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THE GAY Q&A

Goldie & Anny

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Lesbian and Transgender Moms Are Changing the Face of Motherhood

Non-traditional Families Celebrate Love and Parenting on Mother's Day

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Mother's Day is an opportunity to recognize the growing profile of lesbian and transgender mothers through personal stories, which *Between The Lines* asked willing families to share along with a photo. In many ways, these women and their children are a lot alike – compassionate with deep, unconditional love for each other. By living their lives authentically, these families are showing the world that a healthy bond between a parent and a child knows no boundaries.



Christi Smarch with her mom, Diana.

The Smarch Family

Since she was a little girl, Christi Smarch of Madison Heights has always had a strong relationship with her mother, Diana.

"A good portion of my friends called her 'mom' when I was growing up and even now. She is the kind of mom I think everyone wants to have," she said. "My mom will make me dinner and muffins and then have a blast on the dance floor with me. We always have a great time when we are together."

It took some time for Diana to get used to the idea that Christi - the middle child and her only daughter – is a lesbian.

"I came out later in life after being married and having a child," said Christi, mother to her 22-year-old gay son Drake.

"I gave her the space she needed and the time. It was not long before she came to terms



Jamie Blatnikoff, Leah Blatnikoff, Leslee Kanar, Annette Kanar, Emily Rubinstein, Randi Rubinstein and Craig Janes. Wedding day at Lelli's on the Green in Farmington Hills.

with everything and admitted that all of her issues really stemmed around simple fear for me. 'The world can be a cruel place,' she told me once. I understood her fear then and I understand it even more now."

Christi is married to her wife, Misty Gamez, who gave birth to their now 4-year-old



Jonica and Nkenge Burkhead of Hazel Park with their children, Patric, 9, and Johan, 2.

daughter Gracie, the result of a successful intrauterine insemination.

"It is no different in that she is my beautiful daughter and I love her with all my heart," said Diana. "My pride in her love of her wife, her son and daughter knows no bounds. I've seen her overcome such great trials with strength and grace. She has become a beautiful, loving and brilliant lady."

Christi describes her mother as the "kind person who always looks for the best in people."

When asked what kind of advice she would give to other mother's with LGBTQ children, Diana said, "Please try and understand that your child is your flesh and blood and they only want one thing, to be loved and accepted by you. They are no different in their heart than before they shared their heart. To not love and hold them is losing God's most precious gift."

The Burkhead Family

The best part of motherhood for Nkenge Burkhead of Hazel Park, she said, "is observing people, children, with a fresh untainted view

of this world explore it. The innocence of parent to child interaction. An excuse to give into my own childlike desires."

Jonica, too, said she loves exploring the world with her family, in addition to dancing in the living room together and playing video games.

"I enjoy spending time with my sons and seeing the joy in their eyes when they learn a new skill or discover a new park. My favorite part of the day is coming home from work and seeing my boys rush to the door with happiness. Motherhood is great, but sharing this experience with my wife makes life seem magical. Nkenge and I have a great balance, where one of us might fall short the other parent stands tall."

Jonica, the non-biological mother, said the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case was huge for her.

"I was very happy to be legally recognized by the U.S. as a married couple. That meant I could give my family great healthcare benefits through my job. Also, that my wife and I could receive government benefits such as filing taxes together and so forth."

When asked what advice they would offer to other lesbian and transgender mother's just starting out, they agreed "it's important to connect with other queer families so that the children see other families that look like their own."

The Kanar Family

Annette and Leslee of West Bloomfield, who each have children from previous marriages, were married in August 2015.

"Our kids walked us down the aisle, which was wonderful," said Annette, noting that it was important for them to get married to solidify their relationship. "We're not afraid to tell our story because we want people to know they can live their truth and live a happy life



Sarah Mackey, Nicole Derusha-Mackey and their son, Devin Addington of Swartz Creek. Photo courtesy of Amanda Clark Photography

with family and friends. Be legit. Those that love you will continue to love you.”

Known in their community for being role models for their children, Annette said, “Our famous saying is ‘two moms are better than one.’ The kids call us bonus moms.”

The couple built a brand new home to accommodate their children who range in age from 16-26. “We don’t all live together. We never have. But when they come over, we cook and have fabulous meals. We all get along great,” said Annette. “We lean on each other for support. We value each other’s feelings and opinions. When you love your kids unconditionally, they love you back.”

Sarah, Nicole & Devin

Sarah Mackey has been in the lives of Nicole Derusha-Mackey and her biological son, Devin Addington, since he was 5. Devin, now 12, was born with Barth Syndrome and underwent heart transplant surgery when he was just 9 weeks old.

“When we took Devin to the doctor or hospital, as we often did, they would never acknowledge Sarah as a parent,” said Nicole. “For years, she was always listed as ‘Friend’ or ‘Other.’” That changed when their marriage became legal in Michigan. Devin was 8 at the time. “Sarah was now my legal spouse, and recognized as Devin’s parent. It seems like a minor thing, but being a parent in a medical setting gives you a voice. And as the parents of a chronically ill child, your voice is everything.”

Nicole said she has enjoyed seeing the

world through her son’s eyes. “He is an extraordinary, charismatic, and extremely loving little human who has faced many challenges in life. Leading him through some of those challenges, and standing by his side as he works through others, is an incredible journey, and I appreciate the person it’s helped me become.”

When asked about her parenting journey with Sarah, Nicole said she has been the “perfect partner. She has been so supportive since the moment she entered our lives, and I couldn’t be more grateful. She’s the balance that I need in parenting – the logic to my emotion, and the bad cop to my good cop – much to Devin’s chagrin.”

What does Devin think? He said, “I’m proud to have two moms because some people usually don’t even have two moms. My mom is nice, and sometimes Sarah is nice.”

The Burchett Family

At 20 years old, Jacobian Lawrence Burchett is working hard and trying to decide what he wants to do with his life, but there is one thing he knows for sure.

“I love my mom for giving me life and raising me. I can talk to her about anything on this Earth. We may not see eye-to-eye about certain things as time and life goes on, but she is always there to help me understand, and for that, I am grateful.”

See Motherhood, next page

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Family Matters: Legal Issues for Same-Sex Parents

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark marriage equality decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* removed barriers to the adoption process for same-sex married couples. But there are unique and complex legal issues to consider when deciding to become a family. Kerene Moore, the supervising attorney for the Jim Toy Community Center's Know Your Rights Project, points to a few things for same-sex married couples to consider when making a decision to adopt or conceive children.

- Same-sex married couples can now jointly adopt children in Michigan. Prior to the *Obergefell* decision, Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage made this considerably difficult.

- Michigan statute requires that both married spouses be listed as parents on the birth certificate of any child that one of the spouses gives birth to during the marriage.

- When a married same-sex couple decides to bring children into the home, an adoption may be either required or strongly recommended to prevent any challenge to a non-biological spouse's parental rights.

- Where a surrogate is used, adoption proceedings will be required to terminate the surrogate's parental rights and legally establish the new family unit, including obtaining accurate birth certificates.

- Female spouses should complete the confirmatory adoption process to ensure that a known sperm donor's parental rights are terminated and to eliminate the risk of challenge to the non-biological spouse's parental rights at any time in the future. Revocation of parentage laws vary throughout the country, and can be utilized when there is a breakdown in the marriage. Confirmatory adoption orders generally eliminate this risk.

- Confirmatory adoptions are completed through the statutory framework for step parent adoptions in Michigan, and can often be completed without the support of an attorney where a sperm bank is used.

- Attorney support is strongly recommended whenever a couple decides to use a known donor or surrogate to expand the family. Culturally competent legal counsel can explain the same-sex couple's rights and walk them through the process.

The KYR Project is staffed by the Outlaws of the University of Michigan Law School, and has limited hours during the summer months. For legal advice and referrals, email outlawslegal@gmail.com.

MCC Detroit Says 'Please Mr. Postman!'

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

May is Motown Celebration Month at the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit in Ferndale. On hand May 7 to give a special spiritual blessing for the first of its kind, four-part monthly Sunday service series was Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown, newly appointed Interim Moderator of MCC's worldwide.

Rev. Elder Brown's sermon series opener was titled, "Please Mr. Postman." And response from the full-house, jubilant congregation at Motown kickoff Sunday was that her special delivery message was well received.

Delivery was followed by the MCC Detroit choir singing the title song, directed by Motown musical enthusiast and Minister of Music Bryan Londrow.

Rev. Elder Brown, who has been a Motown Music enthusiast since the 80s, said

of the May Service theme, "Detroit's musical gift to the world has so much of a great spiritual content to it — happiness, love of life, rhythm, pulse — that, while not necessarily out-and-out, traditionally religious, is abidingly spiritual and uplifting. Truly joy filled."

In addition to the singing of Motown hits each Sunday, film clips by The Temptations, Martha Reeves & The Vandelles, Diana Ross and The Jackson 5, are shown on the church's screen monitors at the beginning of service.

The upcoming schedule for the Sunday series, which also marks the beginning of MCC Detroit's 45th Anniversary year-long celebration, is May 14 "I'll Be There" with Rev. Carolyn Moble-Bowie, May 21 "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" with Rev. Deb Cox, and May



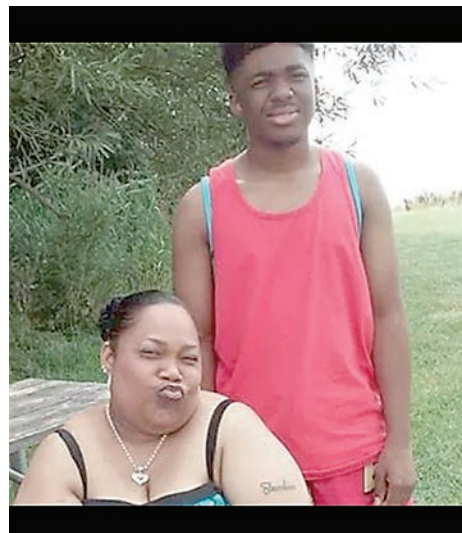
Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow, Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown and Rev. Deb Cox at MCC Detroit in Ferndale.

28 "Get Ready/ Dancing in the Streets" with Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow.

MCC Detroit is located at 2441 Pinecrest Drive in Ferndale. Call 248-399-7741 or visit their website for more information. Service starts at 11 a.m. Early arrival is suggested.

► Motherhood

Continued from p. 5



LaKeisha Burchett, secretary of LGBT Detroit, with her son Jacobian Lawrence Burchett

That kind of respect and admiration is something he learned from his mother, LaKeisha Burchett.

"I enjoy guiding and instructing Jacobian. I enjoy showing him how to live and love others and what he should do to preserve the value of his life in general," she said. "I do my best to make him smart and I always try to keep him active in the mind. I made him an intentional person."

Jacobian lives with his mother and her fiancée Terry Reeves, who she will marry on Aug. 5 this year. The couple has been

together for six years, which LaKeisha said she has always had an open dialogue with her son about.

"I have raised him to respect love and that family comes in very different shapes, colors and spiritual natures. I did not bring it to him until he was fully aware and able to process and articulate his feelings on my relationships that I have had," she said. "There were many challenges along the way. Mostly about myself being a lesbian and the relationship with his father. But he has been a Phoenix throughout and he now understands greater than he has ever."

Jacqui Leaonna Turner and Kara Marie Ramsey

As Jacqui Leaonna Turner of Plymouth began her transition two years ago, the way she felt about her two children never changed.

But, it was her transgender daughter, who was 5 at the time, that "had the foresight to teach me about real courage while being 'true' to my authentic self," she said about her youngest child who began displaying signs of being transgender as early as the age of 3.

"And now that 'she' has passed the 'torch of light' and life unto me, I feel obligated to inturn share it with the world and other children that may identify as being transgender...that 'we' are all beautiful, both inside and out." Mother's Day for Jacqui and her fiancée, Kara Marie Ramsey, means "being a surrogate mother to the children



Jacqui Leaonna Turner and Kara Marie Ramsey of Plymouth with their 8-year-old daughter

of the world, as 'we' guide and show them that 'we' are all deserving and entitled to self-identity and self-exploration of our own unique qualities as we live and grow into our own 'truths' of becoming the best versions of ourselves that we possibly can... as we are all teachers as well as students to the miracle of life."

BTL wants to hear more real-life stories about people and things happening in the LGBTQ community. Contact kate@pridesource.com to share.



Pictured from left to right in top row: son-in-law Ryan Costella, Lauren Costella, 24 with Paityn Dixon, 2; Shelly Taylor; McKenna Dixon, 3; Lori Dixon; Gabriel Dedes, 16; Caitlyn Dedes, 13; and Alec Dedes, 22.

Brownstown Couple Receives Creating Hope Award for Fostering Children

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Lori Dixon and Shelly Taylor became a couple nearly a decade ago. Though Dixon had four biological children from a previous marriage, the couple soon decided they wanted to increase the size of their family.

“We just enjoy kids,” Dixon said. “We talked about having more kids and we decided to foster.”

Three years ago, the couple got their first opportunity to foster and three little sisters arrived at their front door. The couple was interested in adopting one of the girls but did not want to break up the sisters. Fate would do that for them when nine months later two of the sisters were placed with their biological father. Dixon and Taylor adopted the one left behind.

And so started their fostering and adoption journey. To date the couple has fostered 11 children and adopted three of them. All of this has been done through Wolverine Human Services, a social services agency for children in Michigan. In recognition of their efforts, the agency recently presented the couple with the Creating Hope Award.

“Wolverine was awesome,” said Dixon. “I can’t say enough about them. I wish we could take more kids.”

But fostering hasn’t always been easy. “We’ve had a trying time,” Dixon said. “Our children were all drug babies. At one time we had three kids in two different hospitals.”

In many cases, Dixon and Taylor were able to introduce their foster children to a whole new world.



Noah, 1, was adopted after family photo above

“Some of our foster kids had never been to a store, to the park,” explained Dixon. “One of our kids didn’t know how to eat meat. She had lived off of cereal and ramen noodles. It’s very, very sad.”

For their part, Dixon and Taylor choose to focus on the positive and the growth they have seen in their children.

“I think the main thing is they get the schooling and the help, and sometimes special services through the school,” Dixon said. “One of our children didn’t walk until she was 17 months old.

She had a lot of coordination and balance problems. But a lot of normal kids have issues, kids that aren’t drug addicted. I think all three of our kids are going to be just as normal as the rest of my kids.”

There are difficulties to having such a large family, and one that ranges in age from one to 24. Taylor has had to switch from day shift to midnights to cut down

on daycare costs.

“It’s been a big adjustment,” Taylor said of the schedule shift. “I think it’s scary for us. But it’s a necessity for my family. We stay constantly busy but between the two of us we just manage it, juggle it and get it done. There are a lot of sacrifices on our part but everybody’s worth it.”

Dixon agreed.

“I knew my heart and my love was there,” she said. “I just have a love for kids. They’re with you 24/7. You just can’t let them go. They’re very special – every single one of them. We haven’t let any leave our house that’s come up for adoption. So I tell them don’t bring any more.

“I tell my kids if it poops or pees don’t bring it in the house,” Dixon continued. “We have three dogs, two cats, a parrot and five kids living in the house.”

It may be a crowded home but it’s a happy one. And that’s why the folks at Wolverine couldn’t help but recognize Dixon and Taylor’s efforts.

“These parents represent what every child needs and want – understanding, structure, tolerance and most importantly love,” said Wolverine’s CEO Judith Fischer Wollack. “They believe in our mission and live it, helping children to be victors.”

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a care provider and Wolverine Human Services, please contact Gail Gotthelf at gg@wolverinehs.org or visit www.wolverinehs.org

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Alabama, Tennessee Governors Sign Anti-LGBT Bills

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Governors in Alabama and Tennessee have signed into law a pair of measures that could allow discrimination against LGBT families seeking to adopt a child or jeopardize their ability to obtain state benefits.

In Alabama, Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law on Wednesday House Bill 24, which is titled the “Child Placing Agency Inclusion Act,” but instead of encouraging child placement it would permit agencies to deny placement of children into LGBT households.

The new law allows child placement agencies, which often are religious-affiliated groups, such as Catholic adoption agencies, to deny placement in LGBT-headed homes.

According to AL.com, Ivey said she signed HB24 into law to ensure faith-adoption agencies can continue to work in the state.

“I ultimately signed House Bill 24 because it ensures hundreds of children can continue to find ‘forever homes’ through religiously

affiliated adoption agencies,” Ivey reportedly said. “This bill is not about discrimination, but instead protects the ability of religious agencies to place vulnerable children in a permanent home.”

The bill was approved by the Senate on Wednesday by a 23-9 vote and by the House in March by a 60-14 vote. After Senate passage of HB24, the House gave final approval of the measure by a vote of 87-0, with six abstentions, to concur with a change made by the upper chamber of the legislature.

Ivey’s signature was expected. Eileen Jones, an Ivey spokesperson, told the Washington Blade last month her boss “plans to sign it pending a legal review.”

Kasey Suffredini, chief programs officer for Freedom for All Americans, was among those who criticized Ivey for signing the bill in a statement.

“The first priority of lawmakers should be the safety and wellbeing of children, especially those who are in need of safe and loving homes,” Suffredini said. “It is shameful that

Gov. Ivey and lawmakers in Alabama would jeopardize those chances in order to advance discrimination against LGBT people.”

Also criticizing Ivey was Alex Smith, board chair of Equality Alabama, who said in a statement the governor was breaking her promise to usher in a new style of government after succeeding former Gov. Robert Bentley following his resignation amid scandal.

“When she was sworn in as governor, Kay Ivey promised her administration would be a breath of a fresh air from the scandals of the Bentley era, and we hoped she wouldn’t start her administration by approving shameful discriminatory legislation that ultimately does the most harm to children looking for loving homes,” Smith said. “Unfortunately, Gov. Ivey put special interests ahead of the welfare of Alabama children.”

In Tennessee, Gov. Bill Haslam signed into law on Friday House Bill 1111, which requires undefined words in Tennessee state law, such as gender pronouns, be enforced under their “natural” meaning. That could set up the state for conflict with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of same-sex marriage nationwide if Tennessee implements a new law to deny benefits to same-sex couples.

In a statement defending his decision to sign the law, Haslam was consistent with principles on which the judiciary rely, denying the measure would conflict with the Obergefell decision.

“The language of this bill is for a general definitions section of the Tennessee code, which defines ‘road’ and ‘sheriff,’ among other common terms,” Haslam said. “For at least 150 years, courts including the Tennessee Supreme Court and United States Supreme Court have looked to a word’s natural and ordinary meaning when deciding cases. In reviewing this bill, I do not believe the legislation accomplishes anything that isn’t already relied upon by the courts, even after the U.S. Supreme Court’s Obergefell decision in 2015.”

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. John Stevens (R-Huntingdon) and Rep. Andrew Farmer (R-Sevierville), was passed in the House by a vote of 70-23 and the Senate by a vote of 23-6.

Sarah Warbelow, legal director for the Human Rights Campaign, said despite Haslam’s assurance the new law would have a negative impact on LGBT families in Tennessee.

“Gov. Haslam has chosen to put pure politics ahead of Tennessee’s women and LGBTQ people,” Warbelow said. “This



Gov. Kay Ivey (R-Ala.) signed an anti-LGBT adoption bill. (Photo by Fort Rucker; courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

draconian measure will open the state up to many expensive legal challenges and divert state resources to defending an unnecessary, unconstitutional measure. The Governor should be ready to answer for the fallout signing this bill will cause.”

It’s not the first time Haslam has signed into law an anti-LGBT measure. Last year, the governor signed Senate Bill 1556, which provides immunity under state law to counselors who object to care based on “sincerely held principles,” including refusal to treat patients based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Zeke Stokes, vice president of programs for GLAAD, said in a statement Haslam opened up the floodgates for discrimination by signing HB 1111 into law.

“By the stroke of a pen, Gov. Haslam has now placed the future of the state’s economy and the well-being of the LGBTQ community in jeopardy,” Stokes said. “HB 1111 has the potential to undermine marriages between LGBTQ couples, nullify a transgender person’s true identity under law, and put LGBTQ families at risk. This sets a dangerous precedent for how the LGBTQ community is treated in Tennessee moving forward.”

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

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Anti-LGBT State Senator Withdraws Nomination for Army Secretary

BY LOU CHIBBARO JR., WASHINGTON BLADE

Mark E. Green, who President Trump nominated last month to be Secretary of the Army, withdrew from contention for the position on Friday following a month-long campaign by LGBT advocacy groups to publicize his anti-LGBT record as a Tennessee state senator.

His withdrawal came less than a week after the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group, said it generated 6,800 calls to Congress from constituents strongly opposing Green's nomination.

"Since Trump's announcement of Green's nomination, HRC worked diligently to expose Mark Green's shameful anti-LGBTQ record and rhetoric and the danger his nomination posed to LGBTQ service members and their families," HRC said in a statement.

"We thank the many senators, from both parties, who expressed concerns about the nomination," said HRC President Chad Griffin. "His nomination was a clear indication of Donald Trump's lack of judgement and failure to be a president of all Americans," Griffin said.

Within the past two weeks at least five Democratic senators announced they would vote against the Green nomination, including Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee which would have had to approve the nomination, expressed concern about Green's statements that were considered hostile to LGBT people and Muslims.

And in a development that startled political observers, a Pentagon spokesperson on Friday declined to say whether Secretary of Defense James Mattis still supported Green's nomination.

Green, a physician, is a West Point graduate and decorated Iraq War veteran. His controversial views on LGBT issues emerged during his tenure as a State Senator in Tennessee. Among other things, he has described transgender people as being mentally disordered.



Mark E. Green withdrew nomination for army secretary on Friday. Washington Blade file photo

He has spearheaded anti-transgender bathroom legislation and backed a "religious freedom" bill, approved by the Tennessee Legislature that would allow mental health professionals to refuse treatment for LGBT patients based on religious objections.

"Tragically, my life of public service and my Christian beliefs have been mischaracterized and attacked by a few on the other side of the aisle for political gain," Green said in a statement on Friday. "While these false attacks have no bearing on the needs of the Army or my qualifications to serve, I believe it is critical to give the president the ability to move forward with his vision to restore our military to its rightful place in the world."

The White House and Pentagon didn't immediately offer a statement responding to Green's withdrawal.

"Serving as Secretary of the Army is an incredible and vital role to the success of our modern military," said Matt Thorn, executive director of OutServe-SLDN, the nation's largest organization representing LGBT people in the military.

"Mark Green did not live up to the duty and honor that is expected of an individual serving in such a role," Thorn said in a statement. "Mr. Green has better served the Army with his withdrawal than he would have as Secretary."

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

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Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Glen Flexit Gets Fixed!

I rarely write about straight guys. I find them to be, well, rather flighty. But in the interest of LGBT civility to all God's web-footed creatures, let me tell you about my oddball neighbor Glen Flexit. A piece of work.

I met Glen last year. Our meeting was brief. He buzzed my apartment door. Expecting DBT ("door bell trade"), I opened. He whispered "John 3:16," turned and vanished down the hall. Thinking I'd been invited to a promising, exciting, memorable Sunday brunch I hurried down two flights.

There was no John at 316, just a tired Jane in a terry cloth robe and haphazard curlers, who said, "Whatever you're selling, I don't want any!" and slammed the door in my startled, disappointed face. Alas, no orgy with finger food. Or, Glen Flexit.

A week later Glen hit on me again. "Jeremiah 29:5!" he winked and quickly disappeared once more. I gave it another go and this time elevated up twenty-eight flights. Surprise of surprises, a Jewish couple actually lived rooftop there.

I had tea, blintzes, a nice chat. (I hit it off with their poodle named Putzer.) They hadn't a clue about who Glen Flexit is. ("Oy vey! Another goyishe-kopf!")

My third encounter with Glen Flexit was on the elevator. He stepped on, beamed, shook my hand, and said, "God and Donald Trump love you! Have a blessed day, big guy." Before I could protest, "I'm too old for long-distance, one-sided, pussy-wussy romances," Glen was off and running again.

The next thing I know pamphlets were being pushed under my apartment door at odd hours. Copies of "Detroit: Sin City USA," "Let Jesus Rapture You!," "Fags Aflame!" The sci-fi literature kept me awake. I was a basket case.

Then, before you could shout out, "Armageddon at Menjo's! Grab your jockey shorts!" it stopped. No more pamphlets. No Glen. Nothing ...

Strange to tell I start to miss the guy even if he is straight. He seems a nice paint-by-numbers sort. You know the type. Pin-stripe shirt. Bow tie. Plaid sports coat. Four-pocket cargo shorts. Argyle socks. Penny loafers. Drip-dry bliss in winter and in summer. He just needs a few friendly tips on living from a pro. (Unfortunately not my cup of spiked oolong tea.)

Six months pass before we meet by chance again at a crowded gym. What a surprise! Shoulder-length hair. Gold rings on biceps. Heroic sandals. Leather headband. Glen Flexit looks like a Ben Hur cab driver with his meter running.

"Wow! Were have you been all my life?" I ask the prodigal son. "I've had an intervention," confides Glen Flexit, sipping a flirtatious cappuccino. "My family hijacked me to a Fundy Movie Conversion Marathon." "Good grief, dude, what's that?" I ask.

"Well, to keep me from going overboard on the Holy Roller Express I was given 24/7 hours of nonstop reparative viewing." "Go on," I urge.

"Not much to tell. Exhausting nonetheless. And scary. I was locked in a padded, giant-screen TV room with Grade B Bible flicks playing day and night. Day and night!

"You know: Samson and Delilah, Sodom and Gomorrah, King of Kings, Ten Commandment, Mel Gibson's Passion of Christ (in Latin!), Sound of Music, Flying Nun reruns. Left Behind serials. Something clicked. I haven't 3:16'd or 29:5'd a soul since I got out."

(Therapeutic thanks to Julie Andrews, Sally Field, Charlton Heston, Cecil B. DeMille, and Jeffrey Hunter, as that hunky, blue-eyed Good Guy from Galilee.)



Viewpoint

When Mother's Day Isn't So Rosy



BY STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, PH.D

For some, Mother's Day is not a warm day of celebration. Many dread its arrival because their mother has passed or their relationship with their mother is tumultuous. The coming of this day brings with it the sting that "I am different" because I am not like everyone else who is looking forward to happily sharing the day with their mom. It is hard for people not to fall into the trap of "comparing their insides to other people's outsides," i.e. thinking that just because people look normal and happy on the outside that they really are.

The sting may also hit you while standing helplessly in the greeting card aisle. With each sticky-sweet card you pick up with sentiments like: "You're the best mom

ever" or "You've always been there to guide me and teach me all of the important things in life," you may find yourself wanting to grab the first blank card with a flower on it and run out of the store.

You may also question what is wrong with your mother. Why can't she be a normal mom like the idealized image you have of everyone else's? Or, you may take the shame on yourself and question what is wrong with you. It is hard not to feel defective when it feels like your mother doesn't love or approve of you. Many wonder when they will ever be good enough to please their mothers. For some, on an unconscious level, it feels like one cannot approve of themselves

See next page

► Williams: Mother's Day

Continued from p. 10

until their mother does. They hold on to unrealistic expectations that someday their mother will give them the love they need if they change to her liking and meet her expectations.

Some try to avoid the pain of this dilemma and overcompensate by being super-achievers. One may know they are successful in a career, relationship or some other aspect of life, but still continue to feel the ache of incompleteness. They strive to get another degree, another promotion, a bigger house or car, and still feel inadequate or like an imposter.

While others surrender to the pressure of not feeling good enough and self-sabotage and under-achieve as a form of self-punishment. Some find themselves in relationships with people who are emotionally unavailable, neglectful or abusive, mirroring the familiar parental relationship.

One may believe in their rational, logical mind that they are good enough, but the human subconscious mind holds onto what was conditioned in childhood. It is very hard for the subconscious mind to synch with the logical mind. In other words, what one thinks may not be what they actually feel. This is the biggest challenge I see my clients facing that makes them feel emotionally stuck and damned to repeat the same unhealthy behaviors. One may go to therapy long enough to realize why they are the way they are, but they are unable to stop the emotional triggers and break the life-long patterns.

Talking about one's emotional pain with a therapist can be relieving in that another human being validates one's pain and helps them make sense of what has happened. It can provide comfort to know that one isn't crazy and that there are reasons for their triggers and behaviors. There are ways

to change outdated maladaptive coping mechanisms, but sometimes talking is not enough. I believe that in addition to talk therapy, therapeutic interventions focused on feeling rather than thinking must be employed to effect the physiology of the brain and produce lasting change.

Some thoughts on how to cope with the upcoming Hallmark Holiday:

I often suggest to clients to write a letter to their mother (whether the parent is alive or deceased) and in doing so, hold nothing back that they need to express. I then suggest they share their feelings with a trusted friend or therapist (if they feel safe to do so) and then destroy the letter.

Why not spend time or do something nice for a woman you admire or look up to? This woman may be aware of your admiration of her or not. It does not matter. Possibly a card or gift given to her to express your high regard for her will make both of you feel good.

Lastly, practice a random act of kindness by visiting a woman or multiple women in a retirement facility. There are plenty of women there that would appreciate your visit and possibly some chocolate chip cookies.

Many people spend tremendous energy trying to change their mother's behavior and hold out hope that someday the relationship will be all they wished it could be. I suggest if your mom cannot receive the goodness you have to offer, find another grateful woman who can. You both will be the better for it.

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

Charmaine Yoest

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Trump has plucked Yoest from the cesspool of misinformation and bigotry that is the Family Research Council to spread the gospel of “contraception doesn't work” and “breast cancer is caused by abortions” in the federal government.

President Trump's goal to fill cabinet positions only with people who are diametrically opposed to what said cabinet is supposed to do continues. This time he's tapped Charmaine Yoest to be assistant secretary of public affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Yoest is an anti-abortion extremist who, in addition to her wild ideas about a woman's right to choose what happens to her own body, has some pretty crazy views on things like sex and sexuality (funny how being anti-choice and anti-LGBTQ so often go together).

Before I get too far ahead of myself, however, I should explain what HHS is and does. Or, rather, I'll let HHS explain in words from its own website: “The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services protects the health of all Americans and provides essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.”

It would be more accurate to replace the word “protects” with “formerly protected” because they certainly do not care about that now.

It's bad enough that Tom “gay marriage is sad marriage” Price is the head of HHS. He's also anti-choice and has a great big boner over the potential destruction of the Affordable Care Act which would literally cause people, primarily the poor and the sick, to lose their insurance, therefore losing their access to health care, and therefore dying. HHS has essentially abandoned the “health” and the “human” parts of its name.

But now Trump has plucked Yoest from the cesspool of misinformation and bigotry that is the Family Research Council to spread the gospel of “contraception doesn't work” and “breast cancer is caused by abortions” in the federal government.

In 2006 she appeared on a Fox News segment about pending legislation in New York City to allow transgender men and women to change their birth certificates. She was against it, saying that birth certificates

represent “what actually happened in real life,” essentially dismissing transgender people as living in some kind of fantasy world. She also accused transgender people of trying to “redefine what normal is” and said she didn't want to share a restroom with trans women.

Her husband, Jack, also seems delightful. In a blog post about that Fox appearance he lamented the fact that his wife was “forced into debating a tranny of some stripe.” Note that tranny is not only pejorative, but he spelled it wrong.

In 2007 she debated Freedom to Marry's Evan Wolfson on MSNBC and sprouted bullshit claims that research showed that children were harmed when raised by same-sex couples. She made the same claim ten years earlier on CNN and in 2006 on NPR.

Her backwards thinking is especially dangerous when it comes to HIV/AIDS prevention. She once said that advising people to wear condoms for protection was “shockingly irresponsible” and “absolutely insane” because condoms don't have a 100% success rate. She especially didn't want teenagers to use condoms. “Where are we going to go when teens get this disease, using a condom, and they say, you know, ‘But my government told me that I was going to be safe?’”

The obvious answer is that we need comprehensive sex education so that sexually active teens learn about the actual risks involved with condoms and other types of contraception. But, of course, Yoest is against that, too.

If knowledge is power, then the Trump Administration is the weakest in history. Yoest will fit right in.

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

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

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

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

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



Photo: Justina Mintz

THE GAY Q&A

Goldie & Amy

'Snatched' Co-Stars Talk Longtime LGBT Support, Doing a Gay Cult Film Together and How 'Love Knows No Gender'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

“We’re serious bitches too,” says Amy Schumer, nearly in tears. The comic firecracker is seated next to national gay-loved treasure Goldie Hawn, and the screen icon has just made a touching revelation: She used to comfort men dying of AIDS.

Perhaps that isn’t the kind of heartwarming reveal you’d expect during a sit-down for their action-comedy, “Snatched,” but as this onscreen mom-daughter duo joke about a potential gay-themed sequel (the ladies already have several queer-centric working titles; for Schumer, the joke writes itself), it’s clear nothing is off topic. They’re just happy to be here speaking to gay press, which has Schumer “very elated.”

“This will be our favorite interview of the day,” the 35-year-old raves from a hotel bungalow in Santa Monica. Beaming, Hawn shares her enthusiasm: “It will be!”

“Snatched” is Hawn’s first movie since 2002’s “The Banger Sisters.” But donning a signature frilly, shoulder-less, royal blue dress, it seems like just yesterday the 71-year-old’s frothy charm enraptured gay audiences on “Laugh-In” in the late ’60s, and later, in 1996’s “First Wives Club” and, of course, “Death Becomes Her,” in 1992.

“It’s fun doing press with her,” says Schumer, as Hawn, en route, recharges at the hotel’s nearby buffet line before breezing in. “It’s also relaxing, because she’s like a mom – you’ll ask her something, and you’ll be looking for a sound bite and then we’re out of time and I’m like, ‘OK, cool. Good job.’”

Before being snatched up for their next interview, Hawn and Schumer got real about their respective gay followings, how Hawn thinks Schumer still has time to pursue a lesbian relationship and their commitment to “fight to the death” for LGBT people.

Why has it been important to you both to advocate for the LGBT community, especially now, in this political climate?

Schumer: I can’t remember a time I didn’t. When I was in high school, people weren’t really out yet. I think it’s more now. It was a different time even then, but it was never a question. It was never a choice. It was, “Yeah, of course.”

Hawn: Being an ally for LGBT people and an ally for *all* people, transgender or whatever – to me, that’s a human story. I feel there are injustices in the world that I’ll stand up for, and I think that it’s important to realize that the world is filled with these kinds of issues. We’re dealing with intolerance and what’s going on with deportation and what’s happening with Mexicans and what’s happening with people who are Muslim. There are so many things, and if you can’t stand up for it, then you’re not standing up

for humankind. Because that’s who we are. We all have skin and blood, and we’re all made of the same things. I have a note that I will probably needlepoint one day: “Love knows no gender.” And it doesn’t. Love is something in the heart and in the mind, so why would you chastise anyone for that? And this is something that I feel very strongly about.

Schumer: Also, we’re both people who will stand up to the death for our gay friends and gay people and what’s going on in Chechnya and the fear of what will happen in the coming years. We’ll be there to fight alongside our gay friends.

Hawn: You know what I used to do? This is interesting. When we went through the AIDS period, it was a very scary time, and I would go visit guys and I’d get in bed with them just to be there with them.

Schumer: Come on, think about that.

Hawn: Oh, I just remember.

“ you know what I used to do? This is interesting. When we went through the AIDS period, it was a very scary time, and I would go visit guys and I'd get in bed with them just to be there with them. ”

– Goldie Hawn

Schumer: Aw, Goldie. And great – now we're all crying.

Amy, on behalf of gays everywhere, thank you for being instrumental in bringing Goldie back to the big screen.

Hawn: Awwww!

Schumer: You're welcome!

Hawn: Oh my god, so sweet.

You were missed, Goldie.

Schumer: Dude, yeah. I completely agree, and I feel the same way. I just stayed on her, and we did it together.

Hawn: You were the one, I gotta tell you. It really was Amy.

When in your career did you two first know you had a big gay following?

Hawn: Gosh, honey, this is a long time ago. I think when I first came on – it started then. The early days. There wasn't a moment in my career, never a moment. I was a dancer, and I grew up and that's who I was. There was no issue. I mean, I had a tremendous amount of gay friends, so my whole life was basically like that while dancing. So, I never noticed who was gay or who was straight. For me, it was like that.

Now, later on, you started seeing more, maybe excitement, around it. But I'll tell you, I don't pay much attention. You can't pay too much attention to those things and live a full life. It can't be just about that. So, I don't pay a lot of attention to things. I have a little bit of blinders on.

Schumer: I've been on the road for 15 years. What I would do after shows is go dance at gay bars, and I started noticing, because even the worst towns have a fun gay bar, people being like, “We were at the show.” I remember it was a realization for me going on the road. And I've had a bunch of gay couples say, “I wanna propose at your show,” and I get really psyched! Ha! You're like, “Yes!” Not because, “Oh, good, that's a market”; it's like, that's who you want to love you. I feel really grateful and lucky, and the love is mutual.

Hawn: A really good friend of mine, who is gay, married her girlfriend and they wanted to get married in my house. All our friends were there, and it was the most beautiful thing. It was just so emotional, and (my son) Oliver, who is 40 now – at that time he was about 20-something – basically went, “Mom,

I want a gay marriage!” Ha! I was like, “I know! It's so beautiful.”

Schumer: I'm always walking around in every town I'm in and I'll find a park, and there are always people having their engagement pictures. I'm like, “Can I be in this photo?” I want in on the fun!

As someone who used to dance in gay bars, were your dance moves in “Snatched” gay-inspired? And how about Goldie's?

Schumer: Oh, definitely. Also, just to watch Goldie dance is one of the great joys of my life. Honestly, to see that live.

Hawn: Ha!

Goldie, with your dance scenes in this movie, were you having flashbacks to your iconic dancing in “First Wives Club” at that lesbian bar?

Hawn: Oh, right! I danced in a lot of movies! It's weird but it happened and it's good.

Schumer: To have you not dance in a movie is a crime.

Both of you have experience in a lesbian bar. Goldie in “First Wives Club,” and Amy, you were a bartender at one before your comedy career took off. Is this maybe a potential jumping-off point for a second movie starring both of you?

Schumer: There's our sequel: “The Real Snatched.”

Hawn: Ha! “Snatched Unhinged!” “Snatched Uncensored”!

Schumer: And “Uncut”!

How do you think this film may resonate with gay people and the relationships they do or don't have with their parents?

Schumer: That's a good question.

Hawn: Very good question.

Schumer: I definitely haven't thought about how different sort of lifestyles could experience it because it does feel pretty universal, but I get it. I think it really will bring together people who have had a struggle with a parent – that idea of, we're both doing the best we can.

As kids, you're just so, “Oh, my mom just loves me.” We all take our parents for granted, and the goal is to be able to accept that they just love the shit out of me and did the best they could. And maybe it wasn't enough, but (it's important) to find peace for yourself in that and to get rid of some of the anger. I hope this movie brings kids and parents together –

See Goldie & Amy, page 15

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May 11, 2017 | BTL 13

5 Reasons Why You Need to Attend More LGBT Film Festivals

BY MIKEY ROX

As someone who writes about LGBT entertainment on a regular basis (and has plenty of eye-rolls to give about the kind of content we're putting out there; "Prince Charming," anyone?), it was heartening to see recently at the OUTshine Film Festival in Miami (formerly MiFo) that the artists in charge of bringing our stories to life – whether triumphant or tragic or even mundane (our lives aren't always disco balls and Unicorn Frappuccinos, after all) – have their fingers on the pulse of where we're at as a community. But this and other LGBT film festivals are much more than grabbing a box of Sno-Caps and settling in for a flick about me and you. Here's why it's important – no, you're *duty* – to attend an LGBT film festival ASAP.



1. LGBT film festivals tell our stories even if mainstream media won't

You can count on one hand the number of LGBT films that have caught mainstream attention over the past two decades. Not films featuring LGBT characters, but rather films *about* LGBT characters. Ask any of your straight friends (hell, even your younger gay friends) to name an LGBT film and I'm willing to bet you get one of three movies in response: "Brokeback Mountain," "The Birdcage" and "Moonlight." The latter of the three was only released last year, and therein lies the problem: Hollywood is still afraid to bring LGBT movies to the big screen. One argument is that there's little money to be made off LGBT movies, but that's just not true. Great LGBT movies bring in serious cash, like "Brokeback"'s \$178.1 million haul on a \$14 million budget and "Moonlight"'s \$55.8 million take with a super-tight \$1.5 million budget.

What these three films have in common – as they do with most other LGBT films that have seen the light of day – is the internal struggle we all deal with as LGBT people. Coming out (or not coming

out as is often the case) is perhaps our biggest story arc, and it's the only one Hollywood seems willing to tell. Aside from us dying of AIDS, of course. (*eye-roll*)

This alone is a strong case for LGBT film festivals.

"LGBT film festivals ensure there is an audience for LGBT films, which otherwise may struggle to prove their value in a mainstream market, and thus never get made," says Ebony Rhodes, an OUTshine Film Festival board member. "LGBT and allies can support the film festival by sharing and promoting the event as a relevant cultural arts partner in the larger community through all regular channels of communication. Raising awareness of LGBT film festivals also means we must support the actual filmmakers and talent by learning more about their work and supporting their careers by buying their films or supporting media platforms that feature their films, shorts or web series."

2. They bring awareness to our issues and humanize the LGBT experience

Another reason LGBT films

find it difficult to make their way into mainstream moviegoers' consciousness is that mainstream audiences don't "get" us. They're not LGBT, so how can they relate, right? Obviously we know that we deal with all the same issues the rest of humanity deals with (except having to one day reveal our sexual orientation like what's behind curtain number three on "Let's Make a Deal"), but sometimes it takes strapping our family members to a movie theater recliner for two hours to get our point across. While local megaplexes are lacking options to help us hold our friends and family captive, LGBT film festivals are providing these experiences in droves. Some of the best movies I've ever seen – LGBT or otherwise – I saw at OUTshine last month. This is not an exaggeration. French-Canadian film "1:54," about school bullying, is not only topical but it should be required viewing for anyone under age 30. I beg you to find it (and a big box of Kleenex) and watch it with someone you love.

3. They're a great way to meet other cultured members of the LGBT community

While LGBT film festivals celebrate our stories in theaters, they also encourage creating more stories in the real world. To that end, there are plenty of opportunities to mix and mingle with other attendees at these festivals, with post-screening discussions, cocktail parties, brunches and cultural activities around town that bring us together without having to open a single app.

4. Attendees spend their pink dollars in our communities

I spent 10 days in Miami for OUTshine (it's a major event for the LGBT community, as are the other fests around the country) while other attendees came in and out of Magic City at their leisure to enjoy the films they most wanted to see, as well as dine, shop and relax. When I wasn't inside a theater, I was out exploring the surroundings – and spending my gay money. I enjoyed the area's abundance of incredible restaurants (I recommend Orange Blossom and Yardbird Southern Table & Bar), rented a Jet Ski on the ocean, popped into the Pérez Art Museum in downtown, threw back a few drinks at Sugar atop the East Hotel, hit up a vinyl store to

cop an album for my record player at home, and played gay bingo at Hôtel Gaythering. Proceeds from the latter supported OUT Miami, so it was money well spent.

5. LGBT film festivals remind us we're not alone in our individual struggles

Being LGBT can feel lonely at times, especially when we're not represented equally in the content we consume that allows us to see ourselves and recognize that other LGBT people are going through the same things we are. That's changing on television – GLAAD reported the highest number of LGBT characters ever on television last year – but we're still not equitably represented in movies, or at least not in the ones that hit major theaters. So we must continue to find the content that does represent us and fully support it.

Say Rhodes, "LGBT film festivals are important because we learn to truly accept ourselves as LGBT, from having positive role models and access to validating narratives that help us process otherwise confusing, complex and often scary emotions within ourselves. The film festival provides a supportive environment to reminisce, rejoice and affirm our own identity and the fact that we are not alone."

Remember that: You are *not* alone, my friends. Grab a pal. See a movie. Stay proud.

OUTshine hosts two LGBT film festivals a year: Miami in April and Ft. Lauderdale in October; it will host its first seven-day film festival cruise in Feb. 2018 aboard Celebrity Equinox. For more information, visit outshinefilm.com.

Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. He splits his time between homes in New York City and the Jersey Shore with his dog Jaxon. Connect with Mikey on Twitter @mikeyrox.



► Goldie & Amy

Continued from p. 13

Hawn: The other thing you're dealing with is a very strong rejection and it is arguably very, very important to find forgiveness. This movie may or may not touch a little on that, but we're talking about a relationship between a mother and a daughter. It's kind of like a fraught relationship, and we do get into it. I'd like the idea that perhaps whether you're gay or not that you're able to go in and say, "Maybe I should call my dad, maybe I'm gonna call my mom."

One of the realities is that if you don't make peace, they're gonna die one day, and it's really important to know that, because moms and dads don't last forever. If you've got unfinished business, we need to face that, and that's not easy. And a lot of parents are stoic and won't give, and if they don't give it's a very sad story, because you know why? Every child wants to love their mother and their father. Love is the most important thing, and when they feel rejected and unloved that hole can never be filled by anyone else.

Amy, in the movie, you tell your brother that he's "so gay for mom."

Schumer: I wondered what the experience would be of that line.

Who are you gay for in your lives?

Schumer: I'm gay for so many people that I think I may be just gay.

Hawn: Ha!

Schumer: I love my girlfriends so much that I've kissed girls – but I've never had, like, a lesbian experience. Not yet. But I'm sure. The life is young.

Hawn: I was gonna say: There's a lot of time!

Schumer: There's time left. But you know how you just think your friends are so beautiful, and (with) my really good girlfriends, over the years I've had confusing feelings because I just love them so much. I just think they're so beautiful, so I'm gay for my friends.

Hawn: My best girlfriend is gay... and my

other girlfriend probably could've been! She wore man shoes all the time, and I was always the one in little twinkle shoes. She'd go out with me and I'd say, "Now are you gonna wear your suit and your man shoes because we're quite a couple!" Ha! But my best girlfriend is gay, and this is the girl I laugh with like crazy. And my nephew!

Naturally, Goldie, everyone around you is gay, and with a résumé that includes "First Wives Club" and "Death Becomes Her," I'd expect nothing less. Which of those films do you think earned you the most gay cred?

Hawn: That's really interesting. Probably "First Wives Club." But "Death Becomes Her" was pretty gay.

Did you know "Death Becomes Her" would eventually become a gay cult film?

Hawn: Not at all! I just thought that it was gonna be a cult film forever because it's all about staying alive and staying young forever, and (director) Bob Zemeckis was way ahead of his time. So, for me, it was just a general commentary on where we're going, because everyone wants to stay young and no one wants to get old and what is the elixir and what can I drink?

When did you realize that it was adored by gay audiences?

Hawn: I never thought of it! But I love that.

Schumer: I hope this becomes a gay cult movie.

Hawn: That would be awesome!

I mean, basically anything that Goldie touches, right?

Hawn: Well, my god, that's quite a compliment.

Schumer: We should all be so lucky!

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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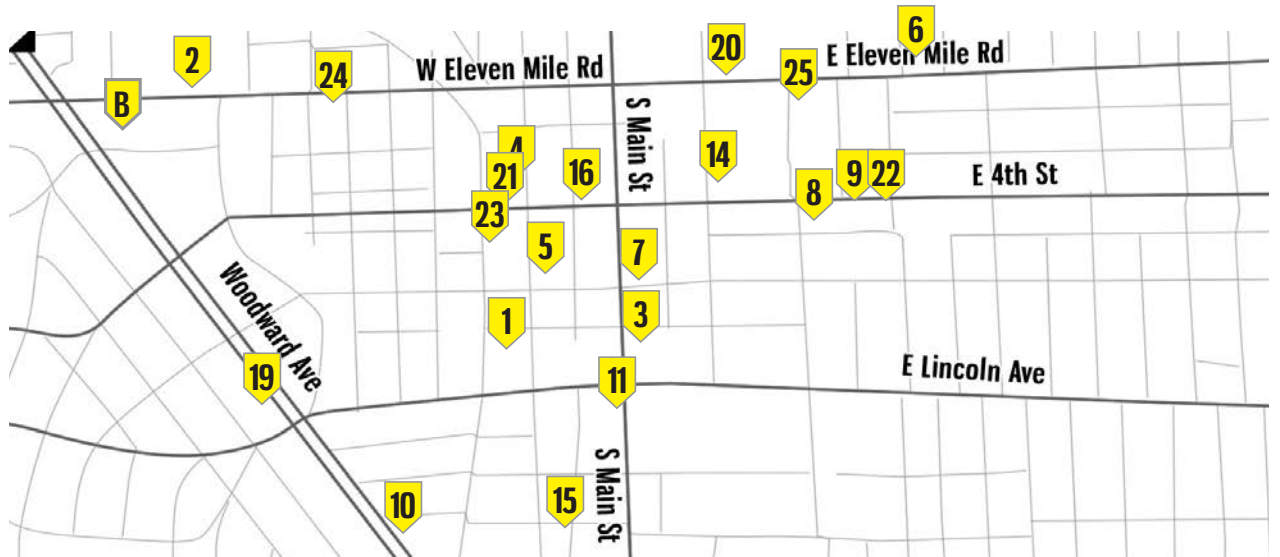
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Pronto! Welcomes Dynamic Duo for Singalong Brunch

Two best friends. Two pianists. Two amazing vocalists. This Dynamic Duo – Gerianne and Eric – have brought their show to Pronto! in Royal Oak. On the first Saturday of the month, the Dynamic Duo performs the best of the best showtunes from 12-2 p.m. during their “Saturday Singalong: A Broadway Brunch.”

The show begins with Gerianne and Eric encouraging brunch-goers and waitstaff to belt out with Broadway, Pop, and Disney standards led by their own powerhouse vocals. Throughout the show, Gerianne and Eric share hilarious stories of their past, but also give the audience some heart-warming and touching moments. The family-friendly singalong, for which reservations are highly encouraged, is fun, funny and interactive. Pronto! is located at 608 S. Washington Ave.

For more information or to reserve a spot, visit www.facebook.com/dynamicduoact or call 248-544-7900.



Dynamic Duo – Gerianne and Eric – have brought their show to Pronto! in Royal Oak. The Dynamic Duo performs the best of the best showtunes from 12-2 p.m. during their “Saturday Singalong: A Broadway Brunch.” BTL photo: Andrew Potter

Royal Oak Enhances Court Experience for Citizens

The 44th District Court in Royal Oak has a new online case look-up system, the first of its kind in Oakland County, and one of the first in Michigan’s district courts. Court Administrator Gary Dodge told the Oakland Press the court received two new programs late last month.

One goal is to vastly reduce the number of phone calls the court has to handle each day on simple matters of court dates, fines and the status of cases, according to Dodge. The website will also allow users to review each day’s docket and look up court cases. Users can access the system through the city’s website at romi.gov under the Government tab or directly at romi.gov/904/Court-Judicial-Services.



Wine Stroll

Sample featured wines and signature hors d’oeuvres from more than 20 of downtown Royal Oak’s top restaurants in a self-guided walking tour from 12-5 p.m. on May 20. The event, made possible by the Royal Oak Restaurant Association, supports the Boys & Girls Clubs of Oakland and Macomb counties.

Participating locations include: Andiamo Royal Oak, bd’s Mongolian Grille, Blackfinn Ameripub, Cantina Diablo’s, Fifth Avenue, Gusoline Alley, The Inn Place, Mesa Tacos and Tequila, Mr. B’s Gastropub, Oak City Grille, O’Tooles, Pronto!, Rock on Third, Strada, Tequila Blue, The Morrie, Tom’s Oyster Bar and Vinoteca.

Non-refundable tickets for the 21 and over Wine Stroll are \$40 in advance and \$50 the day of the event if not sold out. Purchase tickets online <http://gaybe.am/7z>. For more information, visit www.DineRoyalOak.org

Royal Oak High School Ranked Among the Best

In the 2017 Best High School rankings by U.S. News and World Report, Royal Oak High School was ranked in the Top 50 statewide among the best public high schools in the state in the latest list of high-performing schools.

The data collected by the magazine in Michigan shows Royal Oak High School is ranked 42 out of 850 high schools. Royal Oak High School was one of 79 high schools in the state to earn a silver medal award. Six schools received gold medals and 160 got bronze medals.

This year marks the third year in a row that Royal Oak High School has gotten a silver medal designation in the annual ranking of high schools nationwide by the magazine. Statistics from the report show that the high school has an enrollment of nearly 1,300 students, a 92 percent graduation rate and a ratio of one teacher for every 19 students. The student body makeup is 51 percent male and 49 percent female,

The data collected by the magazine in Michigan shows Royal Oak High School is ranked 42 out of 850 high schools. Royal Oak High School was one of 79 high schools in the state to earn a silver medal award.

and the total minority enrollment is 17 percent. A key metric for analyzing top high schools in the study is the level of college readiness of its students. Students in Royal Oak have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement course work and exams and 44 percent of students at the school participate in the program, according to the report. U.S. News and World Report worked with RTI International, a global non-profit social research firm, to produce this year’s list of top high schools in the nation. A four-step process was used to identify the best high schools. The first three steps included performance on the math and reading portions of their state proficiency tests, graduation rates and how well all students were served. Schools that made it past the first three steps were assessed further on how prepared students were for college-level work.



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LaChanze 'Feeling Good' in Detroit Show

Tony Award-winner LaChanze is celebrated for her "ability to deliver exceptional vocals mixed with authentic emotions," says BroadwayWorld.com. LaChanze's latest show is an intensely personal on-stage memoir that uses the music of jazz, rock, soul and Broadway to share her journey. LaChanze will perform at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on May 20 at the Marlene Boll Theater, 1401 Broadway St. in Detroit. Call 313-405-5061 or visit <http://cabaret313.org/> to purchase tickets ranging in price from \$60-125.

Happenings

OUTINGS

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

Small Business Roundtable: Michigan LGBT Non-Discrimination 9:20 a.m. Register online. Discuss the impact non-discrimination policies would have on small businesses in Michigan. Small Business Majority and Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.facebook.com/events/1718155831811208/

LGBTQ Youth Meeting 6 p.m. Community Service - trash pickup OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., **Kalamazoo**. michael@kgkrc.org www.outfrontkzoo.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 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.OLconline.org

Tuesday, May 16

Community Housing Network Night 4 p.m. Community Housing Network, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

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/

Thursday, May 18

Nonprofit Management Conference 8 a.m. Low-cost training and networking for non-profit professionals. Keynote speaker Anne Parsons, President and CEO, Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Troy Chamber of Commerce and PNC Bank, 3838 Livernois, **Troy**. www.troychamber.com/non-profit-network/nonprofit-management-conference/

SAGE Table 5 p.m. Reserve your seat with Judy Lewis via email. A free intergenerational dinner party for LGBTQ people and allies where hearty conversation will be the main course. SAGE Metro Detroit, 4750 Woodward Ave., **Detroit**. jlewis@SAGEMetroDetroit.org www.sagemetrodetroit.org

LGBTQ Youth Meeting 6 p.m. The Ark: Services for Youth with Christina Hayes. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., **Kalamazoo**. michael@kgkrc.org www.outfrontkzoo.org

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

Friday, May 19

Coffee Hour with State Rep. Jon Hoadley 3:30 p.m. Join Jon Hoadley for coffee and good conversation about issues that matter to you most.

Alcoholic beverages will cannot be purchased during this event. Jon Hoadley of House District 60, 1156 S. Burdick St., **Kalamazoo**. www.facebook.com/events/417342508647490/

Saturday, May 20

The Indivisible Fair 2 p.m. Hosted by U.S. Senator Gary Peters, Kunoor Ojha from the National Indivisible Guide, Jocelyn Benson, CEO of the Ross Initiative for Sports Equality. Meet with community activists and service groups from across the state of Michigan.

Farough & Associates and Indivisible Michigan - District 11, 28600 W. 11 Mile Road, **Farmington**. www.facebook.com/events/1316435955113710/

Sunday, May 21

Kidney Walk 8:45 a.m. Registration at 7:30 a.m. Visit the HFHS page for details. HFHS Equity & Diversity Team, 8450 W. 10 Mile Road, **Royal Oak**. http://donate.kidney.org/site/TR/Walk/Michigan?team_id=204105&pg=team&fr_id=8504

"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, 6427 Centurion Drive #150B, **Lansing**. www.voterunlead.org

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

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

Editor's Pick

Play Date Potluck Brunch

Kick off the first LGBTQ & Ally Family Group of the year during the Grand Rapids Pride Center's "Play Date Potluck" Brunch at 11 a.m. on May 20 at 343 Atlas Ave. SE in Grand Rapids. Hosted by Missy and Jenny, this is an opportunity to get to know other LGBTQ & Ally families. Board games and crafts will be available for children to play with. Email family@grpride.org to find out what to bring and let event coordinators know of any allergies or restrictions. More information is available at www.facebook.com/groups/grpridefamily.





A DISCUSSION & BOOK SIGNING

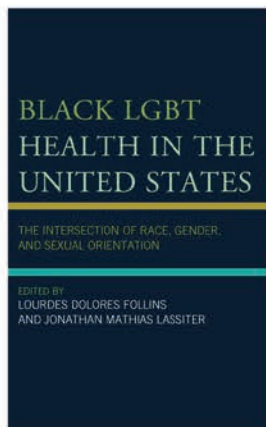
Black LGBT Health in the United States

The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation
Published by Lexington Books

June 2, 2017

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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Join Authors

Dr. Lourdes Dolores Follins, Editor
Associate Professor,
Kingsborough Community College/CUNY



Dr. Jonathan Mathias Lassiter, Editor
Assistant Professor of Psychology, Muhlenberg College



Dr. Amorie Robinson (Kofi Adoma), Contributing writer
Licensed clinical psychologist serving Wayne County
Third Circuit Court adjudicated youth at the
Clinic for Child Study in Detroit.



Moderated by Leseliey Welch, Deputy Director
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Refreshments will be served. There is no charge for this event. Common
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Kevin Heard Makes Top 'Twenty in Their 20s' List

One of this year's top 20 millennials influencing progress in Southeast Michigan is a member of the LGBT community. Kevin Heard is the founding board member and board president of the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce.



Kevin Heard

Crain's Detroit Business holds an annual celebration highlighting the best and brightest under 30 who may not have made their first million, but whose creativity and entrepreneurial spirit is already positively contributing to a new energy locally.

"When they told me I was one of the 'Twenty in their 20s' I was shocked and immediately humbled. I have been working on this chamber for three and a half years. I never knew how big it was going to get, let alone gain any recognition," said Heard, noting the chamber's role in putting a magnifying glass on the diversity and validity of LGBT businesses.

"I am thankful for my board of directors, our members and corporate partners for their support. We still have a lot of work to do. With their continued support we can get closer to creating an inclusive environment for all."

Heard confirmed the organization continues to grow and attract corporate partners, including Kroger, Henry Ford Health Systems, and most recently PNC Bank, which signed on in April. When Heard became board president in September 2015 he increased paid membership by 400 percent, creating an operating budget close to \$20,000.

Long-term goals for the chamber include creating an LGBT business district within the city of Detroit. Heard told Crain's he believes a less fragmented business district could help with another goal: attracting LGBT tourism dollars.

In addition to his chamber responsibilities, Heard works full time as an account executive at Michigan.com. He recently became the lead for USA Today Network's LGBTQ employee resource group, which fosters a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the company's mission, values, goals and business practices.

Read more about Heard online <http://gaybe.am/s2>.

Motor City Pre-Pride Community Meeting

Motor City Pride will host a pre-Pride community meeting at 6:30 p.m. on May 23 at TechTown, 440 Burroughs St. in Detroit.

"The meeting is to inform individuals and groups about the plans for the festival, and to hear their ideas as we fine tune details," said Dave Wait, chairperson of the festival and parade June 10-11 at Hart Plaza in Detroit. "We feel that the more people that know about the plans, the better the experience for all attendees."

This year, MCP will gather and pay respect to those lost to violence both within the Michigan LGBTQ community and globally, including the 49 lives that were tragically lost at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando.

MCP invites the community to join the organization in a candlelight vigil at 8 p.m. on June 10 following the close of the festival that night. The vigil is open to everyone in the community who seeks peace and



Photo Courtesy of Tih Penfil

tolerance, and will be free of charge to attend. Illumination devices will be provided as supplies permit.

The application for the MCP Pride Parade is now available online. This

year's parade will be themed "Stronger Together" as the state of Michigan comes together as a community.

More details are available on the [MotorCity Pride Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/MotorCityPride) www.facebook.com/

LGBTQ Elders and Youth to Break Bread at SAGE Table

On a typical day, not many LGBTQ people cross paths in a meaningful way with LGBTQ people from other generations. Many do not have children to care for them as they age nor do they have families that fully support them. Too many LGBTQ people will go through different stages of their lives without some measure of support that only someone from another generation could provide.

In an effort to cut across the age boundaries of our day-to-day lives in a positive and profound way, SAGE Metro Detroit will join the entire country at 5 p.m. on May 18 to host a "SAGE Table," which brings together LGBTQ people and allies of all ages. This event is one of 163, so far, nationwide to create connections by sharing a meal together, giving LGBTQ people of all ages a chance to have

conversations that many have never had before.

The SAGE website reads: "As we build connections among LGBT people of all ages, we strengthen our community ties and forge new traditions. 'SAGE Table' creates the opportunity for LGBT people and their allies to explore what caring for one another can look like when age no longer divides us."

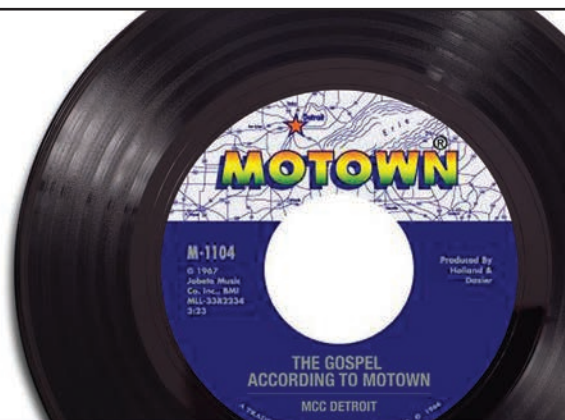
Seating is limited for the special one-day "SAGE Table" – with support from AARP – at Hannan House, 4750 Woodward Ave. in Detroit.

Pre-registration is required with Judy Lewis via email JLewis@SAGEMetroDetroit.org or visit www.sagemetrodetroit.org for more information.



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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Between THE Lines

David Rosenberg, Longtime BTL Distributor, Retires

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

David Rosenberg's involvement with Between The Lines dates back to 1993 when there was no LGBT newspaper in circulation in Michigan. There had been LGBT publications in the area before, most notably 10 Percent, which was later renamed the Michigan Tribune before it had stopped publishing almost 25 years ago.



David Rosenberg

After two years, Rosenberg, a Long Island, New York native, had called it quits at the University of Michigan Medical School and was working as a certified massage therapist.

"I needed a newspaper to advertise in because back in those days that was the only way people found out about you," Rosenberg recalled. "There was no internet."

Rosenberg was friends with Mark Weinstein, a writer just back from an extended tour of Europe who needed to find a job.

"He was very good and he was a great thinker and an excellent writer," said Rosenberg of his friend. "His politics were progressive. So in terms of writing and editorial he was a natural fit for a newspaper. My skills

were that I was able to use PageMaker software and that's what we used to make the newspaper. We were able to go to the University of Michigan computer center, which at that time you didn't need any ID to get into. So I helped him use the PageMaker software and we crafted the paper together."

The first edition came out in April 1993, and the two commenced a monthly publishing schedule.

"I helped out until Mark got his footings on using the software and then he really is the one who made the paper what it was," said Rosenberg. "I also helped provide some seed money to help print the first edition and helped him secure some advertising. Then he published the paper for about 11 months."

By this time, Weinstein was looking to move to a radical faerie community, so he sought out someone to take over his publishing responsibilities.

"I didn't want to do it," said Rosenberg. "So Shannon Rose came in and later Julie Enser and the two of them were owners of the paper for about year. I helped Shannon some but ultimately we parted ways. Then there was a switch around in 1995 and Jan Stevenson, who had been the executive director of Affirmations, took over the paper with her partner Susan Horowitz, who had recently moved to Michigan from New York."

Still, Rosenberg continued to be affiliated with the paper. By the fall of 1995 he had begun distributing it.

"I covered the bars in the city of Detroit as well as the Ypsilanti community," Rosenberg said. "And I made sure that Eastern Michigan University got distribution."

Rosenberg continued distributing BTL for the next

22 years, until stepping down from his post this month.

So why retire now?

"I've been investing money using my earnings and I feel good about where I am right now," said Rosenberg. "So I can start working less and spending more time doing other things that are helpful for me. I'll continue to work as a massage therapist and a yoga teacher as well."

Looking back on his journey with BTL, Rosenberg said he is proud of what he helped build and what the paper has become today.

"I think Between The Lines is definitely a chronicler of record for the gay community," he said.

"I also think that the editor can help nurture future gay writers like Jay Kaplan who wrote an excellent opinion piece about the significance of circuit court decisions for the community. Jay Kaplan is not writing for Metro Times. He's not writing for the Free Press. But he's a good writer and that's where the gay newspaper fills a void, by finding excellent thinkers in the gay community who can write well and bring their voices out to the public."

Between The Lines wishes to thank Rosenberg for his many years of service and extend well wishes for a happy retirement.



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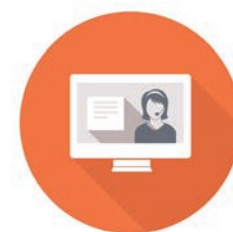
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Editor's Pick

An Evening of Art, Fashion & Philanthropy

Jim Luckey, 65-year-old retired Detroit architect, is well-known for his colorful, strongly patterned trousers, which will be the subject of an auction on June 6. "30 by Jim Luckey," an auction of 30 bespoke pairs of pants, is presented by Ethan and Gretchen Davidson to support the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park. The event at 5:30 p.m., hosted by the David Klein Gallery, 1520 Washington Blvd. in Detroit, features wine and small bites. Tickets for a \$75 donation can be purchased online at <http://gaybe.am/HY>.



▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 20

MUSIC & MORE

Benefits/Social Events

Kalamazoo Pride "Vox Vidorra with Caj Monet" Tickets: \$10 (21+) All proceeds benefit OutFront Kalamazoo. Bell's Eccentric Cafe - Back Room, 355 E. Kalamazoo Ave., Kalamazoo. 8 p.m. May 19. www.facebook.com/events/1773416249639637/

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

Cabaret 313 "Chuck Cooper and the Clan" Tickets: \$25-125. Marlene Boll Theatre at the Boil Family YMCA, 1401 Broadway St., Detroit. 7 p.m. May 20. 313-405-5061. <http://cabaret313.org/shows/chuck-cooper-clan-may-20-2017/>

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

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. Through June 5. 2485455545. www.theringwald.com

Taking Shakespeare Tickets: \$25-30. Students: \$10 with valid ID. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. May 18 - June 18. 517-655-SHOW. www.williamstontheatre.org

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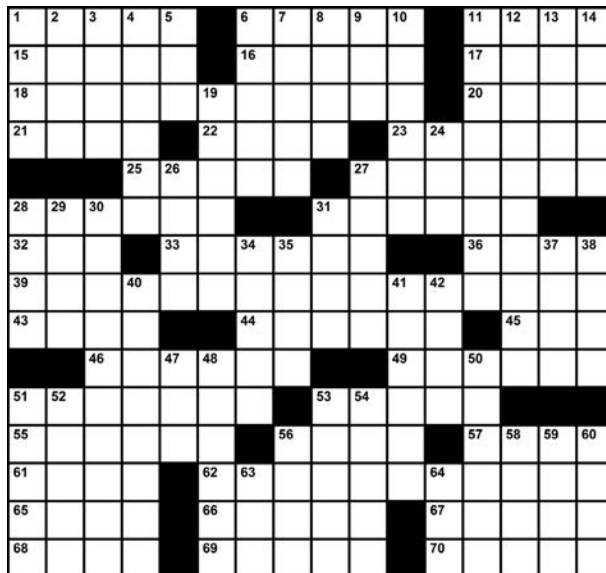
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Across

- 1 Drag queen ___ Lettuce
6 Dawson's, in teen TV drama
11 Break it on Broadway
15 Oral performances
16 Primary blood carrier
17 Novelist Patricia ___ Warren
18 Out Pentatonix singer
20 Handle a shrew, for Shakespeare
21 Sexy clothing material
22 "Don't Look ___ That Way" (Cole Porter)

- 23 Potbelly, and others
25 Endora portrayer
27 Sawbuck
28 Used the Divine Miss M's name in vain?
31 Jeremy Irons role as a pope
32 Lines at checkout? (abbr.)
33 Medical research monkey
36 For-skin cream ingredient
39 Pentatonix cover of a Freddie Mercury song that went viral
43 Give ___ to (approve)
44 White water site
45 Virginia Woolf ___ Stephen

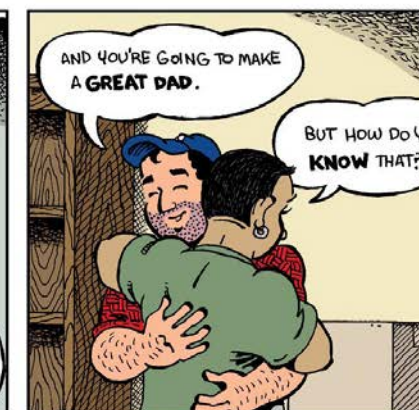
- 46 Pulling out of the closet?
49 Rock Hudson's "Winchester," et al.
51 Lubricant containers
53 Prefix with vitamin
55 The Spanish one was huge
56 Pound sound
57 De Matteo of "Desperate Housewives"
61 Top target
62 Out Pentatonix singer
65 "___ The Woods"
66 Gung-ho
67 "Amadeus" star Tom
68 One who gazes at crystal balls
69 "Bewitched" aunt
70 Go lickety-split

Down

- 1 Top-remover Mia
2 Buffalo's lake
3 Morse clicks
4 Country houses, to Nureyev
5 It hangs from your butt
6 Montmartre menu
7 Travels aimlessly
8 Highland dialect
9 Heteros, on PlanetOut?
10 "The Gay Metropolis" writer Charles
11 Willa Cather character, and others
12 Go from the bar without a partner
13 Recipient of Bugs' kisses
14 Sharon of "Queer as Folk"
19 1982 biopic with Ian Charleson
24 "Star Trek: ___"

- 26 Word after wheat, for granola lesbians
27 Singer Reagon
28 OJ portrayer Gooding
29 Second word of fairy tales
30 Bill, to Hilary at Yale
31 Tupperware sound
34 Makes money the old-fashioned way, to John Houseman
35 Unforeseen difficulty
37 River of Hirschfeld's country
38 Davis pair in "Feud"
40 Cam Tucker, on "Modern Family"
41 Brewer Coors
42 Exam for jrs.
47 Abe Lincoln's boy
48 Bad way to come
50 Emulate half of the Odd Couple
51 Wet spot on a blanket of sand
52 Cara of "Fame"
53 Online stat exaggeration?
54 A lot up front?
56 Madonna taught this in "The Next Best Thing"
58 Get under the skin of
59 Suffix with prefer
60 Like finer wine
63 James Dean's "East of Eden" role
64 Grateful cries for one who satisfies

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