

MICHIGAN'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993



Trump's Voter-data Collection Efforts Could Be Disastrous for LGBT Voters

Summer Flicks: A Must See Gay French-Canadian Film '1:54'

'Faces for Equality' Facebook Site Launches



'The Big Sick' Actress on Her New LGBT-resonant Rom-Com, Fair Representation in Film and Shining a Spotlight on Gay Actors

CRAZY for ZOE KAZAN

What is TRUVADA for PrEP?

TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a prescription medicine that is used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1. To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- ◆ **You must be HIV-negative before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**

You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.

- ◆ **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- ◆ **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**

- ◆ **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP:**

- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months.
- If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.

- ◆ **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**

- Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
- Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.

- ◆ **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- ◆ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV and stop taking TRUVADA, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- ◆ **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.** If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- ◆ **Also take** certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.

What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- ◆ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA.
- ◆ **Too much lactic acid in your blood** (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ◆ **Severe liver problems**, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ◆ **Bone problems**, including bone pain, softening, or thinning, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.

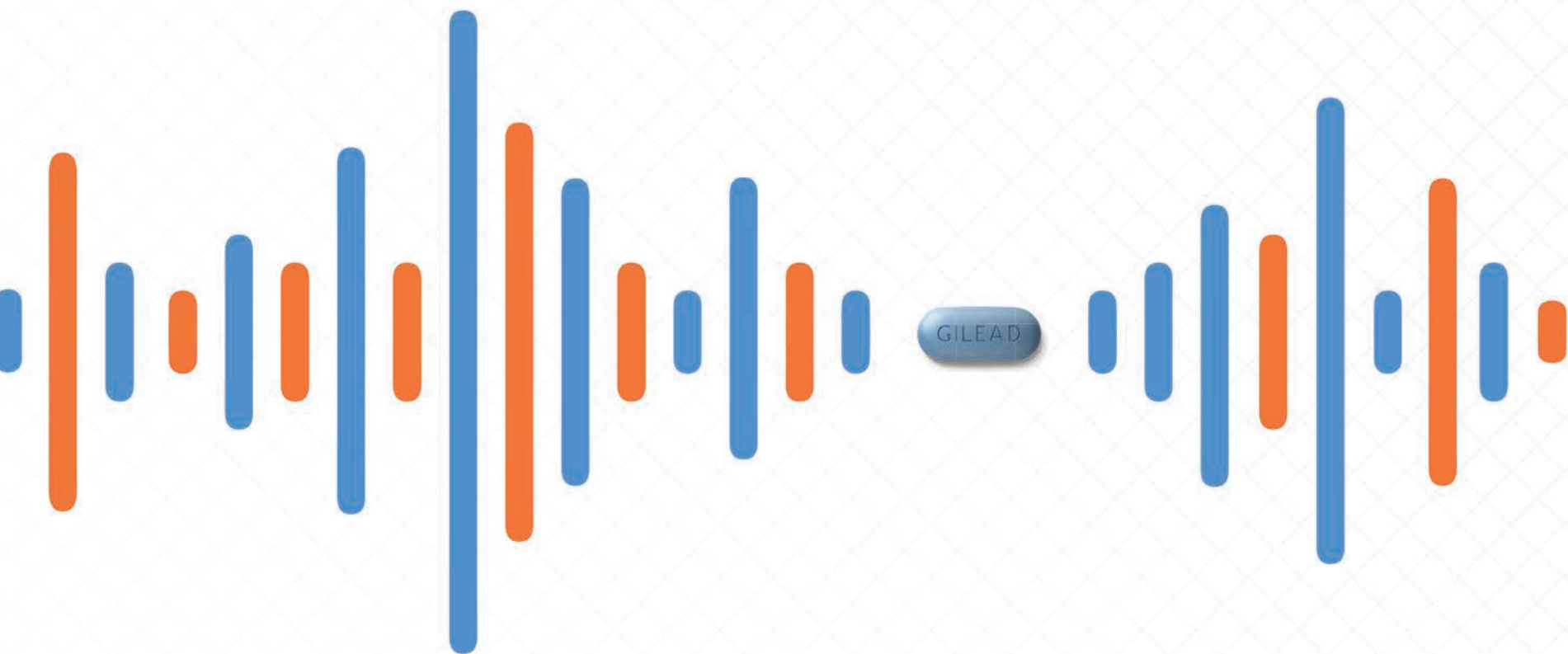
Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- ◆ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- ◆ **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA.
- ◆ **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- ◆ **All the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- ◆ **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include certain medicines to treat hepatitis C (HCV) infection.

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

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.



Have you heard about
TRUVADA for PrEP™?

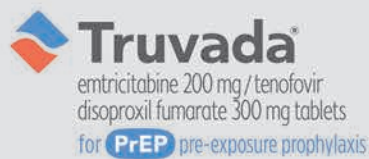
The **once-daily prescription medicine** that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when used **with safer sex practices**.

- TRUVADA for PrEP is only for **adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex**.
- You **must be HIV-negative** before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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(tru-VAH-dah)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.** Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you think you were exposed to HIV-1 or have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- See the “How To Further Reduce Your Risk” section for more information.

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA for PrEP is a prescription medicine used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1.

- To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day,** not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- Use TRUVADA for PrEP together with condoms and safer sex practices.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months. You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP™ (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP” section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- Bone problems.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

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

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can pass to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

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

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.



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Transgender Woman Launches Facebook Site 'Faces for Equality'

BY CAROL TANIS

When Donald Trump won the presidency, Jamie Lynn Hemphill felt she had to do something. She wanted to put a face on transgender individuals with the hope of educating Trump about how his actions could adversely affect their lives. Transitioning and Trump's election prompted her to launch the site "Faces for Equality" on Facebook. The site is open to anyone to view, like, or add a comment. And she hopes it will inspire others to get involved.

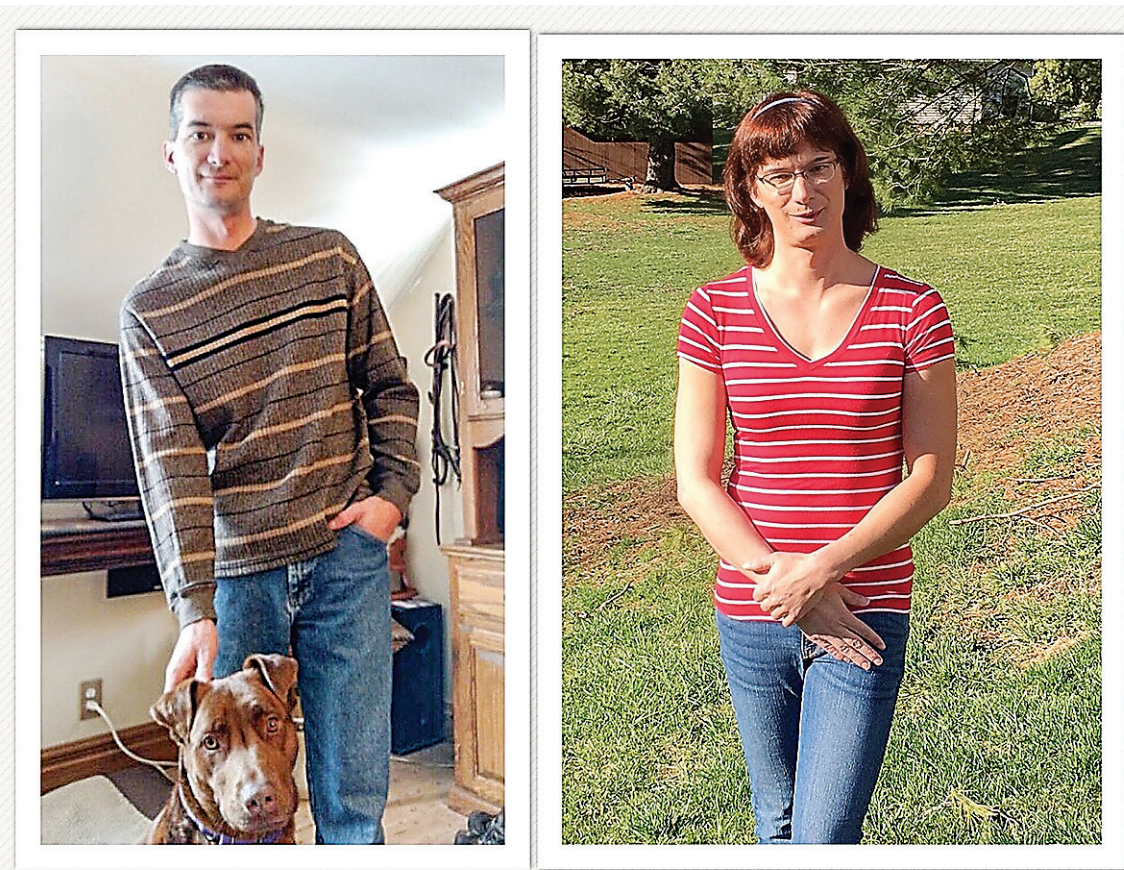
"I have endeavored to become a visible face to let people know that trans people are real," said Jamie. "We have feelings and all we want to do is just live a normal life. After being a white male, becoming a minority as transgender and female has been an eye-opening experience."

On the site's main page, a photo of Jamie is featured prominently and positioned among the letters she's written to Trump and copied to members of Congress and Michigan's Legislature.

She's pledging to write a letter to Trump each month, informing him of how such measures as requiring transgender individuals to use separate bathrooms or the bathroom that corresponds to one's biological gender is discriminatory.

"My letters basically say whether you give me rights or take away my rights, this is the face of who you are doing this to. That's my point. To put a face on these things. I'm just an average person who pays her taxes every year. I work hard for a living and I deserve the same rights as everyone else. I want to stand up for what I believe in, no matter what the cost. I believe in the saying, 'bad things happen when good people do nothing.'"

Jamie's letter-writing campaign also seeks to promote equality for women, Muslims or any minority that's targeted by discrimination. Additionally, she hopes "Faces for Equality" will inspire others to write the president and lawmakers. "My dream would be for this to become a national movement, for there to be so much mail that they can't ignore it."



Jamie Lynn Hemphill before and after her transition. Photo courtesy of Carol Tanis

Transitioning from male to female has increased her awareness of how women are sometimes belittled and harassed by men, particularly in her profession as a long-distance semi-truck driver. Jamie has viewed most of the U.S. from the cab of a truck. She's driven in New York City, crossed the Continental Divide on I-70 in Vale, Colorado, seen the border fence in El Paso, Texas and viewed sunsets and sunrises over palm trees in Los Angeles. Now, as a woman driving an 18-wheeler, she has noticed male car drivers occasionally making lewd gestures or flashing her, and questioning her ability to drive her truck, often prefaced by the words, "honey," or "sweetie."

"In Detroit, I had to back up to a very tight loading dock, and the customer asked if I knew how to back up a truck. I said, 'I've been driving a truck for ten years.' He was kind of surprised," she said. For safety reasons, at night she doesn't leave her cab, which is equipped with two bunks, a small refrigerator,

microwave, TV and chemical toilet.

While some now question Jamie's ability as a female truck driver, others have been mostly affirming of her transition, including her current employer. In 2015, she came out to management saying she wanted to transition. Her role serving as a mentor to other drivers was discontinued. However, she was allowed to change her driving schedule to accommodate attendance at therapy sessions, which are required to get hormone replacement meds. She took one week off from work, leaving as James Frank Hemphill and returning as Jamie Lynn Hemphill, presenting as female and wearing form-fitting clothes.

Then in 2016, she had her name changed through Social Security, including on her birth certificate, and driver's license. Jamie said she's always been attracted to women's clothing. As a kid, she wore her sister's bathing suit once, but her dad demanded that she take it off immediately and punished her. As

a teen, she didn't like seeing hair appear on her legs and she rarely went swimming without wearing a shirt.

In her 20's, Jamie got married to a woman with two girls. However, the marriage broke up because she was so unhappy living as a man and yet could never speak of it. (She remains in contact with the two girls from that marriage, who are now adults, and they support her transition.) Jamie abused alcohol to medicate her pain and then got married again in 2009 to Marykaye. After they had been married a couple of months, she told her wife that she has cross-dressed all of her life. Her wife was okay with the news, but Jamie requested that they not discuss it, and for the next seven years they didn't.

Through the years, they began to drift apart, and Hemphill knew she had to finally speak the words that she'd known all her life--that she was meant to be a woman. She knew that, if she couldn't transition, it would be difficult to go on. "I

Trans Support Groups in West Michigan

For those seeking support there are two groups in West Michigan: One group meets the third Friday of the month at 6 p.m. in Grace Episcopal Church in Holland at 555 Michigan Ave.

Call 616-396-7459 for more information.

Another support group meets in Grand Rapids at the Pride Center at 343 Atlas Ave., SE. Call 616-458-3511 for meeting details.

was at the point where there was no holding it together any longer. I was shaking when I told Marykaye. Here I was about to do something where I could lose everything I had in life: my wife, my children, my job," said Jamie.

Marykaye thought Jamie was going to ask for a divorce, but when she learned that she wanted to try living as a woman, Marykaye said after some thought "let's try it," and the process began with Jamie wearing a wig and dressing as a woman at night in the car. Marykaye said Jamie promised to transition only as far what she Marykaye wished. "But I didn't know what I was comfortable with," said Marykaye. "Then I began thinking about it and later I said if you want gender confirmation surgery, I'm fine with that. I had been sexually abused by more than one family member at age six for a couple of years. My dad is schizophrenic and physically abused me and, as a result, I didn't trust men. So, I'm okay if Jamie doesn't need male genitals. It's kind of like I've been pre-conditioned to be her wife. It

See next page

► Facebook Site

Continued from p. 7

took some time to get to that point, but now we are effectively wife and wife.”

During counseling sessions, they both work on their personal issues and what they face as a couple. Talking with a therapist has been affirming for them both as individuals and helpful for their marriage. Jamie has never been happier. “I’m becoming the person I’ve been on the inside my entire life, and now I can let the world know it,” she said. “I’m able to be myself for the first time. And our relationship is stronger because there are no secrets. Before I met Marykaye, I’d never experienced unconditional love, and her love has made it safe to come out.”

Marykaye agrees that counseling has helped them both in many ways and she remains attracted to Jamie even as a woman. “Here’s this wonderful person who treats me with love and respect so how could I not reciprocate if my spouse wants to be true to herself. Plus, there are so many issues from my past that I would not have worked on in counseling, had she not transitioned.” MaryKaye adds that being married to a transgender woman is not exactly what she “signed up for” when they married, but she remains physically attracted to Jamie.

Marykaye also plays a strong role concerning “Faces for Equality” by administrating the Facebook page. She posts letters on the site that Jamie has written to politicians. Also, she has created and administrates “Our Transgender Journey Together,” a Facebook site detailing their lives together as they go through the transitioning process and strive to maintain a solid marriage.

Last fall Marykaye and Jamie joined Plymouth United Church of Christ in Grand Rapids, and Jamie was baptized. Jamie said the affirmation she’s received at the church and from her employer has empowered her to come out publicly as transgender on “Faces for Equality” and to keep going when people react negatively to her.

Visit the “Faces of Equality” Facebook page <http://gaybe.am/Oo> to support Jamie’s efforts.

Michigan DOC Revises Policy, Allows Transition-related Care for Trans Inmates

BY BTL STAFF

The Michigan Department of Corrections has adopted a new policy for the care of transgender prisoners after a transgender woman incarcerated in a Michigan prison campaigned, with the help of the Southern Poverty Law Center and the ACLU of Michigan, to receive the hormone therapy she was denied.

The policy, which took effect June 26, came after Jami Naturalite wrote to the SPLC last year seeking information related to the SPLC case, *Diamond v. Owens*, which successfully challenged a similar, unconstitutional policy in Georgia. The SPLC and the ACLU of Michigan contacted prison system officials on her behalf in October, sparking a collaboration that resulted in the new policy that protects the Constitutional rights of transgender prisoners.

“We are pleased that the Michigan Department of Corrections took this important step to ensure that transgender people in prisons receive the care they need - and which the Constitution requires,” said David Dinielli, SPLC deputy legal director. “We hope it also ensures they are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

Denial of medically necessary, transition-related care for transgender prisoners amounts to “cruel and unusual punishment” under the Eighth Amendment. Without such care, transgender people may experience gender dysphoria - the distress associated with the conflict between one’s experienced or expressed gender and one’s assigned gender. It puts them at risk of anxiety, depression and suicide.

Hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery are medically necessary for many transgender people experiencing gender dysphoria. Before the MDOC’s new policy was implemented, however, hormone therapy was generally limited to individuals who were already prescribed hormones and were scheduled for surgery before they were incarcerated.

The policy effectively froze the patient’s care without regard to medical need, which Naturalite experienced. Gender-affirming surgeries were also prohibited except in “extraordinary

circumstances” determined by the chief medical officer and the MDOC director.

Under the new policy, transgender prisoners will receive hormone therapy when the newly formed Gender Dysphoria Collaborative Review Committee finds it medically necessary. It also has the authority to consider gender-affirming surgeries on a case-by-case basis. Transgender prisoners with gender dysphoria are also entitled to at least two reassessments each year by a medical provider, in consultation with the review committee.

The new policy also requires staff to act professionally and respectfully when searching or communicating with transgender and gender nonconforming prisoners. Treatment plans for prisoners must also consider housing placement, access to toilet and shower facilities with relative privacy, and what clothing and prison store items - such as undergarments and grooming aids - should be available.

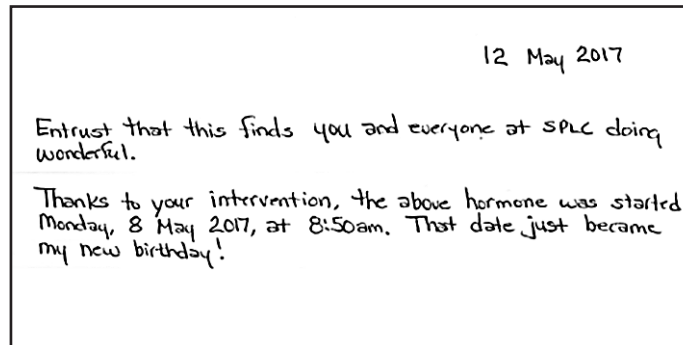
Although the policy just took effect on June 26, the

committee has already reviewed Naturalite’s case and recommended hormone therapy, which she began last month.

“Transgender people who are sentenced to serve time in our prisons should not be forced to endure cruel and unusual punishment because of their gender identity,” said Jay Kaplan, LGBT Project staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan. “This is not some kind of preferential treatment; all inmates have a fundamental right to medical care, safety and a basic level of respect.”

In a recent letter to the SPLC, Naturalite noted that the new policy ends a “struggle within the MDOC - one that caused unknown trials and tribulations upon my trans sisters, as well as upon myself.” She thanked the SPLC, the ACLU of Michigan, and advocate and friend, Lisa C. Gilinger, a transgender attorney in California, for their support, which helped make her life “become more bearable and hopeful.”

Learn more about the Southern Poverty Law Center online <https://www.splcenter.org/>. For more information about the ACLU of Michigan, visit the organization’s website <http://www.aclumich.org/>.



A letter from inmate Jami Naturalite to the SPLC, the ACLU of Michigan, and advocate and friend, Lisa C. Gilinger, a transgender attorney in California.

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Gay Lansing Council Candidate Endorsed by the Victory Fund

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

In 1991 there were fewer than 50 openly LGBTQ elected officials in America. In response to the dire need of representation, it would be in May of that year that the Victory Fund's first iteration would be founded. Fast forward to today, and the organization has endorsed dozens of openly LGBTQ candidates across the nation.

One of whom, is Lansing local Jim McClurken, who will be running for Lansing City Council's 4th Ward seat.

"Jim applied, and Jim has been active in the LGBT community as well as the civil rights community at large for his whole life," said Victory Fund Political Director Sean Meloy. "If you look at his record from the '70s and the civil rights work he's done on behalf of Native Americans and the LGBT community in the '80s during the AIDS crisis, for fundamental rights, for recognition and for basic healthcare rights, he was on the front lines doing that in the community in which he's running right now actually."

McClurken, who is also an anthropologist specializing in ethnohistory, met and exceeded

all the criteria that the Victory Fund looks for when evaluating a candidate for office. Candidates' race and campaign plans are not only evaluated, but active work in the community on behalf of the LGBTQ community, their plans to raise money, and fundamental beliefs are also assessed.

According to Meloy, the Victory Fund seeks out the most well-rounded candidates available.

"If they have those things, as well as the capacity to improve even with the help of Victory Fund, we'll give them our endorsement," Meloy said. "With that endorsement comes a network of folks who look for our seal as a means to say, 'this is an LGBT candidate who is running, and they are in a position to help make some change.'"

For McClurken, some of the changes he wants to bring about most are in the fields of economy, transparency and livability. He said that he is "honored" to be nominated, and hopes his values will resonate with not only LGBTQ individuals, but people in Lansing looking for a change.

"I have to say that Donald Trump's election was another one of the factors that brought home to me that if people like me don't run for office, other people will," McClurken said. "I've been out there for a very long time, I'm not secret



Jim McClurken will be running for Lansing City Council's 4th Ward seat.

about my orientation, my gay politics and my desire to build a safe place for LGBTQ people."

He said his time on the city's Park Board has also informed his campaign.

"Accountability and transparency and decision-making are fundamental to my campaign. The reason I say that is because our current administration has been neither,"

McClurken said. "As a member of the park board I've been involved with park issues intensely for the past year, as our current Mayor attempts to deaccession park land without the approval of the park board, without the approval of the city council. He has done so through multiple back channel dealings and legal ambiguities and I want that to stop."

McClurken said he will also dedicate his time to aiding with immigration issues.

"I want to work to ensure from day one, that people in the community are safe from arrest and as far divorced from the ICE process of deportation as I can possibly make them and I will work toward that in every way I can," McClurken said.

Although McClurken doesn't consider himself a career politician, he is confident that if elected, his time in city politics will benefit everyone.

"Lansing is ready for someone like me to be open and on city council," McClurken said. If elected, McClurken will be the first openly gay man to serve on Lansing City Council.

Read more about the Victory Fund online <https://victoryfund.org/>. Connect with Jim McClurken at <http://mcclurken.net>.

Study Reveals LGBT Rental Housing Discrimination

BY LOU CHIBBARO JR., WASHINGTON BLADE

A newly released study by the D.C.-based Urban Institute found that some landlords that were subjected to discrimination "testing" in the D.C. metropolitan area showed a bias against renting apartments to applicants who self-identified as transgender compared to applicants not identifying as transgender.

The study also conducted several hundred discrimination tests in the Los Angeles and Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, areas in which testers posed as members of gay male, lesbian, and heterosexual couples. The findings from this part of the study show that some landlords displayed a bias against gay male applicants but appeared to treat lesbians and straight women the same.

The study's lead author, Urban Institute researcher Diane K. Levy, told the Washington Blade that in the D.C. tests, 100 of the testers identified as transgender and 99 did not say anything about their gender identity and were presumed to be cisgender.

She said that in a carefully developed



Dana Beyer, executive director of Gender Rights Maryland, said she was pleasantly surprised that the study found the degree of discrimination encountered by the transgender testers to be so small. Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key

plan the people identifying as transgender applicants for renting an apartment disclosed

their gender identity by telling the landlord or rental agent that the name they would be using for the application was different from their birth name because they were transgender and had yet to legally change their name.

The study reveals that in one out of every 5.6 test visits to a rental office, the rental agents or landlords offered to show a self-identified transgender applicant one fewer apartment than was shown to non-transgender applicants.

As part of the study, the testers identifying as trans and non-trans applicants said they were single with no children and had the same financial qualifications to rent an apartment.

The study's findings are presented in a 297-page report called "A Paired-Testing Pilot Study of Housing Discrimination against Same-Sex Couples and Transgender Individuals."

The report says the study arranged for "1,200 in-person tests split evenly between women and men posing as part of a same-sex couple" in the Los Angeles and Dallas-Fort Worth areas where they showed up at a rental office to inquire about finding an apartment.

Rental agents or landlords "told gay men about one fewer available rental unit for every 4.2 tests than they told heterosexual men," the reports states. "Providers were slightly less likely to schedule an appointment with gay men," it says, adding, "The average yearly costs agents quoted gay men were \$272 higher than the costs quoted to heterosexual men."

Levy said the testers who self-identified as gay men or lesbians did so by telling the rental agent or landlord they were part of a same-sex couple.

According to the study, the landlords appeared to treat the testers self-identifying as members of a lesbian couple the same as they treated heterosexual women who said they were part of an opposite-sex couple by not displaying any difference in offering to show them an apartment available for rent.

When the lesbian and straight women testers were able to meet with a rental agent, "agents were slightly less likely to tell the lesbian testers that a unit was available," the report

See Housing Discrimination, page 10

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► Housing Discrimination

Continued from p. 8

says. But it says differences in the treatment between the two groups “generally are small and not statistically significant.”

The report makes it clear that the testing of possible discrimination by landlords and rental agents focused on the early stage of the rental process in which testers visited a rental office to inquire about the availability of an apartment or rental unit and sometimes were shown the units. But it did not involve the testers submitting an actual application since that, according to Levy, would likely involve a credit check and other background checks that could result in agents finding out the testers were not who they claimed to be for purposes of the test.

“Differential treatment matters,” Levy said in a statement accompanying the report. “When people are discriminated against in their housing searches, not only does it go against our collective value of equal opportunity, but it limits their options for where to live, which can affect how they get to work, the schools their children attend, and other facets of their daily lives,” she said.

Levy said that because the study was intended as a research project rather than a discrimination enforcement effort the Urban Institute will not disclose the identity of the landlords or rental agents found to show a bias against the gay or trans testers.

Douglas Wissoker, another of the report’s seven co-authors, said that although the number of instances in which a landlord or rental agent appeared to discriminate against the gay or transgender testers was relatively small, the numbers were statistically significant and clearly not due to chance.

Transgender rights advocate Dana Beyer, executive director of statewide group Gender Rights Maryland, said she was pleasantly surprised that the study found the degree of discrimination encountered by the transgender testers to be so small.

“Yes, trans people are treated worse, but not as badly as one would have imagined,” she said. “That’s one of the takeaways that there is some discrimination but it didn’t seem to be nearly as bad as people would imagine. And that’s striking.”

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/paired-testing-pilot-study-housing-discrimination-against-same-sex-couples-and-transgender-individuals>.

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

Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ Community: What You Should Know

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Care. No Matter What. – Planned Parenthood

Birth control and abortion. For many people, that’s what comes to mind when they think of Planned Parenthood. But did you know that they offer a full range of services, from HIV testing and treatment to cancer screenings? Planned Parenthood is a great resource for the health care of the LGBTQ community. Why don’t more people know?

John Keserich, Director of Political Field Operations for Planned Parenthood of Michigan and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan explains, “While the Planned Parenthood brand is one of the best known and most well-respected brands in the country, especially a health care brand, the name itself can at times be confusing, especially in some communities.

Folks may realize that we provide services related to reproduction— but if pregnancy isn’t a possible outcome of sex, Planned Parenthood may not be an obvious choice for some, as many are unaware of the full range of services we provide.”

Keserich, who is openly gay, and has worked as an advocate for women and families for almost 20 years, wants to spread the word that Planned Parenthood has much to offer the LGBTQ community. “Many, many people, regardless of sexual orientation, need access to condoms, STD testing and treatment, HIV testing, HIV Post Exposure Prophylactic (PEP) Treatment, and cancer screenings. [Screenings for breast, cervical and testicular cancers are available.]

Planned Parenthood of Michigan does not currently provide hormone therapy for transgender individuals, but we continue to consider doing so as we look more closely at the needs of our communities.”

Other services that PPMI provides include annual visits for both women and men, HPV vaccinations for adults age 18-26, and treatment of genito-urinary infections. (Additional services may be available at Planned Parenthood locations in other states; see resources below.) Keserich adds that Planned Parenthood is always looking for ways to expand services to better serve the needs of our communities.

Also, keep in mind that Planned Parenthood’s services are very affordable. They accept most insurance plans, and there is the option of paying with a health savings

account or flexible spending account. PPMI accepts Medicaid and participates with the Healthy Michigan Plan, whose eligibility requirements can be found on their website. And their sliding scale fee accommodates people who lack coverage.

Planned Parenthood has always been a no-judgment zone, where health care services are confidential and compassionate. Individuals from all walks of life, regardless of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual history are welcome. Keserich tells how and why: “At Planned Parenthood, one of our core values is that ‘We Respect and Honor All People’. As is true of all of our core values, we take that very seriously. Our health centers are open to all people and are delivered in a welcoming, respectful, nonjudgmental way.”

Part Planned Parenthood’s mission is education: educating their clients as well as the public. And education regarding LGBTQ issues is an essential component of what they do—it’s more than just a statement. That means they believe that all people of have the right to learn about their sexuality and develop skills to make healthy decisions about their bodies and relationships.

Keserich is proud that “all of our education programs are completely LGBT+ inclusive in that information is presented with the assumption that all gender identities and sexual orientations are represented in the room whether we are talking about healthy relationships or HIV prevention.”

Their Peer Educators Program—which comprises youth who identify as LGBTQ—now features an LGBTQ-specific module, focusing on the community’s issues, from healthy relationships to inclusion. These student groups are led by more than 80 youth across the state, and they support the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. Further, Planned Parenthood provides educational programs for school boards and sexual education advisory boards, with the purpose of helping school districts design and implement LGBTQ-inclusive programs and policies.

Another component of Planned Parenthood’s mission is advocacy. A number of issues they support overlap with the needs of the LGBTQ community: They work with Equality Michigan and the ACLU on the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act, as well as the Michigan Department of Education in regard

to their recommendations concerning the creation of learning environment that seeks to be inclusive of LGBTQ students. Another area of overlap concerns issues surrounding Religious Refusals.

In terms of endorsements, to receive Planned Parenthood’s stamp of approval agencies and organizations must support LGBTQ equality 100 percent.

Finally, Keserich had a few words to add on what we have in common, in the belief that Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ community might support each other’s causes—particularly in light of the present political climate. “First, we can always do more and be better allies in all ways – but we deeply value the intersectionality of our issues with a variety of issues including the LGBT+ movement. But we most certainly have some incredibly important commonalities as it relates to the political battles that we have faced in the past, and that we will continue to face as conservatives hold power in Washington D.C. and in state legislatures across the country.

We have common cause in what is right and just; that all people deserve equality and respect. We share a common philosophy around privacy and sexuality. We share common constitutional issues – equal protection under the law. And we share common enemies – the same people working against reproductive justice are working against LGBTQ equality, racial justice, economic justice, environmental justice, worker’s rights, voting rights, etc.”

I stand with Planned Parenthood. Do you?

Planned Parenthood:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

Planned Parenthood of Michigan:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-michigan>

To find one of PPMI’s 19 locations in Michigan:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center/MI>

Interested in getting involved or staying up-to-date on legislative advocacy? See Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan:

<http://miplannedparenthood.org>

German Lawmakers Approve Same-sex Marriage Bill

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS, WASHINGTON BLADE

German lawmakers on June 30 approved a bill that will extend marriage rights to same-sex couples.

The measure passed in the lower house of the German Parliament, which is known as the Bundestag, by 393-226 vote margin with four abstentions.

The vote took place less than a week after Chancellor Angela Merkel announced her position on whether to allow a vote on the issue had changed.

She told the editor of a German magazine that she recently had dinner with a lesbian couple who are raising eight foster children. Merkel, who is a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Party, voted against the bill.

The Social Democratic, Green and Free Democratic Parties all back marriage rights for same-sex couples. The June 30 vote took place ahead of elections that are scheduled to take place on Sept. 24.

Germany since 2001 has allowed gays and lesbians to enter into civil partnerships. It is among the last countries in western Europe that have not extended marriage rights to same-sex couples. Gays and lesbians can legally marry in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Portugal, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Iceland. Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, who won re-election earlier this month, said his government plans to introduce a same-sex marriage bill. The German bill is

expected to become law by the end of the year. "After years of waiting and hoping, rainbow families in Germany will now receive equal recognition under the law," said ILGA-Europe Executive Director Evelyne Paradis in a statement. "This is a historic milestone that can inspire even more change for LGBTI people." Ty Cobb, director of Human Rights Global, also welcomed the vote. "With the very serious challenges the LGBTQ community continues to face around the world, this is welcome news and an important victory in working to ensure LGBTQ people are embraced as full members of society," he said. The June 30 vote took place a day before up to three million people were expected to line the streets of Madrid for the WorldPride parade. Hundreds of advocates from across Europe have been attending LGBT rights conferences and other events in the Spanish capital this week. Lars Vorberger is a member of the board of directors of Rainbow Rose, the LGBT network of the Party of European Socialists, who lives in the German city of Hamburg. He described the vote as "really wonderful" as he spoke with the Washington Blade on Friday during a Rainbow Rose and Party of European Socialists conference that is taking place at the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party headquarters in Madrid. "It's great to really celebrate this big decision and the big step we took this morning in Germany," said Vorberger.

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

4th Circuit Tosses Challenge to N.C. Anti-gay Marriage Law

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

The U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals tossed out on June 28 a lawsuit challenging a state law allowing state magistrates to opt out of performing same-sex marriages for religious reasons, citing a lack of standing by plaintiffs in the litigation.

Writing for the three-judge panel, U.S. Circuit Judge James Harvie Wilkinson III determined plaintiffs in the lawsuit – couples who assert the law amounts to spending public funds in the aid of religion – have no standing to press a claim against Senate Bill 2.

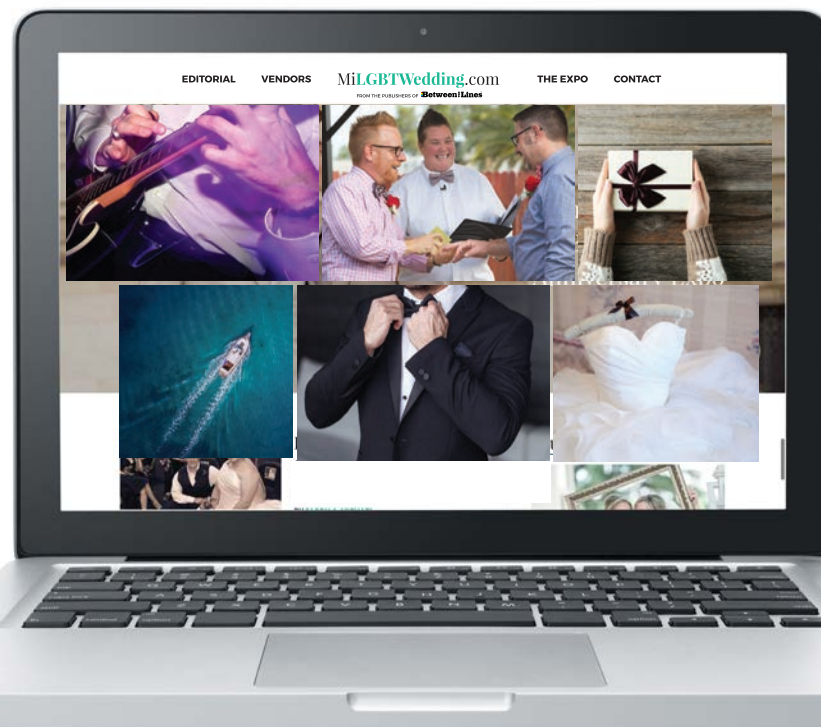
"Plaintiffs concede that the state has not

impeded or restricted their opportunity to get married," Wilkinson said. "One same-sex couple married in 2014, another same-sex couple is engaged to be married, and the last pair of plaintiffs, an interracial couple, married in 1976. Nonetheless, they contend that their status as North Carolina taxpayers affords them standing to challenge SB2. Because plaintiffs' claim does not fall within the narrow exception to the general bar against taxpayer standing, their suit must be dismissed."

Joining Wilkinson, a Reagan appointee, in the 18-page decision was U.S. Circuit Judge Barbara Keenan, an Obama appointee, and

See N.C. Anti-gay Marriage Law, page 21

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Jackson Couple Confronts Bigotry in Delaware Church

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Charles Mead-e collected more than 13,000 signatures two years before marriage equality was legalized in the state of Delaware on July 1, 2013.

“I’ve already had to ask 25,000 people if I could marry someone who I love,” said the Georgetown resident, adding that he shouldn’t have to be reminded of that struggle today. So when a sign that read, “It’s Adam and Eve not Steve – God,” was posted recently outside the Providence United Methodist Church, Mead-e said he was “furious.”

After a friend of his posted pictures of the insensitive sign on Facebook, Mead-e drove by the church contemplating.

“It was either place a burning cross in the church’s front yard or write a letter to the district superintendent,” he said. Mead-e chose the latter.

Over the course of a few days, Mead-e shared his thoughts with Rev. Dr. Kyung-Hee Sa, the superintendent of the church, which is part of the United Methodist Church’s Peninsula-Delaware Conference and falls under the Dover district. His correspondence on July 2 included the Rev. Regina Reeves, who became pastor at Providence on July 1 when her husband, Walter Reeves, retired.

He explained to them that the sign, which came down after about a week, was “more than just offensive.” That it is “mean spirited” and the church owed the LGBTQ community an apology.

Reflecting on his journey, Mead-e recalls the time when he tried to run an engagement announcement in his local paper, the Jackson Citizen-Patriot, in 2008. As a resident of Jackson, Michigan for more than 30 years, he said they wanted to celebrate this news with the community.

Mead-e graduated from both Jackson Community College and Spring Arbor University. As the secretary for PFLAG Jackson for several years, he said he has numerous ties

to the Jackson and state communities.

“I still have my home there and more than likely will retire there as well,” said Mead-e, noting he is aware of the recent victory for LGBTQ rights in his hometown.

Anti-LGBTQ discrimination is no longer legal in Jackson as of April 11 when a non-discrimination ordinance took affect.

Mead-e’s testimony described his relationship with his husband, Bruce. The couple met on Valentine’s Day in 2007 while they were both vacationing in Florida. On February 21, 2009, they had a commitment ceremony at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Lewes, Delaware. They celebrated a civil union three years later on February 21, 2012. In their fifties at the time, Mead-e said he remembers asking himself while saying their vows, “How much time will we have together?”

Such an important question for a couple now in their sixties that embraced their gay identity to start a meaningful relationship later in life. During the last three and a half years, Bruce has been battling lung cancer on and off, which USA Today explores in an article titled “How Long Have I Got?: Why Many Cancer Patients Don’t Have Answers.” Mead-e said they will know more about how much time they have together this September.

‘This Is Not Who We Are’

In an email response to Mead-e, Sa extended his sincere apology.

“I am saddened by such disrespect and judgment for human beings in the name of God. I know where Rev. Walt and Rev. Regina are in their hearts and theology while struggling with some people’s one-sided views. I am grateful that the sign was immediately taken out and the church leaders are led to have serious conversation on what they are not supposed to do and be.”

It was explained to Mead-e via email by Walter Reeves, who was in charge of the church at the time, that the sign was “put up by an individual member of the church without pastoral leadership knowledge or approval. I would like you to know that there has never been a message like that preached at that church.”

Bishop Peggy Johnson told the Dover Post on July 8 that, “We apologized [to Mead-e]. In every way, we are making amends. It was an educational experience. We got to hear his heart and why these things are painful.”

According to Johnson – who serves Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the eastern Pennsylvania area and is



Top: Providence United Methodist Church in Georgetown, Delaware posted an anti-gay sign which was been taken down. Bottom: Bruce and Charles Mead-e in their Georgetown, Delaware home. Photos courtesy of Charles Mead-e

the person to whom Sa reports – the message was contrary to the social principals of the UMC and that the individual that posted the sign has expressed regret.

In the report, Johnson said, “[The person who posted the sign] is very sorry...she didn’t realize the impact and it’s simply never going to happen again.”

As for that person, Mead-e said, “I haven’t talked with her, so I have to take it at face value...My thoughts are that the soundbite coined in the ‘70s has been around for so long that people just assume that it’s factual and don’t think of the impact it has had. I was just awestruck that a church finally said ‘It’s wrong.’ It will probably take another 50 years to remove the soundbite from our culture.”

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Once Upon a Time of Terror (Pt. 1)



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

It's been nearly 40 years since media stories began to appear about what seemed the onset of a pandemic among gay men (and drug users). The acronym for these puzzling outbreaks on the East and West coasts was GRID. Gay Related Immune Deficiency. Later to be called AIDS. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

No one – doctors, virologists, health officials, the Center for Disease Control – seemed to have a clue as to what was the cause of this growing plague. How it was spread. Why it seemed to affect primarily gay men.

Given scant scientific/medical information, it is little wonder that panic – with a capital P and several alarming exclamation points – set in. The panic seemed as contagious as the new disease.

Hard hit were those areas with high populations of gay men during what was called the “sexual revolution” of disco dancing, drug and popper use, bath house and backroom cruising, of the Gay Power Movement, hard-leather militancy of the 1970s.

(I recently watched a DVD documentary, “Gay Sex in the ‘70s.” Interviews were of those gay men who were in New York City at a time when sexual activity seemed nonstop. This was also true of the San Francisco Castro area. It was a time of the so-called “clone look”: Levi's, form-fitting plaid shirts, beards, mustaches, studded cod pieces.)

It helps to keep in mind that the sexual revolution of the '70s was not a gays-only happening. Straights too were getting it on happy-go-lucky – or, unlucky – sex swapping in a big way. Pent-up frustrations prevailed, following the social upheaval of the previous decade. (On a lesser, but more sexually cautious scale, the same thing happened after World War I, leading to the uninhibited Roaring '20s.)

A bit of background history: John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy were assassinated in 1968. Vietnam War protests erupted in major cities that same year. Jonestown, with poisoning Kool Aid drinks that killed 909 religious cult followers, occurred in November 1978.

That same calamitous year Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected San Francisco Supervisor, was assassinated by fired San Francisco supervisor Dan White. White's “Twinkie defense” sentencing resulted in turbulent gay rioting. Cars overturned and set on fire! City Hall Glass shattering! Cop baiting!

In 1969, the Stonewall Riots soon followed, setting the stage for Gay Power, and ultimately the LGBT liberation we experience today. The first New York City gay/lesbian parade took place in June 1970. Hundreds marched.

With the onset of the AIDS pandemic in 1981, gay men became pariahs. Because it was not known how AIDS was spread. Could it be airborne? Could it be just by touching an infected person? Gay men became collective lepers.

Restaurants known to have gay waiters were avoided. Few dared to visit quarantined wards. It would take President Ronald Reagan six years to publicly, but a little too casually, to address AIDS.

Here in Detroit it was a scary time. As tallies of coastal deaths climbed into the hundreds, thousands and more, most of us wondered when the pandemic would hard hit here. Every spot, every cough, every bout of nausea, every ounce of weight loss, was viewed with anxiety. We asked ourselves, who's next?

Treatment was painfully slow in coming. (A close friend of mine was among the first to die of AIDS in Detroit. He complained of purple body spots that resisted on-going treatment.) AZT, a harsh cancer treatment developed in Detroit, was introduced. Side effects hastened full-blown AIDS symptoms.

Many sought frightened refuge, hoped-for safety in the closet. AIDS was relentless. Ten more close acquaintances of mine would follow in the '90s. Mortality numbers grew and grew. Pandemic terror . . . times . . . God only knows . . . how many . . .



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Transmissions

Who Speaks For Us?

On a recent episode of Chelsea, a Netflix-based interview show, host Chelsea Handler asked guest Janet Mock about another transgender celebrity, Caitlyn Jenner. Days before the show, Jenner had joked about the shooting of Congressman Steve Scalise to the College Republican National Committee.

“Liberals can't even shoot straight,” said Jenner, seemingly unaware that the officer who shot and killed the suspect was a liberal, lesbian-identified, African American woman.

Handler asked Mock if she feels a responsibility to defend Jenner as a representative of the trans community, and Mock was very clear in her response.

“I think my community has overwhelmingly said that we don't want that [representation],” said Mock.

Continuing, Mock said, “It's Caitlyn Jenner, who's a

very specific person, with a specific set of experiences that are very moneyed, very white, and very privileged... She can say that on behalf of herself, but I don't think on behalf of the community.”

This is one of the challenges, however, when it comes to the media. If they are looking for a transgender person, Caitlyn Jenner is – for now – one of the first people they will gravitate to. Further, they will gravitate to her for some of the very reasons Mock points out. She is a wealthy, white, privileged celebrity.

For that matter, they may choose her before someone far more well spoken like Mock or others simply because she is likely to say something controversial and – in the eyes of the media – entertaining. This is how they gain

See next page

► Smith: Transmissions

Continued from p. 14

viewers, and how they sell laundry detergent to those same viewers.

Yet Mock is completely right when she points out the specifics around Jenner, and how her experience is vastly different from the majority of trans-identified people. I would even go so far as to note that her lived experience is dramatically different from even this Caucasian trans woman, due in large part to Jenner's privilege.

When Jenner is treated as a representative of the transgender community, she is only bringing her experience to the table. She is not speaking much of the experiences of non-binary transfolks, nor trans men, or transpeople of color, nor a wide variety of identities or experiences. When the media treat her as a representative without considering her limitations, they're potentially harming any other trans person who isn't Jenner.

Yet, in pointing this out, I wonder if this sets up a larger issue. If Jenner does not – cannot – speak to the wider trans experience, then can any of us? Is my experience as a lower-to-middle class, Caucasian trans woman of any value outside of those who share a similar path and environment? Do the experiences of one specific trans person from any background help explain other specific experiences in the wider community outside of their own?

For that matter, does Mock, in speaking about Jenner, run the risk of speaking for a wider community from within her own very specific world view?

Think back to the start of this column. When Mock was asked about Jenner, she addressed this in a very specific fashion. She did not talk immediately how having to defend Jenner, but spoke of the community's views: "I think my community has overwhelmingly said that we don't want that [representation]."

Mock is wise. She let's the community speak. It is a community she embraces, and a community she is a part of. She acknowledges being a part of a greater whole. This is something Jenner has, thus far, been in capable of doing.

What's more, Mock has done an astounding job of speaking on behalf of the community over the last several years, via two books and countless interviews and speeches. She has shown a maturity and wisdom that has earned her a place of respect community-wide. Again, Jenner has not done the same, in spite of her own book, her reality show, and her own public appearances.

Jenner – even though nearly 70 years old – lacks the experience of transgender people a third of her age. She's only publicly started her transition two years ago, and still has a lot of work to do to really understand life as a trans woman.

One other thing: even if it is Jenner, speak to a trans person. Do not assume that you have to speak to a non-trans person to understand us, or get "the straight truth," or what not. You will find there are many non-transgender, self-identified experts who have their own agendas, some of which are very harmful to transgender people.

This is doubly true right now, as we see attempts to roll back transgender rights, as our foes try to paint transgender people as sexual deviants seeking to target vulnerable individuals. Never assume that just because a person isn't trans that they don't have an underlying motive for how they may paint transgender people.

No one person can truly speak for the whole of the transgender community. I, for one, can speak to a lot of the experiences of transgender people, some more specifically than others, but it would be simply wrong for me to claim to be able to speak on the lived experiences of many within the community in more than general terms.

All this said, I would hope that the media would opt to seek out the Janet Mocks of the world. What's more, if you are focusing on non-binary trans issues, seek out a non-binary transperson. Talk to trans men about trans men's issue.

Indeed, a media who is simply going to talk to Jenner about trans issues is a lazy one, and needs to seek out real representation.

Gwen Smith is not suggesting she speak in place of Jenner. You can find her at www.gwensmith.com.

Creep of the Week

Linda Harvey

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Have you raped a rainbow today? No, that isn't from a Skittles advertisement gone wrong. It's just what LGBTQ people do. Take things away from good Christians and rape them out of spite.



At least that's what Linda "human-frown-that-won't-turn-upside-down" Harvey claims. She wants to take the rainbow away from the gays and give it back to God (the Christian God, obviously). And as we all know, June is an especially traumatic month for rainbows. And bigots, incidentally.

According to Harvey, God created the rainbow to "convey simple joy, innocence and purity of heart."

"It's clear God did not intend for the rainbow to represent rebellion, iniquity and division," Harvey writes in an "exclusive" column for World Nut Daily. "So how did this precious symbol become the banner, with few objections, for human depravity, lust, defiance and heresy?"

I know that conservative Christians hate science, but I feel it's important to point out here that the scientific explanation for how rainbows form is when sunlight and rain get together and decide to do gay stuff.

"The sweet rainbow image has been violated, raped by the deluded and fraudulent, and it now serves too often as a garish signpost for slavery to grave homosexual sin," Harvey laments.

See? I told you she thinks LGBTQ people are rainbow rapers.

In reality, the rainbow flag was designed and adopted in 1978 by artist Gilbert Baker (who just died in March) at the request of Harvey Milk. The idea was a symbol to represent the LGBTQ community's pride and diversity (not, as Harvey puts it, "grave homosexual sin"). The flag became especially popular after Milk was assassinated.

And now, the rainbow has become a mainstream symbol of LGBTQ pride, which angers folks like Harvey who think that LGBTQ people should live in shame and fear, hence the need for LGBTQ pride in the first place.

"Rainbow flags are flown in America from some government buildings, at some of our embassies, and these colors on several occasions even lit up our White House (under the former regime, thank God)," she writes.

Yes, thank God we now have a man in the White House who doesn't stoop to the level of celebrating our country's LGBTQ citizens and just brags about grabbing women's pussies instead, as God intended.

So what should those offended by rainbows do?

"As Christians, we have [the] option [to sue]," she writes, "but believers in Jesus Christ don't always go this route because we are more secure than that."

Yes, believers in Jesus are so secure says the woman complaining that gay rainbows hurt her feelings.

Another option, she says, is to "trademark the rainbow," which she acknowledges is "probably impossible."

I have a better idea. If anti-LGBTQ Christians want to reclaim the rainbow so badly, they should tattoo a rainbow across their faces and include the words "God's Property" in letters large and bold enough to be read from a distance.

If enough conservative Christians did this, LGBTQ people would surely abandon the rainbow in droves and have to adopt another symbol. May I suggest the smiley face?

Michigan Non Profit Resource

Have You Experienced Discrimination?

If you or someone you know has experienced discrimination, intimidation, harassment or violence because of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity, contact Equality Michigan's Department of Victim Services at:

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

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

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

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

U.S. Circuit Judge Stephanie Thacker, another Obama appointee.

The couples – aided by the Campaign for Southern Equality and the Charlotte-based law firm Tin Fulton Walker & Owen, sued North Carolina in December 2016 on the basis the law violates the Establishment Clause under the First Amendment and rights to due process and equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

But U.S. District Judge Max Coburn in September ruled the couples lacked any claim to standing under both of those arguments in challenging the law, throwing out the case. Although the plaintiff sought an appeal of the dismissal based on the Establishment Clause claims, the 4th Circuit issued a ruling upholding the lower court decision throwing out the case.

Luke Largess, a partner at Tin Fulton Walker & Owen and lead counsel the case, said his team his reviewing the decision and has not made a decision about the next action in the case.

“We are reviewing the court’s opinion published this morning and will make a decision about whether to pursue any further appeals, either to the full 4th Circuit or to the Supreme Court,” Largess said.

The plaintiffs in the case consist of Kay Diane Ansley and Catherine McGaughey, a same-sex couple who married in October as a result of courts overturning North Carolina’s ban on same-sex marriage; Carol Ann Person and Thomas Roger Person, an interracial different-sex couple denied a wedding in 1976, but able to obtain one in 1978 after winning a lawsuit; and Kelley Penn and Sonja Goodman, a same-sex couple in Swain County and who were engage to marry.

Rev. Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, executive director of the Campaign for Southern Equality, maintained SB2 is discrimination regardless of the 4th Circuit decision.

“SB2 is unjust and distorts the true meaning of religious freedom,” Beach-Ferrara said. “From day one, it’s been clear that SB2 is about one thing - finding a new way to discriminate against same-sex couples and privileging one set of religious beliefs over others. We will keep standing up to discrimination until LGBTQ North Carolinians are equal in every sphere of life.”

The law allows a magistrate in North Carolina to opt out of performing same-sex marriages. However, a magistrate who obtains an exemption can perform no marriages whatsoever for a six-month period. At the end of that period, magistrates can renew their request for an exemption that would last another six months.

SB2 requires at least one magistrate who can perform marriages to be present within a county office at least 10 hours per week, over at least three business days per week.

The North Carolina Legislature approved SB2 two years ago amid a series of court rulings in favor of marriage equality. Ironically, former Gov. Pat McCrory, who became infamous for signing anti-LGBT House Bill 2, vetoed the measure on the basis it defied court rulings for marriage equality. The legislature overrode his veto shortly afterward.

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

Trump’s Voter-data Collection Efforts Could Be Disastrous for LGBT Voters

BY KAREN OCAMB, LOS ANGELES BLADE

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla was among the first secretaries of state in the country to refuse to comply with the Trump administration’s demand to turn over voter data to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. The commission, headed by Vice President Mike Pence and Kansas Sec. of State Kris Kobach, was created by President Trump after he narrowly won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote to former Sec. of State Hillary Clinton because, he claims, “between 3 million and 5 million” votes were cast illegally – an assertion for which Trump provided no evidence and which has been repeatedly discredited.

In a June 28 letter sent to the nation’s secretaries of states, Kobach asked for voter roll data, “including, if publicly available under the laws of your state, the full first and last names of all registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of social security number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, cancelled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information.”

So far, 45 states and the District of Columbia say they are unwilling or unable to provide all the information requested by the Voter Fraud commission.

But even the release of publicly available information could be disastrous and terrifying for LGBT voters. Would name-change requests by transgender voters be considered voter fraud by biased, over-eager commission staffers? Would uncorrected dishonorable discharges under the gay military ban and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell result in an LGBT voter being deemed unworthy to vote and be scrubbed from the rolls? Anti-gay sodomy laws were overturned in Texas and 14 other states under *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003, but some states still have anti-sodomy laws on the books. Additionally, now-archaic anti-gay laws were often handled by biased prosecutors as felonious sex offenses that landed the accused on the sex offender registry, a lifelong stain.

In many states, a person convicted of a

felony is prohibited from voting.

Even California has some cleaning up to do: being HIV positive and having unprotected sex without telling your partner your status is still a felony in California, despite taking medications and having an undetectable viral load. And there are still gay men on the sex offender registry convicted of felonies

Would name-change requests by transgender voters be considered voter fraud by biased, over-eager commission staffers? Would uncorrected dishonorable discharges under the gay military ban and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell result in an LGBT voter being deemed unworthy to vote and be scrubbed from the rolls? Anti-gay sodomy laws were overturned in Texas and 14 other states under *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003, but some states still have anti-sodomy laws on the books .

when homosexuality was a crime. Two bills to correct these issues by out state Sen. Scott Wiener and Equality California passed the Senate and are making their way through the Assembly. One of the reasons cited by Padilla as part of his principled stance against the commission’s request is the susceptibility of the massive data collection to hackers, not just Russian or Chinese but scam artists and blackmailers, the fear of which could result in suppression LGBT voters from registering and turning out to vote.

In response to a recent Trump tweet complaining about states balking—“What are they trying to hide?”—Padilla was forceful.

“I’m not trying to hide – I’m trying to protect,” Padilla, the co-chair of the national secretaries of state’ elections committee, which is meeting in Indianapolis on July 13, told POLITICO on Wednesday. “I’m trying to protect people’s privacy and their personal information, and the integrity of the election,” he said, calling the request “a hacker’s dream come true.”

“One of the main points of why we’re safe now is because the elections are very decentralized. Right now, there is no nationalized centralized voter registration database,” Padilla told Politico. The administration’s request makes clear that what it is proposing is “not a secure site ... and their plan was to make all the information publicly available.”

“So at a minimum, it’s a gift to anyone who wants to wreak havoc on the elections,” Padilla said. “If you want to do Vladimir Putin a favor, put it all in one location.”

In addition to his ‘Just Say No’ posture toward the Trump administration’s voter suppression efforts, Padilla has been touting his plans to enhance voter participation, especially approaching the incredibly important 2018 mid-term elections. But, the Los Angeles Blade asked Padilla at a recent Stonewall Democratic Club meeting in West Hollywood, how could any voter trust the voting process these days, with both left and right claiming the “system is rigged?”

“I’m hopeful and optimistic,” Padilla told the Blade. “If you recall, it was as early as last year, August, when Donald Trump started stoking the fears of the potential for the election to be rigged. And we didn’t know who he was referring to – he probably had inside information.

“But we had record turnout in California, record voter registration and record turnout so that attempt didn’t work,” Padilla said. “But as time goes on, as he continues and others continue to allege that there’s voter fraud, massive voter fraud, millions of illegal votes, my big concern is two fold: that it gets into people minds that maybe it won’t matter so why should I turn out the next time. That’s voter suppression 101. Number two – that in future elections, they’re creating an environment for elections for both Congress and the president where they can roll back the clock on voters rights, as I see it – change the law, change policies, change how we conduct elections that has the net effects of making it more difficult for people who are eligible to register and to vote. And that, frankly, is just un-American, un-democratic.”

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



Photo: Lionsgate

'The Big Sick' Actress on Her New LGBT-resonant Rom-Com, Fair Representation in Film and Shining a Spotlight on Gay Actors

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Why aren't more gay men professing their love to Zoe Kazan?

I wonder this after doing just that. I dote on the 33-year-old film and theater actress – star of “Ruby Sparks,” “Revolutionary Road” and HBO’s “Olive Kitteridge” – like she’s my best girlfriend. Like we have history. Like we sip cosmos and talk about what it was like to play Meryl Streep’s daughter in “It’s Complicated.”

I don’t know Kazan, but I love that she’s so committed to being the best LGBT ally she can be that she follows me on Twitter after ending the interview by telling me, “I will say, just FYI, if you ever feel like I’m not being the greatest ally, please write me on Twitter. I really do feel like I want to do the

best job I can.”

I love her socially-conscious Twitter feed. Love her latest statement film, “The Big Sick,” based on the real courtship of comedian Kumail Nanjiani and his now-wife, Emily Gordon, and the turmoil it causes when his family discovers Emily is white. I love her longtime boyfriend, the also supremely talented Paul Dano. And when Kazan tells me she wants to shine a spotlight on gay actors and prefers a gay actor play her romantic interest should she ever play a lesbian role herself, I love that too.

“I have never had a gay man profess his love to me before,” Kazan demures, somehow not kidding.

Universal gay adoration is inevitable as Kazan calls on powerful, white, cisgender filmmakers to make a mainstream gay

rom-com, and talks about Dano’s onscreen kiss with Daniel Radcliffe and her very human reason for advocating for the LGBT community.

Growing up in Los Angeles, California, what was your earliest connection to the LGBT community?

I think I was really lucky to – yes, to grow up in a neighborhood that was very diverse and inclusive, and to grow up in a family that had those values. I grew up in the ’80s and ’90s, not as progressive of a time as now. I’m sure children today have it a lot better. But I went to a really progressive school with a lot of gay teachers and that wasn’t treated special or different.

It just... was.

Yeah, it just was. And I had two teachers who died of AIDS in the early and mid ’90s and that was something that was talked about really openly at my school. The school advocated for them and there was a real warmth and inclusiveness. I grew up a bit outside of the reality of the world at large at that point, so when I got into high school – and, again, this was the ’90s – people would be like, “That’s so gay,” and it was a rude awakening.

Is it fair to say that because of your upbringing you’re woke when it comes to gay issues and queer stuff?

It is to my benefit as a human that everyone has equal rights and that gay people are treated with respect in the world. That’s the way in which it feels like my issue too. It

matters deeply to me. So, if that's woke, then I guess so. Not a word I use personally but, yeah, go for it!

In addition to a post regarding gay musician Perfume Genius on your Twitter -

Oh my god, I love Perfume Genius. Honestly, all I wanted was to go to his concert and Paul didn't make it happen. It's a real point of contention in our relationship right now.

Ha! You are socially and politically active on Twitter as well, with posts about Planned Parenthood, feminism and one regarding the lack of acknowledgement about Pride month from Trump and his administration. It seems like this is a part of you even though you're not gay.

I care deeply about it. Part of that is, as a feminist, I always sort of rankle when people are like, "I have a mother, I have a daughter" - no, you should care about this because of basic fundamental rights for, like, a huge portion of our population. I feel the same way about LGBTQ relations where, like I said, those rights are important to me as a human. After this administration came into power in November, one of the first things I thought about was actually what happened to gay people under Reagan - the way he ignored the AIDS crisis and how that resulted in so many more deaths, especially in the gay community. And I really felt this thing of, well, yes, our rights recovered from that and our society recovered, but there was a huge cost and not everyone made it. And I thought of that when people were saying, "We'll get through these four years." I thought, "Well, not everybody will get through it." And I think a lot of Republicans think of Reagan as a beaming icon of Republicanism. In fact, during the Democratic Convention, Democrats kept referencing him as being a good example of Republican values that Democrats also shared and I was like, does no one remember the AIDS crisis? He fucked up.

We tend to forget what history told us.

And also what casual bigotry results in. We're saying that right now with the rise of hate crimes in this country and what happened to that poor Muslim girl (17-year-old Nabra Hassanen was assaulted and killed on June 18 after leaving a Virginia mosque). I know that's not the direct responsibility of our president, but I am 100 percent certain that the atmosphere of hate that he has engendered set in those man's actions.

Let's talk about compassion, and how your new film, "The Big Sick," is steeped in it. As a gay man, I found myself completely empathizing with these characters in ways that I didn't think I would. For you, how do you think the overarching themes of forbidden love and familial acceptance of another's partners may resonate with LGBT audiences?

One thing that really speaks so much to me

about the film is how much Kumail loves his family. He loves them and part of what is dividing them is a generational divide and their relationship with religion. I would guess that a lot of gay people growing up in really religious communities might feel like their religion could be a source of division between them and their families based on what some Christians, for instance, think of gay people. There's a part of you that feels like they'll love you no matter what and there's a part of you that feels like they might excommunicate you from the family. I'm very moved by the scene in which he tells them that he's not going to leave his family after he reveals himself to them. It feels really potent to me and I'm glad it spoke to you.

When do you think we can have two gay people as leads in a major romantic comedy?

There's no reason that time can't be right now. And considering the current climate in this country politically, vis-à-vis Muslims, this feels as risky a movie as a movie with two gay leads. Maybe it's not. Maybe I'm wrong about that. But Kumail and Emily were brave and told their own story, and a lot of people took a chance on them and got behind them. And they just tried to do the best job they could of telling their story. They weren't just striving for representation - they had one story they were burning to tell.

I would just encourage everyone out there who is like, "Maybe my story isn't mainstream enough," to just do it. Work really hard. They worked on this script for three years before they brought anybody else on. This movie was started because Kumail was at some standup thing that Judd Apatow saw him at and Judd came up to him and was like, "Come in and pitch me every story that you have." And Kumail went in and pitched and Judd was like, "That's the one." We need our allies. Especially people in power like Judd - straight, white men. We need them to step up and be like, "I'm gonna help you tell your story." So to all the dudes out there in power: I think everybody is hungry to see a story that hasn't been told a million times, and truly there's no reason that can't be right now for many more different kinds of people who are traditionally not as represented in popular culture.

Not to put this weight on you, but you did write yourself a lead in "Ruby Sparks," so surely you can just make this happen too, right?

(Laughs) I have to say I do think that my mind is turned more toward, "How can I be more responsible in who I'm putting in the spotlight?" Trying to think about casting that way. Trying to think about my writing that way. But I also think everybody's gotta do it for themselves. I think back to writing "Ruby Sparks" and it's crazy to me that at 25, or however old I was when I wrote that, that I was like, "Oh, we're gonna get it financed,

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► Zoe Kazan

Continued from p. 23

we're gonna make this film," without any sense of, "I shouldn't be raising my voice." I think a lot of people struggle with that, and it's hard to do. It's not easy. It requires a huge amount of hutzpah, but I think it's more important now than ever.

"I just don't want to be an irreverent torchbearer for something I don't believe in, especially now."

To speak out on issues?

And to have faith in yourself. One thing that is really hard for me is, I don't think I give myself full power of what I already know. I will ask for permission or feel I need someone to come from on high. So, I would just stress that there are a lot of ways to get a film financed and there are actually so many people now who are finding ways to do that through creative channels, so don't wait for someone to do it for you.

If you were to play a lesbian in a romantic comedy, who would you want to cast as your romantic interest?

Robin Wright. I just love her. Or Juliette Binoche. Some beautiful woman of the generation before me. No — honestly, if I were going to make a movie I would probably find someone who's actually gay. I think in terms of trying to be a good ally you want to give people an opportunity who don't have the spotlight on them as much and who don't have as many opportunities. I think that some people are marginalized for whatever reason for their sexuality and I would probably make an effort in that direction.

Speaking of onscreen gayness: Paul famously kissed Daniel Radcliffe in "Swiss Army Man." As his longtime girlfriend, how much say do you

have as to which gay men he kisses on screen?

Very little! And honestly, I didn't even know they kissed in that. I really didn't! And then I saw some clips from it and I was like, "Oh, you guys make out." And he was like, "No, we don't." And I go, "Yeah, you do." He's like, "But we're saving each other's lives!" He said something that made it seem like it was the purest love. (Laughs) It was so sweet. I loved that movie, and I love that scene! Kissing underwater — it's so romantic.

You have the best taste in rom-coms. What kind of romantic comedies won't

you do?

I have to say that when "The Big Sick" came along I was really not looking to do another romantic comedy. Like, I've done it. Also, it's not really what I got into acting to do. I love to do parts that feel more transformative to me — much more of what I've gotten to do on stage from what I've gotten to do on film. Stuff like "Olive Kitteridge" is where my true hunger lies. So, when they called me and were like, "We have a script. It's a romantic comedy. They want you to come in," I read it and was like, "Oh, this is so good." It felt like a movie I hadn't seen before.

You know, it's hard sometimes when you're a working actor and you need to make a living. Sometimes a script comes to you and you're like, it's a little bit sexist, there's something kind of racist in here, but I guess I can improv around it or I just won't say that line. But now I have a much harder, faster rule when scripts come to me and the representation doesn't feel totally great, and around gay issues too. I just don't want to be an irreverent torchbearer for something I don't believe in, especially now.

Help Old Town Businesses Thrive in Lansing

Professionals from all over the city of Lansing are invited to come together and share ideas and opportunities to help their businesses and Old Town thrive. Wake Up Old Town! is a free and informal networking event held from 8:30-10 a.m. on the first Friday of each month at rotating locations in and around Old Town. The next scheduled meeting is Aug. 4 at UrbanBeat Event Center on 1213 Turner St. Dan Maynard will be speaking about POS systems and credit card processing. On Sept. 8, Wake Up Old Town! will take place at Friedland Industries on 405 E. Maple St.

Old Town is the cultural and creative district of Lansing. The community offers unique experiences through special events, incredible people, eclectic shops and a rich history. The Old Town buildings are beautifully restored for residents and businesses of all backgrounds, and the infrastructure is well maintained by sustainable resources. Old Town's diverse mix of destination retail, creative and entertainment businesses offers products and services that are high in quality and one of a kind to the Old Town district. The Old Town Commercial Association will continue to value its heritage, volunteers and stakeholders who dedicate their resources to make Old Town a destination.

For more information, call 517-485-4283 or visit <http://iloveoldtown.org/>.

Horn and Holland Play Jazz on the Grand

The Lansing City Market Grand Concert Series on the riverfront continues with the gospel jazz duo Horn and Holland on July 20. The City Market and LEPPFA have been working with local organizations, including the MSU College of Music and T. Rose Inc., to give back to the community and provide more entertainment options for greater Lansing area residents. The event's free admission is due to generous sponsorship from LAFUCU, Wolverine Development and WKAR. Bring a camping chair, but leave the food at home, because concert-goers can grab a drink and a burger at the Waterfront Bar & Grill. Other select merchants will be open throughout the event. All concerts start at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit <http://lansingcitymarket.com>.

The remaining schedule of performers is as follows:

Jazz

July 20 – Horn and Holland
Sept. 14 – Brandon Marceal

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Sept. 6 – Frog and the Beeftones

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Cycle for Student Scholarships

Wayne State University will host its annual cycling event, The Baroudeur, on Aug. 19 to raise money for student scholarships. The Baroudeur is a fun, noncompetitive event that gives riders of all abilities an opportunity to explore the Motor City and surrounding areas on two wheels while helping economically disadvantaged students pursue higher education. Registration is \$60 July 18, and \$70 from July 19-Aug. 15. Registration online at www.crowdrise.com/2017Baroudeur closes at midnight on Aug. 15. Visit The Baroudeur on Facebook for a full schedule of start times and events.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, July 13

Justice for Our Neighbors 1 p.m. Free legal consultations for LGBTQ immigrants Grand Rapids Pride Center, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.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

Fundraiser to benefit Affirmations 6 p.m. Grab a beer and some grub to support Affirmations. There will be a raffle and prizes. Guest bartenders will be serving. All tips donated to the community center. Affirmations, 7 N. Saginaw St., **Pontiac**. 248-977-3972. www.fillmore13brewery.com/

Battle Creek Pride Weekend Keynote 6:30 p.m. Free. Appetizers and childcare provided. Community discussion on combatting hate in America facilitated by Cynthia M. Deitle, Esq., retired FBI Civil Rights Special Agent and current Program Director for the Matthew Shepard Foundation. KCC Center for Diversity and Innovation, 200 W. Michigan Ave., **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

RENDERED 7 p.m. Featuring Daniel Myers, Philipp Strobel, Altstadt Echo and Marc Church. Factory & Modern Cathedrals, 516 E. Liberty, **Ann Arbor**. www.necto.com

Red Umbrella Support Group 7:30 p.m. For individuals involved in the erotic

labor industry. Sex Workers Outreach Project Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Friday, July 14

Department of Victim Services Open Office Hours 2 p.m. Contact Serena Johnson, lead advocate, for more information or to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Equality Michigan, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. 313-537-7000 Ext 115. sjohnson@equalitymi.org www.grpride.org

Battle Creek Pride Parade 7 p.m. Battle Creek Pride, **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

RuPaul's Drag Race Contestant Peppermint 9 p.m. \$5 for 21+, \$10 for 18-20 Pride Friday, 516 E. Liberty, **Ann Arbor**. www.necto.com

White Party 10 p.m. Battle Creek Pride, 910 North Ave., **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

Saturday, July 15

Battle Creek Pride Festival 11 a.m. Battle Creek Pride, **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

TGMI Table 11 a.m. Meet with the organization during the Battle Creek Pride Festival. Transgender Michigan, 10 N. Washington Ave., **Battle Creek**. www.transgendermichigan.org

Bisexual Peer Group 5 p.m. Meetings are a freeform discussion of current bi/pan/omni news, events, and other LGBT

topics. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. paylor9@mac.com www.jimtoycenter.org/

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Topic: Comic Books and Superheroes Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Sunday, July 16

PFLAG Meeting 2 p.m. Info and Support Meeting PFLAG Tri-Cities, 2525 Hemminger Road, **Saginaw Township**. 989-971-7085. leishashaler@gmail.com www.pflag.org

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

Pride Benefit Drag Show 5 p.m. \$5 Cover Battle Creek Pride, 910 North Ave., **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

Candlelight Vigil 9 p.m. Guest speakers will be invited to guide the community in honoring the lives lost to suicide or homicide. Battle Creek Pride, 2-14 E. Michigan Ave., **Battle Creek**. www.battlecreekpride.org/

Monday, July 17

FtM A2-Ypsi 6 p.m. For transmasculine identified people ages 16 and older. Group is affiliated with FtM Detroit. FtM A2-Ypsi, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. www.jimtoycenter.org/

Editor's Pick

Exhibit at Casa de Rosado Explores Michigan Hate Groups

"Intersections: A Todd Heywood Photo Exhibit" shows images of extremist and hate groups taken in Michigan in the past 15 years. From anti-LGBT advocates and activities to anti-Muslim rallies to white nationalist rallies in Kalamazoo and Jackson, Heywood's photos reveal the complexity of extremism in America at a time when the so-called Alt Right, a new white nationalism, are advising the president of the U.S. in top positions in his administration. The exhibit runs through Aug. 8. There is an opening reception on July 15 at 1 p.m. with special musical guests, Heartland Klezmerim. The gallery, Casa De Rosado at 204 E. Mt. Hope Ave. in Lansing, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 12-5 p.m. For more information, visit the gallery's Facebook page - www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Rosado-805030536302750.



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 18
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

Young Adult Group 7 p.m. For young people ages 18-24 Grand Rapids Pride Center, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Ann Arbor TNG 8 p.m. For the kink and fetish community Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. www.jimtoycenter.org/

Wednesday, July 19
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

Out Loud Chorus Board Meeting 7 p.m. Out Loud Chorus, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. www.jimtoycenter.org/

Thursday, July 20
Free Health & Fitness Open House 4 a.m. Try a sample exercise class (from strength training to Yoga), free food from VedgeCafe, and enter for the chance to win prizes. Free, unlimited 2-week memberships will be given to the first 20 people who become Better Living Fitness Center members during the Open

Editor's Pick

Nobody Puts The Ringwald's Summer Camp in the Corner

Starring an all-male cast, The Ringwald Theatre's latest parody, Dirty Prancing, will give audiences the gayest time of their lives during the undisputed Champ of Camp from July 14 through August 7. In 1963, Frank "Baby" Houseman, a sweet daddy's boy, goes with his family to a resort in upstate New York's Catskill Mountains where he becomes infatuated with the camp's dance instructor, Johnny Castle. Tickets are \$20 for shows at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, and \$10 on Monday nights. There is one Sunday performance at 5 p.m. on August 6 for \$10. Call 248-545-5545 or visit www.TheRingwald.com for more information.



House. Better Living Fitness Center, 834 B. Phoenix Drive, Ann Arbor. 734-442-2419. office@betterlivingfitness.com www.betterlivingfitness.com/

Polyamory Network 7 p.m. Open and inclusive community of people living polyamorously, people interested in polyamory and people of, friendly to and curious about polyamory. Welcomes diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. Polyamory Network, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. jimtoycenter.org

Friday, July 21

suicideTALK Workshop 2 p.m. Dealing openly with the stigma around suicide. Register by July 8. American Indian Health and Family Services, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. bbudde@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org

Woman 2 Woman 5:30 p.m. For lesbian, transgender and bi-attractional individuals. RSVP to Sharron Fincher via email. Woman 2 Woman, 20025 Greenfield Road, Detroit. sharronfincher@lgbtdetroit.org www.lgbtdetroit.org

Turn Up Fridays 9 p.m. \$5 for 18+ until 11 p.m., \$10 after. No cover for 21+ until 11 p.m., \$5 after. Music by Klees. Spiral, 1247 Center St., Lansing. www.spiraldancebar.com

Gender Non-Conformists 7 p.m. A social and support group for genderqueer, genderfabulous, transgender, gender-exploring folks and all those who transgress gender binaries. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

LGBTQ Book and Film Club 7 p.m. July book: The Life of Rock Hudson by Charles River Editors and July movie: Biography Of Rock Hudson Bayard Rustin Media Center, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Men's Social Group 7 p.m. Grand Rapids Pride Center, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. www.grpride.org

Parent Support Group 7 p.m. Dr. Melissa Farrell, LCP and Roz Keith facilitate ongoing group for parents of trans youth to better understand what it means to be transgender. Event is free. Contact Kate Boman for more information. Stand With Trans, 5725 Walnut Lake Rd, West Bloomfield Twp. 248-661-5700. kate@temple-israel.org www.standwithtrans.org

Trivia with Terry 8 p.m. Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. www.autbar.com

Karaoke Night 10 p.m. 18+, free cover 21+ Lipploss Productions, 1247 Center St., Lansing. www.spiraldancebar.com

MUSIC & MORE

Concerts

The Blue Room "Queen and Adam Lambert". The Palace of Auburn Hills, 5 Championship Dr., Auburn Hills. 8 p.m. July 20. 248-377-0100. www.palacenet.com

Film & Video

aut Bar "Campy Movie Night". Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. June 28 - Aug. 30. 734-994-3677. www.autbar.com

Other

Arab American National Museum "Forum on Community, Culture & Race" 25th Annual Concert of Colors event featuring Dr. Thomas Sugrue and performances by Abby Dobson and Las Cafeteras. Arab American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 6:30 p.m. July 13. <http://gaybe.am/vd>

aut Bar "Women's Music on the Patio" Featuring Marsha Gayle and Debbie Vogel. Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. June 28 - Aug. 30. 734-994-3677. www.autbar.com

aut Bar "Live Jazz with the Jesse Kramer Trio on the patio". Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. June 27 - Aug. 29. 734-994-3677. www.autbar.com

Meadow Brook Theatre "Concert & Cuisine" Tickets: \$85-125. Strolling gala featuring local restaurants including beer and wine samplings. Entertainment provided by The Grass Roots. Meadow Brook Theatre, 378 Meadow Brook Road, Rochester. 6 p.m. July 15. 248-377-3300. www.mbtheatre.com

THEATER

Professional

Dirty Prancing Tickets: \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. July 14 - Aug. 7. 248-545-5545. www.theringwald.com

The Seagull Tickets: \$12. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. July 22 - Aug. 13. 313-9869156. www.slipstreamTI.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Berkley Chamber of Commerce "Berkley Street Art Fest" The festival will include a chalk art contest, nine murals created on buildings throughout downtown Berkley, live music, and places for children and adults to create art. Downtown Berkley, Coolidge Hwy and Dorothea, Berkley. 11 a.m. July 15. 248-414-9157. www.berkleystreetartfest.com/

DIA "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. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. July 23 - Oct. 22. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

Downtown Development Authority "Art & About" Every second Friday from June through October Downtown Berkley, 3338 Coolidge Hwy, Berkley. Thru Oct. 13. <http://gaybe.am/DG>

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. Thru - July 28. www.goaffirmations.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Rodin: The Human Experience". Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Thru July 30. 810-234-1695. www.flintarts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Summer Invitational '17" This exhibition features new work by artists we like and admire. Opening reception July 7, 6-9 p.m. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave, Ferndale. Thru July 28. 248-5440394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

MOCAD "99 Cents or Less" A major group exhibition of 99 artists based in the U.S. that addresses Detroit's ongoing economic crisis and its 2013 bankruptcy. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Thru Aug. 6. 313-832-6622. www.mocadetroit.org

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Hear Me Out

Katy Perry, Lorde



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Katy Perry, 'Witness'

Once upon a time, former Christian singer Katy Perry was just a simple California gurl doing simple California gurl things, like spraying Reddi Wip from her boobs because it's fun to blast things from your boobs. Musically, orgasms were not-so-cryptically analogized as full-on symphonies and hummingbirds in flight. Sad, wandering plastic bags were wrongfully used to convey deep desolation. Then the underwhelming "Prism" happened. It tried to deepen Perry's style palette, but musically speaking, the album was a whimper, not a roar. Perry reaches for lioness heights

on "Witness," her fourth album for a major label. But while attempting to replace flippancy for wokeness, the pop fixture who took faux bisexuality to No. 1 loses touch with her hottest commodity: those escapist, guilty-pleasure hooks. "Witness," then, is a rough sketch of an album without any artistic merit and even less of an identity. Of course, Perry's confused sense of self could be overlooked if "Witness" at least served up some melodic diversions; but, in fact, there

was a greater chance at being riveted if you caught her refreshingly exposed, 72-hour live stream, which featured a sit-down with RuPaul. At least the '90s-influenced house banger "Swish Swish," though insipidly written, has Nicki Minaj-buoyed verve, and the title track is an earnest statement song about being loved for who we are. But then there's "Save As Draft," more twaddle (this one took six writers, including Perry), about an e-message Perry intended to send to an ex but never did. Maybe the note was unfinished. Maybe she didn't have the courage to send it. Maybe the undercooked "Witness," too, could've used more time in the same folder.

Grade: C-

Also Out

Lorde, 'Melodrama'

Something happens during Lorde's new album – so far, the year's best – that I can't stop thinking about. In the middle of "Supercut," as the track swirls into something almost spiritual, and the drums kick up and the synths fizzle (thanks to co-producer Jack Antonoff for this beautiful soundbed), the track dissolves. Lorde sings like she's on the phone with you. She sounds so close. Then, out of frustration, out of anger, out of heartbreak, she unleashes an exasperated wail as if she's trying to perfectly illustrate why she called her sophomore album "Melodrama." Lorde's follow-up to 2013's "Pure Heroine" has no problems living up to its name, with "Perfect Places," a brilliant escapist anthem, and the devastating confessional "Writer in the Dark," which deserves all your tears. "I'm 19 and I'm on fire," she affirms. It doesn't matter that she's 20 now (Lorde's sophisticated writing is beyond her young age), or that you're however old you are. This timeless, textured breakup album will stay with you for years to come.



The Secret Sisters, 'You Don't Own Me Anymore'

Leave it to a lesbian to save the world one girl group at a time. Ready to throw in the towel after a heavy bout of business trouble, including filing for bankruptcy in 2014, siblings Laura and Lydia Rogers, who comprise the Secret Sisters, return thanks to out Americana queen Brandi Carlile. Like a country song that someone should be writing right now (next album, Sisters?), their comeback country throwback means someone

else will have to scrub the bathrooms Lydia was scrubbing during their hiatus. Why? Because if the songs on the sublime "You Don't Own Me Anymore" are any indication, from their stunningly wistful remake of "Kathy's Song" to their backwoods sprawl, "Mississippi," the Secret Sisters are right where they belong.



London Grammar, 'Truth Is a Beautiful Thing'

London Grammar's gorg but fairly benign release, "Truth Is a Beautiful Thing," has one of modern music's purest voices, that of Hannah Reid – think angel Annie Lennox, paired with Florence Welch's soulful soar – pulling you through the shattered shards and into grace's comforting arms with every swoop of her magical instrument. That transcendent effect enraptures on set opener "Rooting For You," where Reid's cosmic-like voice breezes through brushes of guitars and keyboards like a sunrise breaking the clouds. Depending on your fondness for looking at the same pretty skyline, the rest of Grammar's tepid sophomore album, so mellow it makes Enya sound like a dance diva, may just be the chill summer getaway we all need right now.



Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).



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Ice Cream Benefits Local Dog Rescues

July is National Ice Cream month and Michigan's popular micro-batch creamery Browndog Barlor is celebrating by hosting a fundraiser for local dog rescue organizations on National Ice Cream Day. The fundraiser will take place from 2-6 p.m. on July 16 at both LGBT-friendly Browndog Barlor locations – Downtown Northville and Downtown Farmington.

Ice cream lovers can get a “free” single scoop of Browndog's famous small batch ice cream on July 16 with a \$2 donation. Offer is good on carry-out ice cream orders only. All donations received on National Ice Cream Day at both Browndog Barlor locations will be donated to two different animal rescues, including Last Day Dog Rescue.

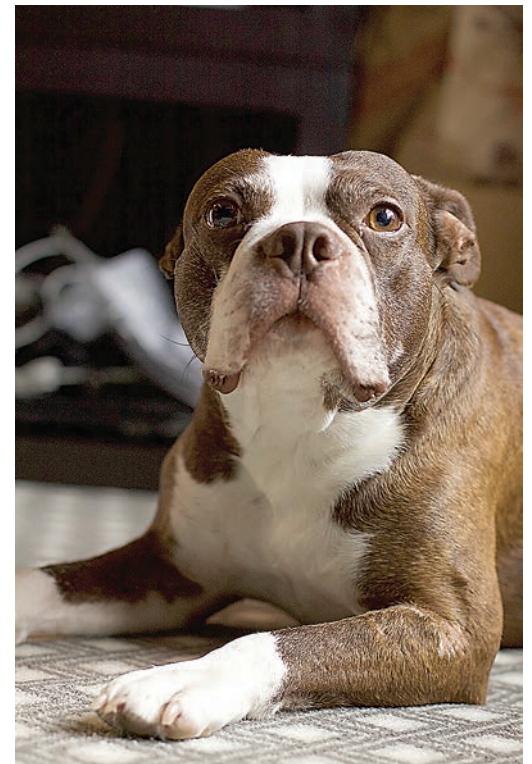
The brain child of owners, Brian Scherle and Paul Gabriel – long-time food lovers and entrepreneurs – Browndog Barlor has become a destination in southeast Michigan, since it first opened their doors in 2015 in Downtown Northville as Browndog Creamery. Scherle and Gabriel's story has long been intertwined with their love of ice cream and rescue dogs. Their

first rescue dog, Stuart, a black Boston Terrier, was the namesake of the Gabriel family's first shop, Stuart's of Novi which opened in 2009. This was fine until Flash – a brown Boston Terrier – was adopted and became jealous of his older brother. With a second location in the works in Downtown Northville, there was no other choice for the owners. The new store had to be named after Flash. Through several unsuccessful renditions of names using “Flash,” Scherle and Gabriel had to start thinking differently with the name, and so Browndog Creamery – a micro-creamery specializing in small batch artisan ice cream – was born.

Fast forward a year later. People loved Browndog so much that Scherle and Gabriel needed to find a place to make more ice cream. They searched many places and finally settled into a building in Downtown Farmington. The building was supposed to be a place to make ice cream, store it, and provide a small scoop store in the front. Continuing in typical Browndog-style they acquired a liquor license bringing the dessert bar to reality in 2016. In early 2017, the owners moved in Downtown Northville

to a new, larger location on Main Street to allow for their expanded menu which includes savory menu items, plated desserts, a craft cocktails bar with a heavy focus on Michigan-made products such as Michigan craft beers and spirits to create cocktails such as beer floats, dessert martinis. The expanded Downtown Northville and Downtown Farmington locations continue to be family-friendly where guests can enjoy their favorite uniquely flavored Browndog Creamery small batch ice cream but both also have a more adult feel for those who want to grab a bite to eat and a cocktail. With the tailoring of the menus, the owners rebranded to Browndog Barlor.

For more information on the National Ice Cream Day fundraiser and Browndog Barlor in Downtown Northville (120 E. Main Street) and Downtown Farmington (33314 Grand River Avenue), visit www.browndogbarlor.com or follow them on Facebook.



Flash, aka Browndog, a rescue and the restaurants namesake. Submitted photo

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Meet Affirmations Volunteer Sabrina Bolvari

In the spotlight is Sabrina Bolvari, a volunteer at Affirmations since September 2016. She is one of many volunteers the community center is incredibly fortunate to have the support of. Bolvari works throughout Affirmations at the Welcome & Resource Desk, and assists with youth programming. Like many other volunteers, Bolvari helps out in the Bayard Rustin Media Center and contributes her time during special events. Read a little more about why volunteering at Affirmations is so important to her.

What made you want to get involved with Affirmations' volunteering program?

I grew up in Ferndale and lived here until I was 19. I've been a part of the LGBTQ+ community since I was 16 years old. I remember performing at Affirmations with our string quartet for one of the grand opening events while I was in high school – that was when I fell in love with the organization; in particular, the resources being offered and the open safe space where you can be yourself! Fast-forward to my internship – choosing time during the first year of my Master's program, and as soon as I saw that Affirmations was a possibility, it was



immediately my top choice! Now here I am as a volunteer/therapy intern and I couldn't be happier that I got the chance to gain therapy experience and give back to the community, all in this bright, artful space in my beloved hometown.

Why is volunteering important to you?

I love feeling like I am really helping to connect people with resources and experiences that they have been seeking. While working at the front desk and with clients in therapy here, I have seen

countless faces light up with genuine smiles.

Are you involved with any specific groups at Affirmations, aside from volunteering?

Besides volunteering at the Welcome & Resource Desk, I am a part of the counseling program here. Having worked in inpatient psych hospitals for the past three years, I considered starting a mental health awareness support group, as our community faces unique stressors and challenges in this respect. My schedule's been so hectic that I haven't had the opportunity to start it, but it's definitely on the table for me as a possibility after graduation.

What are you passionate about outside of your volunteer work?

Spending time with my family, friends and my partner of almost 10 years is a favorite. I also love being out in nature and trying new things like developing aerial silks and rock climbing! Of course, I love to go running, read, write and listen to music.

Learn more about volunteering online at www.goaffirmations.org.

The Frivolist 4 Reasons You Need to Move Gay French-Canadian Film '1:54' to the Top of Your 'Must Watch Now' List

BY MIKEY ROX

Earlier this spring I attended the OUTshine LGBT film festival in Miami, and throughout the 10-day indie-flick extravaganza I caught a number of powerful, relatable and touching movies from across the globe.

I particularly enjoyed “The Lavender Scare,” a documentary about the U.S. government’s mid-century crusade to expose and expunge homosexuals from its ranks; “Handsome Devil” (now available on VOD), an Irish coming-of-age high-school drama about homophobia in sports; and “Heartstone,” a beautifully shot and performed Icelandic film steeped in the confusion of blossoming adolescent sexuality.

The one screening that really captivated me during the festival, however, was French-Canadian film “1:54,” from director Yan England. I barely made it through the first act before the ugly-sobs started (and they continued throughout the film), and if you have any emotions at all, I doubt you will either. You may find it difficult to track down “1:54” for home viewing – it wasn’t released theatrically in the United States – but it’s worth the search.

Here are four reasons why.

1. “1:54” is the debut long-feature film of Academy Award-nominated director Yan England

England’s French-language short film “Henry,” released in 2012, was nominated for Best Live Action Short Film at the 85th Academy Awards in 2013 (you can watch it in its entirety on YouTube), and the accolades continued (despite not winning the golden statuette for “Henry”) for his debut long-feature film “1:54” on the festival circuit last year. The film took home the prize for Best Student Film at the Québec City Film Festival last year (the film’s star Antoine-Olivier Pilon also won the award for Best Actor at QCFF), as well as the Public Prix – a viewers’ choice award – at the 19th Prix Iris, which recognizes the talent and achievement in Québec cinema.

2. It’s not just a gay film – it’s a psychological cyber-bullying narrative that’ll leave you in shambles

At the heart of the story is how two best friends come to terms with their sexual orientation, one of whom has accepted that he’s gay while the other is still very early in the process. It doesn’t help matters, of course, that there are bullies at school with mobile cameras that are itching to catch them in compromising positions so they can blackmail them into submission. While there’s an overarching LGBT element to “1:54,” the elephant-sized



message that you’ll take away from it is that there are plenty of bad people in the world who don’t care if you live or die, and the authority of technology is a powerful tool of oppression and persuasion that spins wildly out of control when in the wrong hands. The acting is so well delivered here that it’ll bring back memories of your own bullying (if you were unlucky enough to endure it), via social media or otherwise, and it’s likely you won’t be able to contain your emotions.

3. It paints an accurate picture of how social media affects adolescents, with sometimes-irreversible consequences

Kids do stupid things; always have, always will. But what “1:54” strives to impress upon you is that bullying isn’t what it used to be. It’s high-tech now, and it follows you wherever you go.

Before social media became popular in the early aughts, you got bullied at school, sometimes on the walk home, but once you were inside the comfort of your home, you were safe – at least until the next day. In hindsight, those were the good times.

For today’s children, even elementary-school-aged kids, there is no respite from the pain and torment if you have Facebook, Instagram or Twitter accounts. “1:54” captures this reality with such accuracy and heartache – for everyone involved in the situations; yes, even the bullies – that Canadian schools are considering the film as required viewing for students across the country.

4. Many viewers of a certain age just won’t ‘get it’ – and that’s a problem

Kids, particularly those in high school, shouldn’t have access to social media. You need to be of strong mind and body to navigate the often-malignant rhetoric and taunting that’s unleashed on social media, especially if it’s unrelentingly directed toward you, and I

don’t believe anyone under age 25 has that capacity.

But that’s an argument for another day.

What I heard in the theater as I sat in my seat long after the credits rolled – to compose myself after all the bawling – was a rather blasé attitude toward the subject matter from most of the audience over age 40. They just didn’t get it, and that’s because they didn’t come of age in a world where social media ruled.

Having myself mourned the death of boyfriends and best friends who have taken their own lives because they couldn’t escape the bullying, I can understand how suicide seems like the only escape. I don’t advocate it, but I do understand how it can seem like the last resort in order to free oneself – and as a society we need to take this issue far more seriously.

Many of us, at this point in our lives, have endured the nasty underbelly of social media – though maybe not in a bullying capacity – and we know how damaging it can be. Which is why it’s high time that we have a proactive conversation on how to best protect ourselves and our children so their final act isn’t physically harming themselves or others.

Personally, I find little joy in social media anymore, though I’m still an avid (and likely addicted) user, and I certainly wouldn’t weep if the power is cut one day. Until then, I’ll reserve my tears for all the people who will continue to be driven to their graves by the broken souls hiding behind computer screens, committed to making other people’s lives more miserable than their own.

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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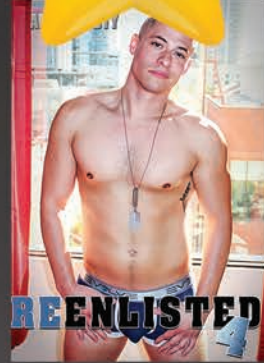
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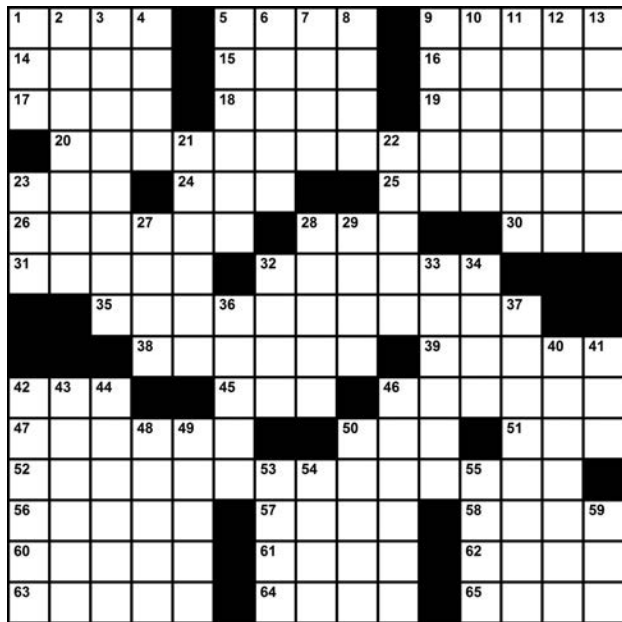
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Q Puzzle



Gay Bogeyman

Across

- 1 Head-turner
- 5 Hightail it
- 9 Mortify with porn, perhaps
- 14 Palindromic fellow
- 15 Architecture, to Philip Johnson
- 16 Keep moist in the kitchen
- 17 Cordial, as a welcome
- 18 "The ___-splitter" (Lincoln nickname)

- 19 Where to find your first mate
- 20 Nursery rhyme in a gay horror film?
- 23 He made boxers more visible
- 24 Fleur for Foucault
- 25 Joan of Lesbian Herstory
- 26 Show a really good time
- 28 Poem of Sappho
- 30 Rock guitarist Barrett
- 31 "Come, come!"
- 32 Mychal Judge, e.g.

- 35 Horror film with a gay title character
- 38 Dictator of Nureyev's land
- 39 Limp body part, allegedly
- 42 ICU amounts
- 45 Point between "gay" and "com"
- 46 Granola lesbian's concern
- 47 Pinball Wizard's game venue
- 50 The Batmobile, e.g.
- 51 One-night-stand partner, crudely
- 52 School where actors study to be in a gay horror film?
- 56 Day of many Hudson flicks
- 57 Cucumber wasted on the kitchen?
- 58 Gently sloped hill
- 60 Not potent
- 61 Off-Broadway prize
- 62 Cole Porter's "___ Love Again"
- 63 Francis Bacon work
- 64 Come across as
- 65 "___ in the Clowns"

- 12 Rock's ___ Dan
- 13 In a mound
- 21 Cockeyed
- 22 Hit in the family jewels
- 23 Dadaist Jean
- 27 Sounds of "Baby, that was good!"
- 28 Circle of Uranus
- 29 "Gorillas in the Mist" author Fossey
- 32 Lorca's stick
- 33 They scatter their seed afar
- 34 Scroll for the cut
- 36 Boy Scouts founder ___-Powell
- 37 Screw around without having sex
- 40 Doesn't leave the closet
- 41 Leonard Bishop's "Creep Into ___ Narrow Bed"
- 42 Bag carrier for Sheehan
- 43 Sings "White Christmas," maybe
- 44 Bernstein manuscripts, e.g.
- 46 Audre Lorde's birthplace
- 48 "The Seven Samurai" director Kurosawa
- 49 Singer Springfield
- 50 Whoopi's role in "The Color Purple"
- 53 Vows now legal for all
- 54 It's a sensation
- 55 "The Unicorn" author Murdoch
- 59 Pull the plug on

Down

- 1 Blow in a comic book
- 2 Stallion sheds
- 3 Like a beard
- 4 What Lara Croft raids
- 5 Ken's fag hag?
- 6 Face-to-face tests
- 7 Carrie in "Star Wars"
- 8 It might go right to the bottom
- 9 Take down a peg
- 10 Sites for three men in a tub
- 11 Nice buns, e.g.?

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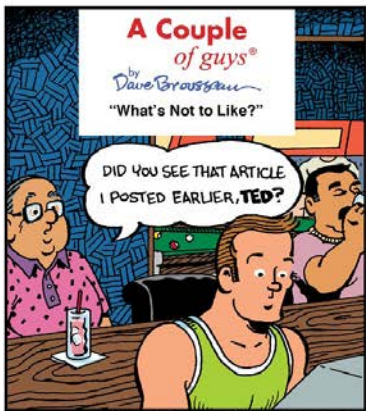
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

UK's 'Cucumber' and 'Banana' get American accents

Russell T. Davies (“Queer as Folk”), the man who created the UK dramedies “Cucumber” and “Banana” (both ran on Logo in 2015), is teaming up with American TV super-producer Shonda Rhimes to bring both shows to the United States. They’ll be folded together into one series for ABC currently known as “Adult Behavior,” with a pilot written by “Wonder Woman” scribe Allan Heinberg. And if you missed “Cucumber” and “Banana” when they aired on Logo, you should know that the gay white male world that “QAF” thoroughly explored is only part of the intersecting narratives of the two series, where characters from all corners of the LGBTQ+ world get their time to be the center of attention (think “Sense 8” without the globe-trotting and supernatural mind powers). There’s no cast yet and no timeline for when the public gets a chance to see the finished product, but any queer primetime series by us and about us is something to celebrate well in advance.

Colton Haynes joins cast of 'American Horror Story'

If you saw the comedy “Rough Night,” but still think you don’t know who Colton Haynes is, think again: He was the freaked out stripper in the thong. And now that you’ve made his acquaintance, you can look forward to his next job, co-starring in season 7 of Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk’s “American Horror Story.” It’s under wraps at the moment, but we do know that the upcoming season centers around the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential Election, with the horror starting on the day after That Man won. (We still refuse to write out his full name and will probably never – what if a demon infects our laptop?) Other cast members include fellow valued queer performers Billy Eichner and Sarah Paulson, as well as “Scream Queens” co-star Billie Lourd and returning “AHS” cast member Evan Peters. Now, the question remains as to how much more horrifying the fictional version of this story can get when real life feels like a slowly-unfolding apocalypse? Come through, Ryan Murphy.

'Every Day' will be sort of gay

The popular YA novel “Every Day,” from author David Levithan, is coming to the big screen. Gay filmmaker Michael Sucsy (“Grey Gardens”) will direct from a script from Jesse Andrews (“Me and Earl and The Dying Girl”). Up-and-comer Angourie Rice – who played Ryan Gosling’s precocious daughter in “The Nice Guys” and will earn a wider audience this summer with “Spider-Man: Homecoming” – will star. But it’s not the fact that a gay director is at the helm that makes this story interesting. “Every Day” is a story that involves its young heroine falling in love with a supernatural entity



Colton Haynes. Photo: KathClick

called “A.” This entity moves into a fresh host body, sometimes male and sometimes female, each new day. In other words, Rice’s teenage protagonist will be getting a crash course in gender fluidity, bisexuality and speed dating all at once. We’re interested, and we hear this one will most likely move into host theaters sometime in 2018.

Chris Colfer does everything at once now

It’s entirely possible that the last you heard from Chris Colfer was during the series finale of “Glee.” Well, guess what? The boy – OK, “man”; he’s 27 after all – hasn’t been sitting around waiting for his next gig. He’s been getting his life. Colfer is the author of a series of fantasy books known as “The Land of Stories,” a saga that spans six novels, an illustrated picture book, audiobooks and an upcoming graphic novel. Not content simply to be an actor, singer and best-selling author, he’s now signed a deal with 20th Century Fox and producer Shawn Levy to take the first of those books to the big screen. It’s called “The Wishing Spell,” and it’s about twin boys who find themselves transported into a world where classic fairy tales come to life. Colfer will not only adapt his own book into a screenplay, he’s also going to direct the movie. Feeling somewhat less than accomplished right now? Perhaps you should. And maybe his old boss Ryan Murphy will be asking him to collaborate one day.

Romeo San Vicente has already heard your cucumber and banana jokes; he’s just happy to see you.

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