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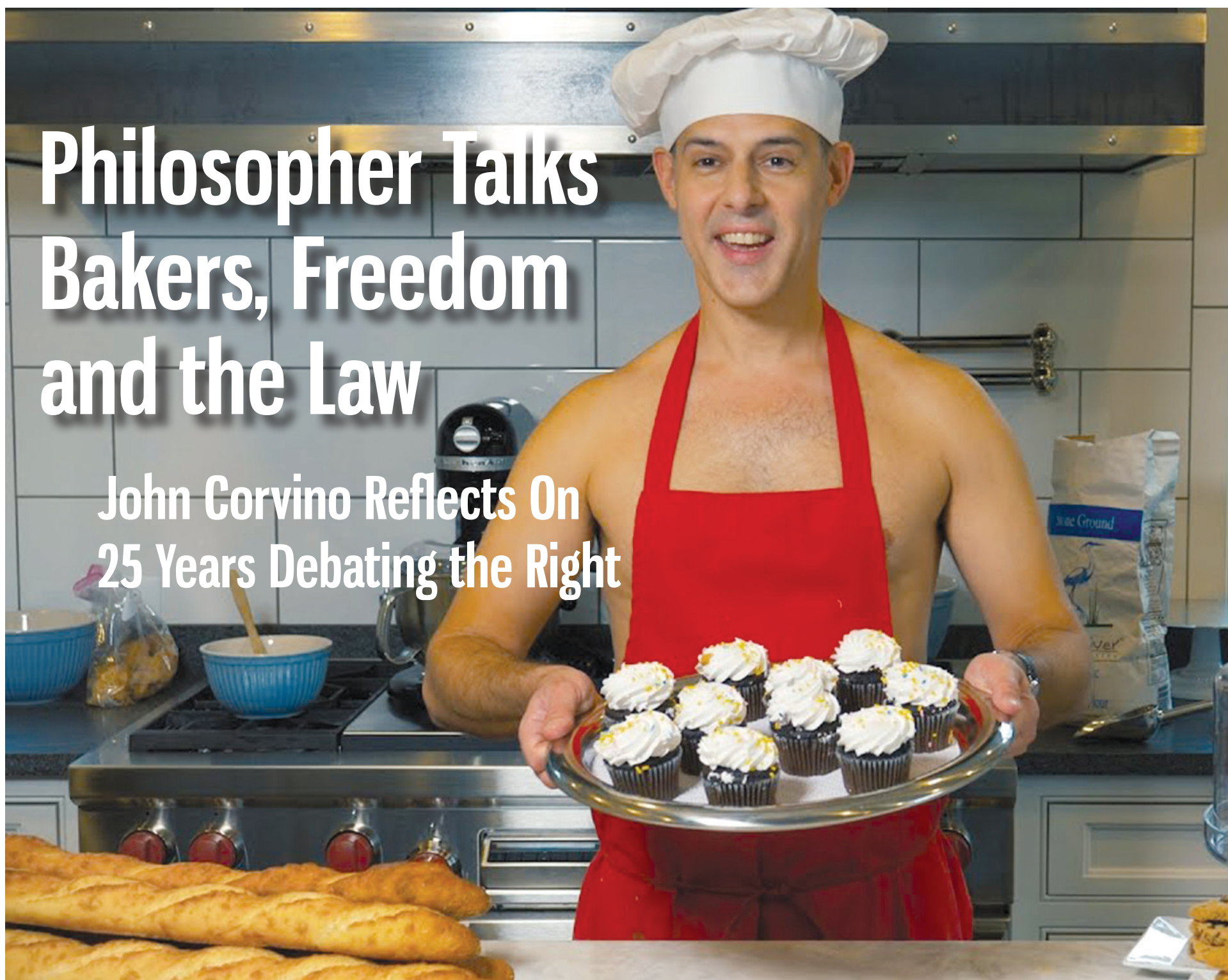


**National Testing Day: Know Where to Go
HIV and STI Testing Sites**

**Texas Governor Signs Anti-LGBT 'Religious
Freedom' Adoption Bill**

Philosopher Talks Bakers, Freedom and the Law

John Corvino Reflects On
25 Years Debating the Right



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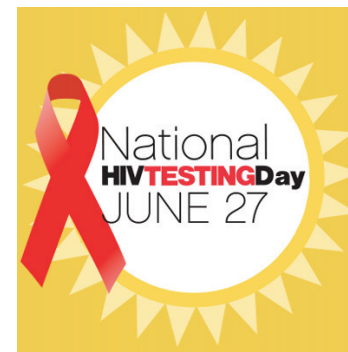
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Philosopher Talks Bakers, Freedom and the Law

Michigan's John Corvino Reflects On 25 Years Debating the Right

Community Celebrates Anniversary of the Philosopher's Lecture, 'What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?'

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

In the 25 years that philosopher, author and lecturer John Corvino has been traveling the U.S. to speak on homosexuality and morality, there have been two changes that are most noticeable to him.

The first is that most people know someone who is LGBT so his presence as an openly gay man is "not much of a novelty to audiences" anymore. The second is that the U.S. now has equal marriage rights.

"Of course, those two changes work hand-in-hand," he said. "Greater visibility made it easier for us to make the case for marriage equality, and marriage equality contributed to visibility."

Yet, he points out, there are still young people being kicked out of their homes for being LGBT and people of all ages are living in the closet.

"It is easy for those of us who are 'out' to forget that many people still experience the



BTL photo: Andrew Potter

SAVE THE DATE

Bakers, Freedom and the Law

Don't miss an evening with John Corvino on June 28 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Affirmations in Ferndale. Corvino will present his new book, "Debating Religious Liberty and Discrimination," followed by a Q&A session. The event is free. Coffee and dessert will be served. Corvino's book is available to purchase online prior to the event for \$20 at <http://gaybe.am/qP>, and at the event for \$25. All proceeds will benefit Affirmations.

shame of the closet and the harm of anti-LGBT bigotry. We should never be complacent about the gains we've made."

So when asked if he thinks his lecture, "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?" is still relevant today, Corvino said, "Yes, although of course I wish it weren't."

This year marks the 25-year anniversary of that lecture, first delivered at the University of Texas at Austin on April 15, 1992. It's also the 10-year anniversary of the DVD version, which is now Corvino's most watched video on YouTube.

To commemorate the anniversary of his lecture and his work for equality more generally, Corvino was honored with the inaugural "Community Hero Award" at the Affirmations Spring Bash in Detroit on March

18. A compilation video was shown during the event.

"It was great," he said. "It was also really hard for me to watch it without tearing up, seeing the work put together like that, realizing that I've got 25 years of adult life to reflect on and life goes by pretty quickly."

Not long ago, Corvino was asked to give the lecture, which examines the various stereotypes with which people attempt to conflate homosexuality with immorality.

He said he hadn't given the lecture in quite a few years and he felt like Carol Channing doing "Hello, Dolly!" (a 1964 musical).

"It's interesting," said Corvino, looking back on his career. He has been the chair of the philosophy department at Wayne State University in Detroit since 2012. He

graduated from Chaminade High School, an all-boys Catholic school, in 1987. He attended St. John's University in New York City, graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in 1990. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin in 1998.

After that, Corvino entered the job market for the first time. He sent out 37 applications and got zero interview opportunities before landing a "temporary" one-year lectureship at WSU in 2001. A year later, he tried again, sending out 45 applications and still got zero interviews.

"I'm sure the fact that I had LGBT stuff on my curriculum vitae had something to do with those early career struggles," said Corvino who authored in 1997, "Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science, and Culture of

Homosexuality,” the most comprehensive anthology on homosexuality available, among other articles he wrote during that time with gay subject matter.

“Thankfully, Wayne State renewed my position for another year, and then another,” he said. Corvino was tenured, promoted and became full professor in 2015.

“I do feel very grateful and sometimes quite surprised when I reflect on where I am right now,” he said. “Perhaps even more surprising to me is the niche I’ve managed to carve out as a ‘public philosopher.’ In grad school I aspired to being a professor. I never aspired or expected to write op-eds, travel the country speaking, or do videos. But it’s become a defining feature of my career.”

Corvino said a number of people have contacted him to help translate his YouTube videos into other languages like Chinese, Portugese and Polish, for example. The self-described “typical American” is only fluent in English at this point, but is “gratified” to impact people in far away places.

Rebecca Kukla, professor of philosophy at Georgetown University and senior research scholar at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics said she thinks of Corvino as “one of the treasures in our discipline, and I am grateful to him.”

Kukla praised Corvino as the person who made LGBTQ issues into legitimate topics for philosophical inquiry.

“He was also one of a small handful of people who proved that public philosophy could be valuable and rigorous,” she said. “Both have been enormous intellectual and political gifts to the field of philosophy, and both have been incredibly liberating for a generation of queer philosophers and for any philosophers who care about contributing to public discourse.”

Corvino’s writing has appeared at The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, The Advocate, the Huffington Post, The New Republic, and Commonweal Magazine, as well as in numerous academic anthologies and journals. Known as “The Gay Moralist,” (Corvino’s column appeared bi-weekly in BTL from 2002-2007) he has spoken at more than 200 campuses on issues of sexuality, ethics, and marriage.

“For someone so young, John has been at it for a long time – making a patient, compelling, persuasive, clear case for the morality and common sense of gay and transgender inclusion, equality, and freedom,” said Evan Wolfson, founder of Freedom to Marry.

“John’s hallmarks are putting rational arguments in emotional and easy-to-follow terms, mixing in effective metaphors and analogies as well as humor. He is always fair, almost to a fault, in stating the positions and assuming the good faith of opponents. And with regard to those opponents, he has shown a preternatural patience in engaging with some doozies for a very long time, representing us and doing us proud on the front lines of intellectual debate and persuasion.”

His latest book, “Debating Religious

Liberty and Discrimination” with counterpoint by Ryan T. Anderson and Sherif Girgis is available now from Oxford University Press.

“I will say this – dialogue is hard and it seems to be becoming harder and harder,” said Corvino. “There are a lot of people who are observing that problem and writing about it and trying to get to the roots of it.”

While that insight is not unique to him by any means, one of the things Corvino said he learned working on this project is that even though he and his co-authors were committed to having a thoughtful dialogue, to understanding one another, to setting up stronger arguments, it was still hard.

“With the best of intentions and considerable effort, there were still a number of points during the process that were tense and difficult and made us very cranky,” he said. “When you have all the conditions seemingly in place to do it well, and it’s still hard to do. So just imagine how hard it is to do in 140 characters on Twitter or in a Facebook thread with people that you don’t really know or in an online op-ed opposite people that you have no relationship with.”

Corvino values the importance of building relationships and trust with people on different sides of the issues so they can make space for otherwise difficult conversations.

“He is smart as a whip, persuasive, principled and witty - not to mention good looking. Everyone who has followed his career publicly knows that,” said Maggie Gallagher, co-founder of the National Organization for Marriage and Corvino’s counterpoint in his book “Debating Same-Sex Marriage,” published in 2012. He is also the author of “What’s Wrong with Homosexuality?” published in 2013.

“What those of us lucky enough to know him in person know is he is also generous, with a gift for hospitality so unusual in these highly polarized times. He’s no longer a Catholic but he inspires me to try to be a better one,” said Gallagher. “Too often when we debate passionately a cause we believe in we throw darts at straw men. John always sees the humanity in the other. Not many of us can pull it off as he does.”

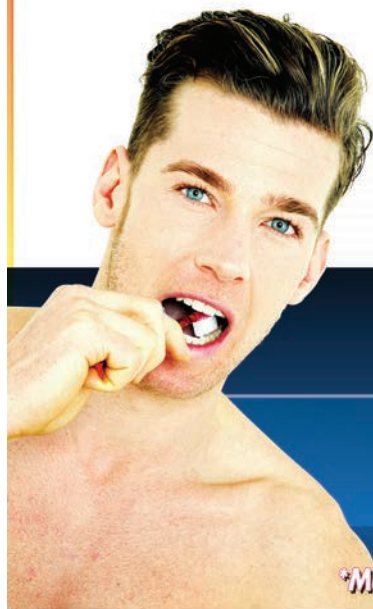
Corvino said, “It’s a great privilege to make a career out of something that is not just intrinsically rewarding for me, but that makes a difference in people’s lives.”

Corvino realizes that not everybody’s experience has been as positive as his, but part of his hope is “to convince people of what I think is the right position on these issues, but part of my hope is also to model a better conversation to show people that it’s possible when we disagree sharply with the people around us, that it’s possible to come together at the table and work at coexisting better.”

Follow John Corvino online at <http://johncorvino.com> or on Twitter @ [johncorvino](https://twitter.com/johncorvino).

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HRC Names Ingham Community Health Centers 'Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality'

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Elias Sivavajchaipong of Lansing said his history with past medical providers has been good and while his medical needs were met, he always felt uncomfortable discussing certain information with them.

"Since I have started seeing Dr. Wert, I have felt extremely comfortable discussing any of my medical concerns with him," said Sivavajchaipong about Dr. Erik Wert, medical director of the Ingham Community Health Centers in Lansing. "In turn, he has been able to get to know me personally. I feel that I am receiving some of the best medical care that I have had in a while."

Under Wert's leadership, healthcare providers at the ICHC have established a reputation for maintaining open and trusting relationships with their patients. This creates an environment where all patients feel welcome.

"We are committed to providing inclusive care to everyone in our community," said Ingham County Health Officer Linda S. Vail. "We will continue to strive for ways to support LGBTQ patients and community members and address LGBTQ health disparities."

The Ingham County Health Department's Community Health Centers recently participated in the 10th edition of the Healthcare Equality Index survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation and was named a "Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality."

Of the more than 1,500 facilities included in the 2017 HRC HEI survey, ICHC is one of just 302 nationwide to receive the top designation and is one of only two healthcare providers recognized as a leader in the state of Michigan.

The designation is based upon foundational elements of LGBTQ patient-centered care, LGBTQ patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and LGBTQ patient and community engagement.

"Making clinics welcoming for LGBTQ people is important," said Wert, who has worked hard



Dr. Erik Wert, medical director of the Ingham Community Health Centers in Lansing. BTL Photo: Todd Heywood

with Hope Dundas, a physician's assistant, to create an inclusive, affirming space for the LGBTQ and kink communities.

"Many people are afraid to tell someone about their lifestyle and they feel ashamed," he said. Wert often tells his kink patients, "As long as there is consent and that's what makes you happy, you have nothing to be afraid of. I often warn my patients or offer advice to make sure they make healthy and informed decisions."

Prep

Wert operates out of the Forest Community Health Center in Lansing where he is known for using the ground-breaking Pre-Exposure Prophylactics, or PrEP, program. The clinic, one of the few providers of PrEP in Ingham County, takes referrals from many private offices and organizations, including the Lansing Area AIDS Network.

The clinic at 2316 S. Cedar St. is the "hub," said Wert, for a majority of their LGBTQ healthcare. There are seven other Ingham County clinics in the group that offer primary healthcare, women's healthcare, school-based healthcare, children's healthcare and dental

care. All of which display the HRC equal sign in the window, sending a message of support for equal rights.

Beyond this, the ICHC assists patients with insurance enrollment, transportation and behavioral health consulting. There is also a sliding fee discount program made possible by federal grants through the Bureau of Primary Health Care.

Training in culturally-competent care is mandatory for everyone at the clinics, said Wert. Front office staff learn how to sensitively collect sexual orientation and gender identity data. The office is designed so nobody can tell which doctor a patient is seeing.

Wert said that he and his team have created workarounds in rigid computer programs to better serve transgender patients. "If my medical assistant walks out to talk to a patient, a warning pops up so they know the name and the pronouns they want to go by," he said.

Sara Doherty of Lansing has been seeing Dundas since October 2016 for both transition and non-transition related care.

"It's so nice to see a provider and not have to worry about their response to my gender identity," said Doherty, a non-binary individual who runs a support group for

LGBTQ teens at the Child and Family Charities agency in Lansing.

"We've had Hope come in as a guest speaker to help teens who are considering transition to understand their options. She is a great support for the kids," they said. "Without even talking about myself specifically, for a lot of people, if you're dealing with physical dysphoria, visiting a medical professional can be a stressful experience. Seeing someone like Hope who is aware of those issues and sensitive to them can make a huge difference. She asks helpful questions to engage your level of comfort, to help you relax and feel comfortable with something that is already uncomfortable."

Wert said that socially-acceptable outlets are not always available for young people. As a result, they self-medicate, which leads to substance abuse and increases their risk for other risky behaviors.

"I know a lot of primary care doctors don't discuss things like sexual orientation and gender identity. They aren't asking the right questions or doing the right tests. It starts with making people feel comfortable so they can have those intimate conversations and discuss their health more freely," he said.

"Studies out of New York, for example, show that lesbians don't get required pap screenings because they don't want to express their sexuality. Their perception is that they are low risk because they aren't having sex with men, but in fact their risk of HPV and cancer goes up without this exam," said Wert.

Other Michigan Health Resources

Only a couple other medical homes are focused on serving the LGBTQ community in Michigan including the Ruth Ellis Health and Wellness Center in Highland Park, specifically for at-risk LGBTQ youth who have runaway from home or are experiencing homelessness. Much like the new Corktown Health Center which opens this summer in Detroit, the ICHC model similar programs like Fenway in Boston and Howard Brown in Chicago.

"We have had the continued support of the administration and the board of directors who hired me to provide this care without interference," said Wert. "It makes this job so much easier."

Jon Villasurda, Community Health Center Board President since 2014, said, "Dr. Wert does a great job. We have a good collaborative relationship and we are intentional about making sure patients feel welcome at our health centers."

Villasurda notes that some members of the board identify as LGBTQ and is 50 percent patient-based, a requirement for federally-based health centers.

"So it really is the community driving the needs, assessment and operations of the organization to accommodate the LGBTQ population," he said, adding that the board easily gave Wert and his team authorization to participate in the HRC HEI survey. "He worked really hard on that. We are really proud of it."

See the HRC HEI results online www.hrc.org/he/search/michigan/ingham-community-health-centers.

Find an Ingham County Community Health Center in Lansing online hd.ingham.org/chc.

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Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

"It's a pity that youth is wasted on the young," said George Bernard Shaw, whose play "Pygmalion" was given a fresh start and a heart pacer as a Broadway musical and, later, a movie "My Fair Lady."

Shaw, who married late in life but didn't care tuppence for romantic dalliance, lived to be a feisty and loquacious 94-year-old. He talked and talked and talked himself into old age – and probably a number of his audiences who sat through his many three-act, four-hour marathons as well. (Plays are still frequently presented at Stratford, Ontario.)

In spite of Shaw's misspent youth quip, if a cosmic fairy godmother or heavenly lady tempest zapped me back to my carefree 20s, I'd do my darndest to learn a few more dance steps with an even livelier set of gay Arthur Murray dance partners. Bunny hop, anyone? line dance, leather dudes?

...getting older hasn't bothered me as much as I thought it would. At least I don't think it has. ("Nobody wants you when you're old and gay," my mother cautioned me when I entered kindergarten, Little Lulu lunch pail in hand.)

Truth is, I don't remember much about turning 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70...or, 80. (If only I had kept a daily journal instead of my "saint for a day" address book.)

But getting older hasn't bothered me as much as I thought it would. At least I don't think it has. ("Nobody wants you when you're old and gay," my mother cautioned me when I entered kindergarten, Little Lulu lunch pail in hand.)

I've never experienced a panic at finding myself over the hill. (Or, taking my turn in the barrel for that matter.) And though I've been around the block so many times it doesn't have any corners to stand on, I've been stoic about losing my hairline in life's turbulent wind tunnel – resigned to experiencing full-body Mach 3 gravitational sag of my gluteus whatever.

If aging is something that happened only to me (or Queen Elizabeth), I'd have a legitimate gripe, so I counsel myself over morning coffee. "Go not quietly into that good night!" I say at bedtime, snoring soundly in spite of myself.

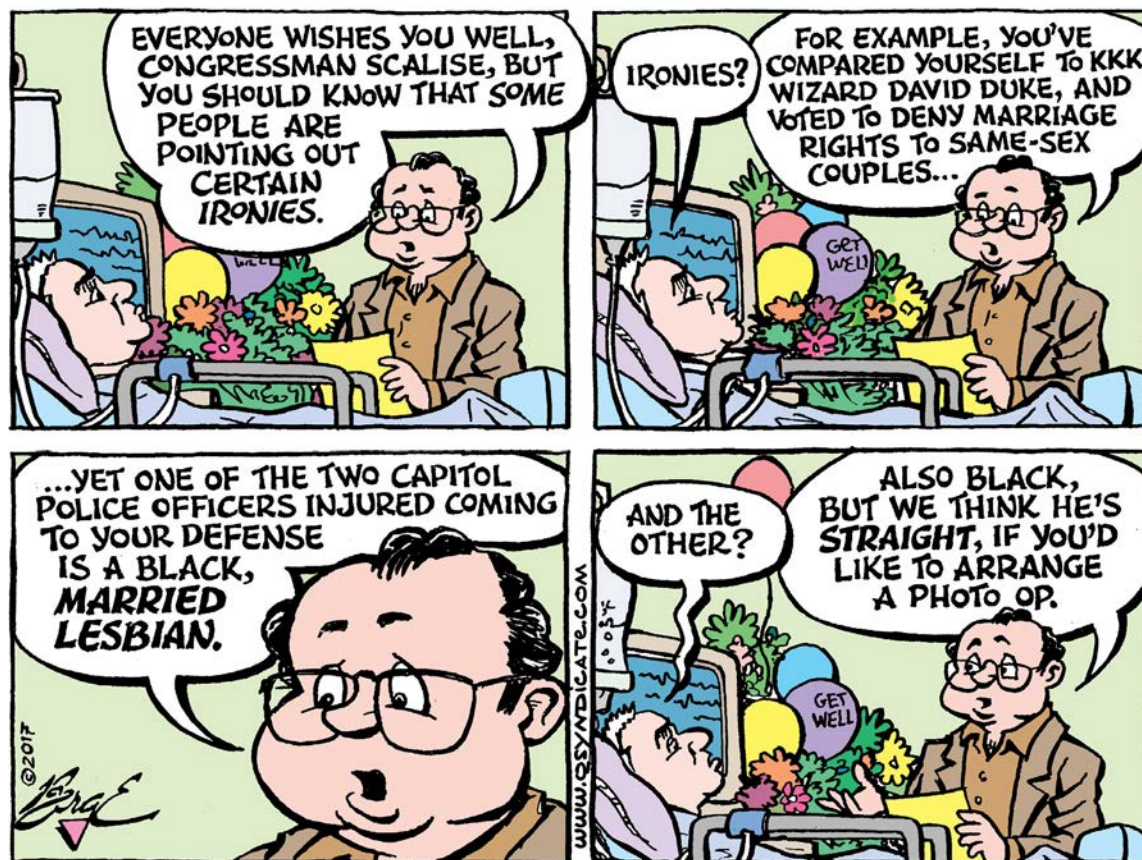
The truth is, aging – like taxation – will chat up anybody who stands in line long enough to chit chat. (Just don't stand naked in front of a full-length, two-way mirror or before a sharp-eyed IRS auditor.)

I do, however remember two birthdays fondly: my 21st at a gay bar and a surprise party for my 50th. In between, I haven't a clue where I blew out my allotted candles or, if in the act of such celebratory ID checking, I got my wish (or, my man).

We all remember our coming of age. "Thank God I'm 21. No more 3.2 Zing Beer for me! It's all disco and LED lights and bubbling champagne from here on in." (Please have three pieces of picture ID handy. Pay the cover charge. And, what are you doing at closing time, big guy?)

And 50! Wow! 600 months. 18,250 days. 43,800 hours. How time

See next page



BY JAY KAPLAN

Viewpoint

Jenison'ToneDeaf' in Title IX Issue

On May 30, the 7th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals issued a great decision for transgender students. Too bad Jenison Public Schools isn't paying attention to it. Granted the 7th Circuit covers the states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, but decisions from Court of Appeals can be informative for other states and school districts, like Jenison to follow. Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District says that Kenosha Schools cannot bar Ash Whitaker, a transgender male student, from using the boys' restrooms at his high school – that to do so violates Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in public education. By requiring Ash to use a bathroom that does not conform to his gender identity, the school district punishes him for his gender non-conformance, which is sex discrimination.

Furthermore, by engaging in this discriminatory conduct, Kenosha schools, as government entity, is violating the equal protection guarantees under the U.S. Constitution for Ash and other transgender students. Applying a heightened constitutional scrutiny on this equal protection claim (instead of the more deferential rational basis test), the Court found that the school district failed to demonstrate that denying Ash access to male restrooms "serves important governmental objectives."

Kenosha defended its bathroom policy by claiming it needs to protect the privacy rights of all students. However, the Court found that a transgender student's presence in a restroom provides no more a risk to other

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► Kaplan: Viewpoint

Continued from p. 8

students' privacy rights than that of cisgender students using the same restroom. The Court noted that the District already has rules and policies to address the possible incident of an overly curious student trying to sneak glances of his or her classmates performing bodily functions.

"Common sense tells us that the communal restroom is a place where individuals act in a discreet manner to protect their privacy and those who have true privacy concerns are able to utilize a stall."

The 7th Circuit's opinion is both sensitive to the interests and concerns of transgender students as well as a sensible reading of civil rights law. If only this common sense would be followed by the Jenison Public Schools. They have told Flynn Suttorp a transgender male student that he can only use one gender neutral restroom at school, the nurse's bathroom in the school office, a staff bathroom in one of the hallways, or the girls' bathrooms. The reason for this policy is that the district fears that some parents may complain and or that some cisgender male students might feel uncomfortable having a transgender student in the same bathroom with them. Why does this questionable rationale sound suspiciously familiar? Recall in the film, "Hidden Figures" where African American female employees at NASA were singled out and relegated to use the "colored restrooms" located much less conveniently on the campus, because some of their white colleagues might complain or feel uncomfortable using the same restrooms as them. The blatant message to these women that they were not to be valued or treated the same as their white co-workers.

Jenison's policy plays into the fears and ignorance regarding what it means to

be transgender. Flynn Suttorp, who was incorrectly assigned the female gender at birth, experienced terrible struggle and pain until he was finally to be his true authentic self – a boy – at home and in school. His use of the communal restrooms are for the same purpose as any other student. And yet he has been singled out and told by his high school that he not to be accorded the same dignity as other students. He is somehow "less than" because he is transgender. The shame, stigma, and inconvenience caused by the district's bathroom policy makes him feel unwelcome at school and uncomfortable using school bathrooms.

It shouldn't matter that Jenison, located west of Grand Rapids, is a "conservative" community with traditional values. Treating people fairly is a pretty damn traditional and some would say conservative value. Complaints and fear of community backlash have never been legal justifications for discrimination. And for those cisgender kids who are uncomfortable, why can't they use the three gender neutral designated bathrooms?

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals (which covers Michigan) will be hearing the appeals of two federal district court decisions that have held that Title IX prohibits schools from denying transgender students to use bathrooms in accordance with their gender identity. Perhaps the 6th Circuit will provide Jenison with the long overdue impetus to do the "right" thing regarding transgender students.

Alas, for now Jenison continues to remain tone deaf on this issue, apparently oblivious to the harmful message it is sending to all students in the District, especially Flynn Suttorp.

Jay Kaplan is the LGBT Legal Project Staff Attorney with the ACLU of Michigan. Connect with him at

famous poem: "They are not long, the days of wine and roses. Out of a misty dream; Our path emerges for a while, then closes. Within a dream." The poet, Englishman Ernest Dowson, died at 32. Short changed. An alcoholic.

Unasked for advice: Enjoy life. It's never later than you think. Or, is it? (To hell with Trump, who's 70 but acts IQ 45.)

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 8

unzips flies. ("You took too long to powder your nose, Mary. You were too busy finding out what the backroom boys were having, Charley.") Ah, yes...

At some undesignated point past ages 60 or 70 – you'll know when you get there, LA Bruce – one stops counting. And, to quote a

Correction

In the article, "Corporations Have Big Presence at Motor City Pride," published on June 15, members present from Christ the King Catholic Church during the parade were from Detroit, not Ann Arbor.

Creep of the Week

Betsy DeVos

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



If you're a school administrator, a teacher, or even a whole school district and you want to assert your right to discriminate against some of your students FOR REASONS, you're in luck! The Education Department under Betsy DeVos ain't gonna stop you. (Unless you're against white Christians probably.)

This is especially true if you want to discriminate against transgender students. The Education Department recently dropped cases in Ohio and elsewhere involving transgender students being harassed and denied bathroom access basically saying, "This isn't our problem."

You'll recall that under Obama the Education Department issued guidelines to schools about how to handle transgender students so that their dignity is respected and their right to an education is not trampled upon. But under Trump and DeVos, however, the Education Department ain't care.

Needless to say, those who support trans students are alarmed by the Department's shrugging off the issue. Shannon Minter of the National Center for Lesbian Rights told the Washington Post, "They have just sent a message to schools that it's open season on transgender students."

In other words, it's a pretty clear signal that the Trump administration has zero interest in hearing some transgender kid bitching about having to pee in a bucket in the janitor's closet or something. Suck it up, buttercup, as Trump supporters like to say right before they head out to protest against Shakespeare.

But it's not just trans students that DeVos wants to abandon. Civil rights are such a drag, after all. What do they do besides get in the way of privatizing America's education system so that rich assholes can get richer? The Education Department's office of civil rights is so over crybaby civil rights wanters.

According to the Washington Post, the head of the civil rights office "has

Under DeVos's leadership, however, they're so busy trying to find ways to make education into a for-profit enterprise that they can't be bothered with systemic civil rights abuses at school. Ugh. Civil rights don't make anybody rich.

directed lawyers to narrow the scope of investigations into sexual assault and discriminatory school discipline policies."

What does this mean and how does it differ from what the Obama administration was doing? Well, under Obama the Education Department took students complaints about serious issues, well, seriously, and investigated whether such complains were "symptomatic of a broader problem, in part by examining at least three years of past complaint data."

In other words, if a student complains that he or she was sexually assaulted at school, the Education Department felt like they should probably find out if this was an isolated incident or a pattern of wider abuse.

Under DeVos's leadership, however, they're so busy trying to find ways to make education into a for-profit enterprise that they can't be bothered with systemic civil rights abuses at school. Ugh. Civil rights don't make anybody rich.

Of course, the department claims that this whole "don't look into civil rights complaints too deeply" policy is to alleviate a troublesome backlog of cases. And while it's true that a backlog of cases is a problem, their solution isn't to hire the personnel needed to get these cases examined. Their solution is to simply stop looking.

In a press release, Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said the Education Dept. was abdicating its "responsibility to protect the rights and dignity of our nation's vulnerable children during the most crucial years of their lives, threatening not only to stall progress on racial, gender and sexual orientation equality in schools, but to undo it altogether."

As is the plan, of course. MAGA 'til you puke.

Michigan Pride: An Outpouring of Love

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Though there wasn't an actual rainbow in Lansing's ominous, cloud-filled skies last Saturday, Michigan Pride had many of its own. Not least of which from Ashton Chapin, who sported a rainbow flag cape, and all manner of colorful clothing as he attended pride last weekend among the 3,000 or so people who came out to participate in the festival.

"I haven't gone to the Pride festival before and I thought it would be really cool to go," Chapin said.

Chapin, who recently came out as gay, said the positive feelings extended even beyond the limits of Old Town, the parade and Capitol steps.

"I've gotten a lot of support from my school, from my friends and family - it's pretty great," Chapin said.

"The overall vibe was very positive and many festival-goers commented they were happy the festival returned to Old Town and that it returned to the month of June," said Leigha Faith, Michigan Pride public relations director.

According to Kathryn Aldrich, a pride-goer

who attended with her family, Michigan Pride is an important part of expanding acceptance.

"This is my first Pride that I've ever attended, but I've been involved in the community kind of on the outskirts for a very long time because I've pretty much known I was bi since I was a kid. But coming out to my family wasn't a thing that could happen," Aldrich said. "I think that Pride is a really important thing for people who maybe didn't have that support growing up, because it allows you to expand your community and expand your chosen family and by providing a lot of other people for you to connect with."

And that familial support wasn't a rare thing. Ada Gilbert attended with her family as well.

"I came out here because I'm a huge supporter and also I'm pansexual, and then all my family was coming too," Gilbert said. "I wanted to come out here and support everybody and hear the speeches that everybody had."

Though the cheers after each speaker's words gave the crowd's emotion away, 14-year-old

transgender rights activist Shane



Both the Waters and the Aldrich families made it out to Pride this year. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

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Shananaquet still felt anxious before his speech.

"I said to my mom that sitting in the chair and watching everyone else go was a lot easier and then once I got to the podium it was overwhelming and then it overcame me," Shananaquet said. "But once I felt all the love and all the support, then I knew I was in the right place and I knew I was doing the right thing and it was so miraculous and marvelous. It was just wonderful to feel all that."

The event also won the support of many allies as well.

"I have a number of friends who are in the community and so being out and supporting, showing that it doesn't matter who people are, what they're like, just go and enjoy one another and don't worry about it," said Mark Waters.

Even the young ones, like Tori Aldrich, who said, "I went here mostly because my mom went here but another part is because I believe that we should all care for each other no matter who we like or whatever we do unless it's a bad thing."

"We would like to say thank you to the community for supporting Michigan Pride," said Faith. "We are an all-volunteer organization and we appreciate the people who



Ashton Chapin sports all rainbow in honor of his first Pride celebration. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

take the time to help us make Pride happen."

This year, more than 75 volunteers helped to keep the festival running smoothly, according to Faith. While a date has not yet been set for a 2018 Michigan Pride event, she said there will be an ongoing discussion to plan for next year's festival. The organization would like to have an area dedicated for children's activities, more vendors and exhibitors. Additionally, an American Sign Language interpreter will be invited to increase accessibility for all in attendance.

Faith said, "More volunteers are always needed and we encourage the community to sign up to volunteer and be a part of the change they would like to see."

Follow Michigan Pride online at www.michiganpride.org, on Twitter @MIPride or on Facebook www.facebook.com/MichiganPride.

Rep. Maloney Introduces Data Collection Bill on Anti-LGBT Violence

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Amid observances of the anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.) reintroduced legislation on June 13 aimed at improving data collection on violence and suicide among LGBT people.

The legislation, known as the PRIDE Act to Combat Violence, was first introduced last year in the aftermath of the Orlando massacre and would authorize \$25 million for the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to collect information on the LGBT status of deceased individuals through the National Violent Death Reporting System.

During a news conference on Capitol Hill announcing the introduction of the legislation, Maloney, a gay lawmaker who's a co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, said the measure was needed "so that we know who's been made a victim because of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

"This is the season for Pride and for determination, and part of being determined is being smart, and being smart means you need to have the facts and that data, and that's all we're doing today," Maloney said. "We're saying we want to know nationally the statistics of violent crimes when it's related to sexual orientation and gender identity."

Under the current system, the National Violent Death Reporting System collects only a small amount of information on sexual orientation and gender identity. The lives lost in the Orlando attack weren't recorded as anti-LGBT murders in any data collection.

According to Maloney's office, all data collection at the National Violent Death Reporting System is performed on a voluntary basis and the results are only released in aggregate to protect the privacy of decedents.

Two states -- Colorado and Nevada -- have instituted policy for data collection on anti-LGBT murders and suicides in their states, but those are pilot programs.

Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.) said at the news conference Nevada's system of data collection on anti-LGBT homicides and suicides was "on systemic fashion" and additional funding will help with that effort at the federal level.

"Other states do bits and pieces of it as they collect data from local entities, but this funding will allow us to have a more systematic approach and do it the way that Nevada does it," Titus said.

Other lawmakers present at the news conference in support of the PRIDE Act to Combat Violence were Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.), who's gay and a co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus; Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Al Green (D-Texas),

who recently called for the impeachment of President Trump on the House floor.

LGBT advocates there in support of the bill were David Stacy, the Human Rights Campaign's government affairs director; Amy Loudermilk, associate director of government affairs at the Trevor Project; and Diego Sanchez, director of policy for PFLAG National.

Loudermilk said the legislation represents a landmark shift in the way LGBT deaths are reported and signals to LGBT youths "their lives matter."

"Right now, it's as if we're in the dark ages of LGBTQ youth suicide prevention because we don't have a baseline number of deaths from which to assess the effectiveness of policy and interventions and appropriate distribution of resources," Loudermilk said.

The Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, signed by President Obama in 2009, in addition instituting federal penalties for anti-LGBT hate crimes allows for data collection on those acts.

Stacy said the PRIDE Act to Combat Violence is needed because that law allows only collection of data on hate crimes, not on suicides or homicides.

"That covers hate crimes, and this is a much broader thing," Stacy said. "It's about all kinds of violent deaths, so suicide is obviously something really critically important, but there are lots of violent deaths that may be connected to other vulnerabilities that the LGBTQ community has."

Stacy added transgender women of color are particularly vulnerable as a result of bias-motivated attacks as well as lack of economic opportunity and housing.

"Having the data would allow us to tease out what those things are and what those factors are, and then we could address them piece by piece," Stacy said.

Maloney said he hasn't spoken with the CDC about the bill since the beginning of the Trump administration, but said the agency under President Obama would be amicable to the measure.

Courtney Lenard, a CDC spokesperson, said "there would be a value add for any additional information and/or data collected through the National Violent Death Reporting System," but added federal agencies aren't able to comment on pending legislation.

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



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Texas Governor Signs Anti-LGBT ‘Religious Freedom’ Adoption Bill

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

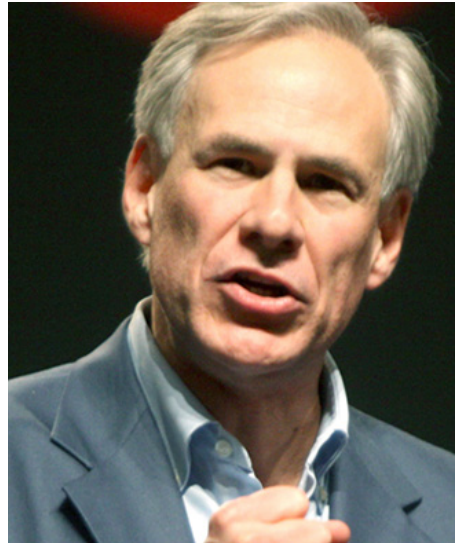
Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has signed into law legislation that would enable taxpayer-funded adoption agencies to refuse to place a child with LGBT families out of religious objections.

The legislation, House Bill 3859, forbids government agencies or contractors from taking “adverse action” against an agency that “has declined or will decline to provide, facilitate, or refer a person for child welfare services that conflict with, or under circumstances that conflict with, the provider’s sincerely held religious beliefs.”

Many child placement agencies are religious institutions, such as Catholic adoption agencies. Under the new law, these agencies could be free to deny placement to an LGBT family – or Jewish people, Muslims and single parents – based on religious beliefs.

The new law also prohibits the state from taking adverse action against adoption agencies for providing children with a religious education, which observers have interpreted as allowing agencies to engage in widely discredited conversion therapy. Further, the law allows agencies to decline to refer a person to abortion or contraception-related services.

Sarah Kate Ellis, CEO of GLAAD, criticized Abbott in a statement for signing the legislation



Gov. Greg Abbott (R-Texas) has signed an anti-LGBT adoption bill. Photo by Gage Skidmore; courtesy Wikimedia Commons

on the basis it will block children from being placed in homes.

“Lawmakers used religion as a weapon to pass a bill that not only harms qualified candidates who want to start families, but children,” Ellis said. “This law was never about the best interests of Texans or of children, but about forwarding a political agenda to codify

“This new law will have dramatic consequences on same-sex couples across Texas who are looking to open their homes and their hearts to children in need.”

– Kasey Suffredini, acting CEO of Freedom for All Americans

the permission to discriminate against LGBTQ Texans into state law. Discrimination has won in Texas, and it saddens me that a child can now be denied the chance to live with a deserving family simply because they are LGBTQ.”

Last month, the Texas House approved the measure, 93-49 and the Texas Senate approved the bill, 21-10. The deadline for Abbott to take action on the bill before it became law on its own was Sunday. Abbott signed the legislation on the same day he vetoed 50 other bills the state legislature presented to him.

Also condemning Abbott for signing the legislation in a statement was Kasey

Suffredini, acting CEO of Freedom for All Americans.

“This new law will have dramatic consequences on same-sex couples across Texas who are looking to open their homes and their hearts to children in need,” Suffredini said. “It will have devastating consequences on LGBT youth, who now can be forced into dangerous practices like conversion therapy. Adults should always be looking out for children, and acting with their best interests at heart - and this new law runs contrary to that basic value.

Other states with laws allowing adoption agencies to deny placement to LGBT households are Michigan, South Dakota, North Dakota, Virginia and Alabama. South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law anti-LGBT adoption measures along with Abbott just this year.

Abbott might not be done signing anti-LGBT legislation anytime soon. He called for a special session of the legislature starting July 18 to pass a bill that would inhibit transgender people from using public restrooms consistent with their gender identity. Although lawmakers advanced such a proposal during the regular session, they couldn’t agree on a bill before time expired.

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

Rule Gives Oregonians Non-gender Option on Driver’s License

BY ANDREW SELSKY

SALEM, Ore. (AP) – In a move hailed by LGBT rights groups, Oregon became the first state in the US on June 15 to allow residents to mark their gender as “not specified” on applications for driver’s licenses, learner’s permits and identity cards.

Under the new rule approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission, Oregonians who select the new option will have an X appear instead of M or F on those cards. The rule, which takes effect on July 3, is a first for the U.S., David House, spokesman for Oregon’s Driver and Motor Vehicles Division, or DMV, told The Associated Press.

“It’s fitting that this is before us during Pride Week in Oregon and Pride Month around the country,” said Commissioner Sean O’Hollaren. “It’s something that we should do because it’s the right thing to do.”

The DMV said the new rule, which the commission passed unanimously, came about after a Multnomah County judge in June 2016

allowed Jamie Shupe, a Portland resident, to legally change to “non-binary” gender.

“There’s a little more truth and justice in the world today,” said Hayley Gorenberg, deputy legal director of Lambda Legal, the oldest and largest national legal organization that advocates for the civil rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people.

Gorenberg said in a statement that when appearances don’t appear to match gender markers on ID cards, people “endure insults and psychological trauma that could largely be averted if they had an option to use a gender marker that does not contradict who they are.”

Lambda Legal said that nationally, people have been harassed and even assaulted after presenting IDs to police, hospital workers, employers, airport staff, bank tellers and others that don’t match their gender identity or expression.

DMV Administrator Tom McClellan choked up as he read letters of support to the commission, including from someone who encountered an embarrassing situation while

going through a body scanner at an airport, and the security officer didn’t know whether to push the blue button for a male passenger or a pink one for a female one.

House said Oregon is the first state or jurisdiction in the U.S. to create this option, but is not the first on the continent, and that the Canadian province of Ontario implemented the X option earlier this year.

“It’s exciting to see Oregon’s Department of Motor Vehicles adopt this change. We know gender is a spectrum and some people don’t identify as male or female,” said Nancy Haque, co-executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, the state’s largest nonprofit LGBTQ advocacy group.

The group said other cultures and other countries that recognize non-binary genders include India, Bangladesh, Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.

In California, the state Senate by a 26-12 vote passed a bill on May 31 to add a third gender option on state IDs, sending it to the state Assembly. The California

Family Council, a conservative Christian group, opposes it, arguing that “government documents need to reflect biological facts for identification.”

The DMV said it studied state laws, updated computer systems, worked with law enforcement and courts and changed administrative rules to implement the change and comply with the Multnomah Court’s order. Judge Amy Holmes Hen ruled that “The sex of Jamie Shupe is hereby changed from female to non-binary.”

Shupe was quoted last year by The Oregonian/OregonLive as saying: “I was assigned male at birth due to biology ... My gender identity is definitely feminine. My gender identity has never been male, but I feel like I have to own up to my male biology. Being non-binary allows me to do that. I’m a mixture of both. I consider myself as a third sex.”



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he hasn't anti-gay violence in Chechnya with Russian leaders. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

Tillerson: 'I haven't Raised Chechnya Anti-gay Abuses with Russia'

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson admitted in congressional testimony he hasn't brought up reports of Chechnya anti-gay abuses in Chechnya with Russian officials, condemning the violence only after repeated questions from Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.).

When Cicilline, who's gay and a co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, questioned Tillerson June 14 on the violence, the secretary of state said he's "aware of those reports."

But Tillerson conceded he didn't raised the issue during a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov or any other time.

"Those are on pending list," Tillerson said. "We did not make our way through all of the issues in the meetings we had."

Pressed by Cicilline on whether President Trump brought up the violence with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Tillerson said he's "unaware" on the president has or not.

Tillerson's response is consistent to the comments last to the Washington Blade on the meeting from White House National Security Council spokesperson Michael Anton, who said anti-gay abuses in Chechnya "did not come up in the meetings" with Lavrov.

When Cicilline called on Tillerson during the hearing to "condemn the torture and murder of gay men in Chechnya" and insist the Russian government must protect all of its citizens, including LGBT people, Tillerson replied, "That is our position globally."

Asked whether that applies to Russia, Tillerson said, "Last time I checked Russia's part of that." When Cicilline sought to clarify whether that response was a "yes," Tillerson replied, "Yes."

Concerns persist over reports that authorities in Chechnya, a semi-autonomous Republic in Russia, are detaining and torturing gay men at what eyewitnesses have called concentration camps. Despite testimonies affirming those reports, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has said it's not happening because no gay people exist in the region. Novaya Gazeta, which first reported the news of the violence, reported last month 26 gay men have been killed as a result of the persecution.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley has spoken out against the atrocities, but President Trump has said nothing. Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have each spoken out against the violence.

David Stacy, government affairs director of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement Tillerson's response during the hearing far from sufficient.

"People have been tortured and killed in Chechnya, yet Secretary Tillerson admitted today he hasn't raised concern about the atrocities against gay and bisexual men with his Russian counterparts – not even once," Stacy said. "When directly asked during the hearing to clearly condemn the attacks, Sec. Tillerson declined to do so. And he had no idea if the President has raised the issue. The Trump/Pence administration's lack of leadership on this issue and human rights around the globe is beyond disturbing. The time for action is now."

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

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Pew Research Poll: 5 Key Findings About LGBT Americans

BY BTL STAFF

Americans' views toward those who identify as LGBT have changed substantially in recent years, and a majority of U.S. adults now say homosexuality should be accepted by society, according to a report by Anna Brown with the Pew Research Center. The legal landscape for LGBT people has also shifted, including through a Supreme Court decision two years ago this month that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

Here are five key findings about LGBT Americans:

1 – Americans are becoming more accepting in their views of LGBT people and homosexuality in general, and the number of people identifying as LGBT has grown in recent years. For example, 63% of Americans said in 2016 that homosexuality should be accepted by society, compared with 51 percent in 2006. LGBT adults recognize the change in attitudes: About nine-in-ten (92 percent) said in a 2013 Pew Research Center survey of adults identifying as LGBT that society had become more accepting of them in the previous decade.

Perhaps as a result of this growing acceptance, the number of people who identify

as LGBT in surveys is also rising. About 10 million people, or 4.1 percent of the U.S. adult population, identified as LGBT in 2016, according to the latest estimates from Gallup. This represents a modest but significant increase from 8.3 million people (3.5 percent of adults) who said they were LGBT in 2012.

Survey researchers face a number of challenges in measuring LGBT identity, and there is no consensus about how best to measure sexual orientation. Some rely on respondents self-identifying as LGBT (the technique used in surveys such as the Gallup and Pew Research Center polls), while others base their estimates on reports of sexual behavior or sexual attraction, which usually result in higher estimates. Other challenges include the stigmatization of identifying as LGBT in some cultures and respondents being unfamiliar with the terms used.

2 – Bisexuals make up the largest share of LGBT Americans. An analysis by UCLA's Williams Institute in 2011 found that bisexuals accounted for about 1.8 percent of the total U.S. adult population at the time. A slightly smaller share (1.7 percent) were gay or lesbian. And the latest Williams Institute estimates, from 2016, find that 0.6 percent of U.S. adults, or 1.4 million people, identify as transgender.

In Pew Research Center's 2013 survey of

LGBT Americans, 40 percent of respondents said they were bisexual, while 36 percent identified as gay men, 19 percent as lesbians and 5 percent as transgender.

3 – Gay men and lesbians are more likely than bisexuals to be "out," according to the 2013 Pew Research Center survey. Overall, only 28 percent of bisexuals say that all or most of the important people in their lives are aware that they are LGBT. Meanwhile, 77 percent of gay men and 71 percent of lesbians say the same. Bisexual women are much more likely than bisexual men to say most of their friends and family know about their sexuality.

The overwhelming majority of bisexuals who are married or in a committed relationship have an opposite-sex partner, which may contribute to the fact that bisexuals are less likely to be "out" than other LGBT Americans.

4 – Most LGBT Americans say they have never lived somewhere that is known as an LGBT neighborhood. According to the 2013 survey, 72 percent say they have never lived in one of these neighborhoods, while 14 percent say they have lived in one in the past and 12 percent say they currently do. While 56 percent say it is important to maintain places like LGBT neighborhoods and bars, 41 percent say these venues will become less important over time as LGBT people are more accepted

into society. Gay men are the most likely of any of the LGBT subgroups to say that these distinctive venues should be maintained (68 percent).

5 – There are demographic differences in who identifies as LGBT. The most notable is by age. Young adults, ages 18 to 36, are by far the most likely to identify as LGBT (7.3 percent). By contrast, much smaller shares of those ages 37 to 51 (3.2 percent), 52 to 70 (2.4 percent) and 71 and older (1.4 percent) say they are LGBT, according to Gallup.

Some 4.4 percent of women and 3.7 percent of men identify as LGBT. Whites are somewhat less likely (3.6 percent) than blacks (4.6 percent), Hispanics (5.4 percent) and Asians (4.9 percent) to say they are LGBT.

There are some modest differences by household income as well, with those making less than \$36,000 annually more likely to say they are LGBT (5.5 percent) than those with higher incomes. These differences may be driven in part by age. There are virtually no differences by education level.

Read more about Pew Research Center research www.pewresearch.org/packages/lgbt-in-changing-times-on-the-lgbt-population.

And What's This About Pleasant Ridge?

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Did you know that 31 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds in the U.S. describe themselves as "not 100 percent heterosexual?" Well, they do.

Or that the state with the highest proportion of same-sex couples raising children is Mississippi? Or, that North Carolina's anti-trans law could cost the state over \$5 billion per year? That's right. Over \$5 billion.

Or that 13 countries impose the death penalty for same-sex activity? Thank heaven, the U.S. is not one of them. (So far.)

These and other fascinating, little known, curious – frequently disturbing – facts, figures and data are available for convenient review and reference in "LGBTQ STATS: Queer People by the Numbers" by authors/researchers David Deschamps and Bennett Singer. (The New Press, 2017; \$17.95)

Data included in the LGBTQ STATS is exceptionally comprehensive, with several hundreds of topics and subtopics of information (over 1,000 Index items listed) in the book's 340 soft-cover pages.

A first edition of the STATS appeared in 1993. According to Deschamps and Singer, the task of collecting was daunting, requiring time-consuming research verification, and evaluation of data relevancy.

"We spent months at various libraries pouring through journals and databases and managed to produce an 80-page almanac. Nearly 25 years later, creating the new edition presented a different challenge: the explosion of information on LGBTQ issues meant we had literally thousands of sources from which to draw data. Statistics are current as of summer 2016."

A sampling – to coincide with Pride Month – can only hint at the rich diversity and impact of our worldwide rainbow display. Consider the following selections.

LGBT Pride Marches - The first took place in New York City on June 28, 1970, the year following the Stonewall Riots. More than 2,000 celebrants participated. On May 25, 1991, the District of Columbia's African American lesbian and gay community sponsored the first such march. Thirty other similar black LGBT marches now take place

throughout the world. In 2016, 400 worldwide LGBT pride events took place.

The "T" – The most frequently cited numerical estimate of the trans population in the U.S. is 700,000 and 15 million worldwide.

AIDS – More than 1.2 million people are affected; 57 percent are gay or bisexual men; of gay and bisexuals diagnosed with HIV in 2014, 38 percent were African American.

International – According to the International L/G Associates, sexual activity between consenting adults of the same gender is legal in 118 countries, including 19 nations in Africa (61 percent of these countries belonging to UN); 69 countries and 85 political entities have some form of anti-discrimination laws; 34 countries and 65 political entities recognize same-sex unions. Seventeen countries and



28 political entities recognize adoptions.

Politics – In 1980, there were five openly LGBT elected officials in the U.S. By 2012, LGBTQ political leaders had been elected to office in every one of our 50 states, and more than 450 openly LGBTQ elected officials now serve across the nation.

The first out LGBT person elected to public office in (1974) was Kathy

Kozachenko, to a seat on the Ann Arbor City Council. The first openly gay African American elected was to the Albany NY Common Council (1989)

Workplace - Corporations investing in

See next page

Canadian Federal Trans-rights Bill Passes Parliament

BY BTL STAFF

Canada's federal trans rights bill passed the Senate on June 15. It previously passed the House of Commons. All that remains is royal assent. That is a formality. It should happen quickly, likely before Toronto Pride on June 25.

The bill amends the Canadian Human Rights Act to add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. It also amends the Criminal Code to extend the protection against hate propaganda set out in that Act to any section of the public that is distinguished by gender identity or expression and to clearly set out that evidence that an offense was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on gender identity or expression constitutes an aggravating circumstance that a court must take into consideration when it imposes a sentence.

► Pleasant Ridge

Continued from p. 14

LGBT issues in 2014 are: Arcus Foundation (\$17 million); Ford Foundation (\$15.4 million); Gill Foundation (\$7 million); Open Society (\$6.5 million); Gilead Sciences (\$6.1 million).

Population – According to the Gallup Poll 2012, the highest percentage of LGBT persons tallies: District of Columbia (10 percent); Hawaii (5.1 percent); Vermont (4.9 percent); Oregon (4.9 percent); Maine (4.8 percent); Lowest: (Utah 2.7 percent); Tennessee (2.6 percent); Mississippi (2.6 percent); Montana (2.6 percent), and North Dakota (1.7 percent).

Conversion Therapy (2013) – From an initial reparative therapy report of 400 men and women: nine in ten said the experience harmed them; 3/4 terminated because it didn't work; 20 percent because they had a nervous breakdown

Military – LGB people can serve openly in the military in 49 countries. Trans people can serve in the military in 19 countries, including Canada, Sweden, United Kingdom and the U.S. Also: in 2013, Russia enacted its now on-going ban on LGBT propaganda.

Neighborhoods – According to a 2015 study of 115,000 members of Planet Romeo – an international social network for GBT men – their Gay Happiness Index of 127 countries, rated Iceland tops (don't ask why), followed by Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Uruguay, Canada, Israel, Netherlands, and twenty-sixth on the Planet Romeo list, the U.S. Bottom of the heap is Uganda (anti-gay hate mongered there by three visiting America evangelicals in 2009).

Oh, yes! That LGBT STATS about **Pleasant Ridge** in Michigan: According to the 2010 census, sent once per decade to every U.S. household, the top 10 cities with the highest number of same-sex couples per 1,000 people are: #1 - Provincetown, Massachusetts (where else!), and #7 - Pleasant Ridge, Michigan. (Go figure!)

Trump Admin Issues New Title IX Guidance for Transgender Kids

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

After revoking Obama-era guidance assuring transgender kids in school have access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity, the Department of Education has issued new rules indicating the Trump administration may seek to adjudicate situations in which schools are allowing student harassment based on gender identity.

The three-page guidance, signed by acting Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights Candice Jackson, says despite the withdrawal of guidance determining Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 bars discrimination against transgender students, the administration will rely on Title IX in accordance with court decisions and regulations when "evaluating complaints of sex discrimination against individuals whether or not the individual is transgender."

That would suggest the Department of Education is repositioning itself in the Trump administration against anti-trans discrimination in schools. The new rules are dated June 6, but were first reported by the Huffington Post late Friday.

A growing of numbers of federal courts are determining prohibitions on sex discrimination under federal law, including Title IX, bars discrimination against transgender people. For Title IX, a series of courts have determined the law assures transgender students have access to the school restrooms consistent with their gender identity.

The instructions, sent to Education Department employees, indicate the Office of Civil Rights "may assert subject matter jurisdiction" over a investigation if the administration deems a school isn't handling allegations of anti-trans discrimination adequately.

Identified as such allegations in the letter is "failure to promptly and equitably resolve a transgender student's complaint of sex discrimination"; failure to assess whether harassment of transgender students, including the refusal to use their preferred gender pronouns, is motivated by animus; or retaliation against a transgender student for looking into potential sex discrimination claims.

The Department of Education under Education Secretary Betsy DeVos issues the new instructions after DeVos and U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions revoked the Obama-era guidance during the early months of the Trump administration. Media

reports indicated DeVos privately resisted the move, but agreed go along with it on the insistence of President Trump.

The Trump administration guidance is considerably shorter than the more robust nine-page guidance the Obama administration issued more than a year ago. Moreover, the Trump administration makes no reference to restrooms and locker

transgender students was a shameful move," Esseks said. "That guidance provided clarity to schools, as well as to transgender students and their families. These new instructions from the Department of Education are far from clear, and federal court rulings are increasingly on the side of transgender students."

Condemning the instructions as "unclear" was Vanita Gupta, CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights, who under the Obama administration was principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

"The unclear instructions issued by the Department of Education sow a new level of confusion and doubt for students, families and schools," Gupta said. "Federal court rulings are increasingly on the side of transgender students, even if Secretary DeVos and Attorney General Sessions are not. The civil and human rights community continues to stand united, supporting the right of every student to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be protected by the law regardless of gender identity."

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said her organization is still reviewing the new instructions, but said it's "unclear and seems to be

further rollback of federal civil rights enforcement."

"It seems that what they are saying is that they will enforce the law for some students and not others," Keisling said. "That is never acceptable. Using the bathroom is a significant and necessary part of being a student. If a student can't use the right bathroom at school, they simply can't go to school. So if a student is kept from using the right bathroom, it is illegal Title IX sex discrimination."

A White House spokesperson made a general assertion President Trump supports LGBT rights when asked if he supports the new Department of Education memo.

"President Trump is committed to protecting the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community, and continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBT rights, just as he was throughout the election," the spokesperson said.

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



The Education Department under Betsy DeVos has issued new Title IX guidance for transgender students. Blade photo by Michael Key

rooms – which was the most contentious point of the Obama-era rules – nor does the new guidance address allowing transgender kids to join athletic teams consistent with the gender identity as the Obama-era guidance did.

On the issue of bathrooms, the Trump-era guidance says the administration may seek to resolve one portion of a transgender student's complaint while the leaving the bathroom issue behind.

"It is permissible, for example, for one allegation in a complaint (such as harassment based on gender stereotypes) to go forward while another allegation (such as denial of access to restrooms based on gender identity) is dismissed," the guidance says.

James Esseks, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's LGBT & HIV Project, said in a statement the new guidance under Trump is insufficient compared to the guidance issued during the Obama administration.

"The Trump administration's decision to revoke the guidance on Title IX and



Photo: Fox Searchlight

Our Ally Sam

English Actor Talks ‘Sickening’ Intolerance, Waiting for the Right Queer Role and Gay ‘Hunger Games’ Fan Fiction

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

After a breakout part in “The Hunger Games” saga, as dreamy tribute Finnick Odair, and now a starring role opposite Rachel Weisz in “My Cousin Rachel,” the odds certainly have been in Sam Claflin’s favor.

Considering his winning streak, we’re holding out hope that a “Fifty Shades of Grey”-style rendezvous between him and the Hemsworth brothers – his idea, mind you – could be the British actor’s next major franchise. Till that blessed day comes, check out what the affable “Me Before You” looker has to say about finding the right gay role, how

people are responding to his recent Hollywood body-shaming criticism and French gay porn.

I love seeing a woman in power, but, man, you really get jerked around in “My Cousin Rachel.”

(Laughs) Haven’t we all been there? Haven’t we all been in love and kind of swept off, though usually warned by friends? But, of

course, Philip is a bit of a loner and left to his own devices, really. Love is blind, and it makes you do crazy things. (Laughs)

Growing up, what was your introduction to the gay community?

I got involved in musical theater at a young age and so that was an immediate part of my

life. I mean, the second you kind of step onto the stage and embrace the arts, it becomes a part of you. And the second you open yourself up to becoming an actor and performing and exploring this industry in whatever capacity – any form of art, really – there’s an openness, and it’s a really wonderful and incredibly rewarding industry to work in.

Plus, you’re British.

(Laughs) It does really upset me that people aren’t open-minded. People are still hung up on such a traditional old-world life, and people should be allowed to love who they want and be who they want and speak what they want and believe in what they want. I think it’s a shame that people are so narrow-minded that they believe their way is the only way. It’s sickening, in all honesty.

I don’t believe you have played a gay role, and I’m gonna let you give me one good reason why that hasn’t happened.

(Laughs) I actually got offered the role of a gay man in a TV series! But I didn’t think it was well enough written. I have auditioned for gay parts and not got them and desperately wanted them. It’s nothing I’m shying away from. It’s something I fully embrace. And, actually, I have done it in plays during drama school, but it just hasn’t worked yet for me. But I’d jump at the chance. I’d be happy to do anything that was sort of good enough for me to kind of get my feet stuck in, like a meaty role, or an opportunity to work with a great director no matter what the story and no matter what the character.

How aware are you of your LGBT fanbase?

In all honesty, I kind of don’t know (laughs). What I mean is, any fans, really, I’m just – it’s always a surprise that someone from whatever country or walk of life (is a fan), and it just sort of amazes me that people travel so far and spend so much time waiting. It’s very humbling. It’s something that you can never really get used to. I think you’d be not a nice person if you got used to it. It’s a consistent shock and one that I try to embrace as best I can. I’m always so grateful that people are interested and do go out of their way to watch my movies and follow my social media. I feel very grateful and lucky and thankful.

Recently, you acknowledged being body-shamed on movie sets, and I’m glad you spoke out against the issue as it relates to male actors in Hollywood. There are many men in the LGBT community who deal with body-related issues.

You know, I’m like any human being on this planet; I have my insecurities. And it fascinates me that bringing it up in an interview resonated with so many people, only because people seem surprised by the fact that happened. I’m like, are you kidding me? It’s been happening for decades and decades and decades. It’s just not talked about as much.

It’s amazing that it has resonated and hit home for so many people. That is, unfortunately, the harsh reality of the world that we live in. We sort of live our lives through Instagram and Twitter and these filters, and we give people an insight into our lives, but we’re so, so picky about what it is that we share. It’s so kind of manipulative and it’s warped our reality. In actuality, how many people are Hollywood-ready 24/7? I think for me as a father and as a son and as a husband, I wanna be around my loved ones – I don’t wanna be spending every day under the sun working out.

Actress Niecy Nash recently told The Cut, “Hollywood is a business that will often require you to be something else. But at some point you have to say, I’m going to be 100 percent who

I am and be OK with that.” Does that resonate with you? When was the point in your career you decided to be your authentic self?

Don’t get me wrong: I wholly agree with what she said. But at the same time, also, one of the reasons I got into acting was because of my insecurities, I suppose. I enjoy hiding behind different characters. My social media feed doesn’t really reflect exactly what I’m doing. I am active on social media, but it’s not quite my life. That, to me, is private. And when I work I love exploring and having those other characters be another side of me and sharing them with the world. In truth, I partly enjoy physically transforming myself for roles. Someone whose career I admire is Christian Bale; he mentally and emotionally goes to a different place every time, and he physically transforms himself and that’s

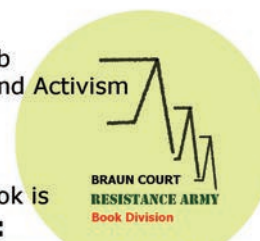
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► Sam Claflin

Continued from p. 17

always quite admirable.

At the same time, to stand out from the crowd, and in order to put your stamp on your work, to have that confidence in yourself somewhat, you have to believe in yourself that you can do it. I still feel like I'm finding my own feet, and every day I'm learning something new. There will definitely come a time when I'm 100 percent confident in myself, I hope. But I'm not quite there yet. As an actor, you kind of constantly panic about what people think, and we strive for perfection as actors, but the thing about being an actor is you'll never be perfect.

Till then, we'll always have you giving Josh Hutcherson CPR in "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire." In fact, you had a real bromance there for a while, and you even said during an interview, "My mouth touching his was a beautiful moment." When can we expect you to rekindle that fire?

You know, Josh is honestly one of my favorite people in the world. In all honesty, every time I go to Los Angeles – and I've only been there once since we finished "Hunger Games," if you can believe it – I always hope that I can actually hang with him, and I'm sure if he's in London he knows he could give me a call. But yeah, hopefully something can be rekindled – that's the hope. He's one of my favorites.

"Hunger Games" fans have some of the wildest imaginations – and some pretty fantastic gay ideas for you, Josh and Liam Hemsworth. What are your thoughts on the gay fan fiction that's been written about you three?

Fan fiction is one of those things I wish I knew more about. Someone was telling me that "Fifty Shades of Grey" was based on "Twilight" fan fiction. I didn't realize there was an underworld with these kind of amazingly imaginative ideas. I had no idea! But I love Liam as much as I love – in fact, I love Chris Hemsworth. I love the entire Hemsworth family. I say we get all of us involved and we do a "Fifty Shades of Grey." We can make it reality.

In "Me Before You," there's a recurrent joke regarding French gay porn. Please tell me that was based on an anecdote from your own life.

(Laughs) I can't say I've watched *any* French porn, actually. No, French porn is not something that I've seen before. However, now I'm intrigued!

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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6 Reasons Why Columbus, Ohio Is My New Favorite City (And Should Be Yours, Too)

BY MIKEY ROX

There's plenty to love about New York, L.A., Miami, D.C., but what about all the other bustling albeit smaller cities across the country that don't get nearly enough love?

I love visiting these less densely populated metropolises – like Detroit, for instance. I took a trip to Motor City for my birthday last year to catch a Tigers game, and I was shocked to see so much development. It's an area ripe with culture and nightlife and incredible real estate opportunities, especially for limited-budget millennials, and I expect only major improvements to Detroit in the future. Memphis, Tennessee, is another place that thoroughly impressed me a couple years ago with its dedication to musical diversity, delicious food and a noticeable commitment to preserving our environment. (The tight-denimed bros in cowboy boots didn't hurt either.)

Recently I spent a few days in Columbus, Ohio – never been; didn't know what to expect – and I was similarly and pleasantly surprised. Located smack in the middle of the state, this

capital city is bursting with commerce and entrepreneurship, fine dining, a robust and active LGBT community, and more activities than you'll be able to do in one visit. (Plus a whole lot of sports-loving, beer-guzzling gay men-folk to feast your eyes on.)

Here are six reasons I'm head over heels for Columbus – and you will be, too.

1. Columbus is home to one of the most stunning new hotels in the United States

Part of Marriott's Autograph Collection, Hotel LeVeque, located in the downtown business district, is an elegant, upscale retreat in a freshly renovated art-deco high-rise overlooking the Scioto River. The place feels luxe and extravagant as soon as you turn through the revolving doors to enter the lobby seemingly plucked straight from an Upper East Side "Gossip Girl" set, but it's the rooms that'll really wow you. I'm pretty sure I was the first person ever to stay in mine – the joint just opened about two months ago – because

there was nary a fingerprint or speck of dust anywhere. The toilet paper hadn't even been broken.

Gilded in gold, the room included a plush king bed with decadent linens; fully equipped desk; velvety chaise in the corner for lounging; a telescope!; marbled bathroom; and a massive shower, with a convenient bench, that you could pile about 15 Gindr tricks into if you're feeling frisky. Party at *your* place! Perhaps the most appreciated aspect of the setup, however, was the intuitive technology system that allowed me to connect my streaming accounts for movie watching, receiving messages, using the Internet, and throwing my personal device screen up on the TV – which is perfect for squeezing in a little bedtime porno action if you bring your boo.

2. If you love hands-on activities with a gay sensibility, this is the place for you

I'm totally a "maker" kinda dude. My guy and I often look for hands-on, take-home

activities for date night, and Columbus saw me coming. Not only is its local business/entrepreneur community thick as thieves – the vast amount of cross-branding will restore your faith in the American dream – but there's an abundance of opportunity to get your hands dirty with something to show for it.

While I was in town I practiced my metal-stamping skills in a jewelry-making class at The Smithery; designed and felted a genuine alpaca-fleece scarf with the help of couture designer Celeste Malvar-Stewart at her studio at Hangar 391 (after a trip to the alpaca farm to meet the animals!); learned the basics of flower arranging and bread making at the aptly named Flowers & Bread (also a working bakery selling morning pastries); and I created my now-signature scent of ginger ale, grapefruit and cilantro to customize a refreshing candle at The Candle Lab. There are lots of other activities you can join – like soap and wine making – which you'll discover in the Made in CBUS trail guide available at local tourism org Experience Columbus.

3. Drag queen extraordinaire

Nina West calls Columbus home

Drag shows usually aren't my idea of a good time – but hear me out before you lose your mind. I've gone to plenty of drag shows, and, frankly, the majority of the time those tired queens haven't bothered to learn the lyrics of the songs they're lip-syncing. It's frustrating when you've come to see a *show*. They're just up there spinning and flouncing and moving their mouths, then throwing *me* shade because I won't tip them.

You gonna have to do your *job* to get my dolla bills, la-dy.

There have been exceptions, of course, like the incredible drag brunch at Palace on Miami's South Beach – those gals put the werk in twerk! – and most recently, incomparable Columbus-native Nina West's full-on drag spectacle "Ohana," performed at Axis, which takes liberty in rewriting memorable Disney songs, riffs on politics and provides plenty of bare-chested male dancers to keep your eyes peeled. Like you need anything else.

4. The restaurant scene rivals that of any top 10 city

There's no shortage of celebrated restaurants in Columbus – I cooked my own rock file on a 500-degree tulikivi firestone at Elevator Brewing Co., and enjoyed some of the best calamari I've ever had at Hubbard Grille – but two establishments really stood out.

Pop into to authentic Italian eatery Basi Italia, if only for the impressively tasty zucchini carpaccio, flash sautéed then tossed with lemon juice and slivered almonds and topped with pecorino Romano (this mini-review is coming from someone who isn't keen on vegetables, by the way), and if you somehow end up with a hangover (there's plenty of opportunity for that at all the breweries and distilleries in the area), I recommend Katalina's headache-curing pulled pork tacos, Latina sandwich and life-changing (not an exaggeration!) Original Pancake Balls, for which the place is famous. They're deep-friend and filled with Nutella, y'all! You're welcome.

5. Columbus's LGBT bar scene is on and poppin'

It was about 5:30 p.m. on a Saturday when I arrived at LGBT watering hole Union Café, and the joint was already buzzing. Cuties inside, cuties outside on the patio – cuties everywhere, really. Not so packed that I couldn't move, but there was a healthy, chatty crowd that made my pre-dinner drinks worthwhile. Later, I caught Nina's show at Axis, which opened its doors to a sold-out crowd. All these LGBT bars that are closing across the country should call Columbus to see what's up; they're doing something right.

6. There's just something about corn-fed Midwest men

From an outsider's perspective, Columbus is a mecca for college-athletics-loving, rural-raised, city-seeking gay men. With scruffy boy-next-door faces. Who wear dingy backwards ball caps and butt-hugging Levis. Basically everything that makes my pingle tingle. Now if you'll excuse me...

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.

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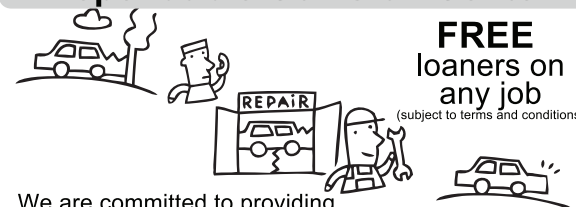


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Summer Food Service Program Feeds Washtenaw County Kids

Food Gatherers Helps Address the Challenge of Summer Hunger

For close to ten thousand Washtenaw County children, summer spells hunger. Throughout the school year, free and reduced price meals are offered to low-income students through the national school lunch or school breakfast programs, but with school out for the summer, hunger can take center stage.

To bridge the summer meal gap, Food Gatherers hosts the Summer Food Service Program, providing nutritious meals when free school meals aren't an option. This year's program began June 19 and will run through Aug. 25 at 32 sites throughout the county.

"For some children, a SFSP meal is the most nutritious meal they'll eat all day," said LeRonica Roberts, Food Gatherers community food programs coordinator. "Last summer, Food Gatherers served 35,991 meals to Washtenaw County children, and we're on track this year to increase that number by five thousand."

New to the program in 2017 is a kick-off celebration at each

participating site. Studies have shown that offering on-site activities helps increase meal participation, so Food Gatherers provides an activity-filled tote that includes sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, coloring books and markers, and sports balls. Participating children each receive a special meal.

Food Gatherers relies on community support to fund the SFSP. For information or to make a donation, visit www.foodgatherers.org.

The SFSP is a federally-funded program, created by Congress in 1968 after studies uncovered a direct link between a child's nutritional intake and their ability to learn in school. In Washtenaw County, Food Gatherers is the largest sponsor of the SFSP and receives partial funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Michigan Department of Education to operate the program.

For a full and up-to-date list of Washtenaw County locations serving free meals this summer, visit www.foodgatherers.org/summerfood.

T-Time with FtM A2 Ypsi

For those who are looking for a place to meet other trans folks in and around the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti areas, mark the calendar for June 26. FtM A2 Ypsi will host "T-Time," a social gathering and safe space for / by trans people of all ages.

The group meets from 6-8 p.m. every fourth Monday of each month at Cultivate Coffee & TapHouse, 307 N. River St. in Ypsilanti. The table is reserved as "T-Time."

All trans, genderqueer, and questioning people are welcome in this space. FtM, MtF, agender, genderqueer, and any other trans identities are also welcome. Minors are welcome to attend with or without a parent or guardian. Parents and guardians are welcome to stay with their child if necessary.

Coffee, tea and beer (for those who are 21+) will be available. The space can be used to

play board games, network, or simply hang out. A representative from FtM A2 Ypsi will be there to provide resources, answer questions or talk.

FtM A2 Ypsi is a support group by and for trans-masculine people in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and the greater Southeast Michigan region. The organization is open to all trans-masculine identified (and questioning) people 16 years of age or older. It doesn't matter if you are, are not, or never plan to transition physically. The group aims to build community among local trans men and to create a safe space where they can support one another. They are affiliated with FtM Detroit, and they cross-program for social events.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi.



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Happenings

What Took Them So Long?

A collaboration that began three years ago, longtime members of Fleetwood Mac, Lindsey Buckingham and Christine McVie have joined together to record their first-ever album as a duo. The 10-song self-titled album was released this month by Atlantic Records. The pair will perform at 7:30 p.m. on July 2 at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave. in Detroit with special guest The Wallflowers. Tickets, \$29-125 are available by phone at 313-471-3200 or online at www.olympiaentertainment.com/fox-theatre.

OUTINGS

Thursday, June 22

Community Giving Days Whole Foods Market will donate five percent of their net sales to Affirmations. Whole Foods Market, Various locations, **Rochester Hills, Troy and West Bloomfield.** kkoch@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org

Free HIV/STI Testing 5:30 p.m. Everyone welcome. Eligible couples can test together by appointment. Call 313-446-9820. UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 800-872-2437. www.goaffirmations.org

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

7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Saturday, June 24

LGBT Older Adult Summit 8:30 a.m. Theme "Moving Forward, Letting Go." Free event. SAGE Metro Detroit, 3408 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** www.sagemetrodetroit.org

Moving Forward, Letting Go 8:30 a.m. SAGE Metro Detroit, 3408 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** www.sagemetrodetroit.org

#PrideRide 1 p.m. CycleBar, 311 E. Big Beaver Road, **Troy.** 3135208629. TJ.Benrowski@CyclebarTroy.com www.goaffirmations.org

Flint Pride 2 p.m. Flint Pride, 1101 Beach St., **Flint.** <http://flinttown.com/>

TGMI Table 2 p.m. Transgender Michigan, 1 Riverfront Plaza, **Flint.** www.transgendermichigan.org

LezRead 4 p.m. Email Kerene Moore

to join Ann Arbor's premier book club for lesbians. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor.** kerenem@jimtoycenter.org www.jimtoycenter.org/

Sunday, June 25

Up North Pride Loud and Proud, **Traverse City.** <https://upnorthpride.com/>

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

Alpha Psi Kappa Fraternity, Inc. Interest Meeting 3 p.m. Learn how to join the non-profit, non-collegiate, community service based organization for dominate lesbian WoMen. Debonair Alpha Delta Colony, **Detroit.** www.facebook.com/AlphaDeltaColony/

Monday, June 26

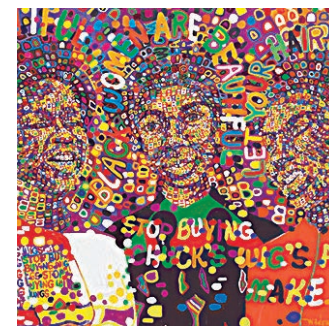
T-Time 6 p.m. Social gathering every fourth Monday of the month where trans folks can meet in a safe space. FtM A2 Ypsi, 307 N. River St., **Ypsilanti.** www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/

Factory Monday 9 p.m. Goth-industrial night. Main room: DJ Void6 hosted by MC Yoda. Red Room: DJ

Editor's Pick

Art of Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement

Explore powerful artworks by African-American artists who formed collectives during the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s and '70s. This Detroit Institute of Arts exhibition runs from July 23-Oct. 22 and includes 34 paintings, sculptures, installations and photographs produced by artists working both collectively and independently to address social and political issues surrounding the Civil Rights Movement and today. Situated within the story of these collectives is the Detroit Rebellion of 1967. The museum, located at 5200 Woodward Ave. in Detroit, is open Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m.; and Saturday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 313-833-7900 or visit www.dia.org for more information.



Madisi. Tickets: \$1-3. Necto, 516 E. Liberty, **Ann Arbor.** www.necto.com

Tuesday, June 27

Pride Awards Banquet 6 p.m. Tickets: \$20-30. Perceptions, 120 Ezra Rust Drive, **Saginaw.** 989-891-1429. pride@perceptionsmi.org www.perceptionsmi.org/prideBanquet.php

Wednesday, June 28

An Evening with John Corvino 6:30

p.m. Admission: \$20-25 to benefit Affirmations. Author John Corvino will present his new book, "Debating Religious Liberty and Discrimination." Corvino will give a short talk followed by a Q&A and book signing. Coffee and dessert will be served. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. <http://gaybe.am/Ej>

Estate Planning Presentation 6:30 p.m. Learn more about the 10 biggest mistakes people make when planning

their estate. Light refreshments, food provided. The Giles Law Firm, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-645-1210. www.thegileslawfirm.com

Thursday, June 29

LGBTQIA Community Meeting with Andy Schor 5:30 p.m. The mayoral candidate will share his vision for the city's future. Suggested donation: \$15. Free pizza, cash bar offered.

Continued on next page

There are hundreds of businesses that advertise in BTL and welcome everyone. Invest in equality and work with businesses that support Michigan's LGBTQ community!

Between the LinesTM

LOVE Wins

Editor's Pick

Henry Ford Hosts July 4th Celebration

The 4th of July is the quintessential American holiday. What better occasion for a four-day party? "Salute to America" runs from 6-10 p.m. June 30-July 3. It's a classic Independence Day celebration with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra that's full of freedom-loving fanfare. Enjoy picnics, games, festive holiday food and a joint concert by the DSO and the U.S. Army field band, concert band and soldiers' chorus. The grand finale features an authentic cannon fire and fireworks display accompanied by live patriotic music. Tickets, \$15-25, are available for purchase by calling 313-982-6001 or online at www.thehenryford.org/current-events/calendar/salute-to-america. The Henry Ford is located at 20900 Oakwood Blvd. in Dearborn.



Penny Gardner and Dennis Hall, 201 E Shiawassee St., **Lansing**. hald2572@sbcglobal.net

Coding Workshop 6 p.m. Please RSVP online Grand Circus, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. haymer@goaffirmations.org <http://gaybe.am/Ju>

LGBTQ Youth Meeting 6 p.m. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., **Kalamazoo**. michael@kgllrc.org www.outfrontkzoo.org

Monday, July 3

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

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

Whole Lives, Healthy Lives Adult Support Group 7 p.m. This one-of-a-kind program in Berrien County helps attendees support each other in healthy ways through active listening and caring feedback. OutCenter, 132 Water St., **Benton Harbor**. 269-925-8330. www.Outcenter.org

Tuesday, July 4

Sexual Assault Survivors Groups 4 p.m. Youth group, ages 13-17, meets at 4 p.m. Adult group, ages 18 and over, meets at 5:15 p.m. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., **Kalamazoo**. www.outfrontkzoo.org

LGBTQ in Uniform Support Group 7 p.m. Meets the first Tuesday of every month. Open to current and former police, fire, emergency medical personnel and military. Affirmations,

290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Wednesday, July 5

The Pastor is In 3:30 p.m. Pastor Dani Veenstra, local United Church of Christ faith leader and ally to the LGBTQ community hosts this free service every Wednesday. OutCenter, 132 Water St., **Benton Harbor**. 269-925-8330. thepastorisin@outcenter.org www.outcenter.org

Free HIV/STI Testing 6:30 p.m. Last client taken at 8 p.m. Matrix MAC Health, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-545-1435 Ext 123. www.goaffirmations.org

LGBTQ Support Group 7 p.m. Connect on Facebook at @LGBTQSupportDownriver Beaumont Taylor Teen Health Center, 26650 Eureka Road, Suite B, **Taylor**. 734-942-2273 Ext. 23.

MUSIC & MORE

Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival "Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival" Works by this year's Stone Composer-in-Residence, Sean Shepherd. Free performances. Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. June 23, 8:30 p.m. June 23. 2485592097. www.greatlakeschambermusic.org

Comedy

Ann Arbor Summer Festival "Scared Scriptless Tour" Tickets: \$45. Featuring comedian Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood. Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. June 24. <https://a2sf.org>

Concerts

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Salute to America" Tickets: \$15-25. The Henry Ford, 20900 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. 6 p.m. June 30, 6 p.m. July 1, 6 p.m. July 2, 6 p.m. July 3. 313-982-6001. www.thehenryford.org/current-events/calendar/salute-to-america

Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival "Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival Showcase" A showcase of young professional ensembles from the festival's Showcase Institute and a world

premiere by Stone Composer Fellow, Will Healy. Tickets: \$10-40. Kirk in the Hills, 1340 W Long Lake Rd., Bloomfield Hills. 7:30 p.m. June 22. 2485592097. www.greatlakeschambermusic.org

Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival "Closing Night of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival" Tickets: \$10-70. Seligman Performing Arts Center, Beverly Hills. 8 p.m. June 24. 2485592097. www.greatlakeschambermusic.org

Theater

Countdown to the Happy Day Tickets: \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through June 25. 313-868-1347. www.detroitreptheatre.com

Lysistrata Tickets: \$12 in advance only. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. June 17 - July 9. 3139869156. www.slipstreamti.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Detroit 1967 "Detroit 67: Perspectives" Exhibit examines 150-year span of the city's history. Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit. June 24 - July 2. www.detroit1967.org

Ferndale Pride "Summer of Pride Art Show" Exhibit honors the struggles of the LGBTQ community through activism during Ferndale Pride, Motor City Pride, Hotter Than July and Transgender Pride. Pittman-Puckett Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. June 1 - July 28. www.goaffirmations.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Grapheeti World" Reception on June 2 from 6-9 p.m. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. May 31 - June 30. 2485440394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com



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Ypsilanti Peer to Peer Program Keeps Youth Informed, Safe

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Statistics have shown that youth ages 13-29 have the highest HIV infection rate in Washtenaw County. In response, a group of young people ages 13-16 in Ypsilanti started a peer mentoring program, Prevent & Prevail, to offer an open exchange of ideas about sex, empowerment, drugs, and prevention for STDs and HIV.

“We found ourselves in the middle of that age range,” said Cleo Ku, 20, one of the original group members who helped start the program almost six years ago. “I was 15 at the time. We wanted to figure out how to combat that and teach our peers and ourselves how to protect ourselves.”

When Ku learned of the startling statistics he was attending educational sessions by way of Educate Youth, the non-profit arm of Dedicated to Make a Change facilitated by Gail Wolkoff at the Jim Toy Community Center in Ann Arbor.

Ku and his peers, along with the help of Wolkoff and a committee of advisors, created the curriculum for Prevent & Prevail themselves. A series of sessions are offered three times a year – in the fall, winter and a condensed summer course. Teen facilitators receive over 20 hours of training before leading a series of information sessions and discussions with their peers.

“They created the program, that’s the reason why it is just so amazing,” said Wolkoff. “They keep changing it. They keep it up to date.”

All of the academic-based programming – S.A.T. Preparation, Prevent and Prevail, Ethics Bowl, and H.O.P.E. – offered is created by youth for their peers. Educate Youth’s mission is to connect youth with the world to promote peace, greater understanding, and a love of learning.

Beyond sex, empowerment, drugs and prevention for STDs and HIV, topics include relationships and intimacy, respect and consent, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This gives LGBT youth information that is important to their lives, but also promotes acceptance and reduces teen-to-teen harassment and bullying due to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

“Most, if not all of us, were LGBT,” said Ku. “So that part had to be in it. That’s a big part.”

There were things about the LGBT community that high school student Tenaya Robinson never understood.

“Being able to hear some people’s stories was really effective,” said Robinson, 17, who recently became a facilitator for the program. “It made me a lot more aware about the way a person identifies, that I should use correct pronouns. That’s something we do at every meeting - ask people to say your name and your preferred pronouns. It can be confusing at first. Sometimes your appearance might not fit the way that you view yourselves. That’s something I try to be cautious about and never make assumptions about.”

Robinson stressed that all of their discussions are held in a safe, confidential, fun and inclusive environment.

“They have a better understanding of what they can do and their options and how to better understand what they’re



going through,” she said. “They’re in an environment where they can raise questions about a lot of things you can’t talk about in public.”

Ku, who chaperones for the program now, said it “fills a gap where a lot of school systems are lacking. It’s very empowering for youth to have this information. It’s not something that they get from school usually, especially when it comes to LGBT facts and things like that. That’s another one of the reasons we created it. We saw our school sex ed really lacking in those areas,” he said.

While it would be ideal to implement the Prevent & Prevail program into local school systems, organizers have been met with resistance.

“We really want to. That would be really great. But we haven’t had any luck with that,” said Ku.

Until then, the program sessions are free and available to anyone ages 12-17.

“The cool thing about the program is a lot of these kids are talking to peers so they know what’s going in the school, what drugs the kids are doing, for example. They can take the misinformation and turn it into real information,” said Wolkoff. “My motto is ‘Just Say Know.’ They can say ‘no’ or they can do something else if they ‘know.’ That’s a lot of the approach.”

Wolkoff credits former first lady Nancy Reagan and her “Just Say No” campaign in the ‘80s for inspiring this.

“At the time I was teaching and I was like to say ‘no’ is the fastest way to get kids to do something,” recalled Wolkoff. “Then there was the drugs and after that the whole war on drugs and then the whole HIV information came out and that nightmare. And it’s like, these kids need to know.”

The next Prevent & Prevail series begins Aug. 7. For more information on the program visit the website <https://educateyouthpsi.org/programs/prevent-and-prevail>.

Letter to Senate: ‘Save the Lives of People with HIV’

BY BTL STAFF

More than 100 organizations nationwide signed a letter to the U.S. Senate in Washington, D.C. on June 12 to “save the lives of people with HIV.”

The letter – sponsored by the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership’s HIV Health Care Access Working Group – is an urgent request for the Senate to reject the American Health Care Act on behalf of the 23 million Americans estimated to lose coverage, including hundreds of thousands of individuals with HIV, if the bill is enacted.

Of the 140 national, state and local organizations that signed the letter, six are from Michigan – AL GAMEA, CARES of Southwest Michigan, Health Emergency Lifeline Programs, HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan, Michigan Positive Action Coalition, and the African American AIDS Task Force.

These organizations represent people living with HIV and vulnerable to HIV, public health and medical providers, HIV/AIDS service organizations, housing providers, and advocates from across the U.S.

The AHCA, or a modified version of it, would return America to a time when healthcare coverage was out of reach for too many people with HIV. The bill would cut billions of dollars from healthcare programs and offset billions of dollars through tax cuts, by retreating on the federal commitment to the Medicaid Program; phasing out of the Medicaid expansion; eroding key consumer protections that prevent discrimination against individuals with HIV; reducing premium assistance for lower income individuals; and ending cost sharing assistance. Together, these changes would be devastating to many people with HIV who would be left without affordable healthcare coverage options and would reverse recent gains in reducing HIV incidence and improving outcomes.

The organizations specified the reasons for opposing the AHCA:

- It will severely weaken the ability of the Medicaid program to respond to the needs of people with HIV and millions of others who count on it for lifesaving care.
- It will leave millions worse off by ending the Medicaid expansion.
- It will make healthcare coverage and services unaffordable.
- It will end key protections for people with HIV and 52 million Americans with pre-existing conditions.
- It will leave people with HIV and millions of others without coverage that will meet their basic medical needs.
- It will provide inadequate funding to stabilize the individual insurance market and give states the flexibility to create high-risk pools.
- It will defund Planned Parenthood.
- It will eliminate the Prevention & Public Health Fund.

The letter stresses that the community cannot afford to go back to the pre-ACA sick care system that focused on treating disability and disease rather than preventing it. The organizations that signed the letter urge the U.S. Senate to work to improve and build upon rather than dismantle health care reforms that have benefited millions of Americans, including hundreds of thousands living with HIV.

Read the letter in its entirety at <http://gaybe.am/4a>

Know Where to Go: HIV and STI Testing Sites

Every year on June 27, members of the community are reminded how important HIV testing is as early diagnosis leads to better health outcomes and less transmission of the HIV virus.

Several Michigan health departments and community-based organizations will provide HIV testing opportunities

on National HIV Testing Day now through the end of the month. Below is a list of sites throughout Michigan where you and your loved ones can get tested for HIV. For more information, call 800-872-AIDS or visit www.michigan.gov/hivstd.

Thursday, June 22

Community Health Awareness Group
1300 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
313-963-3434

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers
Hearth Home Prevention and
Outreach Center
732 Hoyt St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saginaw County Department of
Public Health
1600 North Michigan Ave. Room 312
Saginaw, MI 48602
By appointment only, 989-758-3880
8:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Affirmations
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI 48220
5:30-8 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Mobile Outreach Unit
St. Andrew's Church Breakfast
Program
306 N. Division and Catherine
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
7:30-9 a.m.
Contact Lemont Gore at 734-572-
9355 or lemont@hivaidresource.org
for details.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Oakland University, School of
Nursing
Room 2054 Human Health Building
433 Meadow Brook Rd., Rochester
MI 48309
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Wolverine Wellness
207 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor, MI
48109
1-3 p.m.

Lenawee County Health Department
1040 S. Winter St. Suite 2328
Adrian, MI 49221
8-11:30 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m.

Genesee County Health Department
Floyd J. McCree Courts and Human
Services Center, 2nd Floor
630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 4, Flint,
MI 48502
8-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Wellness AIDS Services
311 E. Court St.
Flint, MI 48502
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Lansing Area AIDS Network
Diversity Psychological Services
1310 Turner St.
Lansing, MI 48906
6-8 p.m.

Jackson County Health Department
1715 Lansing Ave.
Jackson, MI 49202
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Community AIDS Resource and
Education Services of Southwest
Michigan
629 Pioneer St. Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kent County Health Department
Fuller Public Health Clinic
700 Fuller Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Forest Community Health Center
2316 S. Cedar Street
Lansing, MI 48910
By appointment only, 517-887-4424
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Friday, June 23

W'SUP BBQ
60 W. Hancock St.

Detroit, MI 48201
2-6 p.m.
313-577-0792

Community Health Awareness Group
1300 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Specialized testing
for young, high-risk heterosexuals
2-4 p.m. Specialized testing for
young, trans women of color
Please call for details, 313-963-
3434

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Mobile Outreach Unit
Willow Run Party Store
1278 Ridge Road, Ypsilanti, MI
48198
1:30-3:30 p.m.
Contact Lemont Gore at 734-572-
9355 or lemont@hivaidresource.org
for details.

Genesee County Health Department
Floyd J. McCree Courts and Human
Services Center, 2nd Floor
630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 4, Flint,
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9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saginaw County Department of
Public Health
1600 North Michigan Ave. Room 312
Saginaw, MI 48602
By appointment only, 989-758-3880
8:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

See Testing Sites, page 28

HIV POSITIVE? We can help.

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wellnessaids.org



810.232.0888

Hello? I've got a question.

Talk to a live expert about STDs

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The Michigan HIV/STD Hotline. Live weekdays, 10 am - 6 pm.

- CALL NOW FIND A TESTING SITE NEAR YOU.
- CALL NOW LEARN ABOUT PREP, PEP AND OTHER RISK REDUCTION TOOLS.
- CALL NOW LOOKING FOR FREE CONDOMS?
- CALL NOW GET CONNECTED WITH CARE.
- CALL NOW THINK YOU WERE PUT AT RISK?
- CALL NOW NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?
- CALL NOW FIND SUPPORT GROUPS.
- CALL NOW LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

ONLINE CHAT NOW AVAILABLE
WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG

THE MICHIGAN HIV/STD HOTLINE IS A PROGRAM OF UNIFIED - HIV HEALTH AND BEYOND

Perceptions Announces Annual Pride Awards

Perceptions in Midland has announced their annual Pride awardees in advance of the organization's 9th annual LGBT & Ally Pride Awards banquet on June 27 which honors individuals and businesses who have worked to further equality in the Great Lakes Bay Region.



Angelia Williams, Business Pride Award

Williams of Great Lakes Bay Health Centers is the special projects director and has worked on LGBT issues with staff, students, parents and the community. She has been a vital role in addressing the needs of LGBT youth in Saginaw city high schools.



Amy McDonald, Champions of Pride Award

McDonald is a licensed professional counselor covering the Great Lakes Bay Region and based at family and children services in Midland. She offers services to a wide range of clientele and specializes in LGBT, gender and sexuality issues. Amy has served the area LGBT community with deep respect as an advocate, educator, therapist, clinician and friend.

Trevor Ewers, Champions of Pride Award



Ewers is an associate research scientist and the Global Culture Change Leader with GLAD (LGBT & Ally Employment Resource Group) for The Dow Chemical Co. Dr. Ewers, with a small group, created and continues to lead the annual "Great Lakes Bay Pride LGBT Workplace Summit" that promotes workplace equality through inclusive education, training and regional support along with other collaborating businesses/sponsors.



Ellen Keeler, Champions of Pride Award

A Bay City mother and grandmother, Ellen Keeler, was concerned when her transgender grandson tried to commit suicide. When she learned that most transgender people have little to no support from their families, were evicted from homes and lost jobs because they are transgender, Keeler became the coordinator for the local Perceptions transgender support group.

Perceptions and other collaborating businesses/sponsors.

Dr. Elizabeth "Libby" Pionk, Rising Star Award



Dr. Pionk, a lesbian, has dedicated herself to the specialty of family medicine with a special interest in LGBT health and associated medical cases, situations, and policies where healthcare is not tailored to the LGBT patient. She has been a conduit and liaison between the professional healthcare community and the LGBT/SOGIE community.

J. Steele-Louchart, Rising Star Award



Steele-Louchart has been involved with the Saginaw Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Youth Advocacy Council and served as a volunteer with LGBT youth. He has been an active part of the MAX System of Care initiative at the Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority to increase access to services and improve outcomes for LGBTQ youth with emotional and behavioral needs.

Vanessa Guerra, Political Award



Guerra, the state representative in the 95th House district, has been an elected voice of LGBT equality by supporting and co-sponsoring legislation that would expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Right Act. She has supported House Resolutions declaring June LGBT Pride Month every year she has served in office and has attended and participated in numerous Perceptions and LGBT activities.

Tickets are available online at www.perceptionsmi.org. Tickets are \$30 each, \$20 for students.

Ringwald Announces General Auditions

It's that time of year again when The Ringwald Theatre in Ferndale searches for local talent to audition for their upcoming 2017/2018 season. Roles are available for the following shows: "The Rocky Horror Show," "Let the Right One In," "Merrily We Roll Along and Company."

Auditions will be held July 22 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and July 23 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Call backs will begin July 23 at 1:30 p.m. Actors must sign up for an audition slot and can do so online at www.theringwald.com or through the The Ringwald's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/TheRingwald or directly at 22742 Woodward Ave. Please bring a headshot and resume. Be prepared to share any known conflicts.

Actors are asked to prepare one 2-3 minute monologue that best shows their range. If the actor would like to audition for one of the musicals, please also prepare 32 bars of a song that best shows their range. Please bring clearly marked music; an accompanist will be on site.

Visit www.theringwald.com for show dates and rehearsal schedules. The Ringwald is a non-equity theatre. All roles are paid. Call 248-545-5545 for more information.

Testing Sites

Continued from p. 27

Community AIDS Resource and Education Services of Southwest Michigan
629 Pioneer St. Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kent County Health Department
Fuller Public Health Clinic
700 Fuller Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Forest Community Health Center
2316 S. Cedar Street
Lansing, MI 48910
By appointment only, 517-887-4424
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Saturday, June 24

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
3075 Clark Road #203
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Appointments Only. Call 734-572-9355 to schedule.
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Affirmations
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI 48220
1-4 p.m. (Last client at 3:30 p.m.)

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Dancing in the Park
Palmer Park
910 Merrill Plaisance, Detroit, MI 48203
4-8 p.m.
HIV and Syphilis testing, free food and beverages, music, drawing for an Amazon Kindle

Sunday, June 25

Menjos
928 W. McNichols Road
Detroit, MI 48203
5-9 p.m.

Monday, June 26

Matrix MAC Health
Walgreens
30852 Woodward Ave.
Royal Oak, MI 48073
3-7 p.m.

Community Health Awareness Group
1300 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
313-963-3434

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond

Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
University of Michigan Student Union
Spectrum Center Office
530 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109
6-8 p.m.
Call 734-572-9355 for details.

Genesee County Health Department
Floyd J. McCree Courts and Human
Services Center, 2nd Floor
630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 4, Flint, MI
48502
8-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Wellness AIDS Services
311 E. Court St.
Flint, MI 48502
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Mercy Health Prevention Practices
1700 Clinton Street
Muskegon, MI 49442
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Jackson County Health Department
1715 Lansing Ave.
Jackson, MI 49202
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers
Hearth Home Prevention and Outreach
Center
732 Hoyt St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saginaw County Department of Public
Health
1600 North Michigan Ave. Room 312
Saginaw, MI 48602
By appointment only, 989-758-3880
8:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Community AIDS Resource and
Education Services of Southwest
Michigan
629 Pioneer St. Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kent County Health Department
Fuller Public Health Clinic
700 Fuller Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Tuesday, June 27

ACCESS
963 Allen Road
Ferndale, MI 48220
12-5 p.m.

Matrix MAC Health
Walgreens
30852 Woodward Ave.
Royal Oak, MI 48073
3-7 p.m.

Matrix MAC Health
Northwest Activity Center
18100 Meyers Rd.
Detroit, MI 48235.
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Gonorrhea and Syphilis testing

Community Health Awareness Group
1300 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
313-963-3434

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
3075 Clark Road #203
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Appointments Only. Call 734-572-9355
to schedule.
11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 200
Detroit, MI 48202
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Walgreens
2170 Washtenaw Road, Ypsilanti, MI
48197
3-7 p.m.

Gospel Against AIDS
Walgreens
501 South Ballenger Highway
Flint, MI 48532
3 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Genesee County Health Department
Floyd J. McCree Courts and Human
Services Center, 2nd Floor
630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 4, Flint, MI
48502
1-4 p.m.

Wellness AIDS Services
311 E. Court St.
Flint, MI 48502
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Forest Community Health Center
2316 S. Cedar Street
Lansing, MI 48910
By appointment only, 517-887-4424
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Lansing Area AIDS Network
913 West Holmes, Suite 115
Lansing, MI 48906
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Appointment required

Jackson County Health Department
1715 Lansing Ave.
Jackson, MI 49202
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Van Buren Cass District Health Department
Hartford Clinic
57418 CR 681, Suite A
Hartford, MI 49057
1-4 p.m.

Van Buren Cass District Health Department
Dowagiac Clinic
302 S. Front St.
Dowagiac, MI 49047
1-4 p.m.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers
Hearth Home Prevention and Outreach
Center
732 Hoyt St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saginaw County Department of Public
Health
1600 North Michigan Ave. Room 312
Saginaw, MI 48602
By appointment only, 989-758-3880
8:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Community AIDS Resource and Education
Services of Southwest Michigan
629 Pioneer St. Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kent County Health Department
Fuller Public Health Clinic
700 Fuller Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Wednesday, June 28

Matrix MAC Health
Walgreens
30852 Woodward Ave.
Royal Oak, MI 48073
3-7 p.m.

Matrix MAC Health
Affirmations
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI 48220
6:30-8:30 p.m. (Last client taken at 8
p.m.)
HIV, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia and Hepatitis
C testing

Community Health Awareness Group
1300 W. Fort St.
Detroit, MI 48226
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
313-963-3434

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
Ruth Ellis Center
77 Victor St., Highland Park, MI 48203
5-9 p.m.

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond
3075 Clark Road #203
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Appointments Only. Call 734-572-9355
to schedule.
5-8 p.m.

Gospel Against AIDS
Walgreens
501 South Ballenger Highway
Flint, MI 48532
3 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Genesee County Health Department
Floyd J. McCree Courts and
Human Services Center, 2nd Floor
630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 4,
Flint, MI 48502
8-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Wellness AIDS Services
311 E. Court St.
Flint, MI 48502
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Lansing Area AIDS Network
Diversity Psychological Services
1310 Turner St.
Lansing, MI 48906
6-8 p.m.

Forest Community Health Center
2316 S. Cedar Street
Lansing, MI 48910
By appointment only, 517-887-4424
8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

Jackson County Health Department
1715 Lansing Ave.
Jackson, MI 49202
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Great Lakes Bay Health Centers
Hearth Home Prevention
and Outreach Center
732 Hoyt St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saginaw County Department
of Public Health
1600 North Michigan Ave. Room 312
Saginaw, MI 48602
By appointment only, 989-758-3880
1-7 p.m.

Community AIDS Resource and Education
Services of Southwest Michigan
629 Pioneer St. Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kent County Health Department
Fuller Public Health Clinic
700 Fuller Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Planned Parenthood of Michigan will
have 16 of their 19 Health Centers
open on June 27, all of which offer HIV
and STD testing. A full list of locations
and hours are available online www.plannedparenthood.org. PPMI does
not offer free testing, but patients
can be charged on a sliding fee scale,
depending on their income level. They
also take most insurances as well as
Medicaid coverage.

Media Report Looks at HIV Among Gay and Bisexual Black Men

Journalist Explores the Real Reasons Why America's Black Gay and Bisexual Men Have a Higher HIV Rate Than Any Country in the World

BY BTL STAFF

A June 6 New York Times article, "America's Hidden HIV Epidemic," reveals that last year, the CDC, using the first comprehensive national estimates of lifetime risk of HIV for several key populations, predicted that if current rates continue, one in two African-American gay and bisexual men will be infected with the virus. That compares with a lifetime risk of one in 99 for all Americans and one in 11 for white gay and bisexual men.

In the article, journalist Linda Villarosa explores the HIV crisis, most acute in Southern states, which hold 37 percent of the country's population and as of 2014 accounted for 54 percent of all new HIV diagnoses.

Villarosa points to a CDC report in February, which shows that only 48 percent of black gay and bisexual men effectively suppress the virus with consistent medication, and the numbers are even lower for these men in their late teens and 20s. Only a small percentage of black people use PrEP to prevent contracting the virus, accounting for only 10 percent of prescriptions; the vast majority of users are white. The article explains that many black gay and bisexual men either can't afford PrEP or don't know about it – they may not see a doctor regularly at all, and many medical providers haven't even heard of PrEP.

When discussing the causes of and the solutions for the HIV problem, rather than perpetuate the myth that only "promiscuous risk-taking black gay men" are responsible for the prevalence of HIV, Villarosa calls out the structural barriers; lack of access to transportation and information about prevention, testing and treatment; and a high community viral load (prevalence) as some of the many reasons. She wrote that stigma, discrimination and shame drive gay and bisexual men to hide their sexuality and avoid the health care system – and making sure providers have adequate resources and understand how to care for HIV patients.

But this requires funding, and right now, the president's proposed budget includes a \$186 million cut in the CDC's funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and support services. Villarosa points to a 2014 study conducted by Dr. David Holtgrave of the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health which found that to make any real progress in the HIV/AIDS crisis among black gay and bisexual men in the U.S., the government would need to invest an additional \$2.5 billion to address unmet testing, care, treatment and prevention needs.

A June 15 article by the Poz staff gives props to Villarosa and longtime advocate Kenyon Farrow of the Treatment Action Group

for making clear, when it comes to HIV, that the community "must not fall prey to myths, shaming and lazy reporting, but hold news outlets accountable in our search for the truth."

This comes in response to a recent CBS Sunday Morning segment, "36 Years and Counting: AIDS in America," reported by Rita Braver who simply states that "AIDS prevention and treatment drugs can be expensive" and "that not everyone has access to them" without addressing the current administration's attack on the Affordable Care Act or the failure of certain states to expand Medicaid.

The Poz article stressed that it's not enough to say, "the rate of new HIV cases tends to be higher in the African-American and Latino communities," which happens a lot in everyday reports about the HIV epidemic. A basic Google search, as noted in the article, reveals what groundbreaking work is actually happening now and the second and third generations of black and brown activists who are helping to shape new strategies to address HIV as an issue of racial, gender and economic justice, and in some cases, working closely with first-generation AIDS activists. Poz gives a nod to the many public service campaigns that emphasize the importance of knowing one's status and maintaining an undetectable viral load as a means of reducing transmission risk. The article encourages members of the community to go beyond just learning about the HIV epidemic but to take the time to learn what can be done to help.

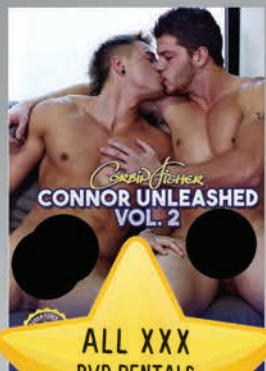
HIV Trends In Michigan

The 2016 annual review of HIV trends in Michigan shows that each year there are more new diagnoses of HIV infection than deaths, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. As a result, the reported number of persons living with HIV in Michigan is increasing. MDHHS estimates that 18,800 persons were living with HIV infection in Michigan as of July 2015. Between 2010 and 2014, the rate of new diagnoses increased significantly among persons 25-29 years of age.

In 2014, the rate among black males was more than 10 times that of white males. Almost three quarters (71 percent) of teen and young adult cases combined are residents of Southeast Michigan. Of these cases, 60 percent were residents of the city of Detroit at the time of HIV diagnosis.

Read the full report online
<http://gaybe.am/6f>

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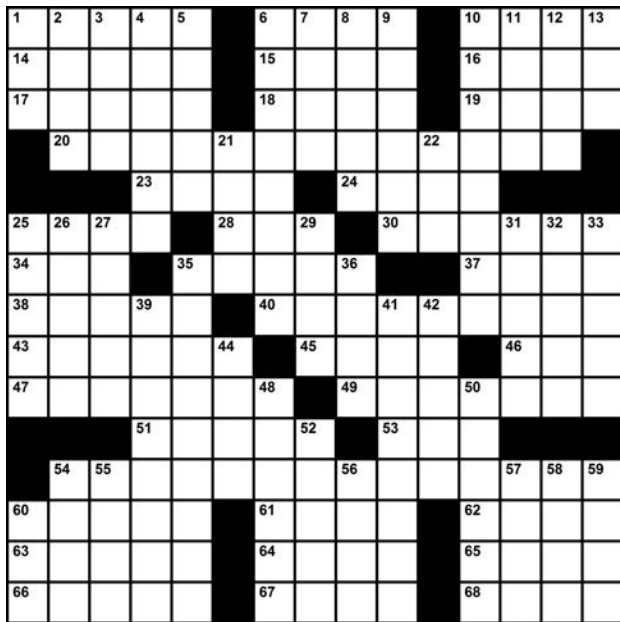
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Q Puzzle



Trailblazer

Across

- 1 Links vehicles for Patty Sheehan
- 6 Son of Adam and Eve
- 10 Auntie of Broadway
- 14 Hole instrument
- 15 Irene of "Fame"
- 16 Flamboyant style
- 17 The bottom line
- 18 "Yeah, right"
- 19 Go down (on)

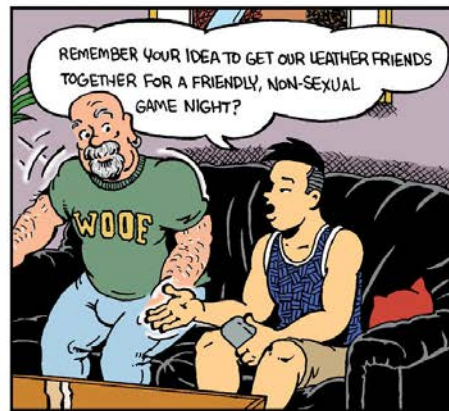
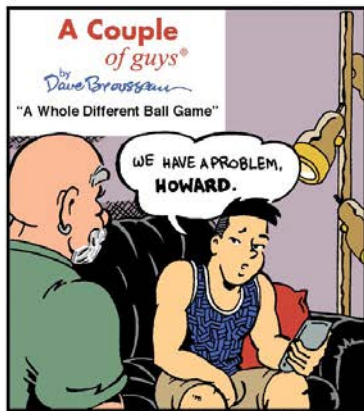
- 20 Actor who plays 54-Across
- 23 "This is the thanks ___?"
- 24 Polo of "The Fosters"
- 25 Drag queen ___ Understood
- 28 Gig fraction
- 30 Once in a blue moon
- 34 Brian Boitano's milieu
- 35 Local at a leaning erection site
- 37 Hawaiian feast
- 38 Comedian Gomez
- 40 Drama series with a trans

- character recently revived on Showtime
- 43 Estevez of "Bobby"
- 45 You may go down on one
- 46 Born, in gay Paree
- 47 Covers the backside of
- 49 Arouses in bed
- 51 Really enjoyed Stephen Pyles
- 53 U. of San Francisco, e.g.
- 54 Trailblazing trans character on 40-Across
- 60 Sarah of Alaska
- 61 Opera figure
- 62 Sulu's star ship captain
- 63 Cause to have an orgasm
- 64 Plumb, and others
- 65 Skye on screens
- 66 Men without women at a party
- 67 Part of GPS (abbr.)
- 68 Unload loads

Down

- 1 Judy Chicago's hrs.
- 2 "And giving ____, up the chimney..."
- 3 Drumbeat start
- 4 Country singer Randy
- 5 "Terminal Bar" playwright Paul
- 6 Where the rubber meets the road, so to speak
- 7 "Seinfeld" character from Pakistan
- 8 How Homo sapiens walks
- 9 They can cut your pole
- 10 One whale of a writer?
- 11 "Six Feet Under" creator Ball
- 12 More than enough
- 13 Top or bottom
- 21 She danced with Whoopi in "Ghost"
- 22 Rough stuff underground
- 25 Played charades
- 26 Start of Caesar's boast
- 27 Bit of calligraphy
- 29 Look at a hottie in a bar, perhaps
- 31 Tom once of the New York state senate
- 32 Kind of wooden bucket
- 33 Ponders
- 35 Georgia O'Keeffe works
- 36 One of Columbus's ships
- 39 Gathering slowly
- 41 Rachel Maddow program, e.g.
- 42 Juicy fruit
- 44 Poems of Sappho
- 48 Napped leather materials
- 50 Casual slacks
- 52 Outhouse
- 54 Come quickly
- 55 "A Streetcar Named Desire" director Kazan
- 56 Burl of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"
- 57 Historic Stonewall event
- 58 Bond's first foe
- 59 Slant unfairly
- 60 "Teletubbies" network in the U.S.

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com



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