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**April 6, 2017**

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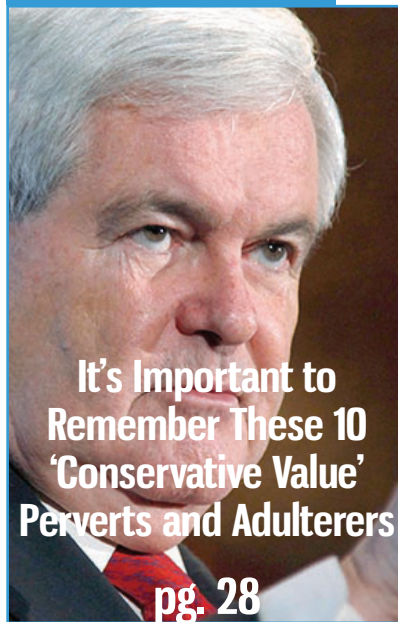
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# HB2 Deal Becomes a Test of the LGBT Movement's Strength

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

A new test for the LGBT movement has emerged in the aftermath of North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper signing a deal to replace his state's notoriously anti-LGBT House Bill 2 with a measure that critics say leaves discrimination in place.

In a rare occurrence, LGBT rights supporters will have to convince businesses the deal signed by a Democratic governor is bad enough to continue the boycott started after the anti-LGBT law was signed by the previous GOP governor that cost the state at least \$650 million. That'll be a tall order for a deal Cooper says alleviates discrimination in a state that has already suffered economic boycotts under HB2 and where companies are eager to grow after more than a year of business contraction.

The new law, House Bill 142, prohibits municipalities, state agencies and the University of North Carolina from the "regulation of access" to bathrooms, locker rooms and showers without the legislature's permission. It also bans municipalities from enacting LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination measures that would apply to private employment or public accommodations until 2020.

The lynchpin for whether or not the boycott will go on and continue to create pressure for full repeal is the National Collegiate Athletic Association, which had given North Carolina until last week to repeal the law or else lose championship games through at least 2022. Along with the Atlantic Coast Conference, the NCAA last year nixed championship games from the state on the basis of discrimination against LGBT people under HB2.

NCAA President Mark Emmert said last week at a news conference during the "Final Four" in Phoenix, Ariz., the board will convene and make a decision this week on whether the games will return or are now lost with a different law in place governing bathroom access for transgender people.

"Everybody loves being in North Carolina for our games," Emmert said. "It's a state, obviously, that in many ways is synonymous with college sports. They are great hosts. Nobody made the decision to leave North Carolina casually. It was a very, very difficult decision for the board to make, and I'm sure the next decision will be very difficult as well."

David McFarland, founder of the Los Angeles-based United for Equality in Sports & Entertainment, said the NCAA "must stand up against this thinly veiled repeal effort" for HB2 and predicted the league would continue to keep games out of North Carolina under



the new deal.

"Based on recent conversations, I have no reason to believe that the NCAA Board of Governors won't stand against discrimination and remain committed to their new anti-discrimination process for championships bids," McFarland said. "The NCAA has recently reinforced their position that all North Carolina bids will be pulled from the review process and removed from consideration going forward. Given that the new repeal bill does not meet the NCAA anti-discrimination policies, the Board of Governors has little to consider."

## NCAA

Already LGBT rights supporters are encouraging the NCAA to stay resolute and withhold games from North Carolina on the basis the new law doesn't alleviate discrimination as the governor says, but keeps anti-LGBT discrimination in place.

The nation's largest LGBT rights group, the Human Rights Campaign, has launched an online campaign calling on supporters to text the NCAA to urge the league to keep games out of North Carolina. According to the Human Rights Campaign, they've had nearly 20,000 emails and calls to the NCAA as of Monday morning.

On Saturday night, as the University of North Carolina faced off against Oregon, #RepealHB2 was trending nationwide on Twitter coordinated by the Human Rights Campaign and Equality North Carolina. Nearly 5 million people took part in the social action and 25 million people saw the

push online, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

Joining calls urging the NCAA to withhold games from North Carolina over the deal is the first openly gay player drafted in the NFL, Michael Sam, who raised concerns on Twitter about the implications of the deal for LGBT athletes forced to compete in the state.

Hudson Taylor, executive director of Athlete Ally, said the only option for the NCAA, if it wants to hold true to its values opposing discrimination, is to continue to withhold games from North Carolina.

"The NCAA's decision comes just two weeks after they responded the Athlete Ally and other LGBT organizations reaffirming their commitment to LGBT protection and inclusion when deciding future site venues," Taylor said. "If the NCAA continues to stand by the LGBT community in the same way they did last year when they initially removed contests from the state, they really only have one clear choice related to this ban, and that's to keep it intact."

U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy III (D-Mass.), the chair of the Congressional Transgender Equality Task Force, wrote a letter to the NCAA on Monday urging the league to continue the boycott of championship events in North Carolina.

"When it comes to civil rights there are not compromises, negotiations or trade-offs," Kennedy said. "Either the laws of this country apply equally to all of us or they don't. By barring local anti-discrimination laws, North Carolina is leaving their transgender community without the protections any other

## NCAA Restores Games to North Carolina Despite New Anti-LGBT Law

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The National Collegiate Athletic Association has decided to restore games to North Carolina in the aftermath of the state reaching a deal to replace anti-LGBT House Bill 2 with another measure that civil rights groups say is discriminatory.

The league announced in a statement Tuesday the "new law is far from perfect," but the board of directors reached the conclusion to restore games to North Carolina after evaluating the HB2 replacement signed by North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper after negotiations with Republican leaders.

"We are actively determining site selections, and this new law has minimally achieved a situation where we believe NCAA championships may be conducted in a nondiscriminatory environment," the statement says.

The statement, however, indicates any site awarded a championship event in North Carolina or elsewhere may be "required to submit additional documentation demonstrating how student-athletes and fans will be protected from discrimination."

During a news conference after he signed the bill, Cooper had said he expects sports to return to North Carolina, suggesting he was given assurances it was enough for the NCAA. The statement, however, says the NCAA "did not lobby for any specific change in the law."

The league has initially cancelled seven championship games in North Carolina as a result of House Bill 2, which barred cities from enacting pro-LGBT non-discrimination ordinances and transgender people from using the public restroom in schools and government buildings consistent with their gender identity. The league gave the state a deadline of last week

See Test, page 9

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# Welcoming Michigan Builds Immigrant-Friendly Communities

BY DREW SAUNDERS

Members of immigrant communities often have trouble settling into life in a new country. There's a new economy to navigate, new laws, and culture shock. There is usually a new language to learn and there is often an element of opposition from local residents – especially in this environment. But help does exist from non-profit organizations such as Welcoming Michigan, a legal and social advocacy project sponsored by the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.

“What’s different about the welcoming approach is that we don’t just say to immigrants ‘This is how you can better succeed [and] integrate.’ We look at the whole community and say to all the community members, how can you help your immigrant friends and neighbors integrate into the community [and] feel included,” said Christine Suave, senior program coordinator at Welcoming Michigan.

Founded in 2012, the organization facilitates communication between immigrant communities, local governments and long term residents. Welcoming Michigan hopes to create a mutually beneficial relationship by encouraging meaningful cultural conversation and inclusion between various socioeconomic communities.

The organization is proud to partner with 15 Michigan localities that have declared themselves “Welcoming Communities,” including the cities of Detroit, Sterling Heights, Hamtramck, Clinton Township, West Bloomfield Township, East Lansing, Lansing, Meridian Township, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Royal Oak and Pleasant Ridge. Also, Kalamazoo and Macomb County.

Suave notes that every community is different, though.

“For example, someone living in a neighborhood where you have a large number of people from your same country, or from a similar culture, can feel very different than if you are the only person who was born in a foreign country in a rural community for example. It can feel

different, especially for people of color,” she said. “They may always be perceived as not belonging, even if they are born here...Each community has a sense of its own identity, values and what it means to be [from there]. I would say every new person has to navigate that space and find their place in the community. So each time a new community starts getting involved in this work, they have to look and see what are their priorities and what makes sense.”

Since the election of President Trump, hate crimes against minority communities and immigrants have increased significantly, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. This kind of discrimination and violence is emboldened by the Trump administration’s decision to suspend immigration into the U.S. from six predominantly Muslim countries. By way of a revised executive order, which will go into effect on March 16, no more than 50,000 refugees will be allowed into the country in 2017 from Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya.

Citizens will be subjected to a 90-day ban on travel to the U.S., according to the order. Existing visas approved before March 16 will not be revoked and the order does not explicitly apply to current lawful permanent residents and green card holders. The State Department reports that visas revoked because of the original travel order have been fully restored. However, it no longer places a blanket ban on Syrian refugees trying to enter the U.S. Instead, refugees, including those from Syria, will be subjected to a 120-day suspension of the refugee program.

“All of this creates a climate where people are fearful. It makes people pull back a little bit and [have] a little more trepidation about participating in community activities and creating community life,” said Suave.

Welcoming Michigan does not perform legal services, but refers immigrants to low or no cost attorneys, including its parent organization in some cases. The MIRC also provides referrals for low



Christine Suave, senior program coordinator at Welcoming Michigan in Kalamazoo. BTL Photo Drew Saunders

or no cost legal representation to low income residents when necessary.

The MIRC has over a hundred attorneys on its “pro bono panel,” according to Managing Attorney Susan Reed. The MIRC also has five attorneys in-house for high-impact priority cases, where the entire staff can be allocated if necessary.

“We are partnering with the ACLU of Michigan in recruiting and training dozens of new attorneys to respond to new crises for families relating to the executive orders targeting refugees and immigrants,” said Reed via email. “... We prioritize cases that relate to access to public benefits and programs, employment, and the legal status of unaccompanied minors and survivors of domestic violence. We also have a special focus on U.S. citizenship.”

In 2012, Welcoming Michigan became the 13th state/local affiliate of Welcoming America, a national, grassroots-driven collaborative to create a welcoming atmosphere community by community. The initial project started in Tennessee in 2009. It evolved out of an effort to smooth over relations between the existing neighborhoods and a growing Somali community in Nashville. Two Michiganders noticed what was happening in the

South and wanted to implement this project locally. They are former Democratic State Reps. Steve Tobocman and Rashida Tlaib – the first ever Muslim member of the Michigan State Legislature. Both became members of the founding board for Welcoming Michigan.

Tobocman now runs Global Detroit, a metro Detroit advocacy group focused on creating jobs and economic growth in Southeast Michigan by working with immigrants, foreign trade and investment.

“We’ve seen more and more Midwestern communities – many of which are not major immigration areas – recognize that immigrants have so much to contribute and almost are the perfect fit for the kind of mainstream economic and policy goals that they have in their communities,” said Tobocman.

Both Suave and Tobocman agree that Michigan’s attitude towards welcoming immigrants is as much an economic matter as a compassionate one, as the 640,000 or so Michigan residents who were born abroad have become a major factor in the state economy. According to a report released by the Michigan Office for New Americans last summer, 30,686 Michiganders born outside of the U.S. are self-employed,

employ 152,780 people statewide and generated over \$600 million in 2014. Tlaib has criticized the (Republican) Snyder-created office for not doing enough for immigrants.

Tlaib said that what makes welcoming initiatives different is that “it focuses on building relationships between immigrant communities and existing communities, rather than just on immigration policy.”

Rather than putting laws through state legislatures or Congress, the welcoming approach is almost a human resources approach, as described by Suave. The organization is committed to encouraging human beings to talk to each other at a grassroots level in an effort to build relationships.

Sports days are used to strengthen bonds between existing community members, for example. Immigrants and native-born Michiganders are paired together on the same teams because as Suave put it, “when you’re playing soccer, language isn’t a barrier.”

Simple explanations of American customs can be used – like why everything turns green on St. Patrick’s Day or what Thanksgiving is about. And Suave said that getting native-born Americans to explain their customs is a way to get them to also see it from the perspective of the immigrants in their communities too. Community clean up days – which might have just included churches in the past – can be expanded to include mosques, synagogues and temples from every religion within a community. Other community building activities, include mural paintings, subtitled film screenings, pot luck dinners and cooking classes. “Exercises like those also helps immigrants practice conversational English,” said Suave. Anyone can come to Welcoming Michigan events. New events are advertised on the Welcoming Michigan Facebook page.

*Welcoming Michigan is located at 3030 South 9th Street, Suite 1B, Kalamazoo. For more information, visit [www.welcomingmichigan.org](http://www.welcomingmichigan.org) or call 269-492-7196.*





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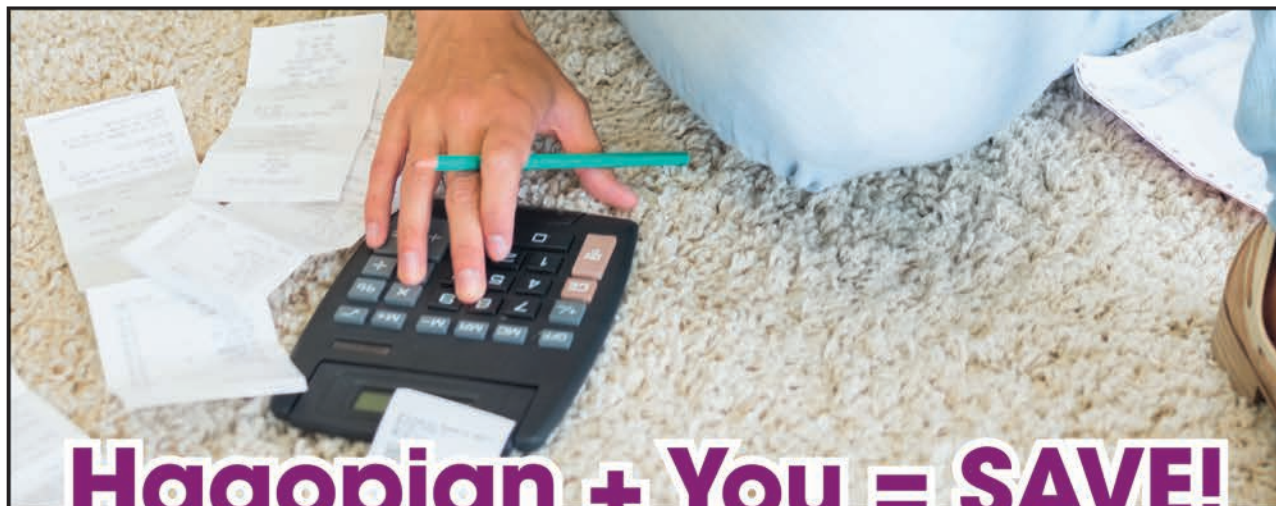
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## Rainbow Flag Creator Gilbert Baker Dies at 65

BY LOU CHIBBARO JR., WASHINGTON BLADE

Gilbert Baker, the creator of the Rainbow Flag, which has become internationally recognized as the symbol of the modern LGBT rights movement, died on Friday, March 31 of natural causes at his home in New York City. He was 65.



Gilbert Baker died Friday in New York of undisclosed causes. Photo courtesy of Washington Blade

According to an official biography posted on his website, Baker worked as a flag maker since June 1978, when his first of many versions of the Rainbow Flag was displayed at San Francisco's LGBT Pride celebration.

Over the next 39 years Baker became known internationally as a highly acclaimed flag maker and artist, with his flag designs being displayed for the premier of China and the presidents of France, Venezuela, and the Philippines as well as for the King of Spain, among others, his biography says.

"As an artist, Baker returned again and again to variations on the Rainbow Flag motif and his artwork and flag creations have appeared in galleries and museums around the world," the biography says.

It adds that in 2000 Baker put on his first exhibition of photographs and fine art celebrating the Rainbow Flag in Rome for the LGBT World Pride event. He opened an exhibit in New York City in 2002 showcasing 180 items he created and put on an expanded version of that exhibit in San Francisco in 2003.

The biography says that while living in San Francisco in the 1970s Baker became friends with San Francisco Supervisor and gay rights icon Harvey Milk and made flags for special events, including gay rights marches, at Milk's request.

"Just days ago, Baker had completed his latest Rainbow Flag, a nine-color flag for which he added the color lavender for diversity," said his friend Jay Blotcher. "He had hand-sewn 39 of these flags to commemorate the 39th anniversary of the creation of the Rainbow Flag, with plans for them to be displayed in San Francisco in June, Blotcher said.

Baker is survived by his mother, Patricia Baker of San Antonio, Texas; and his sister, Ardonna Baker Cook of Cypress, Texas.

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

# Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination: One Mayor's Story

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Detroit, Grand Rapids, Royal Oak, Pleasant Ridge, Okemos, Highland Park, Traverse City, Ypsilanti, Kalamazoo, Bay City, Ann Arbor, Ferndale, Delta Charter Township, East Lansing, Southfield, Sterling Heights. If you live in one of those Michigan cities, congratulations. Your mayor is a member of Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination.

Launched in 2016, Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination is described as a bipartisan coalition of municipal leaders dedicated to securing inclusive non-discrimination protections for all, including LGBT individuals, at all levels of government. It is a program of Freedom for All Americans. Since its inception, membership has grown from 175 to 235 mayors in 46 states and the District of Columbia. Joining the group is one step that city leaders can take to support their citizens and promote equal protections in their homes and places of work, and showcase to the public at large that their city is one of fairness, diversity and inclusion.

When he learned of the coalition, Royal Oak Mayor Mike Fournier was eager to sign on. As City Commissioner, and longtime ally, he championed the passage of the city's LGBT-inclusive human rights ordinance in 2013. He told the Royal Oak Review at the time, "I believe in embracing the values of love, tolerance and the acceptance of others as paramount to peace and advancing the human condition. As a father, it pains me to think the possibility of my daughters or my son being denied justice or equality through no fault of their own simply because of who they are."

When I spoke with Fournier recently, he echoed that sentiment, and laid out how his vision of Royal Oak aligns with the values of the coalition: "When we look at it in terms of internalizing it to Royal Oak, certainly we've done a couple of the measures that promote the initiative of the group, one in particular, the human rights ordinance. I think there are a couple other things...making sure that the culture that we have, that everything that we do – our department heads, our employees, from the police department through DPS, to greeting people at the door – understand what the message is from the commission. We want to be a welcoming city – we are a welcoming city, we want to be a tolerant city – we are

**Royal Oak Mayor Fournier hopes his membership in the coalition will encourage others to follow suit.**

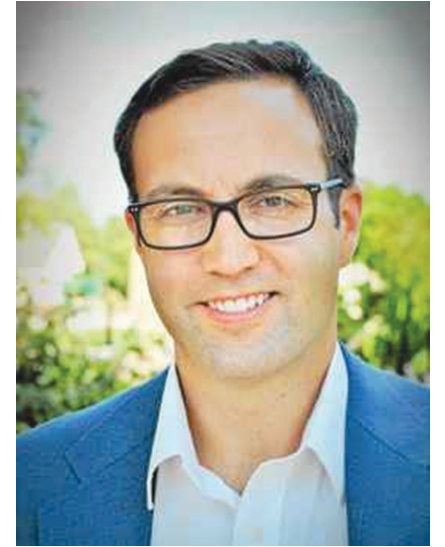
a tolerant city. We're just reinforcing those things in every aspect...standing up with other mayors, [in] support of this."

As "the face of the city," Fournier says, "I think I have maybe a bigger pulpit...to help resolve concerns but also capitalize on opportunities that that really underscore our commitment to LGBT rights in the community." He also commented that a part of the call to action for Michigan mayors is that the state has yet to "step up –" a reference to our failure to update the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

As Fournier explained above, he's set in motion measures for the city that fulfill two of the stated initiatives of the coalition: championing municipal-level protections for LGBT people (i.e. the non-discrimination ordinance) and supporting local law enforcement on LGBT-inclusive trainings (i.e. all city employees trained on the city's inclusive values). While a third initiative, prohibiting non-essential travel to states with anti-LGBT laws, may not seem applicable to a medium-size Midwestern suburb, Fournier was quick to share an anecdote: While on a recent family road trip, he had to explain to their three young children that lunch would be delayed; there would be no stop for food or gas in North Carolina. "That's a small opportunity a singular mayor on vacation was able to capitalize on," he told me, in all seriousness. (I think.)

Fournier hopes his membership in the coalition will encourage others to follow suit, even if it's just to "put their name on it. It's a step in the right direction," while allowing that "not all communities have the same struggles, certainly some areas of the country, some areas of the state, even some areas of this region have different issues and different motivators that they have to address related to LGBT rights."

Looking toward the future, Fournier sees the potential of Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination and his role as a member. "What I foresee is when something comes up in the future, that I can...look to the other communities in Michigan that have



Royal Oak Mayor Mike Fournier

also done the same things. Maybe tap other mayors, especially in the state – like size, like issues – and use that as an immediate resource. It's a great avenue for this organization to reach out to me, and to reach out to these other communities in Michigan if they have something they think is working really well, [then] we can start taking action. Especially for the mayors that aren't LGBT...having this be an independent mayor's networking point, I think we can be more agile and take quicker, more informed action and use each other's resources, as opposed to...trying to figure it out on our own.

"We have to go on a journey of looking, and uncovering, and sweeping where we have to sweep, and polishing where we have to polish, and moving big rocks when we have to move big rocks. And certainly having a network of support to help channel that information to me, and making me aware...of what some of the new opportunities are, what some of the new concerns are, I think is effective. We are stronger together."

A final note: While it may sound impressive that 16 Michigan mayors are members of the coalition, consider that there are hundreds of city mayors in the state, and that most of the members thus far are in the metro Detroit area. We have a long way to go. Contact your favorite mayor and encourage her to join.

*For more information on Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination and to sign up, visit [www.mayorsagainstlgbtdiscrimination.org](http://www.mayorsagainstlgbtdiscrimination.org).*



## ► Test

Continued from p. 4

citizen enjoys. That is the definition of discrimination. In recent years, the NCAA has set the bar high for tolerance and equality both on the court and in the stands. I applaud their leadership and urge them to consider this compromise what it is: A sham."

Despite the pressure, the tide may be turning away from boycotting the state. According to media reports, the board of the ACC Council of Presidents voted last week as a result of the HB2 deal to allow North Carolina to once again hold championship games. That could be a precursor for the NCAA's action in North Carolina.

Beleaguered by cancelled business expansions, performers nixing events and convention boycotts, the chambers of commerce within the state – the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce -- welcomed the new deal as a bipartisan effort to eliminate discrimination. Others applauding the deal are the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association and the North Carolina Travel Industry Association.

University of North Carolina President Margaret Spellings, who has an anti-gay history as an Education Department official under the Bush administration, was faced with a lawsuit under HB2 and predicted in a statement games would return to the state with the deal in place.

"This is a good day for the state and a positive step forward, specifically for the students, faculty and staff of the University of North Carolina and we applaud our elected officials for the bipartisan manner in which they brokered this compromise," Spellings said. "With today's action and our continuing commitment to equal access and opportunity for all, we have every expectation that, once again, the University will be able to host national athletic events and professional conferences as we have for years."

## 'Bad Deal'

But the views of those organizations may not represent the views of North Carolina residents and business leaders who want to rid their state of discrimination regardless of the cost of economic boycott.

Mitchell Gold, co-founder of the North Carolina-based furniture manufacturer Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, said despite operating a business in the state during the economic boycott, he would "honestly hope it continues" with the deal in place.

"I think it's a bad deal and I'm really shocked that the governor caved in on this," Gold said. "To agree to not allow non-discrimination policies in local communities until 2020, I think that's really kind of unbelievable that the governor agreed to that."

Co-chair of the LGBT group Faith in America, Gold said he's not surprised, on the other hand, that Republican leaders in the legislature – House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate President Phil Berger – agreed to the deal because "they have deeply held religious beliefs that are very anti-LGBT."

"The legislators who initiated this legislation, they have been virulently anti-LGBT...for years," Gold said. "They have held up any LGBT legislation in the state and this was one more opportunity for them to poke their finger in our eye."

Gold added he's not surprised business groups in North Carolina are eager to accept the deal, but said he's unsure whether their support will matter in terms of whether lost business will return to the state.

"The chambers in general have not been really supportive of LGBT rights," Gold said. "To the best of my knowledge, the chambers have not been vocal advocates of equality for LGBT people."

If the LGBT movement succeeds in convincing the NCAA to withhold games from North Carolina, which conceivably could lead to continued boycotts from other entities, it would mark a new achievement in the standard for holding states accountable for anti-LGBT discrimination. Never before has a deal been designed to alleviate discrimination in a state signed by a Democratic governor resulted in massive outcry leading to economic boycott. That victory would be more important still if it led to full repeal of anti-LGBT state statutes in North Carolina.

Logan Casey, who's transgender and a research analyst for the Harvard Opinion Research Program, said persuading the

NCAA to boycott the state would be a major victory for the LGBT movement because it would demonstrate the capacity to shatter legislative optics masking political expediency.

"Being able to keep the attention on North Carolina, even after a so-called 'repeal' bill and in the face of competing news items (particularly under the new administration), is a big task," Casey said. "Convincing people that the 'repeal' bill is not good enough is an even harder one. If LGBT organizers can keep the NCAA from returning to North Carolina after this 'deal,' it suggests that they are succeeding at both these tasks, and particularly at explaining why a policy that sounds good (a repeal) is actually worse in some ways than the original HB2. That suggests that the NCAA, and likely other key players, are paying more attention to the substance of LGBT advocates' messages, and not only the optics of a political situation."



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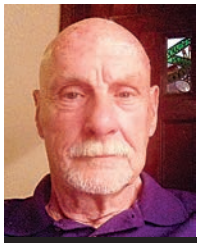
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# Michigan's Largest Mattress Gallery



**A GOOD HEALTHY LIFESTYLE BEGINS WITH HEALTHY NIGHTS SLEEP**





# P, as in Peeping Tom

## Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I was eight years old when I was exposed to my first pornographic glossy 8" x 10" photo. It was of a muscular naked guy and a curvaceous woman, shown to me by a ten-year-old neighbor. How Tommy Jones came across it I have no idea.

I couldn't have looked at it more than seconds short of a would-be hot minute, but I recall distinctly to this day that its after image mentally carried by me for ensuing weeks was of the guy. (Oh, really, Mary!)

When I was 13 I was exposed at Hutchins Intermediate School shop to my first "illustrated comic booklet: the kind men like." It was a comic strip version of cartoon characters being silly for six panels, and screwing and giggling, highlighted by exclamation points and bold-face ejaculatory urgings for the remaining six!!!!

If you'll pardon an unavoidable, but apropos, pun: we've come a long way in terms of porn circa the 1960s, 70s, 80, 90s. Today's internet is Open Sesame to sex.

Something of a Baptist prude back then I was embarrassed, and somewhat tempted to report the shocking effrontery to my then-recently-baptized self but, graciously turning the other cheek early on, I didn't.

Five years later – gay and out at 18 – I began to collect 50-cent copies of "Grecian Guild Pictorial," a collection of photos of male models in posing straps. Many of the models carried coded symbols around their individual picture, indicating availability for payment for the possibility of a future amorous encounter in the magic land of California.

It was against federal law to send the Pictorial through the mail. (American Literary Historian Newton Arvin, an author of several biographies of 19th century writers, lost his teaching position at Smith College, for sharing forbidden mailed copies of the Pictorial with colleagues. He died in 1960, and was exonerated recently.)

Truman Capote, whom he mentored and briefly had as his undergraduate lover, instituted a fellowship in Arvin's memory.)

If you'll pardon an unavoidable, but apropos, pun: we've come a long way in terms of porn circa the 1960s, 70s, 80, 90s. Today's internet is Open Sesame to sex. Sexuality in its infinite variety! Challenging and convoluted body positioning! Eclectic use of clever and damned curious triple-A battery instrumentation! Adored performer status! (Thankfully, porn about or using children is prosecuted with heavy fines and jail sentences.)

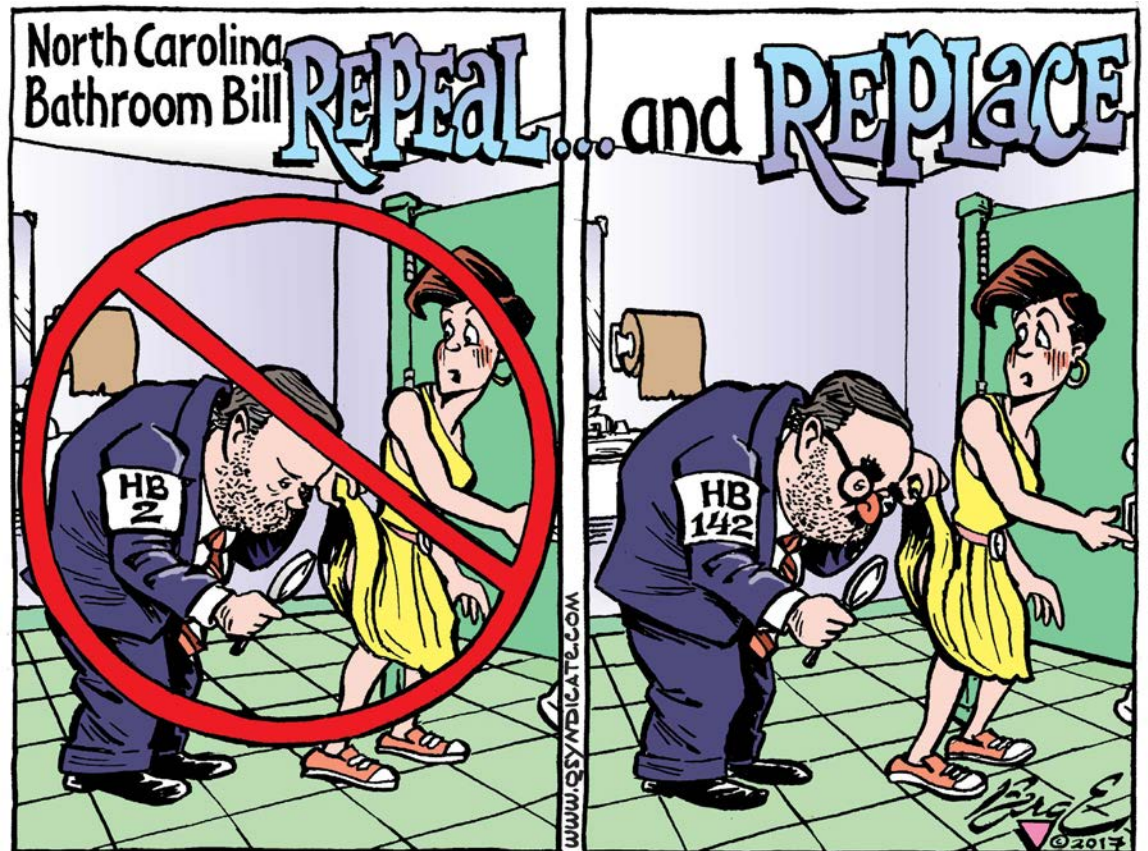
Data estimates of internet pornography use vary with data source and prevailing attitude influencing the gathering of such data.

These data are sourced by TIME magazine, but are now ten years old: 4.5: average number of porno emails received by each user per day; 68 million daily internet searches for porno terms; 72 million individual visitors to porno websites each month; 1.5 billion "peer to peer" file-sharing downloads, each month; 2.5 billion porno emails sent each day; 5 billion, estimated number of work hours lost to cyberporn each year in America, \$2.84 billion, annual U. S. sale of porno products and services. (\$4.9 billion, worldwide.)

The ever-censorious, fundamentalist American Family Association offers its contrasting viewpoint: "The porn industry knows that it cannot survive, unless more users become addicted to their material. They also are specifically targeting more Christian communities, which is part why the Bible Belt leads the nation in consumption of porn.

"The porn movie Fifty Shades of Grey heavily targeted the Bible Belt

See Alexander next page



## Transmissions



## Not Safe

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

As I write this, I am packing and planning my trek to Orlando, Florida for the 2017 LGBT Media Journalists Convening. While I should only need concern myself with how to keep everything down to one rolling bag, I find myself with one more concern. I have a layover at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in Texas, you see. After five and a half hours in the air, I'm sure I'll be ready to stop in a restroom.

On the 15th of March, the Texas senate passed State Bill 6, the Lone Star State's foray into the realm of bathroom bills. SB6 would require people to use restrooms and other facilities that match their "biological sex." They define that as the sex listed on one's birth certificate.

I feel the need to point out here that a birth certificate doesn't actually prove "biological sex," given that is predominately based on the opinion of the doctor attending a birth and not any sort of chromosome test. Further, it is worth noting that not even chromosome tests are definitive, as the notion that "XX" and "XY" are pure identifiers is much murkier than most seem willing to consider.

Also, who carries their birth certificate with them at all times? I know I don't – but I digress.

The bill is part of a Republican push to force the issue in Texas, thanks to Lt. Governor Dan Patrick making transgender restroom access a "top priority" of this legislative session. SB6 will disallow transgender people without a correct birth certificate from the use of same-gender facilities in public schools and other government buildings. It will also void trans friendly legislation in Austin and, yes, Dallas.

The bill still needs to make it through the Texas house and off Governor Greg Abbott's desk before it will be a law, but I cannot help but feel a fair amount of pessimism given the political climate in Texas and the rest of the country.

Arkansas is also making moves against transgender people, with House Bill 1986 – essentially the same bill as SB 6 – making it through the Arkansas House of Representatives on the same day as Texas. Meanwhile, North Carolina remains unable to repeal House Bill 2, in spite of yet another try on the 14th.

Further, the Federal government has rescinded its roles on restrooms for transgender students, while the

See next page



These bills are not only about barring us from restrooms, but have a larger agenda. The fact that I need to consider my right to use the correct restroom in a crowded airport means I don't have the same rights as others. The bills are about disenfranchising transgender people, and keeping us from public life. It is no less than an attempt to remove transgender people from society.

### ► Not Safe

Continued from p. 10

United States Supreme Court did an about face on the Gavin Grimm case – which would have left the high court clear up the issue of transgender restroom use – by sending the case back to a lower court and striking the previous ruling in Grimm's favor.

I should note that these bills are not only about barring us from restrooms, but have a larger agenda. The fact that I need to consider my right to use the correct restroom in a crowded airport means I don't have the same rights as others. The bills are about disenfranchising transgender people, and keeping us from public life. It is no less than an attempt to remove transgender people from society.

Those in support of them will tell you that these bills are designed for "privacy" and "safety," buzzwords with as much truth and clarity as "family" was in the marriage battles of the last decade.

Speaking of "family," the Family Research Council released a document last month, claiming 21 incidents of men violating the privacy or assaulting women in restrooms. They wanted to make a point that allowing people to go into restrooms based on gender identity will allow predators access.

"It is important to note that the concern is not that transgendered individuals are more likely to be sexual predators," said the brief, "but rather that sexual predators could exploit such laws by posing as transgendered in order to gain access to women and girls."

The thing is, while they attempted to frame the narrative as such, these cases did not

involve anyone using such a subterfuge to gain bathroom access. It also avoids what I feel is the most important part of the story: allowing transgender people to use the restroom that fits their gender identity or expression does not limit or change laws against sexual assault. There simply aren't cases of this happening, and the notion of people using these laws as cover to harass women – while appealing to conservatives and others wanting the fight against trans rights – is a baseless claim.

Now I am assuming that SB 6 will not be on the books in Texas by the time I land, nor do I think I'd face airport security pulling me from the facility to demand my birth certificate. No, it is me who worries about being assaulted in a restroom.

You see why the FRC may want to make their issue about safety and privacy; it is transgender people themselves who are at risk. According to a study from the Williams Institute, some 70% of transgender people have faced assault or harassment in restrooms.

Over the last two years, we've seen violence and murders of transgender people raise in numbers. We've already seen seven confirmed anti-transgender murders in 2017, and several other attacks. The legislative climate – and the fear tactics of groups like the FRC – is only fueling this hatred, and emboldening those who feel they will "protect" women.

I want a safe, private restroom as much as anyone – but I expect that safety for all women, trans and not.

Meanwhile, I think I'll just go on the plane.

*Gwen Smith can't believe this is still an issue. You'll find her at [www.gwensmith.com](http://www.gwensmith.com).*

APA quote to it's 180,000 membership is it's comment about the Bible Belt leading the nation in consumption of porn.

In a biblically based attempt to stem this alarming breach — one highly publicized by liberal critics — of Christian morality standards, the APA is offering to its members a five CD set for curbing and breaking the porn viewing habits of its flock.

"Breaking Porn Addiction" recruits for \$79.95. The APA reports it has so far changed the sexual viewing needs and satanic cravings for 360,000 addicts. The Gospel truth with a T, as in trumpet, is that, as always, the sin of lust is big business. APA, Amen!

### ► Alexander

Continued from p. 10

with advertising and PR, which is why their highest concentration of box office ticket sales come out of the south.

"Number 25 in the Current Communist Goals from the book, "The Naked Communist, published in 1958 is "Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, and TV."

Perhaps what's so intriguing about this

# Creep of the Week

## Ramzan Kadyrov

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

**F**ile under: More bad news about Russia.

I know, I know. It seems like every time you turn around there's yet another news story about Russia. It's hard to keep up. And to all of the Trump apologists who shrug off the growing evidence of Russia not only meddling in our election, but also of having direct ties to the Trump campaign and administration, fuck you, you do not care about our country, and you suck.

So, anyway, while Trump's been busy Tweeting about Russia being "fake news" and how the real story is Obama spying on him through Trump Tower's gold-plated microwave, gay men in Chechnya are being rounded up and killed for the crime of being gay, according to Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta.

According to the paper, approximately 100 men were rounded up in a "sweep," and that at least three have been killed, but it is suspected that number is actually higher.

Russia as a whole is not a great place to be gay, but Chechnya is especially bad. According to Novaya Gazeta, even being accused of being gay is enough to destroy a man's reputation. Actually being gay is enough to get you killed, either by the authorities, or by your family via a so-called "honor killing."

Apparently the sweep was prompted by a request made in March by an LGBT group seeking official permission to hold a pride parade.

The Russian LGBT Network put out a statement on April 2 offering emergency aid and asking people who are in danger to contact them. "We are actively cooperating with human rights activists in Russia and abroad, and are ready to evacuate people," the statement read in part.

In other words, this is deadly serious. Especially when you take into consideration the fact that for Chechnya's leader Ramzan Kadyrov, the whole thing is a joke. Or, more specifically, an "April Fool's joke."

Alvi Karimov, a spokesman for Kadyrov, said that reports of gay men being rounded up were "absolute lies and disinformation." His proof? There are no gay people in Chechnya, he said.

"You cannot detain and persecute people who simply do not exist in the republic,"



... being gay in Chechnya can get you killed either by law enforcement or by your own family.

he said, according to the New York Times. "If there were such people in Chechnya, the law-enforcement organs wouldn't need to have anything to do with them because their relatives would send them somewhere from which there is no returning."

Yeah, see above where being gay in Chechnya can get you killed either by law enforcement or by your own family. News reports have indicated that honor killings are unofficially sanctioned in Chechnya in that they don't exactly get thorough investigations by law enforcement.

The Guardian quotes Kheda Saratova, who serves on Kadyrov's human rights council, as saying to a Russian radio station, "In our Chechen society, any person who respects our traditions and culture will hunt down this kind of person without any help from authorities, and do everything to make sure that this kind of person does not exist in our society."

In other words, Kadyrov's human rights council doesn't consider LGBT people human.

Kadyrov has strong ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, so make no mistake that this anti-gay pogrom is likely fine by him.

And of course Trump, who vowed to protect LGBTQ people from "hateful foreign ideologies," is in bed with Putin (figuratively, not literally, unless there's another salacious dossier that I haven't heard about) and that so is Kadyrov. This story alone should be enough to lay bare the emptiness of any promise made by Trump to LGBTQ people.



## ► NCAA Restores Games

Continued from p. 4

to repeal the measure or else lose those games through 2022.

The new law, House Bill 142, prohibits municipalities, state agencies and the University of North Carolina from the “regulation of access” to bathrooms, locker rooms and showers without the legislature’s permission. It also bans municipalities from enacting LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination measures that would apply to private employment or public accommodations until 2020.

Even though the new law bars cities from enacting pro-LGBT non-discrimination laws and the NCAA’s bylaws bar it from hosting games in places with discriminatory practices, the statement gets around that by referencing the success of past games in North Carolina.

“While the new law meets the minimal NCAA requirements, the board remains concerned that some may perceive North Carolina’s moratorium against affording opportunities for communities to extend basic civil rights as a signal that discriminatory behavior is permitted and acceptable, which is inconsistent with the NCAA Bylaws,” the statement says. “However, we recognize the quality championships hosted by the people of North Carolina in years before HB2. And this new law restores the state to that legal landscape: A landscape similar to other jurisdictions presently hosting NCAA championships.”

Other states – Arkansas and Tennessee – have similar laws barring municipalities from enacting non-discrimination ordinances outside the scope of state law. The NCAA has never considered withholding games from those states. However, no other state besides North Carolina has a statute in place that bars state agencies from establishing non-discrimination policies on bathroom access for transgender people.

The NCAA decision to restore games to North Carolina is consistent with the decision by the Atlantic Coast Conference, which had also withheld games from the states, but decided on Friday to restore them in the aftermath of the HB2 deal.

The statement says North Carolina assured NCAA it could enact its inclusive policies through contracts with the new law in place. Further, the statement says “outside of bathroom facilities” the law enables school campus to enact pro-LGBT non-discrimination policies.

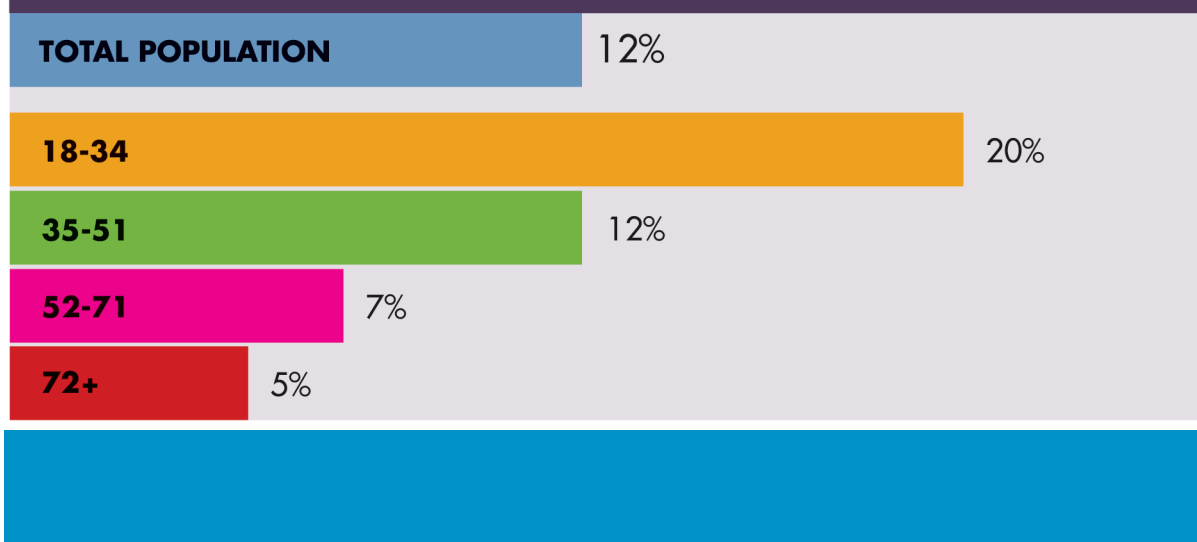
The NCAA decision comes to the dismay of LGBT rights supporters, who saw a continued boycott from the NCAA over the HB2 deal as likely the lynchpin for whether or not an economic boycott of the state would continue to create pressure for full repeal of the law.

Chris Sgro, executive director of Equality North Carolina, expressed disappointment on Twitter with the NCAA decision, saying the league has abandoned LGBT people by returning games to the state.

Also expressing disappointment with the decision on Twitter was Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin, who said NCAA has placed at risk for discrimination LGBT fans and athletes in North Carolina.

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

## % of people who identify as LGBTQ by age group



# New GLAAD Study Reveals Twenty Percent of Millennials Identify as LGBTQ

## Acceptance of LGBTQ Slowed Since the Historic SCOTUS Ruling on Marriage Equality

BY BTL STAFF

**G**LAAD unveiled its third Annual Accelerating Acceptance report <http://gaybe.am/6m> March 30, a survey conducted on GLAAD’s behalf by Harris Poll, which shows that young people are significantly more likely to openly identify as LGBTQ than generations before them. The survey – fielded online November 2-4, 2016 among 2,037 U.S. adults ages 18 and older – also shows growing levels of young people who are more likely to identify outside of traditional binaries such as “gay/straight” and “man/woman.”

“As the administration begins to fulfill its pledges to move the country backwards, many are concerned about progress made in recent years for the LGBTQ community,” said Sarah Kate Ellis, GLAAD President & CEO. “However, this report shows a remarkable new era of understanding and acceptance among young people – an inspiring indication of the future. Though laws can be unwritten, hearts and minds in America have been changed for the better – and that is a

reality less easily unraveled.”

### Key Findings

The survey shows that Millennials (people ages 18-34) are significantly more likely to openly identify as LGBTQ than generations before them. Specifically, Millennials are more than twice as likely (20 percent vs. 7 percent) to identify as LGBTQ than the Boomer generation (people ages 52-71) and two-thirds (20 percent vs. 12 percent) more likely than Generation X (people ages 35-51).

The survey also found that 12 percent of Millennials identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, meaning they do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth or their gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity – doubling the number of transgender and gender non-conforming people reported by Generation X (6 percent).

While older generations (people ages 35+) of LGBTQ people largely use the words “gay” and “lesbian” and/or “man” and “woman” to describe their sexual orientation and gender

identity respectively, Millennials appear more likely to identify in terminology that falls outside those previously traditional binaries.

Interestingly, non-LGBTQ Millennials are also significantly less likely to know someone who identifies as “gay” or “lesbian” than generations before them, indicating that their LGBTQ peers largely describe themselves in words outside more traditional binaries.

The survey shows that while acceptance of LGBTQ people remains high, progress has slowed since the landmark Supreme Court ruling, with rates of discomfort declining on average by 3 percent from 2014-2015 but going unchanged from 2015-2016.

This new data builds on GLAAD’s first two Accelerating Acceptance reports, which revealed significant levels of discomfort among non-LGBTQ people with their LGBTQ coworkers and neighbors.

*For more information, please visit [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org) or connect with GLAAD on Facebook and Twitter. Find the Accelerating Acceptance report at <http://gaybe.am/6m>.*



# With Dem Filibuster Assured, Gorsuch Nomination Heads to Senate Floor

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced Monday the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, although the nomination has hit a significant snag now that Democrats have secured the votes necessary to successfully filibuster his confirmation.

Before the committee approved the Gorsuch nomination on a party-line vote, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) announced during the session he would oppose the nominee and support the Democratic filibuster against him. That made him the 41st vote needed for a successful filibuster.

"I am not ready to end debate on this issue, so I will be voting against cloture, unless we are able as a body to finally sit down and find a way to avoid the nuclear option and ensure the process to fill the next vacancy on the court is not a narrowly partisan process," Coons said.

Other top Democrats announcing they would join Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)'s filibuster were Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), top Democrat on the committee, and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-N.Y.), who until recently was ranking Democrat.

Feinstein cited during the hearing Republican obstruction of former President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland to the U.S. Supreme Court as well as various decisions Gorsuch reached as a Justice Department official during the Bush administration and a judge on the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Our job is to assess whether the nominee will protect the legal and constitutional rights of all Americans, and whether the nominee recognizes the humanity and justice required when evaluating the cases before him," Feinstein said. "Unfortunately, based on Judge Gorsuch's record at the Department of Justice, his tenure on the bench, his appearance before the Senate and his written questions for the record, I cannot support this nomination."

Also cited by Feinstein as a concern is the more than \$10 million the Koch brothers have declared they intend to spend to support the Gorsuch confirmation as well as ads buys from the National Rifle Association and the Judicial Crisis Network.

With a filibuster of the Gorsuch nomination likely to succeed when the cloture vote for the nominee is held on



Neil Gorsuch. Photo: Michael Keys

Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is likely to invoke the "nuclear option," which would eliminate the long-standing ability to filibuster nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court.

McConnell strongly suggested during an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press" he would invoke the "nuclear option" when he declared Gorsuch would be confirmed this week with or without help from Democrats.

"What I can tell you is that Neil Gorsuch will be confirmed this week," McConnell said. "How that happens really depends on our Democratic friends, how many of them are willing to oppose cloture on a partisan basis to kill a Supreme Court nominee, never happened before in history, the whole history of the country."

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said Monday President Trump would support invoking the "nuclear option" to end the filibuster, but ultimately the decision rests with McConnell.

"There's literally going to be the first filibuster in modern times on a qualified judge that's going to end up going on the court," Spicer said. "We have really come a long way, and I think Democrats are setting a very dangerous precedent when it comes to how they want to do this because this isn't about voting against somebody or having an issue with them, it is literally trying to stop using the filibuster for something it was never really intended for, nor has it been the principle that we would vote down someone who is qualified."

LGBT rights supporters have universally opposed the confirmation of Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, citing as a chief concern his decision on the 11th

Circuit in favor of Hobby Lobby being allowed to deny contraception coverage for employees under Obamacare on the basis of "religious freedom" for the corporation. That reasoning, observers say, could lead to religious exemptions for LGBT non-discrimination laws should they be adjudicated by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, on Twitter declared support for the Democrats' filibuster of the Gorsuch nomination based on the nominee's rulings he says could spell trouble for LGBT people.

During his confirmation hearing, Gorsuch said he believes marriage equality is "settled law," but also cited "ongoing litigation about its impact and application right now."

Rachel Tiven, executive director of Lambda Legal, said Gorsuch's words hedging the finality of the marriage issue is "a dog-whistle to the religious extremists who funded his nomination."

"He wouldn't answer whether he thinks cases concerning marriage equality, abortion, school desegregation, or the right to an attorney were correctly decided and final," Tiven said. "He disdains the regulations that govern clean air, clean water and safe food. His snide treatment of everyone from the trucker freezing to death by the side of the road to plaintiffs like ours, who count on the courts to see their humanity and fundamental equality, is startling. In short, this is not a person fit to rule on the lives of 315 million Americans."

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

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## WORSHIP

# Congregation Takes On Racism, Homophobia

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

**EAST LANSING** – It's been nearly a year since Rev. Liz Miller came to Edgewood United Church of Christ and she still feels that she and the church are a good fit.

"We're a really good match for each other and it's been a really wonderful year," Miller, an out lesbian, told *Between The Lines* via phone.

"Edgewood had a significant amount of transition over the past four years so I think they're happy to have someone settled in. And I plan on sticking around for a good, long time."

Miller hasn't always been good, however, at staying in one place too long. Born in Bakersfield, California, Miller spent her time growing up going between her hometown and the Kansas and Oklahoma region.

"I've lived pretty much all over the country, in Georgia, the New England states, the Midwest and finally Michigan," Miller said. "I do love exploring new cultures and learning about different parts of the country and trying new things."

Since being in Michigan, Miller said she acclimated rather quickly.

"It took me about two weeks to become a diehard Michigan State fan," she said. "Now I can be found at most home games for any sport."

Miller lives in East Lansing with her wife, Beth, two cats and a dog.

"We've been together almost seven years and we've been married for three years," said Miller.

"My wife works with the developmental disabilities communities. We were actually married twice. First we had a legal ceremony in Connecticut where we lived. Then we had our wedding in the Grand Tetons National Park. We love the national parks and that has always been a very special place for us. It became legal for gays to marry in Wyoming like two weeks after our wedding. So we have two anniversaries."

At Edgewood, Miller found a welcoming congregation committed to social justice. And during a year of

political strife and the election of Donald Trump, Edgewood has stood strong.

"We have seen since the election that we have more visitors and more new people come who are seeking refuge or feeling under attack and are seeking out a place where they can live out their faith in a radical way. They organize and start letter writing campaigns where they can really live out their political values and

renew that commitment."

Edgewood has partnered with Black Lives Matter Lansing and brought in speakers to tackle the touchy subject.

"Right now we're beginning a six-week anti-racism seminar," Miller said. "It's open to all members of the church and we've really got to go in depth and see how racism has affected us personally, and as a congregation, and what we might begin to do about that."

Fighting homophobia is another priority of the church.

"Our congregation is radically welcoming," said Miller. "Any stereotypes that I may have carried with me about what someone who is in their nineties might believe about the LGBT community has been totally thrown out the window. People are here because we are welcoming and they're open to learning and challenging their own stereotypes that they've grown up with, challenging themselves to be as loving as possible. We thrive on diversity at Edgewood."

But Edgewood isn't always so serious.

"For over 30 years we have had an annual Edgewood Camp where the whole congregation goes to a local campground and spends five days together in the woods, singing, retreating, swimming, and getting to know each other in a different way. That's a long standing tradition and one that has helped people connect to the church. I love Edgewood Camp

because of the opportunity to just play together. And silly songs are definitely a part of that."

It's all about fellowship and ministry, Miller said.

"I feel called to ensure that our congregation continues to be a place where love is spoken," she said. "I feel called to speak out against the policies that have been enacted that are against the LGBT community, against immigration, that have a racist foundation, anything that goes against my Christian values of justice and peace and unconditional love."

For more about Edgewood United Church of Christ, visit [www.edgewooducc.org](http://www.edgewooducc.org).



Rev. Liz Miller, an out lesbian, came to Edgewood United Church of Christ nearly a year ago and says, "It's a good fit."

their faith values.

"We're not a congregation that is 100 percent Democrat," Miller continued. "We have Republicans and Democrats. But I can pretty much say we're 100 percent against hate and oppression of all people."

Fighting racism is a top priority for Edgewood.

"Before I came last spring the congregation had a congregational conversation about what are the most important justice issues of our times and what should Edgewood be doing about them," said Miller. "Anti-racism came to the top. Edgewood has a history in our local community for being dedicated to anti-racism work and they wanted to



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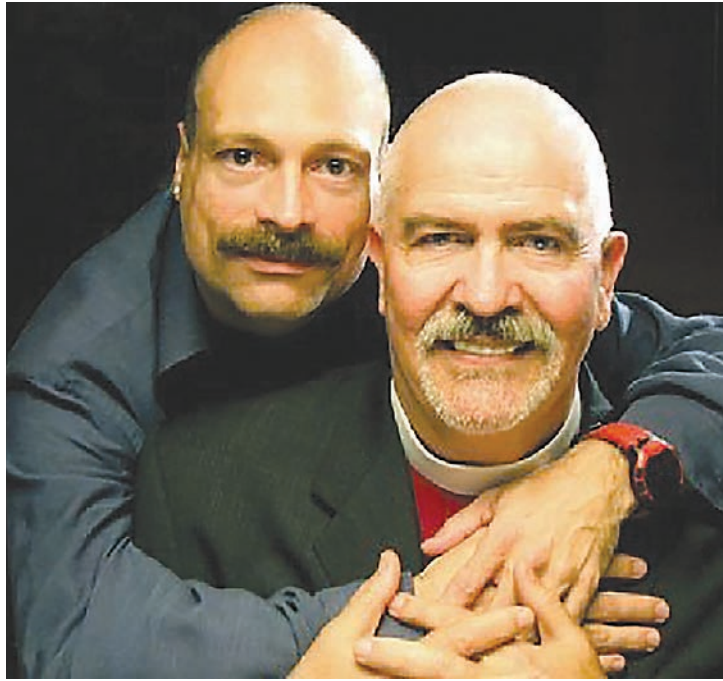
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Rev. Troy Perry with his husband, Phillip Ray De Blicke. Photo courtesy of MCC

## Rev. Troy Perry First American to Be Honored With Cuba's CENESEX Award

BY BTL STAFF

Rev. Troy Perry, founder of Metropolitan Community Churches will be the first American citizen to be honored with Cuba's CENESEX Award. Perry is also the co-founder of Christopher Street West (the oldest pride parade in the world) and a marriage equality activist. The awards ceremony will take place at the 10th Annual Cuban Gala Against Homophobia held in the historical Karl Marx Theater, a 5500-seat venue in Havana, on May 12.

The National Center for Sex Education (Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual, or CENESEX) is best known for advocating tolerance of LGBTQ issues on the island. CENESEX stresses acceptance of sexual diversity and has attracted international attention in recent years for its campaigns for the rights of transgender persons, including the recognition of an individual's gender identity, regardless of birth sex, and provision of state-funded gender reassignment surgery. The Director of the center is Mariela Castro, daughter of Cuban President Raul Castro and Vilma Espin, the brother and

sister-in-law of former leader Fidel Castro.

"To say that I am honored to receive this award from CENESEX would be an understatement," said Perry. "I am thankful that I've had the opportunity to visit Cuba and meet members of the Cuban government as well as its wonderful citizens. I am still saddened that the government of my country, the United States of America, still has not lifted the embargo against this wonderful country and its people. I call, again, for our government to make that change now."

Perry has praised the work of Mariela Castro for working against transphobia and homophobia in Cuba. "Thank God for her. As a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Cuba, she is in the position to be our voice to the socialist government of her country. She is a heterosexual ally, one of the only ones, who is also the mother of LGBTQ rights in her country."

Perry will be traveling to Cuba for the conference with his husband of 32 years, Phillip Ray De Blicke. They reside in Los Angeles, California.

## Historic Central United Methodist Church in Detroit Is Now a Sanctuary

### Several Churches in Michigan Declare Their Support for Undocumented Immigrants

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

With a president and administration that is anything but immigrant friendly, several religious leaders in Michigan have declared their churches to be sanctuaries – safe spaces for undocumented immigrants facing possible deportation. One of those churches is historic Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit, long active in the civil rights and social justice movements.

"When the Syrian refugee crisis was happening we started having a conversation about taking a family in," said Rev. Dr. Jill Zundel, Central's pastor for the past three years. "We have a four-bedroom apartment on our fifth floor. So we kind of revamped that apartment ... we put bunk beds in all of the bedrooms. So that was the discussion we had until the election came up. Then the rhetoric that Donald Trump was spewing got all of us heated. So we actually had a press conference here the day after he was elected to say we were going to stand in solidarity with undocumented immigrants and do whatever we could do."

Central's ministry team made the decision in January to become a sanctuary church, becoming the first church in the state to make that bold move. Since then eight additional churches have stepped up and also become sanctuary churches. Central took in their first family in February, an African family that was seeking political asylum and trying to get into Canada. Having been stopped at the border and turned back, the family went to a local immigration attorney who reached out to Central.

"Basically, they were homeless and didn't know what to do," said Zundel. "So they showed up at the immigration attorney's office. The man's father had been murdered for speaking out against the government and his wife had been thrown out a second story window. She was hospitalized once she got here."

Since taking the family in, reaction has been largely positive.

"If you know the history of Central you know this was a no brainer for us," Zundel said. "It was an easy sell for us. I know at some of the other churches I've served at it wouldn't be so easy to talk them into it. But not here. We've got people at our church taking her to the doctors. We've got people grocery shopping. We had one young mom bring her kids to play with the other kids."

"The response from outside the church has been tremendous, especially since we've been in the Free Press," Zundel continued. "We've been getting money mailed to us from people who believe in the cause or different churches that believe in the cause but can't

take it upon themselves. So that's been helping us out tremendously."

Right now, Zundel said the primary way for those seeking to support Central's sanctuary efforts is through cash donations.

"It just seems like when I think we're running low we get a donation" said Zundel. "I got a \$200 check today that said 'I'm not Methodist but I'm the daughter of an immigrant and I want to help.' So when that comes in that gives us breathing room to continue. The family now has been able to access some of their money so they've been helping with groceries and things. In the beginning they didn't have any car seats



Rev. Dr. Jill Zundel, Central's pastor for the past three years.

or anything so we had to step up. But there's always been just what we needed just at the right time. We even had the UAW Local 600 come in with \$300 in cash one day."

Not all the feedback the church has received has been positive however. Outside agitators responding to the Detroit Free Press article inundated Central with negative phone calls and emails for a time.

"When the article first came out we had such tremendous support and then we started getting the nasty phone calls and the nasty emails," Zundel said. "One day I had to be walked to my car. It was such a nasty email that I received. That's died down. Every once in a while someone tweets that we should lose our tax exempt status for what we're doing. But that's died down tremendously."

Zundel said Central is working with Michigan United, a group dedicated to putting a face on the

See Sanctuary, next page



## The Temple Beth El, a Detroit Gem, to Be Restored

The historic Jewish synagogue Temple Beth El on Woodward Avenue in Detroit will be transformed into a modern performing arts destination, an interfaith worship space and community center. A coalition of local clergy, community leaders, visionaries and builders known as the Bethel Community Transformation Center has developed a plan to restore the 55,000 square-foot historic Albert Kahn-designed Temple, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

“We want to bring the space back to life, and have it as a worship space and performing arts center,” Pastor Aramis Hines told DBusiness Daily News. Hines’ church is one of the several organizations currently using the space. “Most importantly, this is going to be a place for reconciliation. The goal is to use this place as a catalyst for greater conversation across different religions and races alike, so that our community can heal and come together in a greater way. We want to use this building to tell the story of Detroit and the impact it’s had on (the city’s) history.”

BCTC is building partnerships with both religious and secular groups across the metro Detroit area to work toward their goal of raising \$100,000 for which a Kickstarter campaign has been launched to repair roof damage and get the project started. This will be a years-long, multi-million dollar restoration and renovation project that will create jobs, unite the fractured faith and racial communities, and inspire hope in a better day for Detroit, according to the BCTC website.

Hundreds of volunteers have been engaged to help with the restoration, which Hinds told DBbusiness Daily News will take place in stages, so that the religious and community



Photo courtesy of Bethel Community Transformation Center

groups that currently use the space won’t be displaced. The first part of the restoration will be focused on the main sanctuary for worship and performance art, followed by maintenance to the building’s elevators and facilities. Next will be improvements to the gym and social spaces, and finally renovations to the four levels of smaller auditorium space, classrooms, and offices, were many community groups such as the Castle Group and the Pheonix Center currently operate.

Hinds is also collaborating with Rabbi Ariana Silverman, who is on the BCTC’s board of directors, noting that the goal of the renovation is to strengthen the interfaith community and give people a place to come together. There are also plans for the Jewish Historical Society to have an exhibit in the new building, to provide additional educational opportunity regarding Detroit and its history.

Hinds said after securing funding for initial repairs, the project will search for an architect that specializes in historical preservation, because they want to retain as many original designs as possible.

More information can be found online at kickstarter @ <http://gaybe.am/8T>.

### ► Sanctuary

Continued from p. 16

undocumented immigrant crisis.

“They really put the families out before the press,” said Zundel. “But because we don’t know who is looking for the family we have, we’re protecting them and not doing that. But we want to get to a point where we’re changing policies. We’re trying to get the story out that this is real and there are real people affected by these policies now.”

Other metro Detroit churches and synagogues that have declared themselves as sanctuaries include First United Methodist Church in Ferndale, the Birmingham Temple

Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Farmington Hills, Hope United Methodist Church in Southfield, Metropolitan Zion AME Church in Detroit, and Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Hamtramck. The statewide organization, Michigan United (www.miunited.org), has partnered with several other churches – some in secret – that have agreed to act as safe havens for people concerned they may be at risk of deportation.

The Central United Methodist Church is located at 23 E. Adams in Detroit. Call 313-965-5422 for more information or visit the church on Facebook [www.facebook.com/centralumc.detroit](http://www.facebook.com/centralumc.detroit).

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Photo: Myriam Santos

## Melissa Etheridge on Writing New Politically-Driven Songs, Her Trump-Era Medicine (Weed) and Her 'This Too Shall Pass' Worldview

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

“You keep doing what you’re doing, you keep being out, you keep being beautiful,”

Melissa Etheridge tells me, as if to emphasize the present-day significance of simply being your queer self.

The Grammy-winning rock icon, whose coming out at the height of her career in the early '90s paved the way for many in the LGBT community, knows the gravity mere visibility can have on the world. During this impassioned interview, Etheridge, 55,

brings her centered thoughtfulness to our conversation about the precise career moments when her music incited momentous change, the influence Donald Trump is having on her latest “empowered” songwriting sessions, and why she’s not sweating the “big bully in the schoolyard.”

**Melissa, if there was ever a time to drink your weed wine, it's gotta be now and for the next four years.**

(Laughs) Tell me about it!

**Can you send me a crate?**

You do need it, don't you? Oh my god, I wish I could. I wish I could get it out of (California), but I'm working on it.

**Does that stuff help you write? Does it get the words flowing?**

You know what, I'm not as much of a drinker. I actually just smoke, and yes, smoking helps me write very much – smoking helps me every day.

**Is it sativa you smoke for writing?**

For writing I smoke sativa; otherwise, if I'm not writing, I don't use sativa because it would just make me run around in circles. (Laughs)

**You know, when it comes to marijuana, I'm still learning.**

Aww. The whole product thing that I've got going, called Etheridge Farms – part of what we really want to be is sort of the “Cannabis for Dummies.” I can really take everybody through this ... and this is good medicine! It's good for you. And I'll show you the choices



“ I do have a belief that the universe doesn't give us anything we cannot handle. All of this is cementing and making stronger our desire to live in a world that celebrates diversity.”

and how to do it if you're scared and stuff; that's really what I want my brand to be. It's about wellness and sort of walking people through this. It's a very good time to take a breath and know that this too shall pass, and it's making us all better.

**Do you really believe that message – this is making us all better, that “this too shall pass”?**

I do. I have to. It's my worldview. It's my belief in the world, and I do have a belief that the universe doesn't give us anything we cannot handle. All of this is cementing and making stronger our desire to live in a world that celebrates diversity. We know because the last eight years we've been riding on this incredibly amazing wave of, wow, we can all do this, we can live and let live and be stronger, and to borrow (Hillary Clinton's) battle cry, be “stronger together.” Sometimes that being taken away from us and being confronted with what the world would be like without it is what makes that desire stronger, so obviously, it makes us stand up and take to the streets and say, “No, this is not how we want to live, this is not the American dream and let's change that.”

**Well, because we have to – we're forced to. I was listening to your song “What Happens Tomorrow,” from 2007, and it gave me so much hope then and it's giving so much hope now. But also, at the same time, I can't help but feel bittersweet hearing, “I believe a woman can work hard and succeed, and we could be content to believe that she could be in charge of the free, and be the president,” knowing Hillary isn't in the Oval Office right now.**

I still believe in it. I know it was hard. We will never forget what that was like in November and January. We will never forget. We will tell our children. I have 10 year olds and said, “Look, this is an important time in history and you're going to tell people that you were alive when this happened.”

**Creatively speaking, is the current political climate shaping your new music? Are you writing songs about all this?**

Of course. I think we're going to see more music talking about it, more music coming from that, and my music has kind of – I've always had a bit of that in my music. So, right now is a writing time for me. This whole

year. And I can't help but be influenced by it. I don't want to put out a protest album, because I'm hoping in two years it will be moot and that we will have figured this all out, and yet I want it to be inspiring and speaking of our times because these, I think, are very important times.

**What you do so well is put a face on an issue or event, like your song about Matthew Shepard, “Scarecrow,” and “Tuesday Morning,” an LGBT-rights rally cry centered on the late Mark Bingham, who sacrificed his life to save others in the Sept. 11 attacks. I imagine that might be the direction you'd go in.**

It's funny, I haven't really told anybody what I'm up to, but that's exactly it – putting a face to it. I'm finding stories and really taking that way in.

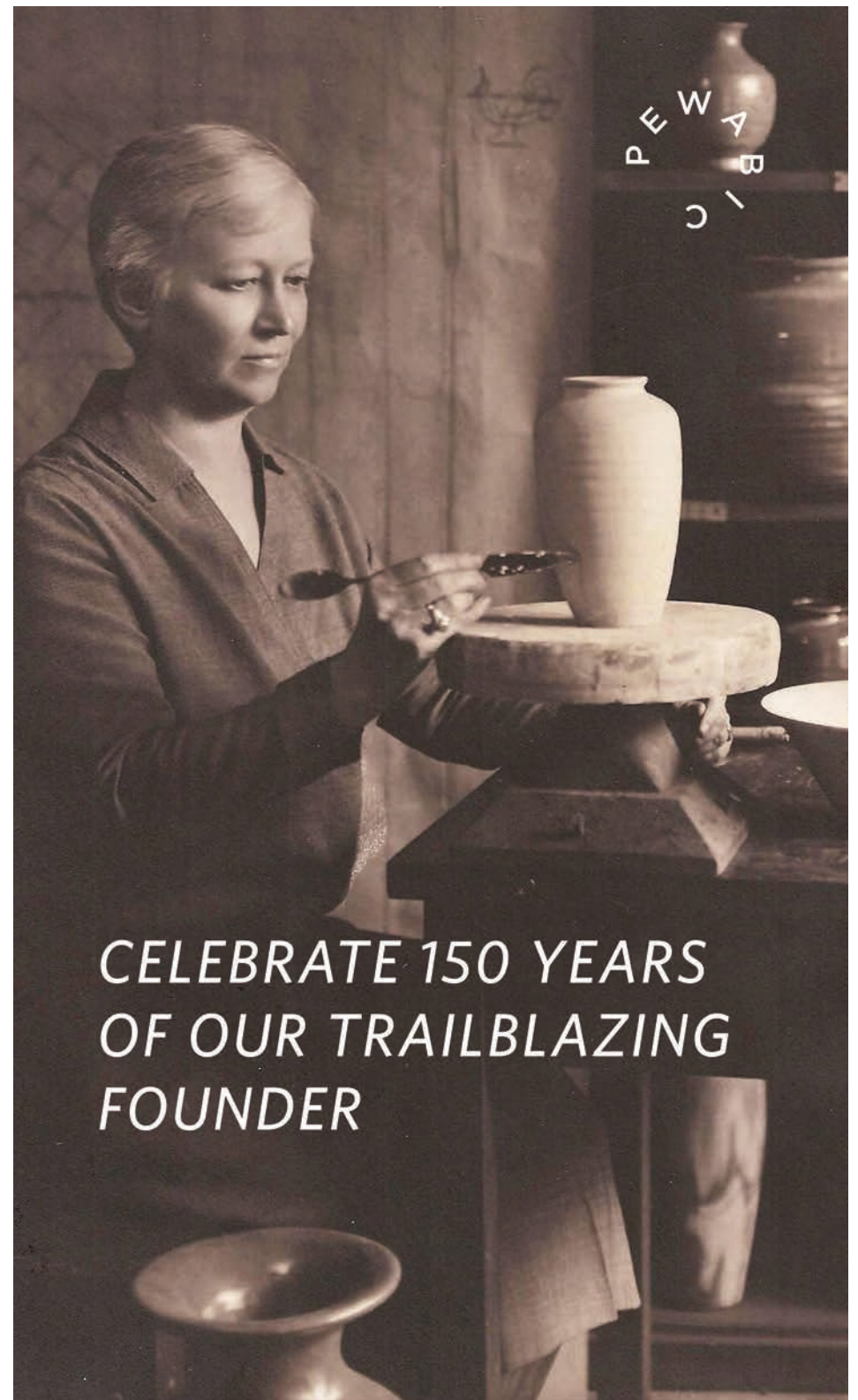
**As someone who's always been a voice in and for the LGBT community, what's it like now to be an out gay musician and activist in a time of social and political fear?**

I've been doing this for 25 years now. I've been out and speaking and being an example, and speaking truthfully and answering the questions and watching our culture and our society move toward this *and* the world move toward less fear and more acceptance of the many different facets of humanity. Having done it for 25 years, I'm not as afraid of this big bully coming into the schoolyard because I've stood with my brothers and sisters, and I've stood with Americans. This is not the majority. I have been around our great country, and, yes, there are fearful people and they have a very large megaphone, but it's not the majority. It's just not. And gay people are being born every day into families and it's a struggle to some, and yet they learn and grow and love. So, I feel empowered. I feel that it only makes us stronger when there's a pushback. It only makes us more determined to live peacefully.

**When have you seen your own music influence the lives of others?**

The first time I really saw it was when I put my fourth album out, “Yes, I Am” (in 1993). I came out completely unknowing

See Melissa, page 20



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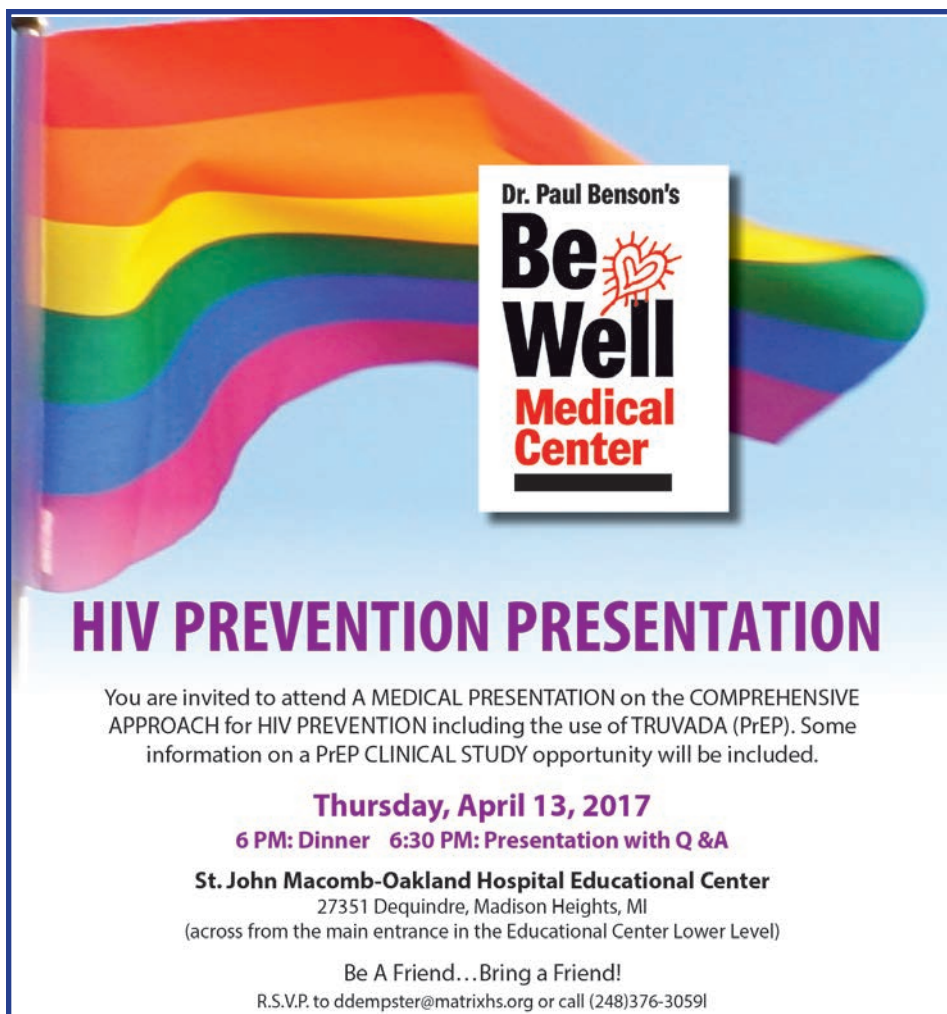
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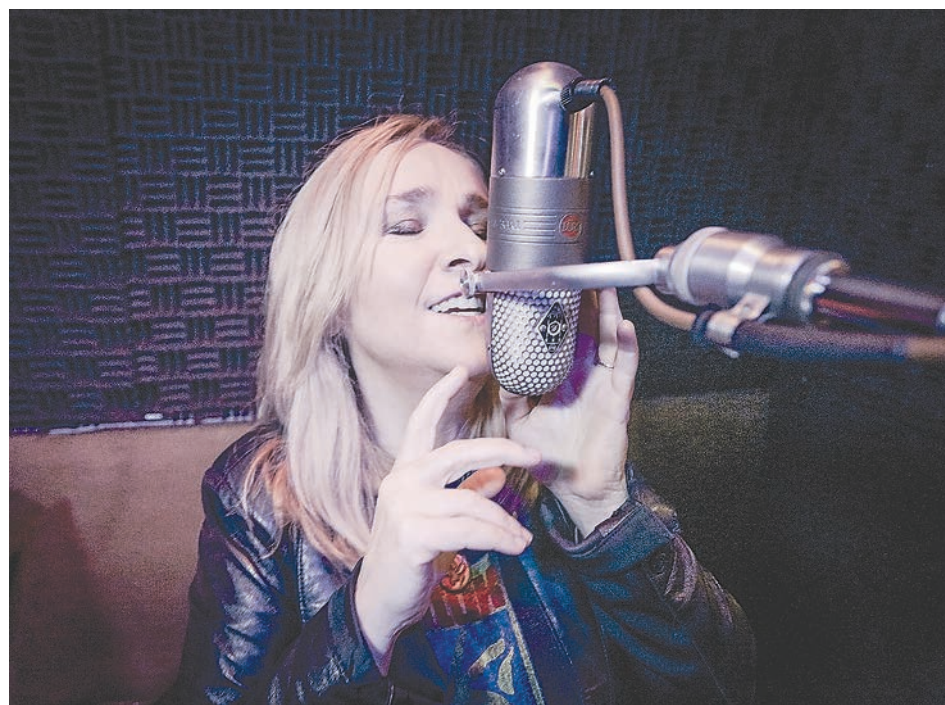
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### ► Melissa

Continued from p. 19

what it was gonna be like, had never seen an artist in rock/pop form come out, and then seeing my album reach stratospheric heights – six million records (sold) and just great success... while talking about being a big ol' lezzie (laughs)! Since then, I have had, oh my gosh, just thousands of people come up to me and say, "Thank you very much. You gave me an example of someone who was gay." "Thank you so much, you helped me come out." Just every day, every age, every type of person coming up.

Then when I was diagnosed with cancer (in 2004), I remember some people in my management said, "Maybe you don't want to tell people you have cancer, they might see it as weak." I was like, "Whoa. Like I'm gonna start lying now? No." So, I treated it the same way, spoke very truthfully and wrote "I Run for Life" and performed at the Grammys and really just stood up and said, "This is what I'm going through, and this is what I believe about my own health." And I saw thousands of people come up to me and say how much it meant to them, and that when they go through it, they remember me.

Then I wrote a song about the environment (2006's "I Need to Wake Up" for "An Inconvenient Truth") and got an Academy Award for it – that was a lot of fun! So, I'm just honored to have been a part of a force of change in this country and in this world.

**Now seems to be a good time for another "I Need to Wake Up." Maybe the 2017 version is just "Woke"? Do the kids keep you up to date on trendy vernacular like "woke"?**

Oh, you have no idea! My daughter goes to Columbia University in New York City, and I was just visiting her and she goes, talking about someone, "They're really woke." And

then goes, "Do you know what that means?" I go, "I can imagine what that means!" Then, (we) had a little discussion about it.

### **So, do you march? Is every Melissa Etheridge concert now a protest?**

It is in a way, just that I'm still here. Just like you said, I'm not much of a preacher; I am more of, "Look at this example, look at life." If you can see it, and not be afraid of it, then that helps bring about the change, so I think the experience of coming to a Melissa Etheridge show can really inspire. I speak about our human condition and the joy of diversity in our world. I really try to inspire people to strength in that way.

### **Where do you find strength right now?**

My music, my wife, my children. Life itself. When you go through cancer, you don't let a bully in the schoolyard mess you up so much. I've seen chemo, I've seen death – and I will not fear. I know that fear is power, and I will not give up my power. I will not fear this. I believe wholeheartedly we are headed – and are on our way already – to better worlds and understanding. So, no, I wake up every morning and I'm ready to go get 'em.

### **What are you enjoying about your life now that you couldn't in the '90s when you first went mainstream as a newly-out lesbian?**

Well, actually, I find myself talking less about being gay now than I did then. That was *all* I ever talked about. My god, I spent two years just talking about gay, gay, gay. The interviews are more about my whole life, and I enjoy that. I'm so much more relaxed, oh my gosh. I wouldn't trade being in my 50s for anything else. I've learned so much. I've grown. I look back at my 30s, when I thought I was all grown up, and I'm like, "Girl, you've got so much to learn." That's the one thing I would tell my younger self – just chill, it's OK, it won't always be this way, you will



get through this, you will get where you wanna go, but just take your time because once you get there, it's not gonna be what you think and you're gonna be off to something else. But don't you worry: 40s are better than the 30s, and I'm telling you, buddy, 50s rock. You're gonna get there in 16 years and you're gonna go, "That Melissa said 50s was gonna rock and she was right."

**Whatever happened to the boxed set that was supposed to be released a few years ago? Is that still happening?**

Let me tell you what happened: I started putting the boxed set together when I was at the end of my Island (Records) thing, and I just totally immersed myself in my old work and went into the vaults and got out old recordings and tracks that no one had ever heard and alternative things and, god, it was just amazing. I found old pictures and videos and was just like, "This is gonna be the greatest boxed set ever."

And then I changed management. I got off of Island Records, and my management said, "OK, if you wanna put a boxed set out, that's one thing, but you're not gonna make any money off of it because it belongs to Universal." We're still looking to do a boxed set. It will be with Universal Music, and no, I won't make any money from it, but it's gonna be a really nice thing. I would say in the next five years is when the boxed set is finally gonna come out. I took it off my No. 1 priority list and that's when I did the last two albums (including her latest, 2016's "Memphis Rock and Soul") and really changed everything around... and I made more money! (Laughs) So, it's still definitely on my mind, and I'm always thinking about it and it's gonna be amazing.

**What unreleased material did you dig up that we might be surprised to hear?**

Oh, there's so much! There are songs from the second and third album – there's just these songs that didn't make the albums, but are completely cut and they're just really great. It's like, oh my gosh, there are songs from "Yes, I Am" that I didn't put out and I listen to them now and go, "Holy cow, these are great," and of course back then I was told, "Don't do this, don't do that." But I'm really looking forward to them seeing the light of day.

**Nostalgia gets easier as you get older, I find.**

I forgive myself so much – how I looked, how I sounded, everything!

**Considering all that's happening in the world currently, do you have any final words for the LGBT community?**

What I would say is, friends, brothers and sisters, we are as strong together as we are strong inside. The work is now inside of us; it's up to each of us to know in our hearts that we are part of the American fabric. We are part of the world fabric. We are part of human society. We always have been, and we are here to represent love. It should tell us something that our biggest struggles these days are about empathy and compassion. That's what we are fighting in our halls of congress: empathy. It is about love. Stand firm and together with anyone – straight, gay, bi, trans, whomever – and go: This *is* us, this *is* the truth, this *is* humanity, this *is* life.

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



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## Riot Grrrl 90s Comes to Ferndale

Fresh off a very successful run at the Planet Ant Theatre in Hamtramck, Riot Grrrl 90s comes to Ferndale for a two weekend – limited engagement at The Ringwald Theater at 22742 Woodward Ave. Set in 1990s suburbia, Rachel and Jen meet in French class and become instant best friends. Their mutual love of Nintendo, Riot Grrrl music and smoking cigarettes gets disrupted when Rachel's neighbor, Mike, starts hanging around. Winner of the Audience Choice Vote for Box Fest Detroit 2016, this is an expanded version of the Award Winning Short Riot Grrrl 90. The performance features DeAnnah Kleitz-Singleton, Janelle Soulliere, Andy Reid, Lauren Bickers, and Dyan Bailey. Showtimes are scheduled for April 7-8 and April 14-15 at 9 p.m. The theater will again be accepting donations to Planned Parenthood at every performance. For more information or to purchase tickets for \$10, call 248-545-5545 or visit [www.theringwald.com](http://www.theringwald.com).



# Happenings

## OUTINGS

### Thursday, April 6

**First Thursdays Kal Mixer** 5 p.m. 18+ OutFront Kalamazoo, 161 E. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. [www.facebook.com/events/1900630326887521/](http://www.facebook.com/events/1900630326887521/)

**LGBT Youth Meeting** 6 p.m. Facilitated by Brooke Lindley, YWCA LGBTQ Victim Advocate and Counselor. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 2693494234. [www.outfrontkzoo.org](http://www.outfrontkzoo.org)

**PFLAG Trans Meeting** 7 p.m. First Thursday monthly PFLAG Tri-Cities, 815 N. Grant, Bay City. [leishahaler@gmail.com](mailto:leishahaler@gmail.com) [www.pflag.org](http://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](mailto:bbudde@goaffirmations.org) [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Friday, April 7

**FoolMoon** 8 a.m. WonderFool Productions, P.O. Box 7616, Ann Arbor. 3138063952. [wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com](mailto:wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com)

### 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. [TJ.Benrowski@CyclebarTroy.com](mailto:TJ.Benrowski@CyclebarTroy.com) [www.facebook.com/events/1341298615927764/](http://www.facebook.com/events/1341298615927764/)

### Sunday, April 9

**FestiFools** 4 a.m. WonderFool Productions, P.O. Box 7616, Ann Arbor. 3138063952. [wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com](mailto:wonderfoolproductions@gmail.com) [www.wonderfoolproductions.org](http://www.wonderfoolproductions.org)

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

### Tuesday, April 11

**QWC Board Games and Brews** 6 p.m. Open to LGBTQ and ally women Queer Women's Community and OutFront Kalamazoo, 4213 Portage St., Kalamazoo. [www.facebook.com/events/803261159823815/](http://www.facebook.com/events/803261159823815/)

### Wednesday, April 12

**FiM Support** 7 p.m. Support is limited to transmasculine, AFAB people who no longer identify as female, or are questioning, and their guests. FiM Detroit, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. [ftmdetroit@gmail.com](mailto:ftmdetroit@gmail.com)

### Thursday, April 13

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

**Race in 21st Century America: The 10th National Conference** 8:30 a.m. Theme: Race, Gender and Sexuality. See website for panel discussion information. Michigan State University, 219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. <http://jmc.msu.edu/race-conference/>

**HIV Prevention Presentation** 6 p.m. Dinner and presentation with Q&A Be Well Medical Center, 27351 Dequindre, Madison Heights. 248-376-3059. [ddempster@matrixhs.org](mailto:ddempster@matrixhs.org) [www.doctorbwell.com](http://www.doctorbwell.com)

**LGBT Youth Meeting** 6 p.m. "Preparing for my first year of college" with Kalamazoo Valley Community College. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. [michael@kgllrc.org](mailto:michael@kgllrc.org) [www.outfrontkzoo.org](http://www.outfrontkzoo.org)

### Friday, April 14

**Community Open House** 5 p.m. Take a tour of the new center. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 South Rose St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. [www.outfrontkzoo.org](http://www.outfrontkzoo.org)

### Saturday, April 15

**Self-Care and Learning to Understand Emotions Workshop** 10 a.m. Registration: \$30. Workshop for parents, helpers and therapists. Radix Institute and Stand with Trans, 29600 Northwestern Hwy. Suite 100A, Southfield. 248-739-9253. [lifeorce99@gmail.com](mailto:lifeorce99@gmail.com) [www.radix.org](http://www.radix.org)

### Sunday, April 16

**PFLAG Monthly Meeting** 2 p.m. Entry from parking lot behind church. Every third Sunday. PFLAG Ann Arbor, 306 N. Division at Catherine Street, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0659. [info@pflagaa.org](mailto:info@pflagaa.org) [www.pflagaa.org](http://www.pflagaa.org)

### Monday, April 17

**TLGB Annual Potluck Easter & All Holidays Meal** 1 p.m. If possible, please bring a dish to pass. Gender-Identity Network Alliance & MCCD,

2441 Pinecrest Ave., Ferndale. 2483997741. [www.facebook.com/events/1763402233975377/](http://www.facebook.com/events/1763402233975377/)

### Wednesday, April 19

**Discussion on ageism** 5 p.m. Contact Pat Baldwin for more information. Detroit Elders, 4750 Woodward, Detroit. 313-833-1300 Ext 15. [www.facebook.com/detroiteldersproject/](http://www.facebook.com/detroiteldersproject/)

**Disability Resource Seminar for Clinicians** 6 p.m. Attorney Ebonie

Adams will discuss the disability process and the various conditions that qualify for disability under Social Security Law. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)

### Thursday, April 20

**Anniversary Celebration** 5:30 p.m. More information on Facebook @lgbtldetroit LGBT Detroit, 20025 Greenfield Road, Detroit. [www.lgbtdetroit.org](http://www.lgbtdetroit.org)

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

### Friday, April 21

**Annual Spring Luncheon** 11:30 a.m. Tickets: \$30. Join Equality Michigan for the "Business Case for LGBTQ Equality" event. Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, 1000 E. Beltline Ave.

## Editor's Pick

### Detroit Actor Plays Historically Significant Role

Phil Elam, a Ferndale native, will perform the role of Homer Smith in the stage production of "Lilies of the Field," which follows the 1963 motion picture's plotline as a traveling handyman who becomes the answer to the prayers of nuns who wish to build a chapel in the desert. The film – which was adapted by James Poe from a 1962 novel of the same name by William Edmond Barrett – earned Academy Award nominations for Best Picture and Best Writing Screenplay, but its historical significance was the milestone performance of Sidney Poitier. "I have admired Mr. Sidney Poitier, both as an actor and as a man, my entire life," said Elam. "As an African-American man living in a new generation, the significance of this role and Mr. Sidney Poitier's Oscar win is not lost on me, especially in these recent times. The story of Homer Smith still resonates as loudly now as it did in 1963. I am proud to be part of bringing it to the stage in Detroit." Showtimes are 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. on April 8 at the A.D. Hinds Performing Arts Theatre, 8801 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. Purchase tickets at the theatre box office and on [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).





## Editor's Pick

### Join the Michigan Democratic Party on April 8

The MDP is honored to welcome one of America's leading political strategists, Guy Cecil, to the 31st Annual Women's Luncheon on April 8 at 11:30 a.m. at the Cobo Center, 1 Washington Blvd., Detroit. There are limited seats. Donation \$50. Contact Virgie Rollins at 313-892-6199 for more information. Later in the evening at 6:15 p.m., join Democrats from throughout Michigan and across the country for the MDP's Legacy Dinner featuring keynote speaker Congressman Keith Ellison. This year, the MDP is proud to honor the history and legacy of the Labor Movement. Tickets \$175. Immediately following the main program, the MDP Youth Caucus will host the Legacy Dinner After Dark. No ticket purchase is required; attendees can make a recommended donation of \$20 to help support young candidates. For more information, visit the MDP Facebook page or the organization's website <https://michigandems.com/events/>.



NE, **Grand Rapids**. 313-537-7000 Ext 108. [lvallarino@equalitymi.org](mailto:lvallarino@equalitymi.org) <https://equalitymi.org/spring2017/>

#### Saturday, April 22

**Foster Care and Adoption Orientation** 9 a.m. For more information please call 877-529-5532 or visit the website. Orchards Children's Services, 24901 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 601, **Southfield**. 248-258-0440. [smarks@orchards.org](mailto:smarks@orchards.org) [www.orchards.org](http://www.orchards.org)

#### Sunday, April 23

**Women Organize Michigan Summit** 9 a.m. Senator Debbie Stabenow; Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence; Congresswoman Debbie Dingell; Gretchen Whitmer, Gubernatorial Candidate, Michigan Progressive Women's Caucus; Lisa Cook, MSU Economics Professor; Danielle Atkinson, Mothering Justice; Lisa Stern Peltz, Fair Michigan Women Organize Michigan Summit, 1 Washington Blvd., **Detroit**. [www.facebook.com/events/345941492473861/](http://www.facebook.com/events/345941492473861/)

#### Monday, April 24

**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](http://www.necto.com)

#### Tuesday, April 25

**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](mailto:blindley@ywcakalamazoo.org) [www.outfrontkzoo.org](http://www.outfrontkzoo.org)

## MUSIC & MORE

#### Benefits/Social Events

**LGBTQ&A Caucus** "Michigan Democratic Party Legacy Dinner" Keynote speaker Congressman and Deputy DNC Chair Keith Ellison. Tickets: \$175. Cobo Center 1, 1 Washington Blvd., **Detroit**. 6:15 p.m. April 8. 269-

455-5009. <https://michigandems.com/events/>

**Michigan Democratic Party** "31st Annual Women's Luncheon" Contact Virgie Rollins for more information. Keynote speaker Guy Cecil, one of America's leading political strategists. Donation: \$50. Cobo Conference Center, 1 Washington Blvd., **Detroit**. 11:30 a.m. April 8. 313-892-6199. <https://michigandems.com/events/>

**Michigan for Revolution** "Dine with the 99" Tickets: \$10 (\$20 suggested). Various speakers and performing artists. Berts Warehouse Entertainment, 2727 Russell St., **Detroit**. 6 p.m. April 8. [www.eventbrite.com/o/michigan-for-revolution-13112511534](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/michigan-for-revolution-13112511534)

**Moms Club of Anchor Bay** "Fire & Ice Mom Prom" Tickets: \$50. Purchase in advance via email. Ladies 21 and over. Benefit for Turning Point to support victims and families affected by sexual abuse and domestic violence. San Marino Club, 1685 E. Big Beaver Road, **Troy**. 6:30 p.m. April 21. [www.turningpointmacomb.org](http://www.turningpointmacomb.org)

**Ozone House** "Cause a Scene for a Good Cause" Bring FB flyer to establishment and Ozone House receives 20 of the sale. Blaze Pizza, 3500 Washtenaw Ave., **Ann Arbor**. 5 p.m. April 13. [www.facebook.com/events/212004672609413/](http://www.facebook.com/events/212004672609413/)

**Pink Elephant Products** "Friends of Freedom House Fundraiser" Enjoy food and wine from around the world in a celebration of freedom. Email for details. Pink Elephant Products, 1420 Washington Blvd. Suite 301, **Detroit**. 5:30 p.m. April 8. [www.eventbrite.com/e/friends-of-freedom-house-fundraiser-tickets-32273786765](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/friends-of-freedom-house-fundraiser-tickets-32273786765)

#### Concerts

**Ten Pound Fiddle** "Melissa Ferrick". MSU Community Music School, 4930 S. Hagadorn, **East Lansing**. 7:30 p.m. April 7. [www.tenpoundfiddle.org](http://www.tenpoundfiddle.org)

**Wharton Center** "Rocktopia" Tickets: \$45. Cobb Great Hall, 750 E. Shaw Lane, **East Lansing**. 7 p.m. April 9. 800-WHARTON. [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)

## THEATER

#### Civic/Community Theater

**Lilies of the Field** Featuring Detroit Actor Phil Elam. Tickets: \$15. Detroit Lighthouse Community Theatre, A.D. Hinds Performing Arts Theatre, 8801 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. April 8 - April 8. [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

**Morning's at Seven** Tickets: \$17-22. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave, **Ann Arbor**. April 20 - April 23. 734-971-2228. [www.a2ct.org](http://www.a2ct.org)

**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](http://www.stagecrafters.org)

#### Professional

**Annamals** Tickets: \$10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, **Hamtramck**. Through April 15. 313-365-4948. [www.planetant.com](http://www.planetant.com)

**Clutter by Brian Cox** Tickets: \$20. Theatre NOVA, 410 W. Huron, **Ann Arbor**. Through April 16. 734-635-8450. [www.theatrenova.org](http://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. 248-545-5545. [www.theringwald.com](http://www.theringwald.com)

**Riot Grrr! 90s** Tickets: \$10. Donations to Planned Parenthood accepted at performances. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., **Ferndale**. April 7 - April 15. 248-545-5545. [www.theringwald.com](http://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. 248-545-5545. [www.theringwald.com](http://www.theringwald.com)

## ART 'N' AROUND

**Affirmations** "Visibility & Artivism: 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](http://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](http://www.dia.org)

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

**Lawrence Street Gallery** "Exposures: Photography '17" Opening reception April 7, 6-9 p.m. Mid-month reception April 21, 6-9 p.m. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave, **Ferndale**. April 1 - April 30. 248-544-0394. [www.lawrencestreetgallery.com](http://www.lawrencestreetgallery.com)

**Scarab Club** "Under the Surface" Works by photographer Myles Gallagher. Opening reception, April 7, 5-8 p.m. Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, **Detroit**. April 5 - May 20. 313-831-1250. [www.scarabclub.org](http://www.scarabclub.org)

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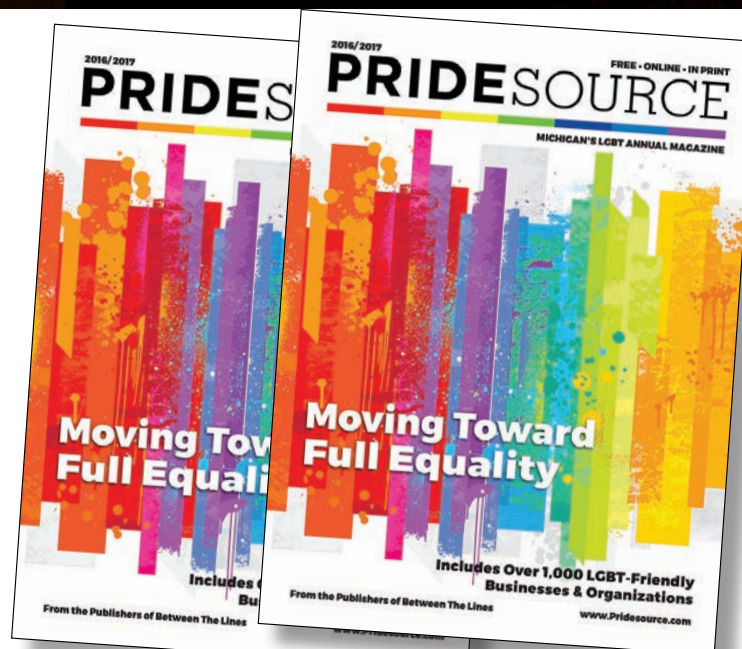
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# Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

## Dueling stars are born (one of them Lady Gaga)

Here's a rule you can count on in the entertainment business: everybody wants to remake "A Star is Born" all the time. Why? Well, probably because it's about that thrilling rush of ascendant glory and the horror show of crushing defeat, and it's all wrapped up in one heaving, melodramatic package, that's why. Also, really, short version here: why not? Therefore, it makes perfect sense that the Lady Gaga/Bradley Cooper-starring version goes in front of the cameras next month (with Cooper making his directorial debut). It also makes sense, in a synergistic way that will probably help both projects, that a new Broadway musical version is in development, as well. Bill Condon will take on that one – he's the director of a little movie called "Beauty and The Beast," the one that just took in a few hundred million dollars in its opening weekend – and it's all early days right now. So by the time both of these projects are ready, and for all we know they might be ready at the same time, we're going to have a diva throwdown on our hands, one that will be ageless and evergreen. And if you got that reference you're probably quite old.



Lady Gaga. Photo: KathClick

## McKinnon and Kunis track down 'The Spy Who Dumped Me'

Forgive us, but we love Kate McKinnon so much that we'd consider it fairly newsworthy if she caught a mild cold (we'd worry, like good stans do, and we'd probably send flowers). Our non-real-life relationship with her is that intense, and we won't apologize for that. As far as we know, however, she is in perfect health and, even better for our fandom purposes, about to jump into a new film project. After proving herself the MVP of "Ghostbusters" and "Office Christmas Party," McKinnon will star alongside Mila Kunis ("Bad Moms") in the spy comedy, "The Spy Who Dumped Me." A clever joke of a title that lots of people might not get because it's based on a 40-year-old James Bond movie, "Dumped" will find the stars involved in international espionage after learning that an ex-boyfriend is also a secret agent. It gets rolling this summer with director Susanna Fogel (who co-wrote and directed the lesbian comedy "Life Partners") and will be ready sometime in 2018, which is sooner than the next Bond, so you'll deal.

## Laverne Cox stars in 'The Trustee'

Did you watch "Doubt"? No? Well, not many people did, sadly, which is why the legal drama was cancelled by CBS after two episodes. But if you did happen to catch it, you got to see Laverne Cox make TV history as the first transgender actress to be cast as a main trans character on a network series. Now she gets to make another kind of TV history, on ABC's "The Trustee." It's a buddy cop pilot from Warner Bros. TV, one that co-stars Meaghan Rath ("Being Human," "Banshee"), and it will see Cox playing an ex-con finishing out her sentence by working for a police department. The history part involves this character not being trans, and that's a first. In other words, we've gone from no trans representation in film and TV, to trans people being the butt of jokes or victims of murder, to sympathetic portrayals by cisgender actors, to trans actors playing trans characters, to this. It's major, and it's good. If it goes to series, you'd better be watching.

Romeo San Vicente has a Laverne Cox wishlist in his DVR.

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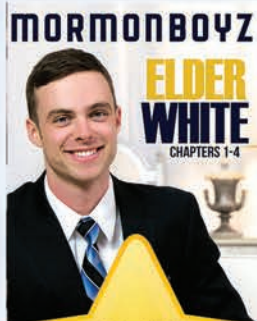
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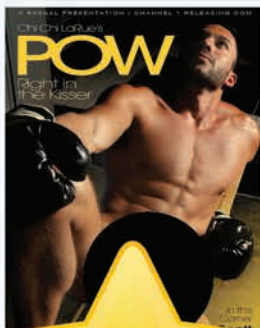
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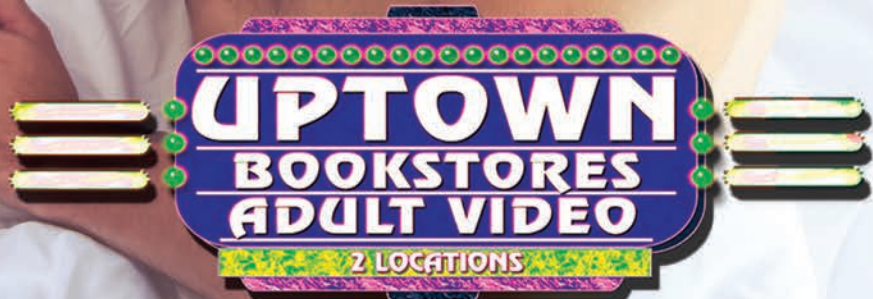
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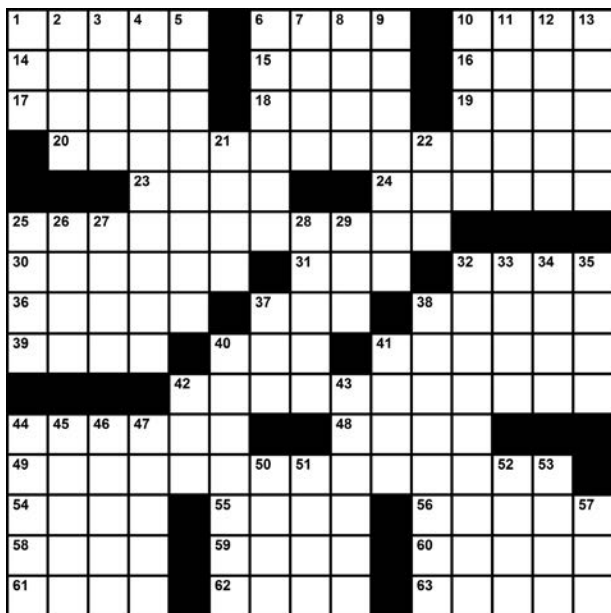
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# Q Puzzle



## The Guys, According to Garp

### Across

- 1 Come together
- 6 Lorca's room
- 10 Change from red to pink
- 14 Ring around your anus
- 15 Mabiuis of "The L Word"
- 16 Had too many M&M's, e.g.
- 17 Metaphysical poet John
- 18 Fuel in Jamie O'Neill's country
- 19 "Get a \_\_\_!"
- 20 Transgender character in

"The World According to Garp"

- 23 Mayberry boy
- 24 Groups of manhunters
- 25 Actor who played 20-Across
- 30 Thinks out loud
- 31 Magneto portrayer McKellen
- 32 Mr. Right-now
- 36 Cathedral areas
- 37 Start of a quote from 20-Across
- 38 "As You Like It" woman
- 39 "Why should \_\_\_ you?"
- 40 Barrett or Chaplin

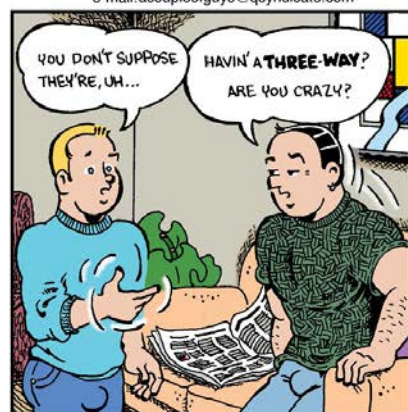
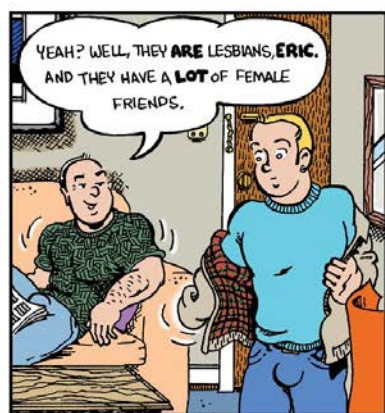
- 41 Enola Gay, for one
- 42 End of the quote
- 44 Like characters that aren't straight
- 48 Skipper's spot
- 49 How 20-Across knew the quote was true
- 54 Staying power, on Broadway
- 55 Six feet under
- 56 They hang from utility belts and under them
- 58 Emulate Jon Barrett
- 59 "Legally Blonde" character
- 60 Hank of hair
- 61 Old Soviet news agency
- 62 Goes out with
- 63 Catcher of phallic fish

### Down

- 1 Dipstick word
- 2 Shakespeare's Othello, for one
- 3 In the year, in Caesar's time
- 4 Solar protection for Klinger
- 5 High points at Metropolitan Community Churches
- 6 Snow White's dwarfs, e.g.
- 7 Part of San Francisco's BART
- 8 Neeson of "Kinsey"
- 9 Do more than just consider
- 10 Tosses in one's hand
- 11 Frida's "farewell"
- 12 He wrote about two guys living together on an island
- 13 Utopias
- 21 Park of Queens
- 22 On the down \_\_\_

- 25 Songwriter Mitchell
- 26 Milk-colored stone
- 27 Where a queen bee rules
- 28 Margaret Thatcher's middle name
- 29 k. d. lang's "Big Boned \_\_\_"
- 32 Whoopi's "Ghost" dance partner
- 33 Jessica of "Dark Angel"
- 34 Layer under two tiny brides and under them
- 35 Hearing things?
- 37 "The Fountainhead" author Rand
- 38 Toni of "United States of Tara"
- 40 Pulls out, in "Gone with the Wind"
- 41 BBC nickname, with "the"
- 42 Third notes, to Bernstein
- 43 Straddled harbor of old
- 44 Place to stop when cruising
- 45 Courtroom VIP
- 46 Protection
- 47 Fantasizes about a hottie
- 50 Cut
- 51 Maupin story
- 52 Coward of "Blithe Spirit"
- 53 Alternative word
- 57 CCCP part

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# (Pa)roll Call: It's Important to Remember These 10 'Conservative Value' Perverts and Adulterers

## The Frivolist

BY MIKEY ROX

I wrote a travel article recently for *Out in San Antonio* magazine about romantic LGBT-friendly and/or -owned hotels, called “6 hotels you should bang in before you die.” The title’s irreverent, sure, but its purpose, like all good article titles, is to draw readers’ interest – and, if I do say so myself, it’s more exciting than the kissy-face getaway ideas that saturate most travel editorial, because, let’s not kid ourselves, couples (gay and straight) aren’t booking romantic overnights for the free shampoo.

But, the problem, when you’re a gay person, is that when you

(10) prominent, so-called Christians and conservatives that have been caught with their proverbial pants down, in many cases on company time and their constituents’ dime...

bring up anything remotely related to sex, you’re automatically branded a deviant.

Now, I usually don’t respond to haters’ comments on my work – except that one time when another gay accused me of being a homophobe; as if – but I just couldn’t let Twitter user @twinmomma’s tweet-response to the article go unanswered. Her suggestion that the LGBT community categorically has

sex on the brain, and that’s why the world at large discriminates against us – and this coming from a lesbian herself – was not only homophobic but downright insulting.

“really? ‘6 hotels you should bang in’? we wonder why people think LGBT people are only about sex,” she wrote. “Not journalism. You’re better than that.”

I could go on and on about all the reasons she’s wrong, but that would take forever. Instead, I’d like to remind her of these (and there are plenty more) prominent, so-called Christians and conservatives that have been caught with their proverbial pants down, in many cases on company time and their constituents’ dime, who are better-suited targets for her ire. If nothing else, let this list serve as a reminder that double standards and hypocrisy still run rampant, among politicians, but also within our own community. #neverforget



### 1. Ed Schrock

It’s the tale as old as time. No, not that one. Rather, the one where a Republican Congressman opposes gay-rights issue, like same-sex marriage and gays in the military, but then has to abandon his bid for a third term because a tape surfaces that incriminates him for soliciting sex from a male prostitute. No beauty in this story; just a beast.

### 2. David Dreier

Dreier, a congressman from California, supported the Defense of Marriage Act and voted against hate-crime laws that would protect homosexuals as well as the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell.” He’s featured in the 2009 documentary “Outrage” for his alleged relationship with his male chief of staff.

### 3. Mark Foley

A leading opponent of child pornography who also served as chairman of the House Caucus of Missing and Exploited Children, Foley resigned his House seat when the sexually explicit e-mails he sent to teen male congressional pages were uncovered. Daddy’s been naughty, y’all.

### 4. David Vitter

Vitter took over his House seat from former Congressman Robert Livingston following the latter’s own sex scandal, and then suggested that then-President Clinton follow suit and resign his own position in the wake of the Monica Lewinsky controversy. I can only image that he was at a loss for words when his name was discovered in infamous D.C. madam Deborah Jeane Palfrey’s little black book of clients.



### 5. Randall L. Tobias

Deemed the “AIDS Czar” under George W. Bush, Deputy Secretary of State Tobias didn’t want U.S. funds providing support to countries that permitted prostitution. Noble stance. At least it was, until he also admitted to being a sex-paying client of Palfrey’s.

### 6. Mark Souder

Souder stood proudly atop his soapbox as a devoted advocate of family values and abstinence. But he took his rightful place back in the gutter after an ethics investigation revealed an extramarital affair with a female staffer.

### 7. Chris Lee

This idiot. A Congressman representing New York, Lee was caught sending shirtless pics to a woman on Craigslist and – get this – used his official Congressional email for all communications. He resigned hours after the story broke, apologizing to his family, staff, and blahblahlah.

### 8. Scott DesJarlais

If DesJarlais isn’t the poster boy for husband material, I don’t know who is. He admitted under oath to at least six extramarital affairs, two of which were with a patient and a staff member while he was a physician. If that’s not enough, this jerkoff made his wife have not one but two abortions while he ran on a pro-life platform.

### 9. Vance McAllister

A married father of five in the streets, caught kissing a married staffer in the sheets. OK, not exactly, but the smooch was caught on surveillance camera, which was enough to end his Congressional career.

### 10. Newt Gingrich

File this under “Why Is This Asshole Still Around?!” While leading the impeachment of then-President Clinton for his dalliances with Lewinsky, Gingrich admitted, at the time, to cheating on his *second* wife. It ultimately led to his resignation from the House, but even today the devil’s minion is still manipulating the Republican Party from the inside.







Miles Bond, Najee Jones, Eric Totaro and Brandon Harrison at 2015 Ferndale Pride. File photo: AJ Trager

## Ferndale Pride Seeks Volunteers and LGBT Couples to Get Married

Ferndale Pride draws more than 15,000 attendees for a full week of events leading up to Pride's premiere event, the daylong street fair. The organization is looking for volunteers to help this year on June 3 with a variety of opportunities. Volunteer meetings are scheduled on April 26, May 9 and May 24 at Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. Members of the community who are interested can visit [www.ferndalepride.com](http://www.ferndalepride.com) to sign up or ask questions.

tying the knot during Ferndale Pride. The Red Door, Level One Bank, Rock Sugar Events and Blumz by JRDesigns proudly present "Married and Proud." The Red Door will host wedding ceremonies in their sleek lounge officiated by one Independent Catholic deacon and Ferndale's Mayor David Coulter. The ceremony includes an appetizer course, champagne toast, cake, a corsage or boutonniere, and other fun surprises. A cash bar will be open as well.

### Create a Romantic Pride Moment

For LGBT couples looking for a unique and memorable wedding experience, consider

Wedding ceremony registration is available online at <http://gaybe.am/JS> for \$100.

### 2017 Michigan June Pride Schedule

- June 3: Ferndale Pride
- June 10 & 11: Motor City Pride
- June 9 & 10: Kalamazoo Pride
- June 10 : Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival, Midland
- June 16: Lake Effect Pride, St. Joseph Berrien County
- June 17 : Grand Rapids Pride
- June 17: Michigan Pride/Lansing
- June 21 -25: UPNorth Pride – Traverse City
- June 24: Flint Pride

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## Hope Not Handcuffs Program Offers Addiction Support

Residents suffering from addiction will have better access to treatment without fear of jail time with the Hope Not Handcuffs program launched in January. The program is being implemented across Macomb County and through the Ferndale Police Department - the only law enforcement agency in Oakland County to take part.

“We have seen firsthand the devastating effect that substance abuse has had,” said Linda Davis, president of Families Against Narcotics, which created the program in partnership with the Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative. “This community-wide partnership will better connect residents with the help they need and provide options for recovery that have been tough to find before.”

The program is simple: those in need or want of immediate help are asked to come to the Ferndale Police Department, where they will be welcomed (no questions asked) and connected with recovery support and treatment. Support is provided quickly thanks to Hope Not Handcuffs’ more-than 200 volunteer “angels,” who assist residents with transport and other needs. Following treatment, individuals will receive referrals for continued support to reinforce treatment and healthy living.

“Michigan’s addiction epidemic continues to hurt families and claim lives all across our state,” said Lt. Gov. Brian Calley, who chaired Michigan’s Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Task Force. “While efforts to deal with the problem are underway at the state level, community partnerships like Hope Not Handcuffs give local residents a new lifeline and show just how much the community cares about the well-being of its people.”

Local partners involved in the program include every police department in Macomb County, the Sheriff’s department, Michigan State Police North post, Harper Woods and Ferndale Police Departments, as well as Macomb County office of Substance Abuse, CARE of Southeast Michigan, Medstar and Universal Ambulance companies and numerous treatment facilities.

For more information about Ferndale’s participation in the program, contact Sgt. Baron Brown with the Ferndale Police Department at 248-541-3650.

## Freedom House Funding Restored

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

A technical error in grant application scoring by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development in December 2016 could have cost the Freedom House 60 percent of their annual budget, putting the organization at risk of closing its doors.

But a successful appeal coupled with a recount led to HUD’s reversal of the organization’s denied application and the reinstatement of its full grant for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

For 20 years, \$391,000 – more than half of the Freedom House’s \$750,000 budget – has come through funding from HUD. The remainder comes from Community Development Block Grant funds, a Health and Human Services Emergency Shelter grant, money from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the HOPE fund, other smaller foundations and some individual donations.

During the last few months, the Detroit-based “gateway” for refugees and asylum seekers has found alternative sources of funding.

“It is difficult for me to express how profoundly grateful we are for the outpouring of support from our community during this crisis. Your donations, fundraisers, and appeals raised \$329,943 for our vital services. Just as important, our residents were able to see how loved and cared for they are by our community,” executive director Deborah A. Drennan wrote in a letter to Freedom House supporters.

Despite the Trump administration’s antipathetic attitude toward immigrant populations, program manager TJ Rogers said, “People in our community and around the country are stepping up to say these aren’t our values as a country and these aren’t our

values personally, so we want to step up and help this organization that is welcoming people who are yearning to breathe free which is very much in line with what and how our country was founded.”

More than 1,000 individual donations were made to the Freedom House, according to Rogers.

“The community sees the value in our work and the need for our work, and they want to make sure we are able to continue to do what we do.”

This will help the organization to fill 2 1/2 open positions on its small staff and continue providing services including temporary housing, food, and clothing; medical and behavioral health services; employment training, English as a Second Language and educational classes; and legal assistance in achieving political asylum status.

Founded in 1983, the Freedom House has helped some 1,400 refugees from 74 countries in the past decade. Rogers said 86 percent of the people who arrive on its doorstep are granted political asylum and 93 percent wind up in permanent independent housing.

### Moving Forward

When asked what the organization will do moving forward, Rogers said they are aware of the proposed 13 percent cut in HUD funding, which is already “quite competitive.”

The Trump administration will slash more than \$6 billion in HUD funding and eliminate community development



Program Manager TJ Rogers said Freedom House will refine a plan that decreases their reliance on government funds going forward. BTL File Photo: Andrew Potter.

grants, according to a budget outline obtained by the Washington Post. The Office of Management and Budget’s “blueprint” for 2018 puts HUD’s funding at \$40.7 billion, down from \$46.9 billion in 2017.

In response, the Freedom House will refine a plan that decreases their reliance on government funds, according to Rogers, and increases funding from philanthropic and corporate funders as well as individual donors.

“We have this additional year to continue to build relationships through fundraising efforts to ensure that we’re able to be sustainable in the long term,” he said, noting that HUD funding beyond 2018 is not a guarantee.

Drennan wrote in her letter that the organization is planning a community celebration so that their staff can say “thank you” to supporters who have “shown such love and generosity to Freedom House and its residents.” Stay tuned to email and social media for details.

To make a contribution or for more information about the Freedom House, visit [www.freedomhousedetroit.org](http://www.freedomhousedetroit.org).

## Grant Opportunities Available for Nonprofits

The Ferndale Community Foundation is now accepting grant request applications for the organization’s 2017 grant cycle. Grants are available to nonprofit groups and organizations for projects that provide opportunities for public art, cultural or music events, health programs, or youth recreation activities, according to Foundation Chairperson and Ferndale City Councilman Dan Martin. The total amount awarded will be \$7,000, made up of multiple individual grants of \$2,500 or less. Eligible applicants must be based in Ferndale or work on behalf of the City and its residents.

To be considered for for a grant, download and complete

the three-page application on the City of Ferndale website at <http://gaybe.am/v1>. Return with additional information about your project or organization (if applicable) by no later than April 14 to Ferndale Community Foundation Grants Submission, Ferndale City Manager’s Office, 300 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale, 48220. Applications can be submitted by mail, to email at [Dan.martin72@yahoo.com](mailto:Dan.martin72@yahoo.com), or in person. The Foundation will make its funding decisions by early May with planned distribution of checks in early May. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Martin at 248-672-4067.

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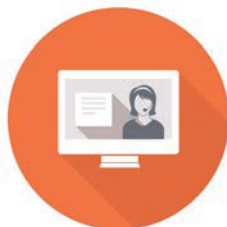
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