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**PAGE 8**

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**GOP Health Plan's  
'Devastating'  
Impact on Those  
with HIV**

**PAGE 10**

---

**The Chipping Away  
of Obergefell**

**PAGE 12**

---

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**LGBT Wedding Expo Returns to  
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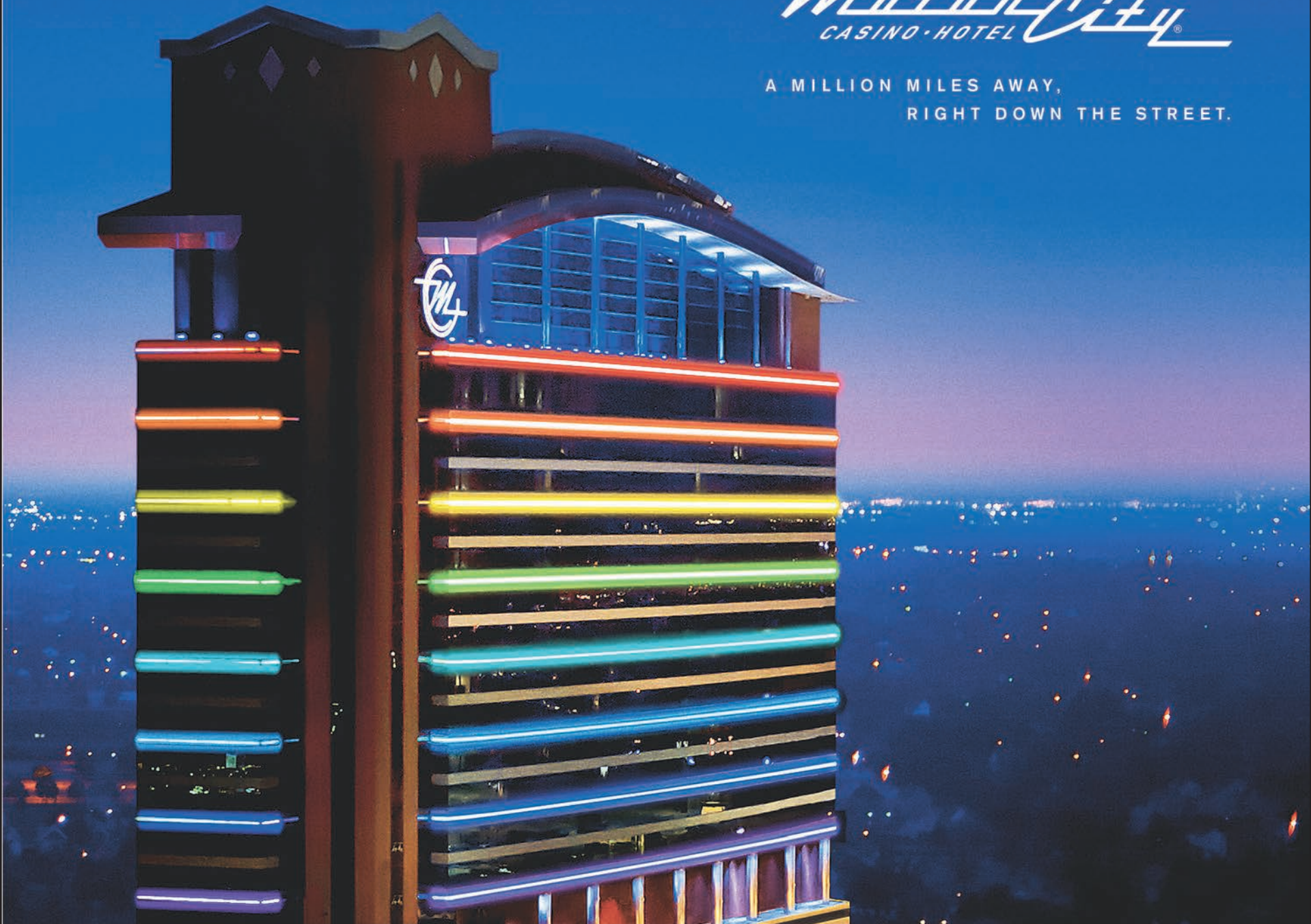
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## COVER

16 Save the Date

## NEWS

8 Assault on Marriage Equality Under Banner of 'Religious Freedom'

10 GOP Health Plan's 'Devastating' Impact on Those with HIV

14 Justice Dept. to Give \$8.5 Million to Pulse Nightclub Victims

14 21 LGBT Groups Urge Senate to Rigorously Question Grouch

## OPINION

12 Parting Glances

12 Viewpoint: The Chipping Away of Obergefell

13 Creep of the Week: Tom Price

## LIFE

40 Screen Queen

42 Cool Cities: Lansing

46 Happenings

50 Classifieds

51 Puzzle and Comic

53 Deep Inside Hollywood

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

54 Meet Steve Fano, Volunteer at Affirmations

54 The Motown Movement

## COMING SUNDAY



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## WEDDING GUIDE

16 LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo Returns to MotorCity Casino Hotel

18 Friend's Before Lovers: Building a Relationship to Last

22 Gentlemen's Consignment Offers Quality Menswear at Affordable Prices

22 Identities Affirmed with Gender-Bending Wedding Apparel

24 Finding an Officiant

27 Sunday Event Schedule

28 LGBT-Friendly Vendor Listings

31 Williams Sonoma Keeps Up with Entertaining Trends



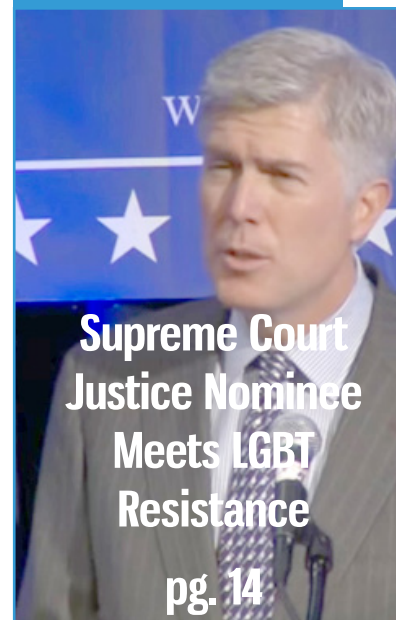
## ORGANIZING



**Update: Around the U.S. Battles Heat Up As Same-Sex Couples Face Discrimination**

pg. 8

## POLITICS



**Supreme Court Justice Nominee Meets LGBT Resistance**

pg. 14

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



**Meet Affirmations Volunteer pg. 54**

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# A Message from the Publishers

## When The Personal Is The Political

BY JAN STEVENSON AND SUSAN HOROWITZ

This Sunday, hundreds of LGBT people will shop, dance, eat, drink and be merry at the 7th Annual Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo at MotorCity Casino Hotel. There will be over 100 equality-conscious vendors, all of whom want to help LGBT couples create a fantastic wedding experience. It will be joyous, it will be fun, it will be celebratory, it will be revolutionary and romantic.

It will also be an important political statement.

An aspect of the rise of Trump and the current backlash against minority rights is a visceral, political reaction to the legalization of same-sex marriage. There are some who cannot abide LGBT people getting married. Some of those same people are still

traumatized by the experience of a Black U.S. President, and some feel that immigrants are stealing our country.

It is unlikely that minds and hearts will change among the right-wing “true believers.” But it is vitally important that we remain visible, outspoken, connected to each other and supportive of the businesses, individuals and political leaders who believe in marriage equality. We cannot, and will not, take our hard-won rights for granted. Complacency in the face of backlash guarantees erosion of the very rights we have worked so hard to secure.

Attorney Angie Martell explains in her op-ed in this issue that marriage rights are threatened now by new laws that allow for discrimination based on religious convictions. In fact, by getting married some couples could be outing themselves, subjecting them to discrimination that they could avoid as

closeted “good friends.” Leaders at Equality Michigan are watching Republicans in Lansing, building relationships and support to thwart any attempts to pass such a Religious Freedom Law here in Michigan. The ACLU of Michigan is also closely watching our politicians for signs they might try to pass discriminatory laws here. Martell and Jay Kaplan of the ACLU’s LGBT Project will be discussing these very issues, and what we as a community can do to protect ourselves, at a pre-Expo workshop at 11 a.m. March 26 on the second floor of the MotorCity Casino Hotel ballroom.

The LGBT community has always been good at throwing a party, and the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo this Sunday will be a fantastic gala! It will also be our chance - as a community - to boldly embrace our legal right to marry whomever we

want, to publicly celebrate our marriages with style, pageantry and excellent decor, food and drink. We will never go back into the closet, as individuals or as couples.

For those people who cannot accept us, it is an uncomfortable reality that LGBT couples can marry openly and honestly. For us, it is the very essence of who we are and it is worth fighting for. The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo gives us a chance to support the businesses that understand and value equality, to support the organizations that work every day in the political arena to protect our rights. It’s also our chance to celebrate and support each other as LGBT citizens and loving couples. We hope to see you all Sunday!

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# Assault on Marriage Equality Under Banner of ‘Religious Liberty’

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

It took the work of an entire community across the U.S., and the dedication and time of legal teams in many states to make history and move the country forward in June 2015 when the Supreme Court ruled to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide.

As right-wing conservatives plot to erode progress, what issues are likely to arise in the next four years?

A report by Vox said to look for Congress to pass the First Amendment Defense Act – a piece of legislation that President Donald Trump has pledged to sign, even though it would do serious harm to the same-sex spouses that he purports to be “fine with.”

FADA is also in line with Vice President Mike Pence’s beliefs about marriage. “Pence clearly has hoped to bring his ‘religion for discrimination’ agenda from Indiana to the entire country,” said Jennifer C. Pizer, senior counsel and director, Law and Policy Project for Lambda Legal.

The core provision of FADA prohibits the federal government from imposing any “tax, penalty, or payment” on a person who acts according to a religious or moral belief that marriage should be confined to one man and one woman (or that sexual intimacy should be confined to that sort of traditional marriage).

This language, according to the report, goes beyond the protection for religious actors contained in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the law that fueled *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. Instead of imposing a balancing test, as RFRA does, FADA provides virtually absolute protection to religious traditionalists who refuse to comply with federal civil rights laws that conflict with their views about marriage and sexuality.

## The Implications?

Legal experts have said they are confused about what exactly FADA would mean, because the language is intentionally broad and vague. “FADA’s language is so sweeping that it’s impossible to catalog all its likely impacts on LGBTQ people and their families,” Pizer told *Refinery29* in February. “Its consequences would be devastating for huge numbers of Americans, and it would prompt widespread confusion and intensive litigation.”

What we do know, Pizer said, is that the point of FADA is to make it a “religious right” to discriminate against workers, tenants, patients, and other people who are currently protected in various ways by federal laws, rules, and nondiscrimination terms of federal contracts and grants.



The Washington Supreme Court has ruled against Barronelle Stutzman of Arlene’s Flowers

“FADA would really blow gaping holes into our nation’s civil rights protections,” said Sarah Warbelow, legal director for the Human Rights Campaign. “All the sorts of ways in which the federal government has begun to extend critical protection to LGBTQ groups, FADA would allow people to pick and choose whether or not they could treat you equally, based on their religious beliefs – and using taxpayer funds.”

To give the community a sense of which organizations or businesses receive government funding and would get free rein to discriminate under FADA, Warbelow said it’s almost all healthcare facilities, the vast majority of universities, businesses that have five or fewer board members, and homeless shelters. The last time FADA was introduced to Congress on a federal level, it didn’t include specific provisions targeting transgender people, although Warbelow said it’s likely that FADA will be updated to include something about “the religious belief that sex is determined at birth.”

FADA also protects the religious belief that sexual relationships should only take place within heterosexual marriages, so Pizer said in the report that single parents and unmarried straight couples could be impacted, too. Under FADA, an organization could assert the religious belief that they don’t want to give benefits to same-sex couples. Corporations and nonprofits could refuse to allow same-sex spouses to take time off to care for their spouses under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Or, if an organization decides that a same-sex relationship is incompatible with their beliefs, they could terminate the person’s employment. FADA even gives certain individuals the legal right to discriminate.

## On the Anti-Gay Radar

While the majority of Americans support LGBT rights, these gains have produced a strong backlash. The hardline groups promoting RFRA to justify anti-gay discrimination are the Alliance Defending Freedom, the American Family Association, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Focus on the Family, and the Liberty Council.

Also, the National Organization for Marriage, which has outlined its wish list for Trump’s presidency. The anti-LGBT group referred to Trump’s victory as a “bright and exciting time” for the organization founded in 2007 to oppose marriage equality around the nation. Since the beginning of this year, the organization’s goal has been to “restore marriage, uphold gender, protect religious liberty and promote families.”

First on its agenda is the repeal of marriage equality through the Supreme Court, according to a report by the Advocate. The group has worked with the Trump administration to appoint justices who would overturn the Supreme Court’s decision. Calling the decision “anti-constitutional,” NOM claims that equality was “imposed” on America.

LGBT advocacy groups and individuals agree that claims of religious freedom are being abused to discriminate against the LGBT community and other minority populations, as the community has seen more of recently.

## Pidgeon v. Turner

The Texas Supreme Court is pondering whether the state can deny spousal benefits to same-sex couples simply because they are

gay, according to a Slate report.

The plaintiffs, Jack Pidgeon and Larry Hicks, are Houston taxpayers who oppose the city’s policy of providing spousal benefits to all married state employees, gay or straight. They point out that the policy violates Texas’ same-sex marriage ban, which bars the state from providing any “right” or “benefit . . . asserted as a result of a marriage between persons of the same sex.” Houston first defended the policy, which it enacted in response to a lawsuit in 2013, on the grounds that the Supreme Court’s decision in *United States v. Windsor* cast doubt on the constitutionality of anti-gay marriage laws. After *Obergefell*, it argued, reasonably, that because states could no longer discriminate against same-sex couples, the Texas spousal benefits ban was invalid, and the city’s extension of spousal benefits to same-sex couples was constitutionally compelled. As taxpayers and “religious conscientious objectors” to same-sex marriage, Pidgeon and Hicks insist that they have standing to challenge Houston’s policy in court. And they want the Texas Supreme Court to hold that the state ban on spousal benefits is totally constitutional under *Obergefell* – rendering the Houston policy unlawful.

## Washington Supreme Court Disagreed with Anti-Gay Florist

The Washington Supreme Court’s ruling in February against a Christian florist who was fined by the state for refusing to provide flowers for a same-sex wedding is a victory for the LGBT community. But several cases involving anti-gay Christian wedding vendors have emerged in recent years and may not all play out the same.

The justices, according to a CNN, agreed with a lower court that Barronelle Stutzman, owner of Arlene’s Flowers in Richland, violated a state civil rights law that bars discrimination in public businesses on the basis of sexual orientation. The court also ruled that the law does not infringe on her free speech.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, the Christian legal organization representing Stutzman, pledged following this ruling to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

“The Washington State Supreme Court’s ruling tramples on our nation’s long held tradition of respecting the freedom of Americans to follow their deeply held beliefs, especially when it comes to participating in activities and ceremonies that so many Americans consider sacred,” Tony Perkins, president of the conservative Family Research

See RFRA Update, page 15



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# GOP Health Plan's 'Devastating' Impact on Those with HIV

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The Republican plan to repeal and replace Obamacare with the American Health Care Act continues to worry advocates seeking to ensure access to health care for LGBT people and people with HIV -- a concern that a recent report from the Congressional Budget Office has validated.

According to CBO, 14 million people would lose insurance coverage in 2018 if the American Health Care Act were to become law as a result of the elimination of the individual mandate under Obamacare. But that number would climb to 21 million in 2020, then to 24 million in 2026 following repeal of the Medicaid expansion under Obamacare. In 2026, CBO estimates 52 million people would be uninsured, compared with 28 million who would lack insurance that year under current law.

As President Trump pushes for the proposal and continues to call Obamacare a "disaster," a major source of fear for advocates of LGBT people and people with HIV is the rollback of Medicaid, which as health coverage for low-income Americans provides care for more than 40 percent of people with HIV and many transgender people.

CBO estimates the American Health Care Act would decrease direct spending in Medicaid by \$880 billion over the 2017-2026 period resulting in 14 million fewer Medicaid enrollees by the end of that period.

Carl Schmid, deputy director of the AIDS Institute, said he couldn't overstate the calamity passage of the American Health Care Act would mean for people with HIV.

"I hate to use the word devastating, other people have used it," Schmid said. "The CBO score is not surprising at all because it's what we had said that the biggest impact, they're really cutting back, scaling back coverage in Medicaid. They're removing all these people from the Medicaid rolls."

Schmid said the American Health Care Act would also remove the Medicaid requirements that the states provide 10 essential health benefits, including prescription drugs, which means "we don't know what the states will provide" to people with HIV.

Also at risk under the plan, Schmid said, is access to preventative services, like HIV testing, or access to PrEP as a means of HIV prevention for low-income people on Medicaid.

"PrEP is covered by most plans right now," Schmid said. "Medicaid plans and qualified health plans. If people don't have coverage, they can't access the medications, and the



From left, President Donald Trump, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan. Washington Blade photos of Trump and Ryan by Michael Key; photo of Spicer courtesy C-Span

federal government's not paying for PrEP by the CDC or the Ryan White program. Ryan White is just for people who are HIV positive."

One aspect of Obamacare that LGBT supporters value is Section 1557, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in health care. The Obama administration interpreted that provision to bar discrimination in health care against transgender people, including by denying them gender reassignment surgery. A court order has enjoined enforcement of that regulation, but advocates insist transgender people can sue under the underlying law if they face discrimination in health care.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said the provision is safe for the time being because it couldn't be eliminated through the budget reconciliation process planned for the American Health Care Act, but nonetheless transgender people would face other problems.

"That really doesn't matter because the repeal bill would make it so much harder for trans people to get insurance though the continuous coverage requirement, the gutting

of Medicaid and several other aspects, that protecting from discrimination would move to a lesser concern," Keisling said. "Trans people would be among those most hurt."

In the individual market, CBO estimates the Republican plan would reduce premiums by an average of 10 percent, but there's a wide fluctuation in estimated payments for older people and younger people. For a person making \$26,500 a year, the yearly net premium would be \$1,450 if that person were 21 years old, \$2,400 if that person were 40 years old and \$14,600 if that person were 64 years old.

Under the legislation, premiums for older people could be five times larger than those for younger people in many states, but the size of the tax credits for older people would only be twice the size of the credits for younger people.

CBO estimates the American Health Care Act would result in greater cost savings than Obamacare for the federal government. Under the Republican proposal, the agency projected a reduction in the federal deficits by \$337 billion over the 2017-2026 period.

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer defended the American Health Care Act

March 14 by dismissing the CBO's estimates that the number of uninsured people would increase, asserting its estimate during the Obama era that 24 million people would have coverage under Obamacare in 2016 was "way off."

"They were off by 13 million people -- over 50 percent," Spicer said. "In fact, only 10.4 million people were actually covered. Reports now suggest that that number has dwindled down to 9 million. CBO coverage estimates are consistently wrong and, more importantly, did not take into consideration the comprehensive nature of the three-pronged plan to repeal and replace Obamacare with the American Health Care Act."

The second prong to the administration's approach to health care reform is regulatory relief aimed at reducing costs by 10 percent in the individual markets. The third is additional legislation to undo Obamacare that can't be done through the regulatory process, which only requires a majority vote for passage in the U.S. Senate as opposed to 60 votes to

See next page

overcome as a filibuster.

Phill Wilson, CEO of The Black AIDS Institute, said in a statement the White House attack on the CBO's calculations is "spin" because the American Health Care Act will increase premiums, reduce benefits and replace subsidies with tax credits.

"Particularly if you're a person living with HIV/AIDS, a poor person, a person with other chronic illnesses, or an older American -- regardless of what lie the administration or the Congress tries to sell to you -- ask yourself this: Is my health insurance likely to be more robust, better and cheaper under the new plan than it was under the Affordable Care Act?" Wilson said. "Then mobilize accordingly."

Under questioning from CNN's Jim Acosta, Spicer conceded millions of people won't have health coverage as a result of the American Health Care Act, but insisted "you have to look at the current situation."

"If you could bring down cost and choices and allow people to find a plan that fit their budget, that was tailored to their needs, there is actually a higher likelihood that they will find something that they want at a price that they can afford -- as to right now, which is I get a plan that I'm forced to buy that has a deductible that I can't afford, but I've got a cute little plastic card that I can wave around," Spicer said.

Schmid rejected the argument health care plans can't be used now because premiums and deductibles are too high, noting for many people, such as those on Medicaid, it's either this coverage or nothing at all.

"We agree that there are problems with high deductibles," Schmid said. "That's why we want to repair the Affordable Care Act, but taking away coverage from people is even worse. And he mixes up Medicaid. Medicaid doesn't have premiums and deductibles and so that's the biggest problem. They keep on saying it doesn't work. You have deductibles. Well, that's only the qualified health plans. Medicaid doesn't have premiums, doesn't have deductibles. They have minor co-pays and they're limited by law, and they're minimal."

As part of an effort to derail repeal, Democrats, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), have sought to vilify the proposal by calling it "Trumpcare" much like Republican opponents of Affordable Care Act dubbed the Democratic plan Obamacare -- a nomenclature President Obama ultimately accepted as his own.

Spicer, however, sought to put some distance between Trump and the Republican proposal by rejecting the Trumpcare label for the American Health Care Act, saying the issue at hand isn't labels, but health care reform.

"The Obama administration didn't label it Obamacare, they called it the ACA," Spicer said. "I mean, this is the American Health Care Act. The president is proud of it. The president is proud of the fact that we're working with Congress. But this is a bill that is not his, it's a joint effort that we've worked with the House and the Senate on. He's proud of it. He's proud of the impact that it's going to have on American patients. So I don't think this is about labels and names, this is about getting a job done."

The office of U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), who was the originator of the American Health Care Act before Trump endorsed it, didn't respond to the Washington Blade's request to comment on the impact the plan would have on LGBT people and people with HIV.

Gregory Angelo, president of the Log Cabin Republicans, said he'd withhold formal comment on the American Health Care Act, citing on ongoing review of the American Health Care Act on LGBT people and people with HIV.

"I will say that I continue to get messages from LCR members across the country whose premiums have skyrocketed or whose healthcare plans have been canceled as a result of Obamacare," Angelo said. "Clearly there has to be a better way."

Because of opposition on all sides, passage in the Republican-controlled Congress will be an uphill fight. Democrats, including the conservative Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) seem locked in opposition to the American Health Care Act. On the other side of the aisle, the far-right House Freedom Caucus opposes the measure because it doesn't go far enough, as do Sens. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.), whose states have enacted some version of the Medicaid expansion.

Schmid said he doesn't think the current version of the American Health Care Act would make it through Congress, saying Republicans are "running scared" over the prospects of the bill becoming law.

"I think what they'll do is make some changes, but I don't see how this is going to pass even in the House, let alone the Senate," Schmid said. "It's ripping coverage away from people with health care, and we can't do that. What we say is people with HIV need consistent care, and you cannot risk taking away their medications or health care. Not even for a single day."

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.*



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## Sequins and Wedding Rice Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

On the topic of marriage screen legend Greta Garbo boasted, “There are some who get married and others who don’t. I have never had an impulse to go to the altar. I am a difficult person to lead.”

What she really meant is that she had no interest in being led to wedded bliss by a man. She did, however, have what gay author and cultural historian Rodger Streitmatter calls “an outlaw marriage” on and off for over 30 years with MGM film writer Mercedes de Acosta.

Acosta mentored Garbo, teaching her society manners, nuances of excellent English, and often chose Garbo’s next film success.

Streitmatter’s 2012 “Outlaw Marriages” book is devoted to the hidden partnerships of 15 famous persons – the obvious: Walt Whitman, Peter Doyle; Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas; Tennessee Williams, Frankie Merlo – and the not-so-well-known: Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg; Jane Adams, Mary Rozet Smith.

(According to Streitmatter, the length of these relationships varies from 8 years to 56. The record holders: Janet Flanner and Solita Solano.)

Outlaw marriages in America are nothing new. In the 19th Century such were called “Boston Marriages”. Two women living together. (Presumably without sex.) And Hollywood publicity-arranged marriages are legendary. (Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck).

The Supreme Court endorsement of same-sex marriage has brought “Outlaw Marriages” out of solitary confinement into the open. (How long it remains so with Trump – with his lockup in Cell #45 mania – is of serious LGBT concern.)

According to a 2016 Gallop Report, “There are now about 491,000 same-sex marriages in the U.S., up from roughly 368,000 in 2015. Gallup estimates that 3.9 percent of U.S. adults are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Of these adults, 9.6 percent report being married to a same-sex spouse, up from 7.9 percent before the court decision on June 26, 2015.

According to Gallup, the percentage of LGBT Americans living with a same-sex domestic partner declined from 12.8 percent to 10.1 percent over the past year, reflecting couples who got married and those who ended their partnership. Half of LGBT Americans continue to identify as single or never married.”

The first public gay wedding took place nearly 50 years ago in a house at 6205 Miles Avenue, Huntington Park, Los Angeles where the Metropolitan Community Church held its first meeting. The church, founded by Reverend Troy D. Perry in October 1968, welcomed LGBT members.

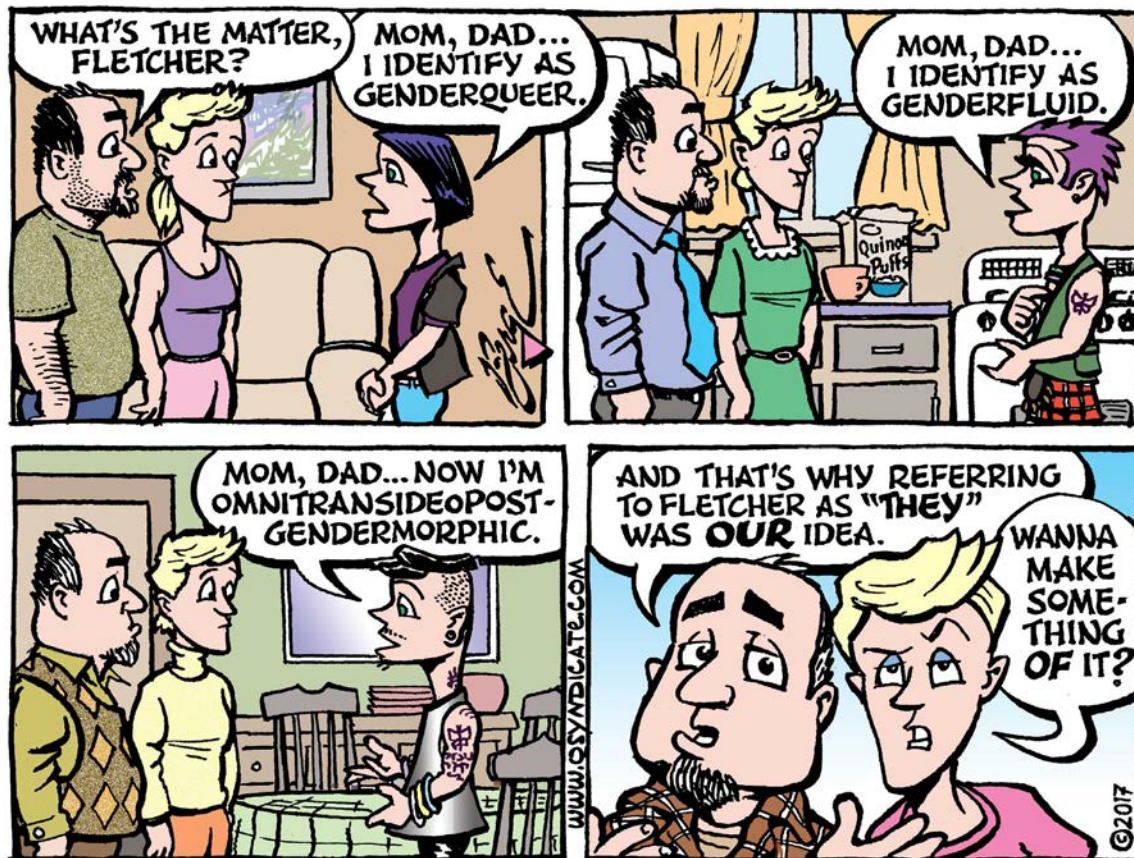
Perry was born in 1940, and had been ousted in 1967 from his prior Pentecostal church because of his homosexual orientation.

In December 1968, Perry performed a ceremony for two Latino men. TIME Magazine would call it the very first public same-sex wedding in the U.S. In December of 1969, the L.A. Times printed a front-page article about a “church for homosexuals.”

A year later, two women were married there, also officiated by Rev. Perry. In 1970, he would file a lawsuit on behalf of these two women – Neva Heckman and Judith Bellew – asking for their marriage to be legally recognized. This lawsuit was ultimately dismissed.

Over 240,000 gay weddings would be performed by the Fellowship over the next 45 years. Perry would tell each couple that their marriage was “blessed by God, but is not yet recognized by the government. We’re working on that.” While the marriages weren’t legally binding, the church would perform them if a couple had been dating for at least six months.

Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow, current pastor of MCCDetroit, and its pastoral staff, have to date performed several hundred, blessed and legal same-sex marriages. Hallelujah! Amen! Awomyn! Go catch the bouquet! Throw sequins with your rice!



BY ANGIE MARTELL

## The Chipping Away of Obergefell

Viewpoint

While many of us do not believe that marriage equality will be overturned let no one be confused that on the horizon there will be concerted efforts to strip gay and lesbian couples and individuals of rights. Our unions will mean little if through executive orders the federal government or state governments through state laws can enact religious exemptions that erode the rights and benefits afforded to that status by allowing the rise of religious exemptions that seek to protect the “moral convictions” of any one who believes that “marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman. Our rights mean little if same sex couples have the right to marry but are treated differently than heterosexual couples, that is, you have the fundamental right to marry but no rights to equal benefits.

Remember while we still can marry in Michigan, LGBTQ people have no civil rights protections state

wide. Remember that as you plan proactively to protect yourself and your family. You may have marital rights but you can be terminated for being LGBTQ in Michigan. You may have marital rights but someone can refuse to rent you a room for your honeymoon. As Americans we need to remember that “marriage” does matter for everyone and equal treatment is a clear aspect of the Obergefell decision.

While Obergefell gave us the ability to marry and recognized our marriages nationwide, it unfortunately created a line in the sand. If you marry you have certain rights as a couple and if you don’t marry you may not have certain rights. One example is the right to bury or cremate your love one. Only spouses or relatives have say regarding these rights. When a person who is part of an unmarried couple of 30 years passes away his/her/their partner cannot bury them and cannot cremate them because they are not a blood relation or spouse.

## ► Chipping Away

Continued from p. 12

This person has to wait for a family member to contact the funeral home.

And while marriage may matter to some it may not be for everyone. For senior LGBTQ people, like their straight counterparts, marriage may not benefit them economically if they are receiving social security. We need to be able to protect all LGBTQ people and what is most important is to think strategically what is best for you.

## Children

Creating a family is equally complex as you seek to protect your relationship to each other and your children. How you create your children is something that should also be considered, that is, known donor, unknown donor, use of ART (Artificial Reproductive Technology, surrogacy, etc.)

While a child is presumed to be a child of the marriage there are other considerations and possible exceptions couples need to know. The rights of unmarried couples and married couples and parentage and custody are complex and not all attorneys are culturally competent in this area. Do your research before you hire an attorney.

When you choose a lawyer make sure they are culturally competent, that they understand your issues and what you are seeking. Lawyers often create bad law when they aren't well versed or understand the legal trajectory. Make sure that you plan very carefully and think about whether the protections you create can be upheld in other states.

## Tips

1. If you plan to have children or have children you should seek legal counsel. Married couples with children born of the marriage have presumption rights just like their heterosexual counterparts. Couples can pursue Stepparent and Second Parent Adoptions. Children of a married couple also have inheritance benefits.

2. Unmarried same sex couples with children need to explore how to protect the children and the non-biological parent's rights. If a non-biological unmarried parent dies that child or children may not receive the non-biological parent's social security. If something happens to the unmarried biological parent the non-biological parent may face great hurdles seeking recognition of that parent's relationship with the child or children.

3. Think and Plan carefully your Estate and Trust Planning regardless if you are married or an unmarried couple.

4. For long term couples with short marriage

When you choose a lawyer make sure they are culturally competent, that they understand your issues and what you are seeking. Lawyers often create bad law when they aren't well versed or understand the legal trajectory. Make sure that you plan very carefully and think about whether the protections you create can be upheld in other states.

dates (i.e. together 20 years but only married for 3 years) a post nuptial or considerations of what benefits you have retroactively should be explored. Prenuptials if planning to get married. Post nuptials if already married.

5. For long term couples about to marry, consideration about assets that are not "marital" but which you both have shared economically as a couple, especially retirement benefits, pensions, real property, etc.

6. Your marriage date is the date you were married not the date Michigan recognized your marriage. Obergefell acknowledged and resurrected all prior marriages. Be careful before you get married that you aren't already married. It's a crime called bigamy.

7. Before you get married make sure you weren't married before. Was there a domestic partnership earlier in your other relationships that may have been elevated to a marriage? The State of Washington post Obergefell stated that all domestic partnerships for people under the age of 62 have been converted to a marriage. Have you ever been in a civil union? This too can pose an impediment for a future marriage.

8. Investigate all the employment benefits you are entitled to as a married person.

9. Seek culturally competent legal counsel.

10. Portability – Make sure all legal orders or documents are portable to every state of the union. We all deserve to be treated equally and with equal dignity and respect for these are the fundamental principles of our constitution. Some of us will choose to marry and some will not however let us as a movement make sure that if one of us is attacked that we all support each other, especially the most marginalized of us, for it will be the most vulnerable who will be attacked first.

Connect with Martell at the "LGBT Rights in the Trump Era - What Lies Ahead," workshop on March 26 at 11 a.m. in the second floor ballroom at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. For more information, call 734-369-2331, email [info@iglesiamartell.com](mailto:info@iglesiamartell.com) or visit <http://iglesiamartell.com>.

# Creep of the Week

## Tom Price

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Did you know that LGBTQ people get old? If you're a religious fundamentalist you might not since you believe that all LGBTQ people die of AIDS in their 20's because God hates them. But if you believe that LGBTQ people are, well, people, and also believe in the concept of aging, then it will not surprise you that elderly LGBTQ people exist.

Granted, we live in a society that, in an attempt to pathologize their sexuality, too often portray LGBTQ people as if sex is their only governing drive. This argument was a huge part of the fight against marriage equality: same-sex couples can't be "married" because they're incapable of being monogamous. We see this in the anti-trans bathroom bills proposed under the guise of protecting women from sexual predators. Gay men were banned from being Boy Scout Leaders because of the fear that they would molest the boys. In other words, the idea that LGBTQ people are nothing more than walking talking sexual deviants is an idea that persists despite plenty of contrary evidence.

At the same time, our society completely desexualizes the elderly. Old people do not have sex. I mean, sure, they do in Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson movies, but that's about it.

And these two competing narratives: gays have all of the sex, olds have none of the sex, renders LGBTQ seniors pretty much invisible.

Which is why in 2014 the Obama administration began asking questions about LGBTQ seniors on the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (NSOAAP), administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

NSOAAP is a "critically important national survey of older adults that helps the government decide how to spend billions of dollars on senior centers, Meals on Wheels and other essential elder services," according to the organization Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE).

Which is why SAGE and other LGBTQ advocacy groups are alarmed that all of a sudden, on new HHS Secretary Tom Price's watch, questions related to LGBTQ seniors disappeared from the NSOAAP.

LGBTQ rights advocates fear that the removal of the questions is an effort to



... the idea that LGBTQ people are nothing more than walking talking sexual deviants is an idea that persists despite plenty of contrary evidence.

further marginalize LGBTQ seniors, a group that has been identified as having unique challenges.

"Our community fought for years to get our LGBT elders included in this survey so they get their fair share of government-funded elder services," SAGE declares in an online petition appeal. "We won that fight, and we're not going back."

David Stacy, head of policy for the Human Rights Campaign, told the Associated Press, "If you deny the problem exists by not having the data, it certainly makes it easier to pursue the policy you prefer without regards to reality." In other words, it's more of what we've come to expect from the Trump administration: denial and obfuscation.

While this change might seem like a minor bureaucratic detail, note that when Price was a U.S. Representative (R-Georgia), he had a score of zero from the Human Rights Campaign. He called the Supreme Court's marriage equality ruling "a sad day for marriage" and voted to enshrine discrimination in the U.S. Constitution. He called the Obama administration's guidelines to schools to protect trans students "absurd."

So there's little doubt that collecting information on LGBTQ seniors probably seems absurd to him, too. Besides, the Trump administration wants to cut services to seniors. It's as if they think they can push the "fruity" ones off the cliff first and nobody will notice. Speak up. Call HHS at 1-877-696-6775 and sign the SAGE petition here: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/trump-administration-erasing-lgbt-elders>.

## Justice Dept. to Give \$8.5 Million to Pulse Nightclub Victims

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

The Justice Department on March 7 announced it will give more than \$8 million to the victims of the Pulse nightclub massacre.

A Justice Department press release says its Office of Victims of Crime will provide \$8,466,970 through an Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program grant that will also reimburse costs associated with the center that provided assistance to the victims' families in the days after the massacre. The Office for Victims of Crime is expected to award the grant to Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi's office on Wednesday.

"This funding will provide important support to the victims, their loved ones and communities who were affected by last year's devastating attack on Pulse nightclub," said U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions in the press release. "We continue to mourn those who were taken from us that awful day, and we admire the resilience of the great city of Orlando."

"With this grant, we reaffirm the Justice Department's commitment to the people of Orlando, the families of the victims and all who are helping those affected by this heinous crime," he added.

A gunman killed 49 people and injured 53 others when he opened fire inside the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla., on June 12, 2016. The massacre, which took place during the gay club's weekly Latino night, is the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

Activists sharply criticized Bondi and Florida Gov. Rick Scott for their failure to specifically mention the LGBT victims in the public comments they made in the days after the massacre. President Trump reiterated his call to temporarily ban Muslims from entering the U.S., even though the gunman who pledged his allegiance to the so-called Islamic State in a 911 call he made from inside the nightclub was born in New York City.

Trump earlier this month signed an executive order that, among other things, removed Iraq from the list of predominantly-Muslim countries from which citizens cannot enter the U.S. for 90 days. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco last month blocked the original travel ban that Trump issued on Jan. 27.

"OVC is committed to assisting the recovery, healing and justice for all victims of crime and this award will help to provide much needed support, emotionally and financially, as they continue to heal," said Marilyn McCoy Roberts, acting director of the Justice Department's Office of Victims of Crime, in a statement. "This award will reimburse victim services costs for operation of the Family Assistance Center in the immediate aftermath of the shooting, and ensure that victims, witnesses and first responders receive necessary services to help them adjust in the aftermath of violence, begin the healing process and cope with probable re-traumatization."

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade www.washblade.com and is made available in partnership with the National Media Association.*

# 21 LGBT Groups Urge Senate to Rigorously Question Gorsuch

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

A total of 21 LGBT groups who oppose the confirmation of U.S. Circuit Judge Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court are calling for rigorous questions for the nominee during his confirmation hearing.

In an eight-page letter sent to Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) of the Senate Judiciary Committee, LGBT groups underscore the need to "demand complete answers" from Gorsuch because it's the only way to "reveal the extent to which his nomination jeopardizes rights and liberties that many Americans believe are secure."

"The American people have a right to know how the appointment of Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court would impact the rights of LGBT Americans, people living with HIV, and other at-risk communities who are entitled to rely upon the Constitution's guarantees of equality, liberty, dignity and justice under the law," the letter says.

The letter identifies four key areas in which LGBT groups urge questioning for Gorsuch — the extent to which he subscribes to the judicial philosophy of originalism, fundamental rights, equal protection and the role of the courts — each of which, the LGBT groups say, is important to LGBT people and people with HIV.

"Judge Gorsuch's articulated judicial philosophy is far outside the legal and social mainstream, and would significantly disrupt Americans' expectations about the rights that they enjoy under the Constitution," Gorsuch said. "His views should be as frightening to others as they are to the LGBT community. The Committee should

require Judge Gorsuch to explain what he means when he describes himself as an 'originalist.'"

In the aftermath of landmark rulings such as *Lawrence v. Texas* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the letter calls on senators to question Gorsuch on whether the Constitution guarantees a fundamental right to privacy that protects consensual adult sexual relationships as well as fundamental right

iteration of the letter include the Victory Institute and Service & Advocacy for GLBT Elders, or SAGE.

The opposition to Gorsuch in the letter is consistent with the opposition to Gorsuch expressed by LGBT groups immediately at the time President Trump nominated him to the Supreme Court. Concern over Gorsuch was largely based over his rulings in favor of "religious freedom," such as the opinion he wrote at the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in favor of Hobby Lobby denying health coverage for female employees.

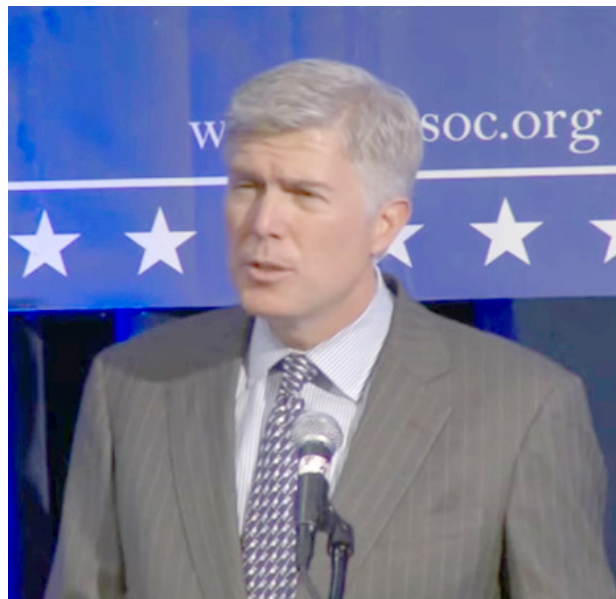
Although Gorsuch has never ruled on the issue of same-sex marriage, the nominee wrote a scathing piece in 2005 for the *National Review* titled "Liberals & Lawsuits" excoriating the progressive movement for seeking advancements in the courts. Two years after the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, the article identifies marriage equality as an issue that should be settled outside the judicial system.

In 2009, Gorsuch joined an published opinion before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Kastl v. Maricopa County Community College District*, which found transgender people aren't protected under the provision of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barring sex discrimination.

Gorsuch's views on this issue could be of importance as courts consider the issue of whether transgender people are entitled to bathroom access consistent with gender identity under laws like Title VII and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

The offices of Grassley and Feinstein didn't respond to the *Washington Blade's* request to comment on the Gorsuch letter from LGBT groups.

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.*



LGBT groups oppose the confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch. Screen capture via YouTube.

to marry that applies to same-sex couples.

Other identified areas of concern are approaches to statutory construction, such as whether anti-LGBT discrimination is prohibited under current civil rights law, religious exemptions under the law, the relevance of science to legal decision-making and employer defenses to claims of discrimination.

The confirmation hearings for Gorsuch began Monday before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Initial signatories of the letter, which was led by Lambda Legal, include the Human Rights Campaign, the National Center for Transgender Equality, the LGBT labor group Pride at Work and the LGBT military group OutServe-SLDN. Additional names added to a subsequent

## ► RFRA Update

Continued from p. 8

Council, said in a statement. He also called on President Trump to sign a draft executive order expanding the right of people of faith to exempt themselves from certain actions and laws.

In response, Elizabeth Gill, staff attorney with the ACLU's LGBT Project, said, "Religious freedom is a fundamental part of America. But religious beliefs do not give any of us a right to ignore the law or to harm others because of who they are. When people experience acts of discrimination, they feel that they are not full and equal members of our society, and we're delighted that the Washington Supreme Court has recognized this."

### Kentucky Governor Signs "Charlie Brown Law"

A recent Vox article reports SB 17, known as the "Charlie Brown law," would allow anti-LGBT discrimination in Kentucky schools. The bill passed the state House of Representatives in an 81 to 8 vote after a Kentucky school cut a bible verse from their production of "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

The measure allows student organizations at high schools and colleges—under the guise of expressing religious viewpoints—to discriminate against LGBT students. The law is said to protect students who "voluntarily express religious or political viewpoints... in classroom, homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments" and enshrines students' right to "distribute religious or political literature in a public school."

Gov. Matt Bevin's "shameful decision to sign this discriminatory bill into law jeopardizes non-discrimination policies at public high schools, colleges, and universities," said Warbelow, according to the report. "No student should fear being excluded from a school club or participating in a school activity because they are LGBTQ."

Warbelow added, "While of course private groups should have the freedom to express religious viewpoints, they should not be able to unfairly discriminate with taxpayer funds."

### South Dakota Governor Signs Religious Adoption Protections

A new law, Senate Bill 149, passed by South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard on March 10 will allow state-funded child service agencies to deny support to LGBT couples and individuals on the grounds of religious liberty, according to an ABC News report. The bill is the first to be passed on the grounds of religious freedom since the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide in 2015.

The law states that child placement agencies, which include adoption agencies and foster care, are free to refuse service

under any circumstance that may conflict with "sincerely-held religious belief or moral conviction." Leading advocacy groups including the HRC and ACLU have raised concerns that the bill will open child service agencies, which support over 1,200 foster children in the state, to deny adoption and foster services to minority groups including LGBT couples, single parents, and mixed-faith couples.

"We're deeply disappointed by Governor Daugaard's decision to green light Senate Bill 149," said Libby Skarin, policy director for the ACLU of South Dakota in a statement. "This discriminatory legislation takes South Dakota in the wrong direction, and sends the message that our leaders are more concerned with the desires of religious agencies than the rights of individuals and children in our state." The ACLU said they are "examining legal options" in response to the bill.

### Christian Bakers Take Fight Over Same-Sex Wedding Cake to Oregon Appeals Court

The case of the Gresham bakers who made national headlines after refusing to bake a cake for a lesbian couple's wedding landed before the Oregon Court of Appeals on March 2. The bakers, Aaron and Melissa Klein, argued that Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian and the Bureau of Labor and Industries violated state and federal laws by forcing them to pay \$135,000 in damages to the couple, according to The Oregonian's report. The legal team behind Sweet Cakes by Melissa also said the state violated the Kleins' rights as artists to free speech, their rights as Oregonians to religious freedom and their rights as defendants to a due process. They argue the damages amount was excessive and that Avakian, who praised an LGBTQ advocacy group on Facebook the year before the hearing, should have recused himself. In their appeal, the Kleins are seeking a religious exemption to the 2007 Oregon Equality Act, which protects Oregonians from discrimination.

### Protecting LGBT People

While LGBT people can continue to marry legally, they are still at risk of being fired from their job, denied a loan, evicted from an apartment, or thrown out of a restaurant. Chad Griffin, president of the HRC, told NPR in 2016 that his group had tracked 204 bills in 34 states deemed "anti-LGBTQ."

Activists in Michigan are working hard to update the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to expand LGBT protections. Until then, for those LGBT people concerned or worried, it is recommended they visit their local civil rights and social justice organizations—ACLU of Michigan, Equality Michigan, the Know Your Rights Project, Fair Michigan, and Lambda Legal—to report any instances of discrimination they are aware of.

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# LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo Returns to MotorCity Casino Hotel Sunday, Celebrates Equality, Challenges Trump Era Backlash

So what exactly makes LGBT couples and their allies flock to this event? The list could fill a banquet hall, but here are the Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar:

**1** Find more than 100 pro-equality vendors all in one place. Every vendor at The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo is proud to serve all couples and families. LGBT couples can relax, knowing their celebration will be treated with dignity and respect – and anyone planning a special event can be confident they're choosing a pro-equality vendor.

This is an important time to celebrate local businesses in Michigan that vocally support equality for the LGBT community and its allies. Expo workshop features prominent LGBT attorneys to discuss what same-sex marriage looks like under the Trump administration.





**DETROIT** – Same-sex couples may get to keep their marriages under the Trump administration, but threats to LGBT equality remain, most notably efforts by legislators to pass laws that would permit discrimination under the guise of religious beliefs.

Despite this, local businesses across the state of Michigan are saying “no” to anti-LGBT laws and continue to stand up for LGBT rights, which are at the forefront of this year’s Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo on March 26.

Between The Lines will host a pre-Expo workshop, “LGBT Rights in the Trump Era - What Lies Ahead,” at 11 a.m. in the second floor ballroom at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit.

Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project, and Angie Martell of Iglesia Martell Law Firm, PLLC in Ann Arbor, will discuss a variety of public policy issues affecting the LGBT community.

“I will address the proposed draft Executive Order from the Trump Administration that would permit this type of discrimination, as well as Michigan’s law permitting faith based adoption and foster care agencies that

contract with the State to refuse to work with LGBT families. I will also talk about the backlash targeting transgender people for discriminatory treatment, such as the bathroom bills we’ve seen introduced around the country,” said Kaplan.

Although the LGBT Movement is on defense, the Expo is a great opportunity for LGBT couples and individuals planning events to enjoy themselves and connect with more than 100 inclusive vendors that continue extending themselves to the LGBT community.

“We know a lot of people are concerned about LGBT rights under the Trump Administration, but this is a day where people can come together in a safe space to celebrate how far we’ve come,” said Jan Stevenson, co-publisher of Between The Lines and co-producer of the event with her co-publisher and wife, Susan Horowitz. “There will be plenty of work to do in the next four years, but the expo is the place to come for a day of fun, planning the celebrations of our lives.”

The event, being hosted for the seventh year by BTL, will continue to be Detroit’s only LGBT-specific destination for couples

planning their wedding to meet with the inclusive vendors that respect their unions. But it’s also the perfect place for straight allies to show their support for these vendors and the LGBT community, by considering inclusive vendors for all the special occasions in their lives: weddings, anniversaries, vow renewals, graduations, bar and bat mitzvahs, adoptions, baby showers, and more.

Once again, the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo is being held at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. The Expo will feature more than 100 vendors, a fashion show, live entertainment, prizes, special guests and plenty of surprises, all in MotorCity’s state-of-the-art ballroom and Sound Board Theater.

“We know some couples with wedding plans have been moving up their ceremonies since Donald Trump was elected,” said BTL co-publisher Susan Horowitz. “And we know a lot of couples — including straight ones — feel more determined than ever to live their lives out loud and support the people and communities they care about.”

**SUNDAY MARCH 26**

### LGBT EXPO

The Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo will be held on Sunday, March 26 from 12-4 p.m. at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. A pre-expo workshop will start at 11 a.m. discussing LGBT Rights in the Trump Era.

Tickets are just \$10 each. Learn more or order tickets online at [www.milgbtwedding.com](http://www.milgbtwedding.com) where inclusive vendors will be featured all year long.

See page 25 for Run of Show  
>> [www.MilLGBTWedding.com](http://www.MilLGBTWedding.com)

# Friend's Before Lovers: Building a Relationship to Last

## Solid Foundation Helps Transgender Couple Plan Their Wedding with Ease

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Sometimes, the best love relationships are the ones that are based on friendship. As is the case with Hannah Hartley and Diane Schultz, two transgender women who met four years ago during an LGBT community meeting at Affirmations in Ferndale.

"Diane caught my eye from the first moment we met. She seemed to have an elegance and a kindness that made me think, 'I really need to know that woman,'" said Hartley.

Schultz knew, too, that she had found a new friend. She said, "Hannah seemed like the cool girl, and a person that was a real go-getter in life."

The lesbian couple from South Lyon made a connection that was more than just superficial. They spent time getting to know each other's likes and dislikes, engaging in heart-to-heart conversations, and were able to lean on one another for support during their simultaneous gender transition.

"We were truly the best of friends," said Hartley. "Diane witnessed my dating shenanigans, my ups and downs, and the fact that I tend to make a big deal out of things or find some type of cosmic meaning in everything. She is much more pragmatic, down-to-earth and realistic about life."

Schultz played it cool a year into their friendship when Hartley was ready to share that her feelings had developed.



Hannah Hartley and Diane Schultz.

"I told her I loved her and wanted to take her out on a date and her response to me was, 'Well Hannah, I am not sure you love yourself.' I looked at her and said, 'Give me a couple of weeks and that should be plenty of time,'" said Hartley, the wittier of the two, adding that Schultz gave her a pat on the head and said, "What am I going to do with you?"

A little persistence and what Hartley calls her "excellent art of persuasion" led to their first date in

May 2014 when Schultz prepared a "beautiful" dinner and things just clicked.

"Meeting this way allowed us to enter our relationship with nothing to hide. This made the move into our relationship particularly meaningful because we knew the real person on the other side of the table," said Hartley. "And for the first time in our lives we started a relationship with no secrets about who we were, who we are and who we were becoming as we moved forward together."

People Cafe," said Hartley.

That's where Schultz pulled off a surprise wedding proposal in front of a crowded dining room plus a few thousand people on social media.

"Hannah lives on Facebook and has developed quite a following in our community, so I thought it would be appropriate to share with our family and friends," said Schultz, adding they will return to Saugatuck for an intimate wedding on June 17.

### Is That Going to Be a Problem?

The most nerve-racking part about planning a wedding for two transgender brides, according to Hartley, is finding a dress.

"Shopping for gowns was something that terrified me from the very get-go," she said.

Designers aren't quite in tune yet with a transgender woman's fashion struggles, which can make it difficult to assert their own presentation of femininity.

"Many of us have a bit boxier shoulders and rib cages, and we are constantly looking for ways to make it work," said Hartley, who resorts to shopping online for clothing, but realized, "I would not be able to pull off wearing a wedding dress that fit properly without help from someone at a store who could alter the garment for the big day."

So they went for it, visiting

### A Public Proposal

During the summer of 2016, Hartley and Schultz journeyed to the LGBT-friendly city of Saugatuck in west Michigan for their first post-transition celebration. Their road trip destination was a quaint bed and breakfast off the beaten path.

"We had the opportunity to venture to the neighboring town of Douglas where we found a true diamond in the rough, the Everyday

See Friends Before Lovers, page 20

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## ► Friends Before Lovers

Continued from p. 18

multiple bridal shops, but one in particular, David's Bridal, went above and beyond what they had expected.

"It didn't really bother Diane, but I wasn't sure if we would be accepted. We forged ahead, going anywhere a bride would look and decided not to overthink the process, but at the first bridal appointment, I completely freaked out heading into the store," said Hartley pointing to her overzealous announcement to the woman behind the counter that she is transgender.

"I asked, 'Is that going to be a problem?' And now that everyone knew that I was trans, at least I was through outing myself and could take the next steps in the process. The staff and manager of the store turned out to be supportive and courteous while helping us," she said. "We even had support and acceptance from other brides purchasing their gowns and accessories. We have seen a dramatic increase in overall acceptance of our trans identity in the past few years and were a bit surprised how easy, happy and pleasant our experience was." Both women selected "incredible" dresses around \$750 each - a trumpet-style gown for Hartley and an A-Line gown for Schultz.

The LGBT-friendliness continued when the couple contacted Vacation Rentals by Owner online to secure a 4,400-square-foot space - a restored barn from the 1860s - for their ceremony and reception.

"We explained that we were both transgender and we planned on getting married at The Barn. This is where the rental agent said



Hannah Hartley and Diane Schultz in front of their home.

there might be a problem and was silent for what seemed like five minutes. We were sure we were going to have to keep on searching. But then she explained that the only problem was the owner of The Barn has never before allowed the location to be used for an event such as a wedding. We got the green light to have our wedding in this gorgeous barn," said Hartley, noting the importance of getting married in the same town where they were engaged and are welcome.

Hartley and Schultz chose their friend,

LGBT-inclusive photographer Steven Wieckowski, who owns Swift Creek Creative, because he understands their vision when creating images.

"I felt it was important to select someone that was familiar with the transgender community and would be comfortable and relaxed working with us, and have an ability to help capture us looking our best and not feel awkward while capturing such an important and intimate day in our lives," said Schultz.

The couple passed on hiring a wedding

DJ, opting instead to use their iPhones with personalized wedding playlists.

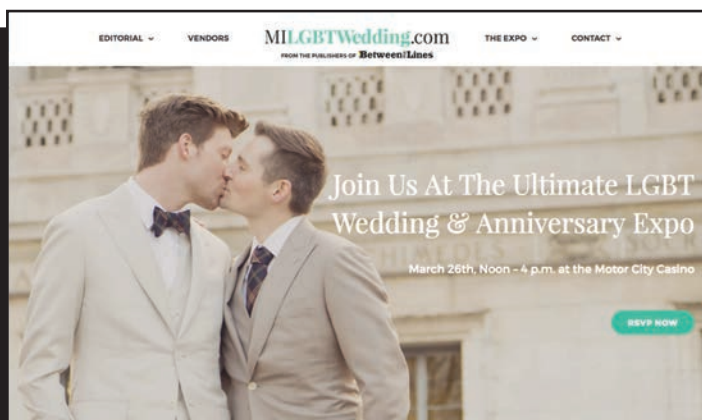
They learned of Chef Bill Campbell with Flavour by Bill by word of mouth. He will cater the event, as well as provide flowers - a rustic mix of Lisianthus, Liatris, Wax Flower, Queen Anne's Lace, Hydrangea and Sea Holly in coffee cans painted in a variety of yellows, oranges and greens. Both Hartley and Schultz will carry a traditional bouquet of red roses.

Since The Barn can only accommodate 20 guests, the couple plans to broadcast their ceremony live on Facebook and will host a reception, the "Two Brides BBQ," during the summer this year.

"We want everyone to celebrate," said Hartley. "And not only our wedding, but life, each and every one of them, because a life lived authentically can be an amazing thing."

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar.

3. Enjoy free food and other freebies. Yes, we said free. There will be plenty of deliciousness to sample during the expo, including tasty delights from many of our vendors. You'll also be able to scoop up a variety of nifty items our vendors and exhibitors will have on hand, all for the taking.



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Kelly Pepper, owner of Gentlemen's Consignment in Royal Oak, poses in his well-appointed store. BTL photo Jason A. Michael

## Gentlemen's Consignment Offers Quality Menswear at Affordable Prices

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

**ROYAL OAK** – Kelly Pepper used to be a large man. “Then about eight years ago I had gastric bypass surgery and lost 145 pounds,” Pepper said proudly.

Like many who experience such drastic weight loss, Pepper suddenly found himself left with a closet of clothes he could no longer wear.

“Somebody suggested I consign my clothes,” Pepper recalled. “I didn’t even know what consignment meant. So I looked it up and I went on a search for a consignment store for men. I couldn’t find one anywhere and that’s when I thought to myself, ‘I can’t be the only one out there.’ So that’s when I decided to open my own.”

Originally, Pepper opened his store, Gentlemen’s Consignment, in Plymouth in 2012. But the following year he relocated to Royal Oak, where he continues to do a brisk business.

“A lot of my consigners came from the Bloomfield Hills area and shopped at the Somerset Collection,” said Pepper. “They

would say that Plymouth was just too far.”

Since opening his store, Pepper said he has learned a tremendous amount about men’s fashion. “I was not a fashion guy,” Pepper confessed. “I didn’t know anything about brand names. I was not label driven before I opened my store. It was a learning process. As the years have progressed, so has my knowledge of designers, cuts, content, quality, why something is made the way it is, what particular designers are known for and who to steer away from and why. My knowledge has really developed.”

Now, Pepper loves to share what he’s learned with his customers.

“I would like everyone to know that I am here and I’ve developed a keen sense of fashion and detail,” said Pepper. “So I can act as my customer’s filter. It’s not just anything that comes through the door that I accept. I’m particular and they’re going to see that in what’s in here as well. You’re not going to have stained collars or missing buttons or a loose seat. If it’s damaged or shows even a little bit of wear I don’t accept it.”

See Consignment, page 32

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar:

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## 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.

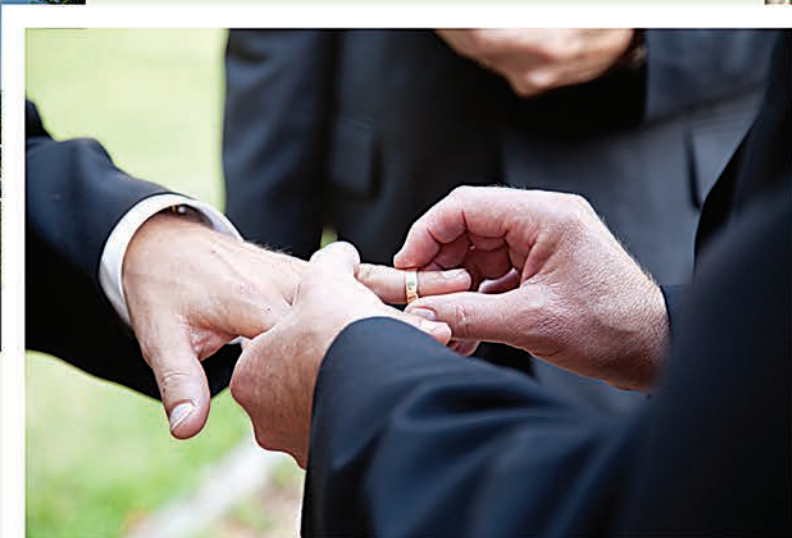
"My method of planning the perfect ceremony consists of meeting with my couple two to three times," Ephraim said. "The purpose is to get to know them well enough to write a personal ceremony that will reflect their lives, love for one another, and their marital values. Sometimes it may take an extra 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

See Officiant, page 38

### Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar:

5. Feast your eyes on special event fashion. Looking for the perfect wedding gown, a dapper tux or suit, or a sweet little something for your wedding night? Fashion shows throughout the day will show off some of the very best styles the area has to offer, from traditional to modern, from the wedding day to the honeymoon — including a few surprises, along with a special beauty demonstration.





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## Christina and Alicia Wilk of Clinton Township



When it comes to planning your wedding, follow your heart, don't listen to those around you and do what is right for you. That's how the Wilks said they were able to enjoy their wedding-for-two this year on June 21, 2016.

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

While planning for their wedding, Christina said, "We were using all the wedding tools and realized so many didn't offer same-sex labels and same-sex specific vendors. I had to preface every inquiry with 'we are a same-sex couple so we would like to know if you support our love before we give you our money.'"

Rather than organize an elaborate event, they kept it simple. Christina wore a dress designed and handmade by a friend. Alicia chose an outfit she knew she would be comfortable wearing on a beach. A loving and supportive friend, Crissi, who lives in California was willing to get ordained to perform their ceremony. They all hopped in the car to drive down Highway 1 from Santa Monica and found the quiet Redondo Beach where they had the "perfect, just us" ceremony.



Find their story online at [www.MiLGBTWedding.com](http://www.MiLGBTWedding.com)

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar:

6. Get down to live music and entertainment. Bands that would love to play for your wedding will be performing in the Sound Board theater throughout the expo. Listen while you chat with vendors or take a break to boogie — it's all there for your entertainment. And that's just the beginning of the show we'll be putting on just for you.

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11 a.m. - LGBT Rights in the Trump Era  
with attorneys Jay Kaplan and Angie Martell

### SOUNDBOARD STAGE

12:15 Five Star Entertainment - DJ

1:00 Chris Anthony DJ

1:30 The Tuxedo Fashion Show  
Featuring the Tux Shop on Woodward, Birmingham, MI

2:00 Blue Water Kings Band Performs

2:30 The Honeymoon Fashion Show  
Featuring men's and women's lingerie of Busted, Detroit MI

3:15 The Bridal Gown Fashion Show  
Featuring B. Ella Bridal, Plymouth MI

4:00 Emcee Jason Bowen Close of Show

### THE COMERICA STAGE

12:00 Emcee Jason Bowen Opens the Show with a song

12:30 Fabulous Prize Giveaways!

12:45 The Beauty Demonstration  
Featuring The Beauty Bar, Plymouth MI

1:00 Fabulous Prize Giveaways!

1:15 The Wedding Cake Demonstration  
Featuring Sweet Dreams, Warren MI

2:00 The Chocolate Demonstration  
Featuring AG Chocolates, Jackson

2:15 - 3:45 Fabulous Prize Giveaways!

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



# VENDORS



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Continued from p. 29

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## Williams Sonoma Keeps Up with Entertaining Trends

The entertaining trend is “so hot” right now. “It’s the largest growing aspect of our business and translates wonderfully into gifts not only for a wedding, but as a thank you to the wedding party,” said Ryan Coffin, general manager at Williams Sonoma Somerset Collection ([www.facebook.com/WilliamsSonomaSomerset](http://www.facebook.com/WilliamsSonomaSomerset)) in Troy.

“Deciding on gifts from Williams Sonoma offers many benefits. On in particular is the sales associates who are knowledgeable in our product to help with selection,” he said. “Williams Sonoma has become known for the quality of its product as well. Not only are you receiving a higher level of service but you are receiving the highest level of quality. There are few individuals that do not get excited to see a box from Williams Sonoma containing a gift for them.”



## Make Cocktails at Home

The Williams Sonoma stemware is all available for monogramming. This helps to personalize gifts for the recipient.

The shaker in the shape of a dog speaks to the variety in which the Williams Sonoma barware can lend to



See Gifts, page 38

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar.

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# Identities Affirmed with Gender-Bending Wedding Apparel

## Tux Shop Owners Understand Glitter and Tulle Isn't for Everyone

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

When Birdie Buckley-Ball was planning to walk down the aisle with her wife Megan, she never even considered wearing a dress. But a dearth of clothing tailored to women with Buckley-Ball's taste, as well as butch women, transgender men, and gender non-conforming individuals has made finding a tuxedo or a suit to properly fit their bodies challenging and expensive.

"I always wear clothes that make me feel comfortable and make me confident," Buckley-Ball explained. "For me, that was always pants and shirts. So for your big day you want to feel confident, so I decided on pants and a dress shirt. I also had the bow tie and vest. Just no jacket. We got married in September and it was already hot enough."

Though Buckley-Ball makes it sound easy breezy, there are challenges for those individuals who want to wear tuxedos and suits to their wedding ceremonies. Not every person, depending on their measurements, can rent a tux as often the bustline makes standard alterations inadequate.

That means they would have to buy a custom-fitted suit, something that can be quite costly. While opting to go without a jacket, Buckley-Ball did simplify things. But still there were issues.

"I rented a tux, and the funny thing is it was easy," she said. "But the people took my measurements as if I was a guy. So when I did try on the shirt it fit me perfectly fine in the neck and that was it. So the clerk, she realized at the time that she didn't take the right measurements. Eventually, she found me a shirt that was a little too big. But it was my own fault for not getting a custom-fitted shirt."

The dilemma for many butch women, transgender men and gender non-conforming individuals is finding a shop where they feel welcome and respected, and a clerk adept at the differences between fitting women and men's bodies.

"It is complicated for women to get tuxes," said Buckley-Ball. "If you go to a place and they're not comfortable with women wearing tuxes then they're going to be uncomfortable. And they're going to be uncomfortable with you."

More and more, the formal wear industry is catching on to the demand for gender-bending clothing designs. In metro Detroit, there are places like 1701 Bespoke and the Tux Shop on Woodward that are trying to make the process a little less complicated for everyone to find the perfect tuxedo or suit.

Jeff Nelson of the Tux Shop has been helping members of the LGBT community look the way they feel for some time now. He admits it's still something of a challenge, but that there are more options now than ever for those who want to wear a tux or suit.

"It's the difference between what's rental and what's purchase only," said Nelson. "Even years ago there were ladies tuxedos but they were for purchase only and still are for the most part. I think with more options with fit and style it kind of helps fit women better. Everyone's still got their own taste and desire as far as styling. If I can successfully fit a woman in men's clothing then we'll go for it. Otherwise they're just left to buy and get a tailor."

Nelson said that starting this spring the Tux Shop will begin carrying a line of tuxedos designed specifically for



The Buckley-Ball couple Megan and Birdie at the Joe Louis Arena on their wedding day, Sept. 28, 2012. Photo: Facebook.

a female's body, which is an exciting option for cisgender women and feminine lesbians also, that choose to say 'no' to the dress. The line is called Little Black Tux and is by designer David Tuterra. But still, the line will be for purchase only.

For those people that still want to rent, Nelson points to a few options.

"I had two ladies wear whitetail coats to their wedding last year and they fit well," Nelson said. "Just the sleeves needed to be altered. But the overall fit was pretty good because the tail coats didn't need to be buttoned."

Tail coats not your thing? Well, don't give up just yet. "I'll still successfully outfit women," said Nelson. "There'll be ladies I'll meet this Sunday at the Expo and depending on the shape, the cut, maybe they've had experience wearing men's clothes before, I know I can successfully fit them. With today's cuts, the slim fits to low rise, I usually can fit them. If they're looking for something else we're going to steer them toward buying something."

Even if the process can be a little complicated, Buckley-Ball said it's worth it to be able to walk down the aisle feeling confident and comfortable.

"I'm seeing that more people, like my friends and people that I know who are LGBT, are going the more comfortable route," she said. "They throw out their traditions because there really isn't a traditional wedding for the LGBT community. This is new. So we got to do it as we wanted to do it and no family or friends could say 'well tradition calls for this...' Because we were making up tradition as we went along."

Connect with The Tux Shop on Woodward at 33437 Woodward Ave., Birmingham at 248-644-5055 or online at [www.thetuxshoponwoodward.com](http://www.thetuxshoponwoodward.com). 1701 Bespoke is located at 139 W. Maple Road, Suite A, Birmingham. For more information, call 313-744-3560 or visit [www.1701bespoke.com](http://www.1701bespoke.com).

## ► Gentleman's Consignment

Continued from p. 22

Pepper said his best sellers are shoes and sports shirts. "I sell a lot of shoes," he said. "You wouldn't think so but I'm very particular about what I accept."

The one exception to that rule is boots.

"Western boots, cowboy boots...they just don't move. My slowest sellers, but they're still very good sellers, would be suits. However, I do a fair amount of business with suits."

Not everyone knows how to find the perfect fitting suit, but Pepper said he can help.

"When a gentleman comes in who's not very well versed on how to wear a suit I tell the guy the first thing you need to fit is the shoulders, because everything else from the shoulders down can be altered, in terms of the jacket," explained Pepper. "It can even be shortened if you really want it shortened. The same way with the pants, you've got to fit the waist. I can go to the rack and pick out a suit and I'm pretty sure I have the right fit. And when a guy comes in I can tell him what size he is without a tape measure, and I'm pretty accurate."

As successful as he's been through the years, Pepper said he's unsure why there are not more men's consignment shops in the metro Detroit area.

"I would love to know that answer," he said. "There's consignment for women, for children, infants, housewares, furnishings. There are even a few car lots that are consignment. But for men this is it. I don't understand. There should be more. And hopefully I'll find someone who will help me put more out there."

Yes, Pepper is looking for a business partner to help him take Gentlemen's Consignment to the next level.

"I'm looking for somebody who's going to actively work in the store alongside me," said Pepper. "I'm only one person and I can't do it all. I've taken this as far as I can as a one-man band, so to speak."

But Pepper plans to keep doing what he's doing until the perfect partner comes along. In addition to clothes, he's expanded his accessories department and you can find belts by Gucci and Prada in the store as well as a bracelet by Hermes. He's also has wallets, cufflinks, and - his favorite - bowties.

"I love, love bow ties," Pepper said. "We're actually having a Tie One On event on April 8 from 12-6 p.m. for guys who want to come here to learn how to tie bowties."

"When it comes to showing customers how to tie a bowtie, I'm the most patient person in the world," Pepper continued. "I love bowties, I love tying bowties and I love showing customers how easy it is to tie bowties."

For more information on Gentlemen's Consignment call 248-591-4554 or stop by the store located at 623 South Washington Ave. in Royal Oak.

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar:

8. Support the businesses that support your values. Whether you identify as LGBT or a straight ally, wouldn't you rather spend money with pro-equality vendors who treat people right? Vote with your wallet!



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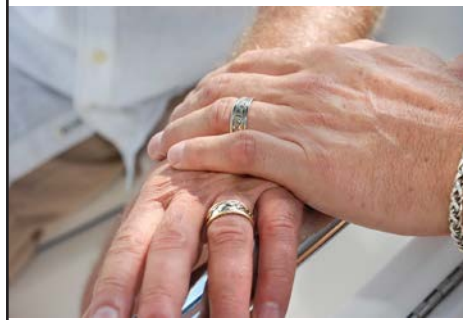
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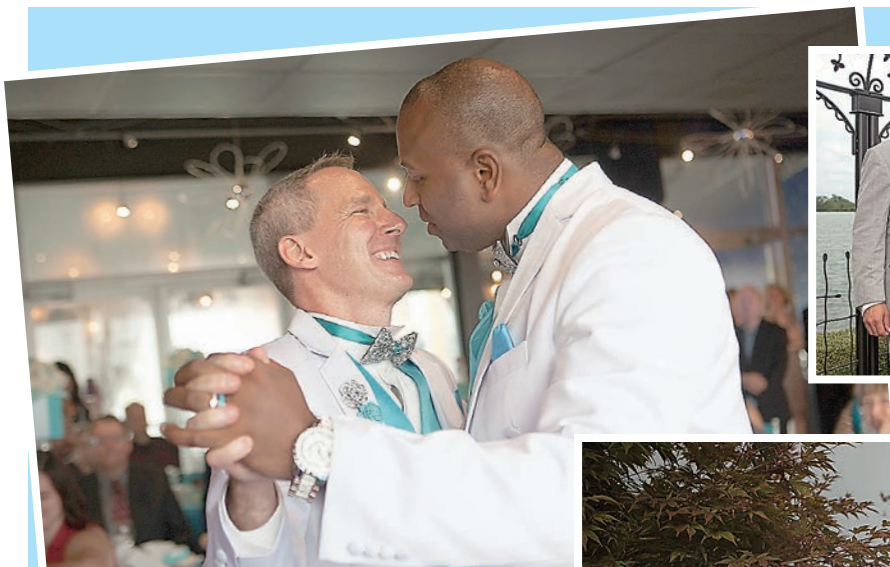
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## Jeff and Dimitrius Mitchell of Hamtramck

Considering Dimitrius had already planned the wedding of his dreams when he first proposed, Jeff had no problem giving him complete control.

“He had a vision. I wasn’t one of those people who had a vision of what their wedding was going to be like. I wanted him to have, as much as the budget would allow, everything he wanted,” said Jeff.

That included an intimate Tiffany-style wedding this year at the Roostertail in Detroit on August 13, 2016.

Their cake, in the shape of a Tiffany box and Tiffany blue cupcakes, were made at Christine’s Cakes and Pastries in Utica. Fisher’s Flower Shop in Dearborn created their floral arrangements. Julie Haven and her trio, Red, White and Crazy, performed some of the couple’s favorite songs, such as “At Last” by Etta James and “A Thousand Years” by Christina Perri.

“Our wedding coordinator there gave us advice on a photographer,” said Jeff, who was nervous about finding LGBT-friendly vendors at first.

“But it worked out,” he said about Everett Stewart in particular. “He never photographed a gay wedding, but he was a super open guy, so cool, even encouraging us to kiss during the shoot.”

**Find their story online at [www.MiLGBTWedding.com](http://www.MiLGBTWedding.com)**

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## Amanda and Jamie Lehman-Faber of Novi

“For me, it was all in the details,” said Amanda about their wedding on May 29, 2016. “We spent a lot of time organizing and preparing the weekend experience for our guests from the host hotel location to the coordination of events and transportation. We took pride in the food and music – we had a friend play live guitar during cocktail hour and created both dinner and dancing playlists. We kept the speeches and vows short and sweet but spent time making sure they were meaningful and personal.”

One of their friends recommended Café Cortina in Farmington Hills based on the intimate setting the couple was searching for. Having their wedding and reception at a full-

service restaurant also allowed them to reduce the overall decisions and vendors they needed to engage.

Amanda and Jamie knew their style was “rustic chic” and agreed on a neutral color palette of sandstone, champagne and gray. “I really tried to pay attention to unique details that captured us as a couple. We added personalized touches from wooden décor to photos of us around the café to create a warm environment,” said Amanda.

The couple hired Modern Touch Media to create their wedding highlight video featuring “Seasons of Love” from the Broadway musical “Rent,” “I Choose You” by Sara Bareilles and “Halo” by Beyonce.



Find their story online at  
[www.MilGBTWedding.com](http://www.MilGBTWedding.com)

### ► Gifts

Continued from p. 36

## Dine in Fashion

The Williams Sonoma dinnerware is a great addition to any kitchen. It is French porcelain and comes in a variety of patterns and styles. The dinnerware pictured is from a line by Aerin Lauder, granddaughter of Estée Lauder, and is exclusive to Williams Sonoma.



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See Gifts, page 38

## Top Ten reasons you should put this year's expo on your calendar.

9. Get inspired for the celebration of your dreams. Maybe you're not planning a wedding right now. But everyone loves a good party — and there are plenty of life occasions to celebrate: anniversaries, graduations, bar and bat mitzvahs, adoptions, baby showers and more. So who knows when you might need a great caterer, event venue or florist? There's no time like the present to dream about the future.

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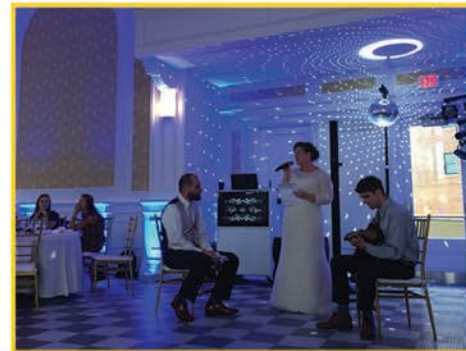


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## ► Officiant

Continued from p. 24

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 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

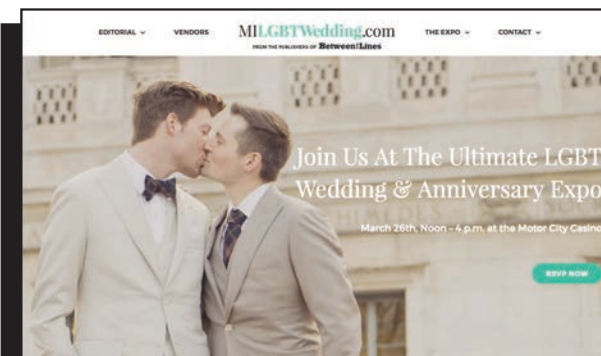
serving as an executive director for a nonprofit agency,” Munce recalled. “A few months later I was asked by a friend who was already legally married if I would officiate at their beach wedding in Livingston County. From there it sparked an interest to companion couples in one of the happiest moments 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](http://www.weddingofficiantmarkpephraim.com). Miriam Jerris and Stephen Stawicki can be found online at [www.theweddingconnection.net](http://www.theweddingconnection.net). Learn more about Brad Munce, visit [www.bradmunce.wixsite.com/sacredjourneys](http://www.bradmunce.wixsite.com/sacredjourneys).



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## ► Gifts

Continued from p. 36

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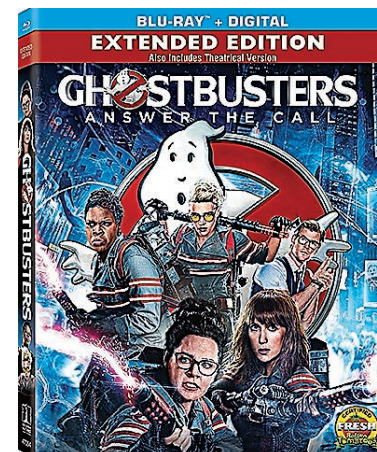
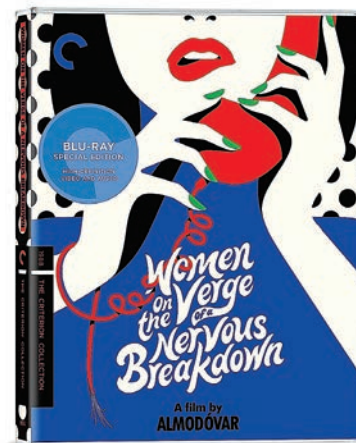
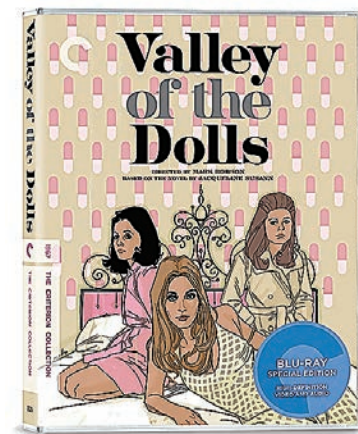
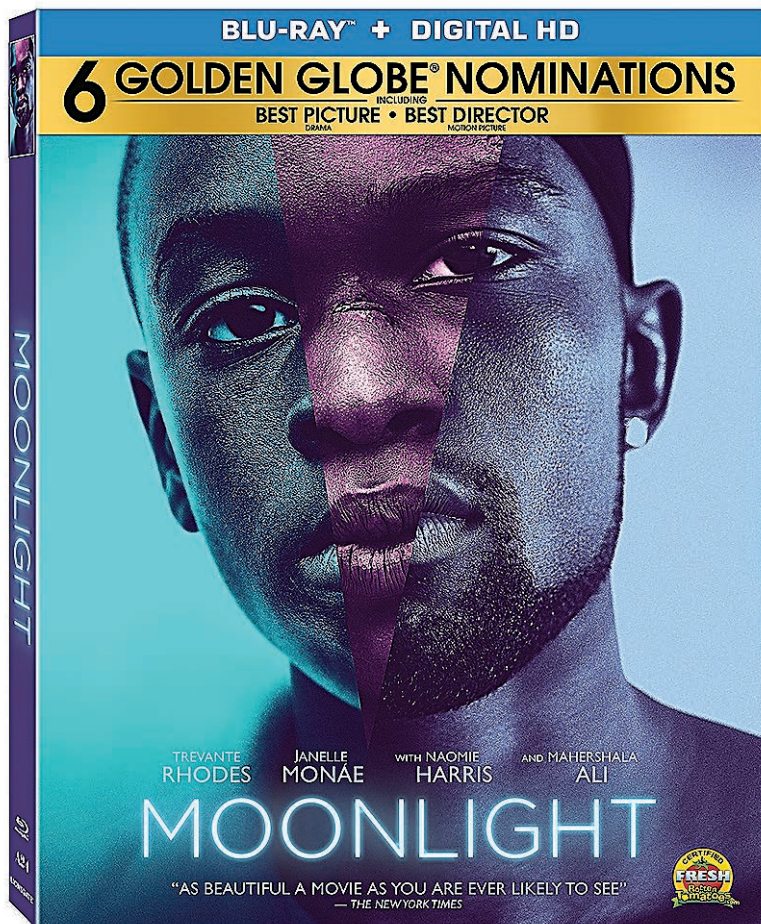
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## Screen Queen

# Best Picture Winner 'Moonlight' & John Waters' 'Multiple Maniacs'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

### Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

Perhaps you stumbled onto the acclaimed, queer mind of Spanish auteur Pedro Almodóvar via his latest work, 2016's "Julieta." Or maybe it was his homoerotic melodrama, which involved a gay filmmaker, said filmmaker's trans sister and a stalker in 1987's "Law of Desire." Or was it the film that earned Penélope Cruz an Oscar nod in 2006, "Volver"? In any case, Almodóvar's Hollywood profile got a giant boost in 1988, with "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," the out director's defining, Oscar-nominated black comedy. The campy caper centers on a high-profile actress, Pepa (Carmen Maura), who finds herself saddled with her lady friend's misadventure — sleeping with terrorists (typical) — while trying to sort out her own man problems. Pepa's issue is her womanizing boyfriend Iván, responsible for triggering her epic meltdown. How's this for inspiring: She sets fire to their bed and, in another fit of nostalgic rage, hurls a record out the window like the kind of badass, heartbroken heroine we so love. Almodóvar's screwball soap opera shakes out like an acid trip, as its unhinged hijinks

are amusingly heightened, while edgy thriller-like camera effects break the comedy-genre mold. And thanks to the Criterion Collection, the film's kitschy '80s-era color scheme pops with even greater vibrancy. The restored version of Almodóvar's splendid crossover triumph includes new interviews with Maura, who discusses her recurring acting roles in Almodóvar's films, and the director himself, musing on the feature's bold fashion choices and how the movie came to characterize the first decade of his directorial career.

### Moonlight

This year belongs to "Moonlight," even if confused Oscar presenter Faye Dunaway wanted us to think otherwise. Writer-director Barry Jenkins' tender time lapse through three significant periods of lead character Chiron's Miami-based life explored identity with the poetic ambience of a Terrence Malick film, and Oscar voters took notice. "Moonlight" rightly won three statues in February, including Best Adapted Screenplay, which went to Jenkins and Tarell Alvin McCraney, who wrote the autobiographical source material; Best Supporting Actor (Mahershala Ali); and the coveted Best Picture award. The

Oscars weren't wrong, for once (remember 2006, when "Crash" somehow triumphed over "Brokeback Mountain"? remember "Crash" at all?): "Moonlight" is a raw, harrowing achievement in storytelling and cinematography, which achieves a dreamlike resonance. The drama is marked by its earnest portrayal of the black and queer experience, and the people who make being ourselves that much easier. For Chiron, who's essentially motherless, his rock is a charismatic and open-minded drug dealer named Juan, played against type with father-figure warmth by Ali. "I got you," Juan assures in one of the film's finer scenes, as a weary Chiron takes a metaphorical swim. Later, the terrific Trevante Rhodes, playing adult Chiron, has a major breakthrough thanks to Juan, the person who helped nurture his understanding of himself when no one else — not his self-involved mother (a hauntingly good Naomi Harris) or friends at school — would. Jenkins talks about casting local non-actors to cultivate the film's relatable authenticity during one of the bonus features, which also include a Jenkins commentary, interviews with the noteworthy ensemble and a piece focused on the film's stunning music.

### Florence Foster Jenkins

What's a "singer" to do if she can't sing? Sing anyway. In director Stephen Frears' "Florence Foster Jenkins," those ear-splitting shrieks belong to the titular real-life warbler (played and sung by our favorite "overrated" actress Meryl Streep), whose heart is in the right place — she just wants to help change the lives of World War II soldiers — even if her notes are not. "It is true that a lot of singers my age are on the decline, but I seem to just get better and better," Florence boasts to her vocal coach (David Haig), unironically, as her earnest husband and manager, St. Clair Bayfield (Hugh Grant), remains stone-faced and her new piano accompanist, Cosmé McMoon (a hysterically expressive Simon Helberg), looks on in horror. People pretend to love Florence, or they're AARP card-carriers and are unaffected by her squawking howl. Undue praise leads Florence to believe she's ready for Carnegie Hall, which means a bigger crowd, actual music critics and, oh no, the possibility that Florence will now discover that her voice is not what she thinks it is. As if this is news to you, Madame Streep owns that screen like only a diva can, splitting sides with a mangled version of Mozart's "Queen of the Night" aria and, in a touching coda, moving you with a sweetly delusional dream



sequence. Featurettes are bountiful, but it's the ever-delightful Streep's sit-down with costume designer William Ivey Long that stands out amid a look back at Florence's real-life songs and a history of Carnegie Hall.

## Also Out

### Valley of the Dolls

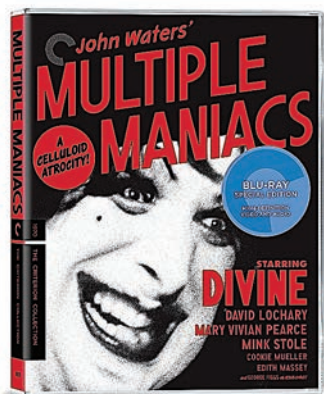
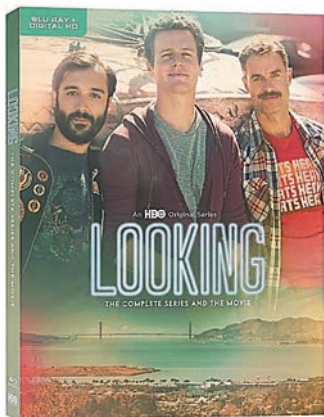
"Valley of the Dolls" first threw its drug-infested self onto American audiences in 1967. Had it been 2017, just think of all would-be meme-worthy moments that could be gleaned from failed-actress-turned-author Jacqueline Susann's sordid source material, which was a book before becoming one of the camp genre's greatest guilty pleasures. The spectacularly bad Patty Duke-starring frolic is a campy cocktail of high-glam Hollywood expose, clashing genres, porn, melodrama and absurdly hysterical one-liners ("Mother, I know I don't have any talent! And I know all I have is a body, and I *am* doing my bust exercises!"). Said frivolity endures now that Criterion has resurrected director Mark Robson's opulent awfulness for a shiny Blu-ray edition. Included among the plentiful extras are 2001's dishy TV program "Hollywood Backstories," with behind-the-scenes footage of an aged Judy Garland performing her last song for a film.

### Ghostbusters

The same people who probably put Donald Trump in office tore into the all-female "Ghostbusters" even before its release, which the new take on the 1984 classic derides not just with an "ain't no bitches gonna hunt no ghosts" joke but simply by existing. Director Paul Feig ("Bridesmaids," "Spy"), who we love because he subverts onscreen gender norms and lets women be the badasses they are, enlists a comedic team so dreamy they should probably just remake every all-male-dominated '80s flick: Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Leslie Jones and Kate McKinnon, whose character is probably queer. Their secretary? A nerdy-hot Chris Hemsworth. Even without Hemsworth, who's hysterical by the way, "Ghostbusters" is a fun, fresh outing for a new generation of thrill-seeking kids and Trump-era feminists. Among the extras: a fascinating visual effects comparison piece.

### Looking: The Complete Series + Movie

For years, we called on Hollywood to develop a TV series that reflected the "real lives" of gays – so, the complete opposite of "Fire Island" – and then, in 2014, we got it. But we didn't watch it, and now it's gone. This is the sad fate of HBO's greatly underappreciated and queer-zeitgeist dramedy "Looking," about the idiosyncratic lives of an everyday group of gay men living in San Francisco. Jonathan Groff's Patrick Murray took centerstage as a neurotic preppie, but it was the show's understatedness that qualifies it – even as writers approached touchy and important topics including serodiscordant couples and PrEP – as one of the most extraordinarily ordinary portrayals of queer life. The gone-too-soon series at least got a respectable final bow with a full-length, wedding-centric movie that honored "Looking" and its characters with sophisticated storytelling and a poignant last shot. Cast episode commentaries are included.



### Multiple Maniacs

Even John Waters is appalled by "Multiple Maniacs" – his own movie, mind you. During a 2016 commentary for a newly Criterion-restored version of the black comedy, Waters is his typically amusing, filterless self as he discusses a wide-range of tidbits regarding his 1970 black-and-white film, an exploitative DIY feature produced on a shoestring budget and filmed with a chummy group of self-proclaimed "freaks." Late drag icon Divine leads the shenanigans with a fetish show called "The Cavalcade of Perversion,"

which spotlights "two actual queers kissing each other like lovers on the lips" and a resident "puke eater." That's just child's play, because then Divine robs and murders her weirded-out patrons while also partaking in rosary buttplay at a Catholic church with Waters film-mainstay Mink Stole. The shockfest was, essentially, the beginning of a decades-long legacy for one of cinema's filthiest forefathers. Stole, along with other "Multiple Maniacs" actors, speak at length about working with Divine and Waters on a movie that Waters says he's glad his mother never saw.



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 <p>CAMILO</p>	<p>CLASSICAL SERIES</p> <h2 style="color: red;">SYMPHONIC JAZZ</h2> <p>Leonard Slatkin, <i>conductor</i> Michel Camilo, <i>piano</i></p> <p>SPONSORED BY </p> <p><b>FRI., APR. 21 AT 10:45 A.M.</b> <b>SAT., APR. 22 AT 8 P.M.</b></p> <p><b>BACH</b> Orchestral Transcriptions <b>SHOSTAKOVICH</b> Jazz Suite No. 1 <b>MICHEL CAMILO</b> Concerto for Jazz Trio &amp; Orchestra</p>
 <p>VROMAN</p>	<p>POPS SERIES</p> <h2 style="color: red;">RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN</h2> <p>Daniel Meyer, <i>conductor</i> Lisa Vroman, <i>soprano</i> • Brent Barrett, <i>tenor</i></p> <p>PRESENTED BY </p> <p><b>FRI., APR. 28 AT 10:45 A.M. &amp; 8 P.M.</b> <b>SAT., APR. 29 AT 8 P.M.</b> <b>SUN., APR. 30 AT 3 P.M.</b></p> <p>Your favorite Broadway hits from <i>Oklahoma!</i>, <i>The Sound of Music</i>, <i>The King and I</i>, <i>South Pacific</i>, and more. </p>



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## Stand with Gavin Rally in Lansing March 28

The Trump administration made a callous and cruel decision to rescind federal guidance on the rights of transgender students at school and underscores the pressing need for comprehensive nondiscrimination protection at the local, state, and federal level. As a result, the U.S. Supreme Court remanded Gavin Grimm's case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Despite the fact that the Supreme Court will not be hearing Grimm's case, pro-equality advocates from across Michigan will be moving forward with a rally on March 28 at 10 a.m. the Michigan State Capitol.

Equality Michigan released a statement that said, "It remains vitally important that we show up for transgender young people and send a message to policymakers that all students, regardless of their gender identity, deserve safe schools and communities."

Members of the community that support laws that bar discrimination based on gender identity and expression, that want to stand against the Trump administration's attack on the rights of transgender students at school, and will support Grimm as he continues to fight for all transgender students through the federal courts are invited to attend the event.

The rally is being convened by: Equality Michigan, ACLU of Michigan, Affirmations, OutFront Kalamazoo, Jim Toy Community Center, LGBT Detroit, Polestar LGBT+ Community Center of Traverse City, Trans Sistas of Color Project- Detroit, Lansing Association for Human



Rights, Perceptions, Grand Rapids Pride Center, Ruth Ellis Center, Gender Identity Network Alliance, Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network, GLSEN-Southeast Michigan, Transgender Michigan, Space for Grace Fellowship UCC, and PFLAG-Michigan Chapters.

For more information, contact Nathan Triplett, EQMI's director of public policy and political action, at [ntriplett@equalitymi.org](mailto:ntriplett@equalitymi.org).

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# First African American and Woman to Run for Lansing Mayor

Judi Brown Clarke said she will run to become Lansing's first African American and female mayor. The announcement by Brown Clarke, a first-term Councilwoman, was made during a press conference at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame on March 2. Brown Clarke touted her work as diversity director for the National Science Foundation's Bio-Computational Evolution in Action Consortium Center at Michigan State University and her work with corporations like Nike as evidence she can bring a new energy to harnessing hi-tech jobs in the city, according to a Lansing City Pulse report.

Brown Clarke has served as a member of city council at-large for the last three years awarded a diversity leadership award by Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon. Under her leadership, Brown Clarke told supporters and the media she is calling for a renewed sense of decorum, respect in the city, and "a community of grace in which everyone feels empowered." The LCP reports that while Virg Bernero has announced he will not seek a fourth term, Brown Clarke will face State Rep. Andy Schor, the only other declared mayoral candidate, who has done well in pre-filing polls. Those polls put Schor over Bernero and Brown Clarke in third place in a three-way primary. City Clerk Chris Swope has also said he is considering a run.

Read the full story online at: <http://gaybe.am/vy>

## MSU Employees Protect Students' Immigration Status

About 700 Michigan State University employees have signed a statement indicating they will not collaborate with federal agencies that try to discern the immigration status of university students, according to a Lansing State Journal report.

In a "statement of solidarity," faculty and staff said they would support students' attempts to remain in the U.S. and will not collaborate with federal agencies seeking to apprehend or deport them. MSU employs about 12,000 faculty and staff, according to its website.

The faculty statement comes on the heels of executive orders that restrict travel to the U.S. and refugee resettlement. A March 6 executive order from President Donald Trump suspended visitors from Syria, Yemen Somalia, Iran, Libya and Sudan for 90 days, and halted



Judi Brown Clarke

refugee resettlement for 120 days. The order also decreased the number of refugees allowed in to the U.S. in 2017 to 50,000.

In a press release that accompanied the statement, Ken Harrow, an English Professor at MSU, said the statement - put together without input from university administration - "is not a call for disobedience of laws, but a refusal to collaborate with the federal immigration authorities such as ICE (Immigration and Customs enforcement)."

MSU Spokesman Jason Cody told the LSJ in an email the university appreciated "the efforts by our faculty and staff to reinforce the core values of MSU, including diversity and inclusion."

He said MSU does not disclose information from a student's education record, including immigration status, without the student's consent, unless compelled by law.

He said the January travel ban, which later was rescinded and replaced with the March 6 order, has limited the ability for some students to travel abroad. Cody said the university continues to admit students from the six restricted countries. "MSU has always believed strongly in the benefits of having a diverse and global student body and work force, and that will not change," Cody said.

Read the full story online at <http://gaybe.am/D4>.

## 2017 Building Michigan Communities Conference

Members of the community can register now for the 2017 Building Michigan Communities Conference May 1-3 at the Lansing Center at 333 E. Michigan Ave. in Lansing.

The conference offers two-and-a-half days of professional development, including some sessions that will provide continuing education credits, as well as lots of opportunities for networking.

The educational tracks for the 2017 conference are: Ending Homelessness,

Homeownership, Multifamily, Organizational Development and Vibrant Communities. The May 1 luncheon keynote will be Tom Daldin and Jim Edelman of Under the Radar, Michigan. They will share their experiences of traveling Michigan discovering and uncovering cool people, places and things. Early-bird pricing is available until April 10.

More conference details and registration information is available online at <http://buildingmicommunities.org>.



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# Theater

## 'Avenue Q' closes out 46th season at UDM

**DETROIT** – The 46th season of The Theatre Company of University of Detroit Mercy concludes with Avenue Q, running March 23 – April 9, 2017. With music and lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx and based on the book by Jeff Whitty, Avenue Q will be performed at The Marlene Boll Theatre at the downtown YMCA. Avenue Q contains mature language and situations; not intended for children.

Part puppet, part human, Avenue Q is the adult musical comedy packed with heart and big dreams. This timeless story follows college grad Princeton as he moves to Avenue Q in New York City; broke, trying to find love, eager to make new friends, and striving to find his purpose in life.

"Avenue Q is a delightful journey of discovery that is full of amazing music and characters which often look very similar to our lives. The show is full of adult jokes, often inappropriate, which reminds us that life is only for now. That love is only for now. Bad hair is only for now. Certain political leaders... are only for now," says director Greg Grobis. "What do you do when life sucks and you

can't find your purpose? Come to Avenue Q and find out."

The Theatre Company's Avenue Q cast includes Joel Fazee as Princeton, Ashley Armstrong as Kate Monster, Andrew Laux as Brian, and Cat Menzies as Christmas Eve. Other professionals include Michael Adams as Gary Coleman, Timothy Smith as Nicky, Dale Dobson as Rod, and Hayley Pulizzi as Lucy.

Avenue Q features eight events associated with The Detroit Theatre Discussion Project (DTDP) which features post-show events following Thursday and Sunday performances as well as events at local libraries in the community. Discussants from Detroit Mercy and the community will speak and answer questions about topics related to the production. More information can be found at [www.TheTheatreCo.com](http://www.TheTheatreCo.com). or call 313-993-3270.

## Critically acclaimed 'The Encounter' at UMS

**ANN ARBOR**—In 1969, Loren McIntyre, a National Geographic photographer, found himself lost among the people of the remote Javari Valley in Brazil. It was an encounter that was to change his life: bringing the limits of human consciousness into startling focus. In this solo performance, Simon McBurney traces McIntyre's journey into the depths of the Amazon rainforest, using binaural technology

(3D audio) to build an intimate and shifting world of sound.

The Encounter comes to Ann Arbor following a three-month Broadway run. "This production from the genre-bending Complicite company is one of the most fully immersive theater pieces ever created." (New York Times)

Headphones will be provided and must be worn throughout the performance. If you are hearing-impaired, visit the website for information on how best to experience this event.

The Encounter is a Complicite / Simon McBurney production, directed and performed by Simon McBurney and inspired by the book "Amazon Beaming" by Petru Popescu. It will be performed at the Power Center/UMS Thursday, March 30 at 7:30 pm, Friday, March 31 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, April 1 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available online at [ums.org](http://ums.org).

## 1984 at Williamston Theatre

**WILLIAMSTON** — Williamston Theatre takes a turn at classic literature with the Michigan premiere of 1984 by George Orwell, adapted by Michael Gene Sullivan.

Based on the iconic novel by George Orwell, 1984 brings us the story of Winston Smith, a cog in the giant machine state of Oceania. Winston has been caught struggling for scraps of love and freedom in a world awash with distrust and violence. With the

brutal "help" of four Party Members, Winston is forced to confess his Thoughtcrimes before an unseen inquisitor, and the audience – which acts as a silent witness to his torture. A ferocious and provocative adaptation of one of the most prescient works of literature of the last century, 1984 asks: "What does it mean to be an individual?" "What does it mean to be human?" (Contains mature language/content)

The cast of 1984 consists of Tobin Hissong, Curran Jacobs, John Lepard, Robin Lewis-Bedz, Brandy Joe Plambeck and David Wolber. The director is Williamston Theatre's artistic director Tony Caselli. The production features scenic design by Kirk Domer, lighting design by Shannon Schweitzer, costume design by Holly Iler, sound design by Jason Painter Price and props design by Michelle Raymond. The stage manager is Paige Conway.

Performances begin Thursday, March 23 and run through Sunday, April 23.

1984 begins with five preview performances starting Thursday, March 23. During the first four previews audience members will have the opportunity to take part in the process of creating a show by participating in a talkback session with the director following each performance. The official opening night is Friday, March 31 at 8:00 p.m. with the show scheduled to run through Sunday, April 23.

Call 517-655-SHOW (7469) or visit [www.williamstontheatre.org](http://www.williamstontheatre.org)

Find more online at [www.encoremichigan.com](http://www.encoremichigan.com)

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## OUTINGS

### Thursday, March 23

**LGBT Youth Meeting** 6 p.m.  
 Cookie Decorating OutFront  
 Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose  
 St., **Kalamazoo.** www.  
 outfrontkzoo.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

### Friday, March 24

**Allies in Counseling: LGBTQ+**  
 8 a.m. Discussion with Dr. Joe  
 Kort. Pre-registration suggested.  
 Tickets: \$25-75 before March  
 10. \$35-90 day of conference.  
 Oakland University's Theta  
 Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota,

201 Meadow Brook Road,  
**Rochester.** smcdaniel@  
 oakland.edu https://orgsync.  
 com/34048/chapter

### Saturday, March 25

**Canned Food Drive** Contact  
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 for details. Get 20 off at Mac &  
 Brewz 3/19-25 during  
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 State University, 4870  
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 ez9589@wayne.edu  
 http://macncheez.com/  
 midtown

### Sunday, March 26

**Luminary Workshop** 10  
 a.m. Suggested donation  
 of \$10. WonderFool  
 Productions, P.O. Box 7616,  
**Ann Arbor.** 3138063952.  
 wonderfoolproductions@gmail.  
 com wonderfoolproductions.org

**The Ultimate LGBT Wedding  
 & Anniversary Expo** 12 p.m.

Between The Lines, 2901 Grand  
 River Ave., **Detroit.** 866-782-  
 9622. www.milgbtwedding.  
 com

### Tuesday, March 28

**#StandWithGavin** 10 a.m.  
 Equality Michigan, ACLU of  
 Michigan, Affirmations, OutFront  
 Kalamazoo, Jim Toy Community  
 Center, LGBT Detroit, Polestar  
 LGBT+ Community Center  
 of Traverse City, Trans Sistas  
 of Color Project, Lansing  
 Association for Human Rights,  
 and more. Equality Michigan,  
 100 N. Capitol Ave., **Lansing.**  
 ntriplett@equalitymi.org www.  
 equalitymi.org

### Wednesday, March 29

**International Transgender Day  
 of Visibility Flagship Event** 6  
 p.m. Poetry night Transgender  
 Michigan, 515 S. Washington  
 Ave., **Royal Oak.** 2485152551.  
 www.transgendermichigan.org

### Thursday, March 30

**LGBT Youth Meeting** 6 p.m.  
 Women's History with Youth  
 Ambassadors OutFront  
 Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose  
 St., **Kalamazoo.** www.  
 outfrontkzoo.org

### Friday, March 31

**ELCRA 40th Anniversary  
 Celebration** 1 p.m. Fair  
 Michigan, 100 N. Capitol Ave.,  
**Lansing.** www.fairmichigan.  
 org

### Saturday, April 1

**Spring Women's Night Out**  
 Lesbian Connection, 333 Blue  
 Star Hwy, **Saugatuck.** 517-371-  
 5257. LC@LConline.org www.  
 LConline.org

### Sunday, April 2

**Luminary Workshop** 10  
 a.m. Suggested donation  
 of \$10. WonderFool  
 Productions, P.O. Box 7616,  
**Ann Arbor.** 3138063952.  
 wonderfoolproductions@gmail.  
 com wonderfoolproductions.org

## Editor's Pick

### Gay Fan Fiction Wanted

Media Director Brandy Joe Plambeck and Artistic Director Joe Bailey of The Ringwald Theatre in Ferndale are sounding a call for new, original one-act plays (with the subject matter of furthering along the storyline to any movie or television series) to be performed at their 8th annual Gay Play Series. The Detroit-area's only LGBT short play festival is striving to provide early-career writers the opportunity to see their work produced, giving them what is oft-needed exposure. Create a situation that has never happened before in that setting with a LGBTQ slant to it. No more than 30 pages. 30 minutes or less. Submissions are due electronically to info@theringwald.com by April 15. For submission details or more information about The Ringwald Theatre at 22742 Woodward Ave., call 248-545-5545 or visit www.theringwald.com.



**Women Together Celebrates 40 Years** 1 p.m. Please bring a dish to share. Beverages provided. RSVP to Alice McKeage via email. Women Together, 18120 Jamestown Circle, Northville. rainbow.gardner@gmail.com

**Monday, April 3 UNPLUGGED Social and Support Group** 7 p.m. First Monday of every month. For those shunned, disfellowshipped or excommunicated from their religion, family or friends for being LGBTQ. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. haymer@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org

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

**Tuesday, April 4 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. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 269-345-5595. blindley@ywcakalamazoo.org www.outfrontkzoo.org

**The Path to Adoption** 6 p.m. Interested in adoption? Informal Q&A session. Orchards Children's Services, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

**LGBTQ in Uniform Support Group** 7 p.m. Meets the first Tuesday of every month. Open to current and former police, fire, emergency medical personnel and military. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

**Wednesday, April 5 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, April 6 First Thursdays April Mixer** 5 p.m. 18+ OutFront Kalamazoo, 161 E. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. www.facebook.com/events/1900630326887521/

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

**Relationship Skills Class** 7 p.m. Build stronger connections with co-workers, family, friends and romantic partners. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-677-7226. bbudde@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org

**Friday, April 7 FoolMoon** 8 a.m. WonderFool Productions, P.O. Box 7616, Ann Arbor. 3138063952. wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com wonderfoolproductions.org

See Happenings, page 48

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**Between THE Lines**

## ▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 47

### Saturday, April 8

**Ride for Affirmations** 12 p.m. \$25 per person. Proceeds to benefit Affirmations. Email or call to sign up. Cyclebar, 311 E. Big Beaver Road, Troy. 313-520-8629. T.J.Benrowski@CyclebarTroy.com www.facebook.com/events/1341298615927764/

### Sunday, April 9

**FestiFools** 4 a.m. WonderFool Productions, P.O. Box 7616, Ann Arbor. 3138063952. wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com wonderfoolproductions.org

**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

### Tuesday, April 11

**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

## MUSIC & MORE

**Freep Film Festival** "Meet Me at the Lindell: The Story of American's First Sports Bar". Cinema Detroit, 4126 3rd Ave., Detroit. 5 p.m. March 31. www.freepfilmfestival.com

### Benefits/Social Events

**Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan** "Cookie Bake-Off Benefit" Tickets: \$45. Kensington Hotel, 3500 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 6 p.m. March 23. www.girlscoutbakeoff.com

### Concerts

**Cabaret 313** "On the Road Again" Featuring Gabrielle Stravelli. Tickets: \$25-125. Black Box Theatre, Detroit Opera

## Editor's Pick

### Poetry and Open Mic Night

The International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31 is an opportunity for transgender people to to embrace who they are. But also, for their allies to show their support for the transgender community. It's with that in mind Transgender Michigan has organized a flagship event for members of the community to come out and celebrate. On March 29 from 6-8:30 p.m., TGMI will host a Poetry and Open Mic Night at Five15 in Royal Oak. All are welcome to the event at 515 S. Washington Ave. Refreshments will be available. For more information, find TGMI on Facebook or visit the organization's website at www.transgendermichigan.org/.



House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 7 p.m. March 25. 313-405-5061. http://cabaret313.org/shows/gabrielle-stravelli-march-25-2017/

**The Ark** "Susan Werner". The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 24. 7347611800. www.theark.org

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint** "Summer Osborne and Renee Janski in Concert" Ticket: \$10-15. UUCF, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy., Flint. 7 p.m. March 30. 8102324023. www.uuflint.org

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint (UUCF)** "Renee Janski and Summer Osborne" Women's festival favorites. Tickets: \$10-15. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Highway, Flint. 7 p.m. March 30. 8102324023. uuflint.org

### Film & Video

**Freep Film Festival** "Citizen Jane: Battle for the City". Marvin and Betty Lecture Hall at DIA, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. April 1. www.freepfilmfestival.com

**Freep Film Festival** "12th and Clairmount". The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:30 p.m. March 30. www.freepfilmfestival.com

**Freep Film Festival** "Two Trains Runnin'". Third Man Records, 441 W. Canfield St., Detroit.

7:30 p.m. March 31. www.freepfilmfestival.com

## THEATER

### Civic/Community Theater

**Red Velvet Cake War** Tickets: \$20-22. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. March 24 - April 9. 248-541-6430. www.stagecrafters.org

### Professional

**Gay Fan Fiction Wanted** Submit a script (performance time of 30 minutes or less) for the 8th Annual Gay Play Series. Deadline is April 15. See website or email for details. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through April 14. 2485455545. www.theringwald.com

## ART 'N' AROUND

**Affirmations** "DIA Open Studio Field Trip" Bring out your inner artist with Heather Aymer, Affirmations Community Resource Coordinator. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6 p.m. March 31. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

**Affirmations** "Visibility & Activism: A Showcase of Transgender Activism" Exhibit highlights the activism, courage and artistry of the transgender community. Pittman-Puckett

Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. April 1 - May 27. 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

**FIA** "Reaction: The Art of Social Commentary" Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. March 9 - May 7. 810-234-1695. www.flintarts.org

**Lawrence Street Gallery** "How Many More?" An anti-assault weapon themed all media exhibit Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave, Ferndale. March 1 - March 31. 248-544-0394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

**Signal-Return** "Power of the Press Fest" A celebration of traditional printing, visual and literary arts. Poetry readings, lectures, exhibitions, workshops, and a free festival in Shed 5 of Eastern Market. Signal-Return, 1345 Division St, #102, Detroit. 5 p.m. April 5. 3135678970. www.powerofthepressfest.org

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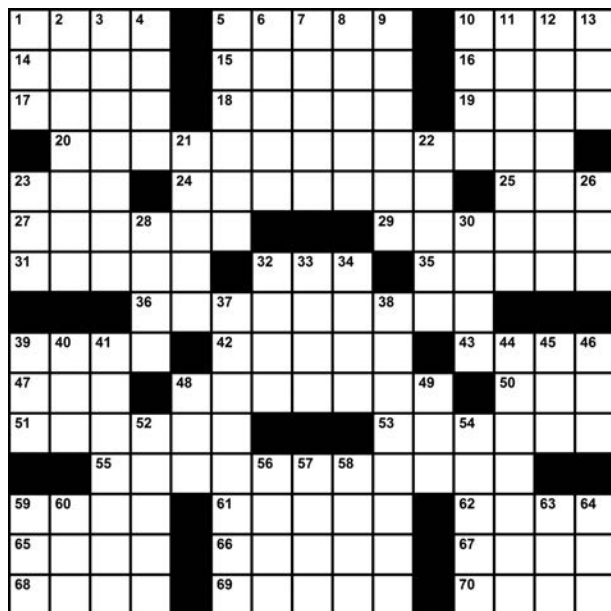
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# Q Puzzle



## Distinction at the Oscars

### Across

- 1 "Fame" word that follows performing
- 5 Disney deer
- 10 Doctors, doggy-style
- 14 Geoffrey of "Frida"
- 15 Cager Shaq
- 16 Ginsberg's "Gotcha"
- 17 "\_\_\_ hollers, make him pay"
- 18 Hermaphroditic land animal
- 19 It brings a tear to the eye
- 20 Start of one distinction of

### Down

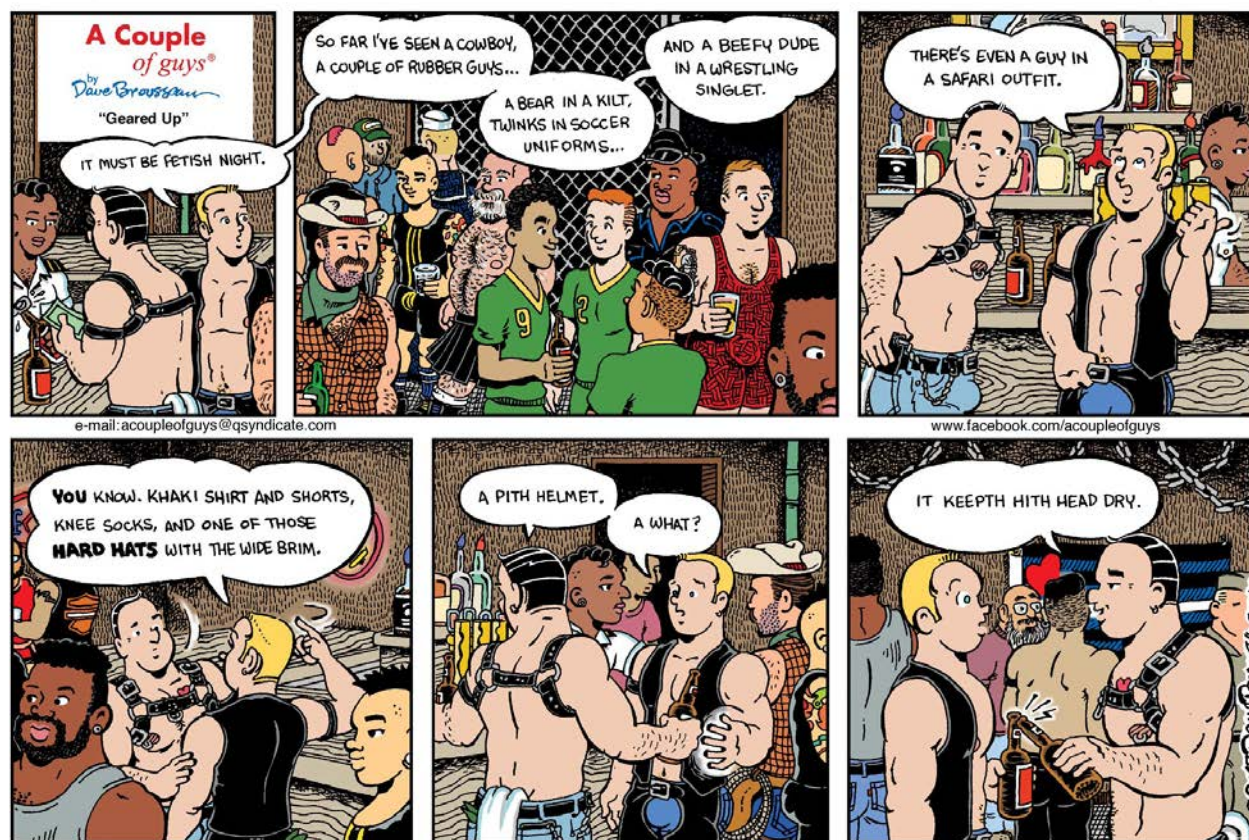
- "Moonlight"
- 23 Earhart's domain
- 24 Jeremy Irons' domain in "The Borgias"
- 25 Prefix for the homophobic Right
- 27 One-time Toyota rival
- 29 Got the bottom line
- 31 Gay porn director Rainier
- 32 Suck the energy from
- 35 Urgent wants
- 36 More of the distinction
- 39 Whitman who sampled Peter

- Doyle
- 42 Specialty of Wanda Sykes
- 43 Fairy story
- 47 Just make, with "out"
- 48 "The Lonely Goatherd" singer
- 50 Comic actor DeLaria
- 51 Vincente Minnelli's "\_\_\_ Parade"
- 53 Person in the Navy
- 55 End of the distinction
- 59 Like a Muscle Mary who does sit-ups
- 61 Martian marking
- 62 Some actors have big ones
- 65 Load
- 66 The way we word
- 67 "Aida" solo
- 68 Helpful tip
- 69 Printer powder
- 70 Gay Bob, for example

### Down

- 1 Paul Newman role in "Exodus"
- 2 Orton's "The \_\_\_ on the Stair"
- 3 Summer tops
- 4 "Fer \_\_\_!"
- 5 Ralph Waldo Emerson's hometown
- 6 Nitpicky about a bit of history?
- 7 Dry and crumbly
- 8 Cotton props in "Showboat"
- 9 "Yeah, right!"
- 10 Ricky Martin's "Livin' La \_\_\_ Loca"
- 11 Teach LGBTQ studies, for example
- 12 Made pink?
- 13 Army N.C.O.
- 21 Longtime Dolphins coach Don
- 22 TÊa of "Fun with Dick and Jane"
- 23 1993 Carole Maso novel
- 26 Scores with Esera Tuaolo
- 28 Splinter group
- 30 Big top, e.g.
- 32 Manly man
- 33 Where to look, in "Misty"
- 34 Drag queen Gene
- 37 Brief circumcision?
- 38 Athlete who tries to pin you to the floor
- 39 On the small side
- 40 Alias, initially
- 41 Either of Heather's two mummies
- 44 "Fast," to Leonard Bernstein
- 45 Gene Wilder in "The Producers"
- 46 Copland capability
- 48 "You said it!"
- 49 Indian author Santha Rama
- 52 Offer an apple to Adam and Steve?
- 54 Response to "How do you know?"
- 56 Part of a Texas town's name
- 57 \_\_\_ instant (like premature ejaculation)
- 58 Composer John
- 59 "No whispering!"
- 60 Island necklace
- 63 Lubricant
- 64 Mineo of movies

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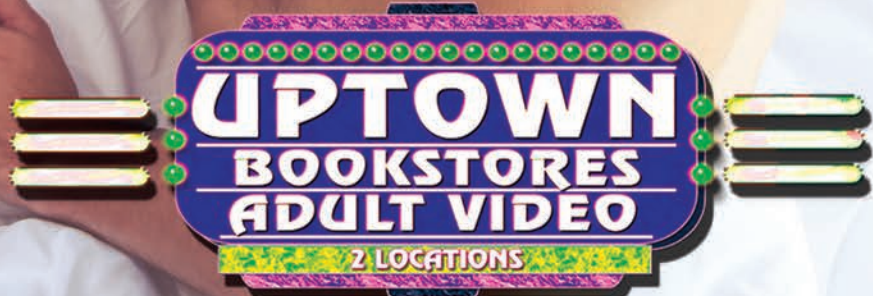
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# Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

## It's almost time to hate-watch 'Fire Island'

Did you watch "Finding Prince Charming"? "The A-List: New York"? "The A-List: Dallas"? "My Husband's Not Gay"? What, you think you're too good for those kinds of shows? OK, you probably are. But we're the opposite of good, so we watched "all" of them, and we can honestly say each one made us better human beings: smarter, stronger, healthier, wiser. And thanks to Logo's ongoing efforts to make momentary celebrities out of gay men who have really amazing chests, we're all about to be gifted with "Fire Island." It's the story of a beautiful summer on Fire Island, one shared by six gay men who were cast from their respective very popular Instagram accounts to be nearly (or maybe totally) naked while pretending to be friends and fighting about stupid stuff while drunk. In other words, our favorite thing on TV



Raven-Symone.  
Photo: Debby Wong

that isn't Wendy Williams. Logo plans to launch this assault on quality and taste this spring, but we wish it were here already.

## Sarah Paulson finds 'Lost Girls'

Amazon Studios has another future hit on its hands with "Lost Girls," and we're going to assume that it will have everything to do with our current favorite lesbian, Sarah Paulson. The show is a serial killer drama – based

on reporter Robert Kolker's 2013 nonfiction book of the same name – to be directed by documentary filmmaker Liz Garbus ("What Happened, Miss Simone?") in her first narrative project. Up-and-coming screenwriter Michael Werwie (this is his first major credit) wrote the adaptation, which involves a Long Island mother (Paulson) searching for her missing daughter. And then the bodies of four female sex workers are discovered in the woods. Gruesome, yes, but also true, and after Paulson's Emmy-winning performance as Marcia Clark in "American Crime Story:

The People vs O.J. Simpson," we're ready to follow her down any path, no matter how dark. Be on the lookout for this one.

## Say 'Hello Again' to T.R. Knight and Cheyenne Jackson

Hey, remember T.R. Knight? He was a staple on "Grey's Anatomy" until leaving the series after an unfortunate incident with a nasty gay slur on set (Google that bit of ancient queer history if you need refreshing). And then he seemed to lie low for quite a while, popping up here and there on shows like "The Good Wife," and most recently, a profile-resuscitating turn on ABC's miniseries "When We Rise." Now he and fellow queer actor Cheyenne Jackson ("American Horror Story") will star in the film "Hello Again." Theater fans will know the source material as the 1994 off-Broadway musical from Michael John LaChiusa (inspired by Arthur Schnitzler's "La Ronde") that explores 10 brief love affairs that take place across 10 separate periods of New York City history. And to show you they mean to do this one properly, here's the rest of the impressive cast, no strangers to song and dance: Audra McDonald, Martha Plimpton, "Glee" alum's Jenna Ushkowitz and Nolan Gerard Funk, Rumer Willis, and "The Following"'s Sam Underwood. We're guessing a late 2017 rollout, probably at the

big autumn film festivals. Stay tuned.

## That's still Raven

Blame "Girl Meets World," if you must, but here comes another vintage sitcom revamp. Well, not exceptionally vintage, if we're being honest, since the sitcom in question is "That's So Raven," which ran for about a hundred episodes between the years 2003 and 2007. And yes, we did, in fact, watch it and not merely crib information from Wikipedia, because we had Disney Channel-addicted nieces and nephews, now in their 20s (translation: advertisers' best friends now making little Disney Channel addicts of their own). Anyway, here comes more, as Raven-Symone reprises her role as the psychic fashion designer tween, now grown up, divorced, and mother to twins. Surprise! One of the kids has inherited mom's special powers, allowing the hijinks machine to crank into overdrive. And if you were wondering how former cast members will figure into the plot, Raven's old pal Chelsea (Anneliese van der Pol) is back for the fun, as a single mom who moves in with Raven, making for every sitcom's favorite trope, the blended family. Did we say blame "Girl Meets World"? We meant "Fuller House."

Romeo San Vicente would like to thank the Disney Channel for many hours of babysitting assistance.

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RAINBOW

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



### Meet Steve Fano, Volunteer at Affirmations

In the spotlight this week is Steve Fano, a volunteer at Affirmations since 2014. He is one of many volunteers the community center is incredibly fortunate to have the support of. Fano works throughout Affirmations at the Welcome & Resource Desk, and assists with youth programming. Like many other volunteers, Fano helps out in the Bayard Rustin Media Center and contributes his time during special events. Read a little more about his deep commitment to volunteering at Affirmations.

#### Why are you involved in volunteering at Affirmations?

Before volunteering, Affirmations was a place I went to for support and services. It helped me to gradually learn to accept and love myself during a difficult period prior to coming out. Volunteering is a great opportunity to give back.

#### Why do you enjoy about volunteering?

It's all about giving back to the community. Plus, it keeps me connected to our great community - something that helps me cope during this uncertain and worrisome political climate.

### The Motown Movement

As Detroit recovers from a heavy setback, the strong do-it-yourself culture has inspired three architecture students from the Netherlands to come up with new ideas for sustainable building together with the community. They said they believe "that strong collaborations are the key to making Detroit a model of a sustainable city."

As a result, Bob Hendriks, Ronen Dan and Dominik Lukkes established an urban initiative called The Motown Movement. They stopped their studies to commit themselves to society. Their goal is fight climate change by making sustainable technology accessible for everyone. Their plan is to design and share methods for transforming worn-down houses into self-sufficient homes by means of affordable, sustainable and innovative techniques. By doing so they aim to inspire other homeowners to do the same in partnership with Midtown Detroit Inc., Focus:HOPE, The Greening of Detroit, EcoWorks,



Glazer Elementary School, Lawrence Technological University, and the University of Technology in Delft. This will create a platform - which consists of an online website and a publicly accessible training center - directly connecting research, education and communities.

The first training center or demonstration home will be at 1995 Ford St. in Detroit. It will consist of three components: a practical showcase, an urban farm or school garden, and a community resource center.

Detroit's tireless dedication to rebuild

the city in a pragmatic and inclusive way hasn't gone unnoticed. It's what has inspired these young architecture students and others around the world. Community support for this project will contribute to the revitalization and help Detroit set an example to the world with a pioneering approach on resolving inequality and climate change at the same time.

For more information or to donate to The Motown Movement visit the organization's website [www.patronicity.com/themotownmovement](http://www.patronicity.com/themotownmovement)



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## DakhaBrakha

Wednesday, March 29 // 7:30 pm  
Michigan Theater | Ann Arbor

Drones and beats, crimson beads, and towering black lambswool hats all serve as a striking backdrop for an unexpected, refreshingly novel vision of Eastern European roots music. This hit Ukrainian folk-punk quartet stirs up a mesmerizing sound that melds traditional Ukrainian folk music, African grooves, Eastern colors, and a contemporary, trans-national sensibility that the band calls "ethno-chaos."

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## Michael Fabiano, tenor Martin Katz, piano

Saturday, April 1 // 8 pm  
Hill Auditorium | Ann Arbor

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