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April 20, 2017

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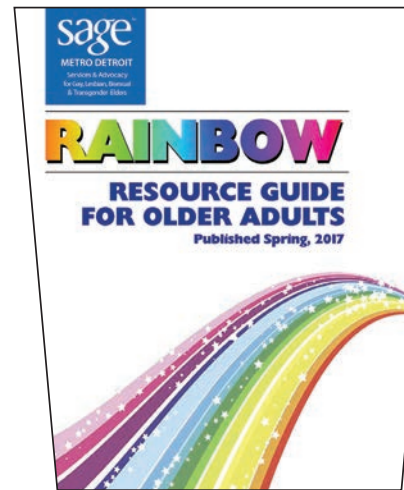
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PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP
20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF
Michigan Press Association
National Gay Media Association
National Gay & Lesbian Chamber
Q Syndicate



EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief
Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 12
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor
Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 24
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Senior News Editor
Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 10
kate@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers
Emell Derra Adolphus, Todd A. Heywood,
Jason Michael, Amy Lynn Smith

CREATIVE
Webmaster & MIS Director
Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Columnists
Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown,
Mikey Rox, Dan Woog
Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Cartoonists
Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers
Andrew Potter
Alexander Godin

ADVERTISING & SALES
Director of Sales
Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 22
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives
Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 13
anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 16
donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Ruth Ellis Center Awarded David Bohnett Foundation CyberCenter Grant

The David Bohnett Foundation, created in 1999 by the philanthropist and technology entrepreneur bearing its name, has recently awarded the Ruth Ellis Center with a CyberCenter grant, which will provide 10 new fully loaded Mac workstations for use by youth in the organization's Drop-In Center.

Among other initiatives, The Foundation provides state-of-the-art computing technology to roughly 60 community spaces nationwide that directly serve people who identify as LGBTQ. REC received its first David Bohnett Foundation CyberCenter grant in 2008 and has continued to reapply and receive new hardware every three years. The new computers will arrive later this month.

"The David Bohnett CyberCenters are places where gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people can comfortably get on a computer, access services, and network with each other in a nurturing and supportive atmosphere," says Paul Moore, program officer at the David Bohnett Foundation. "We are proud to be long-time partners with the Ruth Ellis Center in providing the lifesaving services to our LGBTQ youth." The "refresh" grants, he adds, allow the CyberCenters to keep pace with constant advances in hardware and software.

Incorporated in 1999, REC is a youth social services agency with a mission "to provide short-term and long-term residential safe space and support services for runaway, homeless, and at-risk" LGBTQ youth. The Second Stories Drop-In Center, located at its headquarters in Highland Park, serves anywhere from 30-75 youth on any given Drop-In day. The computers will provide young people access to vital technology to help them with academic achievement, job attainment, and social supports.

"Continued support from the David Bohnett Foundation has played an instrumental role in REC's ability to serve LGBTQ youth experiencing barriers to housing, health, and wellness," says Mark McCormick, director of Development & Advancement at REC. "As the Center continues to build upon its 17 years of service in this community, use of the David Bohnett CyberCenter is expected to increase in the coming months and years."

The delivery of the computers will also coincide with #40toNoneDay, a campaign by the True Colors Fund that aims to support LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. Participants nationwide will post "unselfies" on social media on April 26 to bring attention to a startling statistic – 40 percent of LGBTQ youth experience homelessness, even though they account for only seven percent of young people in the U.S. The True Colors Fund is working to end homelessness among the LGBTQ youth as well as working to create a world where young people can be their true selves.

For more information about REC, visit www.ruthelliscenter.org.

Disparate Identities Collide

Student Panelists at MSU Provide Education on Inclusivity

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Faith and sexuality are rarely mentioned together. In fact, it is not uncommon that the two topics are viewed as entirely separate. Pair those topics with a discussion of race and for many they become inaccessible. Some of those barriers were broken on April 13 at The Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing during an undergraduate panel.

"It's always a good opportunity to be able to come and share that story and first of all demystify what it is to be queer, what it is to be a person of color and move beyond that as well to what are the implications for people," said Nicole Bravo, a second-year graduate student and assistant for the Michigan State University LGBT Resource Center. Bravo has attended the panel several times.

Bravo, who was one of four panelists at the "Intersections between Faith, Race, Gender and Sexuality" event, spoke about her experiences with, divergence from and her process of recovery after being part of the Catholic faith.

"Growing up I went to Catechism and Sunday school and was involved in youth group. I was a 'but Catholic.' I believe this 'but' I don't believe that there's anything wrong with ...," said Bravo. "The breaking point was when I dated my first trans partner.



Intersections between Faith, Race, Gender and Sexuality panelists. Pictured left to right: Nicole Bravo, Leon Hister, William Alexander III, Heba Afaneh. BTL Photo Eve Kucharski

That was the point that I could no longer reconcile the two."

Bravo's insight and experiences were accompanied by that of Leon Hister, Heba Afaneh and William Alexander III – each MSU students who shared traditionally conflicting stories about sexuality, faith and race.

But those were just some of the topics covered April 13 at MSU's "Race in 21st Century America: The 10th National Conference." Post each presenter's introduction, the floor became an open forum for audience members to pose questions on anything from an explanation of pansexuality, to broader queries about the intersectionality of those identities.

Panelist Hister, a senior and dual major in philosophy and social relations spoke about his own experience as a member of the queer community as well as his own understanding of his biracial identity and the process of gaining confidence within it.

"I think that really truly we don't do this often enough, we second-guess what we know," Hister said.

Taylor Schaar, a student affairs employee in a program outside of MSU attended the event to aid her in her work and found the presentation insightful.

"I think that there are a lot of structures in predominantly white institutions that reinforce oppression, even if students who have marginalized identities are given access to education," Schaar said. "I think that that is something that people aren't really willing to examine because it's uncomfortable."

That push out of the comfortable set the tone of the panel, but the tension was outweighed by the positive emotion that filled the room post panel. First year masters graduate student and panelist Alexander summed up the goal of the presentation.

"When a student is from a privileged identity (learning about these identities), they're going to be upset, but at the end of the day you have to be unapologetic about that," Alexander said. "But also open to working with those students to help them learn and grow as well."

For more information about the MSU LGBT Resource Center, visit the website www.lbgtrc.msu.edu, check it out on Facebook www.facebook.com/MSULBGTRC or follow the organization on Twitter @LBGTRC.

Holland City Council Race Could Impact Pursuit of Ordinance

BY JIM LARKIN

Will LGBTQ residents of the City of Holland have to wait another four years before they have the votes of the City Council to pass an anti-discrimination ordinance that will protect them?

They'll get their first indication on April 25, which is the deadline for filing for four open seats on the council. All four seats are currently held by council members who voted against such an ordinance in 2011: Mayor Nancy DeBoer, 1st Ward Councilman Myron Trethewey, 3rd Ward Councilman Brian Burch and 5th Ward Councilman Todd Whiteman.

DeBoer and Trethewey have already filed to seek re-election. DeBoer will be opposed by Jay Peters, incumbent Ward 2 Councilman who voted for the anti-discrimination ordinance.

Only three members of the nine-person council – Peters, Dave Hoekstra and Wayne Klomprens – voted for the ordinance six years ago. That means either both of the other current council members – Brian Lyon and Quincy Byrd – would have to support such an ordinance for it to pass or pro anti-discrimination candidates would have to file by April 25 for Trethewey's, Burch's or Whiteman's seats and then beat the incumbents.

As of April 17, none had. The primary election is Aug. 8 and the general election on Nov. 17.

Washington State Reinstates N.C. Travel Ban After HB2 Deal

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Washington State has reinstated its ban on state-sponsored travel to North Carolina – first enacted over anti-LGBT House Bill 2 -- in the aftermath of the imposition of a new replacement law civil rights groups say is still discriminatory.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee issued a memo on Thursday putting in place a new ban on state-funded travel to North Carolina after his previous ban expired when North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, signed the new measure.

In the memo, Inslee says, like HB2, the new law, labeled House Bill 142, “contains similar troubling, discriminatory provisions and Washingtonians traveling to North Carolina on work-related matters may still experience discrimination.”

“And though North Carolina formally replaced HB2, the continued allowance of discrimination is inherent in the spirit [of] HB142,” Inslee continues. “Consequently, I again order that no executive or small-cabinet agency shall allow publicly funded non-essential travel to North Carolina.”

The new law prohibits 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.

Much to the consternation of LGBT rights supporters, Cooper, a Democrat, the law after closed-door negotiations with Republican leaders of the state

legislature. Their agreement was intended to alleviate economic boycott to the state as a result of HB2 in time for a deadline set by the National Collegiate Athletic Association to either repeal the law or lose championship games for years to come. The NCAA later announced the new law was “minimally” acceptable to again consider championships in North Carolina.

Washington is the third state to declare its travel ban enacted over HB2 will remain in place in the aftermath of Cooper signing the replacement law. Other states that have similarly reaffirmed their bans are California and Minnesota.

Unlike California and Minnesota, Inslee’s earlier ban expired before he reinstated it because the first measure had language keeping it in place “so long as the recently approved HB2 exists in its current form,” which wasn’t the case after Cooper signed the replacement deal.

The remaining states that enacted travel bans over HB2 – Vermont, Connecticut and New York -- haven’t yet declared the status of those policies with the new North Carolina law in place.

Municipalities that have declared they’ll keep their travel bans to North Carolina in place are Chicago; New York City; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Seattle; Portland, Ore.; Atlanta; Baltimore; Los Angeles; Oakland; Santa Fe; Cincinnati; Salt Lake City; Palm Springs, Calif.; West Palm Beach; Portland, Maine; Burlington, Vt; and Wilton Manors, Fla.

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

Texas to Consider Anti-LGBT Legislation Based on HB2 Deal

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

In a sign the new law in North Carolina that replaced House Bill 2 may be exported to other states, the Texas legislature is set on Wednesday to consider anti-LGBT legislation that bears a striking resemblance to the North Carolina deal.

The bill, House Bill 2899, was introduced Friday by Rep. Ron Simmons (R-Carrollton) as a compromise proposal for lawmakers seeking to enact anti-LGBT legislation in Texas as the biennial legislative session in Texas winds down. The legislation is set for a hearing Wednesday in the House State Affairs Committee.

The measure would prohibit municipalities from enacting ordinances that would “protect a class of persons from discrimination” or reduce or expand the classes of persons protected from discrimination under state law. In effect, the proposal would bar cities from enacting ordinances barring anti-LGBT discrimination because Texas state law affords no protection based on sexual orientation or transgender status.

The proposal has explicit language stating city

ordinances would become null and void if they enacted prior to the passage of the law. That would eliminate non-discrimination ordinances already in place in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Plano and San Antonio, according to the Human Rights Campaign’s 2016 Municipal Index.

HB 2899 would take effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house as provided under the Texas Constitution. But if the legislature approves it by a simple majority, it would take effect on Sept. 1, 2017.

The law is proposed as alternative to anti-LGBT legislation already approved in the Senate, Senate Bill 6, which seems to have stalled out after House Speaker Joe Strauss said he opposed the bill and had no intention of bringing it up. That proposal would bar cities from enacting measures to bar discrimination against transgender people in restrooms and prohibit transgender people from using the restroom consistent with their gender identity in public spaces, such as schools and government buildings.

See Texas, page 13

Lansing’s Sanctuary City Fight

BY TODD HEYWOOD

Facing a backlash from conservatives and a possible legal showdown with President Donald Trump’s administration, the city of Lansing has rescinded a resolution declaring itself a sanctuary city.

The reversal brings to an end weeks of contentious public meetings which featured hours of testimony for and against the move meant to assure undocumented immigrants that city officials and police would not become “de facto immigration agents,” as Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero put it.

The label was adopted on a unanimous vote of the Lansing City Council of 6 to 0 April 3. Council Members At-Large Carol Wood, Kathie Dunbar, Patricia Spitzley and Judi Brown Clarke were joined by 4th Ward Councilwoman Jessica Yorke and 2nd Ward Councilwoman Tina Houghton to pass the resolution. Jody Washington, the 1st Ward Council Member, and Adam Hussain, the 3rd Ward Council Member, were absent.

The short-lived declaration died when council members rescinded their resolution the following week on April 12. The resolution to rescind the declaration passed 5 to 2. Dunbar and Houghton cast their ballots against the rescinded resolution, while Brown Clarke, Spitzley, Wood, Washington and Hussain cast their ballots in favor of the move. Yorke was absent.

While Bernero has the option to veto the resolution, he told City Pulse Newsmakers television show that he would not do so.

“To veto a symbolic resolution, which to me is a statement of will, just doesn’t sit well with me,” said Bernero. “To me, it’s anti-Democratic. The council, albeit with all its worth, is a reflection of the people. I am and they are.”

The reversal brings to an end weeks of contentious public meetings which featured hours of testimony for and against the move meant to assure undocumented immigrants that city officials and police would not become “de facto immigration agents,” as Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero put it.

Council members and the state and local chambers expressed concern that the declaration had put a “spotlight” on the municipality for Trump’s Jan. 25 executive order directing the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify, label and potentially withhold federal dollars from “sanctuary jurisdictions.”

At stake was an estimated \$3 million in federal Department of Justice dollars. City officials and the chambers argued that the city could ill-afford to lose that cash, which is used to underwrite law enforcement activities.

But the removal of the label - which has no legal standing, since even the federal government has said in court filings it has no definition of a sanctuary jurisdiction - may not save the city from being placed on what the conservative Washington Times calls Trump’s “Name and Shame” list. That list identifies various municipalities that are not cooperating with immigration officials.

Ironically, an executive order by Bernero, issued on April 3, may keep the spotlight on the city. Bernero’s executive order - Lansing’s new, official policy - is that law enforcement will not detain people based on administrative immigration warrants — so-called retainer or detainer orders — and will not work to enforce immigration laws alone. The executive order, which was affirmed by the April 3 City Council resolution, also prohibits Lansing officials from contacting ICE, except when a person is allegedly involved in “a serious crime.”

Those policy stances have, particularly the detainer orders refusal, have landed other municipalities on the list. Ironically, the list was supposed to be published weekly, but ICE suspended its publication after only three weeks, and days after Lansing adopted its declaration.

DOJ Withdraws Lawsuit Against N.C. Anti-trans Bathroom Law

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Although North Carolina replaced anti-LGBT House Bill 2 with a law that critics say still enables anti-LGBT discrimination, the U.S. Justice Department has withdrawn the lawsuit against the state filed last year under Obama administration.

In a five-page notice, the Justice Department under U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced it has voluntarily withdrawn the lawsuit filed last year by former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

“In light of the passage of North Carolina Session Law 2017-4, House Bill 142, and pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 41, the Parties in the above-captioned action hereby stipulate that all claims or causes of action against Defendants and all counterclaims against Plaintiff which were the subject matter of this lawsuit are hereby dismissed with prejudice,” the notice says.

After North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper signed into law the replacement measure for HB2, whether the Justice Department would continue the lawsuit it filed against the state over the initial law was in question. As of last month, a Justice Department said the U.S. government “reviewing its litigation posture” in the aftermath of the HB2 replacement.

Lynch’s lawsuit alleged HB2, which barred cities from enacting pro-LGBT ordinances and transgender people from using the restroom consistent with their gender identity, contravenes federal law. The Justice Department alleged the law violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013.

The deal Cooper signed, House Bill 142, replaces HB2 with a measure that LGBT advocates say is a bait-and-switch attempt giving the appearance of repeal while doubling-down on discrimination.

HB 142 prohibits state agencies, municipalities and the University of North Carolina from the “regulation of access” to bathrooms, locker rooms and showers unless they have the legislature’s permission. It also bans municipalities until 2020 from enacting LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination measures that would apply to private businesses or public accommodations.

Ford Porter, a Cooper spokesperson, said in response to DOJ’s withdrawal of the lawsuit against the North Carolina law the governor still supports statewide

non-discrimination protections for LGBT people.

“The compromise to repeal HB2 took an important step in the right direction,” Porter said. “Gov. Cooper will continue to work to repair our state’s reputation and add statewide protections for LGBT North Carolinians.”

The withdraw of DOJ’s lawsuit in the aftermath of the switch is consistent with Sessions’ actions against transgender rights since his confirmation as U.S. attorney general. In fact, the Justice Department last month nixed its request for a preliminary injunction against HB2 in favor of an existing injunction against the law that was significantly more limited and applied only to plaintiffs in a separate lawsuit.

Jon W. Davidson, legal director for Lambda Legal, said in a statement the Justice Department is using the North Carolina’s new law as excuse to withdraw lawsuit even though the new statute still enables discrimination.

“Here is yet another instance of the Trump administration and Attorney General Jeff Sessions withdrawing the federal government’s support from transgender individuals, and they are using the fake repeal of HB2 as cover,” Davidson said. “Sadly, this was not unexpected, now that anti-transgender forces are in charge of the Departments of Justice and Education. Once again, the Trump administration continues to abandon transgender Americans.”

Although the Justice Department may be reviewing its position now that HB2 has been replaced, that isn’t stopping LGBT legal groups who also filed a lawsuit against HB2 from continuing with their challenge.

The trio of groups – the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of North Carolina, and Lambda Legal – have declared their lawsuit, which includes claims for the damages inflicted by HB2, will continue, and they’ll seek to amend the lawsuit to challenge HB142 as well.

James Esseks, director of the ACLU’s LGBT Project, said in a statement LGBT legal groups will press on in North Carolina even though the Justice Department has abandoned the fight.

“The Trump Administration may want to use the fake repeal of HB 2 as an excuse to further turn their backs on the transgender community, but the rest

of us aren’t going to give up that easily,” Esseks said. “We’ll continue this fight as long as it takes to truly strike down this disastrous law for good.”

The lawsuit the LGBT legal groups filed against North Carolina, Carcano v. McCrory (now known as Carcano v. Cooper), is on hold until April 28, when a status report is due before the trial court in the aftermath of the enactment of the replacement law to HB2.

Tara Borelli, counsel Lambda Legal’s southern regional office and attorney representing plaintiffs in the case, told the Washington Blade the withdrawal of the DOJ lawsuit will have no impact on the litigation filed by LGBT legal groups.

“This won’t hurt the merits of the lawsuit,” Borelli said. “HB2 was unconstitutional the day it was enacted. HB142 was unconstitutional the day it was enacted, and nothing about who’s sitting at counsel’s table makes either of those laws any more valid.”

Other anti-transgender actions the Justice Department has taken under Sessions are the withdrawal of school guidance assuring transgender kids have access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity and missing a deadline to appeal a court injunction against an Obamacare rule barring anti-trans discrimination in health care. President Trump himself has been accused of weakening LGBT legal protections in the workforce by undoing President Obama’s Fair Pay & Safe Workplaces Executive Order.

Borelli said the withdrawal of the DOJ lawsuit against North Carolina “continues a pattern of the federal government continuing to abandon transgender individuals,” citing among other things the decision by Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to rescind the transgender guidance.

“This is no surprise given the anti-transgender forces in charge of the Departments of Justice and Education, but it is very disappointing,” Borelli said.



The Justice Department under Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) has withdrawn its lawsuit over North Carolina’s HB2. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key



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

Gay Men Sent to ‘Concentration Camps’ in Chechnya

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS, WASHINGTON BLADE

A Russian LGBT advocacy group on Monday confirmed a report that gay men in Chechnya have been sent to secret prisons.

Novaya Gazeta, a Russian newspaper, on April 4 reported gay men have been sent to the prisons – which reports have described as “concentration camps” – in the semi-autonomous Russian republic. It said one of them is located near Argun, a town that is roughly 12 miles east of the Chechen capital of Grozny.

Novaya Gazeta said authorities beat the men and tortured them with electric shocks.

The newspaper published pictures of two men who had bruises on their knees and buttocks. Novaya Gazeta said at least three men died inside the prisons.

The newspaper reported the family of one of the men who was arrested “had to urgently” sell their apartment and property to “saved their loved ones.” Gay men were also reportedly forced to leave Chechnya.

“Unfortunately, we can confirm that there is kind of a prison next to one Chechen city where homosexual men are detained,” Svetlana Zakharova of the Russian LGBT Network told the Washington Blade on Monday in response to the Novaya Gazeta article.

Novaya Gazeta on April 1 reported Chechen authorities have arrested more than 100 men in “connection with their non-traditional sexual orientation, or suspicion of such.” The Russian newspaper said at least three of the men who were arrested were later killed.

The Russian LGBT Network has established a hotline that Chechens who feel threatened by the arrests can call anonymously. Zakharova told the Blade her organization has received more than 20 requests “for help.”

“The number of requests is growing,” she said. “We have already evacuated some



The city of Grozny in the Russian republic of Chechnya. Authorities have sent gay men in the semi-autonomous Russian republic to secret prisons that have been described as “concentration camps.” Photo by Alexxx1979. courtesy Wikimedia Common.

people.”

Rex Tillerson urged to ‘speak out forcefully’ against arrests

The State Department last week described the arrests as “troubling” in a statement it sent to the Blade. It also urged the Russian government to investigate them.

A spokesperson for the Russian government has said the arrests are “a question of law enforcement agencies.” Ali Karimov, a spokesperson for Chechnya’s leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, told a Russian government news agency in a statement that it is “impossible to prosecute those who are not in the republic.”

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is scheduled to travel to Moscow on Tuesday.

Human Rights First and the Human Rights Campaign have both urged him to publicly condemn the arrests while in the Russian capital. OutRight Action International has

also called upon international institutions and foreign governments “to pressure Russian authorities to intervene to immediately stop the abuse.”

“The Kremlin has dismissed these reports, saying that those who were suffering could ‘file official complaints and go to court,’ avenues that are highly unlikely to yield positive results in a region without a strong track record in the rule of law,” said HRC President Chad Griffin in a letter he sent to Tillerson on April 4. “I therefore write to urge you to make clear to your Russian counterparts that such lawless detentions, arrests, torture and murders are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.”

Human Rights First has launched a petition that urges Tillerson to “speak out forcibly against these horrific human rights abuses during his upcoming visit.”

World OutGames Hosts Global LGBTQ Human Rights Conference

BY BTL STAFF

The Global LGBTQ Human Rights conference is positioned to be the most powerful global gathering of internationally respected human rights activists, researchers, legal scholars and trade organizations during World OutGames in Miami.

The three-day conference May 26-29 will feature as many as 40 speakers and more than 35 topics under three specific tracks: promoting inclusivity in sports, health and wellness, and global social justice.

Representing the U.S. are Carlos Quesada

from the International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights; Dr. Cecile Houry, Florida International University; Haven Herrin, ILGA North America; Justin Klecha, SAVE; Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, (D-Florida); Nadine Smith, Executive Director, Equality Florida; Cyd Zeiglar, Commentator and Author; Chris Mosier, Athlete and Transgender Activist; and Deondre Moore, HIV and LGBTQ Youth Activist, among others.

“We are excited to bring together this stellar roster of speakers who can share their stories of strength and hope to a global audience

during the World OutGames Miami Global Conference on Human Rights,” said CEO Ivan Cano. “This conference, along with our other pillars, will offer an amazing experience and serve as a powerful tool to promote unity and inclusiveness.”

The World OutGames, a ten-day multi-sport, human rights and cultural event will kick off May 27 with an opening ceremony and continue through June 4 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Registration for participants is available online at www.outgames.org. Organizations and business that are interested in supporting World

“The State Department has called on Russia to investigate these abuses, but Secretary of State Tillerson can do more,” wrote Human Rights First in an email it sent to supporters on Monday. “As he travels to Russia this week, he should publicly demand that the Russian government bring the perpetrators of these horrific acts to justice.”

“The United States must remain a beacon of hope and freedom – but it cannot do so if our leaders are silent in the face of gross human rights violations,” it added.

A State Department spokesperson on Monday declined to comment on the Novaya Gazeta report that Chechen authorities have sent gay men to “concentration camps.” The spokesperson instead referred the Blade to a statement that Acting Spokesperson Mark Toner released on April 7.

“We are increasingly concerned about the situation in the Republic of Chechnya, where there have been numerous credible reports indicating the detention of at least 100 men on the basis of their sexual orientation,” said Toner. “Some reports indicate many of those arrested have been tortured, in some cases leading to death. We categorically condemn the persecution of individuals based on their sexual orientation or any other basis.”

“We are deeply disturbed by recent public statements by Chechen authorities that condone and incite violence against LGBTI persons,” he added. “We urge Russian federal authorities to speak out against such practices, take steps to ensure the release of anyone wrongfully detained, conduct an independent and credible investigation into these reports and hold any perpetrators responsible.”

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



OutGames Miami are encouraged to contact sponsorship@outgames.org.

► Texas

Continued from p. 5

Matt McTighe, executive director for Freedom for All Americans, said in a statement lawmakers reject the measure because it would have the same discriminatory impact as SB6.

“No one should be fooled by HB2899 - this is dangerous legislation that is just as discriminatory and economically perilous as SB6,” McTighe said. “Legal protections from discrimination are put in place for a reason, and rolling those protections back should never be on the table. Like SB6, this legislation is a solution in search of a problem that just doesn’t exist. There are no winners under HB2899 - it will create dangerous situations for transgender people, and like SB6 it will tarnish Texas’ reputation and economy.”

Also condemning the Texas proposal on the basis of it being worse than SB6 was Sarah Kate Ellis, CEO of the LGBT media organization GLAAD.

“The newly proposed HB 2899 is even worse than SB6 because it invalidates all existing local non-discrimination ordinances that protect LGBTQ Texans and gives anti-LGBTQ state lawmakers full control over future LGBTQ local non-discrimination laws,” Ellis said. “HB 2899 is another harmful ‘solution’ in search of a problem and will accomplish one thing: Further putting the lives of all LGBTQ Texans in jeopardy.”

The measure bears a striking resemblance to HB142, the replacement law that Gov. Roy Cooper signed as part of a deal with Republican legislative leaders to alleviate economic boycott in his state as a result of HB2. The replacement law, which critics say still enables discrimination, convinced major sports leagues like the NCAA to return to the state, although numerous states and municipalities have continued their bans on sponsored travel to North Carolina in protest over the law.

HB2899 is similar to the HB2 deal because both of them bars cities from enacting pro-LGBT non-discrimination ordinances, although that language in the North Carolina law will sunset in 2020.

The North Carolina law, however, is different because it bars state agencies from the “regulation of access” to bathrooms, locker rooms and showers unless they have the legislature’s permission, explicitly naming the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System as state agencies. The Texas proposal has no similar language, nor does it name any school.

It remains to be seen whether Texas will move forward with HB2899, or whether lawmakers other states will seek to pass copycats of the HB2 replacement deal because they’ve seen such measures won’t rise to the level of economic boycott -- at least from major sports organizations.

Ian Palmquist, director of programs for the Equality Federation, said after the NCAA agreed to restore games to North Carolina as result of the HB2 deal other states won’t pass copycats laws because they face boycotts from other entities.

“While some organizations like the NCAA are backing down, many are standing firm,” Palmquist said. “Legislators in other states need to know that voters and businesses will rally against any new bills that diminish protections for LGBTQ 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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What's Prologue is Past Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

At 19, I went to my first gay bar, The Silver Slipper, a dyke bar on Grand River, near downtown Detroit. I used borrowed ID, was escorted authoritatively by two lesbian regulars, Speedy and Draino.

Lesbians sat in an upstairs balcony space. Gays and “tourists,” downstairs. Tourists came to gawk at the queers.

Entertainer was porkulent Chi Chi LaTrine, aka Benjamin Ernest Franklin. He wore wide, be-ribboned picture hats, sang songs with lyrics of questionable OB-GYN soundness. (“Douche yourself with kerosene. Light it with a match. You will be the only queen with a blow torch for a snatch.”)

Chi Chi’s comedy routines closed with his trademark insertion of a champagne glass into his ample facial cheeks and mouth. (Sidebar: Franklin had a sociology M.A., and in the early 60s was the first gay person to speak to Wayne State University psych classes. Caught having a “tryst” in a WSU John, he reluctantly bypassed further grad studies.)

With teenagers friends Gary and Richard, I also hit the Scenic Bar in Toledo, Ohio. Soon our little circle – “Claudia,” (Richard) “Margo,” (Gary) and “Crystal” (!) – took our sing-along road show to Cleveland, staying at the Y-M-C-A!

I met Marcus there, who took me home to his place, played Maria Callas arias from Verdi’s La Traviata, fed me a wonderful breakfast. It was magic – until I learned to my over-stuffed chagrin that my gourmet cook was yet another crossdresser. Two that summer!

(Addendum: Heard Maria Callas in recital at Detroit’s Masonic Temple in 1960. Her conductor was arrested in the notorious Woodward Avenue Stone Burlesque, and had to be “negotiated” for the scheduled concert.)

Next came Big Apple week. Our threesome took the New York Central

**In 1955, we had no role models...These Senator
McCarthy witch-hunting years were terror for “known
homosexuals.” We had no choice but the closet.**

train – playing gin rummy for 13 hours – and booked into the notorious Sloan House Y. It was mid-July. No air conditioning. Heat, 90-plus. Sweat soaked outdoors in minutes. So, we slept at day; partied at night.

I had no sooner unpacked my things when the phone rang. “Hi! I’m Jerry. I saw you in the lobby. Can I take you to dinner?” He left two days later. Ever faithful at 19, I thought of Jerry for 36.5 hours, 36 seconds. (Jerry, who?)

Our trio went to a Greenwich Village downstairs bar, the Sans Souci. “Cry Me a River,” sung by Roberta Sherwood was the jukebox hit. Bar ambiance was intimate and discreet. I met a bona fide actor: Gunther Wilde. (Gunther, who?)

Richard reeled in two mid-30s Italians who invited us to Fire Island. We took the train to Babylon – three hours – and a ferry boat to Cherry Grove. “Truman Capote’s there,” they lied. I experienced a toothache, a sunburn, no sleep, a sore back. (It was worth it.)

In 1955, we had no role models. We suspected certain movie stars. (Tab Hunter, Barbara Stanwyck, newcomer James Dean). All wishful thinking. These Senator McCarthy witch-hunting years were terror for “known homosexuals.” We had no choice but the closet.

For those who could pass for straight, problems were few – vice cops, crabs, VD, job firing, shock therapy, excommunication, incarceration, media exposes – if you kept your “she this” and “she that” to yourself.

Travel was a revelation. We gradually realized we weren’t alone. We were everywhere: doctors, stevedores, actors, professors, cops, nurses, Indian chiefs, average Joes, exceptional Jills. Gaydar was a godsend. (Question: Who needs gaydar these days?)



BY DANA RUDOLPH

Mombian

Love and Science: How Science Has Helped LGBTQ Families

This coming weekend, the March for Science in Washington, D.C. and hundreds of other global locations will encourage science that “upholds the common good” and allows evidence-based policymaking in the public interest (marchforscience.com). I thus thought this was a good time to look at how science has specifically helped LGBTQ parents and our children.

First, and perhaps most obviously, science has helped create many LGBTQ families (my own included) through assisted reproduction techniques such as in vitro fertilization (IVF) and gestational surrogacy.

Second, science has given us studies of LGBTQ families that can help us to be better parents and give medical, educational, and other professionals a better idea of how to support us – for example, research that shows how we find resilience, how we deal with stigma, and how we relate to donors, birth parents, surrogates, and donor siblings.

Third, scientific analyses have helped drive policy and law around LGBTQ families. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) list of mental disorders. They were swayed by “the weight of empirical data” in addition

to “changing social norms” and the development of a politically active gay community, says Gregory Herek, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California-Davis and a widely recognized authority on anti-LGBTQ bias, at his website (psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/).

That move had a lasting effect. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy mentioned it in his 2015 ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges, the case that established marriage equality throughout the country, and noted that now, “psychiatrists and others [have] recognized that sexual orientation is both a normal expression of human sexuality and immutable.”

Beyond the DSM, the research of psychologists, sociologists, medical and mental health professionals, economists, demographers, and others has been used extensively in friend-of-the-court (amicus) briefs in key LGBTQ cases including ones on marriage equality, sodomy laws, military inclusion, and anti-gay discrimination by the Boy Scouts.

In Obergefell, for example, the brief from the American Psychological Association (APA) offered a plethora of “scientific evidence” as to the normalcy and stability of same-sex relationships, including numerous

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Last week, the Washington Supreme Court overturned a trial court decision that had improperly denied a mom custody because she was a lesbian. The ruling stressed that a parent's sexual orientation may not be considered in custody decisions "absent an express showing of harm to the children."

► Rudolph:

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studies that show "same-sex couples are no less fit than heterosexual parents to raise children, and their children are no less psychologically healthy and well-adjusted."

Demographic studies swayed the court, too. In *Obergefell*, Kennedy cited demographer Gary Gates of UCLA's Williams Institute in noting, "Hundreds of thousands of children are presently being raised by [same-sex] couples" – children who suffer stigma and financial strain if their parents cannot marry.

In family law, the decoupling of homosexuality and mental illness has also helped in matters of child custody. Prior to 1973, almost no lesbian mother could gain custody when divorcing a husband, because the DSM said she had a mental illness, explains Nancy Polikoff, LGBTQ family law expert and professor of law at American University, on her blog. The DSM change "transformed that mother into a parent with a legitimate claim that her lesbianism should not be automatic grounds for denying her custody. Forward thinking judges began awarding custody to openly lesbian mothers." In 1976, Polikoff adds, the American Psychological Association "passed a resolution opposing use of sexual orientation as a primary component in custody, adoption, or foster-parenting determinations." (beyondstraightandgaymarriage.blogspot.com)

That shift in thinking still resonates. Last week, the Washington Supreme Court overturned a trial court decision that had improperly denied a mom custody because she was a lesbian. The ruling stressed that a parent's sexual orientation may not be considered in custody decisions "absent an express showing of harm to the children."

Transgender parents, too, have benefited from scientific backing. The DSM in 2013 stopped saying that trans people had "Gender Identity Disorder" – "disorder" implying a mental illness – and instead said they experienced "Gender Dysphoria," a discomfort or conflict between their assigned gender and the one with which they identify. This change has helped doctors in child

custody cases give expert testimony that trans parents do not have a serious mental illness (and are thus unfit to parent) simply by being trans.

The ACLU and the National Center for Transgender Equality have also produced a guide for parents and lawyers "to give parents and their attorneys an idea of the kind of scientific evidence that is available if needed" when providing expert testimony in custody cases.

School policy as well as law has been informed by scientific thinking. Herek, for example, provided testimony for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' 2011 hearings on ways to protect students from bullying and harassment. GLSEN's biennial National School Climate Survey on LGBTQ students is replete with statistical analysis – and was cited by the Obama Administration's Education Department in a 2011 memo reminding schools receiving federal funds that they must provide all student groups, including LGBT ones, with equal support.

And leading medical and mental health organizations as well as 60 other scholars, including demographers, economists, and psychologists, recently contributed amicus briefs in support of Gavin Grimm, a transgender student fighting in federal court for the right to use the school bathroom that matches his gender identity.

This is but a brief sketch of how science has assisted LGBTQ families (and hasn't touched on how it has benefited LGBTQ people in other ways, notably in enabling appropriate medical and mental health care for LGBTQ individuals), but I hope it helps show that while love may make a family, science may play a supporting role. Championing the goals of the March for Science may be as important as any advocacy we do for our families in the current era.

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

Creep of the Week

Alex Jones

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



If you don't know who Alex Jones is, consider yourself lucky.

Picture a mentally unstable person boiling over in rage and ranting about conspiracy theories on a street corner. That's Alex Jones, except instead of a street corner, he has his own radio program and video show on the internet.

Jones is a terrible person. He's delusional, hateful, and says things that anyone with any sense knows are crazy and have no basis in reality. Oh, and Donald Trump loves him. Who says opposites attract?

Jones has a long history of anti-LGBTQ animosity.

He's ranted that the Pulse nightclub murders in Orlando were a government conspiracy and that the gay community brought on themselves and/or was in on it.

He recently called Congressman Adam Schiff, a Democrat from California who has been investigating Trump's ties to Russia, "an archetypal cocksucker" and "a fairy" who is "sucking globalist dick."

In 2015 he said that letting children read "Heather Has Two Mommies" or being respectful of whether a child identifies as a girl or a boy "space-cult, suicide-cult, exterminism, craziness." The ultimate plan, Jones said, "Is an asexual humanoid."

He promoted the story that Barack Obama and Rahm Emanuel were gay lovers and that Michelle Obama is transgender. "I think it's all an arranged marriage," he said in 2016. "It's all completely fake and it's this big sick joke because [Obama is] obsessed with transgender, just like some weird cult or something. I think Michelle Obama is a man. I really do. I really do. I believe it." Oh, he also believes that Michelle Obama murdered Joan Rivers.

He's called Lady Gaga a "goddess of Satan" and claimed that Beyonce, with the CIA's help, wanted to eat children's brains.

Did I mention Trump likes this guy?

Anyway, Jones is currently involved in a

Jones is a terrible person. He's delusional, hateful, and says things that anyone with any sense knows are crazy and have no basis in reality. Oh, and Donald Trump loves him. Who says opposites attract?

custody battle with his ex-wife for their three children, ages 14, 12, and 9. According to his ex-wife, Jones broadcasts his show from the home where he lives with the children and she thinks being exposed to this radical extremist rhetoric is bad for the kids.

"He's not a stable person," she reportedly told the court according to NBC News. "He says he wants to break Alec Baldwin's neck. He wants J-Lo to get raped."

But hey, at least he's not reading "Heather Has Two Mommies" to them.

Now that the custody of his kids hangs in the balance, Jones, who has basically been a tin foil hat salesman and model for years, has changed his tune. He is, according to his lawyer, a "performance artist" who takes "powerful and aggressive and strong and takes strident positions on controversial issues."

In other words, he's like an interpretive dancer, if said dancer used hate speech and lies instead of, say, dance moves.

On April 15, a clip posted to the Internet of Jones saying that what he did was "satire" and that he wasn't being literal. "Yeah, I dress up as the Joker and act all crazy and say crazy stuff. That's called satire," he said, adding, "I believe everything I'm basically saying."

The reference to the Joker was an attempt at humor, something Jones is not good at. He is also terrible at satire but very good at believing and spewing complete bullshit. With credentials like that, he could very well become President, or at least get a position in the Trump administration.

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Study Finds Married LGBT Older Adults are Healthier, Happier

BY BTL STAFF

Same-sex marriage has been the law of the land for nearly two years – and in some states for even longer – but researchers can already detect positive health outcomes among couples who have tied the knot, a University of Washington study finds.

For years, studies have linked marriage with happiness among heterosexual couples. But a study from the UW School of Social Work is among the first to explore the potential benefits of marriage among LGBT couples. It is part of a national, groundbreaking longitudinal study with a representative sample of LGBT older adults, known as “Aging with Pride: National Health, Aging, Sexuality/Gender Study,” which focuses on how historical, environmental, psychological, behavioral, social and biological factors are associated with health, aging and quality of life.

UW researchers found that LGBT study participants who were married reported better physical and mental health, more social support and greater financial resources than those who were single. The findings were published in a February special supplement of *The Gerontologist*.

“In the nearly 50 years since Stonewall, same-sex marriage went from being a pipe dream to a legal quagmire to reality – and

it may be one of the most profound changes to social policy in recent history,” said lead author Jayn Goldsen, research study supervisor in the UW School of Social Work.

Some 2.7 million adults ages 50 and older identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender – a number that is expected to nearly double by 2060. Among LGBT people, marriage increased noticeably after a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. A 2016 Gallup Poll found that 49 percent of cohabiting gay couples were married, up from 38 percent before the ruling.

For the UW study, more than 1,800 LGBT people, ages 50 and older, were surveyed in 2014 in locations where gay marriage was already legal (32 states and Washington, D.C.). About one-fourth were married, another fourth were in a committed relationship, and half were single. Married respondents had spent an average of 23 years together, while those in a committed, unmarried relationship had spent an average of 16 years. Among the study participants, more women were married than men, and of the respondents who were married, most identified as non-Hispanic white.

Researchers found that, in general,

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“ In the nearly 50 years since Stonewall, same-sex marriage went from being a pipe dream to a legal quagmire to reality – and it may be one of the most profound changes to social policy in recent history. ”

- Lead author Jayn Goldsen, research study supervisor in the UW School of Social Work.

participants in a relationship, whether married or in a long-term partnership, showed better health outcomes than those who were single. But those who were married fared even better, both socially and financially, than couples in unmarried, long-term partnerships. Single LGBT adults were more likely to have a disability; to report lower physical, psychological, social and environmental quality of life; and to have experienced the death of a partner, especially among men. The legalization of gay marriage at the federal level opens up access to many benefits, such as tax exemptions and Social Security survivor benefits that married, straight couples have long enjoyed. But that does not mean every LGBT couple was immediately ready to take that step.

According to Goldsen, marriage, for many older LGBT people, can be something of a conundrum – even a non-starter. LGBT seniors came of age at a time when laws and social exclusion kept many in the closet. Today’s unmarried couples may have made their own legal arrangements and feel that they don’t need the extra step of marriage – or they don’t want to participate in a traditionally heterosexual institution.

Goldsen also pointed to trends in heterosexual marriage: Fewer people are getting married, and those who do, do so later.

“More older people are living together and thinking outside the box. This was already happening within the LGBT community – couples were living together, but civil marriage wasn’t part of the story,” she said.

The different attitudes among older LGBT people toward marriage is something service providers, whether doctors, attorneys or tax professionals, should be aware of, Goldsen said. Telling a couple they should get married now simply because they can misses the individual nature of the choice.

“Service providers need to understand the historical context of this population,” she said. “Marriage isn’t for everyone. It is up to each person, and there are legal, financial and potentially societal ramifications.” For example, among the women in the study, those who were married were more likely to report experiencing bias in the larger community.

At the same time, Goldsen said, single LGBT older adults do not benefit from the marriage ruling, and other safeguards, such as anti-discrimination laws in employment, housing and public accommodations, are still lacking at the federal level.

Over time, Goldsen and colleagues will continue to examine the influence of same-sex marriage policy on partnership status and health.

The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Aging. Other researchers were Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen, Amanda Bryan, Hyun-Jun Kim and Sarah Jen in the UW School of Social Work; and Anna Muraco of Loyola Marymount University.



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Inclusive Vendors Offer 'Relief' for LGBT Couples

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BY BTL STAFF

Shannon D'Annunzio said she felt "a big relief" to find more than 100 LGBT-friendly vendors during the Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo in March. She and her wife-to-be, Danielle Turner, were among more than 600 people who came out in search of inclusive vendors to help with their wedding planning.

"It's a relief to know that I can reach out to these people and I know that they're not going to say 'I'm not going to make you a cake,'" she said.

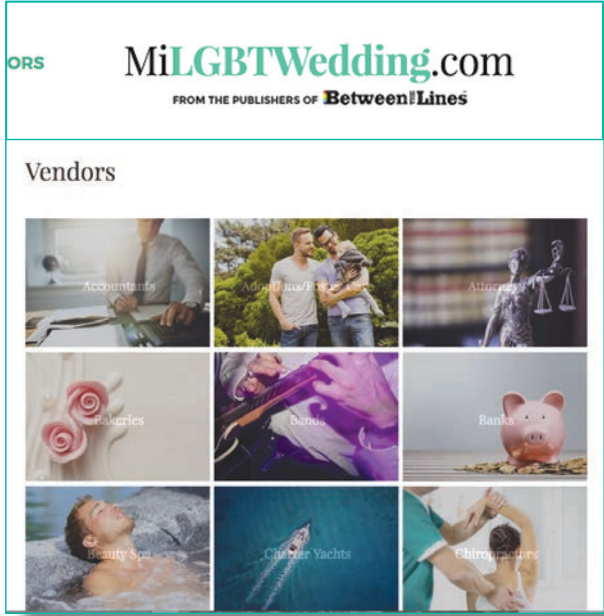
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Photo: Ron Cadiz / Sony Music

BILLY PORTER IN FULL BLOOM

Tony Award Winner Talks Arts Activism, His Play on ‘the Lost Generation’ of Gay Men... and Returning to ‘Kinky Boots’?!

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Iconic soulstress Nina Simone questioned her place in the world as a black woman after learning of four young African-American girls who were killed in the

bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. She responded defiantly with “Mississippi Goddamn,” a political anthem that acknowledged, “All I want is equality for my sister, my brother, my people and me.”

Sociopolitical demonstrations have long been woven into various musical genres – even Katy Perry’s ironically shiny single, this year’s “Chained to the Rhythm,” like Simone’s “Mississippi Goddamn,” underscores continued minority suppression.

In 2013, singer and theater performer Billy Porter left his mark on socially-conscious art while originating the role of Lola, a drag queen who finds common ground with a shoemaker, in the Broadway musical “Kinky Boots,” which garnered the Pittsburgh native a Tony

Award for Best Actor.

This year, just days before President Donald Trump's inauguration, Porter married his longtime partner, Adam Smith – because what if he couldn't after Trump took office? But acts of sociopolitical defiance in the face of a minority-deserting administration extend also to his latest album, "Billy Porter Presents: The Soul of Richard Rodgers." Among the classic selections: the hopeful "Edelweiss" from "The Sound of Music," intentionally released as the album's first single on Trump's Inauguration Day.

Why end the album with "Edelweiss"?

I released (that song) the day of the inauguration as a single. If you've ever seen "The Sound of Music," "Edelweiss" is the song they sing as they try to escape Austria during the Nazi regime. I was making a very specific statement about that day.

What statement were you making?

We need to pray and we need to engage, and we need to be visible and we need to be like that Edelweiss flower and still bloom in the darkest of times, in the coldest of times.

What's your past relationship with Richard Rodgers music?

Richard Rodgers is from the Golden Era of musical theater, when musical-theater music was what was on the radio. (He) had managed to crack through the zeitgeist in a way that not a lot of composers can because still, even to this day, his music is very popular, so everybody knows a Richard Rodgers song. When you hear how we deconstruct the material and try to update it for a new millennium, you'll hear them in a totally different way than before.

Which song of Richard's do you feel closest to?

Probably "Edelweiss" just because it means so much every time I sing it, and it makes me feel like I'm contributing. For some reason, society today thinks that artists should just shut up and not talk about politics, and I don't really understand that, because we've always been the people who illuminate – we speak truth to power in creative ways and create conversations and can change hearts and minds. So, I'm going back to that. You know, I'm just interested in the president not lying. I'm just interested in that. To go from what we had to this is just horrifying.

As a recently married man, how does it feel to be "official" in Trump's America knowing our rights may be in jeopardy?

Well, you know, we got married before he took office for that very reason, because we just wanted to make that clear. I mean, it's weird because it's my job, you know? My job is to try to reach across and speak to people who we don't normally speak to and come to an understanding. Music is universal, and it breaks down walls and barriers.

You say it's your "job" to reach across the aisle – does that feel even truer after doing "Kinky Boots"?

Yeah, because when I was doing "Kinky Boots" the first time, it was about being in the middle of change that was moving in our direction. Now, it's about making sure our rights don't get rolled back. It's a different climate. It's a lesson in understanding that it's ongoing and forever. You have to fight for the rights and then defend the rights forever. If we didn't learn that before, we know it now.

Are you going to any red-state cities on this tour?

This first leg, yeah, I am. I'm going to Florida and Indiana, and some other places all over the country. I'm excited to do it because I lead with love, and I feel like no matter what disagreement there may be, I'm leading with love. I'm here to hear you. I'm here to talk about it. And I'm here to actually have rational conversation.

But I'm not interested in having *irrational* conversations, and that needs to get called out. I think we have sort of begun the first steps of doing that – recalibrating. The press thought he was such a joke that they didn't pay attention to him, really, and then he got away from us, and the world is in chaos. So, it's a far more political show than I have been doing recently.

Political how?

I have some protest music in the old-school tradition of the ones who came before me, like the Nina Simones, the Harry Belafontes and Curtis Mayfields – that movement of music that was about educating and speaking truth to power and making sure our voices were being heard. That kind of art needs to come back.

Tell me how you wound up reimagining these songs within an R&B framework.

It just kind of came together. It started out as an idea. We did a concert back in 2009 at a theater in Los Angeles, where the focus was deconstructed arrangements. We went from jazz all the way through to modern hip-hop, and so when the album came around, I thought we should really focus on being fresh and innovative in terms of sound. I thought the R&B and soul versions of these was something we hadn't really heard a lot about.

In the early aughts, you told The New York Times that you're one of few Broadway performers to have an R&B album.

That's why I did this album, because that's really the biggest point I'm making: which is, we sing like this. We do it like this. And we do it eight times a week. So, wake up and listen, 'cause this album stands up next to any R&B soul album ever made. It stands up to it, and I know that. The new album, I'm

See next page



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► Billy Porter

Continued from p. 21

really proud of it. We just need to embrace it and write more material now, and I think “Hamilton” kicked that door down. I’m writing a contemporary-gospel musical right now – we have to show up and create the material.

How did the idea come to you?

I’ve always wanted to do it; I just needed a way in, because religion can be so polarizing. How do we remain authentic to the genre while embracing people who don’t necessarily believe in the language of the doctrine that gospel music sort of came out of? How we tell it – telling the audience and teaching them how to hear it, teaching how to watch it – is very important. How do we teach people how to watch us? How do we teach people how to hear us that embraces them and not makes them feel alienated? The focus is love. That’s what’s in the room, and it doesn’t matter what life you live outside of there. We’re talking about us right here, right now. I don’t know if that’s gonna work, but that was the way that I could write it. And it’s not about religion at all, by the way. It just happens to exist inside of the music that represents religion.

How far into it are you?

I just finished the first draft, and I’m writing it with (gospel performer and composer) Kurt Carr. We got about 17 songs, which is good. I also have a play that’s in development at the Public (Theater) about what I call “the lost generation” of gay men my age – 47 – who came out in the ’80s and went straight to the frontlines to fight for our lives and here we are 30 years later. Those of us who survived have PTSD and we know how to fight a lot, but we don’t really know how to live. I’m excited to be talking about that in creative ways.

Both of these pieces sound very close to you.

Yeah. Very, very, very close.

This piece on the lost generation – what’s your role in its development?

I wrote it. It’s in development right now, so it’s the very beginning stages. But I’m also sort of speaking about it because that’s how shit happens – you gotta speak it into action.

Do you miss “Kinky Boots”?

I do. Especially now, because I feel like doing “Kinky Boots” in this political climate is an act of resistance. And it’s the best kind, because, once again, it reaches out with love. It leads with love – it’s art, so it opens up a

different side of the blinds. People hear differently, people see differently.

Do you have any interest in ever returning to that role?

I do, and I may at some point in the very near future. And that’s all I’ll say about that. (Laughs)

Late last year Vice President Mike Pence attended a performance of “Hamilton” and actor Brandon Victor Dixon spoke out during the curtain call about whether this administration will protect minorities. If Pence attended

“Kinky Boots,” how do you think you would’ve handled the situation?

I think Brandon was unbelievable. It’s like, you represent us, you work for us and I hope that you remember that. There are a lot of people who are nervous about what you may or may not do. The politics you ran on do not feel like they include us, so we just want you to know that as you move forward. Remember us.

The thing about Trump’s response was, you can’t be a dictator, boo. You can’t. We’re not gonna do that. Whatever it takes, we’ve done it before, so pull it together, people, and let’s start fighting. We gotta come together.

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

“I feel like doing ‘Kinky Boots’ in this political climate is an act of resistance. And it’s the best kind, because, once again, it reaches out with love. It leads with love – it’s art, so it opens up a different side of the blinds. People hear differently, people see differently.”

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The XTL (Cross the Line) Youth Workforce Program is a four-month program for individuals 13-24 years old, focused on building LGBTQ and Ally leaders in the workforce in metro Detroit. (The youth must host one community event during their program cycle).

For a vendor application, please contact:
Ian Unger, Youth Program Coordinator at iunger@goaffirmations.org.

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Fashion Show Explores Classic to Avant-Garde Designs

The Michigan State University College of Arts and Letters and the Department of Art, Art History and Design presents their annual Apparel and Textile Design Student Fashion Show at the Wharton Performing Arts Center, 750 E Shaw Lane, East Lansing on April 28 at 7 p.m.

This juried fashion exhibition is a culmination of creative explorations ranging from sustainable to classic to avant-garde fashion.

The Apparel and Textile Design program emphasizes creativity and experimentation that mingles design with art. Students combine fine art, couture and technical design to create original garments, which reflect an understanding of global issues such as sustainability and cultural dress. The focus of the Apparel and Textile Design program is the research, design and creation of avant-garde fashion designs. The Department of Art, Art History and Design is dedicated to the creation and historical study of the visual arts through its undergraduate and graduate degree programs in studio art, art education, art history, and apparel and textile design. Students are encouraged to develop aesthetic and conceptual awareness, perceptual and creative problem-solving skill and informed judgment in a learning environment that values the development of personal vision, critical inquiry and philosophical reflection.



Meet Lauren Paulauskas

MSU ATD Alum and Designer Lauren Paulauskas is a fashion designer, graphic artist and illustrator based in New York. She will share her design process and fashion design experiences on April 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the B130 Wells Hall at the College of Communication Arts and Sciences, 619 Red Cedar, in East Lansing.

Currently, Lauren works as the Lead Fashion Accessories Designer for Gina

Group, an accessories design firm. Her work takes her across the world from Europe to Africa to South America doing textile research, and most recently, Hong Kong and Guangzhou for their seasonal Trade Exposition.

Architecture, graphic design and interior design inform her aesthetics, but her goal as a designer is to accurately bring form, function and seasonal trend directions together into designs for each of her many prestigious clients.

Paulauskas is also serving as one of

the featured judges for the Apparel and Textile Design fashion show.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.whartoncenter.com/events/detail/apparel-textile-design-fashion-show-1.

The ATD Fashion Design program can be followed on Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/atdfashionshow/>, Twitter <https://twitter.com/atdfashionshow>, and Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/AtdFashionShow>.

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Volunteer at Michigan Pride in Lansing

The 28th annual Michigan Pride attracts thousands of people from around the state to celebrate the LGBTQ community and its allies. In order to make Michigan Pride happen, more than 100 volunteers are needed. For the past 25 years, the Lansing festival, to include a march and rally, have been sustained by the power of volunteers. Michigan Pride is looking for volunteers to become a part of their rich tradition by helping out for a few hours on June 17. A volunteer shift – anywhere between

two and six hours – encompasses a variety of duties and time commitments between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. Opportunities to volunteer with friends or family are available, and shifts are based on skill set or special needs, if any. Michigan Pride volunteers will receive a T-shirt to wear during their shift. For more information or to register, visit the Michigan Pride website <http://www.michiganpride.org/index.php/get-involved/volunteer/> or email pride@michiganpride.org.

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Happenings

It's a Family Affair

Capital by James Armstrong, directed by Leah Smith is set in 1858. This farcical romp about Karl Marx, his daughter, a renowned celebrity, and money madness is on stage now through May 14. Performance times at 13103 Woodrow Wilson St. are Thursday-Friday, 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, 3 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Call 313-868-1347 or visit www.detroitreptheatre.com.

OUTINGS

Thursday, April 20

Community Give Back Night 5 p.m. Live music with Dan Maxon. 10 percent of all sales benefit the OutCenter. OutCenter, 111 W. Shawnee Road, **Baroda**. 269-925-8330. info@outcenter.org www.outcenter.org

Anniversary Celebration 5:30 p.m. More information on Facebook @lgbtdetroit LGBT Detroit, 20025 Greenfield Road, **Detroit**. www.lgbtdetroit.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. NE, **Grand Rapids**. 313-537-7000 Ext 108. lvallarino@equalitymi.org <https://equalitymi.org/spring2017/>

Saturday, April 22

Detroit River Clean Up 9 a.m. Orientation prior to boat launch and picnic lunch. Dress for weather and bring lifejackets. Friends of the Detroit River, Foot of Harrison Street just off West Jefferson, **Trenton**. 734-676-4626. www.detroitriver.org

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 www.orchards.org

LezRead 4 p.m. Email Kerene Moore to join Ann Arbor's premier book club for

lesbians. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. kerenem@jimtoycenter.org www.jimtoycenter.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/

J-Serve Detroit: National Day of Service 1 p.m. Jewish teen volunteers needed. 6th-12th graders. Free of charge. Pre-registration required. Kosher pizza lunch. Transportation provided. J-Serve Detroit, 7400 Telegraph Rd., **Bloomfield Hills**. 248-833-2527. stillman@jfm.org <http://jewishdetroit.org/event/j-serve/>

Monday, April 24

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

Tuesday, April 25

Free Family Acceptance Project Training 9 a.m. Registration required online. Family Acceptance Project, **Detroit**. fap@sfsu.edu <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

Wednesday, April 26

Volunteer Meeting 7 p.m. Call for volunteers. Visit website for more information and to sign up. Ferndale Pride, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.ferndalepride.com

Thursday, April 27

22nd Annual Lavender Graduation 4:30 p.m. A celebration of LGBTQIA+ graduates. Register online at <http://tinyurl.com/UMLavGrad17>. University of Michigan Spectrum Center, 525 S. State St., **Ann Arbor**. 7347634186. www.facebook.com/events/1918955791724650/

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

Red Umbrella Support Group 7:30 p.m. For individuals involved in the erotic labor industry. Sex Workers Outreach Project Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Friday, April 28

6th Annual Jim Toy Birthday Bash 6:30 p.m. Suggestion donation: \$10 Jim Toy Community Center, 200 W. Michigan Ave., **Ypsilanti**. www.jimtoycenter.org/

Saturday, April 29

64th Annual Youth Justice Leadership Conference 10 a.m. "From One Generation to the Next: Bridging the Gap." Featuring Youth Voice Art Project. Pre-registration is required. Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion,

8425 W. McNichols, **Detroit**. 313-870-1500 Ext 107. yshakur@mirroundtable.org www.mirroundtable.org

Queer Prom 7 p.m. Tickets: \$5. Restrictions apply. Register online. For LGBT+ high school students in Northwest Lower Michigan. Polestar LGBT+ Community Center, 263 West Grandview Parkway, **Traverse City**. www.tcpolestar.org/prom

Sunday, April 30

VegFest, Michigan's biggest vegan event 10:30 a.m. Tickets: \$12-15. VegMichigan members admitted free. VegMichigan, 46100 Grand River Ave., **Novi**. 877-778-3464. www.vegmichigan.org

Books & Authors Event 11 a.m. Check out Charlotte Fisher's new book, "Take a Lesbian to Lunch." Juried book fair

featuring mostly Michigan writers. Leon & Lulu, 96 W. 14 Mile Road, **Clawson**. 248-288-3600. shop@leonandlulu.com www.leonandlulu.com/

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

A Taste of Italy 1 p.m. Enjoy a delicious pasta meal and dessert. All proceeds to

Editor's Pick

Celebrate Arab American Culture in Michigan

The Wild Swan Theater features a new and original production, "Marketplace Stories-Folktales from the Arab World," developed in collaboration with the Arab American National Museum and the National Arab Orchestra. A 19th-century village marketplace comes to life through timeless stories and music, passed on from country to country and from one generation to the next. The collection of tales will premiere on stage at Towsley Auditorium, Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr. on May 4-6 at 10 a.m., and at the AANM's Aliya Hassan Auditorium, 13624 Michigan Ave. on May 9-10 at 10 a.m. and May 13 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$8-10 for all performances that will be American Sign Language shadow interpreted for deaf patrons by Synergy on Stage. Those who attend the performance are invited to tour the Museum at the reduced price of \$3 per student. For more information about the performance, call 734-995-0530 or visit the Wild Swan website www.wildswantheater.org.



Editor's Pick

'Taste of Italy' Fundraiser to Benefit Ann Arbor Youth

The LGBT Outreach Ministry at St. Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor will host a fundraising dinner, a "Taste of Italy," on April 30 from 1-7 p.m. to benefit the Ozone House and Corner Health Center. Indulge in a delicious Italian meal and dessert while learning more about the emergency shelter, safe space, transitional housing and counseling for homeless youth, LGBTQ runaway teens and families in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Freewill offerings will be accepted. The parish at 331 Thompson St. is located two blocks from the central campus of the University of Michigan. For more information, call 734-663-0557, email rleone@umich.edu, or visit www.stmarystudentparish.org to donate online.



benefit the Ozone House. LGBT Outreach Ministry, 331 Thompson St., Ann Arbor. (734) 663-0557. rleone@umich.edu www.stmarystudentparish.org/

Potluck 6 p.m. "Pasta-luck" - Bring your favorite pasta dish. Winner of the best dish, following a vote, wins ten raffle tickets for FtM Detroit's next Gender Blender event. FtM Detroit, 313 W. Webster, Ferndale. ftmdetroit@gmail.com www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/

Monday, May 1

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

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

Tuesday, May 2

Sexual Assault Survivors Support Group 4 p.m. Facilitated by LGBTQ Victim Advocate/Counselor Brooke Lindley. Youth group (13-17) from 4-5 p.m., adult group (18+) from 5:15-6:15 p.m. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 269-345-5595. blindley@ywcakalamazoo.org www.outfrontkzoo.org

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

Wednesday, May 3

Building Michigan Communities Conference Speakers include Tahrih Ziegler, Jim Edelman and Tom Daldin. Tickets: \$50-65. Early bird pricing until April 10. Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-483-7400. http://buildingmicommunities.org

Tin Can Raffle 7 p.m. Last first Wednesday fundraiser before Pride. Ferndale Pride, 279 W. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. http://ferndalepride.com/

Thursday, May 4

Recycle Your Old Used Eyeglasses 10

a.m. Drop off your old, used eyeglasses to benefit New Eyes for the Needy. 20/20 Vision, 3110 Walton Blvd., Rochester Hill. 248-375-0040. www.new-eyes.org/

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

MUSIC & MORE

Benefits/Social Events

Dexter Senior Center "George Bedard & the Kingpins Swinging into Spring" Benefit for the Dexter Senior Center. Knights of Columbus Hall, 8265 Dexter-Chelsea Road, Dexter. 6 p.m. April 22. 734-426-7737. www.dexterseniors.org

Freedom House of Detroit "A Benefit Concert" . Sainte Anne De Detroit Church, 1000 St. Anne St., Detroit. 5 p.m. April 30. www.freedomhousedetroit.org

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

Project Beautiful - Inside and Out "Rainbow Cabaret" Benefit for the Ruth Ellis Center. President and CEO of GLAAD will speak. Tickets: \$100. SCL (Newly renovated club above Bistro 82), 401 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. 6 p.m. April 28. www.eventbrite.com/e/rainbow-cabaret-benefiting-ruth-ellis-center-tickets-32782110174

Comedy

Falling Down Stairs Productions "Comedy Extravaganza" Featuring comedian and LGBT advocate Sampson McCormick. Benefit for Polestar LGBT Community Center. The State Theatre & Bijou by the Bay, 233 E. Front St., Traverse City. 9 p.m. April 22. www.facebook.com/events/147325779938505/

Concerts

The Ark "Paula Cole". The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. April 23. 7347611800. www.theark.org

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

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

Professional

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. Through April 24. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Affirmations "Visibility & Activism: A Showcase of Transgender Activism" Exhibit highlights the activism, courage and artistry of the transgender community. Pittman-Puckett Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. April 1 - May 27. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Detroit After Dark: Photographs from the DIA Collection" Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 5 - April 23. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

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

Lawrence Street Gallery "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. 2485440394. 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. 3138311250. www.scarabclub.org

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Leon & Lulu Announces New Spring Edition Of Its Award-Winnings Event, Books & Authors

Popular Event Featuring Michigan Authors to be Held Twice Annually, Adding Live Reading at The Show

CLAWSON – Book on over to Leon & Lulu from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 30 for a brand new spring edition of the retailer’s award-winning Books & Authors event. This will mark the ninth Books & Authors event at Leon & Lulu. The event – formerly held only once a year in October – is a juried book fair featuring mostly Michigan writers. Guests will now have the chance to mix and mingle with up to 60 authors who will sell and sign books, twice annually.

“Books & Authors has just exploded with popularity with changes in the industry, making book publishing more accessible to talented authors,” says Mary Liz Curtin, co-owner of Leon & Lulu. “Hosting the event twice a year will allow new authors to meet their adoring fans. This year we’re again working with the wonderful folks at the Oakland Literacy Council, who provide the basic literacy and English language instruction necessary for adults in our community to find employment.”

With a nod to Independent Book Store Day, the April 30 Books & Authors also will give guests the chance to check out Leon & Lulu’s new Three Cats Café, which is next



door at The Show. There, writers will read excerpts of their work from 11:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. where patrons can enjoy baked goods and coffee drinks, or lunch until 3 p.m., while listening.

Shake the ink-stained hands of local authors and celebrate reading, writing and really good

hot dogs at Leon & Lulu’s Books & Authors event April 30. For a full list of expected authors, please visit www.leonandlulu.com/meet-the-authors. Admission is free and the event is open to the public. For more information, visit www.leonandlulu.com. Find Leon & Lulu on Facebook at www.facebook.com/leonandlulu.

To learn more about Three Cats Café, go to www.threecatcafe.com. Daily lunch offerings are published here www.facebook.com/threecatcafe.

Take a Lesbian to Lunch – author Charlotte Fisher’s highly anticipated follow up to Mackinac Bridge Jesus – is receiving high

marks from readers in and out of the LGBT community. This book is a must read for anyone who’s ever felt out of place or uncomfortable in their own skin. More than an anthem for gay rights and social change, this collection of short stories challenges individuals to love themselves from the inside out, and do the same for others. Fisher calls the fresh collection of essays, set in her home state of Michigan, both heartbreaking and heartwarming. Whether she’s writing about Barbie, the devil or her gay cat Edgar, you’re sure to laugh, cry or maybe both. Diverse audiences have connected with Fisher’s writing. She believes her stories touch people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or sexual identity because they examine real human conditions: rejection, kindness and healing. “There are those who might see the word ‘Lesbian’ and run,” she says. “This book is not a rainbow rally. Rather, it challenges readers to shed their long-held biases – whatever they might be – and become willing to change. It is a story of awakening, releasing and forgiving.” Readers have called her first book, Mackinac Bridge Jesus, “poignant, “brave” and “roll-on-the-floor funny.”

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1. DiMeo PJ. Psychosocial and Relationship Issues in Men with Erectile Dysfunction. Urologic Nursing. 2006 Dec; 26(6): 442-453. 2. Hunskaar S, Sandvik H. One Hundred and Fifty Men with Urinary Incontinence. III. Psychosocial Consequences. Scand J Prim Health Care. 1995; 11:193-96.



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NMAC Seeks Youth Leaders to Help End HIV Epidemic

Young people, ages 18-15, who are passionate, fearless and willing to learn are needed. The National Minority AIDS Council is looking for fierce youth leaders who will commit to ending the HIV epidemic. Young people living with HIV or on PrEP, LGBTQ, youth of color, and young cisgender and transgender women are particularly encouraged to apply. Through the NMAC's Youth Initiative, young people can learn from peers and elders in the HIV movement. This will be the seventh cycle of this seven-month program with support from Viiv Healthcare, the Magic Johnson Foundation and Advocates for Youth. The program will provide unique leadership and educational opportunities through online webinars, peer-to-peer networking, and advocacy training. This will support the building of new skills that will allow the scholars to engage and carry out community level partnerships to address and advocate for persons living with and impacted by HIV. Youth scholars will have the opportunity to be paired with a mentor to support their success throughout the program. Apply today online at <https://nmac.z2systems.com/np/clients/nmac/survey.jsp?surveyId=40&>. Applications are due April 28. Recipients will get one coach ticket for air, train or bus to attend NMAC's National Conference, USCA in Washington, D.C. Also, a four-night stay in a hotel Sept. 6-10, per diem, and conference registration. For more information or questions, please contact Pavneet Kaur for more information at pkaur@nmac.org or visit the NMAC website, www.nmac.org.

OutFront Seeks Volunteers

OutFront Kalamazoo at 340 S. Rose St. has an opportunity available for interested volunteers. The community center is looking for friendly, phone-savvy individuals to help out by joining the front desk staff. Primary responsibilities include answering the phone, directing calls and warmly greeting guests. Training is provided. OutFront Kalamazoo is a community resource for services, groups, support and engagement with the LGBTQ and ally community in the greater Kalamazoo area – whether you're a youth looking for other LGBTQ friendships, or a transgender individual seeking community. If interested, contact Margy at margy@kglrc.org or 269-349-4234. Visit www.outfrontkzoo.org for more information.



OU Professor, Transgender Advocate to Serve on National LGBTQ Task Force

BY SEAN DELANEY

Transgender advocate Charin Davenport, who teaches writing and rhetoric at Oakland University, has been hired to serve on the National LGBTQ Task Force, an organization that has been promoting equality for the LGBTQ communities for more than 40 years.

"This kind of experience is invaluable not only to the OU campus, but in the lives of young trans people," said Davenport, who came out to her former employer in the summer of 2013.

"It connects us to a larger community and delivers the message that OU is a progressive and forward-looking university that honors all of its students as equal partners in the pursuit of their goals."

Founded in 1973 as the National Gay Task Force, the organization became the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1985 and adopted its current identity in October 2014. Its stated mission is to advocate freedom, justice and equality for LGBTQ people, and to build a future where everyone is free to be themselves in every aspect of their lives.

"For the OU community, the Task Force can be an incredibly valuable resource for training workshops and



Photo courtesy of Oakland University

seminars for students, faculty, staff and the administration," Davenport said. "It also provides opportunities for students to be part of a statewide grassroots effort to raise awareness and work toward equality."

Davenport will serve on the Task Force through June while continuing to teach at the university, which was recently ranked as one of the state's top LGBTQ-inclusive campuses.

"One of my roles with the Task Force is to develop a statewide faith-based network of allies that is inclusive and safe for trans people," she said. "So many Trans people do not feel welcomed in those spaces. So, a lot of what I'll be doing is raising awareness within the faith-based communities and

training them to be effective allies in our struggle for equality."

Davenport will also be tasked with addressing access to safe educational spaces, health care, what it means to be an ally, employment, and training trans people to effectively communicate and participate in their local communities.

"A big issue will be to amend the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act in Michigan, as well as local ordinances," she said. "As it is now, Trans people have no civil rights protections in Michigan, except for those communities with human rights ordinances. Nowhere is this more evident than within the TPOC (Trans People of Color) community, where the intersections of race, education, poverty and gender identity exist."

Grace Wojcik, coordinator of OU's Gender and Sexuality Center, called Davenport's appointment to the National LGBTQ Task Force a "huge asset" to the university community.

"It further demonstrates how committed faculty and staff are to making the campus a more LGBTQ-inclusive place," she said.

To learn more www.thetaskforce.org. For more information about OU's LGBTQ-inclusive initiatives, visit www.oakland.edu/gsc.

Gallery Welcomes Artists Outside the Mainstream



Works by artist, designer, printmaker and collector John Gutoskey will be on display during the "Raise Your Voice" exhibit at Casa de Rosado in Lansing.

In the up-swinging REO Town corridor is Casa de Rosado, a nearly 3,600-square-foot building in Lansing where art exhibits with political agendas speak volumes.

Gallery coordinator and owner Theresa Rosado told the City Pulse that she hopes the gallery will become a haven for artists who have been "ostracized" from the mainstream art community in Lansing and beyond.

Rosado said that Lansing needs more outlets for difficult-to-digest artwork, and she believes that local communities will support edgy, message-driven art.

The gallery's latest show, "Raise Your Voice: A Social Justice Exhibit," opened in April and

will be on display until May 28. It features works by Bruce Thayer, John Gutoskey, Petra Daher and more, including works by Rosado herself. The exhibit highlights everything from LGBTQ issues to union rights through paintings and photography. The gallery has also hosted live music events related to social justice.

The gallery, which is free to enter, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 12-5 p.m. at 204 E. Mt. Hope Ave. in Lansing. A reception with Drew Howard will be held May 6 from 1-3 p.m. For more information, visit Casa de Rosado's Facebook [/www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Rosado-805030536302750](http://www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Rosado-805030536302750).

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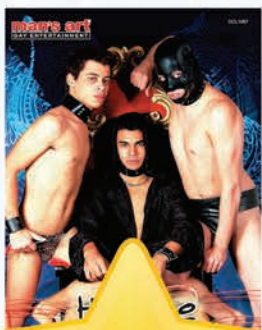
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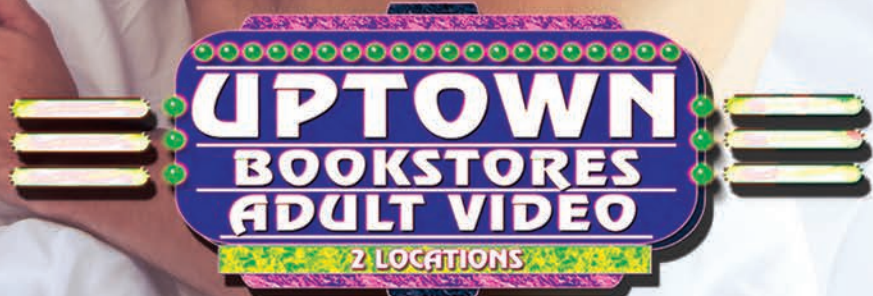
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'What happens at The Abbey'? It looks like the usual.

Move over "Fire Island" – a show that hasn't even aired yet but now has to move over, anyway – because there's another queer-themed reality series ready to be a very bad influence on your summer viewing habits. It's called "What Happens at The Abbey." It is not about a monastery. It is, however, about an exceptionally popular gay bar/restaurant in West Hollywood that happens to be located right next door to Pump, the place you all know and hate-love from "Vanderpump Rules." Lots of really pretty people work at the Abbey – the one thing they all have in common – and their respective sexualities, genders and races run the gamut, so a good variety of attractive couplings are sampled in the show's preview trailer. Expect sex, screaming and very little sobriety (a disembodied voice yells "Penis!" in the trailer, so that's promising). And if the show doesn't deliver healthy amounts of all three, then we're going to be bored fast. It premieres on E! Sunday May 4.



Dan Stevens. Photo: Starfrenzy

and creators, and we're cheerleading hard right now for "Transparent"'s Silas Howard – one of Hollywood's few trans directors – and his new project, "A Kid Called Jake." The feature film, adapted from a Lincoln Center play by Daniel Pearl, will star Claire Danes and Jim Parsons as a married couple with a transgender child. Their 4-year-old, Jake, prefers to dress up and play princess rather than as male-identified

fantasy heroes, and it's up to the parents to sort out a response that will allow their little one to thrive. The film is in pre-production now, and it couldn't be timelier, as the current presidential administration's cruel anti-LGBT platform has already started attacking trans

children by rolling back public school restroom policies that would allow children to use the one that corresponds to their gender identity. In other words we're primed for a little art as activism, especially if it makes Republicans lose their minds.

Queer seniors are making 'Christmas'

Every time a tween, teen or Millennial star comes out in Hollywood, our heart grows three sizes, because they'll never have to worry about the celebrity closet. But there's a special place in our formerly shrunken hearts for the senior queer actors who blazed the trail, and we especially love British character actors Simon Callow ("A Room With a View" – he was the skinny-dipping vicar) and Miriam Margolyes (you know her best as Professor Sprout in the "Harry Potter" films). They've both been out forever, working for nearly as long, and we adore them. They're the kind of people that we scan IMDB credits for – look, it's perfectly normal to fixate on awesome character actors, don't let anyone tell you it's not – and they're the ones making us watch something we've never heard of. Chances are you will hear of their upcoming project, director Bharat Nalluri's ("Miss Pettigrew Lives For A Day") "The Man Who Invented Christmas," a sort-of biopic about Charles Dickens and the events that led him to write "A Christmas Carol." Oh yes, Dan Stevens ("Downton Abbey") and Christopher Plummer are the leads in this one. That's nice. We'll just be catching it (in late 2018) for the co-stars.

Romeo San Vicente recommends Miriam Margolyes as the weird landlady in the even weirder New Wave disco cult musical "The Apple."

The 'Claws' come out

We already miss "Big Little Lies." And "Feud" will nearly be over by the time you read this. So now that we're hooked on TV featuring female-driven misdeeds, where are we supposed to go next for a dose of bad behavior? Luckily, it's TNT to the rescue with "Claws." Set in a Florida nail salon staffed by a group of women who seem predisposed to setting it off, the show stars Niecy Nash, Judy Reyes ("Devious Maids"), Carrie Preston ("The Good Wife"), Jenn Lyon ("Justified"), and Karrueche Tran ("The Nice Guys") as manicurists who find themselves involved in crime, murder and arson – you know, Florida stuff. We assume there will be adult language, adult situations, violence and nudity, all the TV-MA qualities we crave the most. But if not, at least there will be Nash, a woman we would follow off a cliff, "Thelma & Louise"-style, if she demanded it. "Claws" premieres June 11, and to get in the mood we're going to go commit some victimless crimes and see if we like it.

Claire Danes, Jim Parsons and 'A Kid Called Jake'

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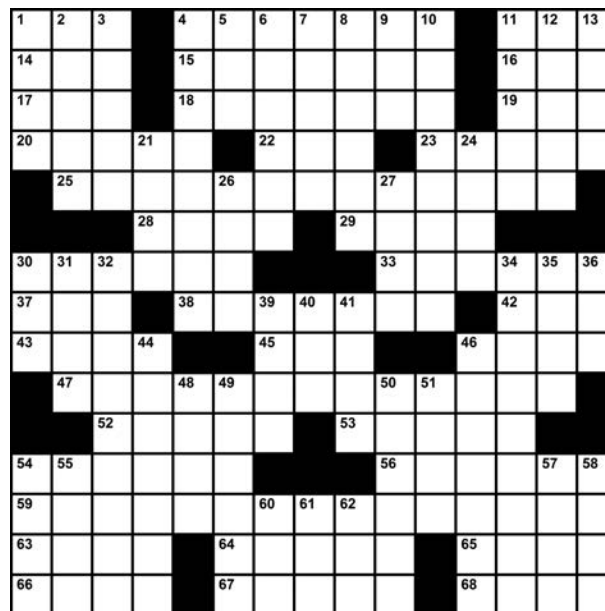


BTL Wedding Announcements Free!

BTL is celebrating marriage equality by running announcements of your wedding, recommitment vows, anniversary or engagement. Simply send us your pics and a description, up to 50 words, and we will run it as space permits in BTL!

Send to editor@pridesource.com

Q Puzzle



How to Have More Sex While Binge-Watching

Across

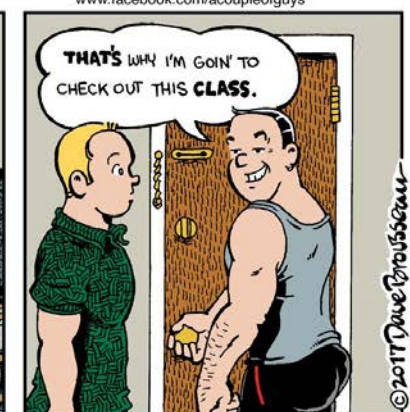
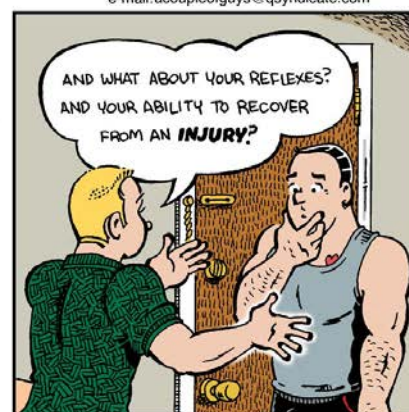
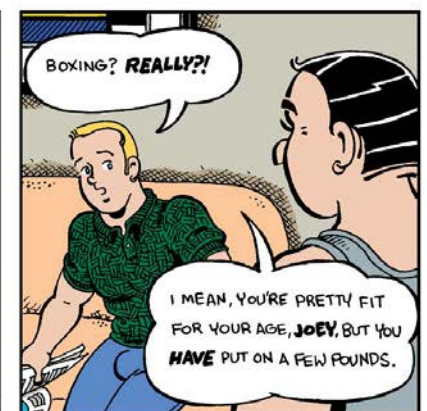
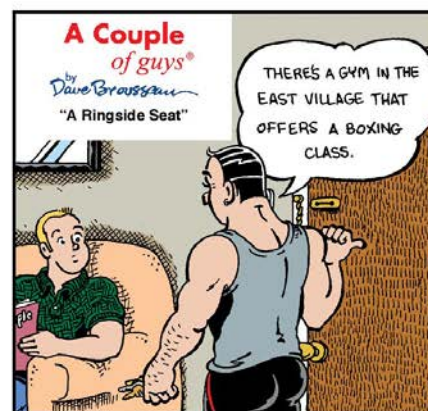
- 1 Title for Elton
4 Milk purifier Louis
11 Use your tongue
14 Script ending
15 Attack with a vicious tongue
16 Fairy tale, so to speak
17 Varnish ingredient
18 Start of Ellen's advice about
- not letting Netflix interfere with sex
19 Mouth-to-mouth pro
20 WNBA Starzz fan, often
22 "Id" follower
23 "A League of Their Own" teams
25 More of the advice
28 P's on Socrates' writings
29 Masked animal, for short

- 30 "The African Queen" director John
33 Paths through leaves of grass
37 Prefix in a kids' clothing line
38 Corrosion coatings on statues
42 Water, to Debussy
43 Melville novel
45 AAA way
46 A girl named Frank
47 More of the advice
52 Message sender of old
53 The active crowd
54 Forest feline
56 Geer role
59 End of the advice
63 Without give
64 Nickname of jazzman Earl Hines
65 Bound gaily
66 Basketball to Eliza Doolittle?
67 Group that goes cruising
68 Rank Amelie Mauresmo, e.g.
- 13 Hard six and more, in Vegas
21 "Java" trumpeter Al
24 Burial site of Macbeth
26 Sometime Capote associate Chaplin
27 Former Chicago Cub Sammy
30 Owl's cry
31 Gomer Pyle's branch
32 Rock Hudson's "Gun Fury," for one
34 Big stick where Boy Scouts sleep together
35 ___ Christian Andersen
36 Wicks once of the WNBA
39 Dangerous meat-eater
40 Telecommunications giant
41 Have an opening for
44 Egg concoctions
46 Like most of the moons of Uranus
48 Novel idea
49 Excuse
50 Like skim milk
51 Linda Hunt's "The ___ of Living Dangerously"
54 Guy that goes either way?
55 "So long!"
57 "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" singer
58 Big Apple enforcement org.
60 Hoedown honey
61 Summer for Rimbaud
62 Margaret Cho's "I'm ___ One That I Want"

Down

- 1 George Takei's role on "Star Trek"
2 About to blow
3 Sum up
4 Hocking site
5 What hangs from a Cuban
6 Goes lickety-split
7 In need of a backrub
8 Like a Mapplethorpe photo
9 Org. for your first mate
10 Gives a larger bosom, e.g.
11 Close of "Serving in Silence"
12 Anouk of film

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com



MOTOR CITY

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PRIDE

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is hosting a community meeting to overview our plans for the 2017 festival and to hear your ideas for activities.

This community meeting is also a great place for those looking to get more involved with pride. Join us and learn how to volunteer for the festival.

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