

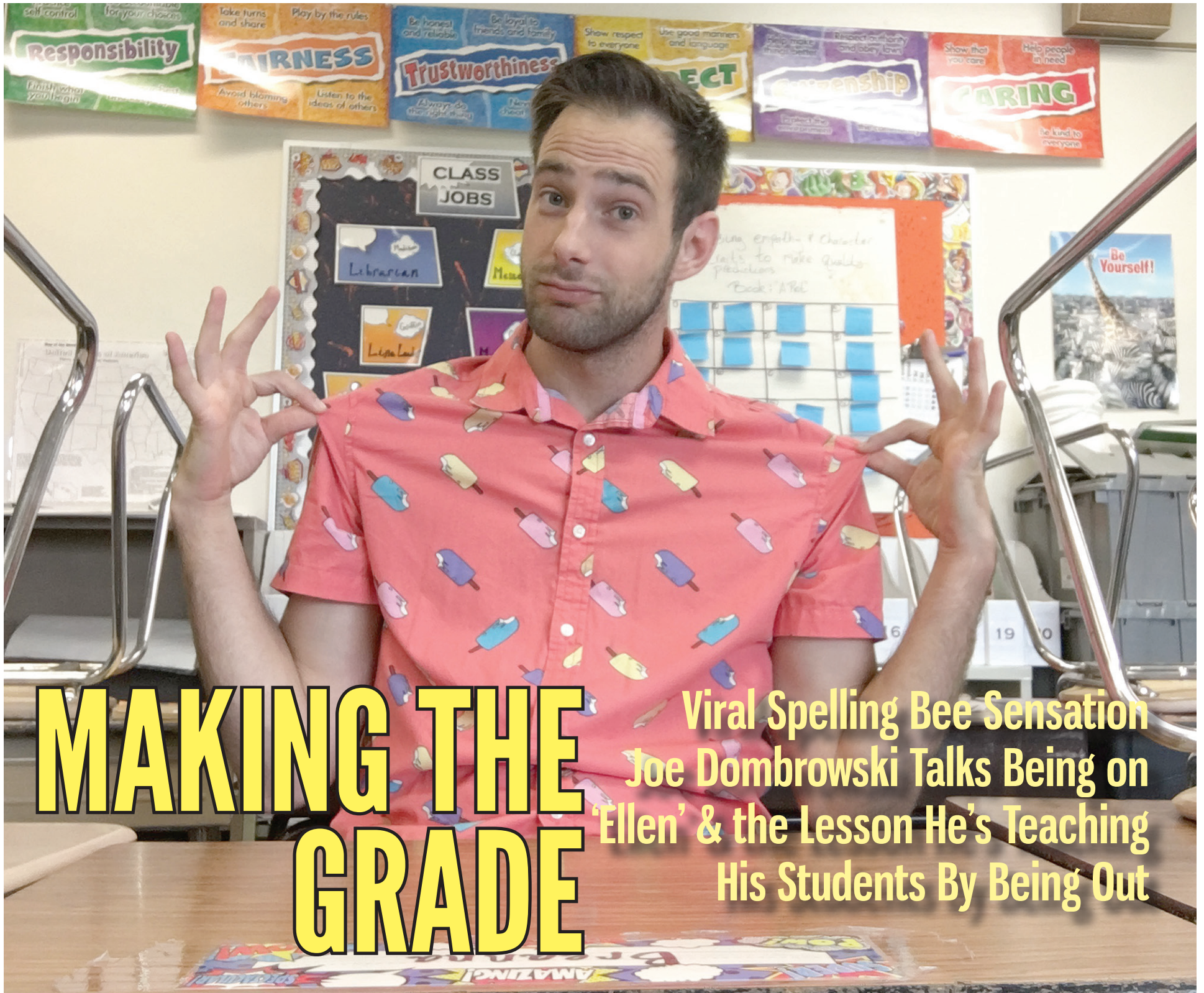
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Viral Spelling Bee Sensation Joe Dombrowski Talks Being on 'Ellen' & the Lesson He's Teaching His Students By Being Out

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Making the Grade

Michigan's Viral Spelling Bee Sensation Joe Dombrowski Talks Being on 'Ellen' & the Lesson He's Teaching His Students By Being Out

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Joe Dombrowski never expected to end up on “Ellen” after his fourth-grade students at Oakland Elementary in Royal Oak hilariously attempted to spell made-up words – and a queen’s name from “RuPaul’s Drag Race” – as an April Fools’ joke. But then again, Dombrowski never expected the legendary prank, which he orchestrated, filmed and posted to his social media, to seize the attention of admirers from around the world... including Ellen DeGeneres.

Just days after the video went viral, the 28-year-old teacher was a guest on the iconic comedian’s talk show. But it wasn’t attention he was after. In addition to receiving a generous \$10,000 check from Shutterfly made out to Oakland Elementary (and \$10,000 for him, personally) – the school largely educates children from low-income families – the teacher and now-famous trickster says he was elated that “Ellen really gave me a platform to put such a positive light on education, which is where my heart is.”

That crazy, surreal day, his heart was in the right place, but his head? Not so much. Instant internet fame will do that to you.

“Once Ellen called, it truly hit me how big this whole thing had gone,” Dombrowski tells me, still reeling from the experience. “When I watched the interview, it all started coming back, and I just realized that I blacked out completely during it.”

This is how he remembers it: Ellen kissed him, he made her – major daytime talk-show host, Glamour Woman of the Year honoree, Emmy winner, Dory – laugh, and then the two shared a special behind-the-scenes moment. During a commercial break, Dombrowski expressed to her how her confidence as an out lesbian – and the fact that “she’s such a strong role model for all people, especially the

LGBT community” – helped transform him into a confident, out gay man, both privately and professionally.

“I was actually fortunate enough to tell her that,” he explains. “She was like, ‘Hey, that truly means so much.’”

“And then the money came into play, and I was like, oh my god,” he adds. “Ultimately, I couldn’t believe that I was able to provide a gift to my students that I wouldn’t have been able to provide on my own, so her giving me the opportunity to provide that for my school is just so humbling and mind-blowing. It felt wonderful to know that somebody believed so much in education that they would give so much back to the community.”

Some things money can’t buy, and in Dombrowski’s case, that something is a powerful, Ellen-inspired lesson he’s teaching his own students: be yourself.

“I’m always true to myself,” he says. “I don’t lie to my students, but I’m here to teach and that’s the bottom line. I’m always myself. I listen to ’90s divas, but it’s OK to like a certain type of music and it’s OK to be who you are. The person you see in the classroom is very much the way I live my life and I have absolutely no shame about what I bring to the classroom.”

“It’s been really great over the years to see how students connect to that energy and realize that it’s OK for them to be themselves, whoever they are. I always send that message home with them.”

Of course, he does so in his own “Mr. D” way – sometimes by name-dropping a drag queen during a spelling bee, his viral claim to fame. And if you think that’s the biggest prank he’s pulled, the joke’s on you. For Dombrowski, it’s just another day.

“I’ve been doing this forever!” he says, geeked. “Just the other day, I convinced them

See next page



“It’s been really great over the years to see how students connect to that energy and realize that it’s OK for them to be themselves, whoever they are. I always send that message home with them.”

– Joe Dombrowski

that April the giraffe's baby was named Baby Joe after me being on 'Ellen' because it was born on the same day."

He cracks up.

"My classroom family has been saying, 'Joe, it was funny, but you have other stuff out there.'"

Those amazingly ridiculous words he asked his students to spell were made up on the spot ("blorskee," for instance – "as in, 'I lost my blorskee at a carnival,'" he recites during the video). Except for one: the name of "RuPaul's Drag Race" contestant, "Ro-laska-tox." "Ro-laska-tox was surprised when Jinkx took the crown," he told his students. "If you didn't get the hyphens, I'm sorry, you got that word wrong."

Dombrowski attributes the success of his epic spelling-bee joke to the time and day he posted it – his lunch hour, on a holiday – and the kid's hysterical not-having-it grumbles.

Its instant success surprised him as much as his public outing.

"It was a bit of a shock at first," he says, regarding the assumptions made about his sexual orientation. "I figured it would happen, and I wasn't thrown off, but I was confused about how to move forward with it."

Headlines in numerous LGBT outlets spotlighted his sexuality: "Handsome Gay Teacher." "Gay Teacher From Michigan." "Openly Gay Teacher." But Dombrowski was relieved to discover that his sexuality wasn't



On set at The Ellen Show, during a commercial break, Dombrowski expressed to her how her confidence as an out lesbian – and the fact that "she's such a strong role model for all people, especially the LGBT community" – helped transform him into a confident, out gay man, both privately and professionally.

the focus of those stories. Instead, "they focused on what I'm bringing to education. They focused on what I'm preaching to my students, and they focused on the energy that we have in our classroom. They truly captured the essence of what I do in the classroom, and the fact of who I am really doesn't matter. But the fact that I could help make a change in education – that's what does matter."

Dombrowski's interest in teaching didn't materialize overnight, but actually, his passion

ignited in college while volunteering at an Ohio summer camp for terminally-ill children. In addition to teaching them, his purpose was to help lighten their load, and "just be able to have fun and enjoy themselves. When that happened, I was like, 'Yeah, this is for me.' I'm definitely in education because I know that I can make learning fun for all kids."

And these pranks? He's been pulling those longer than he's been teaching, with friends, with cousins. In fact, he's been honing his

comedic skills over the last five years while doing improv at Go Comedy! in Ferndale. Knowing that, it's no wonder he's hearing from people who, he says, tell him, "Why weren't you my teacher? Why weren't teachers like this when I was in elementary school?"

"The bottom line is, I know there will be a day when (my students) realize that they had such a positive role model. At the end of the day, that's what I wanna be for my students."

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19 Senators Urge Trump's HHS to Restore LGBT Questions to Elder Surveys

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

A bipartisan group of 19 senators led by Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Robert Casey (D-Pa.) are calling on the Department of Health & Human Services to restore LGBT questions to a federal survey intended to evaluate government services for older Americans.

In a two-page letter dated April 27, Collins, chair of the U.S. Senate Special Commission on Aging, and Casey, the top Democrat, lead other senators in saying the Trump administration's removal of the questions "will limit HHS's ability" to evaluate whether federal programs are reaching LGBT elders effectively.

"Sexual orientation and gender identity questions on these surveys were designed to ensure that vital services were reaching vulnerable LGBT Americans," the letter says. "By rolling back data collection, it is possible that the needs of millions of Americans go unmet."

Much to the dismay of LGBT advocacy groups, the Trump administration indicated last month it would remove questions seeking to identify the sexual orientation of respondents from the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants, or NSOAAAP. (A Federal Register notice indicating the survey would not be changed, although an examination of proposals reveals the questions are removed.)

At the time, HHS said the LGBT questions were part of a pilot test and removed because the sample response "has not been sufficient enough to date to allow for reliability and reporting."

According to the letter, HHS also proposed similar revisions for its Centers of Independent Living Annual Performance Report survey. An initial draft included a questions on sexual orientation and the option to identify as transgender, but those questions were moved in the current draft in the only noticeable change, according to the letter.

The senators urge HHS to reinstate the questions "to ensure that key programs for older Americans and people with disabilities are meeting the needs of the LGBT community." They also seek a staff briefing on the decision to remove the LGBT questions no later than May 5.

An HHS spokesperson confirmed the department has received the letter, but defended the decision to remove the LGBT questions from the federal health surveys.

"Under the Paperwork Reduction Act, making a survey longer or requesting highly personal information can only be justified if the data the additional questions will generate are required by law or can be expected to help us conduct necessary oversight for the program," the spokesperson said. "Given that the questions weren't generating reliable data, they did not meet that standard. Consequently, the questions are not included in the proposed 2017 surveys, which are currently published in the Federal Register for public comment."

Americans United Says 'Religious Beliefs Are Not a Justification for Discrimination'

Faith Coalition Files Brief, Appeals to Support Transgender Woman Fired from Funeral Home

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Americans United for Separation of Church and State says the Supreme Court should not continue to let individual employers use their religious beliefs as justification for discrimination. Along with 76 faith leaders and 13 religious and civil rights organizations, this coalition filed an amicus brief on April 24 in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals supporting Aimee Stephens – the transgender woman who was fired in August 2013 from the Garden City location of the Detroit-based R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes – urging the court to overturn the lower court's ruling that Stephens was not discriminated against.

Her fight has been ongoing since September of 2014 when a lawsuit was filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on Stephens' behalf, which found that her civil rights under Title VII had been violated.

Stephens was employed since 2007. Her termination came two weeks after she wrote her employer a letter informing them about her transition from male to female, and explaining that she intended to dress in appropriate business attire as a woman. The funeral home's owner, Thomas Rost, responded, according to Stephens, by handing her a severance agreement telling her that what she was proposing to do was unacceptable.

The funeral home moved to dismiss the case in April 2015 on the grounds that gender identity is not protected by Title VII; however, the court concluded that the EEOC had properly alleged a sex discrimination claim asserting that Stephens was fired for failing to conform to Rost's sex-or gender-based stereotypes.

After the motion to dismiss was denied, the funeral home – represented by Alliance Defending Freedom – amended its answer to raise defenses under the Free Exercise Clause and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The funeral home argues that it is protected by RFRA, which prohibits encroachment on certain kinds of business owner's religious convictions absent a compelling government interest. The Supreme Court in June 2014 held in the highly-controversial case, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, that RFRA applies to

October 2016. Then Donald Trump won the presidential election and Stephens became worried as he quickly named Victoria Lipnic EEOC Commissioner in January. Lipnic is a Republican, and acting chair of the commission. In July, Lipnic will replace Jenny Yang, a Democrat, who has been the current chair since September 2014.

Lipnic's LGBTQ Track Record

Lipnic was first appointed to the EEOC by former President Barack Obama in 2010 through recess appointment. She was subsequently nominated to a second term and confirmed by the Senate in late 2015. Lipnic's history of supporting LGBTQ issues has reportedly been mixed, but she did vote in favor of pursuing the Stephens case.

Lipnic was part of the EEOC's unanimous 2012 decision in *Macy v. Holder*, where the EEOC held that intentional discrimination against a transgender individual because of that person's gender identity is discrimination based on sex and therefore violates Title VII.

She voted against a key decision in 2015 that found discrimination based on

sexual orientation to be illegal. But she later supported the commission's first sexual orientation lawsuits in March 2016, and another one in January.

Concerns Loom as EEOC Moves Toward Republican Majority

Lipnic's appointment prompted the EEOC's request in January for a 30-day extension to file its legal arguments citing "administration-related changes at the commission" as their reason.



On the National Mall in Washington D.C. two homosexual men, volunteers at the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, respond to the preaching of a fundamentalist Christian (background) with a kiss. Photo: iStock

closely-held for-profit companies.

That case in particular has emboldened other religious objectors, like R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes, to assert their faith-based beliefs, which does considerable harm to LGBT people.

Setting a dangerous precedent in this case, U.S. District Judge Sean F. Cox wrote in his August 2016 ruling that requiring the funeral home to do something it was religiously opposed to because of discrimination laws "would impose a substantial burden on its ability to conduct business in accordance with its sincerely-held religious beliefs."

The next step was to appeal the decision to the 6th Circuit, which the EEOC did in

Shortly after, a Slate report broke this news when the ACLU filed a request to intervene amid speculation the EEOC may withdraw from Stephens' case.

Although the EEOC appealed the decision, "Recent actions by the government have given Ms. Stephens significant cause for concern that the EEOC will not continue to adequately represent her interests," according to court records. "Given the recent change in presidential administration, Ms. Stephens may bring a different perspective to the sex discrimination and religious exercise issues at stake in this appeal. She should not be left to rely on the arguments made by the government, which may now decide to change its position on the issues under review."

The funeral home urged the 6th Circuit on February 6 not to let Stephens intervene, noting in an opposition memo that her motion is "untimely," according to a Law360 report. R.G. & G.R. Harris called Stephens' claims the EEOC would not vigorously represent her "sheer speculation."

The Future of Title VII Protections

The EEOC's leadership, appointed by the president, is composed of the chair, vice chair and three commissioners, with the chair having considerable influence over the commission's direction. Trump has not appointed a fifth commissioner or new general counsel yet, which supports the commission. Until then, legal analysts at Law360 predict little to no change, though they anticipate a decline in Obama's emphasis on LGBTQ protections down the road as they do not seem to be priorities for President Trump.

Moving forward, the EEOC plans to pursue Stephens case – an opening brief was filed in February – and as stated on their website, will continue to function as "an independent federal agency responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee." And while the EEOC's stance is consistent with that taken by the commission while Obama was in office, the ACLU remains concerned cases of anti-LGBTQ discrimination will not be pursued with the same force they were under Democratic influence.

With the future of Title VII protections for LGBTQ people in question, Americans United became involved in this case through its Protect Thy Neighbor project, which seeks to stop religion-based discrimination against LGBTQ people and others.

As a religious liberty organization that advocates for the freedom to believe – or not – as one chooses, Americans United often files amicus briefs in church-state cases across the country.

"True religious freedom, however, does not include the right to use one's religious beliefs to inflict harm on others. Here, that is exactly

what the funeral home is trying to do. Firing Aimee because she is transgender is clearly illegal. It's a violation of Title VII. But the funeral home is arguing that it shouldn't have to comply with Title VII because of its owner's religious beliefs. We believed that it was crucial to offer the point of view of clergy and religious liberty and civil rights organizations to counter the funeral home's narrative. There are many people of faith and many supporters of a robust right of religious exercise who do not believe that religious freedom includes the right to ignore anti-discrimination laws," said Carmen Green, a Madison Fellow at Americans United who litigates church-state cases at trial and on appeal.

Green explains that people of faith and religious groups have voiced support for the rights of LGBTQ persons in amicus briefs submitted in Gloucester County School Board v. GG (bathroom access), Obergefell v. Hodges (marriage-equality), and United States v. Windsor (striking down DOMA), to name just a few cases.

Green said their brief "represents a broad network of religious and religious liberty groups, as well as clergy, who believe that we can simultaneously have robust protections for religious exercise and ensure dignity and equal rights for all."

Protect LGBTQ Employees

While Stephens' case and protections for LGBTQ employees are being determined at the federal level, there is no statewide law in Michigan that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in both public and private sector employment.

More than four percent of the American workforce identifies as LGBT. Approximately 184,000 of these workers live in Michigan, according to a 2015 report by the Williams Institute, and 84 percent of them are transgender workers who experience workplace discrimination.

In 2016, a record number of more than 200 anti-LGBT bills were introduced – a number that is expected to increase in 2017.

Until the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act is amended in Michigan to protect LGBTQ people from employment, housing and public accommodation discrimination, more than 40 cities across the state have adopted non-discrimination ordinances that prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, or both.

As a growing number of courts have held that discrimination on the basis of gender identity violates Title VII, employers are encouraged to enforce more inclusive policies, practices, and procedures for transgender employees.

The ACLU of Michigan is located at 2966 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. Call 313-578-6800 or visit the organization's website www.aclumich.org for more information.

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DESCOVY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.

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DESCOVY may cause serious side effects:

- **Buildup of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis)**, which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold (especially in your arms and legs), feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large and fatty. Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turning yellow (jaundice); dark "tea-colored" urine; light-colored bowel movements (stools); loss of appetite; nausea; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking DESCOVY for a long time. In some cases, lactic acidosis and serious liver problems have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** DESCOVY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV and stop taking DESCOVY, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking DESCOVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Ask your healthcare provider if an HIV-1 treatment that contains DESCOVY® is right for you.

What are the other possible side effects of DESCOVY?

Serious side effects of DESCOVY may also include:

- **Changes in body fat**, which can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking DESCOVY.
- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking DESCOVY if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems**, such as bone pain, softening, or thinning, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.

The most common side effect of DESCOVY is nausea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking DESCOVY?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Other medicines may affect how DESCOVY works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Ask your healthcare provider if it is safe to take DESCOVY with all of your other medicines.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if DESCOVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking DESCOVY.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

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

Please see Important Facts about DESCOVY, including important warnings, on the following page.



LOVE

**WHAT'S
INSIDE**



(des-KOH-vee)

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about DESCOVY® and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT DESCOVY

DESCOVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Buildup of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis)**, which is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: feeling very weak or tired, unusual muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold (especially in your arms and legs), feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems**, which in some cases can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark “tea-colored” urine; loss of appetite; light-colored bowel movements (stools); nausea; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** DESCOVY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking DESCOVY. Do not stop taking DESCOVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

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

ABOUT DESCOVY

- DESCOVY is a prescription medicine that is used together with other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older. DESCOVY is **not** for use to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
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- Take DESCOVY with or without food.

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DESCOVY can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About DESCOVY” section.
- Changes in body fat.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Bone problems.

The most common side effect of DESCOVY is nausea.

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

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with DESCOVY

BEFORE TAKING DESCOVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

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

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

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

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about DESCOVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to DESCOVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit DESCOVY.com for program information.



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Obituary: Peter Cooper

December 29, 1952 – April 27, 2017

OAK PARK – Peter Cooper, a longtime activist in the LGBT and Jewish communities, died of an apparent heart attack April 27. He was 64 years old.

Cooper was born and raised in Detroit. He attended Frank Cody High School. Shortly after high school Cooper started working in banking for City National, which later became First of America and, later still, National City Bank. He worked at the bank for 20 years, from 1979 to 1999.

In the 70s, Cooper became involved in Metro Detroit's fledgling LGBT community.

"Peter was involved with just about every known organization that sprouted out in the 70s and 80s," said his friend of over 40 years, Tom Zerafa. "He was part of the founding of SIMCHA, a gay Jewish group, and he was involved with Metropolitan Community Church as more of a social member. He was also fairly active with the Gay Liberation Front at Wayne State."

In response to the AIDS epidemic, Cooper volunteered with several organizations including Wellness Networks and AIDS Partnership Michigan. He would go on to work for APM as a full-time employee for more than a decade.

"There were always three hallmarks that came with Peter," recalled Barbara Murray, former executive director of APM. "One of them, which many of us well know, was his camera. I think anybody who was ever around him probably has a picture or two or three or six or eight that Peter took of them. And actually one of [my partner] Annie's favorite pictures of me was taken by Peter at Pride in Ferndale many years ago. Now the other two hallmarks were always in his office at work. Number one was toys. Peter always had toys in his office – stuffed toys, fuzzy toys, all kinds of toys in his office. And he always had candy. He always had a bowl of candy or one of those feeder things that you'd hit the lever and candy would drop out.

"We always knew the day after a holiday that Peter would be late to work because he'd be at Walgreens buying all the candy that was now on sale," Murray continued. "We always knew that's where he was. Stocking up on candy."

Cooper also worked as a professional clown, going by the name of Slapstick.

In 2004, Cooper was facilitating an adult group at Affirmations when Jonathan Quirk came into the room and caught his eye.

"At that time I didn't have any contacts within the gay community," said Quirk, Cooper's partner for the past 12 years. "This was the first time I'd ever been to Affirmations. I was looking for some type of outreach, some companionship. We didn't connect at first. I didn't come back for several months and he took notice. I came back in April of 2005 and we reconnected. He was leery about approaching me because of his status at Affirmations. He wanted to be sure it was appropriate."

Within weeks, the two had decided to become a couple and embark on a relationship.

"In the beginning he was kind of the pursuer and



I just fell in love with him," Quirk said. "He was the kindest and most generous person I ever met. He accepted my eccentricities. He loved me not in spite of them but he welcomed them."

While Zerafa said that Quirk was "the best thing to ever happen to Peter," for his part, Quirk felt much the same.

"I always told him that he saved my life," said Quirk. "When I met him I was in a very dark place and he kind of took me in and showed me so much about life and love and how to love myself. As much as people have said I was the best thing that ever happened to him he was the best thing to ever happen to me as well. I could search the whole rest of my life and never find somebody like Peter Cooper."

As a couple, the two enjoyed doing things like going to yard sales and art fairs.

"Peter was not someone with a lot of means so we enjoyed doing things that were just simple stuff," Quirk said. "We took a lot of pleasure in that and really enjoyed each other."

"It was really quite a relationship," Quirk went on. "The thing with Peter is he knew so many people. So in the beginning when we were dating I had to get adjusted to the fact that whenever we went out he was going to see somebody he knew. I had to share him. But when we were home we had our own language. We communicated with each other. We did little things for each other all the time. And we always told each other that we loved each other every day."

For his part, Zerafa said things will never be quite the same without his best friend around.

"When you met Peter you had a friend for life," he said. "He touched thousands of people in his life. Thousands of people. He is going to be missed. I can't even begin to imagine what life is going to be like going forward without him. I can't even imagine it right now."

Holland Community Center to Increase LGBTQ Visibility

BY JIM LARKIN

The irony wasn't lost on leaders of the newly formed Out On The Lakeshore. As the organization, which combines Holland is Ready and Holland PRIDE, began looking for a space for its LGBTQ Community Center it experienced the same type of discrimination that some members of the Holland City Council - in defending their rejection of an anti-discrimination ordinance protecting LGBTQ people - swore didn't exist in Holland.

"It was difficult to find an organization that would rent to an LGBT organization. We had doors that were closed," said Jen Adams, an OOTL board member. "The resistance we received solidified the importance of what we were trying to do."

What OOTL is trying to do, in opening the community center at 451 Columbia Ave. this month, is provide a central, safe place for LGBTQ youth and adults to gather in Holland. The approximate 1,000-square-foot location is envisioned to be a space where LGBTQ people can find support, plan programs, or simply gather with other like-minded people.

"Holland needs a physical presence that's central and visible – a means by which groups and individuals can come together for support and advocacy," said Adams. "LGBTQ youth and adults need a safe space they can come. We need a community center to raise awareness of LGBTQ issues and concerns."

OOTL board member Amy Bade describes it as a "hangout" or "drop-in center" as well as a headquarters for LGBTQ issues to be addressed. When it opens in late May, it will have computers youth and adults can use, and chairs and tables - provided courtesy of Herman Miller - where people can gather and/or meet to plan LGBTQ-focused activities.

Plans call for an executive director to be hired to run the center. Funding for the effort is being provided by grants, organizations and fundraisers.

One of those fundraisers will be held at 3 p.m. May 21 at Saugatuck Center for the Arts, when an Ann Arbor theater group will present "As We Go On," which features a variety of coming out stories.

Tickets for the joint fundraiser with the Grand Rapids Foundation LGBT Fund are \$40 each or \$15 for students and are available at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, www.sc4a.org.

An additional large fundraiser is the Holland PRIDE Festival on June 23-25. This year's celebration will include a June 23 murder mystery dinner at the Holland Area Arts Council. Tickets, for \$50, which includes dinner and drinks, are available by emailing mihollandpride@yahoo.com. For more details go to www.hollandpride.org.

Some individuals and businesses are also joining the effort. Comedian Mimi Gonzalez will present the second annual "Go Girl" event on June 2-4 at The Dunes Resort in Saugatuck, with part of the proceeds from the events – including a champagne breakfast that Sunday morning at Campit Outdoor Resort – going to the OOTL community center. Also featured that weekend will be DJs, music, comedy, and an open mic. For details go to www.gogirl.saugatuck.com.

OOTL was formed in the fall of 2015 by leaders of Holland is Ready and Holland PRIDE, who wanted to unify efforts so they weren't both going to the same businesses and organizations for funding. The nonprofit also provides a central source to provide constant support and understanding for the LGBTQ community of the Greater Holland area.

"We've had support (for the LGBTQ community) in the past, but it hasn't been consistent enough or visible enough," said Adams. "This allows us to provide a consistent level of support on the lakeshore."

For more information on OOTL and the community center, email outonthelakeshore@gmail.com or go to www.outonthelakeshore.org.



Three Arfs. Six Purrs. A Suggestion!

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

A federally funded study by People & Friends of Cats and Dogs (P-FCD) reports that “persons of rainbow personality make the best dog owners, but have little influence on cats, although this should not be misconstrued as homophobia on the part of America’s feline population.”

The P-FCD Study – “Are American Pets at Risk with Gay/Lesbian Owners?” – finds that “dogs owned by LGBT people are happier, better mannered, more likely to heel and to fetch than dogs reared by straights. They shed less – the dogs, not the straights, but who knows – during summer months, and do their gender sniffing and hydrant marking in a covert, more decorous manner.”

Interestingly, too, is the study’s finding that most breeds – with the exception of Pekingese, Chihuahuas and Dachshunds – show marked sporting instincts: catching Frisbees, treeing squirrels, chasing unmarked police cars, and, when raised by newly mating lesbians, guarding unattended U-Hauls.

“Rottweilers, when dyke raised, tend to be a one-owner breed. They are loyal to a fault. (The dogs, not the dykes.) Curiously, pit bulls become remarkably docile when trained by lipstick lesbian owners in suburban settings.

“Breeds raised by gay men seldom bark, or if they do, it’s barking in quieter tones, and are less likely to eat ill-prepared dinner scraps or TV frozen dinner leftovers. They also show a preference for dog houses that are painted in warmer tones and edged with white lattice work. Collars are preferred with sequins and, in leather outings, studs or spikes.”

The old saying, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks!,” has been proven “to be utterly false and denigrating to aging canine populations. Old dogs – with gay owners as role models – are actually remarkably adept at doing new tricks.

A big study disappointment is with finicky cat populations. It’s determined that cats raised by LGBT people are just as likely to be as independent as cats raised by straights.

“The truth is that cats just don’t give a rat’s winkle if you’re straight or gay. If you feed them on time, they just couldn’t care less. And whatever you do, don’t smoke their catnip around them. And please leave their fur balls alone. Under no circumstances color-coordinate or decorate their litter box.”

There is a note of progress, however. For some reason “alley cats seem to live longer when kept by gay, single males. This applies whether neutered or not neutered.” (The cats, not the single males.)

Not everyone is pleased with the P-FCD findings. In The Family Way, a right-wing, vigilante organization headquartered in Free Fall, Montana, expresses outrage at the P-FCD in its monthly newsletter, “The Litter Box.” [Editorial correction: That should be Letter Box.]

“The Gay Agenda stops at nothing,” opines the editorial. “Not only do they want special political rights, the right to marry and to adopt children, now they want to raise America’s wagtail majority – our innocent dogs and cats – as same-sex, house-broken pets. Maybe a dry-blown, perfumed poodle or two, but not a born-again Boxer. Never!”

The editorial ends with the usual request for money in the “cultural war to save our four-footed friends from a life of pampering and eternal perdition. Heaven loves a cheerful benefactor.” How true!

Give a pup or kitten a loving home in 2017. Call the Michigan Humane Society today. Happy Arf! Mary Meow! And a Perverted Purr Award for a pussy-loving Donald Trump and his GOP-decorated, White House Litter Box of unneutered cronies. (Keep plastic, pick-up bag in hand.)



Viewpoint

Flaming, But Not In a Good Way



BY STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, PH.D.

You have probably heard this term thrown around a lot lately – Gaslighting. Gaslighting is a psychological term we, as a nation, know all too well – “Alternative Facts” taking the place of perceived reality.

Gaslighting, means to manipulate one by psychological means into questioning her own sanity.

Melissa McCarthy’s character of Sean Spicer beautifully illustrates the concept during the SNL Cold Open (published Feb. 5 on YouTube):

“I’d like to begin today by apologizing on behalf of you, to me, for how you treated me in the last two weeks.”

Later on in the skit, a reporter asks McCarthy (Spicer) about Trump’s travel ban.

“Yeah, I wanted to ask about the travel ban on

Muslims,” the reporter asks.

“It’s not a ban,” McCarthy says. “Not a ban. The travel ban is not a ban, which makes it not a ban.”

“But you just called it a ban,” the reporter responds.

McCarthy (Spicer): “Because I’m using your words, you said ban, you said ban, now I’m saying it back to you.”

The reporter then says “The president tweeted and I quote, if the ban were announced with a one week notice...”

McCarthy (Spicer) interrupts.

“Yeah, exactly, you just said that, he’s quoting you. It’s your words. He’s using your words when you used the words and he uses them back – it’s a circular using

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Gaslighting is not confined to intimate relationships. Now being expected, as a nation, to believe alternative facts, gaslighting has taken a stronghold. With this happening on a micro level in personal relationships and on a macro level with our nation's current leadership, many feel like we are bombarded by controlling fear-mongers. What can we do collectively to free ourselves from this manipulation?

► Williams: Flaming

Continued from p. 12

of the word and that's from you."

I found this skit hilariously funny, but also highly disturbing in its realism. It seems absurd, but it is dead on.

I see this too often in my practice. A client comes to me desperate to understand why she cannot make a relationship work. She has lost the ability to trust herself and her own judgment. She has begun to believe her partner's alternative facts and has bought into the lie.

In reality, the controlling person has used manipulation and intimidation to twist the facts around to fit her agenda. Almost always, the controller has a personality flaw that does not allow her to self-reflect or see her human limitations. She is unable to see that she has any faults or responsibility in her relationships with other humans. This phenomenon can be extremely subtle or over-the-top. As an example of how outlandish the manipulation can be when it has been allowed to persist over a long period of time, I once had a client who said, "We went out with friends last week and now she is screaming at me that it is my fault that she caught the flu because, if I would have told her it was going to rain and that she should wear a coat, she wouldn't have gotten sick. I guess I should have reminded her."

It is painful for me to see how a person can be unwittingly sucked into this dynamic, how she slowly believes the lie, and how now not only does the controller beat her up, but she starts doing it to herself and believing she is broken. She has lost herself and is unable to see what someone else from the outside clearly can.

People tell her her partner is bad news, but she is emotionally locked in. She believes she is, on some level, defective and that the only person who could love her is the abuser. She concocts strategies to improve herself to win the acceptance of the abuser (which, by the way, never happens). The abuser slyly resolves to distance the person from friends and family who try to offer her insight into the dynamic, isolating her so that the brainwashing cannot be brought to light.

For the reasons I have illustrated, it is not

easy for most people to walk away from such an emotionally entangled relationship, although when I have educated people about the dynamic, some have found a great freedom in understanding it. Although, some beat themselves up for not having seen it sooner. When the client finally is able to see what has happened to her she is able to say "no" to the madness. From my perspective, it is like a high fever that has finally broken, allowing the client to see it all so clearly and leaving her baffled by her former stupor.

Gaslighting is not confined to intimate relationships. Now being expected, as a nation, to believe alternative facts, gaslighting has taken a stronghold. With this happening on a micro level in personal relationships and on a macro level with our nation's current leadership, many feel like we are bombarded by controlling fear-mongers. What can we do collectively to free ourselves from this manipulation?

To begin to combat gaslighting, one first must let go of the fantasy that the abuser will change and that she will grow to see the error of her ways. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but no amount of contorting, confronting, explaining or anything else will change the personality type that engages in gaslighting. For a victim of gaslighting, it usually takes much time and support to gain back one's trust and belief in one's own truths. As a nation, it may require the same long-term effort to avoid buying into the tactics used by an insecure leader to undermine our ability to rely on our common sense. By identifying gaslighting in current personal relationships, we can work on not being swayed by what we know in our gut is untrue. We can also be aware of triggers from gaslighting in former relationships that continue to cause us to question ourselves in the present. By strengthening ourselves in personal relationships, we strengthen ourselves collectively. We grow to trust ourselves and develop the strength to dig our heels in and fight back.

Stephanie Williams is a licensed psychologist and owner of Transcendence Behavioral Health with offices in Royal Oak and Plymouth. Learn more online at www.plymouthpsychologist.com.

Creep of the Week

Erick Erickson

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Asked by a group of high schoolers to share his thoughts about the LGBTQ community, Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyoming) said something stupid.

"I know a guy who wears a tutu and goes to bars on Friday night," Enzi said, "and is always surprised that he gets in fights. Well, he kind of asks for it."

So many problems with his statement. First, does he really "know a guy" who wears a tutu to bars every Friday? That seems oddly specific. And why did Enzi's brain immediately go to "guy in tutu" when reaching for an example of a gay man? Also, does a guy wearing a tutu ask to get punched just a like a woman wearing [fill in the blank with literally any item of clothing you can think of] deserve to get raped?

Enzi has since apologized to anyone who was offended, but conservative commentator Erick Erickson was quick to come to Enzi's defense.

Erickson wrote on his blog *The Repugnant**, "If a guy walks into a bar in Wyoming wearing a tutu, he's probably going to get punched [...] and yes, the dude wearing the tutu shoulders some of the responsibility. He should have known better."

Erickson, who refers to the LGBTQ community as the BLT&GQ community (get it? It's a sandwich and a magazine. It is a very hilarious joke), writes that he's "not condoning violence or even endorsing it. It's just the reality of our world."

But condoning violence is exactly what he's doing. He's saying men in tutus (a.k.a. homos) will get punched because men who don't wear tutus (a.k.a. heteros) are driven to uncontrollable rage by such a sight and there's nothing anyone can do so we must accept it.

"I'm really damn tired of all the people running around making other people extremely uncomfortable then screaming

about their rights and privileges when called out," Erickson writes. "If you want to go around making people uncomfortable, you've got the problem, not the rest of us."

Actually, if you respond to being "uncomfortable" by balling your fist and smashing it into someone's face, you definitely have a problem. That's not normal. It's demeaning to claim that men inherently lack self control or the ability to choose any response to discomfort other than violence.

Erickson has a message for "liberals in their coastal bubbles."

Does a guy wearing a tutu ask to get punched just a like a woman wearing [fill in the blank with literally any item of clothing you can think of] deserve to get raped?

"We are a culturally heterogeneous nation with diverse cultural norms," he writes. "If a guy walks into a bar in Wyoming wearing make up and a tutu, he's probably going to be asked to leave, if not picked on or punched. If you don't like that, don't go to a bar in Wyoming wearing a tutu."

This is, of course, easier said than done. Because gay men don't really run around in tutus, but men who are perceived as gay have a much greater chance of being beaten or killed. Women who are perceived as transgender even more so. LGBTQ people have gained much visibility and that visibility has translated into some important legal and civil rights victories. But it also comes at a price. A price that Enzi and Erickson cheapen when they dismissively talk of "tutus."

Erickson may believe that staying safe is as simple as never leaving your house or living openly about who you are. But I doubt that's a restriction he would stand for in his own life.

**Editor's Note: Right after going to press we learned that Erickson's blog is actually*

Log Cabin President, U.N. Officials Discuss Chechnya

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS, WASHINGTON BLADE

The president of Log Cabin Republicans on April 27 met with representatives of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations to discuss the arrest of more than 100 gay men in Chechnya.

Gregory T. Angelo told the Washington Blade he met with Senior Policy Advisor Kelly Razzouk in New York. He said he also “had the opportunity to briefly meet with” Stefanie Amadeo, who is the deputy U.S. representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

“We discussed a range of topics, including work Log Cabin Republicans done to encourage GOP elected officials in Congress to speak out against the reported atrocities in Chechnya, as well as ways the private sector might assist in this human rights crisis,” said Angelo.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley and Vitit Muntarbhorn, who is the first-ever U.N. LGBT rights watchdog, are among those who have publicly condemned the arrests and reported torture and killings of gay men in the semi-autonomous Russian republic in the North Caucasus. OutRight Action International has urged British Petroleum, ExxonMobil and Royal Dutch Shell -- three oil companies that have made significant investments with state-owned Russian oil and gas companies -- to comment.

“We should use our voice on the global stage to call attention to these horrifying acts and to ensure that they are condemned in an appropriate way, ultimately in the hopes that they will be stopped,” said U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) on Monday during a speech on the U.S. Senate floor.

U.S. Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) and Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) are among the 50 members of Congress who urged Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who is the former CEO of ExxonMobil, to criticize the arrests in a letter they sent to him earlier this month.

Tillerson -- who met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Kremlin officials in Moscow on April 12 -- and President Trump have yet to publicly comment. The State Department a few days earlier said it is “increasingly concerned” over the arrests.

A reporter from Novaya Gazeta, an independent Russian newspaper that broke the story, has gone into hiding after she received death threats. Chechen and Russian officials continue to dismiss the arrests and the growing international outrage over them.

“This is not my field,” Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova told Yahoo Global News Anchor Katie Couric on Thursday during an interview in which she was asked about the reports.

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

LGBT Rights Leaders Flunk Trump on First 100 Days

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Donald Trump received failing grades from LGBT advocates after his first 100 days. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

With the 100-day mark of President Trump’s time in the White House fast approaching, LGBT rights supporters are giving him failing grades as the nation evaluates him at the benchmark.

Since he took the oath of office on Jan. 20, the White House has asserted Trump is “respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights,” but at the same time he has taken anti-LGBT actions -- such as undoing guidance protecting transgender students -- and filled his administration with opponents of LGBT rights.

The Washington Blade solicited evaluations and grade assessments from six LGBT advocacy organizations on Trump’s performance in anticipation of his 100th day in office on April 29. Each of the organizations gave the president a failing grade with the exception of Log Cabin Republicans, which gave him an “A-” grade.

Rea Carey, executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, said she gave Trump a failing grade for missteps ranging from anti-LGBT appointments, immigration enforcement that has “targeted undocumented immigrants with a vengeance” and a budget proposal that increases defense funding at the expense of programs for the middle class.

“Since taking office, Donald Trump has pushed an agenda that is designed to destroy lives and roll back progress,” Carey said. “Everything he has done is detrimental to marginalized communities. His executive orders and actions dehumanize and devalue entire communities of people -- including trans children, people of color and women.”

To the surprise of many, the start of the administration saw limited support for LGBT rights. The White House within days of the new administration issued a statement declaring Trump is “respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights” and would keep in place an executive order signed by President Obama in 2014 that barred federal contractors from engaging in anti-LGBT workplace discrimination.

The Trump administration also defied the wishes of anti-LGBT advocates seeking to purge the State Department of LGBT rights supporters by keeping in place Randy Berry in his role as special envoy for global international LGBT rights.



Donald Trump received failing grades from LGBT advocates after his first 100 days. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

Gregory Angelo, president of Log Cabin Republicans, cited those commitments -- in particular Trump’s pledge to keep the federal contractor order, which was made after a request from Log Cabin to leave the directive intact -- in his explanation for why Trump deserves an “A-” for his first 100 days in office.

“Trump’s first 100 days in office have been something of a mixed bag in regard to LGBT issues, but that was to be expected considering his concurrent outreach to evangelicals and to LGBT voters during his campaign,” Angelo said. “There has been a lot of hand-wringing about a number of ‘non-troversies’ over the past three months -- fake news stories about the White House ‘erasing’ gay people from the Census and the White House website, which were nothing more than fundraising ploys to rile up dejected LGBT liberals still reeling from Hillary Clinton’s loss.”

But other indications bely Trump’s stated support for LGBT people. Despite the White House pledge to keep the Obama-era executive order intact, concerns persist Trump will sign a new directive that would undermine the order and otherwise enable anti-LGBT discrimination in the name of “religious freedom.”

Media reports have said Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner convinced Trump not to sign the order, but White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer has said the administration would “have something” on it. Just this week, USA Today reported a group of 51 House Republicans have sent a letter to Trump calling on him to sign the “religious freedom” executive order.

The same holds true for people with HIV/AIDS. Although the Trump

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administration's proposed budget identified HIV funding as a priority and maintains funding for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, it seeks to cut funding by nearly 20 percent for the National Institutes of Health, which conducts HIV research, and PEPFAR, a Bush-era program that seeks to combat the global HIV epidemic.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, explained his failing grade for Trump by saying any promises the White House has made in support of LGBT people are undermined by Trump's actions in his first 100 days.

"Since the moment he walked into the Oval Office, Donald Trump has attacked our progress and undermined the rights of countless Americans, including LGBTQ people," Griffin said. "From his anti-LGBTQ appointees and nominees, to rescinding protections for transgender students, to his Muslim ban, to his draconian deportation orders, to now considering a taxpayer-funded license to discriminate, Donald Trump has broken his promise to be a president for all Americans."

In terms of anti-LGBT actions, the most concrete actions are ones undermining trans rights in particular. Most prominently, that came in form of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos revoking Obama-era guidance instructing schools discrimination against trans kids, such as denying them access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity.

Under Sessions, the Justice Department also withdrew litigation against North Carolina's anti-LGBT law after it was replaced despite assertions from civil rights groups the new law is discriminatory. The department also missed a deadline to appeal a court injunction barring enforcement of an Obama-era regulation assuring trans people have access to health care, including gender reassignment surgery.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, was insistent the Trump administration is actively seeking to undermine civil rights in explaining the failing grade she gave to the new president.

"The Trump administration set about trying to roll back civil rights for several communities from day one, and the LGBT community was no exception," Keisling said. "From packing agencies with extremist appointees, to attacking transgender students, to undermining health care for transgender people, this administration has already completely undercut any campaign promises of support for LGBT equality."

On international LGBT rights, the Trump administration has already seen a human rights crisis after the emergence of reports of arrests and torture of gay and bisexual men in Russia's semi-autonomous Republic of Chechnya. More than 100 men have been tortured and at least three killed in what media reports are calling "concentration camps."

After some prodding, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley has said the U.S. government is "disturbed by reports of kidnapping, torture and murder of people in Chechnya," although Trump himself has remained silent.

Jessica Stern, executive director of OutRight Action International, gave Trump a failing grade on international work even though Haley spoke out against anti-gay abuses in Chechnya.

"The policies that we are seeing coming out of the Trump administration are scary and dangerous," Stern said. "Expanding the global gag rule, putting forth a Muslim ban, targeting Mexicans, all of these policies are contributing to an environment of marginalization and fear. These policies doubly discriminate against LGBTIQ people who belong to these communities and experience multiple forms of oppression."

Stern also accused Trump of "undermining the international system" by seeking to eliminate funds for the United Nations

In terms of anti-LGBT actions, the most concrete actions are ones undermining trans rights in particular. Most prominently, that came in form of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos revoking Obama-era guidance

and appointing to a U.S. delegation to the U.N. women's conference a pair of anti-LGBT activists.

"What we need now are for progressive leaders in other countries to fill this vacuum and push forward to continue moving the needle forward on human rights," Stern said.

Another metric for presidential commitment to LGBT rights has been making openly LGBT appointments, an effort Obama undertook, which led to a record number of openly LGBT appointees.

In contrast, Trump has yet to make a single openly LGBT appointment. Media reports have indicated Trump intends to appoint Fox News commentator and foreign policy expert Ric Grenell, who's gay, as U.S. ambassador to NATO, but that nomination has yet to occur.

Meanwhile, Trump appointments include Roger Severino as assistant secretary of civil rights at the Department of Health & Human Services, which essentially places an anti-transgender activist in charge of defending trans health. LGBT advocates are also seeking to derail the confirmation of Trump's choice

of Army secretary, Mark Green, who has taken anti-LGBT positions during his career as a state legislator and said being trans is a "disease."

Aisha Moodie-Mills, CEO of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, gave Trump a failing grade for "surrounding himself with appointees who demonize or oppose the rights of our community" instead of making LGBT appointments.

"Personnel is policy, and the extremist worldview of his administration is driving agency and administration policy on LGBTQ rights," Moodie-Mills said. "We saw that when the transgender school guidance was rescinded in February, and we are seeing it now with his insufficient response to widespread reports that gay men in Chechnya are being systematically tortured and murdered. We also see it with his administration's attacks on LGBTQ immigrants, women, people of color and Muslims."

Moodie-Mills called on LGBT rights supporters "to be clear-eyed and relentless because these 100 days were just the beginning," urging LGBT people to run for public office.

"Ivanka Trump is not going to save us," Moodie-Mills said. "We need LGBTQ leaders to run for office and represent us in the halls of power — they are our best defense against anti-equality efforts moving forward."

The White House didn't respond to the Blade's request comment on ways the Trump administration has acted to protect or advance LGBT rights during Trump's first 100 days in office.

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

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VoteRunLead Seminars Prepare Women to Run for Office

BY BTL STAFF

After the last federal election, 6,545 women signed up with VoteRunLead.org to learn how to run for civic and political leadership positions.

More women today than ever before are throwing their hat into the political arena and while this may be a new endeavor, the national, non-partisan, non-profit organization unleashes the power of women leaders in democracy through training, technology and community.

VoteRunLead.org was founded by Erin Vilaridi, formerly of The White House Project, with co-founder and board chair Shannon Garrett, who will lead five day-long seminars throughout Michigan.

The training sessions, “Run As You Are!” will prepare women to articulate their experience as expertise, demystify the campaign trail, identify roles for a women’s “squad,” expand local networks and outline a path to political leadership.

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SPARK East Incubator,
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9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Home Builders Association of Michigan,
6427 Centurion Drive #150B, Lansing

June 3

9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
The Source, 1409 Buchanan Ave. SW, Grand Rapids

June 11

9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sheet Metal Workers Local 80,
17100 W. 12 Mile Road, Southfield

There is no set of rules or experience that are necessary to be a political leader and no definition of who gets to aspire to leadership. Anyone that has the passion to serve their community is able to be a leader. Most women today already have the experience, talent and networks to achieve their political ambition.

For more information, visit www.voterunlead.org.



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The OutField

LGBT Sports Movement Faces Growing Pains

BY DAN WOOG

Once upon a time, there was no such thing as LGBT sports. No one imagined gay men could be athletes. Besides, weren't all female athletes lesbians? Or so the stereotypes went.

Then came Dave Kopay, Greg Louganis. The growth of women's sports. With a rush, LGBT sports roared out of the locker room.

The next step was to gather LGBT athletes together. Outsports created a superb online community. In real time there were running clubs, gay sports teams, even entire leagues.

All of that happened organically. But, as with all growing movements, formal organizations emerge to advocate, educate and show a cohesive face to the world.

Up they sprang: the You Can Play Project. Changing the Game. Break the Silence. Athlete Ally.

Several years ago, Outsports founder Cyd Zeigler wanted to unify all the groups and individuals working in the LGBT sports space. With longtime activists Pat Griffin and Helen Carroll, they organized a summit meeting. Nike offered space and sponsorship dollars.

The first meeting was wildly successful. A diverse group brought enormous energy and great ideas to Portland. They concluded a weekend filled with discussions and social events by marching in the city's gay pride parade.

“The whole idea was collaboration,” Griffin recalls. “Instead of competing head to head for funding and publicity, we wanted to pull individuals and organizations together.” Nike was happy for the help; they needed a way to allocate their funding. The LGBT Sports Coalition would be it.

The new group's emphasis on collaboration was important. All projects submitted through them for Nike funding had to involve more than one group. One of the most important efforts was Common Ground, bringing together LGBT sports educators and administrators with members of the faith community.

Other groups tackled transgender issues through state high school athletic associations. Campus Pride took the lead in working with historically

black colleges and universities.

Annual Coalition meetings in Portland were energizing, exciting and fun. Relationships between member organizations and individuals grew. Young attendees found inspiration. Mentorships formed.

However, the LGBT Sports Coalition lacked 501(c)(3) status. Money was funneled through the Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation. Nike pushed for the Coalition to have its own standalone non-profit status.

At the same time, Nike was going through an internal review of its funding processes, channeling some resources elsewhere.

There were other tensions at the LGBT Sports Foundation (the Coalition's new name). One involved the role of straight allies in LGBT sports. There were raw discussions regarding the role of Athlete Ally, with Coalition members taking both sides of the debate.

Another division emerged around the issue of diversity. Voices asked for greater numbers – and power – for people of color, women and transgender people. Leaders invited members of those groups to join.

Some white men applauded the move. Some felt attacked. An ugly split ensued.

“Treating intersectionality as part of a coalition is how to get things done,” Griffin says. “I understand that other people might have a very different view.”

Yet another fissure appeared. Some Foundation members believed that the most effective way to achieve change is for all LGBT people in sports to come out. Others felt that – while coming out is important – it could not be the only approach.

“I think we need advocacy, education and policy change,” Griffin says. She prefers a holistic approach involving straight coaches and administrators, including seminars, policy manuals and other efforts.

Several members left the LGBT Sports Foundation. Griffin and Jeff Sheng – creator of the “Fearless” photographic project, and a leading



Pat Griffin

voice for intersectionality – shored up the organization. They spent months getting 501(c)(3) status.

Now the Foundation is at a turning point. “We're still very committed to this,” Griffin says. “But we want someone else to step up and take over.”

So far, no one has. “I understand it's hard,” says the author and University of Massachusetts professor emerita of social justice “People have jobs and lives. They're committed to other advocacy groups.”

What does all this say about the current state of the LGBT sports movement?

“It's strong, in the sense that members of the Coalition do amazing work, in organizations like the NCAA and National Center for Lesbian Rights. They're just doing it outside the Coalition,” Griffin says. “But it's sad because we could do so much more if we got our act together. All we need is someone to take charge.”

Every movement has growing pains. The LGBT sports movement is still growing. It encompasses many viewpoints, and with visibility comes diversity.

“We're all still passionate,” Griffin notes. “We may have our philosophical differences, but we all still work for what we believe in.”

She ends the interview. It's time for her and Chris Mosier – trans athlete and Foundation member – to lead another workshop.

Dan Woog is a journalist, educator, soccer coach and gay activist. His latest book is “We Kick Balls: True Stories from the Youth Soccer Wars.” He can be reached care of this publication or at OutField@qsyndicate.com.

Rep. Hoyer Urges Trump to Recall Mark Green Nomination

Democratic Whip Condemns Army Nominee for Anti-LGBT ‘Disgusting Statements’

BY CHRIS JOHNSON,
WASHINGTON BLADE

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) has joined the growing choir of voices opposing the confirmation of Mark Green as Army secretary, urging President Trump to rescind the nomination.

Hoyer, known for his vocal support for LGBT rights, declared in a statement Monday his opposition to Green, whom LGBT advocates are opposing because of his anti-trans comments and record as a Tennessee state legislator supporting anti-LGBT legislation.

“I strongly urge President Trump to withdraw Mark Green as his nominee for Army Secretary,” Hoyer said. “The civilian leaders the president selects to oversee our military set the tone for the men and women of our Armed Forces and how they are expected to behave. Appointing someone with a clear record of homophobia and transphobia, who has made disgusting statements demeaning toward groups of Americans, would send the absolute wrong signal about the values for which our military service members are risking their lives.”

Hoyer’s statement in opposition to Green comes on the heels of a letter spearheaded by Rep. Joe Kennedy III (D-Mass.) and signed by 31 House Democrats urging the Senate Armed Services Committee to oppose Green.

“What message would such an individual’s appointment send to the courageous LGBT Americans proud to serve their nation in uniform and who are doing so every day with distinction?” Hoyer added. “What kind of message would it send to the world, particularly nations like Russia where LGBT individuals are routinely repressed? Our military



Rep. Steny Hoyer urged President Trump to rescind nomination of Mark Green as Army secretary. Blade file photo by Michael Key

cannot be strong unless its values are strong and adhere to the vision of inclusion and the equal opportunity to serve.”

Nominated by President Trump last month, Green spearheaded legislation as a Tennessee state legislator that would have barred municipalities from enacting pro-LGBT non-discrimination ordinances and another bill seeking to bar transgender students from using the restroom consistent with their gender identity.

During a town hall event in Tennessee before the Chattanooga Tea Party last year, Green equated being transgender to having a “disease,” a view major medical organizations have rejected. The LGBT media watchdog GLAAD also uncovered audio of Green on an online radio show in which he said he wants to “crush evil” by keeping transgender women from the restroom, comparing them to ISIS.

Also coming out in opposition to Green nomination on Monday was Muslim Advocates, citing his

anti-LGBT views as well as comments he made against teaching students about Muslims except what he called ‘the assault of Islam’ during the Ottoman Empire.

“You can’t lead a diverse army while having contempt for diversity,” said Scott Simpson public advocacy director for Muslim Advocates. “Our armed forces are filled with patriotic Americans of all faiths, races, sexual orientations and gender identities, and Mark Green’s naked bigotry disqualifies him for the job of Army secretary.”

On Friday, 22 current and former faculty members at service academies, war colleges and other military universities came out against Green in a statement organized by the San Francisco-based Palm Center.

“Mark Green would undermine good order and discipline by fostering dissension within the ranks and sowing confusion about what the military stands for,” the statement says. “All who wear the uniform and risk their lives to defend our freedom deserve the respect and dignity they have earned, including LGBT members, Latinos, women and religious minorities, but Green has a history of creating exceptions for those who don’t want to treat others equally and respectfully. We cannot afford leaders whose priorities are inconsistent with military values. Mark Green is a serious threat to what makes our military great.”

The Washington Blade has placed a request in with the White House seeking comment on the Hoyer statement.

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

NOM’s Anti-LGBT ‘March for Marriage’ Set for June 17

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The annual anti-gay “March for Marriage” in Washington D.C. will take place on June 17, the anti-LGBT organization behind the event announced in an email blast April 27.

Brian Brown, president of the National Organization of Marriage, says in the email blast his organization continues its mission to oppose same-sex marriage nearly two years after the the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality nationwide.

“The March for Marriage is an important event to keep the fight to restore marriage in the public eye,” the email blast says. “It was in 2015 when the U.S. Supreme Court issued their illegitimate, anti-constitutional ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges imposing gay ‘marriage’ on the nation and unleashing a flood of consequences for the overwhelming majority of Americans who continue to revere marriage as the union of one man and one woman.”

The email blast doesn’t indicate where in D.C. the march will take place, but in years past the event has transpired on the National Mall.

Brown, soliciting donations in the email of up to \$1,000 or more, insists a new opportunity to overturn the Obergefell decision is at hand in the aftermath of Trump’s election to the White House.

“With the election of Donald Trump, and several vacancies on the Supreme Court expected during his term, we have a real chance to reverse this ruling in the short-term,” Brown writes. “The appointment of Justice Neil Gorsuch is a great first step. Now we likely need just one justice from the majority ruling in Obergefell to retire and we could be in a position to reverse that ruling. Rumors are flying that such a retirement could occur as early as this summer.”

Trump’s campaign on opposition to same-sex marriage, but after his election said he’s “fine” with the Supreme Court decision and believes the issue is “settled.” However, Trump has nominated the newly confirmed U.S. Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, whom LGBT advocates say is a danger to LGBT rights and the marriage decision.

According to the email blast, the march this year is hosted by the Freedom’s Journal Institute for the Study of Faith & Public Policy, a conservative non-profit that bills itself as an institution committed to individual liberty and family values.

NOM has hosted “March for Marriage” annually for several years. The event has drawn names like perennial Republican presidential candidate and former Sen. Rick Santorum, but the numbers of attendees has dwindled considerably as time passes. According to ThinkProgress, the 2016 march was “a complete flop” with an estimated attendance of 250 people.

In a post scriptum to the email blast, Brown urges supporters to disregard predictions among LGBT advocates the “March for Marriage” will be poorly attended.

“Last year’s March for Marriage blew people away when approximately 400 people attended,” Brown writes. “LGBT extremists who had predicted the death of NOM could not believe their eyes at the crowd of supporters who gathered in D.C. to support true marriage. Let’s make 2017 even more successful! Please make a generous financial contribution to support our work.”

NOM’s event is set to take place just days after the Equality March for Unity & Pride, an anti-Trump LGBT march on Washington set for June 11, and D.C.’s annual Pride festivities scheduled to take place the same weekend.

Photographer Creates Snapshot of LGBTQ Living

Tom Atwood Offers an Intimate Look Inside the Homes of 'Kings & Queens'



Dominique Storni, transgender Native American activist, in front of her shrine in Valley City, Utah.

Our Homes



BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When asked what home means to him, New York-based photographer Tom Atwood said, “Home is a refuge from the chaotic urban world around me, and a welcoming place where I can host guests. I guess this comes from being a rural kid at heart, and needing a break from the city. As well as me being a pretty social person.”

Home means different things to different people, though, which Atwood captures in his new book, “Kings & Queens in Their Castles,” which offers a window into the lives and homes of some of America’s most intriguing and eccentric personalities.

His work has been called “one of the most ambitious photo series ever conducted of the LGBTQ experience in the U.S.” “Over a 15-year period, Atwood photographed more than 350 subjects across the country, 160 of which are in the book.

“I shoot subjects at home because our natural habitats bring out our true character,” said Atwood, who felt there was a need for a serious photo series of the LGBTQ community.

“A lot of LGBTQ photography depicts scantily-clothed young urban subjects and seems to emphasize nudity and sexuality. I wanted to offer a different perspective. There was a need for a series highlighting our manifold personalities and backgrounds.”

Atwood discussed the subjects in his photography book that “sing” to him, what motivated his work and how LGBTQ people’s homes are an extension of themselves.

What did you learn about the different ways in which people define home?

Sometimes I encountered subjects that seem to use their personal space as a way to create a sort of sanctuary which can soothe them. For others, I think our homes seem to represent fantasy worlds that allow us to blossom – to be who we want to be regardless of societal pressure. I think some LGBTQ people go to great lengths to draw distinction between the mainstream and ourselves, a difference that is often represented visually through our living spaces. Unusual color palates, provocative objets d’art... all of these design elements – whether consciously or not – I think are often used to show that we are unique. And other times I think individuals create homes that seem to be aspirational – a projection of who they want to be. So we’ll project elements of the outside world that we want to be a part of our lives into our personal spaces. And of course sometimes it’s a mix of all of the above.

See Snapshot of LGBTQ Living, page 21

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Our Homes



Bishop Gene Robinson, the first out gay bishop in the U.S. Episcopal church, in Mead, New Hampshire.



Tim Coulter, homeless activist who lives in his Scooby Doo-themed van in Los Angeles, California.



Gary Tisdale-Woods, a community volunteer, from Greensboro, Georgia.



Actors Doug Spearman and Marc Anthony Samuel (friend) in Los Angeles, California.

► Snapshot of LGBTQ Living

Continued from p. 18

What's the story behind the title?

I see kings and queens in castles as a telling metaphor for the subjects in the series. Many of the subjects are kings or queens of their professions – leading actors, writers, designers, politicians or journalists. And many of the interiors of the book are visually rich in the way that medieval decorations were – with strong, deep colors and lavish fabrics. The title, in addition to paying tribute to our dazzling drag kings and queens, is also a nod to aristocracy from history reputed to have engaged in alternative sexuality or gender practices or sensibilities.

Can you elaborate on the LGBTQ sensibility of which you speak?

Today, in terms of the modern civil rights movement, it's helpful to highlight that LGBTQ folks are in many ways like everyone else, and as varied as society as a whole. Yet on another level, there's a common LGBTQ sensibility that sets us apart that I wanted to recognize and celebrate. This sensibility shares an outlook with the sensibility of creative and cultural leaders – an awareness of difference, of other, of possibility – an avant-garde mindset. One fascinating phenomenon the series explores is just how many creative and cultural leaders are LGBTQ. Alternative sexuality or gender practices and extraordinary talent in arts and culture often seem to be intertwined. So in recognition of this, I did include many subjects of creative and cultural pursuits.

Can you discuss the fact that your photo series is heavily focused on white people?

It's a completely valid critique. I did go out of my way to try to find more subjects of different ethnicities, even specifically asking for people of varying ethnicities when reaching out to contacts about locating subjects. I both didn't seem to get as many referrals, and didn't seem to have as many people interested in being photographed. Not sure why that is, but perhaps I should have tried harder. There is a broad range of types of people in terms of characteristics not as often associated with diversity, including age, income, profession, interests and geography. A lot of LGBTQ photography historically has skewed younger and more urban, so I went out of my way to include older and rural subjects.

What do you hope viewers will take away from your photographs?

A sense of how varied and interesting the LGBTQ community is. A celebration of difference and of a gay sensibility that is unique. One straight high school friend of mine mentioned after seeing the book that she had no idea so many leaders in the arts, entertainment and media were LGBTQ – that that aspect of the series was really eye opening for her. I also want the series to provide positive role models for LGBTQ youth, and I'm hoping that the book becomes a symbol of and source of pride for the LGBTQ community – that it might help shape and become a part of our identity. On a lighter note, I also just want people to enjoy the book and have fun with the pictures.

Atwood is always looking for referrals to new subjects. Contact him, learn more at www.TomAtwood.com. View more photos and purchase the book at www.TomAtwood.com/kings-queens, or follow Atwood on Facebook <http://gaybe.am/Z0>, Twitter <https://twitter.com/TomAtwoodPhoto> or Instagram www.instagram.com/tomatwoodphoto

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View From the Bottom

Gentrifi-gay-tion: Does Detroit Need a Gayborhood?

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

When it comes to increasing a community's property values, gays add more than curbside appeal, says author Ross Benes in his new book, "The Sex Effect."



Published by Sourcebooks last month, "The Sex Effect" undresses long-standing sex and sexuality myths while cheekily connecting some contemporary issues to our society's inability to comfortably discuss coitus.

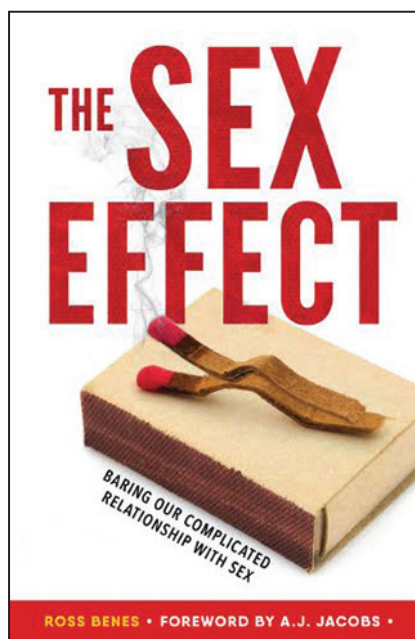
In the chapter "There Goes the Gayborhood: An Investigation into the Economic Prowess of LGBT Districts," Benes - among other points about neighborhood migration patterns - makes the case for why an official gay district in Detroit could prove to be a "small step" in a big way for Detroit's revitalization.

"It's more of a signal of that area around them might improve," Benes told me in our phone conversation recently. In the book he writes, "Cities that show tolerance (which can be exhibited through a visible gay community) are able to attract more workplace talent, which stimulates industry growth."

Makes sense to me.

Childless gay couples help increase the tax base of areas that have suffered

If you look closely at Detroit's neighborhoods - Green Acres, West Village, Midtown, East English Village and Boston Edison to name a few that I know of - you'll find various hamlets of homos.



residential flight because they are considered less family-friendly. In the book, Benes names a few cities like San Francisco, Chicago, D.C. and Boston whose upward economic return began with an influx of LGBT people, according to his research.

"You will find many gayborhoods throughout America that were formerly areas that were decaying," says Benes. "Some time between the '50s and the '80s cities had an influx of gay individuals who came and rebuilt the area and it became a lot more developed."

Full disclosure: Benes isn't gay or a Detroiter. He's white; he's straight; and he grew up in Nebraska. But that doesn't discount his research as a journalist. All of this isn't to say establishing a gayborhood is a panacea for all poverty-stricken communities, but Benes' book brings up a point that is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore as Detroit continues to redevelop at breakneck speed: Does Detroit need a gayborhood?

Depending on whom you ask, Detroit's gay district came and went with Palmer Park. Although it was never officially recognized as an LGBT epicenter by the city like Chicago's

Depending on whom you ask, Detroit's gay district came and went with Palmer Park. Although it was never officially recognized as an LGBT epicenter by the city like Chicago's Boystown, if you were gay in the '80s and early '90s, you just knew. But in the same vein of same-sex marriage, perhaps it is time we make it official.

Boystown, if you were gay in the '80s and early '90s, you just knew. But in the same vein of same-sex marriage, perhaps it is time we make it official.

If you look closely at Detroit's neighborhoods - Green Acres, West Village, Midtown, East English Village and Boston Edison to name a few that I know of - you'll find various hamlets of homos.

As our needs as a community have evolved, Benes notes in his book that so will the idea of the gayborhood. "Some cities have two or three of them instead of one centralized one," he says. "But research shows there are still a lot of LGBT people who prefer them."

In that regard, there will always be a gayborhood in cities where there are gay people. You will just have to know where to look.

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

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Members of the community are invited to Detroit's historic Palmer Woods neighborhood at 8 p.m. on May 20 for the Latin Jazz Garden Concert featuring Orquesta La Inspiracion. The concert will be held in an spacious tent in the gardens of a unique Palmer Woods home.

Orquesta La Inspiracion, founded by Puerto Rican congera Ozzie Rivera and under the musical direction of pianist Bill Meyer, is a large ensemble of some of the Detroit area's most talented and knowledgeable Latin musicians.

La Inspiracion features a hot horn section led by saxophonist Chris Kaercher, explosive percussions driven by top Latin musicians including Ozzie, well respected Latino bassist Eddie Caraballo, and soulful vocals, including the charismatic, dynamic Armando Vega. The rhythms of salsa, merengue, cumbia and Afro-Caribbean jazz are sure to entice the audience to dance and sway out of their seats, and on a star-filled evening the lawn will be the dance floor.

A Latin-style meal will be served during intermission. A tour of the home is offered prior to the concert at 7:30 p.m.

Palmer Woods Music in Homes was started in 2007 by Palmer Woods residents Spencer and Barbara Barefield through their



The Latin Jazz Garden Concert takes place May 20 at 8 p.m.

non-profit arts organization Creative Arts Collective, working with the Palmer Woods Association. The series of concerts supports the arts by showcasing the great talents of world-renowned musicians with Detroit-area roots (born here, live here, or made significant contributions here). The concerts are held in historic homes and gardens in Palmer Woods through mid-June to make more people aware of the beautiful and important architecture in

Palmer Woods, improve the image of Detroit, and encourage historic preservation.

Tickets for all concerts are \$45-70, with discounts for groups of 10 or more. Purchase online at www.palmerwoods.org or by calling 313-891-2514. The address of the concert home in Palmer Woods is revealed when tickets are purchased.

Concerts are produced with support from Be Well Medical Center in Berkley, Barefield

DesignWorks, Blossoms in Birmingham, City Living Detroit, the Michigan Chronicle, DetroitPerforms.org and WRCJ90.9FM. Learn more about Palmer Woods Music in Homes online www.facebook.com/musicinhomes.

Upcoming Palmer Woods Music in Homes Garden Concerts

June 16

James Carter Quartet
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June 17

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8 p.m., Tickets: \$60-70

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R A I N B O W

Palmer Park Art Fair Kicks off Summer, Art Fair Season

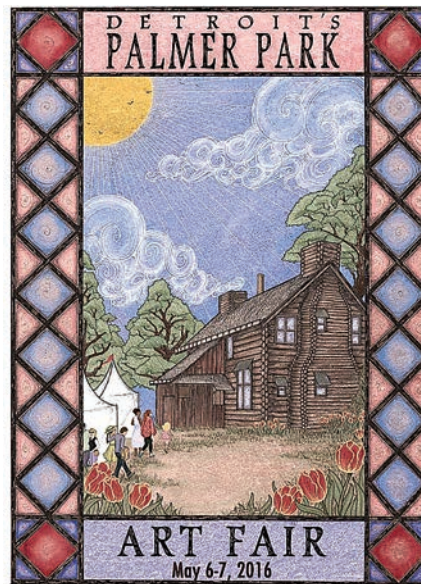
Members of the community look forward to the eclectic, diverse group of artists invited to Detroit each year for the Palmer Park Art Fair. The neighborhood event May 6-7 is produced by Detroit-based Integrity Shows in partnership with the non-profit group People for Palmer Park.

Around 80 artists from 20 states will come together around Lake Francis and the original Log Cabin in Palmer Park, which is featured in this year's art fair poster design. The 2017 winning poster was created by College for Creative Studies graduate Amy Ferguson. It shows tulips and blue skies surrounding the log structure built in 1885 for former Senator Thomas Palmer and his wife. The limited edition poster's border shows the historic cabin windows, which are being renovated this year with funds raised by the People for Palmer Park.

Artists bring trailers and trucks full of fine paintings, creative sculpture, pottery and more to be viewed and purchased in the space off Merrill Plaisance between McNichols and 7 Mile Road. 130 artists applied to be a part of the art fair this year. Criteria included quality of work, the creativity of image and presentation.

"We are proud to be able to be selective, and certain that you will be impressed with those you see at the show. To keep the show fresh about half of the artists are new to the show each year, while the remaining ones are crowd favorites from previous shows," said Mark Loeb, event coordinator.

New artists include ceramic and tile artists Thomas and Sarah Gelsanliter, fine art photographer Kate Tillman and Judy Bowman, whose mixed-media collages are quickly becoming must-haves. Long-time favorites Ron Scarborough and Donald Calloway will also be there. The artist traveling the longest distance to participate



is former Detroiter Kenyatta Ray, who is coming from Belgium to share his paintings.

Revived four years ago after a 30-year absence, the art fair is committed to helping young artists develop the skills necessary to thrive in creative careers in partnership with the Mint Artists Guild. The non-profit group welcomes high school students from St. Clair Shores, Hamtramck, Lincoln Park and Detroit to the art fair this year.

In 2016, Ferndale artist Espacia Fotiu was part of the Mint Artists tent. She will go solo this year with her paintings and mixed-media work that features bits of twigs and natural elements.

The Palmer Park Art Fair gives a variety of entertainment and food options for guests also. Food Lab, a Detroit nonprofit that promotes local socially-responsible food enterprises, will host a tent full of small artisan food purveyors. Among them are Georgia Brown's Gourmet Foods' specialty baked goods; Detroit Gourmet Nut Co.; Mama Suebee's Kitchen with kale chips; Kaleidoscope gourmet chocolates

and Friends Potato Chips.

Two food trucks will satisfy your physical hunger: Fire Kissed Pizza and Chick-A-Dee, and a beer tent run by the People for Palmer Park will offer Motor City Brewing favorites.

The art fair is free to attend on May 6 from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and on May 7 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.palmerparkartfair.com.

Upcoming Art Fairs in Michigan

Westside Art Hop in Ann Arbor
May 13
www.facebook.com/events/188319745000109

East Lansing Art Festival
May 20-21
www.elartfest.com

Kensington Metropark Art Fair in Milford
May 27-29
www.kensingtonartfair.com

Art on the Grand in Farmington
June 3-4
www.artonthegrand.com

Royal Oak Clay, Glass & Metal Show
June 10-11
<http://integrityshows.wixsite.com/royal-oak-cgm>

Berkley Art Bash
June 10
www.berkeleyartbash.com

The Ann Arbor Art Fair
July 23-27
<https://artfairs.visitannarbor.org>

Orchard Lake Fine Art Show in West Bloomfield
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<http://hotworks.org/orchardlakefineartshow>

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Rally to Show Solidarity with the LGBT Community

The Metro Detroit Political Action Network will host an event the group is calling "Love is Love," as part of its Detroit Solidarity Movement. Join the non-partisan group



from 5-9 p.m. on May 7 at Geary Park in Ferndale. MDPAN's goal, according to its Facebook page, is to empower people to become proactive to fight global corruption and stand up for civil rights. "The bigotry the Trump administration is enforcing in society must be resisted."

Other organizations are joining MDPAN, like Putting the People First, Taking Back Orange, Planned Parenthood, No Space for Hate, Studio 416 and GLSEN-Southeast Michigan. Speakers include Joseph Fournier, co-founder of MDPAN; Bill Cobbs, a candidate for Governor of Michigan in 2018; Jenny Elgin with No Space for Hate; and Brianna Dee Kingsley, treasurer, board of directors for GLSEN-Southeast Michigan.

MDPAN encourages attendees to bring signs to the park at 1198 Earl Blvd. For more information, check out the group's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1912684852294479/>.

New Recess Cafe to Open at Affirmations

Come celebrate the opening of the new Recess Cafe from 6-8 p.m. on May 10 at Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. The community center's newest lounge, cafe and store is designed and operated by the XTL Youth Workforce. Snacks, games, free wifi, open mic nights and live performances will be offered in this safe, LGBTQ-friendly space where all are welcome to relax. For more information, visit {URL www.goaffirmations.org/} or contact Youth Program Coordinator Ian Unger at iunger@goaffirmations.org.

It's Time for Chianti and Fava Beans

The Ringwald Theatre in Ferndale is proud to conclude its 10th Anniversary Season with the Michigan premiere of Silence! The Musical with book by Hunter Bell and music and lyrics by Jon and Al Kaplan.

Based on the Oscar-winning 1991 film, Silence! The Musical tells the story of rookie FBI agent Clarice Starling who matches wits with the brilliant but insane cannibal, Dr. Hannibal Lecter in order to catch the serial killer known as Buffalo Bill. Clarice faces her own demons while racing the clock to unlock Lecter's clues before another innocent girl is killed.

This laugh-out-loud naughty satire features a singing chorus of floppy-eared lambs, dueling (and duet-ing) killers, and such songs as "Are You About a Size 14?", "Catherine Dies Today", and "Stuck in the Dark With a Maniac."

Fueled by a rabid cult following, Silence! The Musical shattered every box-office record at the Fringe NYC Festival and went on to win the Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Musical in 2012 and was named by Time Magazine as one of the 10 Best Shows of the Year.

Joe Bailey directs, with musical direction by Jeff Bobick, and choreography by Molly Zaleski.

Silence! The Musical opens May 5 with a special ticket price of \$10. The musical plays at 22742 Woodward Ave. through June 5. Showtimes are 8 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Monday nights with 3 p.m. Sunday matinees. Tickets are \$25 Friday-Saturday, \$20 on Sunday and only \$10 on Monday.

All students can now receive a \$5 discount off normal ticket price on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday performances with valid student ID. Tickets can be purchased at www.TheRingwald.com or at the theatre box office. The Ringwald box office opens 45 minutes before performances and tickets can be purchased with cash or credit card.



Canine Safety Class Required for Dog Park Access

Ferndale residents seeking membership to the dog park located at Wilson Park are required to take a dog park safety class facilitated by staff members from Canine to Five in Ferndale.

The class is held the second Thursday of each month from 7-8 p.m. at the Kulick Community Center. Upcoming classes are scheduled for May 11 and June 8. Pre-registration is required online at <http://gaybe.am/Rk>.



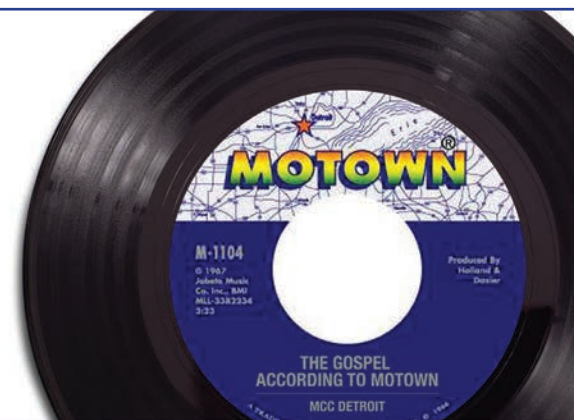
The dog park - located at South Hilton Road and University Street - offers

a number of amenities for four-legged residents and their owners, including safe key-card access, fenced large- and small-dog play areas, sitting areas, and more. The park - maintained regularly by the City of Ferndale and Public Works Departments - is available to Ferndale residents for an annual fee of \$40. For more information about the dog park, visit http://ferndalemi.gov/Services/Parks/Dog_Park.

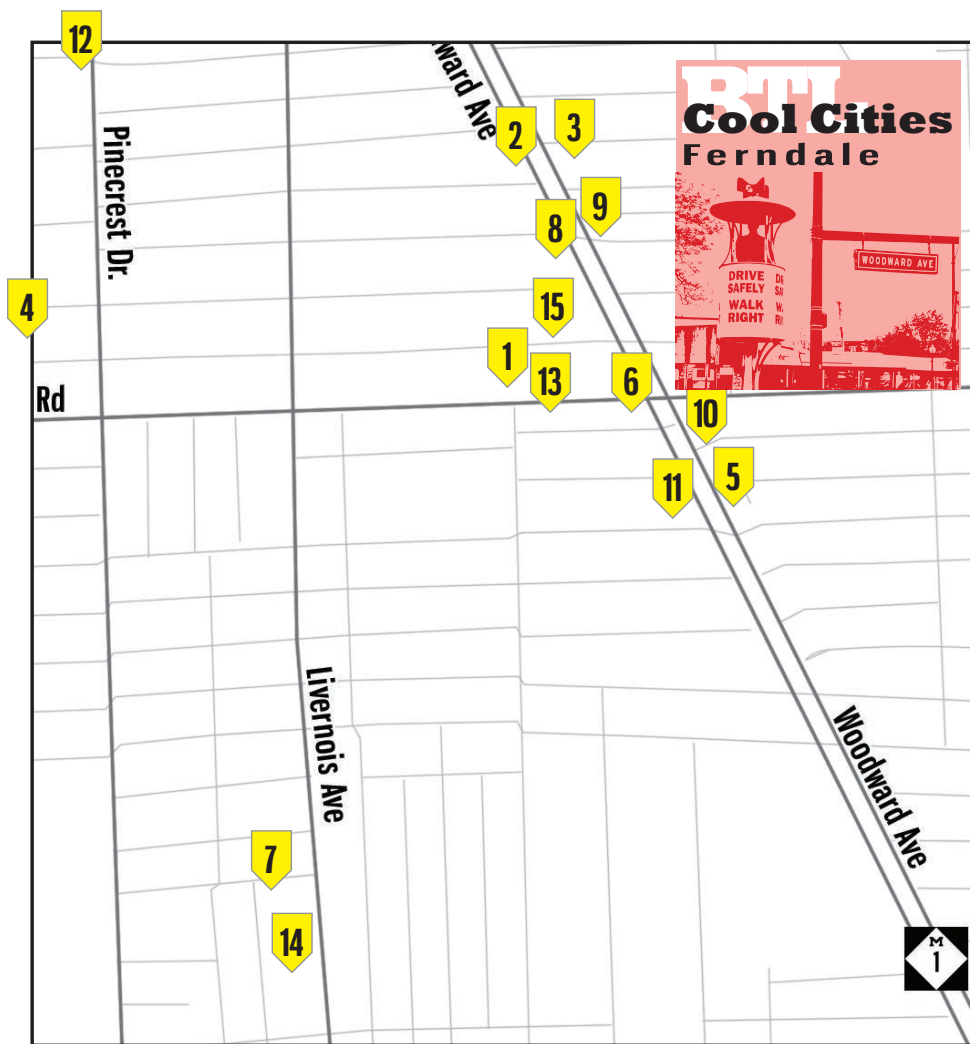


As MCC Detroit prepares to celebrate our 45th anniversary later this year, during the month of May we will focus on the "Motown Sound" in our **The Gospel According to Motown** series. It will be fun as we take titles of popular Motown songs and apply a practical and gospel message for our community.

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She's Got You, Gays

Photo: Eric Ray Davidson/Sony Music.

'Glee' Alum Lea Michele on New Album, Gays in her bed & Girl Crushes

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lea Michele knows exactly where her life is headed. "It's just gonna be me in bed with gay people and I'm gonna be alone forever like Cher," the powerhouse playfully foretells, "and that's totally fine by me." If you're like Michele – theater kid-turned-Broadway queen, and then, with TV's "Glee" and "Scream Queens," the apple of Ryan Murphy's eye – it's a natural fit. And so be it. "That's just the story of my fuckin' life, all right."

Not the whole story, though. The rest involves brainstorming the 30-year-old singer's "dream girl" make-out sessions,

her new bittersweet song remembering her relationship with late "Glee" co-star Cory Monteith, and one topic she prefers not to discuss (needless to say, not the gays).

I loved that you were drinking red wine while singing The Human League's "Don't You Want Me" when you reunited with your "Glee" co-star Darren Criss recently.

Listen, that's just a typical night for me, let me tell you! I mean, we just wanted it to be casual, like a chill time, us hanging out. We didn't want it to feel too performed. We just wanted it to be a little peek of what Darren and I do for fun together.

How much wine did you enjoy during the recording of your new album, "Places"?

(Laughs) No wine during the recording of "Places," I'll tell you that. It was too vocally challenging, so none in the recording studio!

This album is more intimate than your debut. You take it down a few notches, and it sounds like you've realized that you don't need to be the pop artist that some people might think you should be.

Thank you. Can you do all of my press for me and tell everyone that? (Laughs)

Ha! Sure, I'm for hire. How did you apply what

you've learned about yourself as a recording artist to "Places"?

I learned a lot from my first album (2014's "Louder"). I definitely think a lot of things contributed to that album: I took a lot of people's opinions into play, as well as just being a lover of pop music myself and also working on "Glee" at the same time, so I had a lot of factors kind of coming at me.

I worked on this new record over the past three years, and I really just took the time to be quiet and think about myself, and I was finished with "Glee," so I was no longer in the recording studio for that. I just took the time to figure out really, truly who I am as

an artist, what kind of music I want to make, and at the end of the day, I'm from Broadway, I'm a theatrical singer, there's no way around that.

When I did this record, no one told me to change anything; no one told me to sound any different. And this is it, this is me. It's a true representation of who I am, and all I can hope is that people like it. If they don't, that's OK for me now at this point in my life. You know, I'm 30 years old, and I know I can sing. I just hope that people like it and that's all you can really do. At a certain point, you just have to let it go into the universe.

Did you feel differently making your first album? Did you feel like people were trying to put you in a box?

No, I just think that I was sort of influenced a little bit more personally. I was putting myself into a box! No one was really making me do anything – I was the one that was saying, “I want a song that sounds like Katy Perry” and “I want this song to sound like Kelly Clarkson.” But in the recording studio this time, I was like, “No. It can't sound like anyone but me.”

“Hey You” is really beautiful and really haunting. It gives me the same feelings I got when I heard “If You Say So,” from your debut.

Well, that's because it's part two of “If You Say So.”

Can you tell me about “Hey You”? What kind of place were you in when you wrote it?

I wasn't originally thinking of including that on the album. It's sort of a sensitive subject for me that's hard to talk about, and I didn't want anything on the record that I couldn't talk about. But it just felt so beautiful. It wasn't about loss, it wasn't about sadness. It was really about joy and love. I love it so much, and I really feel it represents who I am and everything that I've been through in my life. I don't talk much more beyond that. When you come to my concert, that's really when I open up and dive into what these songs personally mean to me. At the end of the day, the song is pretty specific, and people are gonna make of it what they want, but I wanted to make a song about loss that wasn't necessarily sad. I wanted to show this beautiful moment and there's a little bit more of a deeper story that goes with it that I talk about in my concert.

Has your BFF Jonathan Groff heard the album? What's his favorite song?

Duh! He's heard everything. He loves the album. I think he really loves “Anything's Possible.” We were having a bunch of sleepovers, and he stayed with me in L.A. for a little while, and I just love him so much. I love having him with me. He's my best friend in the whole world, and he supports me so much. I just think people get soulmates in their life and he's my soulmate.

Your gay following obviously extends beyond

Jonathan – when was the first time in your career that you knew you had a gay following?

(Laughs) I grew up in the gay community. I grew up on Broadway. For me, it's just a part of who I am, and I feel so lucky to have been around the LGBT community for so long, and then to be on Broadway and have fans outside of the theater or working with incredible people. Then going onto “Glee” – that show was so important, and playing a young girl who was raised by two gay men in Ohio of all places, I feel really lucky to have been a part of important projects that talk about important things. To have been a part of the gay community and around it for so many years, it's just really helped me develop who I am today. I love my following, and I love all of my fans, gay or straight. But you know, gotta give it up for my gays.

How has the gay community influenced you to become who you are?

Growing up on Broadway there was always this sense of being who you are – you just have to be true to yourself and be who you are, and I saw it. I saw people living their true lives and being their true selves, and for me that was such an incredible vibe to be around growing up. It really did develop me, and you have to really have a strong backbone and you have to have strength – and it comes with a lot of difficulties – and it was such an incredible way to grow up. Honestly, I wouldn't change it for the world.

Will you finally get the lesbian role we've been waiting for you to get on this forthcoming ABC comedy that you're about to be a part of?

(Laughs) Unfortunately, I am not a lesbian; however, I may get to make out with Brandon Micheal Hall, and I don't know if you know what that boy looks like, but he's so friggin' cute. So, I am very excited about that. I wanted to go on “Looking” and I wanted to be a lesbian!

We'll just have to live vicariously through your TV make-out session with Brandon now.

Yeah, sorry, it's really working for me. (Laughs) But we have to think about who my dream girl make-out sessions would be!

Shall we ponder that?

You know what's funny, because I was just talking to Brad Goreski who I love the most, and I was like, “Brad, if you were gonna be with a girl, who would you be with?” He said Scarlett Johansson, and I stopped for a minute and was like, “Oh my god, I think me too!” Also, Penélope Cruz, but I've been told that she kind of looks like me, so I don't know what that says about me – that I'm narcissistic?!

You recently revealed you watch old episodes of “Glee,” and I think that surprised some people.

Yeah, I think that everyone is so shocked

Continued on page 32

PROGRAM CHANGE - NEW ARTIST ANNOUNCED



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► **Lea Michele**
 Continued from p. 31

when I say that.

Are you shocked by people being shocked?

Yeah, yeah, I'm shocked at people being shocked. I'm so proud of the work that we did. And I get that some people would be embarrassed to watch their own material. I understand that. But sometimes it's so fun. I'll be like, "Remember when we did that number?" I think I watch it more because I can't believe that we did it. It's just to remind myself, "You did that. You did that! And that's incredible. And you should be proud of it." It's sort of inspiring for me.

What episode of "Glee" have you revisited the most?

Probably the one when we went to New York in Season 2. That's one of my most favorite episodes, and it was personally such a special episode for me because I had just left New York a year prior, and the next thing you know I was coming back one year later with this hugely successful show being followed by, I think, close to, like, 200 fans and paparazzi. So, for me, it was crazy to be in these places that I'd walked through hundreds of times in my life, but now in such a different way. So, that was such a pivotal episode for me.

Apparently, you and your co-star Naya Rivera were feuding on the show, according to her memoir. Do you have trouble watching episodes with you two in them?

(Laughs) Actually, I think we should – I don't like to talk about that. There are so many more fun things to talk about.

Do you listen to the "Glee" music?

I listen to the music all the time. Actually, I was just listening to me and Naya do "Brave" – that awesome Sara Bareilles song – the other day. That song is so good. I remember that day like it was yesterday because we were so tired, but it's funny, when I do my concerts I sing songs from "Glee" and I talk about what it was like in those moments and behind the scenes. That's my opportunity to get really close with people.

Which songs from "Glee" are your favorite to perform live?

I love singing "My Man," and I think I'm actually gonna include "Poker Face" soon, so I'm excited about that.

LEA MICHELE PLACES



Going back to Brad, you shared a bed with him during your "Bed Series" on your Instagram.

Oh yeah!

How does it feel to steal the man of our dreams?

I mean, Brad is so friggin' hot. I mean, do you see those pictures he posts on Instagram? My comment on one of them the other day was, like, "When you're ready for a girl, let's do this 'cause you're so hot." There was actually a rumor in the Enquirer the other day that I was going to have Brad's baby, which I think is such an honor because he's the best and he's so handsome, but so kind too. I love that when I asked him to do the "Bed Series" with me he was like, "Yeah, sure, of course."

Inquiring minds want to know: What does Brad smell like?

Like a shower after boot camp. Fresh, but still a little sweaty too.

Are you getting more attention from the ladies with your sexy "Bed Series" pics?

I'm not getting enough attention from the ladies, let me say that. I mean, what does a girl need to do?

I mean, yeah, you've taken your pants off, for God's sake.

For God's sake, come on! I need to think of someone else to do the "Bed Series" with me. I'm probably gonna do one with Jonathan soon. I'm always thinking of who I can get in bed with me next.

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

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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.

Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
TechTown - Detroit
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www.motorcitypride.org



Lito's Way: Actor Miguel Angel Silvestre on 'Sense8' Season Two

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

Netflix's soapy sci-fi series from Lana and Lilly Wachowski, "Sense8," revolves around a telepathically connected group of strangers called Sensates. Located all over the world, these diverse individuals can see and even teleport via their fellow Sensates' minds to help each other, especially when avoiding the dangerous enemy Whispers, who is determined to track the Sensates down.

Handsome Spanish actor Miguel Angel Silvestre plays one of the Sensates, Lito, a gay actor in Mexico City who went from hiding his relationship with boyfriend Hernando (Alfonso Herrera) during the first season to being publicly outed in December's "Sense8" Christmas special.

May 5 sees the global debut (and, surely, binge-watching sessions) of "Sense8" Season 2.

By phone, Silvestre, who previously co-starred in Pedro Almodovar's "I'm So Excited," discussed the upcoming second season, which will see the Sensates—including Nomi, a San Francisco-based lesbian transgender blogger/hacker played by Jamie Clayton—come together for plenty of action, thrills, and perhaps even another one of those famous polysexual orgies.

How do you connect most with Lito as a character, Miguel?

When I first started working as an actor, I did a role and the character was very cool. It was my breakthrough in Spain, and when I was doing interviews I was scared to not be as interesting as the character was! Now I'm becoming comfortable with who I am, and the result in the end is better. So I can understand Lito in that sense—to be perceived onscreen as the perfect man, masculine, heterosexual. That's why his performances were all very false. Lito's facing a new era of his life, and he's accepting his darkness, his light, and it will make him more real and have more meaningful relationships and performances as an actor.

Lito's career seemed to be in jeopardy by end of the Christmas special since he refuses to pretend to be straight anymore. How will that play out?

Lana wanted to be very real about what would happen to someone like Lito, so we'll see he's being more authentic with himself and live great moments, and at the same time a lot of things in his life will go to hell. The best of Lito and worst of Lito.

And how will things go with Hernando now that they don't have to hide their relationship?

With the relationship, beautiful things will happen, but at the same time when you face Lito not having work, that makes a huge

change in how you behave. When your dream goes away. There will be many surprises.

Episode six will feature a highlight when Lito and Hernando go to gay pride in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Photos and videos leaked of the entire "Sense8" cast there, actually, with lots of making out and you kissing Brian J. Smith as well! Can you talk about shooting that?

Lana wanted to mix reality with fiction, and the show is very famous in Brazil. So she hid some cameras in public in the actual LGBT parade, and she made me do a speech. Some people didn't know whether it was Lito or Miguel saying the speech, but it was so beautiful the way they reacted. Everything was happening like written in the script. I'll always remember it. Brazilian people are very generous and passionate. It was impossible to keep cool!

During season one, Lilly Wachowski was still male-identified and went by the name Andy. Were you surprised when she came out as transgender last March?

I was surprised, if surprise would be that I didn't know. I always have a lot of admiration for people who follow what they really believe and feel, regardless of the system. I see it as a very positive thing when somebody can connect their hearts and desires with their minds. There's no contradiction. You

get the most authentic, loving person when somebody is not in conflict. For me, [Lilly's announcement] was something to celebrate, it was a beautiful thing, but I didn't know anything when we were shooting season one.

On this season, Lilly took a break leaving Lana in charge. How were things different with just one of the siblings in control?

We missed Lilly a lot. It was so beautiful to see how two geniuses work together. They say that Lana is the balloon that wants to fly high and Lilly was the person holding the balloon so it wouldn't get lost. Lana is very creative, and had a lot of support from many people, for instance David Mitchell (who wrote the "Cloud Atlas" novel) writing the show with her. Lana did a great job. I have excitement to see what came out—if there are any differences. Definitely we missed Lilly's energy, but I don't know how that will be reflected in the show.

Have you ever felt as connected to someone as the Sensates do to each other?

Well, I guess the closest (person) I have been connected to has been my mom. Sometimes out of telepathy I think about her and she calls me right away without knowing!

Catch new episodes of "Sense8" Season Two on Netflix May 5.

Live Theater: Detroit Public Theatre Closes Second Season with World Premiere Play



In “The Harassment of Iris Malloy” a single mother places a bet on a new life after an intimate encounter with a decorated senator, and the media fallout will change them both forever. A compelling mystery wrapped around a powerful examination of the intersection of sex, class, and politics, the show challenges audiences to examine their assumptions about power, politics and parenthood in America today.

The show is directed by Geoff Button, a longtime member of the Chicago theater community, where his work performing and directing has received critical acclaim. The cast for this rolling world premiere includes Alysia Kolasz (Iris), John Lepard (Senator Aarons), Ned Baker (Sticker), and Detroit Public Theatre producing artistic director Sarah Winkler (Cyd).

“Geoff and I created a lot of theatre together growing up in Grosse Pointe, and he has gone on to have an impressive career in Chicago theatre,” states Detroit Public Theatre producing artistic director Courtney Burkett. “We are so thrilled to have Geoff back in the Detroit area directing this exciting new play at Detroit Public Theatre.”

Sarah Winkler moved to Metro Detroit in 2013 and founded Detroit Public Theatre with partners Courtney Burkett and Sarah Clare Corporandy in 2015.

Preview performances for “The Harassment of Iris Malloy” are \$35 with a limited number of “pay what you can” tickets available. Opening night is May 5, with performances through May 28. Tickets (\$20-45) are on sale now at www.detroitpublictheatre.org, in person at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra box office, and by calling 313-576-5111. Tickets are also available for the opening night performance on May 5, at 6 p.m. for \$75. Opening night tickets include pre-show and post-show receptions with the company. Student and senior discounts available. All

Detroit Public Theatre performances take place at The Robert A. and Maggie Allesee Rehearsal Hall inside the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

The Detroit premier of the National Theatre production of “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” will play the Fisher Theatre, now through May 14.

The Tony Award-winning new play by Simon Stephens is adapted from Mark Haddon’s best-selling novel and directed by Tony winner Marianne Elliott.

Fifteen-year old Christopher has an extraordinary brain; he is exceptionally intelligent but ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. When he falls under suspicion for killing his neighbor’s dog, he sets out to identify the true culprit, which leads to an earth-shattering discovery and a journey that will change his life forever.

Mark Haddon’s novel “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” was published in 2003. It was the winner of more than 17 literary awards, including prizes in the US, Japan, Holland and Italy as well as the Whitbread Book of the Year Award in the UK in 2004, and has been translated into 44 languages.

Ticket prices start at \$35 and are now on sale at all Ticketmaster locations, by phone at 800-982-2787, and online at www.broadwayindetroit.com or www.ticketmaster.com, and at the Fisher Theatre box office. Tickets for the open captioned performance on May 7 may be purchased in person at The Fisher Theatre box office or by phone at 313-872-1000.

Detroit Will Host Broadcast of NPR’s ‘Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me!’ on June 15

Now in its 20th season, “Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me!” is National Public Radio’s Peabody Award-winning quiz show. The show is set to take the Fox Theatre stage on Thursday, June 15 at 7:30 p.m.


Host Peter Sagal leads a rotating panel



of comedians, humorists and journalists, listener contestants and celebrity guests through a comic review of the week’s news. Contestants vie for the most coveted prize in all of public radio: a custom-recorded greeting by scorekeeper emeritus Carl Kasell for their voicemail.

Tickets (\$28.50 - 128.50) are on sale now and can be purchased at OlympiaEntertainment.com, the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena box offices, Hockeytown Authentics in Troy (without service charge) and Ticketmaster.com. To charge tickets by phone, call 800-745-3000. For additional information, call 313-471-6611.

Visit www.EncoreMichigan.com for up to date theater information and reviews.



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PrEP STUDY

DISCOVER is a new clinical study for men who have sex with men and trans women who have sex with men. This study is to evaluate if a once-daily investigational medicine can help reduce the risk of getting HIV infection from sex (“PrEP”, or Pre-exposure Prophylaxis).

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Well-Strung is a New York City based string quartet that derives their unique blend of vocals and strings by fusing classical music with the pop music of today. Members Edmund Bagnell (1st violin), Chris Marchant (2nd violin), Daniel Shevlin (cello), and Trevor Wadleigh (viola) will perform at 8 p.m. on May 18 at Andiamo Celebrity Showroom, 7096 E. 14 Mile Road in Warren. Joining them is special guest Thorgy Thor – “RuPaul’s Drag Race” Season 8 fan favorite. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$20-75) visit the showroom website www.andiamoshowroom.com.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, May 4

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

The League of Extraordinary Genders 7 p.m. Transgender support group OutCenter, 132 Water St., **Benton Harbor**. 269-925-8330. info@outcenter.org www.outcenter.org

Friday, May 5

Health and Hygiene Drive Also accepting donations at REC, 77 Victor St., Highland Park, 48203 Ruth Ellis Center and Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, 1611 E. Kalamazoo St., **Lansing**. www.ruthelliscenter.org

Young Women for Change Benefit Concert 6 p.m. Tickets: \$5, students. \$10, adults. Event supports the Ozone House. Girls Group Ann Arbor, 1830 Washtenaw Ave., **Ann Arbor**. www.facebook.com/events/447063925635047/

Saturday, May 6

North Central US Network Gathering Registration required: \$20, includes Saturday meals and events. MCC North Central US Network, 2441 Pinecrest Ave., **Ferndale**. 2483997741. www.facebook.com/events/1869353343287886/

ABPsi Midwest Regional Symposium

8:30 a.m. Registration: \$50, \$35 for students. “Self-care in the face of secondary trauma: Black professionals/ students working on ourselves and for our communities.” Guest speakers include Dr. LaMaurice Gardner, Dr. Paula Christian-Kliger and Dr. George Fleming. U of M Spectrum Center and Metro Detroit Association of Black Psychologists, 3408 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. www.facebook.com/spectrumcenter/photos/a.339598679.402589.96339.215888788440246/1637706272925150/?type=3&theater

“Run As You Are” In-Person Training Session 9:30 a.m. For women who want to learn how to run for political office. Seminar led by VoteRunLead.org’s co-founder and board chair Shannon Garrett. VoteRunLead.org, 215 W. Michigan Ave., **Ypsilanti**. www.voterunlead.org

Sunday, May 7

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

Love is Love: Detroit Solidarity: LGBTQAI

5 p.m. The rally is sponsored by MDPAN, Taking Back Orange, Putting the People First, Planned Parenthood, No Space for Hate, Studio 416 and GLSEN of SE MI. Metro Detroit Political Action Network, 1198 Earl Blvd., **Ferndale**. www.facebook.com/events/1912684852294479/

Monday, May 8

Coffee Hour with State Rep. Jon

Hoadley 7 a.m. Join Jon Hoadley for coffee and good conversation about issues that matter to you. Jon Hoadley of House District 60, Westwood Plaza, 4426 West Main, **Kalamazoo**. www.facebook.com/events/1170366493086839/

Transition 2.0 7 p.m. Facilitated by Hannah Hartley, this group is focused on the art of transition. Integrate safely and positively into society. Open to all. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. 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 9

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/

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

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

Wednesday, May 10

Grand Opening of Recess Lounge 6 p.m. Ferndale’s newest lounge, cafe and store designed and operated by the youth of Affirmations XTL Youth Workforce Development Program. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. iunger@goaffirmations.org www.facebook.com/Affirmations/

Thursday, May 11

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

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

Saturday, May 13

25th Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive The nation’s largest one-day food drive to benefit Food Gatherers. Residents are invited to leave bags of non-perishable foods next to their mailbox prior to the time of regular mail delivery. National Association of Letter Carriers, **Washtenaw County**. www.foodgatherers.org

24/7/365 8 p.m. Join Out Loud for a concert about days, nights and the passage of time. Selections include In the Still of the Night, Time after Time

Editor’s Pick

Support Detroit’s Black LGBT Culture

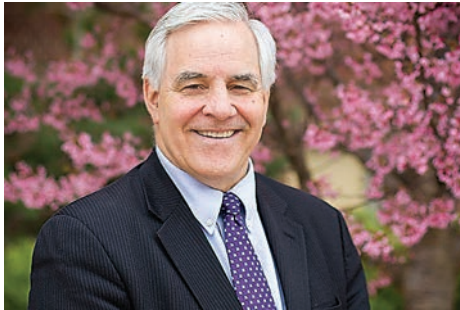
Imagine This Productions will host its third annual art show from 5-8 p.m. on May 20 at the Charlevoix Gallery, 14505 Charlevoix in Detroit. Four gifted artists with Detroit roots have been invited to share their work this year including Clay Drew, Demetrius Green, DL Perrett and Keronce Sims. Art will be available for purchase. This is an opportunity to support local artists and also LGBT Detroit, organizers of Detroit’s Black gay Pride, Hotter Than July. A portion of the proceeds will support this annual event. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/lgbtdetroit/.



Editor's Pick

Ovation Spring Gala

President of the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan Ken Fischer will retire on June 30 after 30 years of leadership at UMS. A joyous and engaging celebration will be held in his honor at 6:30 p.m. on May 6. Enjoy fine food, friends, pop-up performances and reflections at the Crisler Arena, 333 E. Stadium Blvd. in Ann Arbor. Black tie preferred for this special engagement. For questions or to make reservations, contact Esther Barrett at 734-764-8489 or via email embarret@umich.edu. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://tickets.ums.org/dev/contribute.aspx>.



and Good Time. Dan Gerics directs the chorus with Annie Jeng on piano, Edie Herrold on bass and Tamara Perkuhn on percussion. \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door, \$12 for students and seniors, free for children under 4. Tickets available online, from chorus members or at Common Language Books. Out Loud Chorus, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 734-265-0740. outloudchorus@gmail.com www.0lonline.org

Tuesday, May 16

Support Ferndale Pride 2017 5 p.m. Delicious BBQ - sweet, spicy, South Carolina style. A portion of proceeds from the sales will go to Ferndale Pride. Ferndale Pride, 240 W. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. <http://ferndalepride.com/>

Wednesday, May 17

ASIST Suicide Prevention Training 8 a.m. Participants must attend both days to receive certification. Register online. Beaumont Hospital, Maibach Family Classrooms A and B, Troy. 248-858-7171. polmeark@oakgov.com www01.oakgov.com/ServicesReg/Services/Registration.aspx

22nd Annual Dining for Dollars 6 p.m. Unified HIV Health & Beyond, 1830 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor. 734-572-9355. cmcmullen@miunified.org www.miunified.org

Foster Care Clinic 6:30 p.m. The clinic provides information about fostering children impacted by childhood trauma. Methodist Children's Home Society, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. haymer@goaffirmations.org www.facebook.com/events/1530100640334541/

MUSIC & MORE

Concerts

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre "A2CT Improv Ensemble Spring Showcase". A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. May 12 - May 13. 734-971-2228. www.a2ct.org/events/improv-troupe

The Ark "Mouths of Babes". The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. May 11. 7347611800. www.theark.org

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

Marketplace Stories: Folktales from the Arab World Tickets: \$8-10. Wild Swan Theater and AANM, The Aliya Hassan Auditorium, 13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 2 p.m. May 13. 313-582-2266. www.arabamericanmuseum.org

Marketplace Stories: Folktales from the Arab World Tickets: \$8-10. Wild Swan Theater and AANM, Wild Swan Theater, 6175 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. May 4 - May 6. 734-995-0530. www.wildswantheater.org

Three Sisters Tickets: \$12. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. May 13 - June 4. 313-986-9156. www.slipstreamti.com

Professional

Failure: A Love Story by Phillip Dawkins Tickets: \$20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through May 20. 313-365-4948. www.planetant.com

Silence! The Musical Tickets: \$10-25. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. May 5 - June 5. 2485455545. www.theringwald.com

ART 'N' AROUND

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

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

Integrity Shows "Detroit's Palmer Park Art Fair" Free admission, free parking. Palmer Park, Merrill Plaisance off Woodward between McNichols and Seven Mile, Detroit. May 6 - May 7. www.palmerparkartfair.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

UMMA "Constructing Gender: The Architectural Origins of Michigan's Union and League" Admission is free. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 2 p.m. May 7. 734-763-4186. www.umma.umich.edu/

Westside Art Hop "Westside Art Hop" Walk through one of Ann Arbor's historic neighborhoods where residents open up their homes, studios, garages and workspaces to local artists. Ann Arbor Westside Neighborhood, 700 Mt. Vernon Ave., Ann Arbor. May 13 - May 13. 734-757-3717. www.WestsideArtHop.weebly.com/

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Dine for Dollars, Support Fight Against HIV

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond will hold its 22nd Annual Dining for Dollars fundraising dinner, silent auction and strolling raffle at a new location this year - The Ann Arbor City Club.

Join community supporters for a night of festivities at 6 p.m. on May 17 at 1830 Washtenaw Ave. The event features a fabulous dinner prepared by executive chef Nathan Ennis and a chance to win prizes in a fun-filled strolling raffle and silent auction.

As the largest annual fundraiser for UHHB, monies raised will support the organization's mission of advancing prevention, access to healthcare, community research and advocacy - a mission rooted in our history of the fight against HIV.

In addition to celebrating the long history of this event, UHHB will be providing highlights of our work in the community in 2016 including plans to bring an end to HIV through promotion of the UNAIDS 90-90-90



plan to end the epidemic by 2030 as a result of diagnosis, care and prevention.

People living with HIV rely on UHHB and their donors to access medical care, treatment, housing, food, support groups and other

community resources that promote health and a positive quality of life. Like most members of our community, our clients have loved ones and family members that depend on them.

Events like Dining for Dollars raise critical funds to ensure that people living with HIV get connected to lifesaving services and prevention efforts in southeast Michigan.

Reservations for Dining for Dollars may be made securely online at <http://bit.ly/2lhN9YN> or by calling the Ypsilanti office at 734-572-9355, ext. 261. The cost per person is \$135 or \$110 each for a group of four or more. Tables for 10 are also available for a gift of \$1,000.

The public is encouraged to come and celebrate 22 years of one of the community's long-standing events and learn more about the future of HIV care and prevention in Southeast Michigan, as well as changes to move UHHB forward in the fight against HIV in your community.



Volunteers Needed for AIDS Memorial Event

The "Always in our Hearts" Celebration of Life Display from 12-5 p.m. June 3-4 will honor those lives lost to AIDS as well as those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Sections from the NAMES Project Foundation AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display. Volunteers are

needed for this event to set up on June 2, and to monitor the display during the event at the Transcendence Behavioral Health office at 618 E. 11 Mile Road in Royal Oak. Contact Dale Rogalski at dale@drstephaniewilliams.net for details.



Stamp Out Hunger in Washtenaw County May 13

Washtenaw County residents are invited to help fight hunger by participating in Stamp Out Hunger, the nation's largest, single-day food drive on May 13. Hosted by the National Association of Letter Carriers, all Stamp Out Hunger donations will benefit Food Gatherers.

One in seven Washtenaw County residents faces hunger. Providing consistent access to food and support toward financial stability can be critical for families facing poverty. The National Association of Letter Carriers' is working with Food Gatherers to ensure

that families don't have to choose between putting food on the table and paying vital bills.

In an effort to help, residents are invited to leave bags of non-perishable foods next to their mailbox prior to the time of regular mail delivery. Letter carriers collect donations on that day as they deliver mail along their postal routes, and coordinate delivery to Food Gatherers.

The week prior to the food drive, residents will receive an orange, plastic, Stamp Out Hunger grocery bag in their mailbox. The orange bag, or any sturdy

bag, can be filled with non-perishable foods such as canned soup, canned vegetables, canned meat and fish, pasta, peanut butter, rice, beans, or cereal, and left by the mailbox for pick up. Food in glass jars cannot be accepted.

Food Gatherers' participation in Stamp Out Hunger 2017 is made possible with funding from Busch's Fresh Food Market, Domino's, and United Way of Washtenaw County.

For more information, visit www.foodgatherers.org.



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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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Jim Toy Celebrates 87-Young



The community came out to celebrate Jim Toy's 87th birthday and raise money for the Jim Toy Community Center April 28. The event took place at Bona Sera restaurant in Ypsilanti. Visit our story online and see the photo gallery. BTL photos: Doug Coombe.

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

What's Jane Lynch doing? We're glad you asked.

At any given moment, Emmy-winning actor Jane Lynch might be hosting a game show, releasing a CD of Christmas songs, or even actually acting. Currently the latter is taking priority. Lynch is co-starring in a new sitcom pilot for director James Burrows (little obscure shows like "Friends," "Frazier," "Cheers") and "Will & Grace" co-creator Max Mutchnick. It's called "Relatively Happy" and, come on, it'll probably get a series order. Lynch will also voice a character in "Ralph Breaks the Internet," the sequel to "Wreck-It Ralph." But it's Discovery Channel's "Manhunt: Unabomber" that has our full attention. The TV crime series about the search for the notorious Unabomber will star Paul Bettany as that loner in the woods, and feature the divine Ms. Lynch as Attorney General Janet Reno. We love a good historical impersonation performance, and we can see this one fitting like lovely, yet butch, leather glove. We also can't wait to see those amazing glasses.

Cheryl Dunye's 'Black Is Blue' is the future

In the not-too-distant future, when San Francisco has been fully ruined by the tech industry's gentrification, a young, transgender man named Black finds himself in the company of a rich trans woman named Blue, their budding relationship complicated by Blue's "friend-bot," an A.I. companion named Lison. A dangerous triangle grows. And that's the plot of the new film "Black is Blue," from acclaimed queer filmmaker Cheryl Dunye ("Queen Sugar," "The Watermelon Woman"). Based on her own 2014 short, this expanded feature, co-written by Christina Anderson, sounds like no other queer indie film we've heard of, a quality that never fails to excite us. Another exciting development is the presence of trans actor Kingston Farady as Black, which takes the world one step closer toward Jeffrey Tambor getting his award show wish, where no trans character ever again needs a cisgender actor to play them. This one is coming from production company 13th Gen, sometime in 2018. Why does the actual future always take so long?

'The Parting Glass' is a 'True Blood' reunion

A family confronts the death of their sister, travels across the country to collect what she left behind, and deal with the memories dredged up by their collective loss in "The Parting Glass," the directorial debut of actor Stephen Moyer ("True Blood"). In what amounts to something of a "Blood" reunion, the family drama is written by actor Denis O'Hare and co-stars Academy Award-winning "Blood" alum Anna Paquin (who also gets a producer credit). Filling out the cast is Ed Asner, Rhys Ifans, Melissa Leo and Cynthia Nixon (currently tearing up arthouse screens as Emily Dickinson in the acclaimed drama, "A Quiet Passion"). A distinguished bunch, to be sure, and that probably means this one will be arriving during fall's awards season, when Serious Movies get their day in the waning sun.



Jane Lynch. Photo: KathClick

Alex Strangelove finds romance with Netflix

Craig Johnson's career is on the upswing. The queer director of such acclaimed comedies as "The Skeleton Twins" – with Kristen Wiig and Bill Hader – and "Wilson" (featuring a misanthropic Woody Harrelson) has a new film in the works: "Alex Strangelove." It's about a teenage boy reluctant to lose his virginity, the girlfriend who waits patiently, and the treacherous obstacle course that is high school masculinity enforcement. It's in the pre-production stage now, and there's no cast yet, but it does have a home when it's ready to be seen: Netflix. Why, you ask? Shouldn't it go to movie theaters? Didn't you just say his career was on the upswing? Well, the answer to those questions probably involve you not buying a ticket to "Wilson" or "The Skeleton Twins." See, you don't go to movie theaters much anymore. You like to stay home. And the internet has provided a beautiful streaming solution for both established filmmakers and its rising talents, one that will make sure more people see "Alex" in one day than saw his other films during their entire theatrical runs. So it's fine, keep your sweatpants on, the future of cinema will come to you.

Romeo San Vicente will also come to you, but prefers to host.

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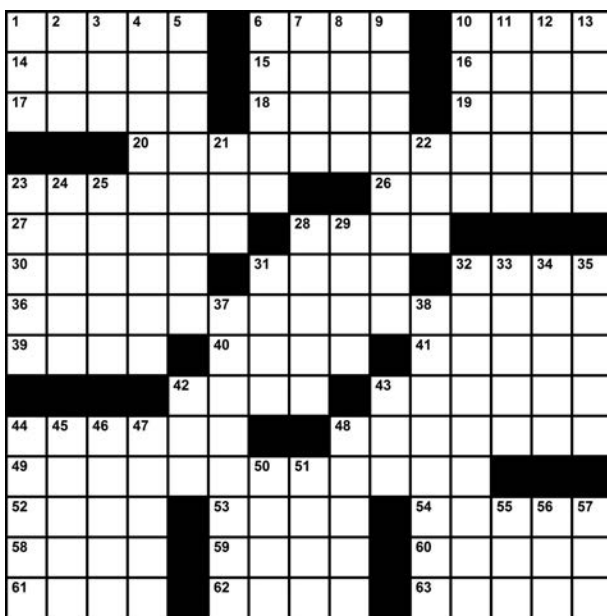
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Q Puzzle



Drag Politicians

Across

- 1 What hibernating bears do
6 Name on a column
10 Michelangelo's "David," once
14 It goes on a queen's head
15 Cross-dresser in a Kinks song
16 Series of concerts for Etheridge
17 In motion
18 Benefit
19 Paintings and such, to da

Down

- Vinci
20 She played Jeff Sessions on "SNL"
23 A bitch might try to catch it in her teeth
26 Most queer
27 Dancer Reagan's father
28 Top choice, slangily
30 Material for nice stones
31 Garr of "Tootsie"
32 Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, and others
36 She played Sean Spicer on

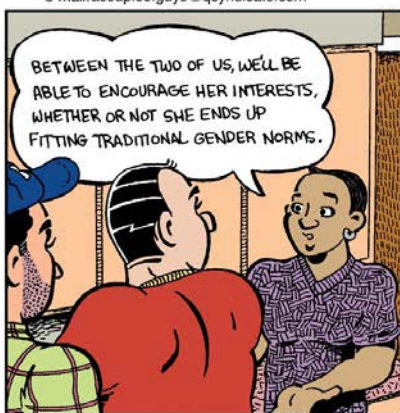
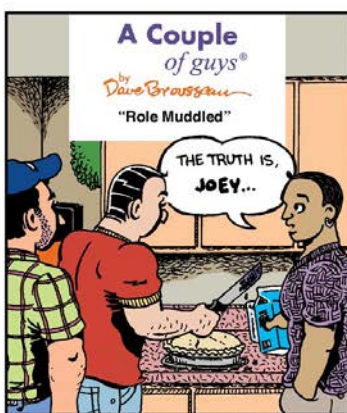
- "SNL"
39 Gardner of mystery
40 Hulce and others
41 One that bends over in an arbor?
42 Standout facial feature
43 Outing in Africa
44 Lickety-split
48 Tanning places
49 She recently told "The Hollywood Reporter" that she'd like to play Donald Trump
52 Gay video directory name
53 La Douce part for Shirley
54 Cardio med
58 A little behind
59 Beats, barely
60 Sexual favors obtained while surfing?
61 Wilbur's stallion
62 Vagina, in slang
63 Where priests come together


- 22 Suffix with ox
23 Body build
24 Paul Monette's partner Horwitz
25 As a whole
28 Amelie Mauresmo's woman
29 Rainbow shapes
31 Retreat for D.H. Lawrence
32 Using the Divine Miss M's name in vain?
33 Fighting hard
34 1920 Colette novel
35 Lebanon neighbor
37 Bending over
38 Mother-of-pearl sources
42 Math degree
43 Signal that goes either way
44 Sacred song
45 Traffic cop's tool
46 Use a gifted tongue
47 "A Streetcar ___ Desire"
48 Cut
50 Sills' solo
51 Dave Pallone and others
55 Provincetown project
56 Carnival town
57 Bette Davis' " ___ Acquaintance"

Down

- 1 RR terminal
2 Flower for Foucault
3 Enjoy orally
4 Contemporary of Claude Debussy
5 Metropolitan Community Church readings
6 "Seascape" author
7 Big bang sound
8 Interest group
9 Al, who sang "Eat It"
10 Bear
11 "SNL" producer Michaels
12 Places for quickies, perhaps
13 George of "The Gay Sisters"
21 Connoisseur Allen

Find solution to this puzzle at
www.pridesource.com





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