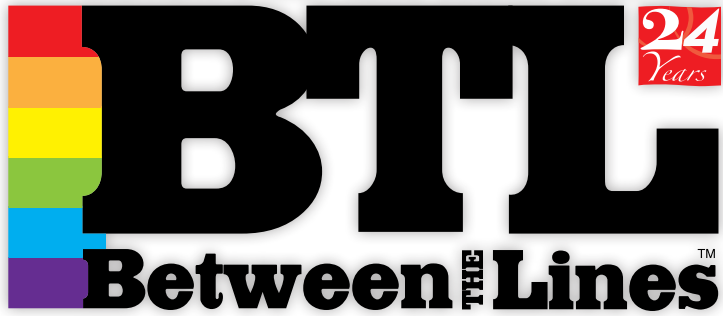


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PUBLISHERS
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

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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

Writers
Emell Derra Adolphus, Todd A. Heywood,
Jason Michael

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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NEWS

Reminder: Resist the Trump Agenda with 'Indivisible: A Practical Guide'

Former Progressive Congressional Staffers Reveal Best Practices for Making Congress Listen, Project Takes Off Across the Country

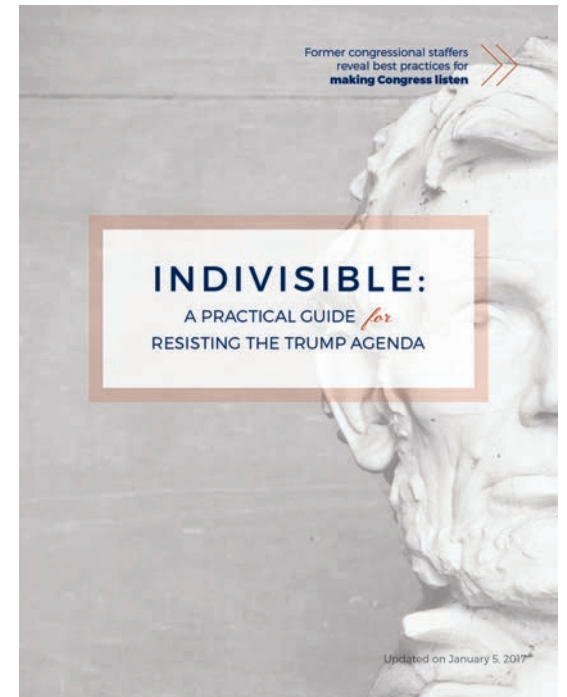
BY BTL STAFF

Do you want to do your part to beat back the Trump agenda? If so, that will require more than calls and petitions according to a group of former progressive congressional staffers who saw the Tea Party beat back President Obama's agenda.

In response, this collective has created {URL "Indivisible: A Practical Guide" www.IndivisibleGuide.com} to share insider information and offer step-by-step instructions for individuals, groups and organizations looking to replicate the Tea Party's success in getting Congress to listen to a small, vocal, dedicated group of constituents. The guide is intended to be equally useful for stiffening Democratic spines and weakening pro-Trump Republican resolve.

"We saw these activists take on a popular president with a mandate for change and a supermajority in Congress. We saw them organize locally and convince their own members of Congress to reject President Obama's agenda. Their ideas were wrong, cruel, and tinged with racism - and they won. We believe that protecting our values and neighbors will require mounting a similar resistance to the Trump agenda - but a resistance built on the values of inclusion, tolerance and fairness. Trump is not popular. He does not have a mandate. He does not have large congressional majorities. If a small minority in the Tea Party can stop President Barack Obama, then we the majority can stop a petty tyrant named Trump," the group's website reads.

These volunteers believe that the next four years depend on citizens across the country standing indivisible against the Trump agenda. They believe that buying into false promises or accepting partial concessions will only further empower Trump to victimize citizens of the U.S. They hope that this guide will provide those who share that belief with useful tools to make



Congress listen.

The guide live on Google Doc, is intended as a work in progress, one that the group hopes to continue updating as the resistance to the Trump agenda takes shape.

"We wrote this guide because we believe that the coming years will see an unprecedented movement of Americans rising up across the country to protect our values and our neighbors. Our goal is to provide practical understanding of how your members of Congress think, and how you can demonstrate to them the depth and power of the opposition to Donald Trump and Republican congressional overreach. This is not a panacea, nor is it intended to stand alone. We strongly urge you to marry the strategy in this guide with a broader commitment to creating a more just society, building local power, and addressing systemic injustice and racism," the group's website reads.

Anyone interested in building on the tactics outlined in the guide, email IndivisibleAgainstTrump@gmail.com. Note state groups are forming. Follow the project online for more information.

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Motor City Pride Spins Off From Equality Michigan

BY JAN STEVENSON

DETROIT – Motor City Pride is going it alone. After operating for the past 15 years under the auspices of first the Triangle Foundation and then its successor organization, Equality Michigan, MCP is now its own organization, complete with its own board of directors, budget and committees.

Dave Wait, the new leader of MCP, has been a driving force and the primary organizer of MCP for eight years. He has also been the EQMI board chair for the past four years, a position he stepped down from, effective Jan. 23 at the organization's last board meeting.

“Motor City Pride is a community event and celebration, which is different from the victim services and policy mission of Equality Michigan,” said Wait. “It makes sense that the two operate separately since their missions, goals and objectives are different – compatible, just different.”

Wait has been active in InterPride, the international organization of pride events. He and his long-time partner, Chris Pollum, have traveled extensively in the U.S., Canada and Europe attending pride celebrations, meeting other organizers and learning best practices for Pride organizing. MCP will continue its membership in InterPride.

“EQMI staff presence will be as big as it was last year,” said EQMI executive director Steph White. She adds that by not being involved in the overall festival planning and execution, the state's main LGBT political organization can focus its attention on having a larger political presence at all the other state's Pride celebrations, including Ferndale Pride, Kalamazoo Pride, Grand Rapids Pride, Michigan Pride in Lansing and others.

The change brings Detroit in line with other major city Pride celebrations, most of which are operated independently of LGBT community groups. For example, Heritage of Pride has run the New York City Pride march, parade and festival since the mid-1970s. Chicago Pride is a unique organization, as is LA Pride and Twin Cities Pride in Minneapolis, to name a few.

“When I joined in the fall of 2015, the board asked me to evaluate this question of keeping the festival integrated fully, or separating them,” said White. “Given the history and financial structures, it's the kind of decision that has to be made thoughtfully, so we took our time. We are now confident that both entities can be stronger and able to thrive if they are able to each focus more strategically on their different missions.”



Follow the Money

MCP's operating budget of \$225,000 has been fairly consistent since the event moved to Hart Plaza in 2011. Wait said that the revenue breakdown has been roughly 40 percent from sponsors, 25 percent from attendee gate fees, 20 percent from vendor booth rental and 15 percent from beverage sales. The largest sponsor has been Delta Airlines, at \$25,000 in 2016. Plans for the 2017 event June 10-11 are well under way and the organization is working with a similar budget of \$225,000.

MCP has operated at about breakeven for the last three years, according to Wait. The largest expenses have been for entertainment, rental and licensing at Hart Plaza, rental of tents, staging and equipment, security, and insurance. Wait confirmed that other than bookkeeping assistance, there has been no paid staff assigned to the event from EQMI. The new MCP entity will continue as a totally volunteer-run organization.

“In this transition year, Equality Michigan will continue to act as our fiduciary agent until we finalize our non-profit status with the IRS,” said Wait. This means that EQMI will act as the fiscal sponsor for MCP this year as the organization does for the Trans Sistas of

Color Project, for example.

Fiscal sponsorship is a formal arrangement in which a 501(c)(3) public charity sponsors a project that may lack exempt status. This assistance until non-profit status has been granted by the IRS will allow MCP to seek grants and solicit tax-deductible donations under EQMI's exempt status.

“Our ultimate goal is to produce other events throughout the year, including the annual ComedyFest, to raise money for Motor City Pride and to build a financial reserve. Our goal is to be able to make monetary grants to local LGBT organizations.”

A New Chapter in a Long History

MCP traces its roots back to 1989 when Frank Colasanti Jr., the pride event coordinator for the Detroit Area Gay & Lesbian Council, led an effort to produce a pride event in the University of Michigan Dearborn Campus' Gymnasium. The event was called PrideFest. In 1991, DAGLC moved the event into Oakland Community College of Royal Oak, and in 1992 Michael C. Lary became



Dave Wait, the new leader of MCP, has been a driving force and the primary organizer of MCP for eight years.

PrideFest's coordinator.

In 1993, realizing DAGLC and the PrideFest Coordinators had different visions for the event, Lary and a number of others formed Southeast Michigan Pride, which mainly focused on producing an annual pride festival. In 1994, the event was renamed PrideFest Celebration with the tagline “A Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Pride Celebration.”

PrideFest stayed in Royal Oak until 2002, then in 2003 SEMP moved the event to downtown Ferndale. Later that year, PrideFest Celebration became a project of the Triangle Foundation, and the following year the event was renamed Motor City Pride. In 2011, remaining a project of Triangle's new name, Equality Michigan, MCP moved to Hart Plaza, in the heart of downtown Detroit.

Learn more at www.MotorCityPride.org

Two Men Charged for LGBTQ Hate Crimes in Separate Incidents

Fair Michigan Assists Wayne County Prosecutor's Office to Bring Justice to Local Victims

BY BTL STAFF

A 26-year-old Detroit man, Jason Hogan, has been charged after shooting a transgender woman.

From Jan. 13-22, an investigation by Detroit Police officers led to Hogan's arrest. He has been charged - by Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy's Office with assistance from the Fair Michigan Justice Project - with assault with intent to commit murder, a felony punishable by up to life in prison, along with possessing a firearm during the commission of a felony, which is punishable by two years in prison. The case was assigned to FMJP special prosecutor Jaimie Powell Horowitz.

It is alleged that on Jan. 13 Hogan met the victim and arranged to pay for sexual activity in the back of his car. After performing a sex act, Hogan shot the victim in the face with a 9mm Ruger handgun. The victim escaped and sought treatment for her injury at Grace Hospital.

Fair Michigan Director of Transgender Outreach Julisa Abad said, "This case highlights the mortal danger faced by transgender individuals in Michigan. Since Michigan law permits employment discrimination against LGBTQ residents, trans people sometimes must resort to sex work in order to survive, which puts them at extreme risk of criminal violence. It is incredibly encouraging to know that The Fair Michigan Justice Project, the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office and the Detroit Police Department have stated, in no uncertain terms, that violence against the trans community is unacceptable under any circumstances and that these agencies stand ready to aggressively prosecute these brutal crimes committed."

Hogan was arraigned on Jan. 24 and was given a \$250,000 cash bond. The probable cause conference was held on Jan. 31. The preliminary examination is scheduled for Feb. 6 in front of Judge Kenneth J. King of the 36th District Court.

Worthy and the FMJP also charged 46-year-old Anthony Thornton in Port Huron with kidnapping, multiple rapes and unlawful imprisonment after old rape kits were processed.

It is alleged that on April 20, 2010 Thornton met his first victim, a lesbian, at the Coalition on Temporary Shelter homeless shelter in Detroit. The victim accompanied Thornton and two other men to an abandoned house to drink and smoke.

When the victim attempted to leave, Thornton and the other men held her down and took turns raping her. The victim had a rape kit collected, but the kit was not processed until March 20, 2015. A Combined DNA Index System hit identified Thornton. It is also alleged that, on March 8, 2011, Thornton's second victim was invited to a home in Detroit by a friend. When the victim arrived, the friend was not there but Thornton was. Thornton overpowered the victim and raped her. Thornton only stopped his attack when he heard someone at the door. The victim was able to escape through a back window and immediately reported the crime. Her rape kit was recently processed, and a CODIS hit identified Thornton. The victim has positively identified Thornton as her attacker.

Horowitz handled both cases for which Thornton has been charged with three counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, three counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, one count of kidnapping, and two counts of unlawful imprisonment. First-degree criminal sexual conduct and kidnapping are felonies punishable by up to life in prison. Second-degree criminal sexual conduct and unlawful imprisonment are felonies punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Fair Michigan President Dana Nessel said, "These cases illustrate the tragedy of Michigan's failure to quickly process thousands of rape kits in Detroit and the importance of Prosecutor Worthy's longtime crusade to bring the perpetrators of sex crimes to justice. An accused serial rapist evaded justice for years, and the victims' demands for justice were unaddressed. The Fair Michigan Justice Project, in association with the Prosecutor's Office and the Detroit Police, is proud to

take up these cold cases and finally deliver justice to the women and LGBT individuals who were victimized."

Thornton was arraigned on Jan. 24 and was given a \$100,000 cash bond. The probable cause conference was held on Jan. 31. The preliminary examination is scheduled for Feb. 7 in front of Judge Shannon A. Holmes of the 36th District Court.

For more information, visit the FMJP at www.fairmichigan.org.



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LGBT Non-Discrimination Ordinance Advances in Jackson

Jackson City Council Votes 4-3 to Prohibit Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

JACKSON – More than 400 people came to the Jackson City Council Meeting on Jan. 24 in support of an LGBT non-discrimination ordinance, which advanced 4-3.

Councilman Daniel Greer told MLive.com, “it’s the largest crowd I’ve seen since starting as a council member in 1997.”

The report said the line to get in the second-floor council members chambers at Jackson City Hall grew out the front door so city leaders relocated the meeting to the Michigan Theatre of Jackson.

Of the 86 individuals to address the city council regarding the ordinance, 82 were in favor, three were against and one said the city needed to study it more. This lasted more than two hours and 23 minutes – plus a 13-minute bathroom break.

The long-discussed NDO progresses forward following the 4-3 vote, but still has another hurdle. The ordinance must pass through two readings to become official, and the informal discussion at the Oct. 11 meeting does not qualify as a reading, Mayor Bill Jors announced at the start of the meeting.

The issue resurfaces at the next council meeting Feb. 7, according to MLive.com. If it receives four affirmative votes, the NDO goes into effect 30 days later.

“For seventeen years, tireless advocates in Jackson have pushed for the passage of an ordinance that would protect LGBTQ people from discrimination. Last night’s vote marks a milestone - the ordinance has never made it this far in the local legislative process. Jackson should celebrate that accomplishment, but also recognize that we’re not done yet and can’t let up now. It’s more important than ever that residents and business owners contact the city council and express their support for this ordinance and show up in force at the next city council meeting to see to it that the Jackson City Council finishes the job,” said Nathan Triplett, director of public policy and political action at Equality Michigan.

The NDO prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, public housing and public accommodations. If no conciliation agreement is made between parties, a civil infraction is given with a fine of up to \$500 per each day of the violation.

Consumers Energy Vice President Daniel Malone spoke for the second meeting in a row, telling council that the largest employer in the county supports the inclusiveness the



Of the 86 individuals to address the Jackson city council Jan. 24 regarding the non-discrimination ordinance, 82 were in favor, three were against and one said the city needed to study it more. Photos: Nathan Triplett



NDO would provide, as indicated by a letter submitted to Councilman Derek Dobies in November 2016.

According to Malone’s talking points, he said, “Jackson is in competition for residents, business, and employees, and inclusiveness is an important factor that attracts all three. Beyond the important issues of fairness and equality lies an additional reason for cities to take matters of equality seriously – it is good business. But this isn’t just about good business or an inclusive community – it’s about doing what’s right for so many who are negatively impacted by discrimination – and it happens right here in Michigan.”

Malone points to the cases of discrimination the Michigan Department of Civil Rights has started logging as more have been brought forward in recent years. He reiterates for the council that in 34 states, including Michigan, it remains legal to discriminate against LGBT people and that roughly 41 Michigan communities have stood up and taken a stand.

“In the absence of a state or federal law prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination, local nondiscrimination ordinances like this are the one surefire way to provide people with legal protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,” said Triplett. “They are also key to building political support for legislative action on

Elliott-Larsen. In the face of a hostile White House and Congress, and a difficult political landscape in Lansing, local campaigns like this are going to be critical component of any effort to advance LGBT equality in Michigan and across the country.”

How Council Members Voted

Derek Dobies, Sixth Ward
Vote: Yes

Daniel Greer, Third Ward
Vote: No

Andrew Frounfelker, Fifth Ward
Vote: Yes

Freddie Dancy, Second Ward
Vote: Yes

Craig Pappin, Fourth Ward
Vote: No

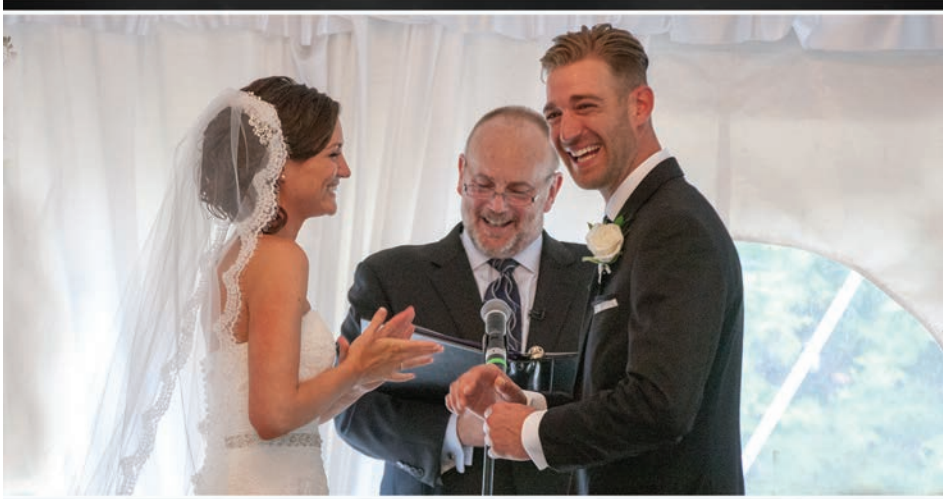
Arlene Robinson, First Ward
Vote: Yes

Mayor Bill Jors
Vote: No

Triplett said, “Opponents of the Jackson ordinance have a big problem – they are basing their opposition on a combination of hyperbolic hypotheticals and straw men. Here in Michigan we have the benefit of nearly 45 years of lived experience with non-discrimination ordinances just like this one in 41 other communities across the state, none of which substantiates any of the fears or concerns being advanced. The proposed ordinance contains extensive due process requirements on par with those contained in both state and federal non-discrimination laws. These procedures are well-established, tested, and proven. The ordinance outlines a detailed complaint and investigation process and explicitly prohibits anyone from providing false information to any authorized individual charged with investigating a discrimination complaint. Frankly, this ordinance contains far more protection against wrongful accusation or citation than you’d find for essentially any other civil infraction established by the city code in Jackson.”

See the council members explain why they voted the way they did online at www.pridesource.com

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1933 Hate Who? This is 2017

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Within months of Adolf Hitler's appointment as Germany's Chancellor in 1933, Nazi S.S. thugs in Berlin stood menacingly in front of Jewish owned businesses.

They held up signs in their grubby, beat-opponents-to-a-pulp hands. Kraft night bei juden! ("Don't buy from Jews!"). Nationwide the Nazi slogan was, "The Jew is our misfortune."

Germany has had a history of Jew-baiting dating to the 16th century. There's an infamous seven-point tract called, "On the Jews and Their Lies." It circulated widely in 1543. It urged...

"...to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians."

Its author was Martin Luther, founder of the Protestant movement. It is, one can say without fear of contradiction, an embarrassment to the many protestant denominations evolved since Luther's time (1483-1586). Many but not all.

It's no stretch of imagination to say that for those historians who have documented the history of the holocaust, it can happen again. They see cautions, hints, alarming similarities between times then and now. Trends to take note of. Warnings to watch out for.

In 1935, Nazi Germany decreed the notorious Nuremberg Laws. Jews were made non-status residents with no rights. They were excluded from practicing any medicine, law, or teaching of Aryan citizens (non-Jews).

In 1938, Jewish homes, businesses, synagogues were vandalized, burned, destroyed during the November weekend that lives in lasting infamy as "Kristallnacht." Night of shattered glass. Soon Jews were required to wear yellow stars.

Failure to do so meant death. Soon Jewish property was confiscated. Jews were deported to lice-ridden ghettos.

German city after city was declared, "Judenfrei." Free of Jews. It was hard not to know what was going on. But most Germans looked the other way. Most minded their own business. Shoah, the Holocaust, was underway. "Kraft nicht bei Juden" it visibly began. It ended with six million Jewish deaths.

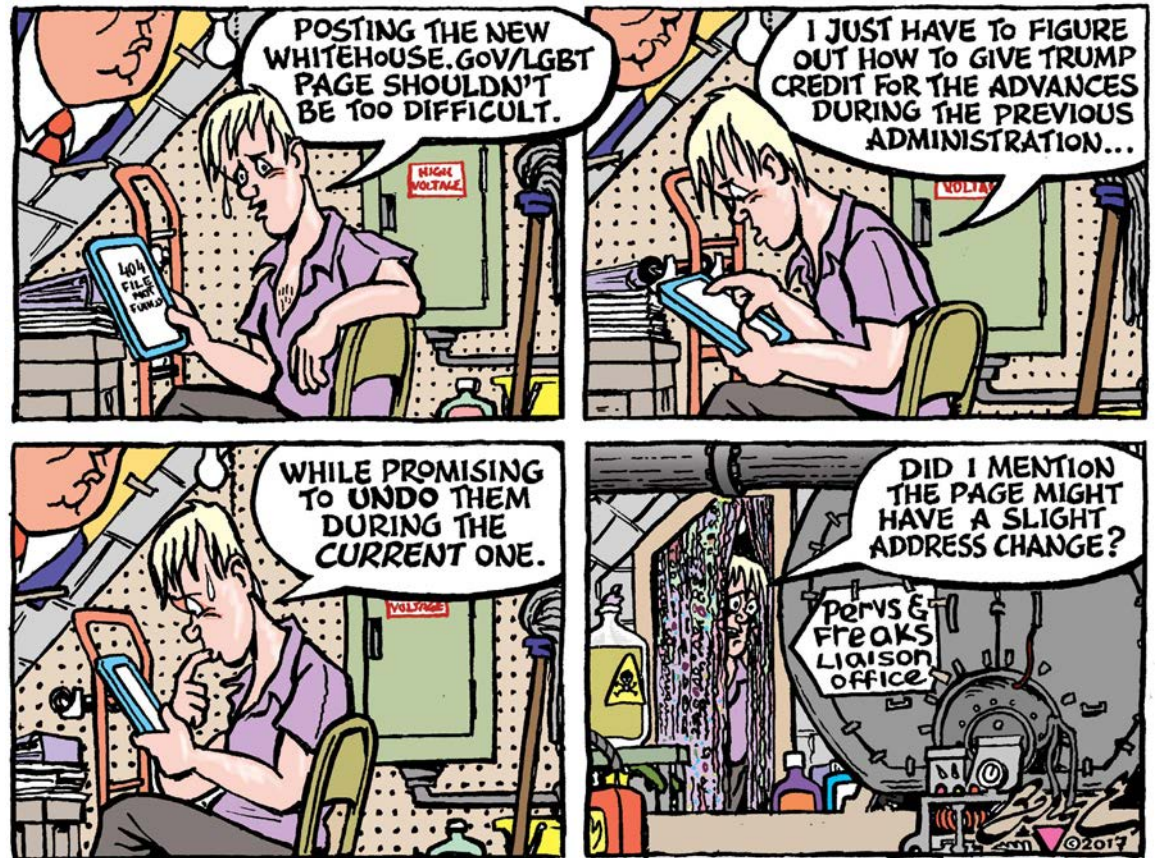
It's no stretch of imagination to say that for those historians who have documented the history of the holocaust, it can happen again. They see cautions, hints, alarming similarities between times then and now. Trends to take note of. Warnings to watch out for. Especially for LGBT citizens.

Having reviewed as much, it's noted with acute interest that the American Family Association has demanded its 180,000 members boycott Home Depot, Target, Ford Motor Company, Disney World for their generous or inclusive support of the LGBT community.

These AFA boycotts have not as yet been effective. Ford Motor Company has not gone under. Disney World still has popular gay days. And, so far, Home Depot or Target – God Bless them! – have not been affected significantly. (Lesbian shoppers will see to that.)

What's disturbing is that it's all too easy to picture an AFA Bible bully carrying a sign, "Don't Buy from Gays or Gay Supporters!" And, standing theocratic thug to thug with them, Trump, Pence and hate-mongering, rightwing Rebiblicans.

Charles@pridesource.com



BY JAY KAPLAN

The Next Four Years

It has only been 10 days as I write this, but from the scrubbing of LGBT issues from the White House website to nominated cabinet members with a clear record of antipathy towards LGBT rights, the Trump Administration has now taken hold. There are numerous laws, public policy issues and policy players to be concerned about over the next four years. They include:

President Obama's Executive Order 13672, signed in July 2014 protects all federal employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the employees of companies that contract with the federal government (which would be 30,000 companies employing one-fifth of the U.S. workforce). During the presidential campaign, President Trump vowed to rescind all of President Obama's Executive Orders. A statement released by the White House Tuesday morning - just 24 hours after some rumors circulated that President Trump was on the verge of rescinding the executive order - says:

"President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community. President Trump continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights, just as he was throughout the election. The President is proud to have been the first ever GOP nominee to mention the LGBTQ community in his nomination acceptance speech, pledging then to protect the community from

violence and oppression. The executive order signed in 2014, which protects employees from anti-LGBTQ workplace discrimination while working for federal contractors, will remain intact at the direction of President Donald J. Trump."

However, it doesn't put us out of the woods regarding the possibility of an executive order permitting individuals, businesses, and organizations that receive federal funding to discriminate based on their religious beliefs. This has not been denied by the Trump Administration at this time. It wouldn't surprise me if they issue an executive order like that, while reminding people that the president didn't rescind the federal employees order (talking out of both sides of the mouth).

Repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been a centerpiece of both the Trump campaign and the Republican majority in Congress. While the media has finally decided to focus on the benefits of this law (22 million more insured, no exclusion for pre-existing conditions, staying on parents' insurance until age 26), little mention has been made of how beneficial this law has been for the LGBT community, particularly transgender people, where for years insurance companies have excluded coverage for

See next page

medically necessary transition care. This includes Michigan's Medicaid program which prohibits payment for trans hormone therapy. Federal non-discrimination regulations for the ACA make it clear that public and private insurers cannot single out transgender people for discriminatory treatment. The regulations also ensure that health care providers cannot refuse to provide medically necessary treatment to LGBT people. In addition to Congress approving a budgetary resolution to eliminate funding for the ACA, President Trump on his first day in office signed an Executive Order calling for federal agencies to "exercise all authority and discretion available to them to waive, defer, grant exemptions from, or delay the implementation of any provision or requirement of the Act that would impose a fiscal burden" on individuals or businesses. This ambiguous language could permit insurers to refuse to cover transition medical care, falsely claiming that it's too financially burdensome and or medical providers to refuse to provide various medical care.

During his campaign, President Trump pledged to sign into law the **First Amendment Defense Act (FADA)**. FADA would exempt individuals from all laws, including civil rights laws based on their "religious belief or moral conviction that marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman, or that sexual relations are properly reserved to such a marriage." Providing an religious exemption for non-religious activity, the legislation has the effect of gutting any and all civil rights protections for LGBT people. Senator Ted Cruz and Representative Mike Lee announced that they will be re-introducing this legislation (which President Obama threatened to veto last session).

The Secretaries of Departments of Justice and Education have interpreted both **Title VII** and **Title IX** (federal civil rights laws that prohibit sex discrimination) to cover LGBT people. In addition the Department of HUD has issued regulations stating that LGBT people are protected against discrimination in government funded housing programs, and that transgender people should be able to access government funded homeless shelters in accordance with their gender identity. In addition the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has been actively investigating employment discrimination cases against LGBT people under the theory of sex discrimination. All of this could change with the new proposed players in the Trump Administration.

His nominee for Attorney General Jeff Sessions, as Senator co-sponsored the First Amendment Defense Act. He supported a federal constitutional ban on same-sex couples marrying, voted against adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the federal hate crimes law, and voted against repealing the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Of the 2015 Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v Hodges*, Sessions opined

If this feels overwhelming
it is. It is so important that
the LGBT community remain
both engaged and vigilant...

that he believed it to be "unconstitutional."

Betsy DeVos, nominee for Education Secretary, along with her family have donated extensively to groups which promote the idea that students who identify as LGBT must undergo "conversion" and have also affiliated with groups that oppose anti-bullying legislation. She and her family have also supported campaigns to deny same-sex couples the right to marry, including Michigan's 2004 ballot initiative campaign.

Although she stated during her confirmation hearing last week she stated she did not support "conversion therapy," she also refused to say that charter schools and private schools receiving federal funds would be held accountable to the same standards regarding bullying of students.

Secretary of HUD nominee Ben Carson stated during his presidential campaign, compared same-sex marriage to bestiality and NAMBLA, in an interview with Sean Hannity. He also stated in a CNN interview that he believes being gay is a choice "(b)ecause a lot people who go into prison go into prison straight...."

He also defended Vice President Mike Pence (then Governor Pence) signing into law Indiana legislation permitting businesses and individuals to discriminate against gay people based on their religious beliefs. This week President Trump appointed EEOC commissioner Victoria Lipnick to be acting chair of the EEOC. Lipnick has dissented from EEOC opinions holding that sexual orientation discrimination can constitute actionable sex discrimination under the theory of gender stereotyping and that transgender employees may not be discriminated against regarding bathroom usage.

That's just four of Trump's cabinet nominees/appointees and their records on LGBT rights, and of course there is **Vice President Mike Pence**, who has a long history of opposing LGBT rights, from signing into law the aforementioned Indiana religious discrimination law, to opposing marriage equality. In 2000 as a member of Congress, Pence proposed cutting off funds for HIV prevention and instead diverting the money to "ex-gay" therapy programs.

If this feels overwhelming it is. It is so important that the LGBT community remain both engaged and vigilant regarding policy proposals and personnel and their impact on the LGBT community. There is so much at stake and the better informed we can be, the better advocates we can be for our cause.

Jay Kaplan is an attorney with the ACLU of Michigan. He can be reached at jkaplan@aclumich.org

Creep of the Week

Donald Trump

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Great news, everybody! Donald Trump is not planning to rescind President Obama's 2014 executive order banning federal contractors from discriminating against LGBTQ people. I repeat, he has said he is not yanking those protections away.

So let's all celebrate Trump, American LGBTQ Savior. Let us grovel at his feet and kiss his rings for sparing us from his mighty wrath. Because he definitely expects praise and thanks for this brave and noble act of not doing something that he could do because he's the president, God help us all.

In a statement from the White House regarding Trump's decision to not take away rights from LGBTQ workers he makes it clear that he totally could if he wanted to, but won't because of how good he is at presidenting. In other words, the statement was all about him.

"President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community," the statement began, underlining Trump's total lack of self-awareness or understanding of irony. But hey, maybe he's being sincere and he actually will go to the mat for the LGBTQ community. Just not the Muslim ones. Or the brown ones. Or the black ones. Or the Jewish ones. Or the immigrant ones. But you know, other than that, ALL Americans.

"President Trump continues to be respectful and be supportive of LGBTQ rights, just as he was throughout the election," the statement continues.

This is some revisionist history here. You may recall that Trump said he thought the marriage equality decision should be overturned. That's not exactly supportive or respectful.

"The president is proud to have been the first ever GOP nominee to mention the LGBTQ community in his nomination acceptance speech," reads the statement, "pledging then to protect the community from violence and oppression."

Oh, we KNOW he is proud of saying the letters LGBTQ during his acceptance speech. Somehow he thinks that saying

I am not impressed and I will not thank Trump for sparing some LGBTQ workers their rights. Because this is but a drop in the very anti-LGBTQ ocean that is his entire administration. I mean, look at his cabinet picks. Jeff Sessions, Betsy DeVos, Mike Pompeo, Tom Price, Mike Flynn, Nikki Haley. None of these people support LGBTQ people and their families. .

five letters out loud is the same thing as supporting the actual people those letters stand for. And hey, given the Republican track record on LGBTQ issues, maybe that counts in GOP circles. But I'm pretty tired of Trump acting like he's the grand marshal in a very sad pride parade.

And let's be clear that he did not pledge to "protect the community from violence and oppression." He made very clear that this protection was only against "a hateful foreign ideology," which was really just a backhanded attempt to gin up support for his Muslim ban.

So, no. I am not impressed and I will not thank Trump for sparing some LGBTQ workers their rights. Because this is but a drop in the very anti-LGBTQ ocean that is his entire administration.

I mean, look at his cabinet picks. Jeff Sessions, Betsy DeVos, Mike Pompeo, Tom Price, Mike Flynn, Nikki Haley. None of these people support LGBTQ people and their families. In fact, all of them are opposed to LGBTQ people.

Trump is supposed to announce his Supreme Court nominee this week and there isn't anyone on the short list who supports LGBTQ issues. In fact, it looks like being anti-LGBTQ was a prerequisite for getting on that list in the first place. Getting an anti-LGBTQ bigot on the Supreme Court bench will have long lasting repercussions for LGBTQ Americans.

So spare me the image of Trump wrapped in the rainbow flag. Don't let this one piece of positive news blind you to the threat Trump poses to you and your family. Keep marching. Keep protesting. Keep resisting.

Swastikas Painted at School with Many Minority Students

CINCINNATI (AP) –Police are trying to determine who spray-painted swastikas, racial and homophobic slurs, and President Donald Trump's last name on sidewalks and signs around a Cincinnati school whose students are mostly minorities.

The weekend graffiti at Withrow University High School was washed away before students returned to class on Monday.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reports Withrow has nearly 1,300 students, most of whom are identified as non-white, and it's known for having many immigrant students.

A Cincinnati Public Schools spokeswoman says diversity should be celebrated. She says school officials hope the vandalism sparks conversations about the need for the country to come together.

Another Cincinnati-area school was targeted with such vandalism recently. State Rep. Alicia Reece, who attended Withrow, says that's an emerging pattern that she'll ask Ohio's attorney general to investigate.

Hackers Target Chair of Calif. Legislature's LGBT Caucus

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) – Hackers have targeted the California Legislature's LGBT caucus chairman by interfering with his campaign website.

The Sacramento Bee reports Assemblyman Evan Low's campaign website was hacked Friday and later blocked as a security risk. Low says authorities have been notified.

After hackers took over, Low's website pointed to Facebook pages for groups calling themselves Shadows Team Hackers and Rajaoui PS. The pages featured posts that identified Low as chair of the LGBT caucus. One included an image of a burning rainbow flag that symbolizes gay pride.

Low says the photo represents anti-LGBT imagery.

Sponsors Withdraw House Religious Freedom Measure

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – A bill that would have allowed people to sue their employers if their policies about LGBTQ people conflicted with their religious or moral convictions is being withdrawn by its sponsors.

The bill sponsors say they remain committed to safeguarding the free expression of religion.

House Bill 135 drew heavy criticism since it was introduced.

Sabrina King, of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wyoming, said the bill would legalize discrimination against same-sex couples and transgender people.



LGBT Detroit Executive Director Curtis Lipscomb (left) introduced Charlie Dickerson as the new project coordinator for Hotter Than July. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

LGBT Detroit Appoints new HTJ Project Coordinator

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT – At their regular monthly planning meeting, which took place Jan. 25, LGBT Detroit Executive Director Curtis Lipscomb introduced Charlie Dickerson as the new project coordinator for Hotter Than July.

The annual week-long Detroit black gay pride celebration will turn 22 this year. The theme of this year's pride will be Heritage. Lipscomb said at the meeting that HTJ is the second oldest black gay pride in the world – a fact that should make Detroiters very proud.

“We should really have our chests poked out,” said Lipscomb.

At the meeting, Lipscomb announced that the HTJ committee had a fundraising goal this year of \$60,000 “in order to barely reach [our requirements]. ... Hotter Than July has never made money. If you want to lose hair and fight a lot, do prides.”

Bringing ‘Freshness’ to HTJ Planning

Much of the meeting was facilitated by Dickerson, whom Lipscomb introduced early on. In addition to his role with HTJ, Dickerson joined LGBT Detroit in December as its new program coordinator. A native of Birmingham, AL, Dickerson moved to Detroit in 2012. Last year, he admitted, was his first time attending any HTJ events, specifically the picnic.

“I wasn't able to really connect with the other events due to work,” Dickerson said. “I really can't speak much on what needs to be improved. I just know that I will be helping to support this year's HTJ. So what happened last year I'm not really concerned about as this

is a new year with new faces and new people in the room. So we are definitely going to make some great changes with HTJ that will benefit everyone.

“Every day is a learning experience,” Dickerson continued, speaking of his dual roles with LGBT Detroit and HTJ. “Because I work for LGBT Detroit I'm able to really dive in deep and learn what it means to run such an event as HTJ. Even though I wasn't here for the early years I would have been a little child so I wouldn't have been able to participate anyway. Not with the parents I had.”

Lipscomb, whose LGBT Detroit has produced HTJ since 2012, has developed a reputation for continuously infusing the HTJ planning committee with new blood and introducing the celebration to a new generation. He said he's happy to have Dickerson on board.

“I welcome Charlie to this new role,” Lipscomb said. “We had a successful January gathering of 25 folks from various sectors of our movement thanks to the help of our partner and champion, Community Health Awareness Group. With new energy and commitment to the project, Charlie brings freshness and a new and important point of view to Hotter Than July organizing.”

Seven events are planned for this year's HTJ, including the candlelight vigil opening ceremony, an opening party, a fine arts reception, a day-long conference, a picnic celebration in Palmer Park, a worship service and a brunch. The next HTJ planning meeting will take place Feb. 22, at the CHAG offices, which are located at 1300 West Fort St. in Detroit. Everyone is welcome.

HTJ Art Show Puts Call Out for Local Artists

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT - Though it's still five months away, Geno Harris, the coordinator for this year's HTJ Fine Arts Reception, has put the call out for local artists interested in participating in the event. A location for the show has not yet been announced, but Harris, who is co-founder of the Poor Man's Art Collective, said it will run throughout HTJ week – the last week of July – and culminate with a Thursday evening reception.

“I'm looking to reach a broad array of our community who are creatively included but, perhaps, have never had the opportunity to be involved in this type of an event,” Harris said. “There's no age restriction. You can be a new artist, someone who has dabbled in creating art, always had an interest in it, but just didn't what to do. I want to mix that with artists who might not identify as being lgbt but are supportive of our community.”

Harris is looking for visual artists as well as poets, singers, musicians and fashion designers. To be considered, you must submit electronic samples of your work to pmacart2003@gmail.com. There is a \$20 entry fee.

Campus Chat: Local LGBT University Student Reacts to Trump Presidency

BY DREW SAUNDERS

Donald Trump holds the distinction of entering office as the least popular incoming president of the U.S. since polling began. Trump's approval rating dropped to as low as 36 percent, according to the Quinnipiac poll, which shows that 44 percent of American voters disapprove of Trump's presidency so far, with another 19 percent who are undecided over his first five days in office.

Most new presidents come with an upsurge of good will and enjoy high approval ratings in their first hundred days. That has not happened with Trump. BTL has met with local university students in and around metro Detroit to discuss their thoughts and feelings about what a Trump presidency means to them, which the publication will highlight over the next couple of months.

Sam Jones-Darling, a political science major at Eastern Michigan University said, "With Donald Trump specifically, I'm not that concerned. The reason why I'm not concerned is the man has no policy experience whatsoever. The man is a roaring joke. The man knows how to be a celebrity, he doesn't know how to be a politician. He knows how to campaign, but governing is not the same as campaigning."

Like many LGBTQ students, Jones-Darling was more concerned with former Indiana governor and vice president Mike Pence.

"The man [Trump] does everything off the cuff and I question whether he's going to get anything done with Congress. Dealing with the New York City Council and dealing with the U.S. Congress are two different beasts," said Jones-Darling. "My concern lays with his vice president Mike Pence. His whole career might as well be the road to hell is paved with good intentions. His moral stance on everything essentially decides his political and policy stance on everything. ... I don't think he thinks he has an anti-LGBT agenda until he actually thinks down and realizes it. But the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, that has a detrimental impact on the LGBT community because we're the ones specifically targeted in that legislation. That legislation in Indiana was specifically written for discriminating against LGBT people."

In addition to problems with LGBTQ people and women, specifically, Trump took a whole 24 hours to decline the support of a former leader of the Klu Klux Klan. When asked if he thinks Trump is racist, Jones-Darling said, "I know Trump is racist. The reason I know he is racist is when your move into politics is to accuse the president of being from Kenya and not from Honolulu, we have a problem. Even after the president released his long form birth certificate that Donald Trump had wanted



Eastern Michigan University student Sam Jones-Darling. Photo courtesy of Drew Saunders

forever, he continued to make up conspiracy theories to why the president was absolutely not born in the U.S. Then the same conspiracy theories were used by members of the Tea Party to keep it going."

He continued, "I think he's more subconsciously racist and doesn't realize how racist he really is, except for against Latino people. But the only thing that he's shown about not wanting any support from racists is the KKK."

When asked if he thinks Trump sees LGBTQ people as an easy target, Jones-Darling said, "I think Donald Trump knows that the LGBT community is not an easy target. He's lived in New York the majority of his life," he said. "He knows the power the community has politically, economically, and also in fundraising. That being said, I feel targeted by his administration because Mike Pence has targeted me and my people. It would not be wrong for the LGBT community to feel targeted because of the targeting his vice president has done. Moreover, his cabinet has gone from a basket of deplorables to a cabinet of deplorables."

Jones-Darling said that as a political scientist, he felt sorry for Trump's campaign staff because they had to constantly rewrite his positions.

"I can only imagine how they felt," he said. "The idea that you could say anything you want and then have your staff have to put the car completely in reverse, turn around and drive back all the way down the street. That's essentially what the staff had to do his entire campaign to save him."

But none of this will stop Jones-Darling from living any differently during the next four years.

"One thing is absolutely certain – we're not going away," he said. "We've worked too hard for what we have and it's taken us too long to do that whole two steps forward, one step back thing. We're going to do the same thing we did during the Bush administration – we're going to fight."

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LGBTs Denounce Trump's Ban on Refugees

BY LISA KEEN

President Trump invoked the specter of violence against LGBT people as part of his justification for signing an executive order Friday afternoon that bars people from several Muslim-dominated countries from entering the U.S. for at least 120 days.

He also cited the attack on the LGBT nightclub in Orlando last year to explain, in a memo issued Saturday, why he is developing a “Plan to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.”

But LGBT legal activists were among the throngs of people denouncing the immigration restrictions.

“The new policy is blatantly unconstitutional and betrays our nation’s commitment to religious freedom,” said Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights. “It endangers the lives of countless people, including LGBT people, in the targeted countries. Trump’s mention of sexual orientation is a distraction and does not mitigate the unlawfulness or reprehensibility of the new policy in any way.”

Rachel Tiven, chief executive officer for Lambda Legal said, “LGBT people refuse to be pawns in Mr. Trump’s dangerous and inhumane game. We utterly reject his discrimination against Muslims in the guise of concern trolling for LGBT rights. If he really wants to help LGBT people, he can pledge to retain the executive orders that help protect us and to nominate a Supreme Court justice who supports equal treatment of all regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

Not all LGBT reaction was harsh. Gregory Angelo, president of the Log Cabin Republicans national LGBT group, said, “There is nothing wrong with taking a thoughtful pause to reassess our country’s immigration policy – policy that both Republicans and Democrats agree is broken.” He applauded President Trump “for becoming the first-ever Republican president to issue an affirmation in support of the gay community via executive order.”

“Regardless of one’s feelings on these policies, this represents an important milestone in LGBT and Republican history, said Angelo.

Reaction to the executive order was swift and dramatic from all quarters of the U.S. and world, with protesters gathering outside the White House and at international airports around the globe. By Sunday, Trump issued a statement saying, “To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban...This is not about religion - this is about terror and keeping our country safe.”

President Trump compared his executive order to action taken by President Obama



Detroit Metro Airport had thousands of demonstrators in five locations through the International terminal Sunday, Jan. 29. It was one of dozens of demonstrations protesting the ban on refugees issued by President Trump on Friday. BTL photo: Jan Stevenson.

in 2011, suspending for several months the processing of applications from Iraqi nationals seeking to enter the U.S. The suspension was taken after the FBI found evidence that two Iraqi nationals who entered the U.S. as refugees had engaged in terrorist activities.

Specifically, Trump’s executive order states that the U.S. “should not admit those who engage in acts of bigotry or hatred...or those who would oppress Americans of any race, gender or sexual orientation.” It says its purpose is to “protect Americans” by ensuring that “those admitted to this country do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles.”

The order “suspends” for 90 days the entrance of both “immigrants and nonimmigrants” from any of seven designated Muslim-majority countries, saying their entrance “would be detrimental to the interests of the U.S.”

The order also suspends the U.S. refugee program for 120 days while various federal agencies amend the program “to ensure that those approved for refugee admission do not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States...” It directs that the refugee program changes include, “to the extent permitted by law,” amendments “to prioritize refugee claims made by individuals on the basis of religious-based persecution, provided that the religion of the individual is

a minority religion in the individual’s country of nationality.”

This latter sentence is aimed at giving priority to applications filed by Christians from Muslim nations.

President Trump explained that provision to CBN - Christian Broadcasting Network.

In Syria, he said, “They were chopping off the heads of everybody, but more so the Christians,” so he thought it unfair that the U.S. was allowing more Muslims than Christians into the U.S.

CNN fact-checked that point and cited Pew research indicating that, in 2016, 99 percent of Syrians entering the U.S. were Muslim, compared to less than one percent Christian. However, the Syrian population is 93 percent Muslim. And the numbers of Muslims and Christians allowed into the U.S. from all countries were roughly the same.

The order specifically identifies Syrians seeking refugee status as “detrimental” to U.S. interests and suspends their entry “until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made (to the refugee program) to ensure (their admission) is consistent with the national interest.”

The order also calls on Homeland Security to expedite the implementation of a “biometric entry-exit tracking system for all travelers to the U.S.”

The order applies to people arriving to the U.S. from seven specific nations: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia. Numerous media organizations have reported that, while many of Trump’s business interests are located in Muslim-dominated countries, none are located in any of the seven targeted nations. National Public Radio also noted that “No Muslim extremist from any of these places has carried out a fatal attack in the U.S. in more than two decades.”

The ACLU has filed a lawsuit to stop the immigration ban and a federal judge in New York temporarily blocked the order’s call for deportation of immigrants arriving at U.S. airports with valid visas, green cards or refugee status. Federal judges in other states took other actions that stopped parts of the order. But the Department of Homeland Security vowed to forge ahead with enforcement, saying it “retains its right to revoke visas at any time if required for national security or public safety.”

In a January 28 memo concerning ISIS, President Trump directed the Secretary of Defense to present to him within 30 days a “preliminary draft” of a “comprehensive strategy and plans for the defeat of ISIS.”

“ISIS is responsible for the violent murder of American citizens in the Middle East, including the beheadings of James Foley,

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Betsy DeVos's Nomination for Education Secretary Clears Committee

BY BTL STAFF

WASHINGTON – After contentious confirmation hearings, protests across the country and two rounds of voting, Betsy DeVos cleared the first hurdle in her path to becoming secretary of education on Jan. 31 with a party-line vote in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions that advanced her nomination to the Senate floor.

All 12 Republican senators on the committee voted for DeVos, a billionaire with a complex web of investments, including some in companies with connections to federal education policy. All 11 Democrats opposed her, calling her both dangerous and unqualified.

The committee voted twice on DeVos's nomination after Democrats protested against a vote cast on behalf of Senator Orrin G. Hatch, Republican of Utah, who was initially absent.

DeVos's ultimate confirmation, while likely, is still not definite, according to a New York Times report. Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, chairman of the committee, was visibly frustrated — by Democratic delaying tactics and arguments — as he defended DeVos and said she would be devoted not only to giving parents a choice about school options but also to protecting public schools.

“She wants to reverse the trend of a national school board and stop telling teachers and school boards how to run their schools,” said Alexander. “One would think the committee would be delighted with that. I respect my colleagues. I don't question their motives. I don't question their votes. But I believe their concerns are misplaced.”

But Senator Lisa Murkowski, Republican of Alaska, expressed reservations about DeVos that sounded similar to those of DeVos's opponents. The senator said that while she would vote to advance DeVos out

of committee, she would not commit to voting for her on the Senate floor.

“She has not yet earned my full support,” said Murkowski, who referred to conversations with Alaska teachers. “Betsy DeVos must show all of us that she truly understands children of all America, of rural, of urban, who are not able to access an alternative choice in education.”

Democrats, teachers' unions and liberal protesters have been flooding senators with calls and emails protesting her nomination for myriad reasons. They have expressed concern about her family's contributions to groups that support so-called conversion therapy for LGBT people; her donations to Republicans and their causes, which she agreed have totaled about \$200 million over the years; and her past statements that government “sucks” and that public schools are a “dead end.”

Opponents have focused on the poor performance of charter schools in Detroit, which she has bankrolled even as she resisted legislation that would have blocked chronically failing charter schools from expanding.

Senator Patty Murray of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the committee, insisted she needed more time to question DeVos about possible conflicts of interests and about her dedication to ensuring the protection of public schools, which she eschewed for her own children.

“I have not been persuaded that Betsy DeVos will put students first if she were confirmed, and I have not been persuaded that she has the experience, skills, understanding, or vision to lead this critical department at a time when it is more important than ever,” said Murray. “From everything we heard, everything we know, and all of the questions that still remain, it is clear to me that Betsy DeVos is the wrong choice to lead our nation's Department of Education.”

► Trump's Ban of Refugees

Continued from p. 14

Steven Sotloff and Peter Abdul-Rahman Kassig, as well as the death of Kayla Mueller,” states the memo. “In addition, ISIS has inspired attacks in the United States, including the December 2015 attack in San Bernardino, California and the June 2016 attack in Orlando, Florida.”

During his campaign for the presidency last year, Trump repeatedly cited the attack on the Orlando nightclub Pulse, frequently in

the context of his proposal to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. The gunman who murdered 49 people and injured 102 others at the nightclub in June of last year was an American-born U.S. citizen whose parents had immigrated from Afghanistan. The gunman called 911 during the attack and declared his allegiance with the Islamic State (aka ISIS or ISIL), but investigators did not find any evidence beyond his statement that the shooter was “directed externally” by any terrorist organization.



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DITA VON TEESE’S ‘THE ART OF THE TEESE’ SHOWCASES DIVERSITY IN BEAUTY

Photo courtesy of Albert Sanchez and Pedro Zalba

Queen of Burlesque Breaks Down Barriers of Seduction through Gender, Size, Ethnicity and Age

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When Dita Von Teese decided to bring her new burlesque tour “The Art of The Teese” to her home state of Michigan for the first time ever, she admits she was concerned about selling tickets.

“It’s a big financial risk, but we picked a few places I’ve never been and Detroit was the first city to sell out,” Von Teese said. “We’ve been opening more and more seats, but it’s the fastest selling show of all of them. That really warmed my heart. I was like ‘Oh Michigan.’ I’m going to go back to Michigan all the time.”

The only pressure then, Von Teese said, was creating the ultimate burlesque show, a spectacle for new audiences.

“I was like ‘well, what do I do?’ I need to bring my A game. I need to bring the very very best best numbers,” she said about her plans for never-before-seen performances as well as re-worked versions of acts that she is so well-known for.

“I can’t just put together a new show and leave all the good stuff behind so I had to

strike the balance between giving my faithful ticket holders lots of new things to see, but also maintain the top level of what kind of burlesque show I want to present.”

Performing striptease since 1992, Von Teese is arguably the biggest name in burlesque in the world since Gypsy Rose Lee. She has transformed the art of burlesque from the traditional Victorian-style - originally men’s entertainment in its golden age in the 1940s and ‘50s - to the neo-burlesque genre, with its feathers and Swarovski crystals, which Von Teese said attracts 80 percent women and the LGBTQ community.

The naturally blond, mid-western glamour girl, born Heather Sweet, has branded herself a muse to the world’s top fashion designers, owner of a line of fragrances, cosmetics, eyewear, lingerie and hosiery, and is a New York Times bestselling author.

Von Teese speaks out about how she’s changing the ideals of beauty, the importance of empowering women, and what she loves about burlesque after reviving the art more than 20 years ago.

You’re no stranger to strutting your stuff on stage in custom shoes by Christian Louboutin, but it’s not like you to march in solidarity for civil rights. What inspired you to join 750,000 people in downtown L.A. to coincide with the Women’s March on Washington?

I don’t like to get too politically charged. A lot of people know I never really get involved. I don’t use my social media very much for that because I respect each other’s opinions and beliefs. I think I wasn’t planning on going and I opened my eyes and I was like ‘I need to cancel everything and go do this.’ I feel like it was great to be around so many like-minded people. I live in California. It helps. We’re as liberal as it gets I’ve heard. But I think everyone had different reasons that they were there and my reasons were mostly for - alot for my LGBTQ community - I’m always very concerned for their rights. You know there’s been a lot of work done to get where they are now and it concerns me that any of their rights could be stripped away in the new administration. That’s one of my biggest concerns in fact. It was really wonderful to be with all those people and have it be so peaceful and fun. I did have a few people who were upset that I even attended and I thought that was very interesting. I didn’t see it as going and taking a stand against President Trump. It’s not just

that. It’s the overall feeling and the mood of everything and everyone. It’s not even just him. It’s what he’s incited and how he has given people permission to say things to discriminate. To be supportive and have people come out and say it’s not okay to say things like that about people. Free speech is one thing, but this is different.

Without spoiling all the surprises, tease us with a few show details.

There are some amazing burlesque stars like the show-stopping Dirty Martini, Jett Adore from Chicago, my co-creator Catherine D’lish has an all new act to debut, plus Ginger Valentine from Texas will perform one of my own signature acts in her own unique way. My co-star, MC Murray Hill - he’s the glue of the entire show. He brings the raucous comedy element. We’ll be creating iconic numbers with my martini glass, my champagne glass and a giant gold bird cage. All new costumes by British designer Jenny Packham. We’re really bringing it. I’m performing a number that I’ve never done on stage. I’ve only done it three times at private parties in the U.S. There is a ballet-themed number. Ballet is rooted in my childhood obsessions. When I was a MAC Cosmetic’s Viva Glam spokesperson, I rode a giant

See Dita Von Teese, next page

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► Dita Von Teese

Continued from p. 17

lipstick. Instead, I will ride a bull. I said I have to bring this one to Michigan. It's all very tongue-in-cheek. There is not much that is serious about the show. It's a playful side of sensuality.

What did you mean when you said it's 'no longer exciting just to see a pretty girl on stage' and that the women you cast have a 'distinctive sense of self'?

Having done my show at the Crazy Horse in Paris where famously all the girls have the same body shape and height, they are all very beautiful, get weighed in every week and have to stay within a certain weight range - it's very strict, but it's a beautiful, astonishing effect, too, I have to say. But for me, what I think the appeal of burlesque is that the very best performers that bring the house down and shake the rafters, that the audience goes bananas over - they know how to bring their personality and character to the stage and they just have that superstar quality.

I think a lot of people, some of the biggest stars of burlesque are not girls that fit into pinup standards. They are changing the ideals of beauty. People get inspired seeing someone that they can relate to in some ways. I feel like even throughout my career - I started when I was a 21-year-old girl and I'm 44 years old now - I think it's important that when somebody comes and sees the show that they see people, not just women, but gender fluid people, and men even, in various stages of life and in various stages of their beauty. I think it's important just as much as diversity and beauty and body shape and ethnicity - all those things are very important to me in casting my show.

If other women are looking to you as a role model, what might you say to them about how to develop or maintain confidence?

I write a lot about that in my book (a 400-page illustrated book called *Your Beauty Mark: The Ultimate Guide to Eccentric Glamour*). It's hard for me in a lot of ways to write a guide that presents my ideas of what I think beauty and glamour is because I'm always saying, "What is it for you?" I'm telling you that I love black lace and black lingerie and black stockings and red lipstick, but what is it for you? It could be white cotton underwear and there's a way to own that and make that sexy and beautiful, too. It's really about getting into what makes you feel good about yourself because if I'd looked to what the men in my life wanted me to look like or be like, it wouldn't be



like this. It wouldn't look like this so I think throughout my adult life I've always had to make decisions about what I thought made me feel good about myself and what made me feel confident and just really stick with what's in my heart regardless of what someone else says about me.

Everyone has a different view of what feminism is. What is yours?

It's like setting boundaries for yourself and I think that's the important thing. We all have those boundaries. It's okay to respect each other's and the idea of burlesque being a modern kind of feminism where women are comfortable with their sexuality and they realize that indulging in playful, fun, glamorous, sensuality can feel good. The thing is we all have to respect each other's different definitions of what it is to be a feminist because ultimately it just means we all have the same opportunity to do whatever we want. It's a very broad and very vast idea.

What do you love so much about burlesque?

I like that it creates a discussion. What

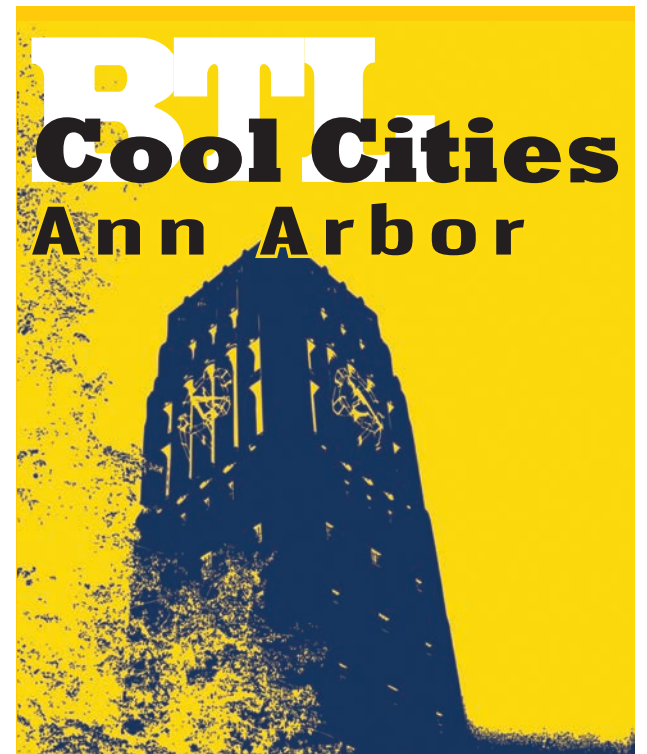
one person finds degrading, another person might find inspiring. I started my career as a fetish model, a bondage model, like Bettie Page, and I found it empowering to be tied up and take these bondage photos. I loved it. I'm in a safe space to feel objectified if I want to and then I step out of it and I'm in control of my entire life. Knowing that play space versus real life. I think the same thing with burlesque. I turn something that someone could have perceived as being degrading to me when I was a 19-year-old girl working in the strip club - I turned that into something else. I'm not telling you that it's for everyone to think burlesque is empowering. You can make your own judgments. I just want people to come and see what it's all about.

Dita Von Teese's "The Art of the Teese" Burlesque Revue premieres at 20 Monroe Live, 11 Ottawa Avenue Northwest, Grand Rapids on Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m. followed by a Feb. 9 performance at 7:30 p.m. at The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. Tickets for both shows are available online at www.livenation.com.

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A sanctuary restaurant sign hangs on the door of Zingerman's Delicatessen at 422 Detroit St. in Ann Arbor. Photo courtesy of Hunter Dyke, The Ann Arbor News

Zingerman's in Ann Arbor: One of Several Michigan Sanctuary Spaces

A movement to create safe spaces for employees is just beginning, and one Ann Arbor company is voicing its support for the newly-founded and hotly-debated project, according to an MLive.com report.

Zingerman's Delicatessen, Bakehouse, Creamery, Roadhouse restaurant and Cornman Farms located in Dexter are now part of the sanctuary status designation for restaurants and businesses, identified through storefront signs as employers who are providing safe spaces for their employees, devoid of harassment and discrimination from other workers or patrons.

As co-founding partner of Zingerman's, Paul Saginaw told The Ann Arbor News the company only recently got involved in the sanctuary status program.

"This was relatively new, it began a week or so ago," Saginaw said. "It's just kind of blown up very quickly. It's the very beginning of the movement."

He first got involved through the Restaurant Opportunity Center, an advocacy organization for worker rights, that has since collaborated with Presente.org, an online Latino organization, to create the designation program.

Sheila Maddali is the communication director for ROC and said the organization was founded in 2001 to assist in emergency relief for restaurant workers who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. It expanded to a national platform in 2008 and helped create the sanctuary status project.

It started as a response to both restaurant owners and employees who worried about their economic livelihoods in the face of

possible deployments and labor shortages, Maddali said. Restaurants involved receive a placard in the mail and are provided media, legal and communication assistance through ROC.

Saginaw is part of RAISE, Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment, an organization created by ROC that he said serves as an alternative to the National Restaurant Association and began as a response to recent "divisive, hateful rhetoric."

"The different members were voicing a lot of concerns that this was happening during the election cycle," Saginaw said. "After the election, it seemed to continue. A lot of our staff were being harassed. Harassed on buses, harassed on the way to work, harassed in the dining room."

While not much could be done outside of Zingerman's buildings, the sanctuary status served as a symbolic move of solidarity for employees facing those situations.

"Symbolically, we wanted to say our restaurants are places where there is zero tolerance for hate and homophobia and xenophobia. We're going to stand behind our staff," Saginaw said.

Maddali agreed with Saginaw, and said the sanctuary status project is about creating safer spaces for employees from all walks of life.

The official launch for the project is not until February but the response has already been overwhelming, Maddali said, both in positive and negative aspects.

"We have a few places that, as a result of having publicly taken a stand against hate, have been targeted," Maddali said. "We've

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heard a couple restaurants say they've gotten negative attention, saying they were harboring undocumented workers."

There have also been stories of support, of employees learning about what their employers have done and being moved to tears.

"It's just about a safer space for everyone. It's not a radical notion," Maddali said. "People should feel safe when they go to work, that they won't be discriminated against. Right now, we're in a climate that is hostile for everyone."

The response also has prompted interest from more restaurants than ever before, something Maddali contributes to a combination of both media attention and a result of an executive order signed by President Donald Trump that include provisions that would affect border security and sanctuary cities.

"People are looking for ways to do something, to contribute to supporting people who are kind of vulnerable right now," Maddali said.

That show of support also has brought out some haters to voice opposition to the status, Saginaw said.

"It has nothing to do with harboring undocumented workers," Saginaw said, addressing some concerns the status means endorsement for illegal immigration. "The laws are very, very clear and they are very very, strict. This is about creating a place where there is zero tolerance for hate and discrimination."

It is a responsibility that Saginaw and Zingerman's business leaders take seriously.

"As an employer, I'm legally bound to create a safe place," he said. "I'm following the law. But more than anything, its symbolic. You can make a statement publicly and we are willing to do that."

The small signs in the windows of certain Zingerman's businesses, like the Delicatessen and Roadhouse restaurant, state "Sanctuary Restaurant, a place at the table for everyone." Despite their size, the signs have prompted plenty of conversation.

"We're in a new reality here," said Saginaw. "I have folks who

are stressed, they are worried, they are concerned. People feel under attack. We want them to know when they come to work, we're going to do everything we can to create a safe place."

He hopes more restaurants and organizations also consider adopting the sanctuary status.

"This isn't just about immigrant workers, this is about LGBTQ, this is about our Muslim brothers and sisters. Our brothers and sisters of color," Saginaw said. "Our hope is that more and more people sign up, and more and more people come out publicly and say they won't tolerate hateful speech, discrimination, and harassment."

Other Michigan locations designed under the sanctuary status include Detroit's COLORS and Russell Street Deli, the Lantern Coffee Bar & Lounge in Grand Rapids and Morning Star Cafe in Grand Haven.

Ann Arbor has been considered a "sanctuary city," a location viewed as a safe haven for undocumented immigrants, but has not ever officially declared itself as such.



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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 2

PFLAG Trans Meeting 7 p.m. First Thursday monthly PFLAG Tri-Cities, 815 N. Grant, **Bay City**. leishashaler@gmail.com www.pflag.org

Friday, Feb. 3

"Self-Love" Pre-National Black HIV Testing Day 7 p.m. Snacks, poetry, music, art and knowledge. All are welcome. Wake Up, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 2483987105. www.goaffirmations.org

Sunday, Feb. 5

Drag Queen Bingo 11 a.m. Tickets: \$20-\$30. Reservations required. 18+ Five15, 515 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. www.five15.net

Monday, Feb. 6

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.olsonline.org

Factory Monday 9 p.m. Goth-industrial night. Main room: DJ Void6 hosted by MC Yoda. Red Room: DJ Madisi. Tickets: \$1-3. Necto, 516 E. Liberty, **Ann Arbor**. www.necto.com

Tuesday, Feb. 7

Gamenight 1 a.m. Gay Geeks Social Group, 4636 15 MILE RD Apt. xxx, **Sterling Heights**. www.meetup.com

Friday, Feb. 10

LGBTQ Teen Valentine's Dance 7 p.m. Food, dancing with DJ Fudgie. Email Zoe Steinfield for details. TRUE, a Teen LGBTQ Group, 469 N. Hagadorn Rd., **East Lansing**. 725-222-8783. truegbtq@gmail.com www.facebook.com/events/1830186150558923/

Saturday, Feb. 11

TGMI Port Huron Social Club 1 p.m. Transgender Michigan, 324 Superior Mall, **Port Huron**. www.transgendermichigan.org

Sunday, Feb. 12

A Cat Cabaret 6 p.m. Tickets: \$100. Proceeds go toward supporting various programs at Caffe Lounge and Ferndale Cat Shelter. Ferndale Cat Shelter, 22920 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. 248-544-3030. http://bit.ly/2gNVvdk

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Comedy

Broadway in Detroit "Motor City Laugh-A-Thon". Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Feb. 10 - Feb. 10. 313-872-1000. www.broadwayindetroit.com

Concerts

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Mozart Festival: 'Nachtmusik'" Tickets: \$15-100. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 2 - Feb. 3. 313-576-5111. www.dso.org

Live Nation "Umphrey's McGee Night 1 with Spafford" Tickets: \$22.50-39.50.



are an adult who is interested in volunteering, please contact Zoe Steinfield at 725-222-8783 or at truegbtq@gmail.com. Learn more about TRUE on their Facebook page.

The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Feb. 3. www.thefillmoredetroit.com

Live Nation "Umphrey's McGee Night 2 with Spafford" Tickets: \$22.50-39.50. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Feb. 4. www.thefillmoredetroit.com

Shows

Live Nation "Dita Von Teese: 'The Art of the Teese' Burlesque Review" Tickets: \$35-100. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9. www.thefillmoredetroit.com

THEATER

Sing Happy! A Celebration of Kander and Ebb Tickets: \$30 for dinner and show; \$15 for show only. Penny Seats Theatre Company, Conor O'Neills Irish Pub and Restaurant, 318 S Main St., **Ann Arbor**. Feb. 2 - Feb. 16. www.pennyseats.org/box-office

Professional

Firepower by Kermit Frazier Tickets: \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through March 12. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

Men Are From Mars - Women Are From Venus. Olympia Entertainment, City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Editor's Pick

LGBTQ Teen Valentine's Dance

There is a sense of unity found within dance. That's why TRUE, a Lansing-area LGBTQ teen group, is hosting a Valentine's Dance on Feb. 10 from 7-10 p.m. at Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Rd., East Lansing. The dance, hosted by DJ Fudgie, is for Lansing-area teens who identify as LGBTQ+, questioning or allied. There will be food available. For questions about the event, or if you are a teen who will need transportation to or from the dance, or if you

Through Feb. 4. 313-471-6611. www.olympiaentertainment.com

The Lion King. Broadway in Detroit, Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Feb. 1 - Feb. 26. 313-237-SING. www.broadwayindetroit.com



Editor's Pick

Benefit for Ferndale Cat Shelter

It's a Cat Cabaret on Feb. 12 from 6-10 p.m. hosted by the Ferndale Cat Shelter and Caffe Lounge to raise funds for their various programs. The event at The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale and will feature live performers, music, drinks and dinner catered by Howe's Bayou. The evening will consist of a raffle where gift baskets from local businesses will be given away. Tickets are available online at www.themagicbag.com. For more information about FCS a non-profit corporation, visit http://ferndalecatshelter.org.

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KGLRC Honors REACH Award Recipients

BY BTL STAFF

KALAMAZOO - Each year, the KGLRC has the honor of presenting outstanding community members awards at their annual Winter Gala.

"We know a lot of incredible, meaningful and intersectional work happens because of our community and it's important to lift up and recognize those who are going above and beyond to make this world a better place," said Jessica Hermann-Wilmarth, KGLRC board president. This year's awards were handed out at the Winter Gala Jan. 28.

and beyond. Kelly has made the lives of people in Kalamazoo better because of her dedication and commitment to equality and social justice. She has shown the LGBTQ+ community what a real ally looks like.



Community Award presented to Jay Kaplan

Jay Kaplan travels all over the state of Michigan in his role at ACLU of Michigan ensuring that LGBTQ+ folks are not only protected but also aware of their rights. He spends countless hours every week fighting for equality and fairness in our state. He drives hours to provide clear and concise facts about the legal landscape for LGBTQ+ Michiganders. Jay Kaplan is a champion for LGBTQ+ rights and we are lucky to have him fighting on our side. This state is better and stronger because of Jay Kaplan's efforts.



Retail Award presented to Bell's Brewery

Bell's Brewery is a prime example of a company that puts equality at the forefront of its business. Not only does Bell's show up to Kalamazoo Pride and pride celebrations across the country, but they work hard every day to make sure they are brewing a safe and affirming environment for their employees, customers, and visitors.



Terry Kuseske Education Award presented to Denise Miller

Denise Miller has dedicated her life to being a life long activist, student, teacher, mentor, and social justice warrior. She is the cofounder of Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative where she implemented Creative Justice trainings and culinary classes and creative writing classes. Whether she is in the classroom or in a coffee shop, Denise is changing the education game with her persistent demands for intersectional equity.

Dr. Charles Warfield Ally Award presented to Kelly Doyle

Kelly Doyle currently serves as the executive director of CARES in Kalamazoo. Long before she stepped into that role, Kelly has been fighting for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, women, LGBTQ people, and marginalized folks in Kalamazoo



Jim Knox Humanitarian Award presented to Anna Cushman

Anna Cushman (known by most as Cush) dedicated her entire life to fighting on the front lines for women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and HIV care and decriminalization. She was an active volunteer for many organizations in Kalamazoo and served on the CARES board. The impact and influence of her efforts are undeniable. She changed many lives in the Kalamazoo community and beyond and has paved the way for the work we continue to this day. While Cush has passed away and is dearly missed, her work lives on and will not be forgotten.

Learn more about KGLRC at www.kglrc.org or by phone at 269-349-4234.

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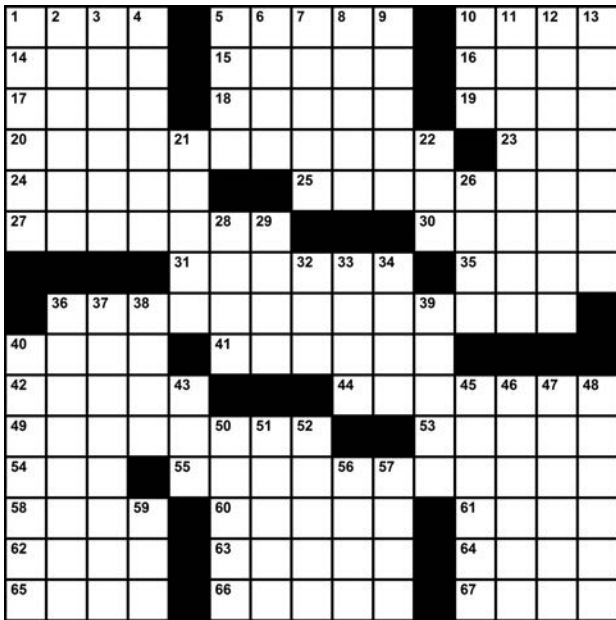
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Q Puzzle



- 40 Irene of "Fame"
 41 Bust to private, e.g.
 42 Water molecule threesome
 44 Lost an erection, with "out"?
 49 One whose mother is a bitch
 53 "Love Affair" costar Dunne
 54 Psychic Geller
 55 Source of the original slogan
 58 Make more potent
 60 Like Christopher Rice's stories
 61 "Take a crack ____"
 62 Series terminal
 63 Like a rambling sentence
 64 Amsterdam's land (abbr.)
 65 He shot a fruit on his son's head
 66 Gyrate
 67 They don't hang out in gay bars
- like nuts
 13 What Heather says to her mommies after a meal
 21 Emanation from Feniger's kitchen
 22 Order before shooting off?
 26 "Nowhere Man" opening
 28 Came out with
 29 Beat, but barely
 32 Academic dept. head
 33 Straddling
 34 "A bit of ____?" "I drink it all day"
 36 Over do the golden shower?
 37 Like some exotic fruit
 38 Drivers get off on it
 39 Response after a Cho joke, perhaps
 40 "Romeo and Juliet" clan
 43 "Providence" lead role
 45 Senate page's chore
 46 News agency founder
 47 Ill will
 48 Bottommost areas
 50 The active crowd
 51 A stroke ahead, for Sheehan
 52 "With parsley"
 56 Heart donor for King Richard?
 57 Lair of bears
 59 Wing for Philip Johnson

The Great Depression

Across

- 1 Where the Dutch girl stuck her finger?
 5 Sequence for Bernstein
 10 Stone of "Easy A"
 14 Party to
 15 Sheryl Swoopes, for one
 16 Small vessel
 17 Like characters in "Kinky Boots"
 18 What Garbo "vanted" to be
- 19 Business letter abbr.
 20 Start of the translation of a political slogan
 23 Albert to Armand, in "The Birdcage"
 24 "Are you calling me ____?"
 25 Captain Jack Sparrow, e.g.
 27 "A Girl Thing" director
 30 Pink fruit
 31 Wild and crazy
 35 Gin type
 36 End of the translation

Down

- 1 Bottom-of-the-barrel
 2 Prepare to blow
 3 "77 Sunset Strip" character
 4 Curry favor
 5 Play for a sucker
 6 Auto racer Yarborough
 7 Socrates' market
 8 Pinko's hero
 9 With blood rushing to the head
 10 She had no heterosexual parents
 11 "Cabaret" singer
 12 Oral stimulator that tastes

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com

Naked Men's YOGA

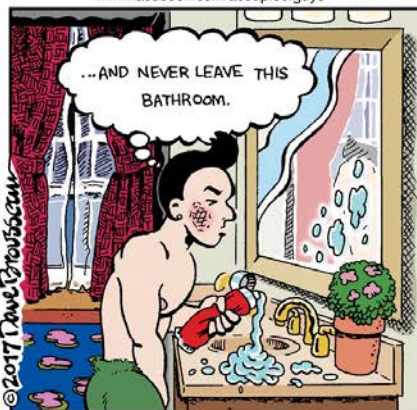
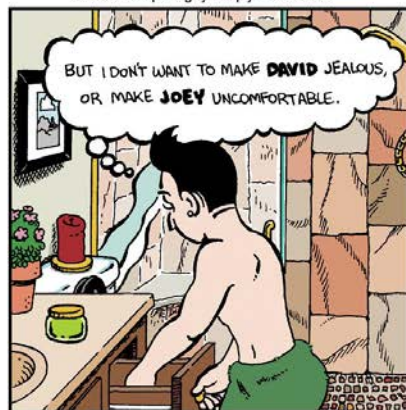
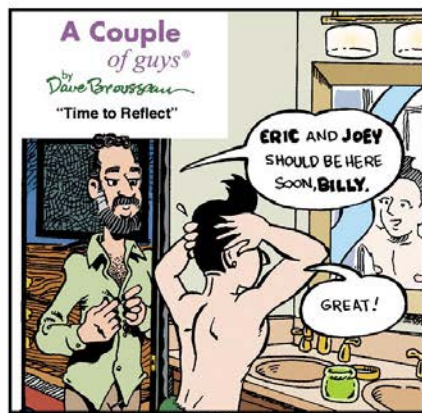
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7 Alternatives to 'Netflix & Chill' That'll Still Get Ya Some

BY MIKEY ROX

Netflix and chill has run its course, my friends. Sure, for a while there it was fun to invite over the object of your affection under the guise that you'll watch some smart documentary just to pull a bait-and-switch with your dick, but it's time to get creative again.

This Valentine's Day, go the extra mile to make your sweetie smile with these inexpensive activities where everyone comes out a winner.

1. Shop the Antique Store For a Secret Gift

My boyfriend and I recently planned this activity at a local antique mall, and we had a blast doing it. The gist of the game is to find the perfect Valentine's gift for each other – but there's a catch: You can't spend more than \$20. Sounds tricky when you're browsing antiques,



but if you go to a large-enough center, you'll find a treasure trove of small trinkets, odd and ends, and this-and-thats. Keep an eye out for sales, too. Many antiques stores rent out booths to sellers, and some of those sellers have sales on occasion. In fact, the gift I picked for my guy – an old Welmy Six camera, circa 1951, to symbolize all the adventure ahead – retailed

for \$60, but the booth offered 75 percent off. I copped the piece for \$15, and he'll receive a gift that he'll cherish forever. Can't wait to see what mine is!

2. Play a Naughty Board Game

If the late-night moves are getting stale, bring in a board game. Silly, but give it a chance – there are plenty of options available to suit just about every level of kink. I've played an adult board game in the past, and I can say with certainty that not only is it exciting – my heart was literally pounding with anticipation when we first started – it leads to the good stuff rather quickly; I'm not sure we ever finished the game, but nobody lost that night. Mind you, there aren't many same-sex-oriented games available, but Sexopoly, in particular, is accommodating to any persuasion.

3. Buy New Undies Together and Show 'Em Off

Like how your beau looks when they shimmy down to their skivvies? Up the ante – and freshen up both your underwear drawers – with a trip to your favorite place to pick up boxers, briefs and everything in between. Browsing the sensual selection will get the blood flowing – face it, we've all spent too much time staring at the Calvin Klein boxes at Marshalls – and you'll be ready to burst by the time you get home to put on your own private fashion show.

4. Plan a Meal to Cook Naked

This year, my valentine and I will be arriving home from a quick vacay to Miami on Feb.

14, which leaves little time (or energy) to get all gussied up after a day of travel just to brave the holiday dinner crowds. Instead, we've planned a decadent meal of steak, wine and dessert – courtesy of my very own kitchen – that we'll prepare together in the buff. If you want to follow suit, consider this precaution: Wear aprons by the fire so you don't damage the dangly bits.

5. Pour the Wine and Divulge Your Fantasies

Plenty of couples are open to sexploration – especially us gays – but what we do with our partners may only scratch the surface of what we'd like to try. So talk about it. Pour a big glass of your favorite vintage and discuss your fantasies. Reminisce about the best sex you've ever had with one another, reveal what your partner does that still makes you tingle, and introduce fresh ideas and scenarios to usher in a new era of pleasure.

6. Blow Each Other in a Dressing Room

Listen, I'm not advocating that you be a pervert in public, but what nobody knows won't hurt them. Personally, I've engaged in a little dressing-room foreplay – we were both trying on clothes behind the same door and things got out of control (in a very good way) – and it was exhilarating and satisfying. To pull it off without going to jail, keep it quick, keep it quiet, and, above all, keep the door locked.

7. Fire Stick and Dick

I couldn't pass up the opportunity to mention this meme; I saw it the other day on social media and it made me chuckle. Same idea as Netflix and chill, but for fancy people. Time to raise your standards.

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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