents who often focus on attempts to get their LGBTQ child to conform being the answer to them not being bullied at school, when research shows the importance of LGBTQ children feeling safe being themselves paired with primary caregiver and school intervention to create a safer environment.

The conference is sponsored by Beaumont Children’s, NoBLE (No Bullying Live Empowered) and Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. Additional support comes from the Michigan Elementary and Secondary Principals Association.

Registration is \$25 per person and includes breakfast and lunch. Professional development credits are available. Principals, teachers, counselors, liaison officers, social workers, school board members and those working in community agencies are encouraged to attend.

For more information or to register for the conference, visit www.ibpaworld.org/mi.

The conference is preceded by a free event also at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak for parents and adult family members covering information and strategies specific to online safety. Karuna Nain, Facebook global safety manager, will present “Navigating the Social World with Your Teens – Insights from Facebook,” on Sept. 29 from 7-8 p.m. Registration is required online at <http://gaybe.am/bpc> for this event.

Ruth Ellis Center Hosts Family Support Training

BY BTL STAFF

DEARBORN – Compelling research on LGBTQ youth, young adults and families from the Family Acceptance Project has found that family acceptance helps promote well-being and protects against risk, while family rejection is related to serious health and mental health concerns. This includes suicidal behavior, depression, illegal drug use and HIV.

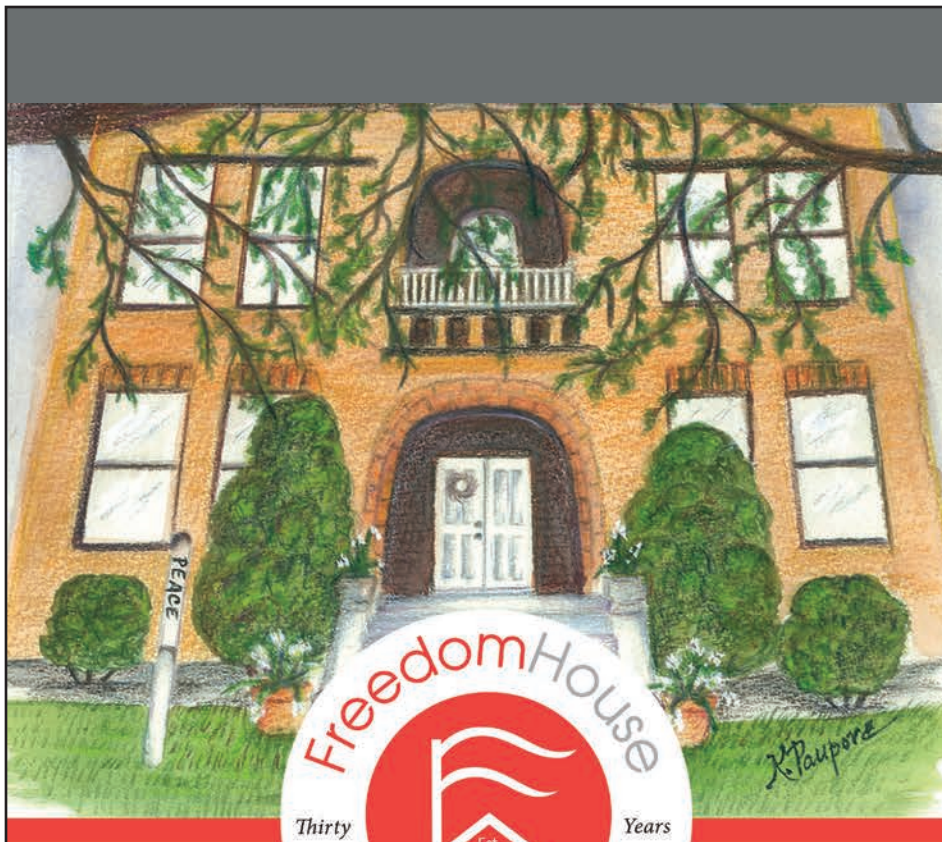
In addition, family conflict related to sexual orientation and gender identity can lead to homelessness and removal and ejection from the home. That’s why the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park is inviting health and mental health providers who work in schools and colleges, as well as those who provide family

and out-of-home services, to learn more about vital work to increase support to LGBTQ youth and their families.

Dr. Caitlin Ryan and her team at San Francisco State University have developed the first research-based family support approach to help prevent risk, promote well-being and positive adjustment for LGBTQ children, youth and young adults in the context of their families, cultures and faith communities.

Dr. Ryan will provide a one-day training, “The Critical Role of Family Support in Preventing Risk and Promoting Well-Being for LGBT Children and Youth,” on Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. to teach providers

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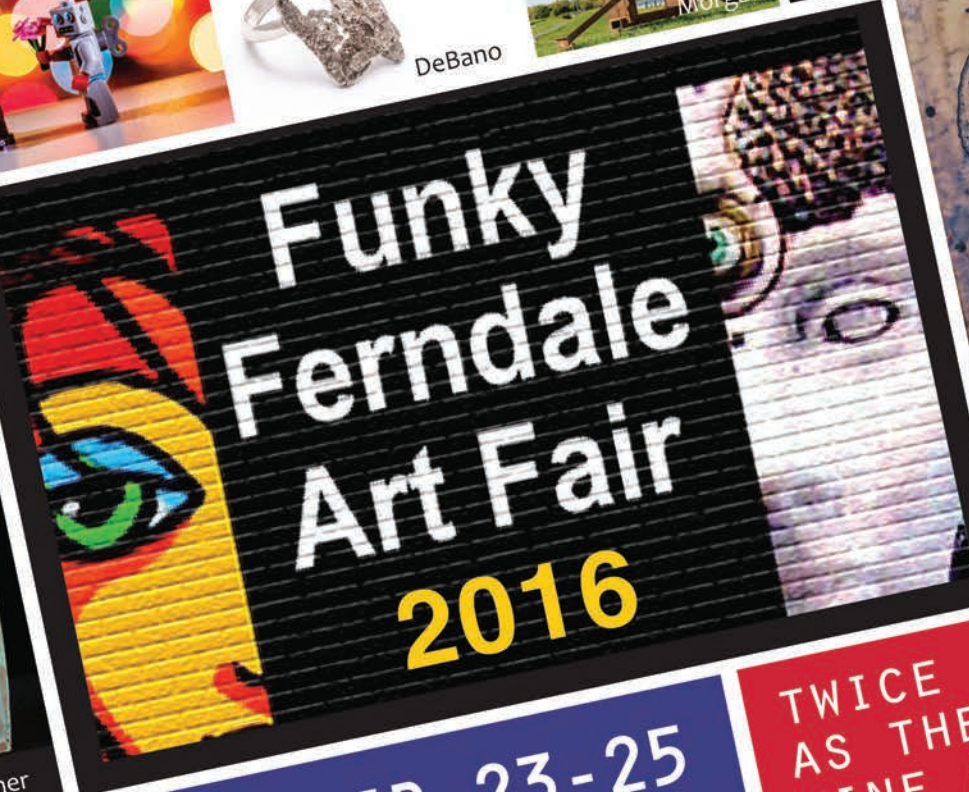
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Important Victory for LGBTQ Students and School Safety

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING – The State Board of Education voted 6-2 to adopt a guidance on how Michigan schools can create safe learning environments for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

“This guidance is the result of months of hard work by pro-equality advocates and organizations from across Michigan working together and speaking with one voice. It’s one more example of what our community can accomplish when we stand united in support of full equality,” said L. Michael Gipson, Deputy Director at Equality Michigan in a statement.

“At a time when far too many politicians are trying to score political points at the expense of the LGBTQ community, Equality Michigan commends the State Board, particularly President John Austin, for their unwavering support of this important guidance. When our opponents tried to threaten and intimidate these pro-equality public officials, they stood strong. The importance of their commitment cannot be overstated. As far too many of you are all too aware, anti-LGBTQ bullying, harassment, and violence are pervasive in our schools.”

The State Board of Education and the Michigan Department of Education developed the guidance at the request of schools and educators asking for recommendations of best practices in creating more supportive learning environments for LGBTQ students, who are at greater risk of suicide, and are not succeeding academically absent a supportive school environment.

The guidance received thousands of comments when it was first published, and resulted in hours of public, sometimes contentious, meetings of the State Board of Education. The controversy drew in lawmakers from both sides of the aisle as well.

Twenty-five Democratic lawmakers submitted a joint letter to the board on Tuesday evening.

After noting the horrendous health disparities between LGBTQ youth and their peers – which the lawmakers said “demand... action” – they went on to chastise those who opposed the guidance.

“Sadly, we watched as people who put political agendas before student safety rushed to condemn your proposed guidelines,” they wrote. “It must be noted that these fears are based on imagination, not fact. Local ordinances protect transgender people in more than 30 Michigan cities and townships, and there is no record of these laws resulting in unsafe bathrooms for cisgender (non-transgender) people. Concerns that your proposed policy would harm students are unfounded. We stand with the Board of



State Board of Education President John Austin (D-Ann Arbor) announced his running mate Ismael “Ish” Ahmed in August. Together, their education agenda is focused on how to make education in Michigan work for all students; whatever zip code they live in, whatever their race, color, creed, country of origin, gender identity or sexual orientation. BTL photo: Kate Opalewski

Education and your proposed guidelines. Every student deserves to thrive and succeed in an environment that demonstrates care and inclusion in their everyday educational experiences. This policy further increases the engagement and support students with marginalized identities deserve to ensure they are learning and growing in a healthy environment.”

In March, House Speaker Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant) told MLive.com the draft guidance would “eliminate parental authority,” as well as cause “privacy and safety concerns” for other youth in schools.

Not happy with just challenging the guidance, the GOP controlled House Appropriations Committee voted to strike all funding for the Board of Education for the budget, said Progress Michigan, a progressive advocacy group.

Gary Glenn, a Republican lawmaker from Midland and president of the virulently anti-LGBTQ equality, told the board Wednesday that the answer to safety concerns for transgender youth was the implementation of separate bathroom and other facilities.

“If a child is suffering from the delusion they are of the opposite sex, then I think the compassionate thing to do is allow them to use a restroom in privacy or a locker room in privacy,” Glenn said, according to the Detroit News, “rather than allow the 99 percent of children who don’t suffer this delusion to be

confronted with something that will put their modesty and privacy in question.”

State Rep. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) applauded the passage of the guidance. Then chastised opponents.

“Despite fear-mongering on the part some of the proposal’s detractors, these guidelines will increase – not decrease – student safety. It’s important for all LGBT students in our state to know that their safety and dignity are as important as any other student’s.”

The guidance document, according to the board, would not be mandated and local school districts would be making their own decisions



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– State Rep. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) applauded the passage of the guidance. Then chastised opponents.

on their local policies. The guidance would merely offer options for districts to consider, if they choose to. Local school districts each would decide to do what they believe is appropriate and helpful for all of their students.

The guidance shares best practices already in place at many schools across Michigan as they work to address concerns of academic achievement and safety for the nearly nine percent of Michigan students who identify as LGBT. Twelve percent of these students did not go to school in the past year, because they felt unsafe – twice the rate of straight students. Forty-six percent had grades that consisted mostly of C’s, D’s and F’s, again nearly double the number of heterosexual students with similarly poor academic performance. And most disturbingly, 29 percent of LGB students have attempted suicide in the last year, 4.5 times the rate for non-LGB students.

“Today’s vote sends a clear message about the kind of state Michigan is going to be,” said State Board of Education President John Austin. “The board members supporting this guidance showed that we’re serious about improving learning and life outcomes for all our school children, including LGBT children. We’re providing a roadmap for schools across Michigan to ensure that all our kids are safe in school and put in a position to succeed.”

The broad policy, first introduced in March and revised in August, includes guidelines on things such as allowing students to use restrooms based on their gender identity, ensuring staff are trained to address the issues facing such students, and supporting the creation of clubs such as gay-straight alliances. Educators also would be urged to allow students to be referred to by the name and gender of their preference while at school.

“This evening, we’re celebrating this important win, but there’s a great deal of work left to be done. We’ll need to work hard to ensure that these recommendations are implemented in local school districts across Michigan. We’ll need to remain vigilant and prepared to respond to legislators who oppose LGBTQ equality and who have already introduced two North Carolina-style bathroom inspection bills here in Michigan. We’ll need to build on today’s success to grow support for other pro-equality policies, including an all-important amendment to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to ban anti-LGBT discrimination,” said Gipson.

“I want to thank each and every one of you who sent an e-mail, made a call, or drove to Lansing to speak in support of this safe schools guidance. We could not have done this without you and you can be sure that we’ll be looking to you for that same energy and commitment in the fights to come.”

North Carolina Battles on Two Fronts

BY LISA KEEN

North Carolina is a battleground on two fronts these days: Over the state's recently enacted anti-LGBT law and over the political race for the White House. And at least one of those battles could come to a major turning point this week.

In a strange twist, North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory on Friday said he'd call a special session of the state legislature this week to consider repealing HB2, but only if the city of Charlotte first repealed its non-discrimination law. That law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as race, sex and other categories.

According to local news reports, McCrory's communication office issued this statement Friday:

"For the last nine months, the governor has consistently said state legislation is only needed if the Charlotte ordinance remains in place. If the Charlotte City Council totally repeals the ordinance and then we can confirm there is support to repeal among the majority of state lawmakers in the House and Senate, the governor will call a special session. It is the governor's understanding that legislative leaders and the lieutenant governor agree with



that assessment."

Charlotte City Council rejected a proposal in May where the legislature said it would "amend" HB2 in return for Charlotte's repeal of its non-discrimination law.

Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts issued a statement Monday morning (Sept. 19) that

left no impression the Council would consider repealing its ordinance.

"The City of Charlotte continues its commitment to be a welcoming community that honors and respects all people," said the statement from Roberts. "We appreciate the state wanting to find a solution to the

challenges we are facing and applaud the governor for recognizing the state should overturn HB2, which the state can do at any time without any action from the City of Charlotte. We are not prepared to add this item to our agenda this evening, however, we urge the state to take action as soon as possible and encourage continued dialogue with the broader community."

The statewide LGBT group Equality North Carolina and the national Human Rights Campaign issued statements Friday urging Charlotte to reject the proposal.

"It would require Charlotte to drop the very protections for the LGBTQ community that businesses, the NCAA and other organizations have now made clear are needed and are a priority," said JoDee Winterhof, an HRC senior vice president.

The ACLU and Lambda Legal also issued statements opposing the idea.

"The reason the NBA, NCAA and countless other groups and companies have refused to do business in North Carolina is because HB2 is an unprecedented and targeted attack on the LGBT community that is inconsistent with American values - not because Charlotte

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Montgomery Remembered as a 'Pioneer' at Service

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT – He was not only an activist and advocate for LGBT rights, he was a larger than life personality and a hero to many. About 150 people came out to the Wayne State University Community Arts Auditorium Saturday to remember Triangle Foundation co-founder Jeffrey Montgomery for his tireless work and wonderful wit.

"My Uncle Jeff was the best," said Lauren Montgomery. "He just was. He was charming and eloquent and funny and intelligent and wise and passionate...He was one of the smartest people I've ever known. He could just as easily talk about Shakespeare as he could talk about drag queens. And he would probably tell you that those two subjects weren't that far apart."

Talking is what Montgomery did best, according to Sue Hyde, the director of the annual Creating Change Conference produced by the National LGBTQ Task Force.

"What I loved most about Jeff was his career as a professional talker," Hyde said. "Jeff could talk a Scotsman out of penny. He could talk a dog out of a meat truck. And then both the Scotsman and dog would attest that they had cheerfully given up the penny and the meat."

"He'll be remembered always for his tenacious, persistent, determined talking, also known as advocacy," Hyde continued. "But [he'll be remembered for] not just his perseverance but also his great gift for speaking truth to power - for never giving an inch to bad excuses for non-action. Jeff dogged the district attorneys, the police, the media and elected officials so that they would take seriously the plague of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. He was fearless and relentless in his dedication to ending bias violence against us."

Montgomery's lengthy list of accomplishments was constantly put on full display throughout the service, from his co-founding of the Triangle Foundation to his work with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the Woodhull



Jeffrey Montgomery's older brother James led the service on Saturday. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

“He'll be remembered always for his tenacious, persistent, determined talking, also known as advocacy.”

– Sue Hyde, director Creating Change Conference

Freedom Foundation. One of his most noticeable accomplishments, Hyde said, was becoming an expert on the use of the so-called "homosexual panic" defense that was once commonly used in the trials of men who killed gay men.

"Through the Jonathan Schmitz murder trial for the killing of Scott Amedure - the Jenny Jones Show murder case - to the trial of the

killers of Matthew Shepard, Jeff Montgomery took the stand in the court of public opinion to disarm and neutralize the homo panic defense over and over to anyone who would listen," said Hyde. "Jeff said it is not homosexual panic that drives the murder of gay men it is homophobia and homo hate that motivates our killings."

For Montgomery, his activism in the LGBT community began following the 1984 shooting death of his lover Michael outside a gay bar in Detroit. Montgomery was talking publicly about LGBT rights and issues in metro Detroit when few others were.

"He was the lone voice for our community for a long time, at least from my vantage point," said activist Kofi Adoma. "Back in those days that took courage. He took his work seriously and he showed me just how to steer my passion for social justice into something that could change people's lives. He taught me not to be afraid of who I was and to stand up. He taught me not to allow the heterocentric

For Jeffrey Montgomery, his activism in the LGBT community began following the 1984 shooting death of his lover Michael outside a gay bar in Detroit.

system to make our community invisible.

"It has been an honor to know him," Adoma continued. "In my eyes he was a pioneer who had some wonderfully powerful resilience going on. He just kept on going."

But behind the activism was a man fiercely devoted to his family, said older brother James Montgomery.

"During the toughest period of my life, during a personal crisis...he was there for me every day. He took every phone call. He gave me sage advice. He made me understand that the sorrow and pain I was going through could be overcome. He made me realize that if I could only live in the present I could actually create my own future."

Niece Shannon Montgomery Wilkinson said that growing up her uncle was the star of the family.

"Jeff had the kind of presence that took up an entire room," Montgomery Wilkinson said. "He was always the center of attention with his sharp wit, deep laugh and brilliant smile. As his health started to get the best of him it was hard to see this larger than life man slowed down by the realities of humanity."

Adriel Thornton, who Montgomery personally convinced to join the Triangle board, said his mentor's influence will live on.

"Myself and everyone behind me owes Jeff Montgomery an immeasurable amount of gratitude for being that guy who stood and took those barrels for us and took those gunshots for us," Thornton said. "He took that hate and he literally was on the cross for us. I'll never forget him and I'll be forever grateful."

► REC

Continued from p. 4

about her efforts to decrease family rejection, and increase family acceptance, support and connection between children and youth who identify as LGBTQ, their families and caregivers to prevent risk and promote well-being. This event is hosted by REC with the

support of the Virtual Center for Excellence.

"The impact of this work is at the heart of the Ruth Ellis Center's mission and we have been privileged to work with Dr. Ryan, in particular, on our Family Preservation program through Family Group Decision Making which focuses on safety with LGBTQ youth while increasing the likelihood they can stay with their parents or primary caregiver in the home," REC Executive Director Jerry Peterson said.

Ryan is a clinical social worker who has worked on LGBT health and mental health for more than 40 years, with a focus on LGBT children and adolescents. The Family Acceptance Project's family support model was designed to be used in all systems – in families, primary care, behavioral health and mental health services, school-based services, out-of-home services and pastoral care.

"We hope you will join us for this day of interactive learning geared toward providers

at every level, in various systems of care, all invested in the safety and well-being of LGBTQ youth," Peterson said.

Pre-registration online is required for the training at the Fairlane Club, 5000 Fairlane Woods Drive in Dearborn. There is no fee and continuing education credits are available. For questions about this training, contact Carolyn at cmiranda@vceonline.org or call 734-785-7705, ext 7271.

commendably decided to protect LGBT people from discrimination,” said Simone Bell, the Southern Regional Director for Lambda Legal.

Meanwhile, the state is still wincing as major corporations and events pulled out of the state, citing their opposition to HB2. Just this month, both the NCAA and the ACC college athletic organizations announced they would not hold championship tournaments in North Carolina. Those announcements set off a political earthquake in the state which was already reeling from a wave of cancellations from classic to pop concerts, to travel by employees from New York and other states, to more than 60 major corporations filing statements in opposition to HB2 and, in many cases, putting a halt on plans for conferences or to build in the state. Wired magazine estimates the state has already lost almost \$400 million because of the law. The NCAA and ACC decisions alone cost North Carolina more than \$90 million, says Wired.

Not surprisingly, then, Gov. McCrory is racing to find a way to stop further damage.

Earlier in the month, he asked a federal district court judge to delay the trial challenging HB2 from November until May, noting that the U.S. Supreme Court might take up a similar case from Virginia. Lambda Legal’s national legal director, Jon Davidson, said his group agreed to the delay after the federal court granted a stay of the law as it applies to transgender people at the University of North Carolina.

On Friday, McCrory dropped one of his two counter lawsuits and issued the statement hoping to persuade Charlotte to repeal its law so the state could declare HB2 no longer necessary.

The law, enacted last March, bars any local jurisdiction (not just Charlotte) from passing non-discrimination laws that exceed state law (and state law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity). More notoriously, HB2 also bans transgender people from using any public restroom other than one assigned to a gender that matches their birth certificate.

Presidential Politics

Add to the economic and legal turmoil, the fact that North Carolina is one of 12 states where pollsters are uncertain how it will vote in the presidential election, and the implications of HB2 become even more dramatic.

Democrat Hillary Clinton has spoken out clearly against the law. Republican Donald Trump has sent mixed signals.

Speaking to a campaign audience in Greensboro, North Carolina Thursday, Clinton

The law, enacted last March, bars any local jurisdiction (not just Charlotte) from passing non-discrimination laws that exceed state law (and state law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity). More notoriously, HB2 also bans transgender people from using any public restroom other than one assigned to a gender that matches their birth certificate.

said, “I’m running for the LGBT teenager here in North Carolina who sees your governor sign a bill legalizing discrimination and suddenly feels like a second-class citizen.”

In her remarks, at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, she said she wanted to “make sure every person and, particularly, every child, no matter who they are, what they look like, or who they love, are part of the American dream now and way into the future. Let that be our message. Let that be our mission.” (Video of her remarks is available from the Greensboro News & Record.

Trump initially said North Carolina would have “a lot of problems” for passing HB2 and suggested it was unnecessary. “There has been so little trouble” regarding the use of bathrooms, he told the Today Show April 21. But over time, he’s said the issue should be left to the individual states. Asked about it in July, Trump told the News & Observer, “Well, I’m going with the state. The state knows what’s going on. They see what’s happening and, generally speaking, I’m with the state on things like this.

As of Sept. 15, openly gay electoral data guru Nate Silver was predicting North Carolina to be leaning slightly toward Trump, 53 percent to 47 percent. Silver also dramatically downgraded Clinton’s chances of winning the White House - from 70 percent to 60 percent, following her previous weekend’s woes. On Sept. 9, Clinton described some of Trump’s supporters as a “basket of deplorables,” a phrase that the Trump campaign meant Clinton thinks all Americans are deplorable. Two days later, Clinton collapsed outside a 9/11 memorial services and then took three days off to recover from pneumonia.

Analyzing many polls, Silver sees the state has being the fourth most likely to provide the “tipping” point in the Nov. 8 election (behind Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio).

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Faith Community Offers Hope to Transgender People

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

What the world needs right now are people of faith. That's what Rev. Rodney McKenzie, Jr. preached to around 80 people who gathered for the "Faith Allies for Trans Lives: Stand Up for Justice" event on Sept. 17 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brighton.

"Our work right now is needed more than ever... a time when politicians say trans people can't use bathrooms or when faith is used to hide discrimination. What we're saying is not today, not on our watch, not in our faith, not our government, not our divine spirit, not our truth, not our justice, not our liberation," said McKenzie, Jr., who is the Director of Academy for Leadership and Action with the National LGBTQ Task Force.

The conference and training, hosted by Inclusive Justice and the Task Force, aims to establish relationships between group leaders and members of the community to begin building a statewide faith network dedicated to justice and the full inclusion of LGBT people in congregations and in society-at-large.

The focus was on transgender, genderqueer and genderfluid people who are still in an "urgent and desperate" battle for their lives, according to Rev. Dr. Julie Nemecek, a nationally-recognized transgender activist, speaker, elder and minister. Nemecek said "We've come a long way baby, but we're not there yet." She explained that backlash can be expected when progress is made for marginalized and oppressed people, but she offered some solutions on the upward struggle to equality.

"Know where candidates stand on LGBT issues and vote accordingly... build relationships with local legislators to make yourself known so when anti-transgender bills come up, those legislators will see your face," she said about the executive and legislative battlegrounds. As far as the judicial branch is concerned, Nemecek seems confident transgender rights will be upheld moving forward despite the recent setback in the EEOC v. R.G. & G.R Harris Funeral Homes case. Nemecek said she believes that decision will be overturned, referencing victorious cases such as Smith v. Salem and Barnes v. City of Cincinnati, which have set precedents in courts across the country.

"Change is happening. It's not easy, but it's happening," she said about the many houses of worship that are beginning to understand what a spiritual experience coming out can be for many in the LGBT community.

The church sanctuary was filled with hope as Nemecek armed attendees with the most



Members of the Inclusive Justice board Jim Toy, Rev. Mike Cooper, Linda Haywood, Rev. Joseph Summers, Rev. Beth Rakestraw and Rev. Peg Faulmann host the "Faith Allies for Trans Live: Stand Up for Justice" event on Sept. 17 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brighton. BTL photo: Kate Opalewski

powerful, research-based and easily accessible weapons they have. Their stories.

"Your story matters. Tell your story, often, to anyone who will listen, and to those that follow after you, you will be a hero," she said. "Because what changes hearts and minds are personal stories."

Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) made it clear why that's true. "It's easy to hate an idea, it takes a lot more to hate a person, especially when you know them," he said.

Hoadley started the day "intimidated and excited" to be at the event sharing a story of his own. "I want to challenge myself to do something that is still not always the most natural part of who I am," he said before boldly talking about his faith.

Born and raised in South Dakota by a strong Catholic family, Hoadley said he struggled with his faith and his relationship with God during his adolescent years. While prepping for Confirmation in the eighth grade, he was earnestly looking for answers about his sexuality when his priest did not seem ready to engage deeply in those kinds of conversations.

"I was not confident in myself enough to say

'because I'm gay,' that I have some questions about how does my lived experience intersect with my faith. Instead, I said I don't understand where the church is coming from on some of these issues. Sort of dipping my toe into that water," he said.

When given a chance to ask questions about social wedge issues, such as abortion, euthanasia and gay marriage, all of which were part of his curriculum, his priest said, "Let's just pray instead."

Looking back, Hoadley said, "I don't know if maybe that was a way to open up dialogue or not, but it's not what I needed to hear in that moment."

So, he hit the pause button on his faith until 2009 while working on the One Kalamazoo campaign which helped Kalamazoo become the 16th city in Michigan to adopt an anti-discrimination ordinance.

For a number of reasons, Hoadley felt a strong pull to the First Congressional United Church of Christ in Kalamazoo where he showed up on All Saints Day, Nov. 1.

"I remember being so overwhelmed about being reconnected to such an integral part of

who I am," he said. "The organ was playing, I was thinking of my grandmother who passed, thinking of all that time I didn't get to spend in spaces like this because someone, myself or others, had created these barriers... I found myself during that service just crying, being overwhelmed, but also knew that that's exactly where I needed to be."

Just as Hoadley was exactly where he needed to be the day of the conference to remind people that telling their stories in the light and out loud matters.

"We're creating paths that will make it easier for someone to walk in the path behind us. The fact that someone else may have a slightly lighter load in this millennia-old task of coming of age, of figuring out who we are, of figuring out how to be our authentic selves means that the work that we're doing today matters," he said. "So part of what we have to do now is to celebrate who we are and our lives and our families and our love. To celebrate our faith out loud in Michigan in our hometowns, because when we live our lives authentically, it allows other people simply

See next page



Stephanie Lange speaks to trans justice conference attendees during a panel discussion with Seth Carwyn, Deanna Hurlbert, Jacie Sanders and Rev. Dr. Julie Nemecek.

just to be themselves. I know that it doesn't come easy, but that means the work is even more important."

Some of the people leading the work included founder of Stand with Trans Roz Gould Keith; State Board of Education President John Austin; transgender activist and speaker Seth Carwyn; Blue Water Unity Church Administrative Director Jacie Sanders; Task Force Faith and States Organizing Manager Kathleen Campisano; and well-respected transgender advocate Char Davenport.

On the panel, Deanna Hurlbert, director of Michigan State University's LGBTQ Resource Center, drew attention to a change in language that is confusing for some people.

"What we know about our sexuality, about our sex, our physical bodies as human beings and gender has changed radically. Gender and sexual difference has always been with us and a part of us. We now have language to describe ways of being different in terms of gender," she said about her efforts to educate people on the issue of gender-neutral pronouns and inclusive language.

Hurlbert also made a valid point about school-based sex education programs, calling them "essentially plumbing class."

"Insert tab A into slot B, get child C. If you don't want child C, don't put tab A into slot b. Until the foundational nature of the education we get about gender and sexuality changes, this is going to be a massive challenge... especially for those children who can't find themselves in the textbooks or represented in the world around them," she said.

Perhaps this will change sooner than later considering the big win for the LGBT community on Sept. 14 when the State Board of Education voted to adopt guidance on how Michigan schools can create safe learning environments for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Stephanie Lange, Student Assistant Specialist and Reproductive Health Supervisor in the Chippewa Valley School District said first we have to present fact-based material that isn't confrontational or debatable. Otherwise, she said, if a teacher does not agree or feels uncomfortable with the information, they will not teach it even if it is mandated.

All the more reason for transgender students, parents and allies to encourage dialogue within their school settings. Lange started a conversation in her school district when she shared her story about her transgender son. She is one of the lucky ones to work with a loving and affirming group of people who embraced and supported her during that time.

"All of the things I was afraid of never happened," she said, and to prevent others from feeling afraid, she and her mother, Penny Hader, recently established transgender youth and family



Rev. Deon K. Johnson and Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo), represent joy and possibility for the LGBT community. BTL photo: Kate Opalewski

support groups to fill a need in Macomb County.

And to think, there was a time when Lange admitted she thought having a transgender son was the worst thing that ever happened to her.

"It's not. It's amazing. This is going to be the wildest ride of my life... I love my child and my child is the same human being they were five minutes before they sat on my bed and said they were a boy. I'm going to tell that to anybody that cares," she said. "Because we have to love these kids. They need help. They need us to love them no matter what."

For more information about *Inclusive Justice*, visit their website www.inclusivejustice.org. Contact the National LGBTQ Task Force online www.thetaskforce.org to learn more about their efforts.

Transgender Organizations in Michigan

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Transgender Connect
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Ellen Bommarito LGBT Center,
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Flint, MI 48502
810-766-6606
www.umflint.edu/lgbt

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Detroit, MI 48201
313-578-6800
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Five Arfs & a Who Cares? Purr

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

A federally funded study by People & Friends of Cats and Dogs (P-FCD) reports that “persons of rainbow personality make the best dog owners, but have little influence on cats, although this should not be misconstrued as homophobia on the part of America’s feline population.”

The P-FCD Study – “Are American Pets at Risk with Gay/Lesbian Owners?” – finds that “dogs owned by LGBT people are happier, better mannered, more likely to heel and to fetch than dogs reared by straights. They shed less – the dogs, not the heterosexuals – during summer months, and do their gender sniffing and hydrant marking in a covert, more decorous manner.”

Interestingly too is the study’s finding that most breeds – with the exception of Pekingese, Chihuahuas and Dachshunds – show marked sporting instincts: catching Frisbees, treeing squirrels, chasing unmarked police cars, and guarding unattended U-Hauls when raised by lesbians.

“Rottweilers, when dyke raised, tend to be a one-owner breed. They are loyal to a fault. (The dogs, not the dykes.) Curiously, Pit bulls become remarkably docile when trained by lipstick lesbian owners in suburban settings.

It’s determined that cats raised by LGBT people are just as likely to be as independent as cats raised by straights.

“Breeds raised by gay men seldom bark, or if they do, it’s barking in quieter tones, and are less likely to eat ill-prepared dinner scraps or TV frozen dinner leftovers. They also show a preference for dog houses that are painted in warmer tones and edged with white lattice work. Collars are preferred with sequins and, in leather outings, studs or spikes.”

The old saying, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks!,” has been proven “to be utterly false and denigrating to aging canine populations. Old dogs – with gay owners as role models – are actually remarkably adept at doing new tricks.”

A big study disappointment is with finicky cat populations. It’s determined that cats raised by LGBT people are just as likely to be as independent as cats raised by straights. “The truth is that cats just don’t give a rat’s winkie if you’re straight or gay. If you feed them on time, they just couldn’t care less. And whatever you do, don’t smoke their catnip around them. And please leave their fur balls alone.”

There is a note of progress, however. For some reason “alley cats seem to live longer when kept by gay, single males. This applies whether neutered or not neutered.” (The cats, not the single males.)

Not everyone is pleased with the P-FCD findings. The Family Way, a right-wing, vigilante organization headquartered in Free-Fall, Montana, expresses outrage at the P-FCD in its monthly newsletter, “The Litter Box.” (Editorial correction: That should be Letter.)

“The Gay Agenda stops at nothing,” opines the editorial. “Not only do they want special political rights, the right to marry and to adopt children, now they want to raise America’s wagtail majority – our innocent dogs and cats – as same-sex, house-broken pets. Maybe a dry-blown, perfumed poodle or two, but not a born-again Boxer. Never!”

The editorial ends with the usual request for money in the “cultural war to save our four-footed friends from a life of pampering and eternal perdition. Heaven loves a cheerful benefactor.” How true!

Give a pup or kitten a loving home in 2016. Call the Michigan Humane Society today. Happy Arf! Mary Meow! And a Perverted Purr!

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Viewpoint



Thinking for Ourselves

Radical Legacy: Jeffery Montgomery 1953-2016

BY SHEA HOWELL

About 150 people gathered to remember Jeffery Montgomery on Sept. 17 on the Wayne State University campus. Jeff died on July 18, shortly after the annual Motor City Gay Pride event he championed.

Jeff was a leading voice demanding dignity for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people from the mid 1980s through the beginning of the 21st century. Often he was the lone voice in a hostile world.

After his partner Michael was shot to death in front of a gay bar in 1984 Jeff turned grief and anger into activism. The police had told Jeff they had no intention of investigating the murder. It was just another gay killing.

Jeff refused to accept this. From that day on he devoted his considerable intellect, energy, and humor to challenging the police, state law-makers, and ultimately the federal government.

I loved Jeff for his commitment and courage and for his confidence that people could be better. We worked closely together shortly after he co-founded the Triangle foundation in 1991.

We shared an appreciation for the radical tradition in America. I still vividly remember the first time I visited his apartment. Hanging in a place of honor above the fireplace was a framed covers of the graphic socialist magazine, Masses.

Masses was published between 1911 and 1917 when it was shut down by the government for encouraging people to refuse to be drafted. Jeff’s grandfather had been a contributor to the magazine and was a well-known member of the Detroit Socialist Party. It was a history that delighted Jeff. He kept a copy of the Masses credo that declared:

A Free Magazine – This magazine is owned and published cooperatively by its editors. It has no dividends to pay, and nobody is trying to make money out of it. A revolutionary and not a reform magazine; a magazine with a sense of humour and no respect for the respectable; frank; arrogant; impertinent; searching for true causes; a magazine directed against rigidity and dogma wherever it is found; printing what is too naked or true for a money-making press; a magazine whose final policy is to do as

See Howell: Thinking for Ourselves, next page

What an Alt-Right Government Would Look Like, Just Check Out Michigan

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Want to know what the U.S. would look like under a Donald Trump presidency informed by the Alt Right movement? You don't have to go much further than the Michigan legislature to get a taste of the insanity that will rain down upon us for four years.

First, let's define the Alt-Right movement and why it is key to Trump's ascension in the polls. Alt-Right is, at its heart, a white nationalist movement. Breitbart.com reported in March that there are four general categories of alt-right adherents. It dismisses the obvious white nationalists – the neo-nazis calling for race wars, though they have issued their support for Trump in many areas across the country – calling them the 1488ers. The other groups they identify are: the Meme Warriors – which they say are millennials hell bent on sacrificing all the sacred cows of American culture – The Intellectuals, who have laid the foundational thought for alt-right thinking; and the Natural Conservatives. It is the Natural Conservatives they hone in on, noting them as tribalists fearful of shifting racial demographics – witnessed by their support of immigration reforms which ban specific groups from immigrating to the U.S. and crack down on those already in the country without documentation.

So how in the devil's hell could one argue that Michigan's legislature is an example of Alt-Right politics at play?

In 2010, The GOP grabbed control of the State House and the Governor's office. Combined with the 2/3 control of the Senate, the GOP controlled the entire state government apparatus. This was the effect of the so-called Tea Party movement. And that movement, while painted as a grassroots movement for patriotism, was in fact the first time we saw alt-rightism grow in popular power in America.

Ostensibly opponents hated the overreach of government (well, except when it benefits corporations and specific brands of Christian thought), but their rhetoric challenged Barack Obama – from his citizenship to his legitimacy. Why? Because he was black and had an alien sounding name. On the campaign trail in 2008, opponents called him a terrorist. Even today, he stands accused regularly of sympathy and support of the Muslim Brotherhood – an allegation without fact. Hell, Trump himself did not acknowledge Obama was, in fact, an American citizen until last week.

But the seeds of the radical reworking of the Party of Lincoln were sown in Michigan years earlier. Of course, there is the rise of Ronald

See Heywood: [Alt-Right Government](#), page 17

► Howell: Thinking for Ourselves

Continued from p. 12

it pleases and conciliate nobody, not even its readers – There is a field for this publication in America. Help us to find it.

It was a statement that captured much of how Jeff lived his life.

In the early 1990's he helped forge the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. It recorded crimes against LGBTQ people in cities across the country. This work became the basis of national hate crimes legislation and challenged the idea that LGBTG people were disposable.

Jeff became a leading voice challenging the "homosexual panic" defense. This was a strategy arguing that killing a person who is LGBTQ is excusable. People panic in the mere presence of someone who is gay. Jeff's insistence on our shared humanity and searing arguments shattered this idea. He helped convict Jonathan Schmitz who murdered Scott Amadure in Oakland County in 1995. Amadure had revealed on the nationally televised Jenny Jones show that he had a secret crush on Schmitz. A few days later, Schmitz shot him.

Jeff became a leading voice challenging the "homosexual panic" defense. This was a strategy arguing that killing a person who is LGBTQ is excusable.

It was Jeff's voice that helped the country come to terms with the killing of Mathew Shepard. He publically supported the prosecution and helped eliminate the panic defense. Meanwhile, he privately helped Mathew's family come to terms with their grief.

Confronting the daily cruelties of America took a heavy toll on Jeff. He struggled most of his life against its pull.

Jeff's life affirms the power of people to create change. But it also cries out for us to acknowledge that those who refuse to conciliate, who fight for basic dignity, become wounded in the battle. As we see a new generation of warriors emerging, we all need to make sure their lives not only matter but are filled with love.

Creep of the Week

Pat McCrory

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Hey, remember that anti-gay law in North Carolina, HB2 (which stands for "hate & bullshit")? Well gosh darn, the whole thing just doesn't seem to be going very well for them.

Just in case you're not up to speed, HB2 is that law that seeks to force trans men and women to use only public restrooms that match the gender on their birth certificates, not their actual gender identities. The bill also nullifies any laws that seek to ban anti-LGBT discrimination. In other words, HB2 makes it illegal to make anti-LGBT discrimination illegal.

In a "who could have possibly seen this coming unless their eyes were blinded by hate," the backlash against the state was swift. The Department of Justice is all, "Oh, hi. Just so you know, HB2 violates a little thing called the Civil Rights Act" which could cost the state lots of federal education dollars.

Tourism, businesses, the NCAA and ACC (no sportz ball for bigots!), and even Bruce Springsteen ("Some things are more important than a rock show and this fight against prejudice and bigotry ... is one of them," Springsteen wrote) canceled, fled, and/or ceased plans for expansion. It does not pay, literally and figuratively, to discriminate.

In fact, according to Wired magazine, "[T]he total cost to North Carolinians so far from HB2 protests is slightly more than \$395 million." That's a lot of millions.

North Carolinians aren't super happy about this huge bill, by the way. The majority of them want HB2 repealed.

Thankfully, the state's governor, Pat McCrory, has finally seen the light. If there's one thing Republicans love more than discrimination against minorities, it's money. And so McCrory has offered to flush HB2 down the toilet of history, no strings attached.

Ha ha. JK.

Actually McCrory is willing to back a repeal of HB2 only if the city of Charlotte agrees to repeal its LGBT rights ordinance,

As for common sense, give me a break. Dude: you signed a bill that has resulted in your state hemorrhaging nearly \$400,000,000 and counting. You diverted a half a million dollars from disaster relief to pay for HB2-related legal bills.

which protects LGBT people from discrimination, including discrimination in public restrooms. HB2 was passed as retaliation against Charlotte for daring to protect all of its residents.

But Charlotte's mayor and city council are all, "Nope." And McCrory is pissed.

McCrory said in a statement, "Despite offering a very reasonable solution and compromise for North Carolina, it's obvious that D.C. special interest political pressures on elected Charlotte city officials – and even our own attorney general – again derailed common sense."

Note that the state's attorney general, Roy Cooper, is a Democrat who refuses to defend HB2 and is running against McCrory to become governor, which is why McCrory's snit includes him specifically.

But let's unpack McCrory's big heap-o-bullshit response a bit more. First of all, McCrory's use of the words "reasonable" and "solution" and "compromise" is disingenuous at best. "Delusional" is more like it.

Secondly, only a man completely out of touch and/or without a heart thinks that LGBT people are a faceless big pressure "D.C. special interest" group and not, you know, human beings.

As for common sense, give me a break. Dude: you signed a bill that has resulted in your state hemorrhaging nearly \$400,000,000 and counting. You diverted a half a million dollars from disaster relief to pay for HB2-related legal bills. You don't get a say in "sense," common or otherwise.

While McCrory may not have the power of common sense, he does have the power to call for a special session of the legislature to repeal HB2. And here's the thing: even if Charlotte did say, "Oh, okay. We hate LGBT people too, now," there's no guarantee that HB2 would get the ax. But McCrory should. May the voters of North Carolina enact the very reasonable solution of voting him out of office.

Upcoming Oakland County Clerk Lisa Brown Fundraiser Honors Commitment to Marriage Equality

BY BTL STAFF

As the Oakland County Clerk, Lisa Brown is known for her commitment to working for all citizens in the community. That includes LGBT citizens.

Brown was a defendant in the federal lawsuit, *DeBoer v. Snyder*, in which April and Jayne DeBoer-Rowse challenged Michigan's denial of adoption and marriage rights to same-sex couples. Named as a defendant because her office is responsible for issuing marriage licenses, Brown supported the plaintiffs, testifying in March 2014, and expressed her eagerness to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples as soon as the law allowed.

"It was my honor to be a part of history. Marriage equality is a great step forward but there is still much to be done. I will never stop fighting to preserve people's basic rights, making sure elections are conducted fairly, and protecting citizens and taxpayer dollars," Brown said.

She received 81 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary race in August. In November's general election, Brown will face former Oakland County clerk and long-time GOP politician Bill Bullard, Jr.

To say thank you and show support for Brown, an LGBT fundraiser will be held in her honor on Sept. 28 at 7 p.m. at Planterra, 7315 Drake Rd. in West Bloomfield.

The event is hosted by several leaders in the LGBT community including Jan Stevenson and Susan Horowitz, Mark LaChey and Bryan Hoffman, Nancy Katz and Margo Dichtelmiller, Michelle Walters and Suzanne Wait, Tom Hitchman and Keith Hewitt, Amanda and Kay Shelton, Stephanie and Emma White, Rep. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), and Southfield Mayor Ken Siver. Special guests, the DeBoer-Rowse couple, will also attend.

Shane Pliska, president of Planterra and son of founders, Larry and Carol Pliska, said he appreciates having this event at his LGBT-friendly wedding venue and botanical garden that welcomes a diverse group of people for non-denominational ceremonies or garden parties.

"Lisa Brown is a forward thinking individual. She agrees that gay marriage



Paul Kittinger and his partner, Brian Vargo were married at Planterra this year. Planterra will host the Lisa Brown fundraiser Sept. 28. Photo credit: Marek Dziekonski



Oakland County Clerk, Lisa Brown, left, in March 22, 2014, signing the first marriage certificate issued in Oakland County that historic day to James Ryder and Frank Colasonti, Jr. BTL publishers Susan Horowitz and Jan Stevenson served as witnesses. BTL file photo: Andrew Potter

is good for Oakland County...that it's not only important for civil liberties, but it's good for business too. Lisa is business-friendly, as well as conscious of the social responsibilities that go with her job," he said.

The Pliska family imported the botanical garden building from Izegem, Belgium, where glass and iron greenhouse structures are crafted in the tradition of Baron Haussmann's

Parisian arcades. This 23,000-square-foot feat of architecture design was sent in pieces to be reconstructed. Benelux is the horticulture capital of the world and the reconstruction was extremely precise, down to the millimeter. The building devotes 11,000-square-feet to a collection of unique botanicals and is open year-round to the public for retail sales.

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Kevin Kresch at 248-953-1050 or email lisa4countyclerk@gmail.com. For those who are unable to attend the event, but want to support Brown, visit her website or make checks payable to Lisa Brown for County Clerk and mail to P.O. Box 251552, West Bloomfield, MI 48325.

To say thank you and show support for Lisa Brown, an LGBT fundraiser will be held in her honor on Sept. 28.

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Marketing and Social Media Strategies Focus at DRLGBTCC Mixer

FERNDALE - Farmington Hills-based Marx Layne & Company will host the next Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce Membership Mixer from 6:30 - 8 p.m. on Sept. 29 at Affirmations in Ferndale. The event, which is open to DRLGBTCC members and non-members alike, will include a business networking reception followed by a Marx Layne & Company presentation regarding marketing and social media strategies for business success.

"The Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce is proud to host a variety of events throughout the calendar year that help our membership build stronger and more effective business practices," said DRLGBTCC President Kevin Heard. "We would like to thank Marx Layne & Company for hosting our event and providing a meaningful learning opportunity for business leaders who are interested in building their brand and engaging key stakeholders."

Marx Layne & Company Vice President and DRLGBTCC Board Member Michael Odom as well as Senior Account Executive Lynn Haliburton will lead the presentation. From media relations and effective networking to

social media and stakeholder engagement, attendees will learn valuable marketing and public relations strategies to better position their businesses in the marketplace. Light refreshments will be served.

"For nearly 30 years, Marx Layne & Company has been an effective partner to a variety of businesses from small nonprofits to Fortune 500 companies," said Odom. "We are proud to support the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce and its membership by giving attendees an overview on strategies to reach and surpass their marketing and social media goals."

The event is free of charge for all DRLGBTCC members and there is a \$5 fee for non-members. To register for the event, contact Kevin Heard at 313-673-3001 or via email at info@detroitlgbtchamber.com. Founded in 2013, the DRLGBTCC strives to promote and empower its metropolitan Detroit LGBT, allied business members, nonprofit members, corporate partners and their employees. For more information about the DRLGBTCC, visit www.detroitlgbtchamber.com.

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Trump Sparks Concern, Suspicion Among LGBT Russians

GOP Nominee 'an emotionally needy, malignant narcissist'

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

Donald Trump's praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin has sparked concern and suspicion among LGBT Russians and their allies.

Elvina Yuvakaeva, a Russian LGBT rights activist who is a member of the Russian LGBT Sports Federation, told the Washington Blade on Sept. 13 in an email that Trump and Putin "don't care about LGBT rights at all."

"Putin doesn't mind LGBT rights at all," she said. "He just manipulates them for the sake of implementing his current political agenda."

"It is the same with Trump," added Yuvakaeva. "If speaking out for LGBT [rights] provides a benefit, he speaks out. If a statement against LGBT [rights] is useful, he makes it."

Yuvakaeva spoke with the Blade hours after President Obama criticized Trump for praising Putin.

"I have to do business with Putin," said Obama during a Hillary Clinton campaign rally in Philadelphia. "I have to do business with Russia – that's part of foreign policy – but I don't go around saying, 'That's my role model.'"

Larry King's interview with Trump aired on the Kremlin-owned RT America last week.

The Independent reported that Putin described Trump as an "outstanding" man and an "absolute leader in the (U.S.) presidential race" during a December 2015 press conference. Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chair who resigned last month, has ties to former Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich and other pro-Russian politicians in the country.

"As a KGB man, Putin reads people exceptionally well," said James Kirchick, a gay journalist who frequently criticizes Putin and Trump. "He could tell from thousands of miles away that Trump is an emotionally needy, malignant narcissist and that flattery would win him over."

"Trump is such an egomaniac that he will put his craving for praise before the interests of his own country," added Kirchick.

Trump criticized propaganda law before 2013 pageant

Putin sparked outrage among LGBT rights activists in Russia and around the world in 2013 when he signed a law banning the promotion of so-called gay propaganda to minors. The statute took effect less than six months before the Miss Universe 2013 pageant took place in Moscow.

Trump, who co-owned the pageant at



Elvina Yuvakaeva speaks on Capitol Hill in 2013. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key



Donald Trump's praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin has sparked criticism. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

Trump said in a speech he gave in Ohio last month his administration would require potential immigrants to the U.S. to pass an "ideological test" that would include questions about LGBT rights.

the time, told gay MSNBC anchor Thomas Roberts, who co-hosted the event with singer Mel B., he did not like what the law is "all about." Pageant participants did not discuss the gay propaganda ban or Russia's overall LGBT rights record during the broadcast of the event.

LGBT activists with whom the Blade has spoken say discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity has increased in Russia since the law took effect.

Ivan Nikitchuk and Nikolai Arefyev, who are members of the Russian Communist Party, introduced a measure in the Russian Duma last October that critics said would have effectively banned gays and lesbians from coming out. A parliamentary committee earlier this year expressed opposition to the draconian measure.

Yuvakaeva told the Blade the Obama administration's efforts to promote LGBT rights abroad have had a positive impact in Russia. She expressed concern that these efforts may end if Trump were elected president.

"As a Russia-based organization we've got a lot of inspiration and support from both U.S. individuals and organizations to help us in our struggle," said Yuvakaeva. "My great

concern is that the situation in Russia could become even worse if Trump will be elected."

Kirill Sabir, chair of the FtM Phoenix Group, a group that advocates on behalf of transgender Russians around Moscow, was less pessimistic.

"The relationship between two successful men who are close in age promises to be more productive than between a strong man and an ambitious woman," Sabir told the Blade on Monday in an email, referring to Clinton.

Sabir suggested a Trump presidency would temper the hostility that has existed between the Kremlin and the White House during the Obama administration. This detente of sorts could have a positive impact among LGBT Russians.

"The [possibility of having] a good relationship between our countries does not upset me," said Sabir. "It would be beneficial for both nations as well as for our LGBT communities."

Polina Andrianova of Coming Out, a St. Petersburg-based LGBT advocacy group, told the Blade she is "personally" interested in the outcome of the election.

"There is not much discussion in the community about Trump and the U.S. election," she said. "It's hard for me to say why."

"It seems that no one is taking seriously the possibility that Trump might be elected," added Andrianova.

Gay Russian asylees 'worried' about Trump

Trump reiterated his call to temporarily ban Muslims from entering the U.S. in the wake

of the June 12 massacre at the Pulse nightclub that left 49 people dead and 53 others injured. He also said he would suspend immigration "when there is a proven history of terrorism against the United States, Europe and our allies."

Trump said in a speech he gave in Ohio last month his administration would require potential immigrants to the U.S. to pass an "ideological test" that would include questions about LGBT rights. He also called for banning immigrants "from some of the most dangerous and most volatile regions of the world that have a history of exporting terrorism."

The brothers who carried out the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings were ethnic Chechens who were living in Cambridge, Mass. Their parents received asylum in the U.S. in 2002.

Oleg Tomilin, who is from the Russian city of Voronezh, lives in D.C. with his husband, Maksim Kochura.

The couple left Russia in 2014 to escape anti-gay persecution. Tomilin and Kochura married at the Wilson Building less than three months after they arrived in the U.S.

Tomilin told the Blade that he and Kochura "are very worried about Trump becoming president" because their asylum case is still pending.

"We are not sure about the policy USCIS (U.S. Customs and Immigration Services) will follow regarding LGBT asylum seekers," said Tomilin.

A Trump campaign spokesperson did not return the Blade's requests for comment.

From our NGMA member LGBT paper the Washington Blade.

► Heywood: Alt-Right Government

Continued from p. 13

Reagan and the “welfare queen” myth of the 80s. But in more recent history, right here in Michigan, we saw the rise of a white nationalist student group at Michigan State University. The group, Young Americans for Freedom, was involved in “Catch an Illegal Immigrant” game, anti-gay lectures advertised with flyers which read “Gays Spread AIDS,” and the political movement to ban affirmative action.

Their activism – noxious and supported by neo-Nazis like Preston Wiginton and Minutemen Militia leader Chris Simcox – was soon labeled for what it was – hate. The Southern Poverty Law Center added the group to its list of hate groups in 2007. Bristow denied in interviews following the listing that he or his ilk were anything like the KKK or neo-Nazis.

But key here was the response of then-Michigan GOP Chair Saul Anuzis.

“This [Bristow] is exactly the type of young kid we want out there,” Anuzis, then already the GOP state chair, said on a radio program in May 2007, the year after MSU-YAF’s more outrageous activities were made public. “I’ve known Kyle for years and I can tell you I have never heard him say a racist or bigoted or sexist thing, ever.”

Anuzis would run for the chair of the national GOP, and lose. At that same time, Michigan saw the rise of people like former State Reps. Jack Hoogendyk and Dave Agema. Agema went on to represent Michigan on the National GOP, and supported Alt-Right candidates for office, including supporting a move to take out former Republican State Rep. Frank Foster, replacing him with an Alt-Right, “traditional family values” conservative Lee Chatfield. Foster introduced legislation to amend the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to include the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities; but excluded the trans community. Chatfield has joined with the likes of Gary Glenn, a lawmaker from Midland and president of the American Family Association of Michigan, to prohibit trans people from using bathrooms that correspond with their identity.



Agema wanted to ban Sharia law from U.S. courts. He pushed hard to round up undocumented immigrants. He brought a supposed former terrorist to the state capitol to make wild, unproven claims of Islam’s threat. He tried to gut funding for HIV. He fought anti-bullying legislation because it protected the LGBT community. He pushed through social media ridiculous claims written by a white nationalist about the LGBT community.

But the Alt-Right agenda doesn’t end there. We see it in laws to increase school of choice programming and shifting funding to private education. We see it in moves to gut protections for unions. We see it when legislation to make attacking a cop a hate crime gains support but laws to make it a hate crime to target the LGBT community are sent to the Senate Government Oversight Committee – the Committee where legislation “goes to die.” We see decisions made to usurp the voting rights of people of color and entire communities through the emergency manager system. We see that emergency manager system result in the wholesale poisoning of a majority African American community and the lackluster deny, lie and mislead responses which increased the exposures for months.

So, if you want to see what America will become under a Trump Presidency, you need only look to Lansing. It is a terrifying, horrifying threat to the values of American equality; it feeds the basest, unfounded fears and stokes isolationism and threats.

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Brides Celebrate a Perfect 'Just Us' Wedding

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When it comes to planning your wedding, follow your heart, don't listen to those around you and do what is right for you. That's how Christina and Alicia Wilk of Clinton Township said they were able to enjoy their wedding-for-two this year on June 22.

"For us, we didn't have any challenges because we just made it happen," Christina said. "We focused on our love and our excitement and the fact that there was no stress."

A carefree relationship came easy for the couple when they met in August 2014, both exhausted by previous emotionally draining relationships.

Who knew a matchmaking game called "Find Alicia a real girlfriend" on social media would bring the best kind of love together, their forever love.

"It isn't your typical love story, or is it? We met through a Facebook post. You may be thinking, 'really?'" Christina said. Just 24 hours after Alicia's online plea, and several replies from eager friends, the connection was made.

"I hate talking on the phone and Alicia loves it. Somehow, somehow, she got me to stay up for five hours at a time listening to her story, her listening to mine, us laughing about our music guilty pleasures... Justin Bieber is always on and we are always singing along... and bonding over our experience going to the same cosmetology school, but five years apart. I didn't ever want to get off the phone with her, she was like a magnet. I went to bed talking to her until she was trying to wake me up to say goodnight with the phone to my ear and I woke up waiting for a text from her. And she never let me down because she was always thinking about me too," she said.

A week passed before Alicia picked Christina up for their first date at Pronto! in Royal Oak.

"I think of that as our go-to spot because it brings back so many amazing memories of our first few months together and how shy we both were with each other and all the butterflies, although I still get butterflies every time I think about her... unless I know the laundry isn't done or the house isn't clean," Christina said.

A year and five months later, it was time. One of Christina's best friends Carolann and her wife, Jackee, hosted a surprise birthday dinner for Alicia. After Christina had fallen asleep, Alicia told Carolann she had already bought a ring and was planning to propose the following weekend on their trip to Chicago.



Christina and Alicia Wilk of Clinton Township got married June 22. Photos courtesy of couple.

Carolann was adamant that Alicia pop the question that night.

"She wanted to witness the moment because she loved us together and couldn't bear to not see it happen so Carolann woke me up at 4 a.m. out of a dead sleep and said they needed to show me something," Christina said.

At the time, Alicia said she thought two things. "One, she's going to be so mad about me waking her up. Two, I don't want to wait another minute."

When Christina walked around the corner in her PJ's, hair a mess, there was Alicia on

one knee.

"It all happened so fast because I was so nervous. I don't even remember what I said. What I do remember is I looked down and the ring wasn't in the box anymore. She had already snatched it out of the box," Alicia said.

"I don't even remember if I said yes because I was half asleep, but I grabbed the ring myself and put it on my own finger, deadweight hugged her and said 'can I go back to sleep now?'" Christina said.

The next day Alicia asked Christina if she could actually put the ring on her finger. "Now,



it's an ongoing joke that I like to randomly put the ring on her finger since I didn't get to when I asked," Alicia said.

"We will forever be able to laugh about the proposal and we wouldn't have it any other way because every day is full of laughter with us," Christina said.

For months, they tried so hard to organize a wedding. At one point, their guest list was up to 250 people.

"We were using all the wedding tools and realized so many didn't offer same-sex labels and same-sex specific vendors. I had to preface every inquiry with 'we are a same-sex couple so we would like to know if you support our love before we give you our money,'" Christina said. "It was almost like coming out all over again and all those emotions of fear, sadness, and hurtfulness rushing back again."

Beyond the heartache of that process, they came to the realization that finances would prevent them from moving forward as originally planned.

"Alicia has Crohn's disease and because

See Marriage: Brides, page 20





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National Gay Media Association Announces Inaugural Ad POP Awardees

NEW YORK –The National Gay Media Association has announced the winners of the inaugural Ad POP awards. The Ad POPs (Pride in Online and Print) reward the best representations of LGBT individuals in online and print advertising in regional LGBT media.

Winners were selected from both the national and regional levels. B. Ella Bridal in Plymouth won for Best Regional Ad. Brittany Blase owner of B. Ella Bridal, and Zvezda Deuling, the ad designer, accepted the award at their shop. “We are thrilled to have B. Ella Bridal’s ad recognized for our LGBT inclusiveness. It’s such an important part of our business, and it is wonderful to have this honor,” said Blasé.

Other Ad Pop Award winners include Mercedes in the Automotive sector, Wells Fargo and PNC Bank in the Financial sector, Gilead in the Pharmaceutical sector, Pernod Ricard for Absolut in the Spirits sector and Alaskan Airlines in the Travel sector.

Ad POP is a production of the National Gay



B. Ella Bridal in Plymouth won for Best Regional Ad. B.ella produces the Briday show at the BTL Wedding Expo each year. The 2017 event is scheduled for March 26, 2017, at Motor City Casino in Detroit.

Media Association, a group of the nation’s leading LGBT newspaper publishers, located in New York (Gay City News), Washington, D.C. (Washington Blade), Boston (Bay Windows), Philadelphia (Philadelphia Gay News), Detroit (Between The Lines), Chicago (Windy City Times), Dallas (Dallas Voice), Los Angeles (The Pride), San Francisco (Bay Area Reporter), Atlanta (Georgia Voice), Ft. Lauderdale (SFGN) and Orlando (Watermark).

For a complete list of the 2016 Ad Pop winners go to www.nationalgaymediaassociation.com.

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► Marriage: Brides

Continued from p. 18

of multiple surgeries and lots of doctor’s visits, we have a few thousands of dollars in medical debt. We would have put ourselves in even more debt by throwing what we thought would be the wedding of our dreams because we were paying for it on our own,” Christina said, adding that their families are not financially stable and able to help, and part of her family does not accept her relationship with Alicia.

With the hope of buying a home soon and starting a family, a large wedding no longer felt like a good fit. They made a choice to plan the wedding for themselves and their future. Not to accommodate friends and family who Christina said, “should be happy for you either way if they love and support you.”

The couple realized that focusing on what they wanted with their financial situation in mind was the most important to avoid stress and set themselves up for success.

“Because it’s about both people. Listen to each other’s wants and compromise,” Christina said.

A loving and supportive friend, Crissi, who lives in California was willing to get ordained to perform their ceremony. They had already booked a vacation to visit Alicia’s sister and walk in the San Francisco Pride parade, so they made their wedding a part of the celebratory trip.

“We did have fear in our hearts and minds as we boarded the plane for our trip. It was a few weeks after Orlando and a week after the Los Angeles Pride threat. We didn’t let what happened to our brothers and sisters discourage us. We let it empower us to still go, to celebrate our love and the love of all the lost,” Christina said.

Upon arrival, they went straight to the clerk’s office to get their marriage license then enjoyed the rest of their day including a night out in West Hollywood for an impromptu bachelorette party. The following day they relaxed and got ready. Christina wore a dress designed and handmade by a friend. Alicia chose an outfit she knew she would be comfortable wearing on a beach.

Later, they all hopped in the car to drive down Highway 1 from Santa Monica and found the quiet Redondo Beach.

“Then we got out, started to take pictures and said let’s get married right here. So we did,” Christina said. Another close friend, Cat, who also lives in California witnessed and helped capture their moment by taking photos during the ceremony.

“At the end we walked along the beach as the sun set. It was perfectly romantic,” Christina said. “We laughed and cried. We were so engulfed in each other that we didn’t pay attention to what was going on around us. It was perfect for us.”



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Detroit Animal Welfare Group Needs Community Support

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Animals are not disposable. They are not something people can throw away when they are done with them. Yet, it continues to happen every single day, according to Sharon May, a volunteer with Detroit Animal Welfare Group in Romeo.

“We get hundreds of calls a day from people wanting to surrender an animal. It’s overwhelming,” May said. There are a variety of reasons why people do it, but often times it’s the harsh reality of vet bills and new routines or an unexpected health issue. Some frustrated pet owners, May explained, lack the patience and understanding needed to teach their pet what is acceptable behavior and the solution is to give them away.

Many dogs and cats are abused or cruelly killed by people who don’t want them. They are dumped on the side of the road left to starve or get hit by a car. Several more are injured, frightened and suffering from disease.

The fortunate ones are rescued by compassionate and hardworking people who volunteer their time with rescue programs, such as DAWG, and at shelters. Animals are taken in off the streets by volunteers to feed them, provide them with medical treatment, rehabilitate them if possible, and work



tirelessly to rehome them.

But a shelter is only as good as its volunteers are abundant. Many shelters are overcrowded. More help is needed to maintain the quality of life for homeless dogs and cats as they wait to meet their new owners or live out the remainder of their days at the shelter.

“We have great volunteers who sacrifice a lot for these animals. They are committed and do a great job, but we need more,” said Kelly LaBonty, founder of DAWG, a non-profit rescue on the verge of becoming the first no-kill shelter in Macomb County pending the installation of required fencing, which DAWG needs help to acquire and put in.

Volunteer duties include, but are not limited to cleaning kennels, walking dogs, feeding animals, grooming animals, assisting at adoption events, coordinating fundraisers, transportation of animals, and fostering.

DAWG has saved more than 2,000 animals locally since it began in 2011. The rescue also has a Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit to help nurse wildlife in Michigan back to health when needed and safely release them.

But their main priority is the dogs – the old dogs, the bully breeds, and the dogs with medical issues.

“We don’t take in puppies and ‘frou frou’ dogs. We don’t take dogs from Macomb. There is a much greater need in Detroit’s inner city,” May said, adding that they have an ongoing relationship with the Michigan Humane Society and Detroit Animal Care and Control.

New DAWG Programs

Something as simple as shopping at Schwan’s online can help. When people designate DAWG as their charity of choice, a percentage of the purchase goes to the rescue.

DAWG recently announced their new animal sponsorship program established by volunteer Meaghan Marton who commutes from Amherstburg, Ontario to help when she can.

As a sponsor, a contribution between \$10-50 per month will help cover monthly costs to feed an animal and provide medical care. This guaranteed donation will allow DAWG to allocate additional funds raised toward the care of other animals and shelter maintenance. Sponsorship perks include animal visitation at DAWG, and quarterly emails and updates.

“It gives people who are unable to or are not ready to adopt a pet a sense of ownership and responsibility to an animal of their choice,” she said. On occasion, Marton has stayed overnight at the shelter in a loft apartment above the barn. The space was converted by a volunteer to give shelter dogs a chance to live outside of their crates, which some have called home for more than a year.

“It’s beautiful,” she said. “It’s an amazing experience getting to witness the excitement each of the dogs have while spending time outside of their kennel.”

LaBonty said the dogs “love it,” but more importantly volunteers can address behavioral issues and teach the dogs basic manners while getting some experience in a home environment, which makes them more adoptable.

This is critical as many shelter dogs

Meet Keyla

Keyla has been affiliated with DAWG since January 2014. She was found on 8 Mile and Van Dyke after being hit and dragged by a car. She suffered head wounds and severe spinal cord damage. It was determined by veterinary professionals that Keyla would never walk again, but four months later she was learning. With mobility lessons and water therapy, Keyla was thriving, but this type of treatment is expensive and requires one-on-one time and attention. Keyla needs someone who is looking for something meaningful to do. It’s a life commitment. Without help, DAWG will need funding to purchase Keyla a dog wheelchair, which has the potential to set her back, decreasing her chances of being adopted.

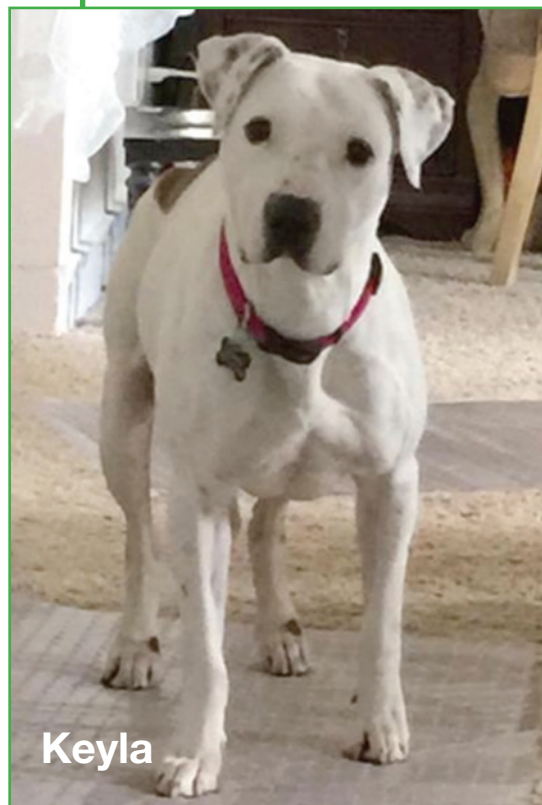
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DAWG Drop-Off Locations

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16367 Judiciary, Macomb



Keyla

DAWG recently announced their new animal sponsorship program established by volunteer Meaghan Marton who commutes from Amherstburg, Ontario to help when she can.

succumb to “kennel stress,” a condition that effects even the most loving and healthy animals. This is caused by noise, unfamiliar smells, fear, continual confinement and lack of human contact. The idea that these dogs can go stir crazy can result in irreversible emotional trauma, which leads to depression, lethargy and an unhealthy decrease in weight. Some dogs become hyperactive and start exhibiting extreme behavioral problems.

That’s why DAWG enlists the help of local trainers as shelter dogs’ transition into their foster or forever homes, but funding is needed to continue this much-needed service.

“Training is always a big thing,” LaBonty said. “Because these dogs have lived on the streets, some have behavioral issues. A few trainers have volunteered to help on a limited basis. Otherwise, it is not cheap.”

Sabrina Terenzi, owner and operator of Boo Boo’s BoneYard in Armada was been helping the rescue rehabilitate dogs by taking them out of the shelter one at a time to socialize with her pack and

expose them to a new environment.

“Many of these dogs have not had the opportunity to take a walk on a leash or visit public places like parks or pet stores. They have minimal interaction with people and animals outside of the farm at DAWG,” she said, adding that first impressions are a big part of the adoption process.

Terenzi said it takes time to learn a shelter dog’s temperament and how they will respond to structure and routine, but it’s important to know and explain to potential adopters.

“There is a period of time a dog needs to decompress and adjust to being in a new space,” she said.

For this reason, the adoption process is not always as simple as filling out paperwork and taking the dog home.

DAWG is committed to education. Part of DAWG’s outreach efforts include teaching owners how to properly care for their adopted pet to keep them safe, healthy and happy.

In addition, DAWG strongly advocates for the spaying and neutering of animals. “Do not buy from a pet store or a

breeder,” May said. “There are pages upon pages on Facebook from shelters all over the country that have dogs in need of rescue.”

Getting these animals off the streets seems to be the easy part. But DAWG’s shelter is near full and foster homes are limited right now. LaBonty consistently worries about funding to care for the number of animals they take in.

DAWG operates on a budget of \$120,000 a year. Adoption fees generally cover age appropriate vaccines, heartworm and feline leukemia tests, deworming, microchipping, and spaying and neutering.

But DAWG’s long-term survival depends on more foster parents, money for food, additional veterinary expenses and countless supplies. This leads to the hard part of asking the community to step up and help. Solving the problem of the overpopulation of animals will take time. Aside from killing them, LaBonty said, for now the answer lies in working together to take care of them and find them loving homes.

For more information about DAWG to include volunteer applications, monthly pet adoption and fundraising events, and how to donate, visit their website www.dawghaus.com or DAWG’s Facebook www.facebook.com/DetroitAnimalWelfareGroup/ page.



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Why Your Feline Friend Needs Medical Care

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Our animal companions are really good at hiding their health problems from us, especially our sneaky cats. But seeing your veterinarian on a regular basis will help you pick up on these problems, sometimes preventing them from worsening and becoming serious.

Dr. Glynnes D. Graham, owner and primary veterinarian of Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital in Detroit said the most common health problems cats face are kidney failure, heart disease (specifically hypertrophic cardiomyopathy) and dental issues such as gingivitis.

“Many times people bring their cats to the vet when it is past the point of being able to help,” she said. “We didn’t have the opportunity to catch it early and make changes.”

For example, heart disease in cats is often accompanied by a heart murmur, which goes undetected by the pet owner.

“The cat doesn’t appear to be affected by it so the disease is left untreated, which can cause problems. Cats are highly prone to blood clots if they have heart disease, but if they don’t come to the vet, we don’t know about it. We are able to diagnose and manage the disease with medication,” she said.

But not all cats will take oral medications, whether in pill or liquid form.

“Cats are not always interested in getting with the program. There are a surprising number of transdermal medications that can be wiped on their ears or skin. Some antibiotics can be injected and last seven to 14 days,” she said.

As different medication options become available, Dr. Graham encourages cat owners to be up front with their vet.

“If you cannot get your cat to take pills, let your vet know. Some pet owners come back a week later and no medication has been given. Had I known, I might have made a different choice,” she said.

While it’s not easy to figure out what your cat is thinking or feeling, one thing is true. They do not have nine lives and it’s time to bust the cat myths that felines are self-sufficient and aren’t exposed to potential health hazards because they never leave the house. Cats need wellness check-ups, vaccines, dental



exams and nutritional consultations just as much as their pet owners do, according to the Cat Fancier’s Association.

Prevention is preferable to treatment, so Dr. Graham recommends annual physical exams for cats under the age of eight. Cats over the age of eight would benefit from exams every six months.

“Vets vary on recommendations in terms of regular bloodwork,” she said, adding that cost should not deter pet owners from at the very least being informed.

“It’s up to the pet owner to make the decision about what to do next, but without any information, they won’t know what the decision needs to be. This does not mean they have to do what the vet recommends either,” she said. “It may be that they are fine and healthy and wonderful. Wouldn’t it feel good to know that?”

Sure, but generally speaking, cats hate the vet.

“And owners hate bringing them to the vet, putting them in carriers, listening to them yodel in the car the whole way. It’s a pain in the neck,” she said. “Unlike dogs who go to the vet and are in the car all the time, cats don’t have a lot of experience. They don’t like it. The owner doesn’t like it. So it doesn’t happen.”

There are a variety of ways to try and help your cat overcome their fears and reduce their anxiety.

Tips for Taking Your Cat to the Vet

A recent Animal Planet survey revealed that two-thirds of cat parents take their pets to the vet less than once a year, in part because of “feline resistance” to the experience. Here are some suggestions to make the process of taking your cat to the vet a little easier.

Help your cat get comfortable with a travel crate.

Instead of storing your cat’s travel crate in a closet, keep it in an area where he or she takes regular cat naps. Let your cat wander in to explore or sniff around the outside every few weeks. Before trips, pad the bottom of the crate with a blanket or t-shirt. The softness of those items, along with your scent might give your cat comfort.

Help your cat calm down.

Try a pheromone spray, such as Feliway, which contains a synthetic form of the scent that cats rub against each other and their loved ones to reinforce social bonds. It can be sprayed on the cat or in the travel crate. Some cat owners rave about Rescue Remedy, which can be added to your cat’s water hours before crate time to take the edge off. The vet can prescribe a sedative if necessary. Even the correct dosage of Benadryl can help.

Go for a ride.

Cats like things to be familiar and predictable, and cars are not that. But a mock trip to the vet with your cat can be rewarding. Even if you just drive around the block, the goal of this behavior modification technique is to accustom your cat to being in a carrier and in a car. For most cats, the car ride to the vet is scary and can create a stressful experience. Always reward your cat with their favorite treats so they associate positive experiences with the car drive.

Make sure your cat can see you.

When possible, don’t leave your cat alone when its in the crate. Most of the anxiety comes from the unknown of being confined to a small space, but some cats might fear being abandoned especially if they were rescued from a neglectful situation.

Ask for a house call.

Some cats are really distressed when leaving the house and have a complete meltdown at the vet’s office. If your cat feels more comfortable at home and nothing else helps the process of going to the vet, then consider finding a vet that comes to you.

For more information about keeping your cat happy and healthy, contact Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital at 3800 Grand River Ave. in Detroit at 313-832-7282 or on their website www.pattersondogandcat.com.



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Join the MHS Mega March to Help Animals

BY BTL STAFF

For those who need a reason to participate in the Michigan Humane Society's annual Mega March for Animals, meet Indy. She came into the care of MHS as an emaciated puppy, just fur and bones. Something, her last "meal," was protruding from her stomach. When veterinarians performed surgery, they were shocked to discover an eight-inch piece of a plastic coat hanger inside which took hours to remove.

Following her procedure, Indy received specialized treatment and loving care. She is now happy and healthy living in her forever home, but MHS would not have been able to save her without support from the community.

Every year, MHS hosts the Mega March, the largest walk for animals in the state of Michigan, to raise money to improve the lives of homeless, injured and neglected animals. MHS is a private, nonprofit organization, which receives no government funding. Instead, MHS relies on individual donations, corporate giving and fundraising events to support their lifesaving programs and services.

Such as the procedure Indy needed to survive. She represents the thousands of animals who can be saved as a result of friends, family members, and co-workers coming together to participate in the Mega March.

Join MHS with or without your pet on Sept. 25 at the Belle Isle State Park in Detroit. Participants are welcome to bring their friendly pets on a leash or in a carrier on the 2-mile walk. There will be other opportunities to walk as two smaller marches will be held at Kensington MetroPark in Milford and the Stony Creek MetroPark in Shelby Township, both on Oct. 2.

As always, MHS invites several sponsor and vendor tents to provide information and giveaway items. The event features a pet photo booth, face painting, and contests for the best dressed pet, the best trick, and the pet/owner look-a-like.

MHS provides care for more than 30,000 animals, operates centers for animal care in Detroit, Rochester Hills and Westland; finds homes for approximately 8,000 animals a year; reunites pets with their owners; operates a cruelty investigation department to assist animals in the Detroit area and more.

For information or to register online, visit the MHS website www.michiganhumane.org/MEGA..



Indy



Michigan Senate Approves Bill to Allow Dogs on Restaurant Patios

BY BTL STAFF

New legislation, Senate Bill 727, would offer Michigan restaurants the option to permit dogs in their outdoor dining areas.

Sens. Margaret O'Brien (R-Portage), Tonya Schuitmaker (R-Lawton), and Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) said they are sponsoring the bill, which passed Sept. 7, to help increase tourism.

O'Brien told MLive.com that she had heard from constituents who traveled with dogs. They loved amenities like dog parks and hotels that allow dogs, but couldn't take their dogs to a restaurant patio.

"And it was getting frustrating because they didn't want to eat at McDonald's, they didn't want to do takeout and eat in the hotel, they wanted to be able to go outside, enjoy the beauty and have their pet there," O'Brien said, adding that "Michiganders love their pets. Dogs have become important members of the family. With so many pet-friendly amenities like dog parks and hotels that accept dogs, it is reasonable to allow

restaurants to decide if dogs are allowed on their outdoor patios."

Proponents agree if the dogs are not in the kitchen, they can't contaminate food that is being prepared, and in a dining room they might be no more of a risk than humans.

But the Michigan Association for Local Public Health objects to the bill telling City Pulse in Lansing that it would require local health departments to provide additional training and education for inspections and create a new license and license renewal process. Training materials would need to be developed relating to employee hygienic practices, fecal clean up, cleanable surfaces and storage of chemicals.

While service dogs are already allowed in restaurants, Senate Bill 727 would expand the law to include permission for non-service pets to accompany diners to designated outdoor patios.

The conditions of the legislation would require restaurants interested in the option to use individual discretion regarding the size and type of dogs permitted, as well as the right to refuse or remove a patron and their dog at the establishment's discretion. Staff coming into contact with animals would be required to wash themselves before returning to work.

Dogs would have to be leashed and couldn't pass through the restaurant interior or sit in chairs or on customers' laps. Patios would have to be free of dog hair. Surfaces contaminated by dog waste would have to be disinfected immediately.

The legislation wouldn't require restaurant owners to allow dogs, and local communities could pass ordinances prohibiting dogs on restaurant patios.

"We've got all the rules in place so a community can ban it if they don't want it, a restaurant does not have to do it, but if a restaurant chooses to do it we already have a list of rules that they will have to follow to protect everyone's health and safety," O'Brien said.

Schmidt said this bill is not a free-for-all and there are rules restaurants must comply with. Restaurants that choose to allow dogs must inform the health department and have a separate entrance for customers with dogs.

The bill passed 32-4 in the Senate and has been referred to the Committee on Regulatory Reform in the House of Representatives.

Take Your Dog to Dinner

Here is a list of the Top 10 Dog-Friendly Restaurants in Michigan, according to BringFido.com, a dog travel directory for pet owners looking for somewhere to stay, play or eat with their dog.

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See Next Page

► Restaurants

Continued from p. 26

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The Filling Station Microbrewery
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Cafe Via
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HB 4478 Protects Pets from Domestic Violence

BY BTL STAFF

Judges in Michigan now have the legal authority to include pets in Personal Protection Orders for victims of domestic violence.

Gov. Rick Snyder signed HB 4478 into law in May 2016 to provide more protections for Michigan families and to help keep people with their pets during times of great distress.

Rep. Robert Kosowski (D-Westland) introduced the critical bill, which received overwhelming bipartisan support.

“Often, in domestic violence situations, the perpetrator of the abuse will use a family pet as a way to control their human victims,” Kosowski said. “In essence, my legislation would add a check box so that a domestic violence victim can include his or her pet while obtaining a personal protection order.”

The Michigan Humane Society, which investigates more than 5,000 animal cruelty complaints in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park each year, consistently testified in support of HB 4478 as it made its way through legislature.

MHS reports that many domestic

violence victims often look to surrender their pets or have them humanely euthanized as a “better option” than leaving them with their abusers.

Currently, 28 other states have similar provisions in place. The state of Minnesota has been tracking the number of PPOs that include companion animals since 2010. The number increased from 167 to 1067 in 2013.

“Statistics such as these show that once domestic violence victims became aware they could include companion animals in personal protection orders, they overwhelmingly chose to do so,” he said.

“This legislation is more than just including a check box on a form. Right now, domestic violence victims are not leaving their dangerous situations because their abuser is using the family pet as a pawn. Ensuring victims are aware they can include their companion animals in a personal protection order not only can save the animal from further abuse, it can save the human victims, both adults and children, from being controlled and forced back into violent situations,” he said.

“I am extremely happy that the

“Ensuring victims are aware they can include their companion animals in a personal protection order not only can save the animal from further abuse, it can save the human victims, both adults and children, from being controlled and forced back into violent situations.”

— Rep. Robert Kosowski (D-Westland)

Governor saw the importance of this legislation, and acted quickly to sign it into law. I’m proud that Michigan will now join several other states in furthering protections for both human victims of domestic violence, and their companion animals as well.”

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Birds as Best Friends

The Highs and Lows of Bird Ownership

William Kupsky says he became a bird enthusiast when he met his partner. They marked the move into their home with a pair of love birds, and admits he never really liked birds growing up.

Dr. William J. Kupsky at home with his birds. BTL Photos: Emell Derra Adolphus

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

Feathers can be just as fun as fur. They shine when groomed. They ruffle when excited. And when they shed, a process called “molting,” they beckon a refreshing turn of season.

Zircon, a male eclectus parrot, is perched with pride on owner Dr. William J. Kupsky’s finger in a living room glittering with antiques. Still, the bird commands colorful attention.

His feathers are the shade of the rare green zircon gemstone, with a beak the color of an orange peel. Watching the room with wary eyes, Zircon inches farther up his owner’s arm with fleeting comfort in the presence of a stranger.

“I think dogs and cats need more attention,” says Kupsky. But what he really means is they require more day-to-day duties, such as the changing of cat litter and regular walkings. Not to mention the hassle over hair says Kupsky,

chuckling. “Dog and cat hair, that doesn’t go well with Persian carpets and antiques.”

Kupsky, a professor of pathology at the Wayne State University School of Medicine, cares for a collection of eight birds with his partner, Ali, in their Grosse Pointe Park home: Zircon, two king parrots, Jasper and Garnet, a Pionus parrot, Lapis, two Indian ring-necked parakeets, Jade and Cecilia, a Prince of Wales Parakeet, Charles; his partner, Diana, passed away; and a lutino parakeet, Topaz.

“They all have different personalities,” he says. “Each bird is kept in separate cages because, even though they see each other, in the wild they would not normally interact with each other.” At one point they had a bird collection of 12.

“Depending on the species, they can be very easy to care for,” he says.

When it comes to pet ownership, you’d be hard pressed to shoehorn bird owners into the categories of “dog people” or “cat people”

says Kupsky. Bird owners are in a league of their own, as he explains it takes a certain amount of prowess and patience to unlock the personality of parrot. But once you do, you’ll have a companion for life that can occasionally be a tad cuckoo.

“If you don’t pay enough attention to them, they can get neurotic,” he says, which for some bird species can mean feather-plucking until they are close to a raw chicken in resemblance. Bird species of higher intelligence like the African Grey Parrot have been known to break up relationships because they can be deeply attached to one person and not the other says Kupsky.

“And then suddenly you’re stuck with this bird that may live 40 or 50 years.”

Kupsky says he became a bird enthusiast when he met his partner, they marked the move into their home with a pair of love birds, and admits he never really liked birds growing up. “I was always sort of afraid of them,” he says,

simply explaining, “They bite.”

Biting aside, Kupsky says it was their bird brain that eventually won him over.

“They are smart. They’ve gotten out of their cages many times, so we’ve had to reinforce some of them,” he says. “One time we found out they were getting out of their cages and flying around and going back in before we got home because we found bird droppings on the chandelier.”

Overall, he says, birds like being around people and enjoy “peacocking,” so to speak, when company comes over. But like any relationship says Kupsky, you should be sure owning a bird is something you want to do before you take the dive and start developing a bond.

“They have to get used to that. Once they are used to that they are fine. And lots of fun.”

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IT'S RAINING MENZEL

Idina Menzel on Working Toward LGBT Icon Status, a Lesbian Elsa and Angry Gays Who Oppose Her 'Beaches' Remake

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Though it arrives nearly 20 years after her debut album, the timing couldn't be more perfect for a self-titled Idina Menzel release. Menzel's latest is a declaration of self—of her real self, that is.

"It's how you pronounce my name," the Broadway star says during our recent interview about the eponymous title, "idina.," not-so-subtly alluding to that infamous name botch at the 2014 Academy Awards.

You remember: John Travolta called her "Adele Dazeem" just before she hit the stage to perform her career-changing song "Let It Go" from Disney's "Frozen," during which the Tony winner voices cold-thwarting snow queen Elsa. "Frozen" fame took Menzel to Elphaba heights, but it was "Wicked" and

"Rent" that forever made her a gay fave.

Imagine, then, what a new "Beaches" might do for Menzel. The Lifetime remake of the 1988 classic has the 45-year-old portraying Bette Midler's CC Bloom, a career choice the singer-actress admits has ruffled the feathers of her loyal queer following. Menzel talked about one gay fan's tweet that led to her almost backing out of the film altogether, how LGBT support solidified her success and why she's "excited" that "Frozen" fans are pulling for a lesbian Elsa.

What's a trip to the grocery like now, after "Frozen" made you a household name?

It depends on how many little kids or gay men are there. And they certainly have been complimentary, and yeah, we take some pictures and I've put myself on a video for

several people's birthday wishes and bar mitzvahs.

But the gay guys aren't just singing "Let It Go" to you, I'm sure.

Exactly. And you know what, I'm leaving out the ladies too! Because, of course, I was Maureen in "Rent," so it's not all the gay male community. There are a lot of beautiful women that have been very supportive of me.

What does your long and loyal history with the LGBT community mean to you?

Honestly, you said the word "loyal" — it means everything to me. All the women that I've revered in my life have been beloved by the gay community. So, when I was younger it was like, if I'm not in with that club, then I haven't made it. So, as soon as I felt like I was

being included and appreciated and supported (by the LGBT community), it just really meant everything to me. Not to mention, the accolades and all the compliments don't come easy. There can be harsh critics; it's not an easy crowd to win over, so it feels good when you feel like you've made friends and they are so loyal and so supportive.

When were you first aware of your gay following?

The first moment was probably when I'd go to the Nederlander Theatre when I was in "Rent" (in the mid '90s), and I'd get all these amazing letters from young kids struggling with their sexual orientation and who they were and how they wanted to come out. I'd get a lot of letters about that and how I was helping them be honest with themselves and be brave about coming out, so it started then

and that was even... that was stronger than I had even anticipated or ever really had dreamed. Just on a much deeper, much more important level than singing a high note with a lot of bravado and people clapping. And it's continued to be like that, really, with "Wicked" and "Frozen," with Elsa. There are always these characters who are literally trying to come out of the closet – they're hiding something within them that they're afraid to let people see, and then finally they embrace it and change the world around them.

You seem to gravitate toward empowered female characters and tropes. Is there a particular reason why?

I have no idea! (Laughs) I swear to god, I don't know if I find them, or they find me. I went into the studio (for this album) – I was going through a divorce (Menzel and her former "Rent" co-star Taye Diggs officially divorced in late 2014 after 10 years of marriage), and I can't tell you how many times I'd sit with these amazing writers and want to write some really upsetting, sad, dark song and it would turn out to be some uplifting, empowering song about trying to find my strength as a woman. I'd be like, "Aaack, why did we write that?! I hate that! I'm just so sick of it! I wanna be miserable! And I want people to let me be miserable!" (Laughs)

But no, I'm half joking. I just want to make sure that people know that I'm not always feeling that empowered and that confident in what I'm doing. Just like anyone else, I gotta work on all that stuff.

Are you saying you're a real person?

(Laughs) I think so! I think I am!

There's a lot of pressure on you and Disney to make Elsa gay. Are you surprised by the #GiveElsaAGirlfriend movement?

Am I surprised? (Sighs) Maybe at first I was a little surprised because it's Disney, but I can say that I'm excited that the conversation is happening. I can't promise anybody that that's what's gonna happen. I'm just a servant at a big company called Disney and I'm happy to have a role and a job. But deep down am I really happy that it's causing people to talk about it and have these kinds of conversations? Yeah, I am.

Do you think the world is ready for a lesbian Disney princess?

Umm... I don't know about that, considering we're having a hard time even getting Donald Trump out of the way. Sometimes it's a little discouraging. But you never know. We keep making all these strides. We've made a lot of strides in the last couple of years, and then all of a sudden the hate and the vitriol within our country is exposed and you're like, "What happened? We're in the ancient times again."

What does it mean to you to know that so many LGBT people interpreted "Let It Go" as a coming

out anthem? And did you when you first read the lyrics?

Yeah, umm... probably not right at first because I'm an actor first, and so I'm thinking, what is it for this character and this young girl? Having had the "Wicked" experience, I bring those themes to it as well. But then I quickly saw all of the parallels and the universality of the song and how it could speak to so many people in so many different ways.

We must talk about the Patti LaBelle-inspired note you slay during "Queen of Swords," from your new album.

(Laughs) I have to say that sometimes my best moments, artistically speaking, have come from really emulating someone I love and playing around, because then I get out of my own space. I was literally just having fun. We had already recorded the end of that song a million times and I sang a million different runs of ad-libs at the end, and I was trying to make my producer and engineer laugh. And I didn't know I could do that one! So then, of course, they put it in.

I've had other moments in my life where I'm on stage and if I'm having a hard time – if I feel insecure about a beat or how I'm interpreting something – I've done something like, how would Glenn Close approach this moment? Then, all of a sudden, I'm like, "Oh, look at this," and I'm holding for applause and taking an extra two seconds just to own the stage, not feeling like I have to get out of there because I'm undeserving. It's interesting if you put yourself in their footsteps once in a while how it can open that up for you and you realize, "Oh, I've been selling myself short. I can sell this moment."

I'm not saying anybody should copy anybody. I don't think anybody should mimic anyone, but I'm always an advocate of emulating and soaking in all of the greats, because then once it comes out of you, it'll never be a clone – it will be you inspired by these people.

You've had three other studio albums – why self-title this one, and what's the significance of the period?

It's very personal. I went through the hardest time in my life while writing this album – a beautiful, successful time, and also a very tumultuous, complicated time in my personal life, and so it's very intimate. It's my way of saying, "Hey, this is me and my barebones." And the period is... what's the word?... just a little nudge, like, "This is me," with a little attitude in there, whether it's how you pronounce my name or (directed toward) anybody who has tried to keep me down.

We refer to our most beloved icons by one name – Cher, Madonna, Mariah, Bette – so maybe this is also your initiation into gay iconography.

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See Idina, page 32

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Photo: Jean Marcus

► Idina

Continued from p. 31

(Laughs) Hey, if I can get into that realm or that class, I would be very happy. It would be a huge compliment. But I'm still working toward that. Those women have done a lot more than I have!

Why was it important to you to be a part of the "Fight Song" for Hillary Clinton during the Democratic National Convention?

Elizabeth Banks asked me to do it. You know, I'm just ... I believe in Hillary and I'm a Democrat, and I'm not trying to put off or judge anyone who isn't, but I felt it was important to be a part of it.

Now that you're obviously tight with Elizabeth Banks, could that mean we'll see you in "Pitch Perfect 3"?

(Laughs) Oh god, that would be awesome. That would be great.

"Wind Beneath My Wings" is a song that's so iconic and so owned by Bette Midler. What was it like taking it on for your upcoming "Beaches" remake?

(Sighs) It was almost reason to say no. I mean, I did say no a couple of times at first to the whole thing because to walk in her footsteps, I mean, you can't. I needed to find what the reasons were to be a part of this when the (original) movie is so beautiful as is. I found that there's a whole young generation of women who hadn't seen "Beaches." Because of the time we're in now, as women, there's a new perspective we have within that story, and there's a new conversation that can go on as far as us living out our passions and our work and our home life. It's a little different when you watch the movie now, in this context of life. There's more that we can bring to it to update it. But as far as the song – the song terrified me. I brought it to my producer, Greg Wells, who did "Queen of Swords" and half of the album, and I said, "How can we make this contemporary?" We sat at the piano and stripped it down, and he just found this way that brings in all these modern sounds. We stayed pretty strict to the melody and I don't know – I'm just really happy about it. I think it came off really beautifully. It's an homage to what was already there, but also just a new incarnation of it.

Gay men are very devoted to "Beaches." Have you consulted any of them for the role?

By accident I went on my Twitter feed and saw somebody who wrote, "Idina, I love you, but it's sacrilege that you're doing this!" I called my agent and I was like, "Tell them I can't do it. All these gay men are mad at me and they're gonna hate me!" But it's just such a great role for me and the experience of being on set and working every day on this beautiful woman that is funny and talented

and she gets to do drama and comedy – it was such a great experience for me and it was just hard to turn down. So I hope they'll forgive me! I understand if they cannot. But you know, come on, Judy Garland redid "A Star is Born" and then Barbra redid Judy Garland! So sometimes these things happen. I'm not saying I'm any of those women, but you know, sometimes we redo these movies.

Earlier this year, you reunited with your "Wicked" co-star Kristin Chenoweth and sang "For Good" with her for the first time in 12 years. What was it like to revisit that song a decade-plus later with Kristin and can we expect you to work on anything else with her?

Ah, maybe! Yeah, I would never say never to that. That experience that day was very powerful for both of us, and very moving. We both sang that song a lot through the years in our own concerts, but we hadn't gotten back and sung it together. And you know, that show changed our lives and the trajectory of our careers. It bonded us – it bonded lots of people – and it's a song that people connect to in so many ways. They use it at their weddings and their dances with their mothers and they play it at funerals. It's this incredible song, and for us to have sort of originated that – and together – it's something we'll always share. We felt such a pride about it.

Are you going to be OK if "Wicked" gets made into a film with actresses other than you and Kristin?

No, I'm gonna – no! I'm gonna have a hard time with that. (Laughs) Let's be honest... you want me to be honest? Or do you want me to say, "Oh, sure, can't wait for whoever looks 20 years younger than me but can't sing as good as me gets the role"?

They better not fuck it up, right?

They better not fuck it up! I'm lobbying to do it like "Benjamin Button." A little CGI on a beautiful, green face. I could look gorgeous! Like, who cares – just take out a couple wrinkles. Green and exotic. I still have a girly innocence about me. And here I am trying to audition for this role... (Laughs)

I'm sorry, Idina; believe it or not, I have no say in this.

(Laughs) No, it's all good. It's not gonna happen for a while anyway. I'll be 70 by the time it comes out and still be trying to get this role.

The special effects will be even better in 30 years.

(Laughs) I hope I'm just not in Vegas in some bad lounge singing it, that's all I hope.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).

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How to Throw a Big Gay Football Party

It's Pigskin Season! Time to Break Out the Jockstraps and Kneepads



The Frivolist

BY MIKEY ROX

You know it's football season when on Sundays your News Feed is filled with a wide range of emotional comments about your friends' favorite teams. As someone who doesn't even know how to throw a football – much less play the game (and I know I'm not alone) – I often feel left out of the conversation. But just because I have no idea what I'm talking about when it comes to touchdowns and T-formations (seriously, I had to look up the definition of the latter), that doesn't mean I can't partake in the festivities. While I may not be a star on the field, I'm a whiz in the kitchen and an excellent host. So you can join in the weekend fun, too, here are my tips for throwing the ultimate football party – without a whole lot of work.

1. Invest in a serious TV.

Just as (if not more) important as anything else at your football party is the television on which the game is played. If you don't have a sizeable screen, what's the point? Nobody wants to squint to see the sweeps – or those tight ends. If you don't already have a flat-screen of at least 42 inches – and you want to host football parties – make it a point to save up for one. You'll make your guests happy in the short term and yourself happier in the long term.

2. Don't fuss over the food.

If it were any other kind of party, I would prepare homemade dishes to surprise and satisfy my guests. Luckily I don't have to do that on game day. Football parties aren't known for their exotic foods, but rather comforting versions of classics that soothe the soul when the weather takes a turn for the worst. Chicken wings, chips and dips, meatballs, chili and nachos are acceptable fare to feed your fans. All of these items are fairly easy to make, too, with just a few ingredients required for each. The best part about these calorie-rich snacks is that they're filling, so even a modest amount will go a long way – though you should probably prepare for two-a-days at the gym for the rest of the week.

3. Beer and wine but not liquor.

I limit the amount of alcohol consumption taking place throughout the four quarters by eliminating liquor all together. Nobody needs to drink Jack for hours on end on a Sunday afternoon – even if they think they might. A couple bottles of red and white wine and a case or two of a domestic light beer and a more adult lager will do the trick, along with nonalcoholic soft drinks as well. Just be sure to tell your guests what's on the bev menu ahead of time so they

can bring their own if they're not down with what you're serving.

4. Less decorating means more down time.

Trust me when I tell you that the kind of people coming to your football fete couldn't care less whether you've decorated or not. OK – the queens might, but your gay "bros" won't notice either way. Thus, if the majority of the football fans won't appreciate the effort you put into turning the living room into a lookalike locker room, why bother? Instead, take a load off and enjoy the game (or at least the commercials) with everyone else.

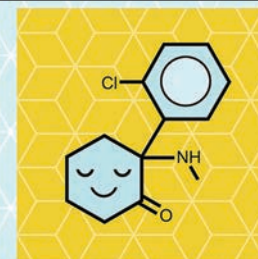
5. Offer other games while they're watching the big one.

Not all of your guests will be as interested in what's happening on the TV as others; some of them will be forced to attend your party – because that's the way gay love goes. For those guests, set up a nearby area where they can play cards or board games while keeping one eye on the tube if they want. If kids are attending, these occupiers are a must – even better if you have a separate room with a video game setup.

6. Enter the end zone with dessert.

Time to wrap up the party? Nothing says game over like bringing out dessert and coffee to give your guests the hint that it's time to hit the road. For an extra special touch, serve up easy-to-make football-shaped cookies (you might even find prepackaged bake-and-serve versions at your local supermarket) with freshly brewed java or artisan hot chocolate.

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



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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Sept. 22

Detroit Design Ball I DDF 2016 5:30 p.m. Fashion shows, green carpet bike experience, DJ Thornstryker, dance performances, creative market, craft cocktails and wine, aerialist performers and more. Tickets \$15-\$19. Detroit By Design, 2934 Russell St., **Detroit**. 734-658-9248. www.eventbrite.com/e/ddf-2016-detroit-design-ball-ballet-of-the-streets-tickets-27354025627

All Genders Film Night 6:30 p.m. A social group to view and discuss films that relate to the unique challenges in the LGBTQ community. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Parent Support Group 7 p.m. Dr. Melissa Farrell, LCP and Roz Keith facilitate ongoing group for parents of trans youth to better understand what it means to be transgender. Event is free. Stand With Trans, 5725 Walnut Lake Rd, **West Bloomfield Twp.** 248-661-5700. laura@temple-israel.org

Voices 2016 7 p.m. Guests will enjoy a strolling dinner, complimentary drinks, a silent auction, and short program. This signature event provides critical funding to support Ruth Ellis Center's annual operations while also celebrating their dedicated and generous supporters. The Center serves runaway, homeless and at-risk LGBTQ youth. The VIP reception begins at 6 p.m. Check back for a special guest

404-6889. www.justgobarefoot.com

Red Hot Fridays 9 p.m. No cover charge before midnight. Password "Red Hot." Red Door Night Club, 22901 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 248-541-1600. info@reddoorclub.com www.reddoorclub.com

Saturday, Sept. 24

Smart Recovery 10 a.m. Smart Recovery offers people with any type of addiction a place to learn how to change unwanted behaviors through cognitive based methods. This is a non-12 step program, led by Smart Recovery trainers, and does not require abstinence. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Coming Out Over Coffee 10:30 a.m. A casual discussion group covering all aspects of coming out and the effects it may have on your life. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Transgender Health Fair 1 p.m. Exhibits, vendors, speakers and panels dedicated to the health of the transgender community. Event is free. Transgender Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. <http://www.transgendermichigan.org/events/health.html>

Alcoholics Anonymous Brownbaggers 1:30 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile

www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Group for gay, bisexual and transgender men ages 18 and up. This group frequently offers holiday parties and outings such as movie nights in addition to regular meetings. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Retro Fevre Saturdays 9 p.m. Music from 80s, 90s, and today. Red Door Night Club, 22901 Woodward Ave, **Ferndale**. 2485411600. events@reddoorclub.com <http://www.reddoorclub.com/events/>

Sunday, Sept. 25

AIDS Walk Detroit 2016 Register to walk, make a donation, or sign up as a volunteer. Delta Air Lines, 316 E. 11 Mile Road, **Royal Oak**. 248-399-9255. info@aidswalkdetroit.org www.aidswalkdetroit.org

Paddle Group 1 a.m. Yak season is April through October. Yak Womyn, **Ann Arbor**. sapphosis@yahoo.com

Monday, Sept. 26

Alcoholics Anonymous 5:45 Serenity 5:30 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

FTM Detroit 7 p.m. This discussion provides trans men an opportunity to discuss a fuller image of transition within their larger life including



Executive Director of TGMI Rachel Crandall will present on how to choose a therapist. Contributing exhibitors include: Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Ftm Detroit, Stand with Trans, Support the T, New Dawn Counseling Center and more. Event is free and will run from 1-4 p.m.

Affirmations is located at 290 W 9 Mile Road in Ferndale.

Editor's Pick

Transgender Health Fair

Transgender Michigan will present its Fall 2016 Transgender Health Fair Sept. 24 at Affirmations. The health fair is the only one designed for transgender men, women and those who are gender non-conforming. There will be a presentation by William Powers of Be Well Medical Center who will discuss the process from the provider perspective; and

New Member Night 7 p.m. Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. No commitments, just see if we're the right group for you. All are welcome-LGBT & allies. No sight reading skills or audition are required. Out Loud Chorus, 1400 W. Stadium Blvd, **Ann Arbor**. 734-265-0740. outloudchorus@gmail.com www.OLonline.org

Sexual Addicts Anonymous 7 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Tuesday, Sept. 27

Show Your Support for MIC Every Tuesday, Juliano's will donate 15 of the bill to MIC, just tell them you're "here for MIC." Motown Invitational Classic, 27380 VanDyke, **Warren**. www.julianosrestaurant.net

Narcotics Anonymous 7 p.m. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Transgender Life Support 7 p.m. An open discussion group for people identifying as transgender and their allies. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Wednesday, Sept. 28

The Critical Role of Family Support in Preventing Risk and Promoting Well-Being for LGBT Children & Youth 9 a.m. Pre-registration required. Featuring the new innovations of the Family Acceptance Project and keynote speaker Caitlin Ryan, PhD, ACSW. Continuing education credits. Ruth Ellis Center, 5000 Fairlane Woods Dr., **Dearborn**. 888-785-7793. www.vceonline.org/2016-09-28-Critical-Role-of-Family-Support-in-Prev.id.2632.htm

Senior Koffee Klatch 1 p.m. A discussion and networking group for people 45 years of age and older. Various discussion topics, social outings and potlucks are incorporated throughout the year. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Out for Freedom: Non-Discrimination Trans Rights and the Path to Equality 5:30 p.m.

Join ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project attorney Jay Kaplan and Transgender Advocacy Project coordinator Amy Hunter. RSVP online. ACLU, 400 Culver St., **Saugatuck**. www.aculmich.org/saugatuck

Middlepath Meditation 6 p.m. Guided meditation covering various topics and methods followed by silent meditations. \$5 suggested donation. No registration needed. This is a drop-in event. Michigan Pagans, 224 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-548-1415. www.bostontearoom.com

Newly Single 7 p.m. A support and discussion group for those who are newly single and are coping with the loss of a relationship. The group offers support, resources, skill building opportunities and social events. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Thursday, Sept. 29

Library at Night Tour 6 p.m. Ticket costs by donation, all proceeds will help support the HYPE Teen Film Festival. Detroit Public Library Friends Foundation, 5201 Woodward Ave, **Detroit**. 313-481-1358. missioncontrol@detroitpubliclibrary.org www.facebook.com/events/1195627480510016/

Men's Film Group 6:30 p.m. 18 and up Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. mensgroup6@gmail.com www.goaffirmations.org

Rehearsals for Metro Detroit LGBT Chorus 7 p.m. New members welcomed year round. One Voice Chorus, 1589 W. Maple Road, **Birmingham**. detroitonevoice@yahoo.com <http://onevoicechorus.net>

Saturday, Oct. 1

AIDS 5K Run and Walk 7 a.m. Officially timed by Gault Race Management. AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region, Downtown Bay City, **Bay City**. www.facebook.com/events/1036964986347056/

Michigan Bullying Prevention Conference 8 a.m. Uniting diverse groups of adults and youth advocates to discuss bullying and peer aggression, includes workshops with keynote by Anne Collier. All professions welcome. Tickets \$25. International Bullying Prevention Association, 3601 W 13 Mile Rd, **Royal Oak**. www.ibpaworld.org/mi/

Monthly Gamenight 5 p.m. Play legacy and campaign style board games. Attendance limited to meetup members. Gay Geeks Social Group [Metro Area], **Detroit**. www.meetup.com/

8th Annual Bras For A Cause 6 p.m. Hosted by Fox 2 Detroit's Erika Erickson, with musical guest Steve Taylor. Live and silent auction. Tickets starting at \$50. Chief Financial Credit Union, 318 W. Fourth St., **Royal Oak**. 248-577-0800. www.brasforacausemichigan.org/

Lesbian Euchre 6 p.m. Please arrive early to register. \$5 donation to Affirmations. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. lsbdanii@aol.com www.goaffirmations.org

Big 80s Flashback Bash 8 p.m. 40th anniversary of punk. 21 and over welcome. Cover: \$6. Proceeds benefit the Hater Kitty Rescue Army, a local cat rescue group. Static Network, 1254 Michigan Avenue, **Detroit**. 313-961-4668. info@staticrecords.com www.pjslagerhouse.com

MUSIC & MORE

Comedy

AEG Live "Comedian Jim Jefferies" The Unusual Punishment Tour. Tickets: \$39.50-\$49.50. All ages welcome. Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., **Detroit**. 6 p.m. Sept. 23. 313-832-7100. www.themasonic.com

Concerts

89X "Young the Giant" With Ra Ra Riot. All ages welcome. Tickets \$27.50 - \$45. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 7 p.m. Sept. 23. <http://concerts.livenation.com/event/08005096BEED3503>

89x and 93.9 The River "Metric" Tickets: \$20-\$45. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 25. 313-961-5451. www.thefillmoredetroit.com

89X and Bud Light "Chill on The Hill" 2016 Lineup includes Bastille, The Used, Pierce the Veil, NOFX, Billy Talent, Beartooth, Finish Ticket, Smashing Satellites, and Run River North. Tickets: \$29-\$139. Freedom Hill Amphitheatre, 14900 Metro Parkway, Sterling Heights. 2 p.m. Sept. 30. 248-377-0100. chillonthehillfestival.com

Editor's Pick

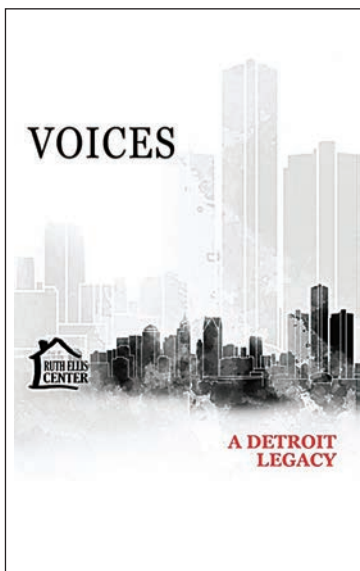
Voices 2016: Thursday Sept. 22

Join the Ruth Ellis Center in their 2016 celebration of Voices, a benefit to support runaway or at-risk LGBTQ youth. Guests will enjoy a strolling dinner, complimentary drinks, a silent auction and a short program with special guest comedian Sandra Bernhard. Voices provides critical funding to support Ruth Ellis Center's annual operations while also celebrating their dedicated and generous supporters. REC helps LGBTQ young people who are living in one of the most medically underserved cities in the state of Michigan get access to mental health, substance use disorder treatment and prevention, and primary healthcare. Tickets: \$175 for general admission and \$275 for VIP. Voices will begin at 7 p.m. at the Waterview Loft at Port Detroit located at 130 Atwater St. in Detroit. Purchase tickets at www.ruthelliscenter.org/voices.

Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Smear Lipstick 3 p.m. A discussion group for self identified feminine lesbian women to identify issues specific to them. The group also does a monthly community service project to increase their visibility in every community. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105.

deconstruction of doubt, male privilege, vulnerability and more. Attendance restricted to FTM/transgender men, anyone who identifies on the transmasculine side of the spectrum. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups



announcement. Lear Corporation, 130 Atwater St., **Detroit**. 313-656-6000. www.ruthelliscenter.org/voices

Friday, Sept. 23

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee 8 p.m. Barefoot is also sponsoring a clothing drive for the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit. Tickets \$20. Barefoot Productions Theatre, 240 N. Main St., **Plymouth**. 734-

Affirmations To Host Fall Fling

FERNDALE – As Affirmations gears up to host its 2016 autumn fundraiser, the organization looks back on all that has changed since the first Fall Fling last year.

Affirmations, one of the 10 largest LGBT community centers in the nation, located right in the heart of downtown Ferndale, has changed a lot since bringing in the new Executive Director Susan Erspamer and going through a big staffing shift.

Erspamer joined Affirmations in November 2015 and since then the organization has expanded and improved upon many of the services it had offered such as: developed a larger volunteer base, reorganized its staffing structure, streamlined and aligned programs to better reflect its mission, created an aggressive annual plan to increase grant applications 250 percent (a significant increase from 2015), launched evidence-based youth programming, implemented the L.E.A.D. Institute, increased education initiatives, refocused its attention on the community centers as a destination for programs and services and developed an effective process for vendor procurement.

Erspamer met with many longtime activists and leaders in the Michigan LGBT

community, past and present Affirmation's volunteers, supporters, current and former board members and a few former staff members to get better acclimated with the political and social climate affecting the LGBT community of Metro Detroit.

"Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to meet with me and share Affirmations' historical information, along with your hopes and visions for Affirmations future. I've cherished each of those conversations," Erspamer wrote in a release about the Fling.

Fall Fling, held inside Affirmations' will feature live entertainment, raffles, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and desserts. For those who have not attended an Affirmations fundraiser, expect an opportunity to see the center in action, welcome the beauty of the new season and get to know the staff and volunteers.

"As summer winds down and we look forward to the colors of autumn, I would like to personally invite you to join us at the Affirmations Fall Fling fundraiser," Erspamer wrote.

Erspamer personally noted that she is excited to meet new LGBTQ and ally faces at this year's event.

"Affirmations needs each of you as

we look to the future; the community is and will always be the backbone of the organization and the key to its success," Erspamer continued.

The money raised from Fall Fling 2016 will support implementation of Affirmations life-transforming programs and services such as the the many counseling services, the relationship skills class, sexual health testing resources, tobacco prevention and cessation, the L.E.A.D. institute, over 15 discussion groups that meet weekly, and the various youth oriented services.

"Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to meet with me and share Affirmations' historical information, along with your hopes and visions for Affirmations' future. I've cherished each of those conversations," Erspamer wrote.

Fall Fling 2016 will begin at 7 p.m. Oct. 8 at Affirmations. Tickets cost \$50 per person and can be purchased at www.goaffirmations.org/fall-fling-2016.

Affirmations is located at 290 West Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. Please dress casually.

For more information contact the Director of Development, Katie Kock at kkoch@goaffirmations.org.

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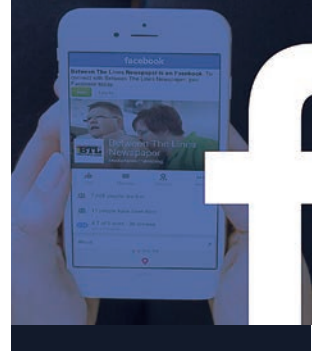
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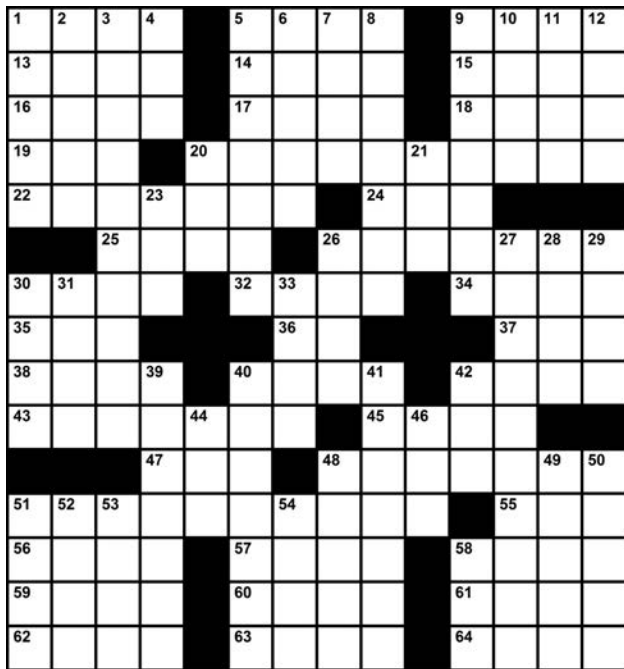
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Q Puzzle



- 32 Since, to J. M. Barrie
 34 Asian cuisine
 35 Will Smith title role
 36 More of the movie
 37 Suffix for southeast
 38 Guitarist Townshend
 40 "A time to embrace and a time to refrain ___ embracing" (Ecclesiastes 3:5)
 42 Stare at
 43 Dickhead
 45 Hathaway of "Brokeback Mountain"
 47 Heston in a chariot
 48 "War Requiem" composer Benjamin
 51 End of the movie
 55 Dr. of the rap world
 56 Straight
 57 Words in many disco names
 58 Brought forth fruit
 59 Undercover crack investigator
 60 Alfred Douglas' school
 61 Got a little behind
 62 You, to the Amish
 63 Groups of games, to Navratilova
 64 "Showboat" cap'n
- 8 Cough med that can coldcock you
 9 Where a welcome is trampled
 10 Type of seaman
 11 Straddled a stallion
 12 Madonna's "Dick Tracy" character
 20 Sch. for Rev. Spahr
 21 Looker's leg
 23 Snatch
 26 The skinny
 27 TV series in which 3-Down has done a film kiss
 28 Dixie Chicks' "Goodbye ___"
 29 Triangle ratio
 30 Drinks like a pussycat
 31 "Losing My Religion" extra Mapa
 33 Dick of "Bewitched"
 39 Use Cialis, e.g.
 40 Over a very long time
 41 Leaves behind
 42 Neighbor of Minn.
 44 Wilder's "___ Town"
 46 Anais who went both ways
 48 Homophobe, for one
 49 Screwed up
 50 Hard up
 51 Tickled pink
 52 Cole Porter's "Well, Did You ___"
 53 Debussy's daddy
 54 Haul around
 58 Drag queen's stole, often

Appropriate Bible Verse

Across

- 1 Lorca's lower
 5 Kind of sheet
 9 Come quickly
 13 Rupert Everett's "___ Life"
 14 2012 Ben Affleck movie
 15 Penetrating reed
 16 Verdi slave girl
 17 One with a long tongue
 18 Cutlass or 98, for short

- 19 Feeling of hitting rock bottom
 20 Start of a movie in which actor Will played gay but did not feel free to do a film kiss
 22 Where Hamlet told Ophelia to get herself
 24 "___ Spartacus!"
 25 It comes before sex and marriage
 26 "Jailhouse Rock" singers?
 30 Mary's little pet

Down

- 1 Beefcake muscles
 2 Scrabble quintet of one-pointers
 3 Actor son of Will
 4 Chicken-king link
 5 Poems of Samuel Butler, e.g.
 6 Official substitute
 7 "Omigosh!"

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com

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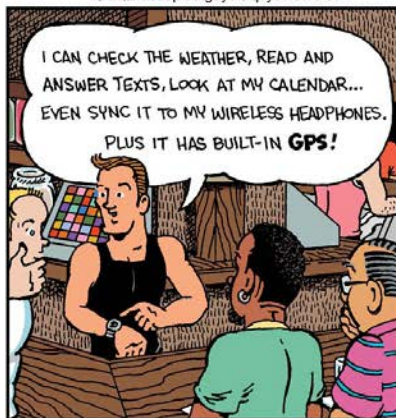
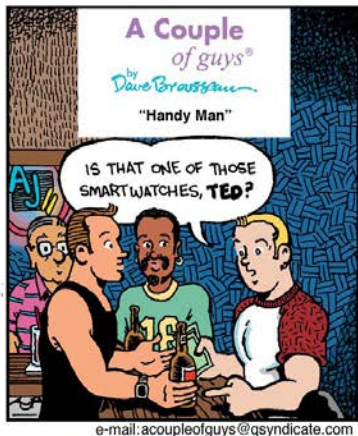
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