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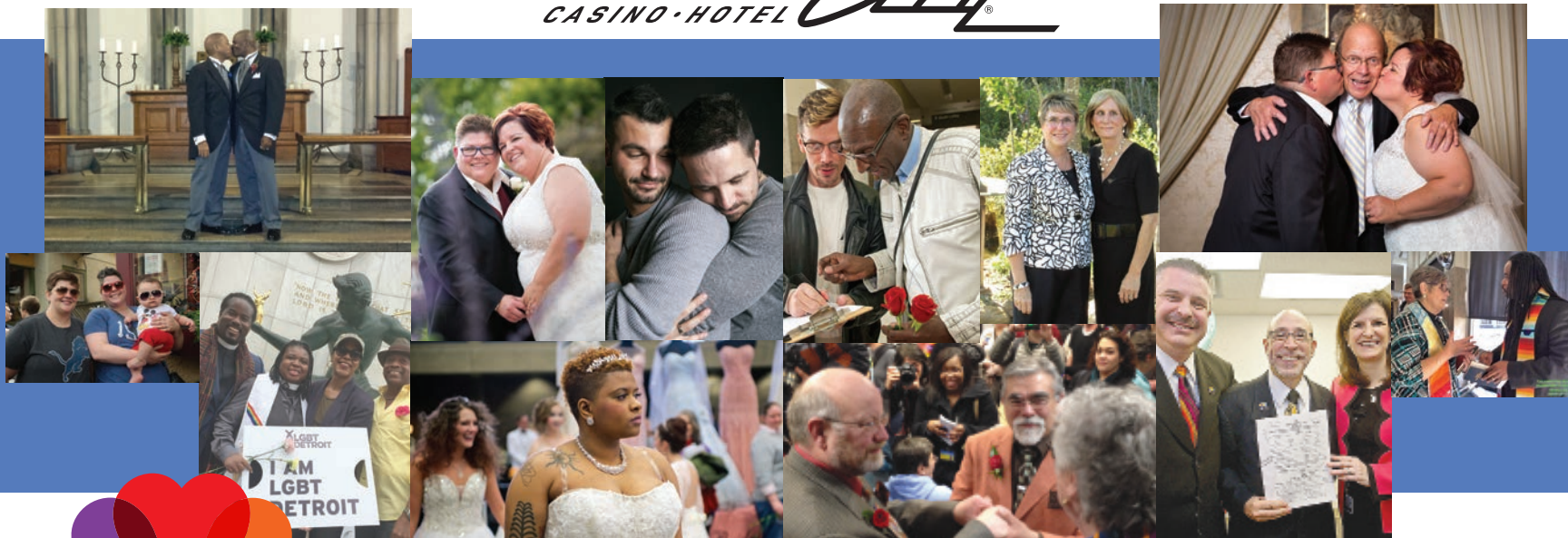
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2. Hunskaar S, Sandvik H. One Hundred and Fifty Men with Urinary Incontinence. III. Psychosocial Consequences. Scand J Prim Health Care. 1993; 11:193-96.

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NEWS



Trump Admin to Rescind Trans Student Protections: Source

BY CHRIS JOHNSON>

Despite pleas from parents of transgender children and LGBT employees, the Trump administration is set Tuesday to rescind Obama-era guidance to schools barring discrimination against transgender students and ensuring they have access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, told the Washington Blade on Monday she's heard from "reliable sources" President Trump has green-lighted the plan for the Justice Department and Education Department to send a "Dear Colleague" letter to schools rescinding the guidance.

"This is the first day of the president's second month in office and he is now fully coming after LGBT people," Keisling said. "I'm angry; I'm outraged. This is about kids who just want to go to school who just want to be themselves, and to hear the president a week or two ago talk about how supportive he is of LGBT people, it's just outrageous that he go after trans kids this way."

Removal of the guidance would fulfill a campaign promise from Trump, who pledged to rescind the guidance after it was issued, but still "protect everybody," amid outcry from conservative-leaning states. The Trump administration would be moving to rescind the guidance shortly after the confirmation of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Jointly issued in May under the Obama

administration by the Justice Department and Education Department, the guidance asserts that denying transgender students access to the restroom in accordance with their gender identity violates the prohibition on sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Rescinding the guidance is consistent with a legal brief the Justice Department filed earlier this month in litigation against the guidance filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on behalf of 12 states. As a result of the litigation, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor issued a preliminary injunction barring the administration from enforcing the guidance nationwide.

Although the Justice Department under former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch filed an appeal along with a request with the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals seeking to limit the scope of the injunction to the 12 plaintiff states, the brief under Sessions withdraws that request and informs the federal appeals court the Trump administration is "currently considering how best to proceed in this appeal."

Transgender advocates took the change in position at the Justice Department as a signal Trump would soon fulfill his campaign promise to reverse the guidance.

A flurry of letters were sent to the Trump administration calling for preservation of the guidance. One came from a quartet of pro-LGBT advocacy groups, one from nearly 800 parents of transgender youths and

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REC Receives Transformational Gift from Local Congregation

Mission of First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham Includes LGBTQ Youth

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Up to 40 percent of all runaway and homeless youth nationwide identify as LGBTQ. Disproportionately affected, LGBTQ young people face a myriad of barriers, including family rejection based on religious beliefs, among others.

When Rev. Amy Morgan learned of this tragedy through her work with the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park, she said, “That kills us.”

As the master of divinity and associate pastor for missions and community at the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Morgan said, “That is not what Jesus would do. That’s not in the book. This is so against the grain of what we believe the Christian gospel message is.”

Which is why Mark Erwin-McCormick, REC director of development and advancement said, “It’s so incredibly important for the Ruth Ellis Center to continue having conversations with communities of faith, especially those that are affirming because they are needed as a resource when working with families. They need to know there are churches available to them that will affirm both them and their children.”

Such as the FPC, known as “Everybody’s



Church members on the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham’s “Mission Crawl” in October 2015 to learn more about plans for the Ruth Ellis Health and Wellness Center. Inset: A Vision Statement quilt hangs in the Welcome Center at First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham. Photos courtesy of FPC

A Mid-winter Choral Concert Feb. 24

The Cathedral Music Society presents the Cathedral Choirs in a concert to benefit the Ruth Ellis Center on Feb. 24 at 7:30 p.m. A reception, sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham and the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, begins at 7 p.m. A great breadth of choral music will be presented from early music to spirituals. The event hosted by the Cathedral Church of St. Paul takes place at 4800 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. Ample, well-lit parking is available by entering via Cathedral Lane from eastbound Warren Avenue. For more information, please call 313-833-7547 or email music@detroitcathedral.org.

Church,” which has a long history of being involved in serving the community. FPC of Birmingham is one of seven Presbyterian churches in North Oakland County. The first was organized in Pontiac in 1824.

“We are building relationships with and getting members of the church involved in the work we’re doing,” said Erwin-McCormick drawing attention to the national implications when communities of faith become involved in this type of work. Especially now as the LGBTQ community faces religious exemptions and further stigma under this new administration.

Morgan explained how the partnership between FPC and the REC developed a little over two years ago following a tour of the Center.

“People were blown away ... A handful of church leaders discern what our projects will be. We discuss how we can make the largest impact ... We surveyed the congregation and learned where people’s passions were. LGBTQ support and the Ruth Ellis Center were a natural go-to.”

The First Foundation made it possible to offer \$56,000 to the REC, the largest contribution made to the Center from the faith community. Of that money, \$36,000 was allotted to the Health and Wellness Center, for which the Center hopes to complete its Capital Campaign in 2017 with community support. The other \$20,000 went toward the Family Preservation Program.

The foundation, introduced in 1981, was established to continue and extend the work and ministry of the FPC by receiving and administering gifts and bequests, and by undertaking to secure increases of the assets of the foundation. The foundation is overseen by a board of nine members and is appointed by the session for six-year terms. This board evaluates grant requests and oversees the investment of the foundation funds.

“We don’t do this because we’re crazy hippy liberals that don’t care what the Bible says,” said Morgan. “We care deeply what the Bible says, which is why we feel we have to do this.”

The congregation has funded a trip to Cedar Point for residents of Ruth’s House (the REC’s



residential foster care facility), and provided the Center with new appliances when needed. On the first Monday of each month, members of FPC provide meal service at the REC drop-in center.

“I watch them as they dance and express themselves. I see their souls coming out. This is who they are. Their movement, their interaction with each other is something the world should see. What a wonderful group of young people. It makes me smile,” said Sue Bay, who is on the FPC board of deacons and functions as the deacons representative to the REC. Bay also serves on the congregation’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee.

“They deserve to be happy, these youth, like anybody else. If there’s anything at all we can do, it’s to let them know that we care. We want to work with them in any way that we can,” she said.

See next page



First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham shows their support for the LGBT community at Motor City Pride. Photo courtesy of FPC

Deacons are members of the church elected by the congregation to serve on the board of deacons for terms of one to three years. Deacons reflect the church membership from high school students to long term members. The mission of the deacons is to reach out to those in need.

“We see ourselves as a congregation that wraps around young people that are on their own. The Ruth Ellis Center isn’t just serving a meal or just offering counseling or wellness resources. It’s all of it,” said Morgan. “We are really concerned for the whole person, which is central to who Jesus was - a teacher and a healer. I want you to have abundant life and be whole. The Ruth Ellis Center is an organization that does that day in and day out. We have to be a part of that.”

Morgan referred to a book called “They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations,” about many young people who don’t resonate with the church and organized Christianity today.

“We really need to get the message out that Christianity is inclusive and Christ is welcoming,” she said. “Millennials believe the church is hypocritical and homophobic. Our church is none of those things, but nobody knows that. Those labels don’t apply here.”

And while the REC does not facilitate religious-based services, and does not promote one religion over another, having resources in the space for youth to pursue spirituality, religion, and faith on their own terms is part of holistic service planning.

Some of these young people might not see a connection right now and how significant it is - that there are people from local congregations to support them just as they are - down the road they might connect with that and it might mean something to them.

“That’s why I want to be here. They are children of God,” said Rosy Latimore, an elder in the church who chairs the DIJ committee. “We don’t have all the answers, but we get so much enjoyment out of working with them.”



Amy Morgan, MDiv., Associate Pastor for Missions and Community at First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham.

When meeting LGBTQ youth at the REC, she said, “It breaks my heart,” to know the challenges these young people are facing on a daily basis.

“The fact that a young person who identifies as LGBTQ is experiencing homelessness because of it - that just really affected me,” said Tom Kirchhofer, who serves on the DIJ committee, and is also a deacon, though not currently on the board. “I couldn’t walk out of the REC without a burden. I wanted to and will continue to do something to work with the youth.”

Visit the First Presbyterian Church at 1669 W. Maple in Birmingham. Call 248-644-2040, email at contact@everybodyschurch.org or visit <http://www.fpcbirmingham.org/>. For more information about the Ruth Ellis Center, visit <http://www.ruthelliscenter.org>.

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Rev. Patti Kennedy, pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ, welcomes celebrants to the opening of the Jackson Pride Center.



Carl Struble (left) who is credited with being the driving force behind the idea of the Jackson Pride Center, uses a regular pair of scissors to cut a ribbon to open the center while Nikki Joly, director of the Jackson Pride Center, uses a ceremonial pair of scissors to assist Struble. State Sen Rebekkah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) watches. BTL photos: Todd A. Heywood



Jackson Vice Mayor Derek Dobies responds awkwardly to a standing ovation which greeted him when he was asked to give remarks at the grand opening of the Jackson Pride Center. Dobies successfully advocated for and pushed through a non-discrimination ordinance earlier this month, making Jackson the 42nd municipality in the state to adopt these protections for the LGBT community. The passage of the ordinance marked the end of a political battle 17 years in the making.

Jackson Pride Center Unveiled

Mid-Michigan LGBT Community Has Safe Space

BY TODD HEYWOOD

JACKSON – A group of nearly 200 residents and leaders of the Jackson community gathered in the community hall of St. John's United Church of Christ on Feb. 17 to celebrate the grand opening of the Jackson Pride Center.

The new center features sofas, table games such as pool and air hockey, a flat screen TV and more. It's an institutional white room painted with a vivid rainbow arching out of a bright red heart.

The opening of the center comes less than two weeks after activists scored a major victory in the city of 33,000 people in south-central Michigan. For nearly two decades, the city has debated the need for a non-discrimination ordinance that was inclusive of the LGBT community, but earlier this month the city council voted 5-2 to adopt the ordinance. Discussions about an inclusive non-discrimination law date back as far as 1980 former city council officials have said.

"I think it's a huge step," said Jackson

Vice Mayor Derek Dobies about the opening of the Center. "I think that a lot of the energy that has come out of the non-discrimination ordinance debate has fed right into the opening of this center and really that the two go hand in hand. Having a safe space within the city in

The opening of the center comes less than two weeks after activists scored a major victory in the city of 33,000 people in south-central Michigan.

the pride center is you know the same is the same intent that council had in making sure that the city has a safe space for members of the LGBT community by passing the non-discrimination ordinance."

While the ordinance has passed, opponents could collect signatures to force a ballot vote on the measure. Dobies said opponents would need to collect signatures equally 10 percent of the number of votes cast last year in the

city's mayoral election. He didn't have a specific figure available, but said it would be "under" 400 signatures. He said he is uncertain if such a move will happen.

The Pride Center will be open Tuesday-Thursday from 3-6 p.m. It may be open additional days and times as community groups use the space for gatherings. Already officials say a lesbian mothers group has expressed interest in holding meetings in the space.

Nikki Joly, the center's director, told those gathered that it was the hope that the space would become a welcome respite for LGBT youth and their allies. The Center was made possible by a \$2,500 grant from the United Church of Christ, officials said.

Visit the Jackson Pride Center inside the St. John's United Church of Christ at 801 S. Mechanic St. Find them online www.facebook.com/Jackson-Pride-Center-342478499468836.

Ray Buckley Gay DNC Chair Candidate Drops Out, Endorses Keith Ellison

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

One week before the Democratic National Committee will vote on its next chair, one of two openly gay candidates in the race— New Hampshire Democratic Party Chair Ray Buckley — has dropped out and endorsed Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.).

In a statement Saturday, Buckley announced he'd remove his name from contention in the crowded field of candidates and endorse Ellison, maintaining he'd strengthen state parties and reform the DNC.

"Now, many candidates have spoken about these issues, but Keith's commitment to the states and a transparent and accountable DNC has stood out," Buckley said. "He knows elections are not won and lost in the beltway, but on the ground across the country. His plan, in fact, shared many of the same ideas and principles as my own. We both believe in investing in all 50 states, Democrats Abroad, and the territories, providing support and resources to help state parties succeed, and organizing in every county across this great country."

Buckley has been New Hampshire Democratic Party chair since 2007 and was the first openly gay state chair for a major U.S. party. Coming from a state where Hillary Clinton narrowly won in the presidential election and Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) was able to oust a Republican incumbent, Buckley said both he and Ellison "have a track record of winning elections."

"While it was a tremendous honor to run for DNC chair over the past few months, I am proud to throw my support behind Keith so we can ensure that the next chair of the DNC is dedicated to investing in and strengthening state parties and ensuring that the DNC is an accountable organization," Buckley said. "As I've talked to the DNC membership, it's clear Keith has widespread support, and I know as our next DNC Chair Keith will successfully unite and grow our party."

Buckley was considered a long-shot candidate in the race. Among his endorsements were Barbra Casbar Siperstein, a transgender member of the Democratic National Committee from New Jersey, and Stuart Milk, an



New Hampshire Democratic Party Chair Ray Buckley has drop out of the race to become the next chair of the Democratic National Committee. Washington Blade file photo by Michael K. Lavers

international LGBT rights advocate and nephew of gay rights pioneer Harvey Milk.

Accepting the endorsement, Ellison

“When we have a successful outcome in Atlanta next week, I have asked Ray Buckley to lead our effort to provide the support and resources the state parties need in a new and innovative 57 state strategy.”

— Rep. Keith Ellison

said in a statement “there is no better example of a strong state party than the New Hampshire Democratic Party” and attributed its success to Buckley.

“Democrats in the Granite State have an incredible track record, winning 11 out of the last 13 statewide elections,” Ellison said. “That’s because of the decades of work by Ray, who believes, like I do, that the Democratic Party must strengthen and empower our state and local parties.”

Ellison said he’s “heard loud and clear from DNC members that this is a moment to use all our talents to rebuild the party from the grassroots up” and thinks Buckley’s methods in New Hampshire will be key for the Democratic Party nationwide.

“The model that Ray has built in New Hampshire and his work as the president of the ASDC is something that we need as we rebuild all 57 state parties,” Ellison said. “When we have a successful outcome in Atlanta next week, I have asked him to lead our effort to provide the support and resources the state parties need in a new and innovative 57 state strategy. Because in this fight against Donald Trump and Republican-controlled states, we need every state party firing on all cylinders. That’s how we take our country back, and I cannot be more proud to have Ray Buckley by my side in this fight.”

Ellison, who along with former Labor Secretary Tom Perez is considered one of two front-runners in the race— is the only candidate running for DNC chair who has spelled out a specific plan for advancing LGBT issues at the DNC. Among his ideas are growing the newly created DNC LGBT advisory board, promoting strong LGBT delegate goals for the 2020 national convention and ensuring gender non-conforming people can participate in the DNC and convention.

Even though Buckley has dropped out of the race, another gay candidate, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg, remains in contention. In an interview with the Washington Blade, Buttigieg said he’s running to make the Democratic Party more viable in the heartland.

The election for chair is set to take place Saturday during the DNC’s winter meeting in Atlanta over the course of next week.

Perez Cites History of LGBT Support in Run for DNC Chair

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

After high-level service in the Obama administration that included fighting for LGBT rights at both the Labor and Justice Departments, Tom Perez is looking to become the next Democratic National Committee chair.

In an interview Friday with the Washington Blade, Perez said in a crowded field of contenders his history of support for LGBT rights makes him the best candidate for the LGBT community.

“I have always fought for equality and opportunity for the LGBTQ community, and if I have the privilege of being elected, past is prologue, the best to judge what someone is going to do in the future is look at what they’ve done in the past, and I’m very proud of my history with partnership with the LGBTQ community because everybody in this country deserves to be treated with dignity,” Perez said.

Perez’s work on LGBT rights goes back as far as the 1990s, when as a former staffer for the late Sen. Edward Kennedy he said he drafted an initial version of the Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Working under the Obama administration as head of the Justice Department’s civil rights division, Perez testified before Congress in favor of ENDA and led an effort in which Anoka-Hennepin School District in Minnesota agreed to change practices to stop the anti-LGBT bullying it allowed in school.

As labor secretary, Perez was charged with enforcing President Obama’s executive order barring anti-LGBT workplace discrimination among federal contractors and interpreted an earlier order from President Lyndon Johnson prohibiting employment bias on the basis of sex to apply to transgender workers. Perez also extended federal benefits to same-sex couples, such as those under the Family & Medical Leave Act, in aftermath of the Supreme Court decision against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Also at the Labor Department, Perez hired Dylan Orr, who was the first openly transgender person to be appointed to a presidential administration and now works for the city of Seattle as director of the Office of Labor Standards.

Ed Murray, who’s gay and serves as mayor of Seattle, supports Perez and said the candidate’s background on LGBT rights is exactly what is needed at the DNC.

“Secretary Perez has been a strong partner and advocate on LGBTQ issues,” Murray said. “It is critical that our Democratic Party leader be able to stand up for the needs of the LGBTQ community, and build a national coalition that will continue to protect the civil rights of all in the face of discrimination.”

The election for chair is set to take place Saturday during the DNC’s winter meeting in Atlanta.

Read the entire interview online at www.pridesource.com



Detroit's Black History Month Celeb

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

When Detroit-born, Cass Tech graduate Bernard Johnson died, age 60 in 1997, the New York Times carried a quarter-page obit celebrating his life as “a Renaissance man in dance.”

Little bigger than a metronome minute – at 5-foot-4 – he started dancing at age 11. We became friends during our CT senior year, and were part of an integrated black/white circle of gay art and music students who often gathered after class to “dish” and let our hair down at a nearby Dunkin’ Donuts Shop in downtown Detroit.

(As art students we were free to roam all seven floors, freehand drawing in pencil and charcoal, mastering the intricacies of one- and two-

For us CT art students – straight, gay, questioning – Bernard Johnson, though short of stature, was someone we all looked up to.

point perspective. During warm weather we sketched, painted watercolors, socialized in shady nearby Cass Park.)

Bernard Johnson majored in fashion design, and was much admired for renderings of furs, fabrics, dresses and accessories.

In the late-1950s there were few

black CT students majoring in fashion design.

He was also known as an interpreter of ballet and modern dance, invited by our senior art/design instructor Donald Thrall to perform for an all-school talent extravaganza.

Bernard wore a discreetly brief costume, and his body was painted a shimmering gold. When he stepped stage center into the spotlight, there was an expectant hush among the 1,500 students gathered in the balconied auditorium.

He paused. Struck an elegant pose. Smiled expectantly. Snapped into stunning. Full! No-let-up! Choreographic mastery!

Music was Les Baxter’s LP recording of “Le Sacre Du Sauvage.” Live bongo drummers drummed Bernard through each flashing movement. Performance was primitive. Limber. Elastic. Gleamingly muscular! When he took several well-deserved bows, sweating glitter from an energetic and orgiastic cadence, everyone stood, whistled, applauded.

Though we didn’t know it then, this was a preview performance for a long and successful career in dance, choreography, film set and costume design, stretching over 40 wonderfully creative years.

“I believe in the power of metaphysics,” he once confided to friends. “Be the best. Associate only with the best. These are the principles I was raised on.” He was fun company. Just a bit “swish” and campy. He carried his books like a well-bred debutante.

But he was not to be trifled with, as a classmate who called him “Miss Thing” during bell change soon found out.

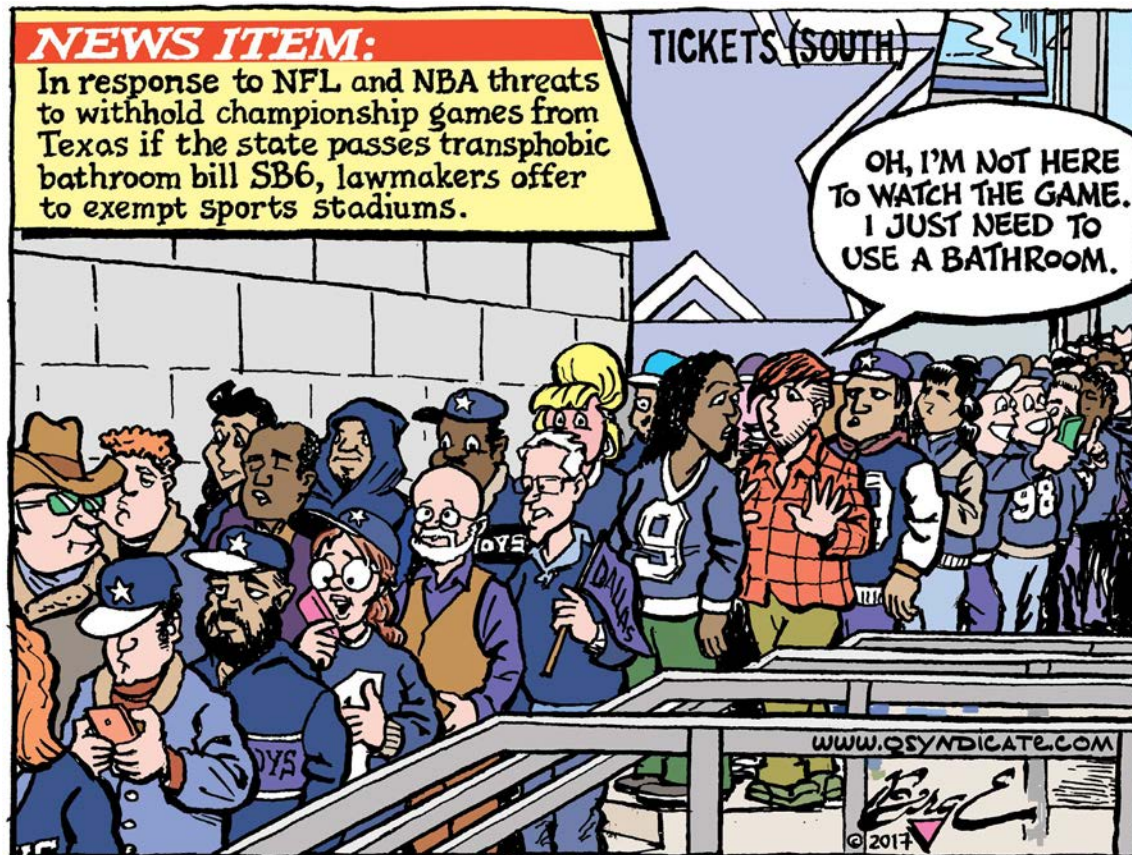
Bernard – who had an impeccable sense of timing – knew just when, where and how to settle a score. In the midst of our design class he loudly confronted the offending dimwit. “If it’s not too much trouble to put that brain you’re sitting on in gear, I’d like words with you.”

We held our breath. One by one he read the guy’s beads. We savored every delicious put down.

His accolades are many: fantasy costume designs; many Broadway musical performances; teaching at the University of California at Irvine; induction into the Black Film Makers Hall of Fame; close friendships with Josephine Baker, Judy Garland, pre-controversial Bill Cosby, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, Aretha Franklin; international tours, command performances for King Hassan II of Morocco.

For us CT art students – straight, gay, questioning – Bernard Johnson, though short of stature, was someone we all looked up to.

Charles@pridesource.com



Viewpoint



BY HATTIE ALEXANDER

Great, The Way We Were

Our new President promises to “Make America great again.” Greatness, I think, is a matter of perspective. Mr. Trump was born into the privileged, wealthy class. From his perspective America used to be great, before all of the liberal laws and freedoms messed it up.

I am writing from the perspective of one who was born to a working class, Black family and has lived through the years that Mr. Trump calls great. So what were those years like? Why cringe when I think about the way we were? Let me take you on a stroll down memory lane.

I was born during the Presidency of Mr. D.D. Eisenhower. Segregation was the law of the land. Voter rights suppression, substandard housing, unfair labor practices, and sundown towns were the order of the day. What is a sundown town, you might ask? It is any city, town, village or neighborhood considered “all white” and off limits to any person of color after sundown. Interracial marriage was illegal in 29 states. Angry mobs of white citizens could take up arms and beat, lynch and mutilate any Black man, woman or child that the good white citizens considered “bad” without fear of reproach. Many would say those times were far from great.

Gay men, lesbians and the gender non-conforming, were considered mentally ill and/or criminal; committed to mental hospitals where shock treatments and lobotomies were performed. The LGBT citizen could be dragged out of their homes or clubs and arrested, beaten or imprisoned. Housing and jobs could be denied. Children could be taken away from parents seen as unfit due to their sexuality alone. Great?

Women who wished to terminate an unwanted pregnancy had to risk infection, hemorrhage and sterility at the hands of uneducated, unlicensed practitioners. Until the Roe v Wade ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court allowed some reproductive freedom. And anyone seeking medical care with a pre-existing condition could be denied coverage by the insurance company. Great.

When seeking employment, citizens who were non-whites had to walk past signs that read “Whites ONLY need apply.” If a man and woman applied for the same job, it would be the man who was hired. A woman was not considered the head of a household (even if she was!) Civil rights, voting rights and other civil liberties were

See next page



Mombian Warmth for the Winter

BY DANA RUDOLPH

February, despite being the shortest month, is often a hard one.

Where I live, any day might be a snow day, with my son home from school and the sidewalks needing to be shoveled. The usual routine of laundry and groceries and dinner doesn't stop. In recent weeks, too, I have been distracted by the news stories of a government chipping away at the rights of LGBTQ people, immigrants and others. How not to be overwhelmed by it all? Here are some of stories about LGBTQ families making February just a bit warmer.

A U.S. District Court in South Carolina has ruled that it is unconstitutional for the state to refuse to put same-sex spouses on their children's birth certificates. The plaintiffs, Casy and Jacqueline Carson, are a lesbian couple who married in Washington, D.C., before their home state of South Carolina recognized marriage for same-sex couples. When Jacqueline gave birth, they indicated on hospital forms that they were married, but then received birth certificates naming Jacqueline as the "Mother"—with "No Father Listed" in the space for the other parent.

The state had previously said it would only issue birth certificates with both same-sex spouses if they got adoptions or court orders—an extra burden not required of different-sex spouses. The couple could not afford this. Casy is a National Guard veteran who left active duty in 2013 because of a serious injury. Jacqueline is a teacher.

Without Casy on the birth certificates they had trouble getting her Veterans Administration and Social Security benefits for their children. Additionally, they worried that Casy could be kept from getting either routine or emergency medical care for the twins and that their children would feel stigmatized when they were old enough to understand their birth certificates.

They filed a lawsuit last May, backed by Lambda Legal and South Carolina Equality. In her ruling Feb. 15, Judge Mary Geiger Lewis wrote that the state's action violates their rights under the 14th Amendment and their "fundamental right to marriage and other protected liberties."

This decision makes me hopeful for the outcome of another case that could have even greater visibility. The National Center for Lesbian Rights last week appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, seeking to overturn an Arkansas Supreme Court decision that denied same-sex parents the right to be on their children's birth certificates.

To assist, Family Equality Council is preparing a "Voices of Children" amicus brief, seeking stories from older or adult children of same-sex parents in any state who have or had birth certificates without both same-sex parents listed. They prepared a similar brief for the winning federal marriage equality cases in years past; seeing them do so again gives me hope. (If you would like to contribute, contact Director of State Policy Denise Brogan-Kator, DeniseBK@familequality.org.)

I'm also inspired by the nearly 800 parents

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signed into law in the 1960s and 1970s. Is it those civil liberties that have made America weak in Mr. Trump's eyes? Would we be great again by refusing education, credit, housing and equal opportunity to those once considered "other?"

In 20th Century America, we saw the economy grow along with our cities. More of the disenfranchised were given educational, job and housing opportunities. Civil rights battles were fought by Blacks, Latinos and the LGBT communities. After the 1970s we began to see more women and ethnics in leadership positions in business and government. All of this came with a cost. Many died or were imprisoned in the fight for fairness.

In this month since the inauguration of Mr. Donald Trump as President of the United States of America, we have seen unrest in many communities. People are fearful that all of the rights we have won will be denied again. We have seen denial of travel freedoms, mass deportation, abuses of power, lies and deception. I can only wonder if everything separate and unequal, the

In this month since the inauguration of Mr. Donald Trump as President of the United States of America, we have seen unrest in many communities. People are fearful that all of the rights we have won will be denied again.

way we were, is what he and those who voted for him want. Is this really the "Great America" that Mr. Trump wants to make us again? Great!

Hattie Alexander is a native Detroiter, nurse by profession and Deacon at the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit.

Creep of the Week

Milo Yiannopoulos (Again)

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Remember when Simon & Schuster was going to publish a book by Milo Yiannopoulos and people



Milo Yiannopoulos

were all, "but he's a racist/misogynist/anti-trans hate monger!" And Simon & Schuster were like, "Yeah, but dollars." But then a recording of Yiannopoulos saying

nice things about pedophilia surfaced and Simon & Schuster was all of a sudden like, "No, cuz morals."

Not to mention that the Conservative Political Action Conference, which has always been a total hatefest, disinvited Yiannopoulos for the same reason. They were cool with the racist stuff, the anti-Muslim stuff, the misogyny. That's CPAC's bread and butter, after all. And let's not forget that when people protested on college campuses against him, many on the right were quick to hail Yiannopoulos as a defender of conservative ideas and claim that the left had no respect for freedom of speech. President Donald Trump even threatened via Twitter to withhold federal funding from the University of California at Berkeley after they canceled a Yiannopoulos appearance.

But apparently that celebration of freedom of speech only goes so far.

Of course, Yiannopoulos says it was all a misunderstanding. Either he was joking, or he used poor phrasing, or the remarks were manipulated by selective editing. Maybe all of the above! Or none!

But it really doesn't matter why Yiannopoulos said, among other things, that a priest who abused him as a boy is the reason he gives good oral sex today. What matters is that Yiannopoulos has thrown fuel on the "gays are pedophiles" fire that opponents of gay rights drag out at every opportunity. Because sex with kids is bad and people who hurt kids are the worst, therefore gays are monsters.

Monsters are, of course, not human, and dehumanizing an entire group of people is a great way to justify systematic oppression and hatred of said group.

For example, the anti-gay right has long since pointed to the North American Man Boy Love Association as "proof

So conservatives can clutch their pearls all they want over what they suddenly find so shocking about Yiannopoulos and his views, but he isn't saying anything they haven't been saying for ages...Finally a gay man who says the same hateful shit about gay people that they do!

that gays are pedophiles, as if this small and isolated group were representative of all gays everywhere. It isn't. It's on the outer fringe. (I mean, if they really were a huge and powerful group, they'd have a way more professional looking website.) I'd say that saying NAMBLA represents the LGBTQ movement at large would be like saying white supremacists represent all Republicans, but that analogy isn't accurate since the outer fringe actually has taken over Republican party.

While the gays as pedophiles myth still haunts gay rights discourse, you can't go to the supermarket checkout without seeing some adorable gay celebrities like Neil Patrick Harris or Ricky Martin posing with their kids on the cover of People. The idea that gays are some kind of sickos who lurk around elementary school playgrounds is a lot harder to sell today.

Then again, we've never had more anti-gay folks in the federal government. Let's not forget that Steve Bannon is who hired Yiannopoulos at Breitbart. And that Bannon is Trump's right-hand man. So when Yiannopoulos says that Trump is the most pro-gay President ever, don't fucking kid yourself.

So conservatives can clutch their pearls all they want over what they suddenly find so shocking about Yiannopoulos and his views, but he isn't saying anything they haven't been saying for ages. Which is exactly why he has been embraced by hate mongers everywhere. Finally a gay man who says the same hateful shit about gay people that they do! Never mind that the vast majority of gays aren't like Yiannopoulos and think he's a garbage bag filled with internal organs. Yiannopoulos, for conservatives is the True Gay. All the rest must just be fake gay news.

Resistance to Trump Finds Plenty of LGBT Help

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Nearly four weeks into the presidency of Donald Trump and the resistance is still going strong. The day after the inauguration, women and men wearing pink pussy hats filled the streets in Washington, D.C. and nationwide for the women's march. The next weekend, protesters crammed airports in protest of Trump's Muslim travel ban as travelers were detained. Around the country, demonstrators are taking a page from the Tea Party and shouting down Republican members of Congress for threatening to repeal Obamacare.

It's just the start of what may be a long four years—or eight—of the Trump administration, but there's every indication this outcry from progressives, which includes voices from the LGBT movement, will continue over the long haul.

Firas Nasr, a queer activist who has organized dance protests in D.C. on behalf of WERK for Peace, said the activism will sustain itself through “a combination of creativity and persistence.”

“One thing that we're really trying to bring into the resistance here is creativity, is love and connection,” Nasr said. “Those are things that people are seeking from the start. That's the reason why we go out to resist in the first place, so hearing that be the end and creating or facilitating a space where that can be expressed I think is the work that we do.”

John Becker, a gay D.C. progressive activist and blogger, said Trump is “counting on protest fatigue” and initiating multiple controversial policies—such as plans to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and a travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries—in hopes people will forget as time goes on.

“I think that's part of their strategy is to just throw as much awful, deplorable, difficult things at us right away and overwhelm people like a Blitzkrieg,” Becker said. “I think they're counting on dulling our senses and our sense of outrage and getting us exhausted.”

Anger with the Trump White House continues to grow not just over policy, but over the scandalous revelations about Trump's ties to Russia. Just this week, National Security Adviser Michael Flynn resigned after revelations he spoke with Russian officials about Obama-era sanctions and media reports revealed Trump aides were in contact with Russian intelligence officials during the campaign.

If poll numbers are any indication, the demonstrations are working and likely won't let up soon. A Gallup poll released on Sunday found just 40 percent of Americans



approve of Trump compared to 55 percent who disapprove of him. That low popularity is atypical for a new president. Last week, a Public Policy Polling poll found Americans are now evenly split 47-47 on support for impeaching Trump and support for removing him from office continues.

Igor Volsky, a gay D.C.-based progressive activist and deputy director of the Center for American Progress Fund, said he doesn't spend “much time worrying that somehow all of a sudden he's going to get his act together and people aren't going to be outraged” with controversial policies continuing to come from the White House.

“I think people are outraged because he does very outrageous things and if that continues, I think we'll see people in the street, we'll see people online be very, very upset,” Volsky said. “And they'll create for those people the political space and the political pressure for members of Congress to break with Trump, to disagree with Trump to undermine the kind of agenda he's pursuing.”

Tea for Progressives, Too?

Observers are already making comparisons of progressive activism to the Tea Party under President Obama, which urged “no” votes from Republicans at every possible moment on his agenda even at the expense of government operations. But don't tell that to progressive activists who see a clear distinction between themselves and conservative activists.

Volsky said he wouldn't make a comparison between the Tea Party and progressive activism over Trump because the latter has already enjoyed much more

sustainability early on in a new administration.

“In many respects, I think, Americans today are far ahead of where the Tea Party was,” Volsky said. I mean, we're weeks into the administration and you're seeing three weekends in a row of tremendous protests.”

But like the Tea Party with Republicans, Volsky said Democrats may feel the fire of the progressive movement if they don't listen to its demands and face ousters in mid-term season.

“You saw a lot of Republicans lose their seats to challenges from the right because the Tea Party created this sense that conservatives, who nobody thought would be in trouble from the right wing of their base, got in a lot of trouble, and lost their seats,” Volsky said. “People like Eric Cantor, so whether or not that's going to happen in this case, we'll have to wait and see.”

There's also a difference in support for both movements. As Becker pointed out, a Washington Post poll found only 27 of Americans supported the Tea Party at the height of the movement in 2010, but 60 percent now support the nationwide women's marches.

“I think that there are similarities, but the critical distinction rests in the genesis of it because the Tea Party in Barack Obama... there was no question about the legitimacy of his election,” Becker said. “He won the popular vote, he won the electoral vote, there was no foreign interference, there was no FBI meddling. There wasn't the same kind of foundational questions about the legitimacy of his mandate in a way that there is for Trump.”

In terms of whether the progressive movement like the Tea Party should encourage Democrats to vote “no” arbitrarily on

everything in the congressional agenda under Trump, views are nuanced.

Volsky expressed caution when asked if Democrats should vote “no” on everything that comes up during the Trump administration, saying the approach should be more selective.

Progressives derailed the confirmation of Trump's pick for labor secretary, Andrew Puzder, who withdrew. A coalition of LGBT groups including the Equality Federation and the LGBT labor group Pride at Work opposed Puzder, saying his employment practices and opposition to raising the minimum wage made him a bad choice for LGBT workers.

Becker said one aspect in which Democrats should emulate Republicans emboldened by the Tea Party is by blocking the confirmation of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, citing GOP refusal to consider Merrick Garland and the Trump nominee's record.

“They set that precedent last year when they—for no reason at all other than partisan spite—denied Merrick Garland a hearing and refused to confirm him,” Becker said. “In terms of the Supreme Court, I do think the Democrats should follow precedent set by the Republicans. As far I'm concerned, that was a stolen seat, stolen from Merrick Garland and Barack Obama and I support any and all efforts to block and obstruct Gorsuch from being seated on the court.”

One aspect of the Tea Party for which it won notoriety was engineering a shutdown of the federal government in 2013 over the implementation of Obamacare. With current funding for the government set to expire in March, the progressive activists may take up the mantle of stopping the

See next page

government by ceasing operations, such as the increased immigration raids under the Trump administration.

Asserting a federal government shutdown “would sort of have to be a bridge to be crossed if we come to it,” Becker said at this time he couldn’t bring himself to support such action because of the negative impacts of the 2013 shutdown.

“The shutting down of the federal government is something that was such a drastic and reckless step that the Republicans took,” Becker said. “I can’t say that is something I would support at this moment.”

An LGBT Piece de Resistance

A cornerstone of the progressive resistance is the LGBT community, which has largely remained steadfast in its opposition to Trump and has continued to speak out against his policies despite the assertion from the White House he’s “respectful and supportive” of LGBT rights. A national LGBT march is planned for Washington during Pride weekend June 11; other cities are looking to schedule similar marches that day in solidarity as was seen during the recent women’s march.

Volsky said Trump’s declared support for LGBT rights falls away after “peeling back” those stated words and looking at the anti-LGBT people advising him.

“If I’m looking at the LGBT movement,

it’s to protect progress on a federal level, to continue pushing for progress on the state and local level and to really be involved in the fight against Trump because LGBT Americans are a great part of the progressive coalition and frankly have shown over the last couple of years how to organize and how to get things done, so I think they’re a great asset to advocacy and the movement in general,” Volsky said.

The LGBT movement, Nasr said, has a creativity and unique intersectionality different from other groups that will continue to energize the progressive resistance to Trump.

“At least as a person of color personally, I’ve seen the LGBTQ community be a center for intersectionality at least in the circles that I run in, so an additional thing that we’re bringing is we’re bringing everyone,” Nasr said. “We’re not leaving anyone behind. This is not white feminism. This is not prim-and-proper LGBT corporate funded work. This is grassroots, everyone’s involved, intersectionality-centered, queer-centered resistance.” The LGBT movement, Nasr said, has a creativity and unique intersectionality different from other groups that will continue to energize the progressive resistance.

Chris Johnson is Chief Political & White House Reporter for the Washington Blade. This reprint is made available by the National Gay Media Association.

offer her services as a publicist pro bono to an adoption-grant organization. She discovered, however, that none of the organizations she found welcomed same-sex or single parents, and all charged application fees. Those weren’t the kind of organizations she wanted to support. She and Kipp therefore decided to start {URL Helpusadopt.org}, an “equality-based adoption grant program.”

Since 2007, they have awarded 208 grants of \$500 to \$15,000, for a total of more than \$1.8 million dollars, to those seeking to complete an adoption after their home study. Grantees have included same-sex and single parents as well as different-sex parents, and Becky noted that transgender parents have been among them. “We take our diversity very seriously here,” she affirmed. A total of 16 percent of their grant money has gone to LGBTQ parents, she said, and she’d like to increase that number. They award grants three times a year, and their spring application deadline is April 15.

The media is full of stories that may rightly concern and frighten us. We should not ignore them — but neither should we feel that all is lost. We are still winning some court battles; still fighting back when we lose; and still have allies. Most importantly, whether we are LGBTQ parents or parents of LGBTQ children (or both), we are strengthened by the bonds of love and family. Nothing is going to change that.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian.com, a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

► Mombian

Continued from p. 11

of transgender children, part of HRC’s new, nationwide Parents for Transgender Equality Council, who sent a letter to President Donald Trump condemning the Justice Department’s announcement that it will no longer try to overturn a district court’s hold on protections for transgender students that were instituted by the Obama administration. The department’s action means the hold stays in place and the protections remain in limbo.

I am motivated, too, by Gavin Grimm, a transgender 17-year-old who is heading to the U.S. Supreme Court next month, backed by the ACLU, to challenge his school district’s rule requiring students to use the restrooms corresponding to their “biological genders.” While the case is about his right to use a restroom without undue burden, it could also have a broader impact. As the ACLU noted in its blog last October, “Gavin’s case, and the so-called restroom debates more broadly, are about much more than just restrooms. This is a chance for the country to get to know our transgender family, friends, colleagues and community members.”

Finally, a story of allies. When spouses Becky and Kipp Fawcett depleted their own savings adopting their children, they then wanted to help other families who might be facing even greater financial obstacles, Becky told me in a phone interview. She hoped to



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► Rescind

Continued from p. 4

another from LGBT employees at the Education Department. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said in a statement to the Washington Blade the change in position at the Justice Department is “deeply disappointing.”

Other LGBT advocates over the course of the holiday weekend said they similarly heard the Justice Department and Education Department would act to rescind the guidance.

Kelly Love, a White House spokesperson, had no comment in response to the Washington Blade’s request to confirm the Trump administration would follow up on the Justice Department’s move and rescind the guidance.

“We have nothing to add to this report right now, but will keep you posted if anything changes,” Love said.

A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment. The Education Department didn’t immediately respond to a request to comment over the holiday weekend.

A decision to withdraw the guidance could be an initial signal of the Trump administration’s position in the case before the U.S. Supreme Court known as Gloucester County Schools v. G.G., which resulted from transgender student Gavin Grimm suing his high school to use the restroom consistent with his gender identity. The questions before the court are to evaluate the guidance and whether the prohibition of sex discrimination under Title IX applies to transgender students seeking to use the restroom in school consistent with their gender identity.

The Trump administration would be rescinding the guidance weeks after the White House issued a statement declaring Trump is “respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights” and would preserve a separate order from President Obama barring anti-LGBT workplace discrimination among federal contractors.

Even if the U.S. government rescinds the guidance, transgender advocates have insisted students are still able to sue on their own under Title IX if they feel they’ve experienced discrimination as a result of their gender identity.

“It doesn’t take away trans kids’ rights,” Keisling said. “It’s Title IX that protects us, not Donald Trump or Attorney General Sessions agreeing with us on Title IX.”

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement the Trump administration must affirm the guidance for transgender students must remain in place.

“Transgender young people face tragically high rates of discrimination and bullying, and they need a government that will stand up for them -- not attack them,” Griffin said. “It’s shocking that this kind of harm would even be a subject of debate for the president. We call on Trump to immediately and permanently affirm the Obama Administration’s guidance and protect transgender students.”

Wash. Court Rules Against Florist Who Refused to Serve Gays

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The Washington Supreme Court has upheld the state’s civil rights law in the face of a challenge to the statute from a florist who refused to serve a same-sex couple based on religious objections.

Writing for a unanimous nine-member court of elected judges, Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud determined in a 59-page decision Barronelle Stutzman, the sole owner of Arlene’s Flowers in Richland, Wash., discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation in 2013 by refusing to provide floral arrangements for the wedding of a gay couple, Robert Ingersoll and Curt Freed.

“[T]he conduct for which Stutzman was cited and fined in this case - refusing her commercially marketed wedding floral services to Ingersoll and Freed because theirs would be a same-sex wedding - constitutes sexual orientation discrimination under the WLAD,” McCloud wrote. “We also hold that the WLAD may be enforced against Stutzman because it does not infringe any constitutional protection.”

Although Stutzman argued the Washington Law Against Discrimination violates her rights to free speech and religious freedom, the high court determined the law didn’t violate the rights afforded to her under the U.S. and Washington State constitutions.

On the claim of free speech, McCloud concludes the acts of arranging flowers “do not meet” the definition of speech based on legal precedent.

“Certainly, she argues that she intends to communicate a message through her floral arrangements,” McCloud writes. “But the major contest is over whether Stutzman’s intended communications actually communicated something to the public at large— whether her conduct was ‘inherently expressive.’ And her actions in creating floral arrangements for wedding ceremonies do not satisfy this standard.”

McCloud also rejects Stutzman’s arguments the court should subject the Washington Law Against Discrimination to strict scrutiny, the most stringent form of judicial scrutiny, based on religious freedom.

“In this case, Stutzman seeks an exemption that would allow her to refuse certain customer services to members of a WLAD-protected class on religious grounds,” McCloud writes. “Under a First Amendment free exercise analysis, the WLAD would



The Washington Supreme Court has ruled against Barronelle Stutzman of Arlene’s Flowers. Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key.

trigger strict scrutiny if it permitted that sort of discrimination only for nonreligious reasons, and thus indicated the government’s preference for secular discrimination. But the WLAD does not do this. “

The Washington Supreme Court decision upholds the ruling of the Benton County Superior Court, which found Stutzman violated the Washington Law Against Discrimination and fined her \$1,000.

Because the case is based on a federal claim, Arlene’s Flowers is able to file a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court after the state high court ruling to reconsider the ruling.

Kristen Waggoner, senior counsel at the Alliance Defending Freedom, pledged on the day the Washington Supreme Court decision was handed down to file a petition of certiorari.

“It’s no wonder that so many people are rightly calling on President Trump to sign an executive order to protect our religious freedom,” Waggoner said. “Because that freedom is clearly at risk for Barronelle and so many other Americans, and because no executive order can fix all of the threats to that freedom, we will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to hear this case and reverse this grave injustice.”

A similar petition making a claim a state LGBT non-discrimination law violates

religious freedom is already pending before the Supreme Court. Masterpiece Bakeshop filed the petition in July after the state courts ruled it violated state law by refusing to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding for religious reasons. The Supreme Court has scheduled the petition for consideration during its upcoming conference Friday.

Jennifer Pizer, law and policy director for Lambda Legal, said the odds are against the U.S. Supreme Court taking up either Masterpiece Cakeshop or Arlene’s Flowers cases.

“I think a grant of cert in either case is unlikely because the federal free exercise claims are very weak and the speech claims in these cases, in my view, are even weaker,” Pizer said. “But, we’ll probably know soon about Masterpiece Cakeshop. And if that petition, surprisingly, is granted, we’ll have an intense showdown on these issues. If that petition is denied, and if history is a guide, the tiny likelihood of success on a follow-on, re-echoing cert petition doesn’t mean ADF won’t try again in Arlene’s Flowers.”

Chris Johnson is Chief Political & White House Reporter for the Washington Blade. This article is made possible through a partnership with the National Gay Media Association.

YOUR MARRIAGE

How to Find the Right Officiant for Your Wedding

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's one of the hardest decisions couples planning to tie the knot have to make: Who should officiate the ceremony? Some attend church regularly and have faith leaders who for them are an obvious choice. But for many more couples, finding just the right person to join them as one is a challenge.

Finding the right officiant - one who can tailor make a wedding service to remember - isn't as difficult as one might imagine. It really comes down to comparison shopping and taking the time to meet with two or three potential officiants to find the one with whom the couple feels a true connection.

"Couples who are truly interested in what is being said at their ceremonies should be working with officiants that have that connection with them and that connection only comes from a face-to-face interview," said Stephen Stawicki, an officiant and master bridal consultant who owns The Marriage Connection with his wife Miriam Jerris, a Humanist rabbi. "Couples just don't want to take the time."

Mark Ephraim, a wedding planner for the

past 50 years and an officiant since 2012, said that once a couple has chosen an officiant, they should plan on meeting with them multiple times before their big day.

"My method of planning the perfect ceremony consists of meeting with my couple two to three times," Ephraim said. "The purpose is to get to know them well enough to write a personal ceremony that will reflect their lives, love for one another, and their marital values. Sometimes it may take an extra meeting or two based on how forthcoming they are with their story. It usually only takes two. Then I write the ceremony and send to my couples for their approval or edits. It's all about them. The words I choose are based on their thoughts and feelings about their love story and love and marriage in general. Sometimes I will include a poem or reading that I find fitting to them. Sometimes they give me one they would like me to include as well."

Often times, it's helpful to see samples of an officiant's work.

"The couple needs to think about what they want and what they don't want," said Jerris, who has been officiating ceremonies for 30

See Your Marriage: Officiants, page 16



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► Your Marriage: Officials

Continued from p. 15

years. “They should ask questions. And the officiant needs to be clear about what they offer, how they work, and what their ceremonies might look like. I have ceremonies that I share with them and I also have some videos that they can see as well.”

Brad Munce, an officiant and life-cycle celebrant who owns Sacred Journeys, also said that the key to selecting the right officiant comes with finding one with whom couples feel a connection.

Couples “really need to look for someone who they have chemistry with, and by that, I mean that they are comfortable and actually like the person,” said Munce. “This will make all the difference in the world. If the couple feels intimidated or rushed, or that their needs are not being met, they will be less content with the final result. I bring a lifetime of experience and spend time with my couples, listening carefully to their vision, helping them create the type of personalized and meaningful ceremony they desire.

“My approach is to be there for them, with them, helping them to enjoy their celebration as much as possible with warmth, encouragement and a sense of humor,” Munce continued.

“Your officiant should take the time to understand your beliefs, your values and what makes your relationship unique. I will never hand you a ceremony and then ask you to show up. Couples are the co-author of their ceremony.”

How They Got Started

It’s not difficult to become an officiant these days. But the individuals who spoke to Between The Lines for this article are all experienced and possess a great compassion for people and a love of, well, love.

For Jerris, officiating at wedding ceremonies was a natural extension of her work as a rabbi.

“I first became certified as an officiant as a Humanist Celebrant, reaching out to people of different and multiple cultures,” Jerris said. “My first wedding was April 1985. It was in the Boston-Edison section of Detroit in an old mansion. The bride was Asian and not religious; the groom Jewish and identified culturally. They wanted a ceremony about who they were. It was right up my alley. I was so excited.”

Munce, a social worker, became an officiant by accident.

“Four years ago I was asked to plan and facilitate a memorial service for a client’s family in northern Michigan, where I was serving as an executive director for a nonprofit agency,” Munce recalled. “A few months later I was asked by a friend who was already legally married if I would officiate at their beach wedding in Livingston County. From there it sparked an interest to companion couples in one of the happiest moments on their lives together. I have always enjoyed being a part of people’s milestones as they navigated through life as an empowering social worker in the mental paradigm. Now it had begun to become full-circle to incorporate my interfaith values of compassion combined with my gift of public speaking to craft personalized love-ceremonies with people of all beliefs and value systems.”

After decades of planning wedding ceremonies for couples it was perhaps inevitable that Ephraim would venture into officiating eventually.

“In 2012 I was planning a wedding for a couple my age and we became friends and they asked me to officiate their wedding,” Ephraim explained. “Although reluctant at first I found the experience to be the most rewarding of my entire career both emotionally and spiritually. I decided there and then it would be the next phase of my life-long career.”

Learn more about Mark Ephraim, visit www.weddingofficiantmarkpephraim.com. Miriam Jerris and Stephen Stawicki can be found online at www.theweddingconnection.net. Learn more about Brad Munce, visit www.bradmunce.wixsite.com/sacredjourneys.

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"There really is a difference"



Photo: ABC

Rachel Griffiths on Portraying a Lesbian HIV-Care Nurse in ‘When We Rise’ & Breaking the Mold with ‘Six Feet Under’

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Early in her career, she stole our queer hearts as Toni Collette’s freewheeling yang in 1994’s buddy comedy “Muriel’s Wedding,” but before long, Rachel Griffiths became one of our most passionate allies both on- and off-screen.

In 2001, the 48-year-old Aussie actress starred as Brenda Chenoweth, the enigmatic, gender-subverting girlfriend-turned-wife of prodigal son Nate Fisher (Peter Krause) in HBO’s Emmy-winning landmark series, “Six Feet Under,” out creator Alan Ball’s gay-inclusive, darkly comic rumination on life and death. One of TV’s finest hours, the

show was heralded for its character David (Michael C. Hall), who was praised for portraying the first authentic gay character on TV. A year after “Six Feet Under” concluded, in 2006, Griffiths made the leap from the Fishers to the Walkers, the family at the center of ABC’s “Brothers & Sisters,” also celebrated for its LGBT representation.

Now, Griffiths is taking her longtime queer advocacy to the next level with “When We Rise,” Dustin Lance Black’s moving and timely portrayal of the progressive post-Stonewall movement. The seven-part miniseries seeks to connect with the heart – not the politics – of Americans through real family stories, something Griffiths’ gay-affirming résumé certainly reflects.

In “When We Rise,” you play Diane, who’s raising a daughter with women’s rights activist Roma Guy, portrayed by Mary-Louise Parker. What are your thoughts on bringing the lesbian-led blended family dynamic to audiences on a mainstream network like ABC?

“Brothers & Sisters” was on ABC at the same time as “Modern Family,” and we had “Will & Grace,” so I didn’t have any kind of surprise it was on a network (like ABC), because ultimately it is about family – it’s about the “we” of gay, lesbian, transgender lives, not the “they” or the “others.” So, for me, to move these people’s lives away from the premium cable niche – I love that by not being on a niche network, there wasn’t a

pressure to be noisy in a more sexual way. We’ve kind of moved past having to explore that.

That’s there in other shows if you want it, particularly with women’s lives. We’ve had “The L Word,” where the women are identified first off in the show by being lesbians. But Roma and Diane’s trouble was, first, (being) women – 51 percent of the population – then the gay/lesbian, then it was understanding the power of how those two movements can come together.

Your roles on both TV and in film suggest that you appreciate portrayals of social and political issues that are reflected through a personal lens.

I absolutely love that. I think if people aren't living in a wider sociological space, they're in a bubble. Growing up, my favorite movies actually were World War II movies – get motor bikes and outdo the Nazis. I was just really primed by seeing political moments intersecting with personal and moral choices, and the drama of that.

That certainly explains your career trajectory.

(Laughs) With a few exceptions!

How do you feel knowing that a half century after the liberation movement of the late '60s and '70s we're still, to some extent, fighting the same fights that are being fought in "When We Rise"?

The last few years have definitely been a wakeup call of thinking that progression is always forward moving. I think we really thought progression was a simple, straightforward thing, so it's definitely a shock that things go backward and forward. Millennials and the younger generation are very comfortable in the gay, lesbian and transgender space, and their comfort level is very high, so it's a shock to see an older generation insist on moving back. I think for many within that younger generation, when they hear certain slogans about how great America used to be, we know that was true for white men, but not necessarily true for all other people.

Which is the crux of the Trump administration. But you're right: The pendulum swings back and forth, and now we've entered a time when progressives are once again stepping up to the plate, and I think younger generations feel compelled to become activists and stand up against this pushback.

I think there are also periods where you have young presidents who are really representing a moment in time, and then we get an old president who is a status quo president. So, I think people are afraid of too much change too fast, and he's the tipping point.

There's been a lot to be afraid of these last 16 years, and if you just read the news or tune into the news cycle, you're conditioned to think we live in the most vulnerable time in human history, which of course you and I know we don't. And I will say, I've got two little American girls and they have their little anxious moments, and I still tell them that there's never been a greater time to be born as an American female than now. Never has she had more opportunities. Never has she had a stronger voice. And never has she had more reasons to be

“ Millennials and the younger generation are very comfortable in the gay, lesbian and transgender space, and their comfort level is very high, so it's a shock to see an older generation insist on moving back.. ”



confident. Gay or straight. I'd still say now is a better time to be gay anywhere in the world.

Growing up in Melbourne, Australia, what was your introduction to the LGBT community?

There were huge rumors at school that George Michael was gay. I was like, "No, no, really?!" (Laughs) And Freddie Mercury had AIDS. "No, he's not gay, too!" It was kind of a mix of probably negative and controversial, I would say, in a Catholic backwater.

I remember there was a gorgeous, contemporary boy and the rumors in the parish: He wasn't well, he was a drug addict and he died of a heroin overdose, and he was from a big Catholic family.

I had only recently learned that he died of HIV/AIDS. So, the family would have rather said he was an addict and died, when he was actually living a very loved life with his partner and died very young. Died at 24, I think.

In 2012, you performed in the Australian production of Dustin Lance Black's play "8," centered on California's controversial Proposition 8. Was that your introduction to Dustin?

Apparently, we met in the Valley for a project. I was the hugest fan of "Milk." As a history lover, what I loved about "Milk," which I kind of sat down somewhat dutifully to be educated with, and I think the same holds true for this piece: how committed he is to elevating these heroes that are gay, lesbian and straight. And perhaps my first introduction to that topic and feeling the outrageous injustice of how they were treated in their own time was seeing the Alan Turing play (1986's "Breaking the Code") at the West End (in London). I was 19 – very young – and that was my introduction to probably the key hero of World War II, who was a gay man and died tortured and broken for his own sexuality. I recall the wrongfulness, and I think had that not been made (into a movie), Lance would've made that story as well.

In "When We Rise," you say, "Gay dads – I wonder if that will ever be a thing." It's kind of hysterical, but also true.

Not very long ago I really remember thinking, "Gay marriage – that'll never be a thing." Even being gay and lesbian supportive, the actual idea... there were just enormous strides being made very quickly. And in my country, Australia, gay and lesbians still cannot marry and are denied fundamental rights to celebrate their unions.

But it's a wonderful thing, the Bill of Rights. It can be used in other countries very much as a political football, and it's just the most inspiring document that human beings have ever come up with as a model and ideal to which we should move forward. And I still believe that that document is going at its strongest and most triumphant when all "men" includes all *people*: men and

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'When We Rise' Offers Clear Path Forward for All Working in *The Movement*



Dustin Lance Black, Austin P. McKenzie and Cleve Jones on set of 'When We Rise.' Photo: ABC

BY KEITH ORR

I first read an advance copy of Cleve Jones' memoir, *When We Rise: My Life In The Movement* early last fall. At the time our president was Barack Obama and we had every reason to believe that Hillary Clinton would be our next president. In that context my reaction to the book was that it was one of the best memoirs I'd read, and one of the best books of the year. Cleve Jones presents his life in an unvarnished manner. The purpose of the memoir was not self-aggrandizement, but rather to share one person's story within the movement.

I note Jones' use of the term "the movement". *When We Rise* is not strictly about gay liberation (or the later more inclusive movement for LGBT rights). Cleve Jones sees, writes, and lives a collective movement of liberation. The women's movement, the civil rights movement, the LGBT movement, the labor movement, and all other liberation movements are spoken of collectively as simply, "The Movement".

Cleve Jones was at the epicenter of much of the modern post-stonewall gay liberation movement on the West Coast. He was friends with Gilbert Baker, creator of the rainbow flag. He was a protege of Harvey Milk, and was the person who first came upon Milk's body after the assassination. He was the creator of the Names Project, aka the AIDS Quilt, the largest ongoing piece of community folk art in the world.

Jones tells us of the roots of his passion for the movement in the one-page preface. The movement saved his life. He tells of his childhood in Arizona. As early as the age of 14 he was marching for Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. He worked for the women's movement. And yet, it wasn't until a Life

In order to get elected, the 45th President had to waken an ugly sleeping giant. In the process he also awakened men and women of good will who believe in the promise of America. Both the book and the series speak to these people, and put light on the good things which happen When We Rise.

magazine article on the Gay Liberation Movement that he saw his own life in the movement he had already identified and identified with. In typical fashion he undercuts the moment from too much altruism. He has a fascination for the pictures of "handsome long-haired young men marching with fists in the air through the streets of Greenwich Village, Los Angeles, and San Francisco" which accompanied the article.

He pinpoints this moment, after a childhood of not fitting in, as a turning point, "I am pretty sure this is the exact moment I stopped planning to kill myself".

When We Rise is a powerful personal memoir and important piece of LGBT history. For that reason alone I thought of this book as an important addition to the literature.

I read it again after it's publication in late November after the devastating election. In this new context I read the book as not only a great memoir, but as an important call to action. Jones lived intersectionality as a youth, but learned intersectionality from Harvey Milk. It is

no accident that the title of the book is *When WE Rise*, not *When I Rise*.

TV Series Airs

Starting Feb. 27, ABC is presenting a seven part series, *When We Rise*. The series was previewed two weeks ago by Chris Azzopardi's interview with director Dustin Lance Black at / www.pridesource.com. The series is partially inspired by the book. It is not a retelling of only Cleve Jones' story, but of many of the people who were a part of the gay and lesbian movement of the 60s and 70s. In that interview, Dustin Lance Black echoes many of the sentiments of the book. This response sums it up:

"The reason I designed this show the way I designed it was because four years ago, I was concerned that social justice movements were becoming incredibly myopic and self-interested, forgetting that we need to work together if we're gonna get anywhere. Not understanding the intersections of our movements, losing sight of where those intersections are, and certainly forgetting the great power that we can gain by working together. So, I was worried. We were becoming divided, and it's why I insisted when designing the show that I find real people who came from other movements, not just the LGBT movement - people who came from the women's movement, the black civil rights movement, the peace movement, and the series eventually touches on immigration and healthcare."

In the aftermath of the election, and especially since the inauguration, we are seeing millions of people standing up for all the colors of the rainbow. Gay people are marching in support of Planned Parenthood. White people are standing up for #BlackLivesMatter. Christians are standing up for their Muslim brothers and sisters.

In order to get elected, the 45th President had to waken an ugly sleeping giant. In the process he also awakened men and women of good will who believe in the promise of America. Both the book and the series speak to these people, and put light on the good things which happen *When We Rise*.

Keith Orr and his husband Martin Contreras are owner/operators of Common Language Bookstore and the \aut\ BAR. Both are avid readers and activists for Social Justice. Visit lgbtbooks.com.

► **Rachel Griffiths**

Continued from p. 19

women, gay and straight, white and colored, Christian and non-Christians.

How did you end up playing Diane?

I knew the project was on, and I read the material and just fell in love with it. I was in LA and got to meet with (Dustin)... and I just got really lucky, I think! (Laughs) With Diane, just holding the heads of dying men, having no answers, and then going home feeling helpless and yet finding the mettle to get up and return and do it all again and handle all the bodily fluids in a plague that had no known source was just heroic bravery. I love that balance – it takes many different styles of work to fight these battles. Hers is through duty and service, not the megaphone.

In addition to “When We Rise,” you’ve been a part of many landmark moments in LGBT programming over the last 15-plus years. Is there a project that stands out to you as being particularly groundbreaking?

I think they all have been in their own way. Of course “Six Feet Under” was massively groundbreaking in that that was the first time I recall there being a gay member of a family not defined by his otherness or his trouble in reconciling it all. And I think this is groundbreaking in its lesbian characters.



The cast of “Six Feet Under.” Photo: HBO

(Laughs) I love the article somebody wrote “Why Is TV Killing Its Queer Women?” It was really interesting. So, I think there are fewer lesbian characters than gay characters probably because they’re not as fabulous with fashion and cute, funny quips.

I think this is groundbreaking for its representation of gay women on network TV and really exploring the day-to-day life of many lesbians, which is not looking hot, or picking up girls in bars, or talking about sex. It’s talking about picking up the kids and, “Oh my god, how can I possibly pay for my family and get better gender equity and pay?”

“Six Feet Under” is still my favorite show to have

ever aired on TV.

I think it’s mine too, next to “M*A*S*H.” My “straight” show is “M*A*S*H” (laughs), which really defined me and half of Brenda Chenoweth. I was always like, “Why can’t a woman be a guy on screen?” Just that kind of badly behaved and morally righteous person, but absolutely incorrigible.

What kind of mark did “Six Feet Under” leave on you?

I think it definitely has left a career mark, not just because it was an enormous success, but pushing the boundaries of women in television and unpredictable modules of likability. I think (Alan) really explored a

depth and a breadth of key archetypes. I was really on that show as *the* girlfriend – then there was the mom, the bratty teen daughter, the Latino wife. He blew the female stereotypes out, and the legacy of that is for all women in television to enjoy on that level.

I was also so proud to be a part of a show that could speak to death and dying and serious themes of human struggle at a time when no other show was doing that. That was a big draw for me, and that (pilot) script that I read, to this day is possibly the best script that’s ever been sent to me with my name actually on it. And the feedback we had from people in the wake of September 11 about how that show nurtured and comforted and enabled them to have conversations they didn’t know how to have – that was really incredible.

(Alan) just kind of found a common space, and said the American family is all these things. It is gay. It is straight. It is lesbian. It is unsure. It is an artist. It is a mother whose personal dreams are not being met. It is a young woman trying to find her identity in a postmodern world. It can be all these things.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).

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2017 MSU Pride Scholarship Available

Following the death of Michigan State University alumnus Bill Beachler in January 2016, the MSU Pride Scholarship award amount has jumped to \$20,000, and will be awarded to one or more students for the 2017-2018 academic year.

This is one of only a handful of such scholarships offered by U.S. universities – founded in 2000 by Beachler, and GLFSA (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Student Association) of MSU.

State Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) was the second student to receive this scholarship.

“He wanted to get to know each winner of the scholarship,” Hoadley previously told BTL. “As a freshman he took me to lunch at Clara’s – someplace I had never been to before – and he shared all this history and culture of the LGBT community that I, as a person from South Dakota, simply had no idea about. That mentorship was pivotal in the next choices I made to get involved.”

Hoadley said the scholarship introduced him to educational advocacy and empowered his love for politics.



Bill Beachler

Hoadley became one of the state’s first openly gay lawmakers in 2014.

The award is given to an MSU undergraduate student selected through a competitive application process. Candidates should demonstrate academic achievement and involvement with, or contributions to the LGBT community. Allies are encouraged to apply. Preference is given to incoming first year (or transfer) students, although all undergraduate students are encouraged to apply.

To be considered for the Pride Scholarship, applicants should log onto the Student Affairs and Services scholarship website for requirements and suggestions for essay topics. Applications are due before March 13.

City of Lansing Continues Investing in Arts and Culture

The Lansing Regional Chamber announced on Feb. 9 that the city of Lansing awarded \$120,000 to support creative placemaking efforts. Mayor Virg Bernero was joined by Bob Trezise of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership and Deborah Mikula of the Arts Council of Greater Lansing to announce the investment.

The 2016-2017 Sense of Place in the Arts Program grant and project announcements include a \$75,000 Arts Impact Project, and grants awarded to four local arts and cultural organizations

See next page

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► Lansing

Continued from p. 22

totaling \$45,000. The Sense of Place in the Arts Program is funded through the city of Lansing and administered by LEAP and the Arts Council of Greater Lansing.

In addition, an official rendering of the 2016 Arts Impact Project to be installed this summer at Museum Drive in downtown Lansing was unveiled, according to a press release.

“The City of Lansing is proud to continue investing in arts and culture because it helps create a ‘sense of place’ that is part and parcel of our economic development efforts,” said Mayor Bernero. “These new projects and programs are impressive, immersive, and creative. In conjunction with my Block by Block (B3) neighborhood revitalization program, I’m particularly excited to see the 2017 Arts Impact Project placed in southwest Lansing, which is a B3 neighborhood of focus.”

The Arts Impact Project this year was selected from more than 15 proposals at an open forum, and will be placed in southwest Lansing, likely near the intersection of Pleasant Grove and Holmes Road. The project was proposed by Kathie Dunbar, at-large council member, and will be designed and constructed by local artists David Such and Fred Hammond.

“Partnering with the city of Lansing and LEAP to administer these project dollars is representative of the ways that artists, arts organizations and municipalities can collaborate to put creativity at the forefront of economic development,” said Deborah E. Mikula, Arts Council executive director. “These grant projects and the Arts Impact Project work to provide metro Lansing residents with accessible arts experiences and help to build a sense of pride in our communities.”

The grantees are Lansing Art Gallery, Lansing Symphony Orchestra, Refugee Development Center, and REO Town Commercial Association.

“Supporting and increasing access to arts and culture is a critical component of successful economic development,” said Bob Trezise, President and CEO of LEAP. “Placemaking projects and programs such as these represent opportunities for families and individuals in the region and across the globe to explore and grow intellectually. It’s this global culture that will help us attract

and retain the best talent and businesses in the world.”

Powering Progress Together at Michigan Summit

The Women’s March isn’t over. Progress Michigan is asking the community to continue to harness its collective energy to help take

The Women’s March isn’t over. Progress Michigan is asking the community to continue to harness its collective energy to help take back the country from the grips of tyranny.

back the country from the grips of tyranny. That’s why the organization is hosting a Michigan Progressive Summit on March 4 at the Lansing Center, 333 East Michigan Ave. in Lansing.

The summit seeks to be a place where progressive individuals from all over the state can gather to discuss the challenges we face during a Trump presidency, learn important organizing skills, and connect with progressive organizations that focus on topics that mean the most to them, and network with like-minded individuals.




Progress Michigan is expecting a diverse crowd that includes community activists, small business owners, union members, elected officials, and many new faces who have recently been bitten by the political bug to attend this year’s event.

The summit is open to the public and costs \$25 per ticket. It’s an opportunity for people across Michigan to come together and gain new skills, learn how to organize in their communities, and find out how to get more involved in the progressive movement. More details, regarding time and special guests, coming soon.

Sign up for the Progress Michigan email list at www.progressmichigan.org.

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Shaka Senghor Writing My Wrongs

Growing up in the gravitational pull of poverty, violence and hopelessness, he was convicted of murder at age 17. His inspiring story of forgiveness and redemption was featured on Oprah’s Super Soul Sunday—now experience it for yourself.

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A scene from "When We Rise," Dustin Lance Black's moving and timely portrayal of the progressive post-Stonewall movement, adapted from the book by Cleve Jones. The seven-part miniseries seeks to connect with the heart – not the politics – of Americans through real family stories. It airs on ABC, beginning Feb. 27.



Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Feb. 23

LGBT Youth Meeting 6 p.m. Sex education with CARES Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St. #102, **Kalamazoo**. 2693494234. michael@kgllrc.org www.kgllrc.org

LGBTQ Book and Movie Club 7 p.m. Meets the 3rd and 4th Thursday of each month. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com www.goaffirmations.org

Saturday, Feb. 25

50/50 Bingo and Games Day 2 p.m. Proceeds benefit Affirmations and Ruth Ellis Center. Motor City Bears, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105.

Healthy Me, Stigma Free 2 p.m. Free for youth of color, ages 13-29 in Detroit W'SUP, 3663 Woodward, **Detroit**. 313-577-6098. dperrett@med.wayne.edu www.facebook.com/events/409926989339554/

Mardi Gras Gala: a Ferndale Pride Fundraiser 7 p.m. Tickets: \$20. Dinner catered by Howe's Bayou, music and dancing. Ferndale Pride, 22856 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. http://

ferndalepride.com/

Wednesday, March 1

Pride Night 7 p.m. 50/50 raffle at First Wednesday Ferndale Pride, 279 W. Nine Mile Rd., **Ferndale**. brboil1982@yahoo.com http://ferndalepride.com

Thursday, March 2

KGLRC March Mixer 6 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 359 S. Kalamazoo Mall, **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. www.kglrc.org

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

Sunday, March 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

Women Organize Michigan Summit 1 p.m. Free. \$10 suggested donation. Child care available. Women Organize Michigan, 1903 West Michigan Ave., **Kalamazoo**. www.eventbrite.com/e/women-organize-michigan-summit-kalamazoo-tickets-30329389019

Monday, March 6

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, March 7

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

Sexual Assault Survivors Support Group 4 p.m. Facilitated by LGBTQ Victim Advocate/Counselor Brooke Lindley. Youth group (13-17) from 4-5 p.m., adult group (18+) from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St. #102, **Kalamazoo**. 269-345-5595. blindley@ywcakalamazoo.org www.kglrc.org

Wednesday, March 8

Foster Care and Adoption Orientation 6 p.m. For more information please call 877-529-5532 or visit the website. Orchards Children's Services, 24901 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 601, **Southfield**. 248-258-0440. smarks@orchards.org www.orchards.org

Thursday, March 9

Free Legal Consultations & Services for LGBTQ Immigrants 1 p.m. Second Thursday of every month Grand Rapids Pride Center and Justice for Our Neighbors, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. 616-458-3511. www.grpride.org

Friday, March 10

3rd Annual BMM GSAs Working Summit 12 a.m. An all day event for youth, by youth to educate, learn, network, and get inspired. Adults welcome. No registration fee. Michigan

Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health, 1 Campus Dr., **Allendale**. 517-318-1414. info@moash.org www.moash.org/join-our-email-list

MUSIC & MORE

Dawn Farm "Relapse Prevention" By by Erik Anderson LMSW, CAADC. Free, open to anyone with personal or professional interest. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 28. 7344858725. http://www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series

Benefits/Social Events

Ruth Ellis Center "Annual Ruth Ellis Day Community Celebration Potluck" Celebrating Black History/Herstory in Detroit. Please bring a dish to serve 6-10 people. Ruth Ellis Center Second Story Drop-In Center, 77 Victor St., Highland Park. 4 p.m. Feb. 26. www.ruthelliscenter.org

Comedy

Motor City Pride "21st Annual LGBT Comedyfest" Jennie McNulty, Jeff Jones, Gloria

Editor's Pick

Annual Ruth Ellis Day Community Potluck

The Full Truth Fellowship of Christ Church, LGBT Detroit and the Ruth Ellis Center invites the community to celebrate Black History/Herstory in Detroit on Feb. 26 from 4-7 p.m. Enjoy fellowship with members of the community from all over Michigan and get to know Mother Ruth by watching a documentary film about her at the Ruth Ellis Center Second Story Drop-In Center at 77 Victor St. in Highland Park. Please bring a dish to pass that serves 6-10 people. Beverages provided. For more information, contact the REC at 313-252-1950 or online at http://www.ruthelliscenter.org.



Editor's Pick

Women Organize Michigan Summit

Attend the March 5 summit from 1-6 p.m. to hear from speakers with organizations that are working on moving Michigan forward by addressing progressive causes that matter most to women. There will be child care provided; please indicate the number of children who will need care. (No need to register infants). While there is no cost to attend, a \$10 contribution is suggested to help cover costs and to help those who cannot give financially. This summit at the Bernhard Center, 1903 West Michigan Ave. in Kalamazoo is dedicated to action. For more information, visit www.womenorganizemi.org or contact the organization directly at womenorganizemi@gmail.com.



Bigelow, and Roxanna Ward. Tickets: \$30. Dearborn's Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. 8 p.m. March 4. www.comedyfest.org

Concerts

Palace of Auburn Hills "Eric Church" Tickets: \$25-\$90. The Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 8 p.m. Feb. 25. 248-377-0100. <http://bit.ly/2fbMCEJ>

Film & Video

FIA's Palette Cafe "Film Fancy February: Dheepan" Reservations required 24 hours in advance. Tickets: \$30. View menu online. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 5 p.m. Feb. 24. 810-234-1695. www.flintarts.org/films

Michigan Opera Theatre "Film Screening: Little Women" RSVP is required. Free event. Detroit Yacht Club, 1 Riverbank Drive, Detroit. 8 p.m. Feb. 23. www.michiganopera.org/special-event/film-screening-little-women/

THEATER

Civic/Community

Theater

The Misanthrope Tickets: \$15-17. Barefoot Productions Theatre, 240 N. Main, Plymouth. Through Feb. 26. 734-404-6889. www.justgobarefoot.com

Professional

Dr. Heidi Jekyll Tickets: \$12. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. Feb. 19 - March 12. 3139869156. www.slipstreamti.com

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

Hand to God Tickets: \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through March 13. 2485455545. www.theringwald.com

Hedwig and the Angry Inch Broadway in Detroit, Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Feb. 21 - March 5. 313-872-1000. www.broadwayindetroit.com

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

ART 'N' AROUND

Affirmations "Beautiful Brushwork - A Collection of Painters and Expression" 25 percent of every art purchase benefits the community center. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 7 p.m. March 2. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Detroit After Dark: Photographs from the DIA Collection" Detroit Institute of

Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 5 - April 23. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "BitterSweet: Coffee, Tea & Chocolate" What is your ritual for drinking coffee, tea or chocolate? Take a picture and share it on Instagram. It's all part of the Detroit Institute of Arts' exhibit - the first of its kind at the museum to engage all five senses. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Jan. 1 - March 5. 313-833-7900. <http://www.dia.org>

Lawrence Street Gallery "The Body Eclectic '17" Reception, Feb. 17, 6-9 p.m. Works by Nora Venturelli. Free and open to the public. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Feb. 1 - Feb. 24. 2485440394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

Static Network "Erotic Poetry & Music Festival" Tickets: \$10-15. Proceeds to Paws with a Cause. The Tangent Gallery, 715 E. Millwaukee, Detroit. 8 p.m. Feb. 25. 313-873-2955. www.facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival/

The Guild of Artists and Artisans "Royal Oak Market: Spring Art Fair" Admission is free. Royal Oak Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Road, Royal Oak. March 2 - March 3.

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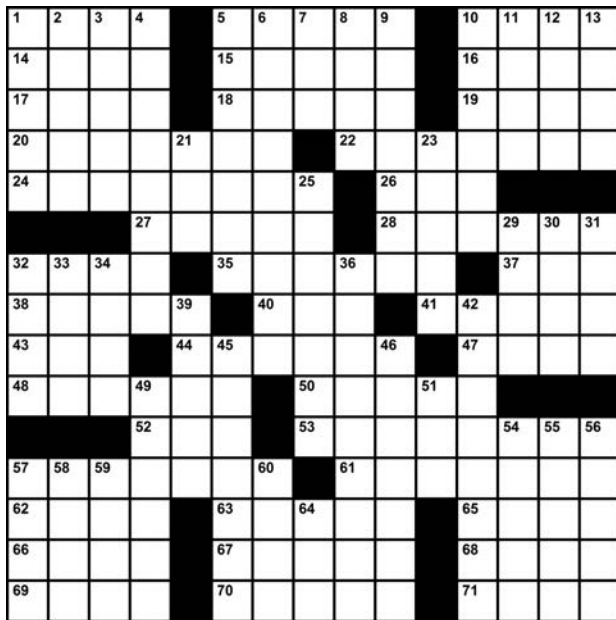
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Across

- 1 Sailor's pole
- 5 Loads of
- 10 Little fairies
- 14 Baldwin staffer
- 15 Nobelist Sadat
- 16 He cruised for 40 days straight
- 17 Race in a regatta
- 18 It helps a baker get it up
- 19 Greek ship

- 20 Suddenly emitted a body fluid
- 22 Portrayer of Lou Grant, source of the iconic lines to MTM
- 24 With 41-Across, iconic line said to MTM
- 26 Scrape by, with "out"
- 27 Avoid going straight
- 28 Roman orator of note
- 32 Bambi, as a newborn
- 35 Apply hastily

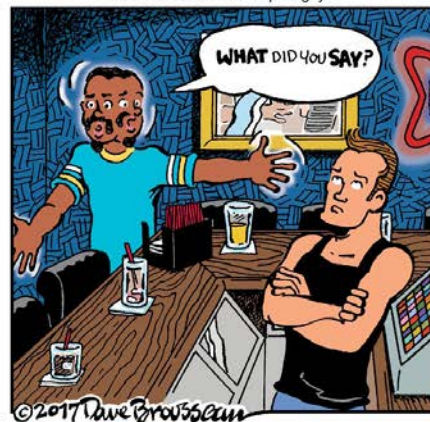
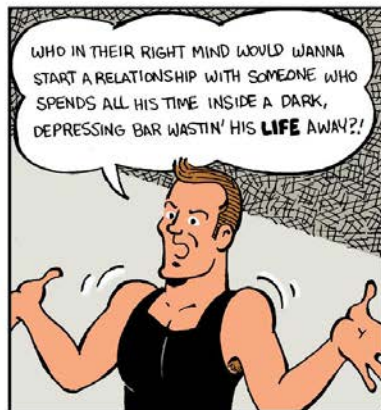
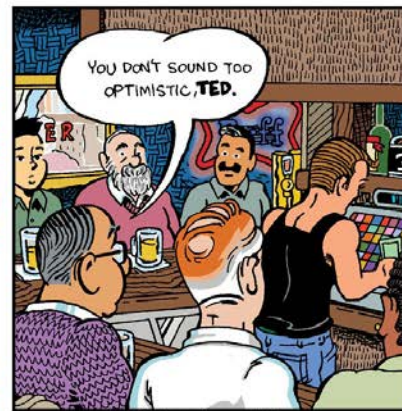
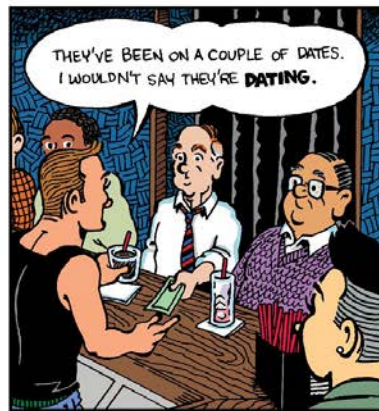
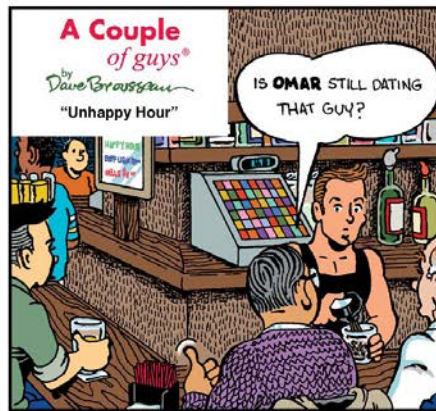
- 37 R. Mapplethorpe supporter
- 38 With 41-Across, follow-up iconic line said to MTM
- 40 Constellation over Rio
- 41 See 24-Across and 38-Across
- 43 JFK debater in '60
- 44 Shakespeare's Ariel, for one
- 47 Sci-fi sightings
- 48 1995 Annie Lennox album
- 50 Adolf's intimate Rohm
- 52 D.C. lobby group
- 53 Mary, on "The MTM Show"
- 57 MTM costar Dick with a lesbian-sounding name?
- 61 Pause in verse
- 62 Opera queen's delight
- 63 "When ___ said and done ..."
- 65 Judy Garland, to many
- 66 Chip off the old flock?
- 67 Meeting place for men in tights
- 68 Woody valley
- 69 Date, with "out"
- 70 Sometimes it drips on you
- 71 "Island of Lost Souls" director Kenton

Down

- 1 Full of lip
- 2 Nero's instrument
- 3 Foucault's final word
- 4 On topic
- 5 Birds do it
- 6 Price of a Susan B. Anthony

- 7 Airline in "The Aviator"
- 8 Writer's Market abbr.
- 9 Erte's style
- 10 Bad way to come
- 11 When it's hard to get up
- 12 Work under Tammy Baldwin
- 13 Restaurateur Toots
- 21 Kind of Buddhist
- 23 "Camille" screenwriter Zoe
- 25 More likely to rust, to the Tin Woodsman
- 29 "I've had it!" to Gomer
- 30 City near Tahoe
- 31 Twelve ___ (Tara neighbor)
- 32 Like an upstanding member
- 33 Words of woe, to the Bard
- 34 Fairy godmother's stick
- 36 Crime in a Sophocles tragedy
- 39 James Baldwin piece, e.g.
- 42 Table
- 45 A guy's junk
- 46 Covers completely
- 49 Where a top puts it?
- 51 "Murder, ___ Meowed"
- 54 More discourteous
- 55 Like Dorothy Parker's humor
- 56 Rimbaud's room
- 57 Bottomless
- 58 Part of San Francisco's BART
- 59 Actor Adams of "The Rebel"
- 60 Enchanted Disney character
- 64 Restroom, for short

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Kate Beckinsale and 'The Chocolate Money'

Her flamboyance may remind you of Willy Wonka, but chocolate heiress Babs Ballentyne has zero plans to give away any of her fortune to some random kid in "The Chocolate Money." The latest from "Hairspray" director Adam Shankman, based on the popular novel by Ashley Prentice Norton, "Chocolate" follows the wild '80s rock star lifestyle of Babs (Kate Beckinsale), inheritor of the fortune and mother to attention-starved and bookish daughter Bettina. As Bettina grows up, her need for mom's love leads to serious complications in everyone's lives. That's all we know right now, and there's no other cast yet, but this seems like just the kind of high-style comedy Shankman could sink his camp-loving teeth into. We'll be waiting, in chic vintage outfits, for this one to arrive sometime in 2018.



Kate Beckinsale. Photo: KathClick

Travis Mathews' 'Discreet' finds its way to Berlin

By the time you read this, Travis Mathews' latest film, the ominously titled "Discreet," will have been seen first by audiences at the Berlin Film Festival, and it's most likely coming to a festival or arthouse near you very soon. An examination of masculinity in crisis, starring a cast of relative unknowns, "Discreet" is the story of a drifter who returns home, after years in hiding, to discover that his childhood abuser is alive. The young man then begins plotting revenge, and it's a safe bet that happy endings aren't in store. Mathews is already known for pushing the boundaries of safe cinema, with films like "I Want Your Love," as well as "Interior. Leather Bar.," and he has described this one as a moody exploration of the anxious U.S. as it is right now. Sounds like just our kind of dark entertainment.

'M. Butterfly' Broadway revival to star Clive Owen

David Henry Hwang's "M. Butterfly," the 1988 Tony Award winner for Best Play, is getting its first Broadway revival, with Julie Taymor at the wheel and Clive Owen in the lead. Owen will play a French diplomat who has a 20-year-long affair with a male Chinese Opera performer who is also a spy (Owen's romantic lead partner has not yet been cast). Shaking off the fiasco of that musical about the superhero who slings webs and moving in a more seriously dramatic direction seems like just the right change

of pace for Taymor. And this stage revival will also allow audiences a fresh chance to experience the heartbreak of Hwang's material – which is based on a real story – without resorting to David Cronenberg's very strange film adaptation. The revival opens this fall, so let's all agree not to tell Mike Pence what it's about so that it's a fresh surprise for him when he shows up.

Trans filmmaker Sydney Freeland scores Netflix debut

Sydney Freeland doesn't yet have the name recognition of, say, Quentin Tarantino, but when the day comes that she does, you can say that you were there when she was just getting started. The Native American trans filmmaker already has one feature film on her resume, 2014's "Drunktown's Finest," and she helmed episodes of the web series "Her Story," but now her latest, called "Deidra and Laney Rob a Train," will take a bow on Netflix on March 17. A crime comedy in the tradition of "Raising Arizona," it's the story of two teenage girls (Ashleigh Murray, "Riverdale"; and Rachel Crow, "Invisible Sister") who turn to the crime of robbing trains in order to support their families after both their mothers go to prison. In other words, the good kind of underdog crime you root for, only in movies. We're ready for this teen Thelma and Louise, and we hope they manage not to drive off a cliff at the end.

Romeo San Vicente taught Gaga how to catch a football.



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SAGE Metro Detroit Releases Guide for LGBT Caregivers

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When caring for an LGBT older adult, members of SAGE Metro Detroit want caregivers to understand the importance of unique circumstances faced by LGBT people ages 65 and up.

More so, for LGBT people to be aware of the supports available to them when caring for another.

That's why the organization created the "Caregiving & LGBT Concerns Guide" in collaboration with the ACLU of Michigan and the three Area Agencies on Aging serving Southeastern Michigan — Detroit Area Agency on Aging, AAA1-B, and The Senior Alliance.

To put this in perspective, the guide points to LGBT older adults who came of age during a time when being openly LGBT could result in severe consequences and did for many, including inpatient mental health treatment, imprisonment, family and community exclusion, and physical and verbal violence.

According to SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, LGBT people, when compared to their non-LGBT counterparts, are twice as likely to age as a single person, twice as likely to live alone, and three to four times less likely to have children to support them. LGBT older adults are nearly three times as likely to live in poverty.

"We're really excited to publish this. We really wanted it to be a guide that was user-friendly and helpful for someone who is caring for an LGBT older adult who may not know some of the key issues that the community faces. They can inform themselves and also find out more information by linking to quite a few national resource centers on LGBT aging," said Kat LaTosch, board president of SAGE Metro Detroit.

Electronic copies are available www.SAGEMetroDetroit.org. Watch for the SAGE Metro Detroit Rainbow Resource Guide to be released soon to help LGBT older adults make informed decisions about which specific service providers to use. LaTosch said the organization has added 42 LGBT-inclusive agencies including seven



home healthcare providers, five legal and financial service providers, 10 mental health and medical providers, seven senior housing facilities, and 13 additional resource and advocacy groups.

AAA Improves Care to LGBT Older Adults in Michigan

A two-year project, funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund from 2017-2018, seeks to reduce isolation and improve care to LGBT older adults in Michigan.

"We're excited to be in the beginning stages of launching a new initiative to expand this to other regions in the state," said LaTosch about the project which aims to build relationships between local LGBT service organizations and the Area Agencies on Aging.

SAGE Metro Detroit has been working with three AAA's in southeast Michigan to strengthen their ability in the following ways to affectively handle members of the LGBT community.

- Upgrade non-discrimination policies within each AAA to include sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Provide training for all call center operators, staff and their vendors.
- Provide on-site, and roll-out of internet-based trainings to increase accessibility and sustainability post-

project.

- Adopt procedural changes to allow AAA staff the ability to collect and record sexual orientation and gender identity demographic information more easily from callers.

- Identify LGBT-affirming service providers for older adults in each region.

- Create a marketing campaign to build awareness about the availability of LGBT-affirming referrals for the region's LGBT older adult population.

- Discover and share lessons about how to adapt an urban pilot for a rural and geographically dispersed population.

- Share a how-to manual for additional AAA regions by 2019.

Area Agencies on Aging in Southeast Michigan

The following agencies provide information and referrals for services such as meals, housing, in-home care, and transportation. They have trained their staff on how to sensitively identify and appropriately serve LGBT callers.

Detroit Area Agency on Aging
313-446-4444

The Senior Alliance
800-815-1112

AAA1-B
800-852-7795

Affirmations Welcomes Two New Board Members

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

The Affirmations board of directors appointed two new board members following their Jan. 25 board meeting who will play a vital and continuing role with all other board members in shaping the direction of the community center in Ferndale.

Eric Martin

Through his work with his corporate employee business resource group at PNC Bank, Eric Martin has had the opportunity to work with Affirmations on many occasions.

"Each time, it is so clear how important the work they do is for our community. I have witnessed the center go through a few changes in leadership and staffing, however they never waiver in the quality of services they provide," said Martin, vice president and banking center manager in West Bloomfield.

"I have been looking, for some time, for a way that I can be more involved in supporting Detroit's LGBT community and through conversations with Susan Erspamer the opportunity to join Affirmations board came about. To this point, I have been involved in community development projects through my EBRG that have allowed me to support the LGBT community. I bring a strong desire to see Affirmations expand their programs and build a strong reputation of support and acceptance in Metro Detroit."



Eric Martin

Mike Flores

When asked why he wanted to join the board of directors at Affirmations, Mike Flores said he knew upon return to Michigan in 2015 that it was something he wanted to do.

"I looked at several organizations, all of which serve specific needs and do a great job meeting those needs in metro Detroit; however, I kept getting drawn to Affirmations. The community center has a long history of serving, adapting to meet the current needs, and having a forward vision to anticipate what may be required to support the community. I want to help honor Affirmations' rich history, and help ensure the organization's success now and in the future," said Flores, who has previously served on the board for the Midwest Aids Prevention Project in Michigan, and the finance board for Youth Pride in Rhode Island. In addition to Affirmations, he currently serves on the membership committee at the Detroit Yacht Club.

As a board member, Flores said he is interested in helping the organization "live up to its vision and mission, ensure its financial sustainability, and help it succeed through rapid changes in our community. Areas of particular interest for me are minority outreach, education, and access to health."

Having worked in the automotive and aerospace industry over the last 15 years in strategy development, Flores said, "I hope the skills I have developed in the private sector will be of value to Affirmations as it defines and redefines itself to meet the needs of the community."



Mike Flores

For more information about Affirmations, visit their website www.goaffirmations.org.

HFHS Joins Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

DETROIT – The Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce is “excited” to announce their newest corporate partner, Henry Ford Health Systems.

“After welcoming retired CEO Nancy Schlichting to speak at our Unconventional Leadership Event at the DIA in October it was just a matter of time before they partnered with us,” said Kevin Heard, chamber president.

HFHS does not discriminate against any person based on sex, gender identity, gender expression or nonconformity with gender stereotypes. As a public entity, HFHS will ensure equal access, without bias, to services and programs, according to the HFHS Gender-Based Non-Discrimination Policy.

The chamber is working with HFHS to revamp their supplier diversity website to include LGBT suppliers and accept the National Gay & Lesbian Business Certification. Moving forward, LGBT business owners are encouraged to register on this website – www.henryford.com/about/supply-chain/diversity. HFHS purchases a vast catalog of commodities from food services to medical supplies, office supplies to landscaping.

“In addition to HFHS joining as a corporate partner, Jim O’Connor vice president for supply chain management at HFHS, has joined the chamber’s board of directors. We welcome Jim and his interest in LGBT suppliers. We look forward to working alongside him,” said Heard pointing to the March 9 Out & Equal networking event, which O’Connor will host.

HFHS has joined the chamber by way of the \$5,000 platinum membership, which O’Connor said, “really just

signals our interest in supporting the chamber. We think we can help with the development of the chamber by participating. We also want to communicate to our patients and their families that we’re supportive of the LGBT community. That’s what our objectives are.”

HFHS has been supportive of the LGBT community for many years as indicated by the Healthcare Equality Index. The HEI is a national LGBT benchmarking tool evaluates healthcare facilities’ policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBT patients, visitors and employees.



Jim O’Connor

For more information about the chamber, visit their website @ www.detroitlgbtchamber.com.



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