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**Trump's HHS
Appoints Anti-trans
Activist to Protect
Trans Health**

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**Transgender
Women of Color
Need Access to
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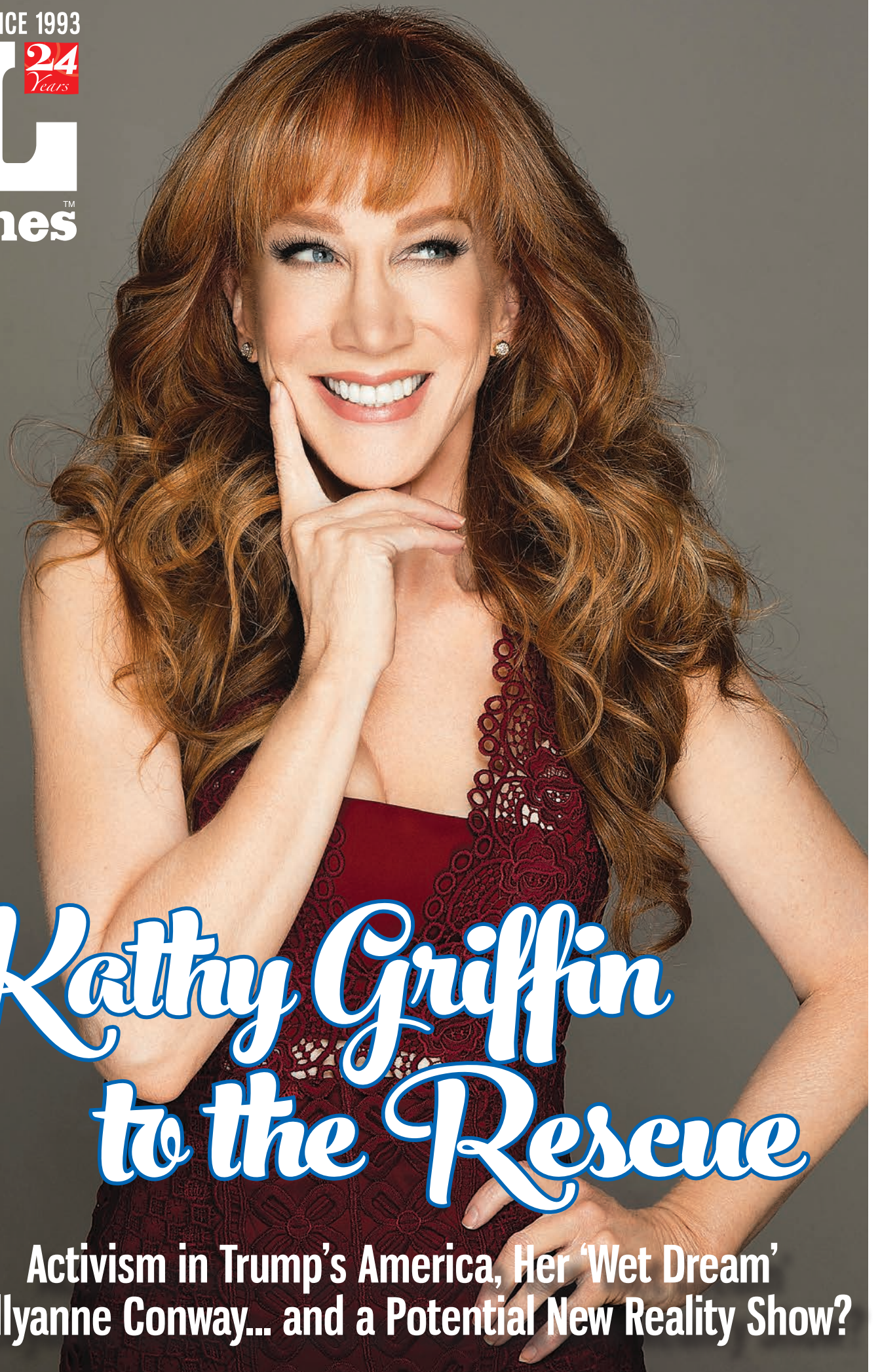
**Wedding Expo
Attendees Express
'Relief' to Find
Welcoming
LGBT-Friendly
Businesses**

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March 30, 2017

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Kathy Griffin to the Rescue

**Activism in Trump's America, Her 'Wet Dream'
Kellyanne Conway... and a Potential New Reality Show?**

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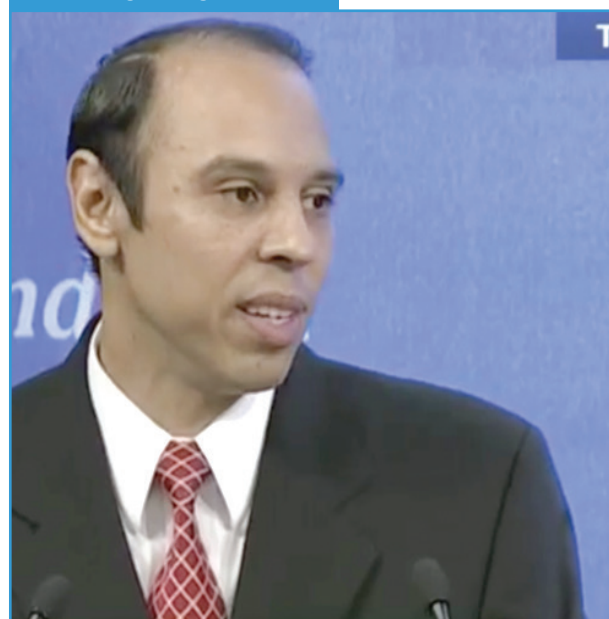
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Trump's HHS Appoints Anti-trans Activist to Protect Trans Health

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Much to the consternation of LGBT rights supporters, the Trump administration has appointed to head the civil rights division of the Department of Health & Human Services a former staffer with the anti-LGBT Heritage Foundation who wrote extensively against the civil rights of transgender people.

A series of statements from LGBT advocates came out Thursday over the appointment of Roger Severino, who until this week was director of the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society for the Heritage Foundation.

Winnie Stachelberg, executive vice president for external affairs at the Center for American Progress, gave no quarter in a statement over the Severino's appointment and its implications for transgender health.

"Frankly, it is sick that President Trump would appoint Roger Severino to lead OCR - putting a man who made his career opposing healthcare non-discrimination laws in charge of enforcing those very same protections," Stachelberg said. "Before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies routinely denied equal treatment to same-sex couples and more than half of private insurance plans explicitly discriminated against transgender patients, with more than a quarter of transgender people reported being denied medical care by a provider. Severino's writing makes it clear that he wants to take us back to the days when 1 in 4 transgender people was refused medical care outright."

Among the posts Severino wrote for The Daily Signal, the blog for the Heritage Foundation, were in opposition to LGBT people, especially transgender rights. After the White House came out against a provision in a congressional defense spending package that would have allowed anti-LGBT discrimination among federal contractors, Severino wrote a post called "Obama Threatens to Veto Military Bill Because It Protects Religious Groups." After the Pentagon lifted its ban on openly transgender service, Severino wrote a post called "Pentagon's Transgender Policy Defies Common Sense."

Severino also defended North Carolina's anti-LGBT House Bill 2, which prohibits transgender people from using the restroom in schools and government buildings consistent with their gender identity. Decrying the "unrelenting and coordinated attacks" against the state for enacting the law, Severino criticized former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch for filing a federal lawsuit against the measure, which he said amounted to progressives "using government power to coerce everyone, including children, into



Roger Severino, director of the DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity at the Heritage Foundation. Image courtesy C-Span.

pledging allegiance to a radical new gender ideology."

Marguerite Bowling, a spokesperson for the Heritage Foundation, defended Severino in response to concerns he'd seek to undermine transgender health in his role at HHS.

"Roger Severino has a distinguished record of fighting for the civil rights and freedoms of all Americans," Severino said. "We have no doubt that Roger in his new role at HHS will protect the civil rights of all Americans."

As head of the HHS civil rights division, Severino would be charged with enforcing Section 1557 of Obamacare, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, disability and age in health programs. The Obama administration interpreted the prohibiting on sex discrimination to bar discrimination against transgender people in health care, including the refusal of gender reassignment surgery.

Wade Henderson, outgoing CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights, said in a statement the office of civil rights at HHS requires "strong and experienced leadership" to enforce Section 1557, and Severino is "not that leader."

"Since enactment of the ACA seven years ago today, members of The Leadership Conference have strongly advocated for the full and complete implementation of Section 1557," Henderson said. "In his previous position at the Heritage Foundation, Mr. Severino repeatedly denounced and actively worked to oppose OCR's implementation of Section 1557. These actions call into question

his ability to fully enforce the ACA and protect communities of color and other underserved populations, who are most at risk for unequal access to health and health care."

It should be noted U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor has enjoined the enforcement of the Obamacare regulation interpreting Section 1557 to apply to transgender people. The Trump administration missed a deadline to appeal the decision to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, but the American Civil Liberties Union is seeking to intervene to defend the regulation.

Harper Jean Tobin, policy director for the National Center for Transgender Equality, said Severino could still do "a number of things" to impact transgender protections under Section 1557 as litigation proceeds.

"The government will now have to make a decision, and OCR is ostensibly the client DOJ in this decision, as to whether to ensure, as the government normally would in a case like this, that federal law and the federal regulation interpreting it and applying the federal law is defended, that a rule overturning it is reviewed by a higher court," Tobin said. "I think the fear is that OCR and DOJ could sort of work together to have this injunction made permanent without any review by a higher court, which would be highly unusual and really inappropriate."

After a rule-making process consisting of many years and with two separate comment periods, Tobin said letting the injunction against the regulation stand would be "tantamount to repealing the regulation without going the

“Frankly, it is sick that President Trump would appoint Roger Severino to lead OCR - putting a man who made his career opposing healthcare non-discrimination laws in charge of enforcing those very same protections.”

- Winnie Stachelberg, American Progress

required rule-making process and instead just acceding to a fringe legal position by one district court judge.”

Tobin added OCR has other responsibilities related to transgender health, such as the federal health care privacy law, or HIPAA, which assures privacy for transgender people in health care settings.

"Up until now, OCR has in cases involving transgender people, just as it does for everybody else, acted to enforce the laws to protect their privacy, but given Mr. Severino's aggressively hostile work to dismantle any kind of legal protections for transgender people, we're worried about what kind of direction the agencies would take on those bedrock protections," Tobin said.

Caitlyn Oakley, an HHS spokesperson, had no comment in response to concerns from LGBT advocacy groups that Severino wouldn't protect transgender health in his new role.

"We aren't commenting on personnel at this time," Oakley said.

Matt McTighe, executive director of Freedom for All Americans, said in a statement Severino appointment to HHS and his anti-trans history spells trouble for transgender health.

"Roger Severino has a proven track record of opposing fair and equal treatment for the transgender community," McTighe said. "He is a dangerous pick for a position that is meant to enforce critical civil rights protections. This is yet another example of the Trump administration's failure to live up to the president's campaign promise of protecting LGBT people and it will have devastating consequences for transgender people across the country."

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

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What is TRUVADA for PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)?

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine that can be used for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection when used together with safer sex practices. This use is only for adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This includes HIV-negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex, and male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV-1. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- ◆ **You must be HIV-negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.
- ◆ **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- ◆ **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- ◆ **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- ◆ **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**
 - Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
 - Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
 - Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
 - Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
 - Have fewer sex partners.
 - Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
 - If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- ◆ **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- ◆ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- ◆ **Serious liver problems.** Your liver may become large and tender, and you may develop fat in your liver. Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- ◆ **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.

- ◆ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider. If your healthcare provider tells you to stop taking TRUVADA, they will need to watch you closely for several months to monitor your health. TRUVADA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status. If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you also take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).

What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- ◆ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
- ◆ **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- ◆ **Changes in body fat,** which can happen in people taking TRUVADA or medicines like TRUVADA.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- ◆ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- ◆ **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
Pregnancy Registry: A pregnancy registry collects information about your health and the health of your baby. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take medicines to prevent HIV-1 during pregnancy. For more information about the registry and how it works, talk to your healthcare provider.
- ◆ **If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed.** Do not breastfeed. The medicines in TRUVADA can pass to your baby in breast milk. If you become HIV-1 positive, HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- ◆ **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- ◆ **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA for PrEP, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include ledipasvir with sofosbuvir (HARVONI).

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.

Have you heard about
TRUVADA for PrEP™?

The **once-daily prescription medicine** that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when used **with safer sex practices**.

- TRUVADA for PrEP is only for **adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex**.
- You **must be HIV-negative** before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-1 negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- **Tell your healthcare provider if you have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- **See the "How to Further Reduce Your Risk" section for more information.**

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Buildup of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in some cases can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP (PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS)

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine used with safer sex practices for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection in adults at high risk:

- HIV-1 negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex.
- Male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

To help determine your risk, talk openly with your doctor about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP" section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Bone problems.
- Changes in body fat.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRUVADA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you become HIV-1 positive because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with TRUVADA for PrEP.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day,** not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- You **must** practice safer sex by using condoms and you **must** stay HIV-1 negative.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
- Have fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV-1 infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.



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Transgender Women of Color Need Access to Public Resources, Better Allies

Julisa Abad Seeks Community-Based Organizations Ready with Solutions

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

During various local LGBTQ community meetings over the last few months, someone always raises their hand to ask how they can be a better ally for the transgender community. Many people are looking for ways to help as the number of threats targeting transgender people increases – particularly for transgender women of color. Eight murders have been reported in the U.S. in the last three months, but this type of violence is not new. Twenty-seven transgender women were killed in 2016 – a record high – and almost all of the victims were women of color, according to GLAAD research. Of the 16 transgender and gender non-conforming people killed in 2015, 13 were transgender women of color.

So when the only answer from some meeting organizers is to “love and accept” transgender people, that is puzzling for those who want clear direction about what to do to actually make a difference.

Because while loving and accepting each other can sustain the LGBTQ community in its journey for liberation, it is not a cure-all for the high rates of sexual violence, poverty and homelessness, police brutality, employment discrimination and other social injustices that continue to hinder the advancement of transgender people as equal members of society.

Just ask Julisa Abad, a 32-year-old transgender woman of color from Detroit who is offering up a different answer.

“There is a lack of attention to the very real issues that are placing trans women of color in danger to begin with,” she said. “We need to increase the service options available to support us as we are some of the area’s most vulnerable people.”

Abad is one of a few local activists trying to educate the community about real transgender lives and what women like her need. She agrees, “yes, love and accept us, but that’s not enough to help us with housing, employment, hormones, medical and dental care from inclusive providers, clothing vouchers, Bridge cards, bus passes, name changes, gender marker and ID changes, food, access to education, mental health services, HIV prevention and treatment, and then some.”

Abad further explains that, “Our struggle cannot be understood through a textbook. I don’t expect people to understand without having more conversations.”

In collaboration with other transgender women of color in the community like Bre Anne Campbell of the Trans Sistas of Color Project, Jeynce Poindexter of Equality Michigan’s Department of Victims Services, and Lilianna Reyes at Affirmations, Abad has been channeling her experience into action.

She has established a rapport with transgender women of color in her role as director of transgender outreach with the Fair Michigan Justice Project, a partnership between Fair Michigan and the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, which investigates and prosecutes crimes against the LGBTQ community. This allows Abad to speak out on behalf of people who aren’t in a position to rise up and demand their rights and respect.

She said she considers herself one of the “luckier trans women with a job and an apartment,” which she attributes in part to her effeminate qualities. This makes her passable based on society’s sexist view of how women should look and act.

“Otherwise, you don’t always get the same respect or opportunity,” she said, pointing to privileged groups of people that have a tendency to ignore the voices of transgender women of color who don’t present themselves similar to the way Abad does.

She is fully aware of the inequality that exists within the LGBTQ equality movement. “It’s a struggle,” said Abad, to overcome the overlapping and intertwining barriers within her own community caused by disparities – gender identity, race, class and criminalization – that exist at the intersection of an already marginalized group.

But Abad said, “At the end of the day, we are all fighting for the same thing,” which is something she is communicating not just to her peers, but to local organizations, members of the community, and support groups that are focused on improving the lives of transgender individuals such as the Detroit-based Community Health Awareness Group and Adult Well-Being Services.

“Julisa has helped Affirmations reach more trans women of color in Detroit. Her tireless advocacy continues to revolve around direct

needs for this community,” said Reyes, program services director at the Ferndale community center. “We partnered with her to provide 20 winter coats in addition to gloves, scarves, and hats during her annual Christmas party for trans women of color in Detroit... We encourage and support Julisa in all her endeavors to make Detroit a better place for women like us.”

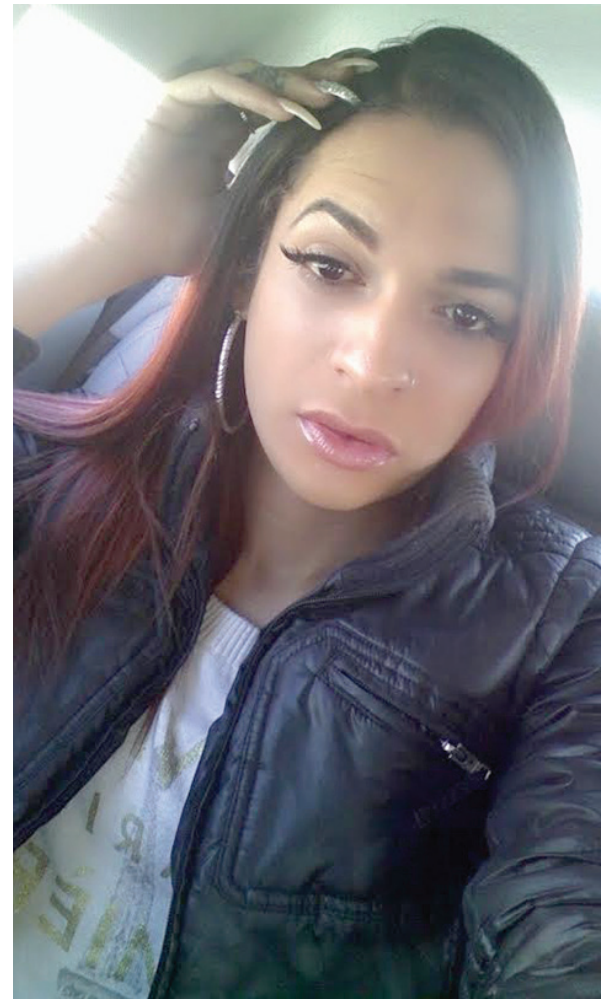
This includes reaching out to shelters and progressive churches, for example, that strive to be affirming of LGBTQ people.

“We don’t always feel welcome though in these spaces that are supposed to be safe for us. If we fear being ridiculed or judged, we will not seek out the necessities that we need,” said Abad, adding that she is committed to helping these social institutions to create more approachable settings, and to be more realistic when giving to transgender women of color living in poverty.

“If you’re handing out food boxes, we are grateful for the donations we receive, but as a community, I think we need to have more conversations about what will actually help us like pull-top cans for those of us who don’t walk around with a can opener, items that can easily fit into a grocery bag or backpack and don’t need much preparation because most trans women I know are sleeping in abandoned buildings with no place to heat up or store items,” she said. “Ask us what we need rather than assume. People don’t always think about non-food items like soap, toilet paper, toothbrushes and razors. These are things that cannot be purchased with food stamps.”

One Thing Leads to Another

Beyond helping transgender women of color with their basic needs, Abad is advocating for more educational opportunities, which can lead to meaningful employment. A study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force



Julisa Abad, director of transgender outreach with the Fair Michigan Justice Project. Photo courtesy of Julisa Abad

proves that discrimination against transgender people in the workplace starts long before the hiring process begins.

When it comes to education, 71 percent of transgender students of color reported being harassed at school. School dropouts because of bullying, paired with countless and expensive barriers to receive identification documents that match a transgender person’s gender expression, prevent finding gainful employment.

Abad understands the key to finding a job is education. Without one, the unemployment rate for transgender women of color will continue to rise. It’s four times higher than the general population, according to a 2015 report by the Human Rights Commission.

“Again, one issue leads to another. With no education we can’t find a job. Without a job, we cannot afford hormones, unless we find a place that distributes them for free. With no

See Trans Women Access page 10

HHS Seeks to Dump LGBT Elders from U.S. Health Survey

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

LGBT advocacy groups are opposing the Trump administration's announced plans to remove questions seeking to identify gay, lesbian and bisexual elders in a U.S. health survey, saying the move represents a systematic plan to undermine LGBT progress.

Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders announced Monday the launch of a campaign to oppose the Department of Health & Human Services' proposed elimination of the questions from the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants, or NSOAAAP. The survey is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of programs funded by the Older Americans Act, such as services for home-delivered meals, homemaker services and the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

Michael Adams, CEO of SAGE, said in a statement the proposed change jeopardizes assurances LGBT elders will receive benefits under those programs.

"Caring about our LGBT elders means making sure they have access to publicly funded senior services, which can be literally life-saving," Adams said. "Now, it appears that the Trump administration wants to make believe LGBT older people don't exist, by erasing them from this critically important survey. We insist that this decision be reversed and that the federal government commit to serving all elders in need, including those who are LGBT."

The Trump administration announced plans to remove the sexual-orientation questions from the NSOAAAP shortly after the confirmation of Tom Price as secretary of health and human services.

As a U.S. lawmaker, Price had an anti-LGBT record, including support for a U.S. constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage nationwide and opposition to hate crimes protections legislation, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal and a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. In 2013, Price participated in an event call hosted by Tea Party Unity and said a caller was "absolutely right" about potentially negative health and fiscal impacts of measures promoting LGBT rights.

The declaration that HHS was considering eliminating the notices was published March 13 in the Federal Register, the daily journal of the U.S. government that includes rule changes.

LGBT elders or questions on U.S. surveys are nowhere explicitly found in the notice. Instead, the notice provides a link to descriptions of previous surveys and a link to a proposed draft of the 2017 survey, incorrectly saying there will "no change" to the new survey. But a look at the survey reveals a change: The elimination of a question on whether respondents identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, which had been included in each annual survey since 2014.

According to the notice, federal agencies are required under the Paperwork Reduction Act to allow 60 days for a public comment period on changes in the collection of information and those are due May 12.

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► Trans Women Access

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hormones, we will not look the way we authentically feel and cannot comfortably present ourselves to the world," said Abad, noting that a proper ID and a higher education doesn't necessarily matter to employers if you aren't passable.

This lack of employment opportunity leaves many transgender women of color no choice but to engage in survival sex work, particularly in the 6 Mile and Woodward area.

"Many trans women of color are literally dependent on this to get their next meal, pay for a hotel room, or offer someone money to crash at their house for a little while," she said. "And they don't like doing this. It's not an ideal job. They don't dream as a little kid about growing up to be a prostitute."

Abad said the psychological distress of surviving this way can lead to substance abuse, yet another barrier to overcome.

"There are certain things trans women mentally go through to prepare themselves to be sexual when they really don't feel like it. They manage life in this way under the influence of drugs and alcohol to do what they have to do. So not only are they prostituting now to survive, they are prostituting to feed an addiction."

It's when they take these risks that most transgender women of color face devastating amounts of violence, and the criminalization of sex work leaves them even more vulnerable. Research shows that transgender women of color are often victimized by the people whose job it is to protect them: police officers. They are six times more likely to experience physical violence than white cisgender people, according to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. It's with this in mind that Abad accepted the position of parliamentarian on the Detroit Police Department's LGBT Advisory Board. DPD Chief James Craig created this board – made up of community members and advocates – in September 2015 in response to a sharp increase in reported crimes against LGBTQ citizens in Detroit.

"From an officer standpoint, I believe this relationship holds a special yet significant place in both law enforcement and LGBTQ community relations. This ensures that LGBTQ people's concerns are heard by the police department and helps us better support each other moving forward," said the DPD's LGBT Liaison Officer Dani Woods.

"We are having conversations and seeing movements in the past couple of years that were once unheard of. For all of us out here trying to make a difference, when potential allies are asking how they can help, it shows that people are paying

“We are having conversations and seeing movements in the past couple of years that were once unheard of. For all of us out here trying to make a difference, when potential allies are asking how they can help, it shows that people are paying attention and want to help.”

– DPD's LGBT Liaison Officer Dani Woods.



attention and want to help. But in order to make a difference, Woods said we need to work better together.

"All differences aside – the past is exactly what it is, the past. We definitely cannot ignore injustices or misfortunes, but we can learn from them and build a better community focused on equality, respect, well-being, and education. These are the things that Julisa participates in, advocates for, and exemplifies, but it takes more than just her. We need more involvement from the community as a whole. The community has to become more hands on."

A Step Toward Justice

Abad's relationship with local law enforcement and within the transgender community made her the ideal candidate for employment with the FMJP.

"Sometimes reporting a crime buys you a whole lot more trouble. When people are victimized and have no choice but to return to the same place where they were, it's dangerous for them," said FMJP Special Prosecutor Jaimie Powell Horowitz. "Julisa's ability to help victims find placement or a safe space to get back on their feet while a case is ongoing has been extremely helpful."

On behalf of the FMJP, a non-profit organization, Abad ensures that transgender people are supported throughout the process of seeking justice.

"Victims are extremely concerned about public denigration in a courtroom setting," said Powell Horowitz, who stresses the importance of being respectful during investigations and prosecutions.

By way of the Transgender Interaction Policy, employees in the Wayne County prosecutor's office are required to treat transgender, intersex and gender-nonconforming individuals in a manner appropriate to the individual's gender identity, which may be different from the sex the individual was assigned at birth or listed on official identification documents. The policy – the first of its kind in the

state of Michigan – was implemented by the prosecutor's office, in association with the FMJP, in November 2016 to enhance productive interactions between prosecutors, crime victims and witnesses who are transgender.

"It is impossible to overstate the importance of this action. A person's gender identity involves one's innermost concept of how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. This policy requires that each person's gender identity be recognized and respected," said Abad, who has proven herself to be an asset to the FMJP.

"She's really energetic. She's an extraordinary person and is one of the kindest people I've met," said Powell Horowitz. "She shows empathy for everyone that she comes across and has really been a positive influence on me."

When asked if it feels like things are changing since she began advocating for herself six years ago, and now for her community, Abad said things have been slightly better.

"I know things won't change overnight, but I do believe there has been a little bit of growth," she said. "When you're not working with us on an everyday basis and you're not hearing about the work we're doing at the grassroots level, it might feel like there is no progression, but there has been. Some organizations are now creating spaces for trans women to have a voice, to sit down and talk about what we need and what will help us."

It's through these conversations and cultural competency trainings that Abad believes she can help members of the community learn how to be better allies for transgender women of color. She said, "Start by really listening, educate yourself, support legal protections, and step out of your comfort zone to confront the way society talks about and treats us. There is a lot of work to do and we can't reach solidarity alone."

To connect with Julisa Abad or to learn more about how to help, call 877-432-4764, Ext 3, or email lgbtteamabad@gmail.com.



► Elder Survey

Continued from p. 10

Laura Durso, vice president for LGBT research and communications at the Center for American Progress, said in a statement the proposed roll back makes it impossible to know whether the Department of Health and Human Services is equitably serving LGBT people in need.

“Without the information provided in these surveys, we can’t ensure that LGBT seniors have equal access to important government services or that LGBT people with disabilities have equal access to independent living services that empower them to live full and self-determined lives,” Durso said. “We can’t ensure that the administration is fulfilling its duty to eliminate the barriers that shut vulnerable LGBT people out of the safety net. By walking back data collection on LGBT populations, this administration is saying that they would rather erase disparities than end them.”

No question in the survey ever addressed transgender status. Even during the Obama years, the U.S. government never included a question in its surveys seeking to identify the transgender population in the United States, citing difficulty in asking the questions and being assured of responses. The absence of those questions was a source of frustration at the National Center for Transgender Equality, which collected its own information on the transgender population in its 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey.

Kelly Mack, an HHS spokesperson, said in response to the criticism the question on sexual orientation was included in previous surveys as part of a trial effort, but is now being eliminated because it didn’t yield sufficient information.

“The questions have been included in previous ACL surveys as part of a pilot test,” Mack said. “These pilot questions are no longer proposed for inclusion in the surveys. The sample size of responses to these

questions while piloted has not been sufficient enough to date to allow for reliability and reporting.”

Mack added HHS will seek to receive public comment on the proposed 2017 survey for an additional 30 days beyond the 60 days required under the Paperwork Reduction Act. A clarification for the Federal Register notice, Mack said, will “be out soon to highlight the proposed changes.”

The proposed elimination of the questions on sexual orientation in the NSOAP is the latest move from the Trump administration to reverse administrative changes in favor of LGBT people seen under President Obama.

Most notably, one such change was the elimination of guidance to schools assuring transgender kids have access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity. Earlier this month, the Department of Housing & Urban Development also withdrew plans seeking to ensure homeless shelters notify transgender people they can’t be subject to discrimination there and for a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, drew a contrast in a statement between these LGBT rollbacks and the State Department’s appointment of anti-LGBT activists to the U.S. delegation to the U.N.’s 61st annual Commission on the Status of Women.

“Apparently, President Trump doesn’t want the government to know, or want anyone else to know, basic information about the lives of LGBT older Americans, LGBT people with disabilities, or LGBT youth facing homelessness,” Keisling said. “He doesn’t want people to know they can’t be kicked out of shelters for being LGBT. But he does want a group like C-FAM -- which promotes ugly lies and slurs about transgender people--to represent our country to the world.”

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

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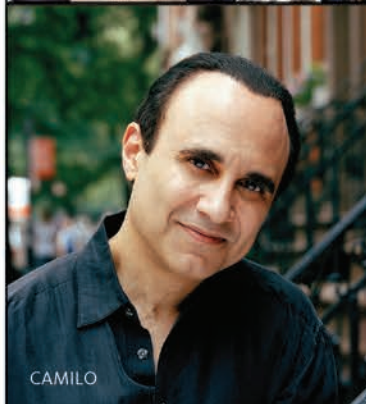
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Attendees at Wedding Expo Express ‘Relief’ to Find Welcoming LGBT-Friendly Businesses

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The seventh annual Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo, hosted on Sunday by Between The Lines at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit, drew a crowd of more than 600 people who came out to visit with more than 100 LGBT-friendly vendors. In addition, the Expo featured three fashion shows, live entertainment, special guests, food and cake tastings, and plenty of giveaways.

“There were a lot of goodies,” said Christy Amon, who attended the Expo for the first time with her fiancé Michelle Abraham. “It was a lot of fun. We’ve been to other expos and there were not as many giveaways.”

Amon, who plans to marry Abraham in October, said she found both a cake bakery and a photo booth she was interested in using for her ceremony, but that she appreciated the entire Expo.

“I enjoyed it all,” she said. The Expo, which returned to MotorCity for the second year in a row, is still the region’s only LGBT-specific destination for couples planning their wedding to meet with inclusive vendors who respect their unions. It’s also the perfect place for straight allies to show their support for these vendors and the LGBT community.

One of those allies was Shannon Abraham, who is actually Amon’s mother.

“I thought the Expo was fabulous,” said Abraham. “I appreciate the love that’s in the room and how everybody is coming together for this purpose.”

Steve Armes and Brandon Crawford are planning to marry in September of 2018. The couple expressed their appreciation for the wide range of vendors that took place in the Expo.

“We found a lot of things to take into consideration,” said Crawford. “I’d have to say the variety was great. There was everything from venues to different styles of suits to photo booths and DJ’s. It’s like an all-inclusive one-stop shop.”

Jamie Ebaugh and Darren McGhee, who have been together 17 years and plan to tie the knot sometime in 2018, agreed.

“I just liked the variety of vendors that were out there,” said Ebaugh. “It’s all about making sure we find the right choice.”

Alex Myers and Jacob Pollet, together for almost four years, walked away from the Expo with several vendors in mind for their



ceremony.

“I think we found a wedding band, a jeweler, a florist and a couple of different options for venues,” Myers said. “We already had our minister picked out.”

Venue vendors appeared to be very popular this year, according to Mary Seigle and Alexandria Oswald, who attended the Expo for the first time.

“There were a couple of venues that looked

really nice, and possibly the bridal salon,” said Oswald. “Everyone was just very friendly and willing to help with the questions we had. It was a great starting point for us.”

Shannon D’Annunzio and Danielle Turner are also planning to marry in the fall of 2018. While it was Turner’s first time at the Expo, her fiancé had last been two years ago.

“The first year I came was right before we were going to find out that marriage equality

“It’s a relief to know that I can reach out to these people and I know that they’re not going to say ‘I’m not going to make you a cake,’” she said. “It’s nice to know that they’re all here by choice. It’s just a very nice atmosphere and a lot of fun to be here.”

– Danielle Turner

was going to happen,” said D’Annunzio. “There was definitely a lot of excitement then. But now it’s just a big relief. A lot more people are coming out. It’s really nice to see the community coming together. It’s just a different atmosphere compared to what it’s been before. Shoot, I even won something.”

At the beginning of their wedding planning journey, Turner said she picked up lots of good tips and ideas.

“There were a lot of really good venues, plus a lot of cake that I like,” she said. “Bombshell Bridal was here, which I really appreciated because as a plus size lady it’s hard enough to find any kind of formal wear as it is. So to see the representation of not only different identifies but different bodies and different types of people as a whole was great.”

Knowing the vendors were all LGBT-friendly made the Expo special for Turner.

“It’s a relief to know that I can reach out to these people and I know that they’re not going to say ‘I’m not going to make you a cake,’” she said. “It’s nice to know that they’re all here by choice. It’s just a very nice atmosphere and a lot of fun to be here.”

The new Expo website, a BTL project, helps LGBT people write their own rules for their celebrations all year round. Visit www.MILGBTWedding.com designed with same-sex couples and their allies in mind to make wedding planning accessible, easier and more fun

Pre-Expo Workshop Focuses on Status of LGBT Rights Post-Marriage Equality

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

DETROIT - The seventh annual Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo, which took place Sunday at the MotorCity Hotel Casino, kicked off this year with “LGBT Rights in the Trump Era - What Lies Ahead,” a workshop that drew about 30 attendees. Speakers included Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the LGBT Project of the Michigan ACLU and attorney Angie Martell of the Iglesia Martell Law Firm in Ann Arbor.

“As a lesbian and leader in the LGBT community, our community was traumatized on Nov. 8,” said Jan Stevenson, co-publisher of *Between The Lines*, to the crowd. “At the paper we were inundated with questions about what does this mean? What does this mean for marriage? What does this mean for our rights? The questions are daunting.”

Kaplan spoke to the momentous Supreme Court decision that granted gays marriage equality.

“We can’t underestimate how monumental that decision was,” he said. “As we look at that and appreciate that, we have to also not forget the collateral damage that was left behind from so many years of states like the state of Michigan denying same-sex couples the right to marry, denying recognition of our families, and people who have been left behind based on that Obergefell decision. So in other words, there’s still more work we have to do in our state.”

Kaplan spoke on a variety of issues, including parenting rights for LGBT couples.

“Right now in the state of Michigan, the Department of Vital Records, if a child is born during a same-sex marriage they will put both parents on the birth certificate,” said Kaplan. “They will issue a birth certificate that says both are the parents. However, that birth certificate is not a legal order or parentage.”

The result is that the ACLU encourages non-biological parents to file for a stepparent adoption for legal protection.

“It’s really not applicable to the situation,”

said Kaplan. “In other words, this is not a stepparent. These are two people who have come together and decided to raise a family and they’re both parents to the child. So we need to come up with a mechanism for this scenario, for same sex couples, that don’t require people to have to go through an adoption process just to get a legal order recognizing that both of them are parents.”

“So as you can see, these are left over things from years of Michigan law and Michigan jurisprudence having a very limited and very narrow view of what constitutes a family that certainly doesn’t take into account the diversity of Michigan families including LGBT families,” he continued.

Traditional adoption for same-sex couples is also under attack in Michigan. Just two weeks before the Supreme Court decision came down in 2015, a law was passed that allowed faith-based foster care and adoption agencies that have contracts with the state of Michigan to refuse to work with certain families based on their religious beliefs.

“What we’ve seen since the passage of this law is that certain faith-based agencies like Bethany Christian Services and Catholic Charities of Michigan, who have the majority of contracts with the state of Michigan, if a same sex couple calls them up and says they’re interested in doing an open adoption, a public adoption, they’re told, ‘Sorry we don’t work with you and you’ll have to go somewhere else.’ [This is] clearly discriminatory and clearly raising some serious constitutional issues.”

The excuse of religious freedom is being used more and more these days in an effort to allow individuals and businesses the right to discriminate against LGBT couples.

“In the past two years there have been more than 300 pieces of legislation introduced in state legislatures that our anti-LGBT,” said Kaplan. “One of the main mechanisms to try to undo or to try to lessen the rights afforded by marriage equality is by using religion as a basis to exempt from laws and to allow



Angie Martell of the Iglesia Martell Law Firm in Ann Arbor and Jay Kaplan of the ACLU of Michigan discuss LGBT rights in the era of Trump at the Expo Sunday. Photos by Jason Michael

for discrimination... We’ve seen kind of new slippery slope that’s been created through our federal courts recognizing businesses as well as individuals that the businesses’ and individuals’ religious beliefs can sometimes be used to exempt them from laws when they’re engaged in nonreligious activity.”

Looking ahead, Martell encouraged attendees to stay alert.

“We’re a strong resilient people,” said Martell. “We have marched in Washington and we have fought for our lives for a very, very long time. I remember times when we were called homosexual. We were driven outside and beaten by police. Everybody remember Anita Bryant? There’s been conversion therapy. There’s been lobotomies. There’s been a whole plethora of things and we’ve refused to be silent. So today we are no different and are in no different a position. And I want us to remember that, because we have strength amongst us and we are the face of America.”

Martell reminds attendees there will be tough times.

“I know there has been a chipping away

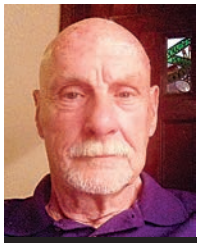
of Obergefell and that’s what I think Jay pointed out,” she said. “We have to be very vigilant about our rights. You have to protect yourselves and your families. We don’t have LGBT protections in the state of Michigan. We have no civil rights. Elliot Larsen does not protect us. We can be denied housing. We can be denied food in a restaurant. We can be denied employment. What Obergefell does is it protects marriage. So your status as a married person is protected. I don’t see that changing ... what I do see is a chipping away at certain benefits and rights through what Jay talked about, which is the religious exemptions. That people will say I don’t want to pick this person up in an ambulance because it violates my religious rights.”

Martell reinforces that LGBT people should not be discouraged.

“We shouldn’t be scared and fearful,” she said. “But we need to be awake and aware.”

For more information from Angie Martell, call 734-369-2331, email info@iglesiamartell.com or visit <http://iglesiamartell.com>. To reach Jay Kaplan, email kaplan@aclumich.org or visit www.aclumich.org.





Blue-Eyed Winks at T Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

With all due respect (and a plethora of apologies) to my manifold, religiously eclectic, catholic – as in universal –PG readership, I spent my 2017 St. Patrick’s Day observance in Mar-a-Lago, Fla. It was a first for me.

If the resort name seems vaguely familiar, it’s the location of the 45-hole golf course where our very under-par president seeks frequent, and repeated, retreat from the manifold duties he has allocated to his sundry and assorted Republican caddy appointees, all of whom he’s so generously indebted to.

Mar-a-Lago is also the nearby home of the tax-free Cathedral Church of the Blue-Eyed Jesus, Inc., a rapidly growing movement with spiritual doctrine of astounding simplicity (and red-white-and-blue appeal) that seems during the past one hundred days or so to be sweeping across our spiritually undernourished country.

The Cathedral itself appears to be designed by an architect with marked Windex proclivities. It’s somehow a cross between a traditional White House, a Manhattan showbiz tower, and a neon’d Sear’s neighborhood shrine for bargain items for last-chance redemption.

There are dozens and dozens of Cathedral stained glass windows, many, many of which have curious purple and red stains of varying intensities and cryptic illuminations.

“You’re oh so lucky, my friend. You can pass. You have blue eyes. A sure sign of religious sincerity.”

What appears to be a gigantic Last Supper is dominated by a glass-tinted blond halo’d savior, with surprisingly small and miraculously semi-stigmatic hands open in cautious blessing.

I, of course, was concerned. Should I or shouldn’t I attend services there? – a slight concession to backhome Detroit’s St. Pat – as an openly gay person, risking religious censure common to most evangelical cross-country denominations. The gay concierge at my beachside hotel said not to worry.

“You’re oh so lucky, my friend. You can pass. You have blue eyes. A sure sign of religious sincerity. The fact that you’re tall like Jesus – he was 6’ 2” – waist size 32” – is a plus. If you’re really worried, sit in the last two rows of the balcony, where concerned gays usually sit. And, just pretend to hum along with the music. Hymns are familiar. Words are different.”

Determined not to exhibit any status as an unbelieving sinner I sat boldly in the third row on the aisle, daringly winking my left blue eye at an usher who happened to be cute. While I was careful not to donate my proverbial Widow’s Mite to the Cathedral, I took copious mental notes during the sermon, “His Blue Eyes Are On the Sparrow.”

The sermon was short. Delivered dramatically! If somewhat too repetitive for my apolitical taste! In essence, said Cathedral Church Pastor Franklin P. Falwell, “The key to eternal life is simple: Jesus has blue eyes. Always had. Always will. Believe that. Live and vote accordingly. And you will be saved. That’s it.

“In spite of Obamacare. School lunches. Misspent funding for the arts and environmental concerns. Brown-eyed people and their nearsighted religions. Crosseyed Separation of Church and State. A Constitution that’s myopic and spiritually outdated. Amen!”

I didn’t stay for the traditional altar call. Hundreds flocked to the altar weeping and wailing. The choir sang, “Washed in the Blood of the Blue-Eyed Lamb” as I hastily exited. I swear to God I saw a halo around the choir director’s puffy, vibrating face.

Oh, no . . . It just couldn’t be . . . Truth with a capital T. And stranger than fiction.



View From The Bottom

Have Your Cake

An Ode to Making Marriage Your Own Slice of Heaven



BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

Cake is often the centerpiece of our celebrations. And depending on the occasion – birthdays, baptisms, and most of all, weddings – our preferential palates can give away bits and pieces of our identities with each bite.

White cake with white buttercream frosting implies conservative, while banana nut can feel Boho. As for vegan, dairy and sugar free – bleh.

At the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo on March 26, personalization was the most appealing promise. When marriage has historically left little wiggle-room for interpretation, customizing your ceremony can feel like a coup.

Generally, couples are quickly forgiven for

ceremonial deviations that may be considered in “bad taste.” Yet when we are faced with arrangements that challenge our social conventions like open marriages, we are often not so toleraNT. Could we be clinging to the bad moralizing that was once used to oppress us?

It’s an age-old issue that only feels new now that same-sex couples can get married, explains philosopher and author John Corvino, who married his partner of 15 years last year.

“Do I think that some gay people who have been the object of bad moralizing and other people’s being busybodies then turn around and do that themselves? Yes, absolutely. Do I think that some gay people forget

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“ I mean relationships are challenging for everybody. But I think they are particularly challenging for those who lack the social support of family, of their community and so on. And the moral objections to same sex relationships have been the primary way in which we have experienced that lack of support.”

– John Corvino

to approach people with the same open mind that we ourselves expect from people? Yes. But I don't think that any of that is unique to gay people,” he says. “I think every marriage, heterosexual or same-sex, has to figure out the specific contours of marriage and what those mean in their particular circumstance.”

Next month marks the 25th anniversary of Corvino's magnum opus “What's Morally Wrong With Homosexuality?” He first delivered the lecture as a grad student at the University of Texas at Austin in 1992. But with age, the lecture's central message, like the author, has appreciated in value.

“The moral argument that many of us heard growing up and still hear today can function as a kind of challenge to intimacy, a challenge to relationships, and can be extra baggage that we carry as we enter into a relationship,” he says. “I mean relationships are challenging for everybody. But I think they are particularly challenging for those who lack the social support of family, of their community and so on. And the moral objections to same sex relationships have

been the primary way in which we have experienced that lack of support.”

In hindsight, homosexuality's “rightness” seems cut and dried – thanks, in part, to Corvino's work to spread the gospel. Similarly, as our community collectively refines the comforts of our commitments, marriage will be more inclusive.

“There are legal aspects of it. There are social aspects of it that depend upon a shared understanding across a community. So the challenge is recognizing that shared understanding and also figuring out how to apply it in specific lives.”

His advice? “The sort of wise crack answer I give is ‘low expectations.’ But I only mean that half jokingly in the sense that people put a great deal of pressure on relationships, expecting their spouse to be their everything at every moment and to meet all of their emotional, physical, intellectual, social needs all the time,” he says. “That makes for very nice engagement card poetry, but I don't think that it makes for a good theory of a successful marriage. I think that the people coming together in marriage and living together in marriage have to be complete persons. And as complete persons, they recognize that they help each other, they support each other, but they continue to be complete persons.”

Long before couples say, “I do,” physical and emotional exchanges begin to bond our separate existences. Shared dresser drawers grow to closet space and sides of the bed. Soon, you're finishing each other's sentences and then sometimes you need no words at all. It's easy to feel like you've been “married” when you share everything but a last name, all the more reason to make sure it is official in writing.

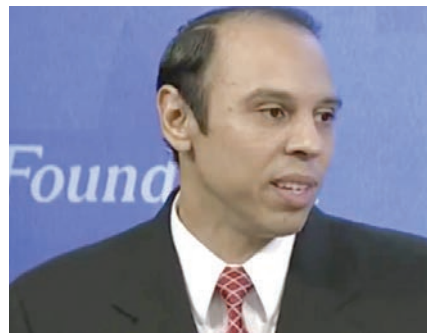
We've fought for that much, to have our cake and eat it, too.

Emell Derra Adolphus is a columnist who examines gay sex, people & politics in metro Detroit. Commiserate and share your stories at EmellDerraAdolphus@gmail.com.

Creep of the Week

Roger Severino

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



He believes that medical professionals should be allowed to discriminate against transgender patients if said medical professional believes “that maleness and femaleness are biological realities to be respected and affirmed, not altered or treated as diseases.”

Honestly, it's hard to keep up. Even with so many positions in the Trump Administration left unfilled, he's still stacking the deck with swamp monsters. It seems like, in order to work in this administration, you have to have an utter disdain for whatever you're going to be in charge of. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos hates public education. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson thinks the State Department is useless. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry is currently channeling his energy into bitching about the election of a gay student body president at Texas A&M.

And then there's Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price, who cares about neither health nor humans, especially not LGBTQ humans.

So it should come as no surprise, but is still incredibly disappointing and gross, that Trump appointed Roger Severino to lead the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights.

So who is Roger Severino? Oh, just some guy from the rabidly anti-gay Heritage Foundation who use to be the director of the DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society (yes, that DeVos).

Severino's no fan of Section 1557, the nondiscrimination provision of the Affordable Care Act. He believes that medical professionals should be allowed to discriminate against transgender patients if said medical professional believes “that maleness and femaleness are biological realities to be respected and affirmed, not altered or treated as diseases.”

Which is interesting because while he claims to respect the biological realness of women, he sure doesn't support their reproductive rights.

He also thinks marriage equality is a threat to religious liberty because it's a religious right to discriminate against icky gay people, thank you very much.

Severino is an ardent defender of North Carolina's anti-LGBT law HB2, often referred to as “the bathroom bill” because of its dumbfuckery telling trans people

they basically can't use public restrooms. HB2 has cost North Carolina, according to the Associated Press, nearly \$4 billion dollars. But that's a small price to pay for dehumanizing trans folk, apparently!

Considering that Severino's job is now to ensure “that people have equal access and opportunities to participate in certain health care and human services programs without unlawful discrimination,” I'm sure he'll protect LGBTQ rights real good.

“I could not think of a more dangerous person to head up the Office of Civil Rights at HHS,” Senior Vice President of Policy and Political Affairs of Human Rights Campaign JoDee Winterhof said in a statement. “Once again, Donald Trump is declaring war against our community by appointing anti-LGBTQ people at all levels of his administration. Mr. Severino takes pride in being a stark opponent of the LGBTQ community and has made it clear that his number one priority is to vilify and degrade us.”

Remember when Trump said “LGBTQ” during the Republican National Convention and people were all, “He's a champion of equality!” It was a silly thing to believe then, and it's completely delusional to believe now.

Severino's appointment is, as Executive Director of National Center for Transgender Equality Mara Keisling, said in a statement, essentially “the fox in charge of the hen house.”

Keisling continued, “He has made attacking women's and LGBT people's access to health care one of the centerpieces of his career, while his baseless claims about protections for transgender people—repeated over and over without any regard for the consequences on transgender people's lives—betray a fundamental misunderstanding of federal civil rights laws, medical science, the reality of what it means to be transgender.”

In other words, we can expect that the disregard for transgender health and lives to worsen under Severino, which is, no doubt, exactly how he wants it.

Michigan Non Profit Resource

Have You Experienced Discrimination?

If you or someone you know has experienced discrimination, intimidation, harassment or violence because of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity,

contact Equality Michigan's Department of Victim Services at :

report@equalitymi.org or call 1-866-962-1147

Equality Michigan is working with state legislators to update the Ethnic Intimidation Act to include proper protections for the gay and transgender community.

To get involved in the movement for better hate crimes law, contact policy@equalitymi.org.

Hundreds more resources can be found at
www.PrideSource.com

Gorsuch Calls Same-Sex Marriage 'Settled Law'

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Amid opposition from LGBT rights supporters to the confirmation of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, President Trump's nominee referred to same-sex marriage as "settled law," but was otherwise relatively tight-lipped about his views during his confirmation hearings.

Grilled by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee about his judicial philosophy, U.S. Circuit Judge Gorsuch on Tuesday maintained "equal justice under the law" -- words enshrined at the top of the Supreme Court building -- was a "radical" idea, but one he'd uphold, when asked about application of the law to LGBT people.

Pressed by Sen. Al Franken about marriage equality specifically, Gorsuch replied, "It is absolutely settled law," but added, "there's ongoing litigation about its impact and its application right now."

When Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) asked the nominee about his views on LGBT people, Gorsuch seemed irritated and responded, "What about them?" and as Durbin sought to clarify, the nominee retorted, "They're people."

Asked by Durbin to point to a statement or decision favorable to LGBT people, Gorsuch offered his judicial philosophy that all individuals are entitled to equal treatment under the law.

"I've tried to treat each case and each person as a person, not a this kind of person, not a that kind of person -- a person," Gorsuch said. "Equal justice under law is a radical promise in the history of mankind."

Durbin pressed Gorsuch to clarify whether that applies to sexual orientation, prompting Gorsuch to invoke the 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision in favor of same-sex marriage.

"The Supreme Court of the United States has held that single-sex marriage is protected by the Constitution," Gorsuch said, using "single-sex marriage" terminology commonly cited in Europe, but rarely in the United States, to refer to marriage equality.

Durbin brought up LGBT people in the context of questioning of John Finnis, whom Gorsuch identified as a mentor during his time at Oxford University. A conservative one-time law professor, Finnis delivered a deposition in the early '90s in favor of Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2, a law that prohibited cities from enacting non-discrimination ordinances based on sexual orientation. The Supreme Court struck down the law in the 1996 *Romer v. Evans* decision.

Referencing a passage in which Finnis

compared same-sex relationships to bestiality and said antipathy toward LGBT people is based not just on religious reasons, but societal views, Durbin asked Gorsuch whether he was aware of his mentor's statements.

"I know he testified in the *Romer* case," Gorsuch said. "I can't specifically recall the specifics of his testimony or that he gave a deposition."

When Durbin sought more information from Gorsuch on the impact Finnis had on his views, Gorsuch referred to rulings he made on the bench as a member of the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

"I think the best evidence is what I've written," Gorsuch said. "I've written or joined over 6 million words as a federal appellate judge. I've written a couple of books. I've been a lawyer and a judge for 25 or 30 years, and I guess I'd ask you, respectfully, to look at my credentials and my record."

In another exchange with Franken, Gorsuch conceded the issue of same-sex marriage is "settled" law, but acknowledged subsequent litigation is ongoing on its impact and kept his cards close to his vest on his personal views.

Referencing Gorsuch's help with former President George W. Bush's 2004 re-election campaign in Ohio as a member of "Lawyers for Bush," Franken noted that was the year the state had an anti-gay amendment on the ballot and asked the nominee whether same-sex marriage should be subjected to popular vote.

"Senator, I don't recall any involvement in that issue during that campaign," Gorsuch said. "I remember going to Ohio."

When Franken asked the nominee if he was aware of the marriage issue in 2004, Gorsuch replied, "Certainly, I was aware about it."

Pressed further by Franken for his views, Gorsuch added, "Any revelation about my personal views about this matter would indicate to people how I might rule as a judge. Mistakenly, but it might, and I have to be concerned about that."

When Franken pointed out the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in favor of same-sex marriage nationwide and asked Gorsuch how his views have changed since 2004, the nominee remain tight-lipped.

"My personal views, if were to begin speaking about my personal views on this subject, which every American has views on, would send a misleading signal to the American people," Gorsuch said.

The Minnesota Democrat sought to move on to another topic as Gorsuch said he wanted to finish his thought about not being able to disclose personal view, but Franken said, "You've given a version of this answer before. I understand."

The issue of marriage equality came up later in the hearing when Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) brought it up when asking Gorsuch about his views on whether the Constitution protects intimate and personal choices. Gorsuch again declined to express his personal views, but underscored the importance of the *Obergefell* decision as precedent.

"*Obergefell* is a precedent of the United States Supreme Court," Gorsuch said. "It entitles persons to engage in single-sex marriage. That's a right that the Supreme Court has recognized. It is a precedent of the United States Supreme Court entitled to all the deference to precedence of the United States Supreme Court, and that's quite a lot."

Originalism a Concern

Much of the concern over Gorsuch concerns his subscription to the judicial philosophy of originalism in which jurists seek to determine lawmakers' original intent of enacting statutes before ruling on them, a practice criticized as a means to deny justice to minority groups, including LGBT people. The late U.S. Associate Justice Antonin Scalia advocated that judicial viewpoint in his dissents to major gay rights cases, such as the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of same-sex marriage.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) sought clarification from Gorsuch on originalism, referencing, among other rulings, the 1996 Virginia Military Institute decision, which determined the state's exclusion of women from the school violated the right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment. Scalia, in his dissent, wrote the decision was creating a new Constitution, not keeping to the original meaning of the U.S. Constitution.

Asked by Klobuchar whether the ruling was based on the original meaning of the Constitution, Gorsuch kept his views to himself and said, "The majority in that case argued that it was." Gorsuch repeated his view the concept of equal protection under the law "is quite significant."

When the Minnesota Democrat asked Gorsuch whether he'd apply that approach to minority groups, such as women, LGBT people and racial minorities, Gorsuch replied, "A good judge applies the law without respect to persons. That's part of my judicial oath."

Seemingly unsatisfied with the response, Klobuchar pressed Gorsuch further, prompting him to reply, "I don't take account of the person before me. Everyone is equal under the eyes of the law."

The reluctance of Gorsuch to offer his views during the confirmation process is typical of nominees seeking confirmation to the Supreme

Court. As other nominees have done in the past, Gorsuch said disclosure of personal views or the appropriateness of a particular decision would suggest a bias on those issues if they came to him after winning confirmation.

Other decisions on which Gorsuch had no comment included the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the *Heller* decision affirming the Second Amendment right to own a firearm in D.C. and the *Citizens United* case allowing unlimited contributions from corporations and unions to political campaigns.

On rare occasions during the hearing, Gorsuch was more direct. Referencing Trump's pledge to appoint only justices who'd overturn a woman's right to have an abortion, Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-S.C.) asked Gorsuch if he made any private commitments to Trump to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but the nominee replied he didn't and was not asked to do so.

"I would have walked out the door," Gorsuch said. "That's not what judges do."

A group of 21 LGBT organizations led by Lambda Legal signed a joint letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee last week declaring their opposition to the nominee and urging rigorous questioning during the confirmation process.

Same-Sex Marriage Should Not Have Been Settled in Courts

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.

When asked by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) to respond to criticism over the op-ed, the nominee said he believes the courts, in fact, are a "very important place for the vindication of civil rights," but in many cases they aren't appropriate for change.

"I can report to you, having lived longer, as I did report to you in 2005 that the problem lies on both sides of the aisle, that I see lots of people who resort to the court more quickly than perhaps they should," Gorsuch said.

Much of the discontent over Gorsuch is also related to his 11th Circuit decision in the *Hobby Lobby* case, when he ruled the Religious Freedom Restoration Act affords

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“religious freedom” protections to not just people, but corporations, and the business chain could refuse health insurance to female employees that covered contraception. Gorsuch joined a similar decision against the Obamacare contraception mandate in the Little Sisters of the Poor case.

At a time when many businesses and individuals are asserting civil rights laws prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination unfairly penalize their religious beliefs, some LGBT rights supporters fear Gorsuch could apply that “religious freedom” reasoning in those cases to institute carve-outs for anti-LGBT discrimination.

Under questioning from Durbin, Gorsuch walked through his reasoning in the Hobby Lobby case, maintaining his ruling is based on the belief the U.S. government could make other accommodations for employees seeking contraception other than employer-based health coverage.

“Does the government have a compelling interest in the ACA in providing contraceptive care? The Supreme Court of the United States said, ‘We assume yes. We take that as given,’ Gorsuch said. ‘The question becomes is it narrow tailored to require the Green family to provide it. The answer there the Supreme Court reached in precedent binding on us now, and we reached in anticipation, is no, that wasn’t as strictly tailored as it could be because the government had provided different accommodations to churches and to other religious entities.’”

Other LGBT criticism over Gorsuch relates to his decisions on transgender rights. In 2015, Gorsuch joined an 11th Circuit decision against a transgender inmate who alleged she was denied transition-related hormone therapy and unfairly housed in an all-male facility. In 2009, Gorsuch also joined an unpublished opinion finding the provision against sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 doesn’t apply to transgender people.

Jim Obergefell, the lead plaintiff in the case that brought same-sex marriage nationwide, wrote in an op-ed for Time magazine on the second day of the Gorsuch hearings he opposes the nominee on the basis that he could undermine LGBT rights, including same-sex marriage, at the Supreme Court.

Noting the narrow 5-4 marriage decision was written by U.S. Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was only confirmed to the Supreme Court after the Senate rejected President Reagan’s nomination of anti-LGBT judge Robert Bork, Obergefell wrote, “we must be as cautious as we were in 1987.”

“As during the Bork hearings, we must again demand that the next justice appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States continue to uphold our Constitution -- including equal protections for LGBTQ people under the law,” Obergefell wrote. “Donald Trump, in nominating Neil Gorsuch, noted his desire to pick a justice in the mold of Antonin Scalia. That should send chills down the spine of everyone who cares about equality and civil rights.”

Eric Lesh, fair courts director for Lambda Legal, said Gorsuch’s hearing did nothing to allay concerns about the his potential confirmation to the Supreme Court because he “refused to answer very fundamental questions.”

“He kept dodging and weaving and running away from his record, which is clearly hostile to the rights of LGBT people and people living with HIV,” Lesh said. “So, we need answers, and that doesn’t change Lambda Legal’s conclusion that based on a comprehensive review of his record, his views on civil rights issues, on LGBT equality are fundamentally at odds with the notion that our community is entitled to equal dignity, justice, liberty under the law.”

AP: Anti-LGBT HB2 Will Cost North Carolina \$3.76 Billion

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The anti-LGBT law in North Carolina barring transgender people from using certain restrooms consistent with their gender identity will cost the state \$3.76 billion as a result of economic boycott over the course of a dozen years, an Associated Press analysis has found.

North Carolina’s House Bill 2, which has been on the books exactly one year as of Thursday, will the cost the state \$3.76 billion after Gov. Pat McCrory signed it into law as result of the cancellation of business expansions, performers nixing events and visitors boycotting the state.

The AP unveils its analysis after the NCAA has North Carolina that it won’t place championship games in the state through 2022 if HB2 remains on the books, which would be a major economic blow for the state.

Chris Sgro, executive director of Equality North Carolina, said in a statement the AP analysis demonstrates HB2 has caused continued harm to the economic climate in North Carolina.

“Before I was an advocate, I worked in economic development, and I find this number is extraordinary,” Sgro said. “This number is extraordinary not just because it represents billions

in economic harm, but because we know underneath there is an untold story of incredible damage that North Carolinians will suffer for decades to come if we don’t fully repeal HB2. It is frustrating, and must be infuriating to North Carolinians, that Phil Berger and Tim Moore cannot put aside their political egos and instead insist on inflicting this kind of harm on their constituents.”

HB2 bars municipalities in North Carolina from enacting pro-LGBT non-discrimination, undoing a recently enacted ordinance in Charlotte, and bars transgender people from using the restroom in schools and government buildings consistent with their gender identity.

Despite efforts from LGBT advocates and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper to repeal the law, the Republican-controlled state legislature has refused to act and alternative proposals have been shot down by either side. One proposal Republicans leaders floated last week was a “religious freedom” bill. Much like similar measures that ignited firestorms in Arizona and Indiana, the bill would allow Indiana residents a judicial right action if they feel state and local governments are infringing on their religious liberties.

According to the AP, HB2’s supporters say its costs are insignificant compared for an economy valued at more than \$500 billion a year. Defenders of the anti-LGBT reportedly say they’re fine with costs if the law prevents sexual predators posing as transgender people from entering private spaces to molest women and girls -- a threat thoroughly debunked as non-existent based on the history of other jurisdictions that have non-discrimination laws and have experienced no problems.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement the time has come for North Carolina to repeal House Bill 2 to end the economic hardship facing the state.

“In light of the AP’s jaw-dropping new economic analysis, every North Carolina lawmaker should have to answer a simple question: Is discrimination worth nearly \$4 billion dollars?” Griffin said. “In addition to the personal suffering this bill has caused LGBTQ people over the last year, it has already inflicted incredible damage upon the state’s economy. It’s time for lawmakers to fully repeal HB2 once and for all, because the price of their inaction is simply too great.”

GOP Former Senator Calls on Trump to Reject ‘Religious Freedom’ Order

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Former Republican Sen. Alan Simpson has become the latest voice calling on President Trump to reject a “religious freedom” order that would undermine LGBT rights.

In an op-ed published Wednesday in The New York Times, Simpson responds to what he says are “fringe-right groups and raging extremists” calling on Trump to sign an executive order enabling discrimination against LGBT people. Simpson’s advice to Trump is simple: “Don’t do it.”

“Aside from being cruel and ugly, permitting discrimination against LGBT Americans in the name of religion would fuel the progressive Democratic base, which devours these morsels of archaic predisposition and the expertly seizes on them -- and the big bucks it raises would most likely be used to take you to court,” Simpson writes.

In a 2013 interview with the Washington Blade, Simpson said he sees no contradiction in his longstanding role as a conservative Republican and his support for equal rights for LGBT people. Simpson was among the Republicans who signed a brief in 2015 calling for the U.S. Supreme Court to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide, although he didn’t sign a similar brief in 2013 calling on the court to overturn California’s Proposition 8.

A {URL draft version <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2017/02/01/draft-trump-order-enable-sweeping-anti-lgbt-discrimination/>} “religious freedom” executive order has circulated among federal advocacy groups and would enable discrimination on the basis of religious objections to same-sex marriage, premarital sex, abortion and transgender identity. The proposed measure would gut former President Obama’s 2014 executive order barring

anti-LGBT workplace discrimination against federal contractors, even the White House issued a statement indicating Trump had planned to keep the order intact.

Media reports indicated Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner convinced Trump not to sign the order, but White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer has said the administration will soon “have something” on the issue. However, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer during a recent news briefing the administration will “have something” on the religious freedom order.

Stephanie Grisham, a White House spokesperson, had no comment in response to the Simpson piece and whether the White House would rule out a religious freedom executive order that would allow anti-LGBT discrimination.

“When we have something for you we will let you know,” Grisham said.

These articles originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.

Activism in Trump's America, Her 'Wet Dream' Kellyanne Conway... and a Potential New Reality Show?!

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Of course Kathy Griffin's manager asks if our conversation is being recorded – have you heard her talk? Luckily, the celeb-skewering, gay-loving, Trump-hating comedienne's filterless mouth moves at a meteoric pace, which is good news for anyone who wants to know her thoughts on basically everything: the practicality of celebrity activism, her idea for a "My Life on the D-List" spinoff and the surprising number of people she meets who say they've never encountered a gay person.

I caught up with Griffin, who discussed all the above just days after being honored with the Vanguard Award by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus on March 12 for her ardent and unwavering role as an ally in the LGBT rights movement. Read on for her insight into what the hell we do – and what she's doing – now that Donald Trump is running this country.

I hear you gave an incredible speech at the 11th annual Crescendo Gala in San Francisco, where you were presented with the Vanguard Award.

I did give an impassioned speech. You know, we're all very, very engaged right now, although the LGBT community is obviously used to being engaged, and now my call to action is to ask the LGBT community to help engage folks that have never been engaged before. Know your local representatives. It's all about the down-ballot. You know, stay galvanized. Learn from the Republicans. They stick together no matter what. We can't be divided. We gotta all stay together. This is it. This is the big one.

You have two Emmys and a Grammy. How would you describe the way those industry honors feel compared to something like the Vanguard Award?

This award feels special, because when I found out about the (SF Gay Men's Chorus) "Lavender Pen Tour," I really thought that was a cool thing, as someone who is a touring animal like myself. I did 80 cities last year, and I'm doing 50 cities this year on my "Kathy Griffin: Celebrity Run-In Tour" to

support my book, and what's so cool is, when I heard that the chorus, which, by the way, is the oldest gay men's chorus in the world – they have a lot of street cred – were gonna purposefully go to very Trump red states, I was like, "OK, I gotta get on board." Because I go to those places on a regular basis! I said this in my speech, but I see the Confederate flags on people's garages when I'm driving gig to gig. What they're doing is kind of like what I do. I think it's so great, and I believe in many, many forms of activism, and it's such a brilliant idea for the chorus to go, "We're taking this on the road and we're just literally gonna be a road tour of gay men singing," so if anybody approaches them or has a problem with them, they're just gonna look like assholes.

What does it mean to you to be an activist and a celebrity with the kind of platform you have in the Trump era?

I think people that believe in any kind of nuanced thought, who can handle a thought, know that, yeah, a celebrity can actually provide a real service for a cause. Celebrities sort of apologize all the time, but we're voting citizens like anybody else. I defend my right to speak about things as a celebrity or as an offensive comic or whatever you wanna call me. I've toured this country so many times, and I've also performed in Iraq and Afghanistan for the troops. I've performed in a prison. I've performed at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. So, I kind of feel that's what I bring to the table – that I'm really, really proud of.

Every city has a different vibe. I can kind of tell in the first few minutes of the show what they're gonna be into. But some audiences really want to hear a lot of Trump material, some wanna hear a lot about my mom, some wanna hear a lot about, you know, my new neighbors Kim Kardashian and Kanye West (laughs), which is hilarious to all parties. My material is definitely new, so if you've seen me five months ago, five years ago or 10 years ago, you're definitely gonna see a new show. And even though I'm supporting the book, I'm not, like, just sitting there reading from the book. I'm doing all different



Kathy Griffin to the Rescue

Courtesy of Kathy Griffin

stuff.

Sometimes in my shows I'll actually talk about the kind of activism that I'm up to, and I'll try to make it funny. Like, I had a one-day show in Mexico, where, by the way, I spent the whole day apologizing to the whole country; I just walked around stage saying, "Lo siento (for) Señor Cheeto." But I bought a bunch of Mexican postcards and those, for example, are fun to mail to legislators that are maybe not helping the LGBT agenda. You can march, you can call, you can send letters, send postcards.

The cool thing is, we're no longer focusing just on Trump, and also, I think we've written him off as just a crazy person. The other thing is, elections are every year. We have to stop thinking, "Oh, I'm just gonna be depressed till 2020" – no, no. I think if a celebrity says (something political), I love it. If Katy Perry can say, like, here's a way you can help – these are grassroots (efforts) and very much in tune with how the LGBT has been rocking it forever. I'm really tired of these people apologizing. It's important that the LGBT community keep standing strong. And what we're gonna hear a lot of is, "Well, you guys are single-agenda" – no, we're equality. Equality is for all. "Oh, a trans woman is gonna molest my kid." OK, hold back. The last thing a Jenny Boylan or even Caitlyn Jenner wants to do is go into a bathroom because they're gonna – I mean, I can't even finish the sentence it's so ridiculous.

And also, by the way, there's a lot of comedy in that. There's a lot of comedy in how some of the Trump voters are kind of coming around a little bit, like not a lot, but some of them. I put a lot of thought into it when I do my messages or calls to action. I don't want to hit them over the head with it, but if you do it with humor – I still say the greatest protest sign I've ever seen is when my mom was in her wheelchair marching with me for the repeal of DOMA and her sign was, "Gay marriage – I'll drink to that." So, you know, we could use humor.

We need humor!

We need humor, I think you're absolutely right. The thing that I hear now as opposed to a year ago and certainly opposed to five years ago is overwhelmingly people saying, "Oh my god, I needed this laugh so bad," or, "I've been in a ball since the election," or, "I'm scared that my cousin is gonna be deported and I needed a night of laughs."

If Trump can get into office, anyone can, apparently. And now Oprah wants to run. If you could replace Trump with any celebrity in the world, who would you put in the White House?

If I could replace Trump with any celebrity, I would replace him with a lady named Hillary Rodham Clinton! Because she fucking won. And it's hers. And she's a celebrity! Well, I mean the obvious joke is, I would put my dog Larry in the Oval and have a lot more confidence in (him), even though all he does

is fart and eat and sleep.

Larry for president... and Anderson Cooper for VP?

Yes! I actually think that works for both parties, because you don't want to make Anderson president because then that's gonna cut down on his modeling. And I want him to be able to take care of the wonderful Gloria Vanderbilt in the style to which she is accustomed for the rest of her life, which means forever. Gloria Vanderbilt for president wouldn't be bad!

Gloria and Anderson: 2021?

I think that's got a mass appeal that you tapped into and this could be the new movement.

What did you think when you discovered that Kellyanne Conway was a former "comedian"?

Well, she was at, like, a corporate party and she had to get up and do standup. Look, Kellyanne Conway is the perfect example of somebody who's like a wet dream for me. I mean, first of all, everything about her is made for comedy. Everything from the lies that get more insane every day to her denials, which are hilarious, to the inauguration outfit, which still haunts me. My theory is maybe she got herself a vindictive gay who just said, "When you go to Gucci, buy the entire mannequin and wear the whole mannequin." You know how gay people can be. Don't act innocent. It was a gay man with an agenda going, "I know how to make the real story here. We're gonna put Kellyanne Conway in a crazy ass red hat like she's in Devo. And then we're gonna give her a Civil War jacket from Gucci that only fucking Rihanna could have pulled off, and then give her a matching handbag. And don't forget the gloves, because when she goes and hugs Steven Bannon you've gotta look at the red gloves and then the red alleged meth marks on his face and see which one strikes you as being more patriotic."

Let me just say: That is one gay agenda I am behind.

(Laughs) And I am too, dammit!

Similar to what you've done as a touring act, and now what the SF Gay Men's Chorus is also doing, "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" is returning and going to red-state cities that need help.

I mean, look, that's really the best thing we can all do right now, because we've all decided to live in these weird bubbles, and this administration obviously has a different world or America or whatever they're doing. But the cool thing is, we're all here doing our thing, and that's what I love. The Gay Men's Chorus is going, "OK, this is our reaction; we're gonna go on the road and we're going to frickin' Trumpland." And I love that "Queer Eye" is like, "We're coming back, but we're not just coming back to Manhattan; we're going to the real America."

See Kathy Griffin, page 23

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Annual Rally Draws Attention to Sexual Violence

Michigan Takes Back the Night will look to raise awareness about sexual violence when it hosts its 39th annual Take Back the Night Ann Arbor rally and march on April 6, according to a press release. The rally, sporting the theme “Power of Words,” will take place at 7 p.m. in the Rogel Ballroom of the Michigan Union, 530 South State St.

University of Michigan students and Ann Arbor community members will come together to celebrate survivors, create awareness, demand change and take a stand against violence.

State Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) will provide the rally’s opening address.

Other featured speakers include slam poets Traci Ayub and Vivan Trutzl, and performances from the RhythM Tap Ensemble, Leim Irish Dance and local singer Kailyn Alderman are set to take place, as well. Additionally, organizations such as SafeHouse and SAPAC will have representatives on hand providing information about their services.

Attendees will be able to visit with the organizations in the ballroom starting at 6:30 p.m. Following the rally, a march through the streets of Ann Arbor will commence, with attendees eventually returning to the Union for a candlelight vigil to close out the event. To learn more, visit www.tbannarbor.org.

State Theatre to Undergo Restoration

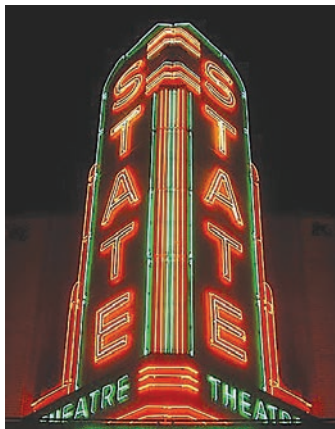
Ann Arbor’s State Theatre celebrated its 75th birthday on March 18, having opened to the public on that date in 1942 as one of renowned architect C. Howard Crane’s many iconic movie palace masterpieces.

There is lots to celebrate, according to a press release, thanks to an upcoming renovation being undertaken by the Michigan Theater Foundation, which owns and operates the State Theatre. This renovation promises to restore the theatre’s former Art Deco glory, while also expanding and enhancing its offerings to the community.

The renovation project will include:

- Increasing the number of screening rooms from two to four,
- Installation of an elevator, making the screening rooms accessible,
- More comfortable seating
- New ADA features for mobility-impaired, hearing-impaired and visually-impaired patrons
- Updated movie projection and sound systems,
- Restoring and refreshing C. Howard Crane’s beautiful Art Deco design of the facade, classic marquee, entrance, lobby and restrooms.

These updates and improvements will help



to meet the Michigan Theater Foundation’s goal of creating a world-class art house cinema.

When originally opened as a regal movie palace, the State Theatre had seating for 2,000 on two floors. The Michigan Theater Foundation leadership purchased the State Theatre space in 2014, preventing it from being converted into office space, preserving this architectural icon and important piece of Ann Arbor’s history.

The majority of the State Theatre’s restoration and renovation expenses will be funded by support from individual donors – large and small. Initial financial support for the renovation from individuals, foundations and businesses has been very strong, led by several major pacesetter gifts. The Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority recently pledged financial support for the restoration of the theatre’s iconic marquee and facade. A public campaign kicks off later this summer.

Questions are being handled by Lee Berry, chief development office of the Michigan Theater Foundation, at lberry@michtheater.org or 734-668-8397, ext 22.



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Poetic Justice: Out Director on Cynthia Nixon's Awards-Caliber Role as Emily Dickinson

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

British director Terence Davies has long been praised for his poetic, lyrical filmmaking, including 1992's autobiographical "The Long Day Closes," 2000's Edith Wharton novel adaptation "The House Of Mirth," and last year's "Sunset Song," based on Lewis Grassic Gibbon's Scottish novel. Perhaps, then, it's no surprise that the openly gay Davies has crafted another masterpiece with his biopic on poet Emily Dickinson, "A Quiet Passion."

The New Yorker's Richard Brody proclaimed "Passion" "an absolute drop-dead masterwork" after screening it at February's Berlin Film Festival, and Cynthia Nixon proves a revelation as Dickinson. Not exactly a spoiler, but her final stretch, as Dickinson succumbed to grueling illness at age 55, entails one of the most visceral, heart wrenching passages committed to modern cinema.

"What we don't understand these days, because we have so many drugs to kill pain, is they had nothing," Davies explains. "With the exception of Laudinum, a kind of opiate to which you could become addicted, if you had a serious illness you were in pain all the time and had to endure it. Emily had Bright's Disease, which is a disease of the kidneys, although she actually died of congenital heart failure. It was a painful death, and there was no palliative medicine at the end of life, you just had to endure it until you died, and that was a constant throughout the 19th century."

"A Quiet Passion" begins during the mid-1800s as the teenaged Dickinson (Emma Bell), a student at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, decides to take up poetry. Obtaining the permission of her father, Edward (Keith Carradine), to write during evenings, she later gets published, but is told that women cannot reach the same literary heights as men. Once Nixon steps in as the adult Dickinson, we trace her relationships with best friend Vryling Buffum (Catherine Bailey), younger sister Lavinia (Jennifer Ehle) and brother Austin (Duncan Duff), and romantic longing for a married, emotionally unavailable Reverend (Eric Loren), and then spiritual crises, and, eventually, illness.

Dickinson only became known to the world after her death, and in fact almost two thousand poems, bound in some 40 volumes, were discovered after she passed: only a handful or two were published while she lived. Today, she is a household name. Despite the bleak aspects of Dickinson's life, Davies mines humor from the patriarchal stuffiness and formality of the era. Edward, a comparative progressive for



Cynthia Nixon and Jennifer Ehle in Terence Davies' "A Quiet Passion," about Emily Dickinson.

the time and one-term Congressman, balks at the shocking spectacle of a woman who dares to sing during a night at the theater. "A gift is no excuse for a female to exhibit herself in that way," he clucks. Davies also keeps things light with zingy, aphorism-rich dialogue that falls somewhere between Oscar Wilde and Whit Stillman.

"I didn't want it all to be solemn; I want it to be fun as well," he says.

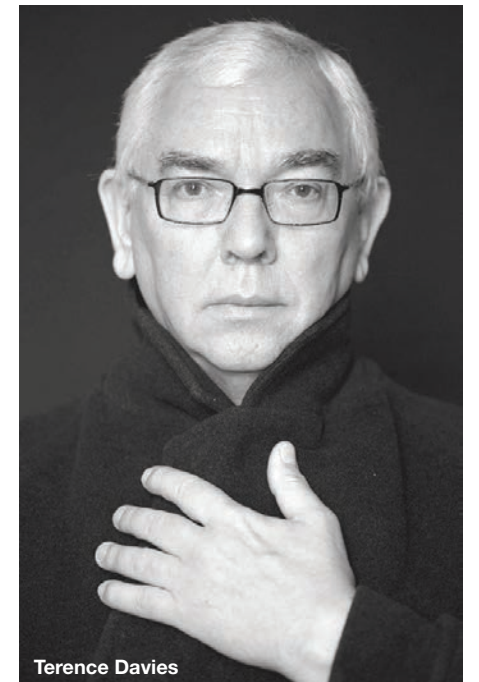
Davies adds that shooting the film in Antwerp, Belgium (standing in for 19th-century Massachusetts) proved a personal joy. Despite a professed distaste for "Sex and The City," he envisioned Nixon as his dream Dickinson from the get-go. "I just disagree with its subtext," he confesses of the HBO show and movie series, "that all you do is go to bed with people and buy things and then eat. I find that rather bleak. I have only watched it once. I just wanted to see Cynthia's reaction shots, which were always the truest. But I do disapprove of it!"

The actress had previously been attached to another film Davies hoped to mount some years back, financing for which never materialized. Her likeness to Dickinson and a mutual fondness for the poet's work (Davies incorporated some of Dickinson's poetry into

“I've been celibate since 1980. But I'm not physically attractive – I never was. Young, good looking, and very stupid – that's a combination nobody else will beat!”

his 2008 cinematic ode to Liverpool, "Of Time And The City") sealed the deal, and he wrote the script during 2012 with her specifically in mind.

In whittling down the events and people from Dickinson's life to form a two-hour movie that nonetheless covers a lot of ground and years, Davies's script ended up with hefty autobiographical elements from his own life (his agent told him it's his most autobiographical work yet, and Davies agrees). Like Dickinson, he was extremely close to his family members; as a youth was sent away to a school and suffered a deep



Terence Davies

homesickness; and they both struggled with spirituality.

"She was fierce in protecting her soul,

See next page

► Kathy Griffin

Continued from p. 19

It's gonna be amazing how many people are probably gonna look at them and go, "You're the first gay person I've ever met." And I love that to this day I'll hear that. I do meet-and-greets, say, at the casino, and to this day I'll have someone after a show say, "You know, I don't think I ever met a gay person before, but there seems to be a bunch of gay people at your show." And I always say, "You never met a gay person?" And they'll go, "Nope." And I'll go, "Well, do you go to church?" And then usually it's a little bit of a conversation ender, but I'm just saying, I'm out there in the real America, and I'm telling you, there are many, many people in the real America who think that they've never even laid eyes on a gay person. But we're all gonna get together and go, "Here we are. We're here, we're queer, don't fucking be scared of us."

Do you think it's time "D-List" makes a comeback too?

Well, I sort of would love to do something similar. I mean, the challenge is, would anyone really let me do a reality show? Because "D-List" really was unscripted, and now they're all scripted and you can see them reading a teleprompter in the interviews and stuff. I'd love to do, like, "D-List to Legend," where I'm trying to become a legend and I'm trying to surround myself with, I don't know, Sidney Poitier, Mick Jagger and Cher. Like, all right, maybe I'm not A-list, maybe I'm B, but it's time for me to become a legend. I think there could be some comedy there. If nobody wants to do it, I'll just have to be a living legend in my mind and rock my 50-city tour and my bestseller, which Anderson Cooper told me he just read his section

and then closed it.

If you do another reality show, can all your confessionals be like Mariah Carey's in "Mariah's World" with the best lighting and on a settee?

Oh my god. I love it. There's an example of a show that clearly had an agenda to be about her engagement to Packer and then she starts banging the young, hot dancer – Tanaka or whatever his government name is – and then the show becomes about that, and then there's just a lot of scenes with a lot of airbrush, filters and lighting where Mariah is dancing on her private jet.

Speaking of divas, you're already besties with Cher. Who's another gay icon you wish you were chummy with?

I've kind of met most of them by now. Cher is definitely the diva that I'm closest with, but I'm pretty close with Bette, and Bette is super cool, super hardworking and will say anything and yet she has a very classy side. Streisand is definitely a tough cookie and hard to have a conversation with, but being a gay boy, I just love her anyway. Liza is just a dream because she's just so Liza. But yeah, I love anything that brings divas together. I hosted "Divas Live" one time on VH1 and that was fantastic. It was like, I'd be in a van going to set – me, Katy Perry and Nicki Minaj and, you know, Sugarland.

Who do you plan on inviting to your "Fire Island" viewing party?

Well, first of all, the gay mafia is real. I'm a product of it and it exists. So, actually, on the Twitter, I just got a tweet from Jai Rodriguez, the original "Queer Eye," saying "overdue for a Kathy Griffin mafia night at her house," so it'll be Jai Rodriguez, Chris Colfer from "Glee," Lance Bass and their plus-



ones, and they'll all come over to my new house and we'll sit in my fabulous screening room – and then we'll watch "Feud." But that's just a typical night for me.

"Feud" is so your show. You must be eating that up.

Oh yeah. I'm eating it up almost as much as Jessica (Lange) and Susan (Sarandon) are eating up the scenery. Actually, we all have indigestion from how much eating of the scenery we're all doing.

Ha, I believe it! Well, great to talk to you again, Kathy. Thanks for your time and for being on the frontlines of the gay movement.

I feel we're all kind of reenergized. Our work is not done. But I couldn't feel like I was in better hands with the LGBT community. I always say this community knows how to litigate and get shit done and get moving and galvanized and get together when the rubber hits the road, and the rubber has hit the road, my friend. So, I'll see you at the next act of resistance... or we'll be sharing a jail cell. One or the other.

With a TV to watch "Feud."

(Laughs) That's all I ask.



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► Poetic Justice

Continued from p. 22

but what comes across in the poetry is, what if you have a soul and there is no God?" Davies says. "What do you do? I was a very devout Catholic, and from age 15-22 I had my doubts. In those days you were told it was the work of the devil, and I fought with that for seven years. At 22, I didn't need it anymore."

However, Davies insists that the film is ultimately "a fictitious version of her life through my subjective prism, so you may not necessarily agree with it. You could only respond to those things in someone's life that have echoes of


you. She had a correspondence with someone named the Master and nobody knows who it was. She improvised on the piano. All those things you cannot keep, because we are contractually obliged to bring in a movie of less than two hours."

The same rules apply to another biopic about a British poet, Siegfried Sassoon – who was also gay and a WWI hero – that Davies just completed a draft of. "Anybody who was anybody in the 20th century he met!" Davies says, laughing. "He knew everybody! So that's going to be played down, otherwise it becomes name-dropping."

Like countryman Ridley Scott ("The Martian," "Alien: Covenant"), Davies is proving quite prolific as


a septuagenarian (he's 71), with an adaptation of Richard McCann's 2005 autobiography, "Mother of Sorrows," also in the works (Paul Dano may star). However, the dryly self-deprecating Davies notes that, while international acclaim is coming his way these days, he's not holding out hopes for a boyfriend, even despite a wave of popularity for "daddies" and websites and apps designed to connect them.

"Sex with a 71-year-old is too close to necrophilia for my taste," he quips, laughing. "I've been celibate since 1980. But I'm not physically attractive – I never was. Young, good looking, and very stupid – that's a combination nobody else will beat!"




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FREEP Film Festival Screening

In "Last Men Standing," a film about HIV survivors in the Bay Area, eight men look back on their experiences and then toward their future with the strength and resiliency they have cultivated over the past 30 years. The film was produced by the San Francisco Chronicle.

Screens on Sat. April 1 at 3 p.m. at Cinema Detroit, 4126 Third Ave., Detroit

Happenings

OUTINGS

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

Trans Visibility Stories of Stealth, Activism and Positivity 6:30 p.m. Ages 13+ Grand Rapids Trans Foundation and

Grand Rapids Pride Center, 600 Monroe Ave., **Grand Rapids**. www.facebook.com/events/1252920788132667/

Friday, March 31

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

The Novi Home & Garden Show 2 p.m. Home Builder Association of Southeast

Michigan, 46100 Grand River Ave., **Novi**. 5867526381. www.novihomeshow.com

Transgender Day of Visibility Fundraiser 5 p.m. Ages 21+ Grand Rapids Trans Foundation and Grand Rapids Pride Center, 33 Sheldon Blvd. NE, **Grand Rapids**. www.facebook.com/events/1439796262697338/

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 www.wonderfoolproductions.org

Strike a Pose Workshop 1 p.m. Tickets: \$25 for a 90-minute voguing workshop with Jose Xtravaganza, dancer and choreographer. He is one of the original vogue dancers on Madonna's Blonde Ambition Tour, and was featured prominently in the famed "Truth or Dare" documentary. Freep Film Festival, 1401 Broadway St., **Detroit**. www.freepilmfestival.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

The Rainbow Connection: LGBTQ Pregnant and Parenting Teens 12:30 p.m. Expanding reproductive health to be more affirming for LGBTQ youth. Register online. MOASH and AFY, **East Lansing**. taryn.gal@moash.org <https://cc.readytalk.com/registration/#/?meeting=rgahbxewkOat&campaign=tc9zq916tsq1>

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

Editor's Pick

LGBTQ Pregnant and Parenting Teens Webinar

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health and Advocates For Youth will offer an informational webinar on April 5 at 12:30 p.m. for providers working with LGBTQ youth and/or pregnant and parenting teens - who are at a higher risk of pregnancy compared to straight youth. "The Rainbow Connection: LGBTQ Pregnant & Parenting Teens - Research, Best Practices, and Q&A," will provide the opportunity to discuss the underlying causes of the increased risk of teen pregnancy among LGBTQ youth, and identify strategies for making spaces for them more inclusive and affirming. Register online at <http://gaybe.am/OR>. For questions, contact Taryn Gal, managing director at MOASH at taryn.gal@moash.org.



Editor's Pick Channel Your Inner Madonna

Want to strike a pose? Learn from the best. Join Jose Xtravaganza on April 2 at 1 p.m. for an all-levels, 90-minute voguing workshop during the Freep Film Festival. Xtravaganza, a dancer and choreographer featured in the documentary "Strike a Pose," will be in town for the film's Michigan premiere. He is one of the original Vogue dancers on Madonna's Blonde Ambition Tour, and was featured prominently in the famed "Truth or Dare" documentary. The workshop, part of the Freep Film Festival, is at Boll YMCA, 1401 Broadway St., Detroit. Tickets for \$25 can be purchased at <https://tickets.freep.com/e/vogue-workshop>.



Friday, April 7

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

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/

ARTS & 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

Concerts

Ten Pound Fiddle "Melissa Ferrick" . MSU Community Music School, 4930 S. Hagadorn, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. April 7. www.tenpoundfiddle.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 "On the Sly: In Search of the Family Stone" . Cinema Detroit, 4126 3rd Ave., Detroit. 5:30 p.m. April 1. www.freepfilmfestival.com

Freep Film Festival "Dolores" . Cinema Detroit, 4126 3rd Ave., Detroit. 5 p.m. April 2. www.

freepfilmfestival.com

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

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

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

Professional

Clutter by Brian Cox Tickets: \$20. Theatre NOVA, 410 W. Huron, Ann Arbor. Through April 16. 734-635-8450. www.theatrenova.org

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. 248-545-5455. www.theringwald.com

Riot Grrrl 90s Tickets: \$10. Donations to Planned Parenthood accepted at performances. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 7 - April 15. 248-545-5455. www.theringwald.com

Special Staged Reading Series Revisiting the AIDS crisis through the Broadway lens. Pay what you can to benefit The Ringwald. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. April 3 - April 24. 248-545-5455. www.theringwald.com

Exhibits & More

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

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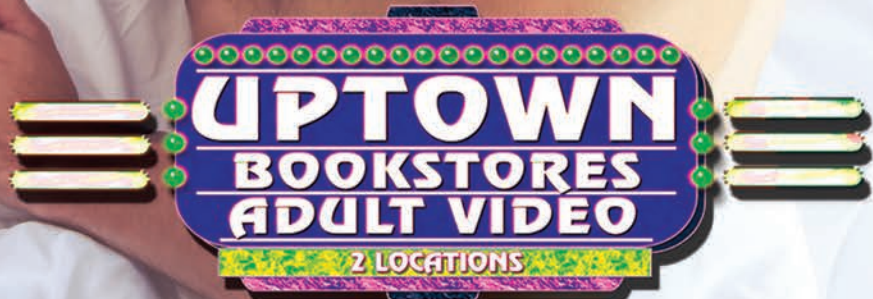


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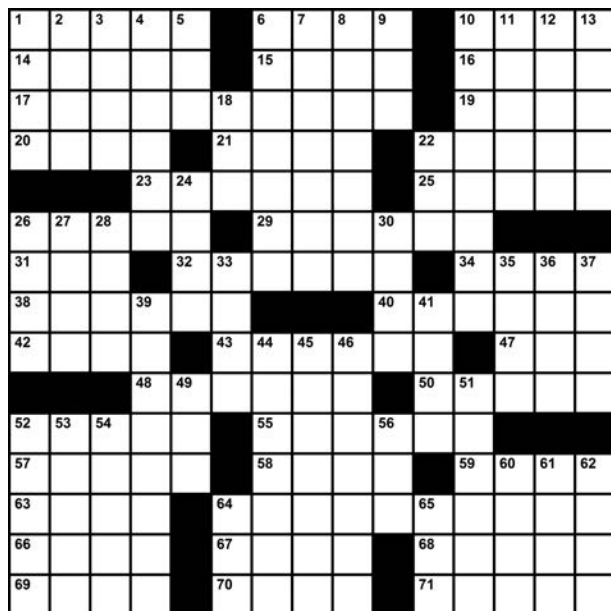
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Q Puzzle



- 38 With 40- and 57-Across, Disney remake that features a gay character
 40 See 38-Across
 42 Coldcock
 43 Mel pretended to be gay for her in "What Women Want"
 47 Emergency road service gp.
 48 Producer-director Bailey
 50 What Donald Duck lacks down below
 52 Son of Uranus
 55 Samples some buns, e.g.
 57 See 38-Across
 58 Birth of a notion?
 59 Circumcise clumsily, e.g.
 63 Come quickly
 64 Harry Potter veteran who plays 38-Across
 66 Early indicator of orientation
 67 The Seattle Storm, for one
 68 Like Baldwin in Paris
 69 Daughters of Bilitis co-founder Phyllis
 70 Snakes in hieroglyphics
 71 Nuts

- perhaps
 11 "___ My Heart in San Francisco"
 12 "Some more" to Margaret Mead?
 13 What electing gay candidates can bring
 18 Teaching deg.
 22 Island necklace
 24 "___ of Eden"
 26 Streisand, familiarly
 27 Aid's partner
 28 Hawaiian wedding wing-ding, perhaps
 30 Hunks of history
 33 Metropolitan Community Church song
 35 "South Park" owner of a gay dog
 36 Terrific, in slang
 37 Yelled yeses
 39 Prepare a bra for removal
 41 Mane location
 44 Where Roxane Gay works?
 45 One of the motorist's aids
 46 Cuff-to-crotch lines
 49 Fla. clock setting
 51 Hubby of Demi
 52 "American Idol" judge Paula
 53 All choked up
 54 Slowly, to Sondheim
 56 Viewed, to Tweety
 60 Continent of Cho's parents
 61 Hole opening?
 62 Spanking spot
 64 LAX pilot's guess
 65 Singer DiFranco

Gay Remake

Across

- 1 The bottom line
 6 Stat for Richard Simmons
 10 ___ jockey strap (support for a radio host?)
 14 Became erect
 15 Stein fillers
 16 Jerusalem server
 17 Downton Abbey veteran who plays 57-Across
 19 Note to Jared Polis' staff
 20 "Shall Caesar send ___?"
 ("Julius Caesar")
 21 "Gorillas in the Mist" author Fossey
 22 Gay character played by Josh Gad
 23 Arizona resort
 25 Annoy during a blow job?
 26 Light, woody material
 29 Wok concoction
 31 Aladdin's monkey
 32 Third Reich chronicler William
 34 Cable sports award

Down

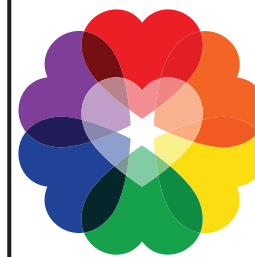
- 1 Cry of pride
 2 Like phone sex
 3 Tara portrayer Collette
 4 Evaluate asses?
 5 Rent or allow
 6 Dish from Pasolini's land
 7 White House closet woman
 8 Ann Bannon or Edgar Box
 9 Sound of the draft fizzling out?
 10 Forced to one's knees,

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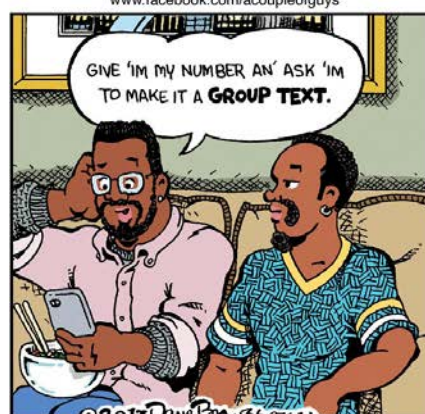
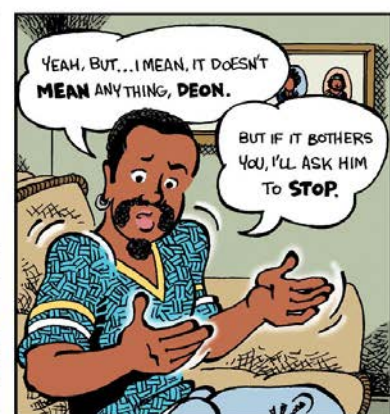
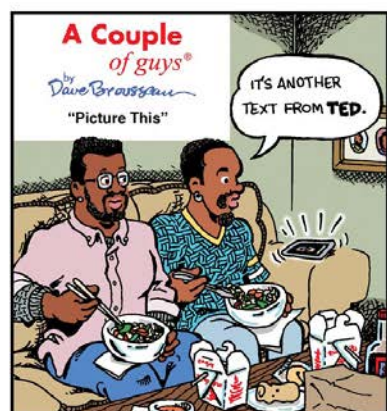
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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Annual Spring Bash Raises Funds for Affirmations

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Affirmations' Annual Spring Bash themed Emerald City was "an incredible success" this year with over 450 people in attendance. The event on March 18 at the MGM Grand Detroit raised a total of \$194,000 for the community center in Ferndale.

"It is humbling and heart warming that so many of our friends turned out and pledged support to our center," said Susan Erspamer, executive director at Affirmations, who thanked her "incredibly talented and dedicated staff" while addressing attendees. They are Katie Koch, Lilianna Reyes, Becca Budde, Ryan Fowler, Shelly McCallister, Ian Unger, Heather Aymer and Kyle Taylor.

"My favorite part of the evening is meeting and talking with people and being able to say thank you, whether it is individually or through my comments as part of the program," she said. "Spring Bash is an excellent platform to let people know what Affirmations is doing, how vital they are to our success, share our appreciation and affirm our commitment to be good stewards of their donations."

Erspamer also expressed the organization's commitment to supporting the public policy and advocacy efforts of sister LGBT organizations present at the event – the Ruth Ellis Center, LGBT Detroit, Equality Michigan, the ACLU of Michigan and the Gender-Identity Network Alliance.

During the VIP reception, Affirmations awarded individuals who demonstrate longstanding dedication to the community center and give generously of their time, talent, and gifts. Honorees included John Corvino, who received the Community Hero Award; Hannah Hartley, who received the Jan Stevenson Award; Debbie Kenjorski, who received the Lorna Utley Award; Henry Grix and Howard Israel, who received the Charles Moyer Philanthropy Award; and John White, who received the Volunteer of the Year Award.

"We thank Susan for her incredible leadership at the center this year," said Frank Aiello, president of Affirmations' board of directors.

"It has become clear to everyone involved with the center that Susan is an incredible listener, a tireless worker, and a thoughtful strategist. We're lucky to have you and your amazing staff," he said, adding, "In a time when having a safe space is more important than ever, Affirmations is there. A shining, transparent beacon of hope and acceptance, and a home for our community. Through the generous support of our donors, we are able to sustain this critical place and its programs."

Affirmations is located at 290 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. For more information or to support the community center, call 248-398-7105 or visit www.goaffirmations.org.

Select photos by Deb Palmer



John Corvino received the first-ever Community Hero Award.



Nancy Katz and Margo Dichtelmiller



John White received the Volunteer of the Year Award.



Susan Erspamer, executive director at Affirmations.



Howard Israel, left, and Henry Grix, far right, received the Charles Moyer Philanthropy Award. They are joined from right by Lisa Gretchko, an attorney in Howard & Howard Law firm, and attorneys Gabrielle McKee and Samuel Richman from Dickinson Wright.



Tom Wilczak and Steve Quintart



Mark Blanke and Michael Perkins



Affirmations Program Services Director Lilianna Reyes



Josh Curiea and Mike Flores



Hannah Hartley, right, received the Jan Stevenson Award from Jan Stevenson.



Debbie Kenjorski received the Lorna Utley Award.




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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Pursuing Our Inner Mood

“Under the Surface,” a groundbreaking photographic exhibition by well-known rainbow community photographer Myles Gallagher opens April 5, and runs through May 20 in the second-floor art gallery of the Scarab Club.

Gallagher was born in Detroit, and takes his visual and image inspiration from what he likes to call “the school of thought that focuses on seeing the unseen,” a variation on his solo show’s title.

“Photography to be aesthetically pleasing and uniquely creative,” said Gallagher, “should capture the unusual angle or shot perspective, and share the gift of intense inner mood, the unique touch of a moment’s visual edge of what is in essence for me, a small pictorial eternity.”

Gallagher has also exhibited at the Ann Arbor Art Center, the Grosse Ile Historic Society, Ferndale’s Lawrence Street Gallery, Wyandotte’s River’s Edge Gallery, the Down River Council for the Arts, and the Jules Maeght Gallery, San Francisco.

An opening reception at the Scarab Club is scheduled for April 7, from 5-8 p.m. The Scarab Club is located at 217 Farnsworth at John R, directly across from the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Call 313-831-1250 for more information or visit
www.scarabclub.org.



“Honey Moon Sweet” by Myles Gallagher

Royal Oak Therapist Offers Support for Transgender People



Meet Nick Zielke, a limited licensed clinical social worker and gender specialist. He completed his undergraduate studies at Oakland University and his graduate studies at Michigan State University. He is a member of Phi Alpha Honors Society and National Association of Social Workers. He specializes in working with individuals and their loved ones who seek support in navigating the challenges presented

by gender, transgender, intersex, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and asexual identity.

Zielke – who was born intersex and has transitioned – also

works with clients dealing with bullying and oppression, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Using a combination of strengths-based perspective and mindfulness based approach during cognitive behavior therapy, Zielke has helped many individuals and families heal, overcome life’s challenges and lead happier lives. Zielke is in the process of becoming a certified transgender therapist through the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. WPATH is the standard of care for transgender medical and mental healthcare.

Each support group offers a safe and accepting space for members to share their experiences, have their questions answered, be encouraged, build a strong support system, gain knowledge about gender transitioning, feel completely accepted without judgment, build friendships, and meet like-minded people.

See next page

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'Link-Up' Offers Better Access to HIV Care

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services released a report in January that shows improvements in HIV Prevention and Care in Michigan between 2006 and 2015.

The report, "2015 National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) Indicators – Final Michigan Assessment," is centered on the HIV Care Continuum, which shows the percentage of the population who are HIV infected and the percentage within this population who know their status, have received care and have achieved viral suppression.

Since 2006, Michigan has seen substantial improvements in several Care Continuum stages. Among the HIV-infected population, there has been an increase of those in care (from 46 percent to 67 percent), those retained in care (from 33 percent to 48 percent) and those who achieve viral suppression (from 22 percent to 55 percent).

A diverse array of programs are in place to continue to improve care and strengthen prevention efforts including high-quality laboratory reporting and surveillance assessments, linkage to care and early intervention services for those diagnosed with HIV, targeted testing for high-risk populations and programs to provide wrap-around services for people living with HIV such as transportation and medication access.

As of May 2016, 17,660 people were estimated to be living with HIV in Michigan; 57 percent of those infected were African-American and 77 percent are males. Men who have sex with men are still not receiving regular HIV medical care. In collaboration with the Detroit Health Department, MDHHS is working hard to assist HIV-positive individuals living in Metro Detroit, who are not currently accessing HIV/AIDS care. By way of Link-Up

Link-Up Detroit can help schedule medical appointments, connect people with a doctor, organize transportation, and ensure medical costs are not a barrier.

Detroit – a free, confidential, and voluntary program – people can access individual short-term, intensive support through referrals to existing community support programs and/or engagement with an HIV medical provider. More people will be coming into care in the coming years and these organizations are making sure they have the proper blend of clinical and support services to help them in a single one-stop space.

Link-Up Detroit can help schedule medical appointments, connect people with a doctor, organize transportation, and ensure medical costs are not a barrier. The organization can also make active referrals to existing social support services to address barriers, such as mental health, housing, transportation, medical case management, early intervention services, psycho/social support, financial distress, co-pay assistance, insurance enrollment, job training, food assistance, nutrition therapy and counseling, legal aid, adherence counseling and addiction treatment.

To connect with Link-Up Detroit, visit www.linkupdetroit.com. The full report can be accessed by going to www.michigan.gov/hivstd. Follow the "HIV Case Reporting and Data" link. For assistance seeking HIV care, call the Michigan HIV Hotline at 800-872-2437.

► Therapist

Continued from p. 30

April 8, May 6, June 3, July 8, Aug. 5, Sept. 16, Oct. 14, Nov. 4 and Dec. 2

Youth Transgender Support Group
Ages 13-17
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Rate: \$20

FTM (Female-to-Male) Transgender Support Group
Ages 18 and over
12:30-2 p.m.
Rate: \$20

MTF (Male-to-Female) Transgender Support Group
Ages 18 and over
2-3:30 p.m.
Rate: \$20

Space is limited to 25 people per group. Please email to reserve at spot at officemgr@crsh.com. The Center for Relationship and Sexual Health is located at 25600 Woodward Ave., Suite 215 in Royal Oak. For more information, call 248-399-7447 or visit www.crsh.com.



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Thursday, April 13, 2017
6 PM: Dinner 6:30 PM: Presentation with Q & A

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