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Running for Detroit
City Council

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July 20, 2017

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Detroit Police Department
LGBT Liaison Danielle
Woods is Sworn to Protect,
Serve and Advocate

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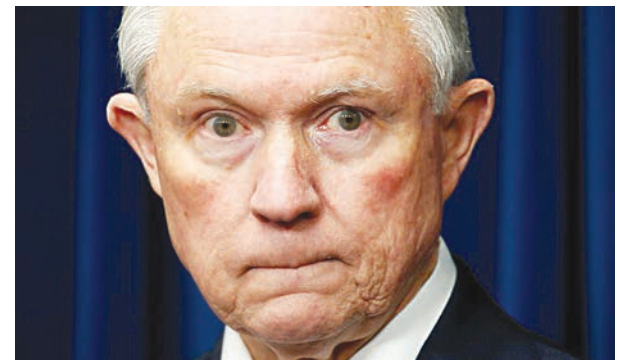
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Jeff Sessions Speaks at the Alliance Defending Freedom's Summit on Religious Liberty

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Out In Force

Detroit Police Department LGBT Liaison Danielle Woods is Sworn to Protect, Serve and Advocate

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

Police officer Danielle Woods would sooner flash you a smile than her badge. Both are equally bright, formidably disarming, and essential to her role as the Detroit Police Department's first-ever LGBT liaison.

"There was no blueprint, no book to go by," says Woods about her newfound role in the department, appointed in 2013. "It was like: make it happen."

But "it" takes a village, she explains.

"I have the support of the police department that says we support you and what you're doing. Let's be progressive. Let's be proactive and not reactive on issues involving the LGBT community," says Woods. "But it takes both sides."

Woods, who identifies as a lesbian, grew up on Detroit's east side and took on the role of matriarch as the oldest of four children. "I had to grow up before my time, had to make sure food was on the table, clothes were washed and do homework," she says. It's this personal experience that helps Woods relate to the communities she hopes to unite. "So I understand when people have certain struggles and strongholds."

Woods initially signed up for the police academy on a dare. Now a 15-year veteran of the force, she will be eligible for retirement by her 39th birthday. "But I don't even think in three and a half years my work will be done," she says. Improving relations between the LGBT community and the Detroit police force is a matter of rebuilding trust.

"The community has built a barrier and because law enforcement didn't know how to communicate, didn't know proper was to engage, they didn't. And a lot of times when you don't engage, sometimes saying nothing says a lot," says Woods. "There have been times when I have been frustrated because I



Officer Danielle Woods with members of LGBT Detroit during the Motor City Pride parade in Detroit on June 11. Photo courtesy of LGBT Detroit

"I have the support of the police department that says we support you and what you're doing. Let's be progressive. Let's be proactive and not reactive on issues involving the LGBTQ community."

- Officer Danielle Woods

want so badly to do good by the community but everybody is not going to like the way I operate. Everybody is not going to like what I am doing, and it can be frustrating."

Still, "The positive parts of the job definitely outweighs the negative," she adds.

Violence against trans women of color and intimate partner violence are two of the foremost issues impacting the LGBT community today, explains Woods. One of the most important roles she plays in combating these issues is visibility—as an advocate and an educator.

In addition to LGBT providing sensitivity training for her peers in the police department, Woods also works with an LGBT advisory board to help set priorities in her work and assess the needs of the community. Currently in the works are plans to create LGBT action teams and partnering with local business to create safe spaces.

"It's getting people involved. When people are involved, you have a different view and outlook on everything," she says. "When you are sitting at home and all you are worried about is you, that's easy. But when you can take yourself out of the equation and worry about somebody else first, that speaks volumes."

When she's not wearing her uniform, Woods is a wife to her partner of 10 years, Pat, who is retired from the department's homicide division. "So you can imagine the pillow talk, right?" she says. Taking her role beyond

Danielle's



LGBT Detroit
www.lgbtdetroit.org

Fair Michigan Justice Project
www.fairmichigan.org

Affirmations
www.goaffirmations.org

Trans Sistas of Color Project
www.facebook.com/TSCOPD

Equality Michigan
www.equalitymi.org

the city of Detroit, Woods also assists other state police divisions with LGBT sensitivity training. It's all about building a collective understanding of the LGBT community, she says, and that starts with respect.

"I will tell you in a heartbeat you don't have to agree. But what we are going to do is respect, and I am going to educate you. It's about equality and the person. We are all people. Period," says Woods. "So I really try to drill that into my trainings. And really try and breakdown for them what it means to be LGBT, give them a different way of looking at what they think they know."

Learn more about community-police relations by calling Officer Woods, Detroit Police Department, 1301 Third St. at 313-596-1023 or email woods668@detroitmi.gov.

This article originally appeared in Pride Source, Michigan's Annual LGBTQ Magazine. BTL interviewed six changemakers in the LGBTQ community who use their "Tools of Engagement" to provide citizens with ideas and resources to transform their neighborhoods and empower them to make decisions that will create positive change.



Congressman Dan Kildee (D-Flint) and Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills) engaged the community in Plymouth on July 16 during the first in a series of health care town halls. BTL Photos: Kate Opalewski

Progressive Groups Hold Health Care Town Halls

BY BTL STAFF

Michigan citizens have the opportunity to have their questions answered and learn how to protect their health care during various health care town halls across the state hosted by the Michigan Democratic Party and Indivisible Michigan groups.

Republicans in Washington are trying to ram through secretive plans that will roll back protections for pre-existing conditions like diabetes and asthma and cause health and prescription drug costs to skyrocket. But many members of Congress are trying to avoid their constituents and their questions at all costs.

That's why these progressive groups have teamed up to hold forums throughout Michigan, including Kalamazoo, Alpena, Southfield, Saginaw and Marquette. Members of Congress, state legislators and health experts will join the events, where citizens can get their questions answered about Republicans' plans to cut health care.

"Republicans in Washington keep rewriting their plans to cut health care behind closed doors, while refusing to hold town halls or even answer their constituents' concerns. They're not doing their job. That's not the way this should work in our country. Everyone deserves to know how these massive cost increases and cuts to coverage will affect them. We invite everyone to come to our town halls to get their questions answered and learn what they can do to protect health care," said Brandon Dillon, Michigan

Democratic Party Chair.

The town halls will also feature discussions about what can be done on the state and federal level to stop them, including the House and Senate Democrats' "Michigan Health Care Bill of Rights," which would help protect families in Michigan from the worst of the cuts coming out of Washington.

"We will never stop fighting against GOP efforts to eliminate protections for people with pre-existing conditions or their plan to allow insurance premiums to skyrocket, especially for seniors. We also need to combat these cuts on the state level. Michigan House and Senate Democrats want to pass a 'Health Care Bill of Rights' to shield families from the worst of these health care cuts. We plan to help them get it done," said Dillon.

Town Halls Scheduled:

Aug. 9

7-9 p.m.

Grand Rapids

Hosted by members of the Kent Democratic Party.

Aug. 19

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Muskegon

Hosted by members of the Muskegon County Democratic Party.

See Health Care Town Halls on pg. 13

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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.

A photograph of two men with beards and short hair, both wearing black leather vests. They are smiling and looking towards each other. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with buildings and greenery.

We're **adventurous,** not reckless.

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TRUVADA for PrEP™ is a once-daily prescription medicine that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when taken every day and used together 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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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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Stonewall for Revolution to Host Gubernatorial Forum

BY BTL STAFF

Democratic candidates running for governor will have a chance to speak directly to voters during a forum on LGBT and women's rights on July 24 in Lansing. They'll take questions from over 15 statewide organizations and nonprofits co-sponsoring the event. The forum will be a one-of-a-kind opportunity for voters to get the candidates' take on LGBT and women's issues, and will be moderated by Between The Lines.

LGBT advocacy group Stonewall for Revolution kickstarted the event. "One of the reasons we created Stonewall was to help identify the candidates who support our issues," said Robert Van Kirk, the founder of Stonewall for Revolution. "We have to hold candidates accountable early on. No candidate for governor should take the women and LGBT vote for granted and Stonewall is providing an opportunity for the candidates to show they care about these issues again."

The forum will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the



Shri Thanedar, Abdul El-Sayed and Bill Cobbs

First Presbyterian Church of Lansing, 510 W. Ottawa Street, near the Capitol Building. Abdul El-Sayed, Bill Cobbs and Shri Thanedar have confirmed their attendance at the forum. Gretchen Whitmer received an invitation but has yet to confirm.

Co-sponsors of the forum include Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan, Progress Michigan, Young Democrats of Michigan, Michigan Federation of College Democrats, Justice Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party, Michigan for Revolution, Women's

March MI, the Progressive Caucus of the MDP, West Michigan United Progressives, the Black Caucus of the MDP, the LGBT&A Caucus of the MDP, Grand Rapids United Progressives, the Democratic Disability Caucus, and the Women's Caucus of the MDP.

"This forum won't just be about abortion rights and gay couples being denied wedding cake. Candidates might have to answer questions on the epidemic level of violence against Native women, or difficulties in healthcare for trans women," said Megan Collier, a regional organizer for Women's March MI. "Their answers to those questions will be really telling for how seriously they take other LGBT and women's issues. This forum will be a fantastic opportunity for voters to hear how they'll be treated after the election."

Find more on Stonewall for Revolution and updated forum details at www.Stonewall4RevolutionMI.com or by searching "Stonewall for Revolution" on Facebook. Links for a livestreamed video of the forum will be available soon.

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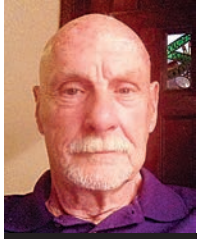
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Once Upon a Time of Terror (Pt. 2)



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Though perhaps unspoken among gay men and doctors nearly 40 years ago when the AIDS crisis started, the presumption of a death sentence was understood. When the HIV-3 retrovirus was identified and infection modes publicized — unprotected oral and anal sex, drug usage, multiple partners, STDs and over reliance on therapeutic antibiotics — gay men were told if they tested positive it was time to get personal effects in order.

AZT was the first powerhouse drug offered, hopefully to extend life expectancy for a few precious months, perhaps a year, often just weeks. (Many who stopped taking it lived longer.)

AZT was developed at Detroit's Cancer Center; used briefly for cancer patients but soon abandoned because of highly toxic side effects: iatrogenic pathologies that mirrored, or, some pharmacists maintained, caused all of the AIDS-related symptoms: radical weight loss, pneumocystis pneumonia, purple lesions, dementia, low platelet counts. AZT was the drug-of-hard-choice. Take it or leave it!

How many gay men died of doing just that is a legitimate question. In spite of the physician's Hippocratic Oath to "do no harm," AZT was scripted.

(The chemist who invented AZT lived in the same Cultural Center apartment building where I lived for 25 years. He was also gay, had an extensive classical music collection, frequently quarreled with his much younger partner, once locking him naked out of their fifth floor apartment.)

The stigma of being HIV positive or, dramatically worse, of exhibiting unmistakable AIDS symptoms like Kaposi's Sarcoma skin lesions contributed to a mutual silence of shame among gay men. The Reagan White House saw the pandemic as unfortunately deserved. If gay men weren't so promiscuous they wouldn't be dying by the thousands.

(Hollywood name star Rock Hudson, who died of AIDS in 1985, was a personal friend of First Lady Nancy Reagan. Other prominent personalities who received "hush hush" treatment included one-time President Trump mentor, attorney Roy Cohn, and Liberace. They were deemed acceptable persons, even though they just might happen to be, well, er, you know, gay. They weren't however codpiece militants.)

For conservative politicians, AIDS was putting a dramatic end to the Gay Power Liberation Movement and in-America's-face militancy exhibited in places like San Francisco, New York, Chicago and other cities with large gay populations. "AIDS will shove them back into the closet or, better still, into an early grave!"

There is an AIDS genocide conspiracy theory: that the retrovirus, or a lethal variant, was introduced during the mid-1970s hepatitis inoculation programs in the East and West coasts. Documentation for this alarming so-called "biowarfare" viewpoint can be read in the controversial, "Queer Blood: The Secret AIDS Genocide," by Dr. Alan Cantwell. Cantwell is himself gay.

During the early decades of the AIDS crisis the government initiated little public support or funding. President Ronald Reagan made no mention of AIDS while in office. It wasn't until AIDS activists became loudly vocal. Demanding! Marching! Staging sit-ins! that things slowly changed.

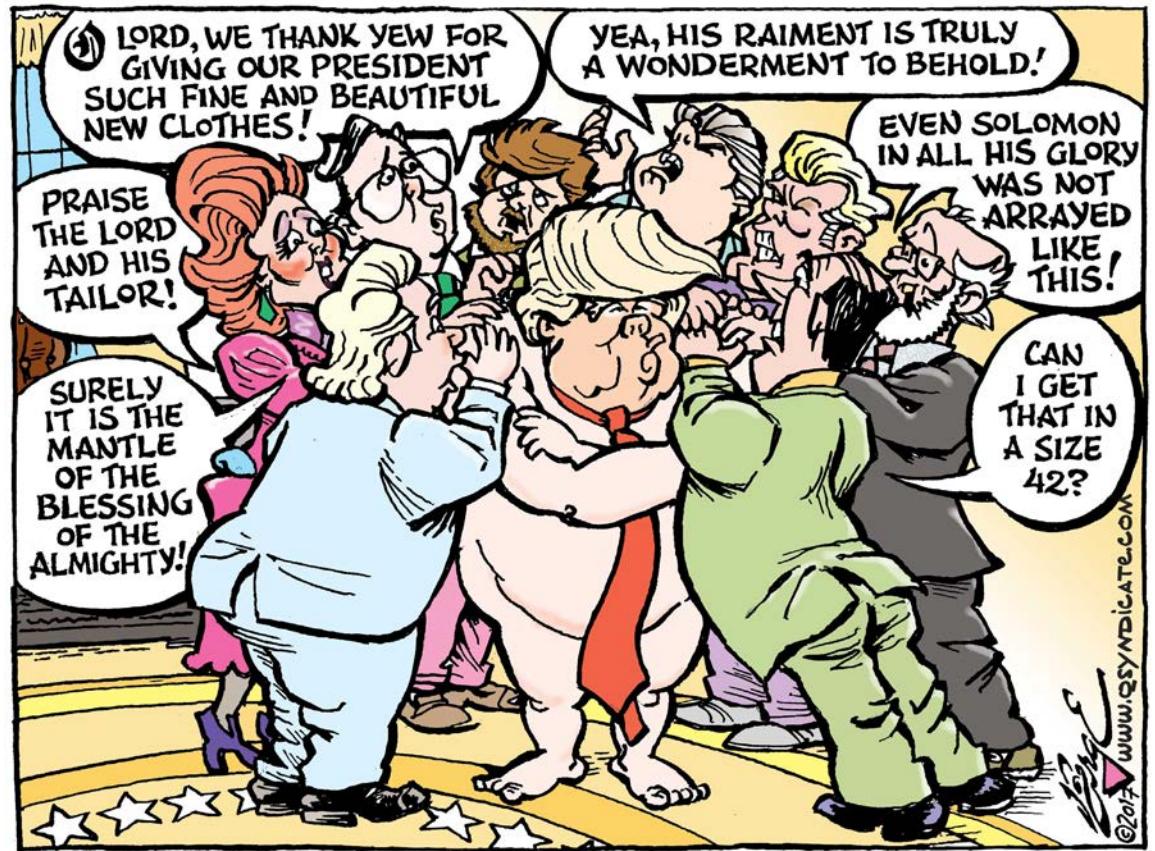
Gays, lesbians, and straight allies took charge, developing education and testing programs, buddy one-on-one systems, safe-sex strategies, fundraisers, shelters for AIDS care; and, importantly, offering loving support with requisite human dignity and respect.

In Detroit, Aids Partnership Michigan, Michigan AIDS Prevention Project, Wellness AIDS Services, Affirmations LGBT Center Switchboard Outreach were there often 24/7 for early and later exposure HIV and AIDS afflicted persons, who were confused, frightened, consistently shunned as societal pariahs.

Outstanding dedicated, local AIDS activists included Dr. Evelyn Fisher, Barbara Murray, Kenny Rose, Craig Covey, Rick Robinson, Ph. D., Lindsay Wright-El; and — often uniting for the very first time in common cause alliance — numerous brave, compassionate, courageous gay and lesbian volunteers.

Memento mori. Today's right-wing, "religious freedom" hatred of LGBTs is spreading. Our lives are once more being infected. The new plague — Acquired Intolerance Determination Syndrome — is in the political pulpit. Speak out! Fight back! Hate is contagious!

Connect with Charles Alexander at charles@pridesource.com.



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Uniformly Bad

Since prior to the last election, many have warned of the precarious position transgender law was on the federal level. While great strides were made during the Obama years on behalf of our community, a lot of those wins were not legislative, but administrative, consisting of policy changes and legal interpretations that sided with the transgender community.

In the last few months, the Trump administration has gone into hyperdrive, working to reverse these rules. These moves started within weeks of Trump taking office, with the administration withdrawing protections for transgender students in February. It would seem that his Education Secretary intends to keep things this way, even intending to return the Office for Civil Rights to "its role as a neutral, impartial, investigative agency."

While I might contend that it has been such, reading between the lines makes it clear that this -- as well as recent attempts to massively cut funding for education -- will all but gut civil rights protections within the Department of Education.

The story is the same elsewhere in the administration, whose many department heads have a history of anti-transgender and anti-LGBTQ stances. His more recent addition is Bethany Kozma. Kozma is an anti-LGBTQ activist and had worked to restrict bathroom rights for

transgender youth. The very notion of seeing transgender people treated fairly in any way within this administration is simply off the table.

I wish I could tell you that there is a silver lining, but a bleaker story has gotten even bleaker.

A victory this last week in Congress, that saw an attempt by Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo) to ban the coverage of transgender health care for transgender troops and their families fail in the House of Representatives has been quickly overshadowed by a far more insidious bill, one that quite frankly should scare us all.

Sponsored by Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX), HR 2796, aka the Civil Rights Uniformity Act of 2017, may be one of the most discriminatory bills since the Sodomite Suppression Act was axed from consideration in California by then-California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

The bill claims to be about repealing "executive overreach," and states, "the proper constitutional authority for social transformation belongs to the legislative branch." That, however, is but the start.

Citing work under Obama to define "sex" inclusive of gender identity, including the landmark interpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as inclusive

See next page

► Smith: Uniformly Bad

Continued from p. 10

of transgender identity and expression, as well as efforts within the Department of Education to allow transgender students use of appropriate sex segregated facilities in accordance with their preferred gender, and the Department of Health and Human Service's regulations that saw transgender people covered in the Affordable HealthCare Act, HR 2796 seeks to reverse all of the above and then some.

Now mind you, this is not some general law about overreach, attempting to provide some nebulous guidance on the divisions between the legislative and administrative branches of our government. No, this bill has two stated purposes, and both are pointed directly at transgender people.

"The purposes of this Act are...to prevent the executive branch from unilaterally rewriting Federal civil rights laws by enacting or implementing any policy or undertaking any enforcement action that is based on construing the term 'sex' or 'gender' to mean 'gender identity'; and...to ensure that gender identity is not treated as a protected class in Federal law or policy without the affirmative approval of the people's representatives in Congress."

It actually gets worse.

The final section of this bill has three specific things it seeks to put into place. First, it seeks to refine "sex" and "gender" in "any Federal civil rights law, and of any related ruling, regulation, guidance, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States" to not be interpreted in a trans inclusive manner, and further restricts "man" and "woman" to "a person's genetic sex."

Second, disallowing any Federal civil rights law from allowing transgender people to be part of a protected class unless expressly designated as such.

Finally, it further clarifies that "Federal civil rights law" is inclusive of "any Federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex or gender," and specifically notes Title XI, the Fair Housing Act and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

What this insidious piece of legislation seeks to do is strip transgender people of any and all Federal law protections. And this from the party that has claimed for eight years that rights should be up to the states, and not the Federal government.

As it stands, this bill was introduced to the House of Representatives, and is currently in the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. It could die in

committee, but I don't think any one of us feels confident enough to sit back and let this happen.

On the subcommittee are Steve Cohen (D-TN), Ron DeSantis (R-FL), Trent Franks (R-AZ), Louie Gohmert, Jr. (R-TX), Trey Gowdy (R-SC), Steve King (R-IA), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), and Jamie Raskin (D-MD). If any of these people represent you, you need to contact them immediately. You can use sites like {URL <https://contactingcongress.org/>} to make this easier. Further, reach out to any others who can speak out. We need everyone we can.

I don't feel I am being overly dramatic to say that a bill like this would be the death knell to the transgender community and each of us. We need to do everything we can to stop this, before it stops us.

Gwen Smith is in it for the long haul. You can find her at www.gwensmith.com.

“What this insidious piece of legislation seeks to do is strip transgender people of any and all Federal law protections. And this from the party that has claimed for eight years that rights should be up to the states, and not the Federal government.”

Creep of the Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Jeff Sessions

When the country's chief law enforcement officer meets with a group that toils daily to hurt LGBTQ people, that's deeply troubling. But when he goes out of his way to praise said anti-LGBTQ group, LGBTQ people have a good reason to be worried.

Not that Attorney General Jeff Sessions has every inspired confidence in anyone who cares about civil rights. Sessions has a long history of being a racist and, lo and behold, he doesn't like LGBTQ people. Funny how those things tend to go together.



On July 11, Sessions spoke at the Alliance Defending Freedom's Summit on Religious Liberty.

Now, that sounds nice. Who on earth could be against joining together to defend freedom? And wasn't this country founded on religious liberty?

Alas, ADF's definition of freedom is limited mainly to white heterosexual Christians. Ditto

freedom is being used to deny a couple of homos a wedding cake or something.

Oh, and wouldn't you know it, ADF is currently representing a baker who refused to cake for a gay wedding. A case on its way to the Supreme Court.

No press was allowed, but Sessions's prepared remarks were published online by The Federalist.

After quoting Washington, Jefferson, and Martin Luther King Jr. (to prove he's not racist), Sessions lamented how hard it is to be Christian in America.

"The cultural climate has become less hospitable to people of faith and to religious belief," Sessions said. "And in recent years, many Americans have felt that their freedom to practice their faith has been under attack."

Yes. This checks out. If you are Muslim, that is (or another religion practiced predominantly by people who aren't white and is thus swept up in anti-Muslim hysteria). Anyone who says it's hard being Christian in America doesn't know what "hard" means and likely doesn't know what "Christian" means, either.

Sessions continued, "The challenges our nation faces today concerning our historic First Amendment right to the 'free exercise' of our faith have become acute."

Again, no. The only thing acute here is the Christianity Persecution Complex on display.

Sessions did say something I agree with. He spoke of the government having a role "to provide the great secular structure" that is supposed to protect everybody's rights.

He then undermines this very concept: "This Department of Justice will never allow this secular government of ours to demand that sincere religious beliefs be abandoned. We will not require American citizens to give intellectual assent to doctrines that are contrary to their religious beliefs. And they must be allowed to exercise those beliefs as the First Amendment guarantees."

Now, of course the DOJ shouldn't restrict religious belief. But Sessions is clearly of the mind that by enforcing, say, anti-discrimination laws that are designed to protect LGBTQ people is tantamount to quashing the free speech of anti-LGBTQ people. Keep in mind that "religious freedom" has been used to defend things like slavery and segregation.

Sessions goes on to say, "Under this administration, religious Americans will be treated neither as an afterthought nor as a problem to be managed."

Says the guy who supports a ban on Muslims.

Sessions has proved time and time again that he cannot be trusted to enforce this country's civil rights laws. He has the right under the first amendment to say otherwise, but Americans have the freedom, for now at least, to call him a liar.

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

Meet the LGBT Activist Running for Detroit City Council

Nguvu Tsare Says 'I Care About Everybody' in District 2

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Nguvu Tsare's name means "defend your power" in Swahili and in a sense, that's what he wants to do for the residents of Detroit.

"My name really represents my life," he said. "That's what my life has been about. Fighting for power for my people and defending the power that my ancestors won for me."

Tsare said too many Detroiters are being left behind as the city undergoes a revitalization.

"In a city that's 80-percent African American there should be no question who has the political power in the city and there is a question about that," he said. "To be honest, I would argue that even though African Americans make up the majority of the population, they don't have the same proportion of political, economic and social power in the city...If you want to talk about the restorative process and truly bringing Detroit back, it has to include the hard work of improving the lives of black Detroiters."

A Lansing native and lifelong activist, Tsare first moved to Detroit 10 years ago. He said he did not until recently see himself as a politician. But after relocating to Detroit's District 2 he felt compelled to run.

"I had no intention of ever running for office, ever, let alone this year," he said. "Activism is my passion. But as I got to know the district a little better and began to understand the political dynamics that were getting ready to shape up, I was pissed. I was really upset because I genuinely felt there was not going to be somebody in this race who cared about me."

But by the time Tsare changed his voter registration, it was too late to make the ballot. As a result, he will run as a write-in candidate in November's general election. For a moment since then, Tsare questioned his run.

District 2 Deserves Better

"I was about to pull out," he said. "I felt I had heard God tell me I need to run and then when that happened and they said I'm gonna have to run as a write-in candidate in the general, I was going to say maybe I had misheard God. But my team said 'no, you should stay in it.' And we figured out a way we



could win and we've been laying the ground work for that to happen."

Tsare describes the process as an "uphill battle." From day one, he said, "It's a very small window of opportunity, but as long as that window is open, I'm going to stay in race because not only do the residents of District 2 deserve better, I deserve better and I refuse to have a representative who I genuinely don't believe will have the best interests of my community at heart."

Tsare is running against incumbent George Cushingberry, Jr., a longtime local politician who has been plagued by various scandals in recent years.

"I think his biggest challenge is he's a District 2 councilperson with an at large mentality," said Tsare. "He focuses on major macro issues. But the reason why we went to districts was to have our representatives focus on the micro issues. So that's the kind of leadership that I'm trying to establish in District 2. A few other districts have that, but I think that's just the challenge we have as a city because districts are new to us. So as people begin to understand what their councilperson is supposed to do as a district representative, I think you'll start to see more people demand

that from their leader."

Tsare said he wants to represent everyone in District 2.

"I care about everyone," he said with a particular emphasis on the transgender community, which is near and dear to him.

"A lot of people won't talk about it, but Palmer Park is in District 2 and we have a huge problem with the criminalizing and the victimizing of transgender sex workers there. You'll never hear another candidate talk about this. I'm the only candidate that's talked about this because these are issues that hit home to me," said Tsare. "Some of my best friends in life have been transgender women and I've seen the struggles they've gone through. Anyone in my district who is transgender or has a loved one who is transgender can know and believe that councilman Tsare is going to go hard for our transgender family."

Tsare began his LGBT activism nearly a decade ago while working with Mpowerment Detroit, a community building and HIV prevention program.

"It changed my life," he said. "I believe it's the reason why I'm HIV negative to this day because of the education I received."

Tsare joined and became a facilitator with

Young Brothers United, an organization that reaches out to youth ages 16-24 in the black LGBT community.

"I've passed out probably thousands of condoms across the city of Detroit and I would like to think that I played a small part in keeping somebody healthy or keeping somebody safe in the city," he said.

At 28 years old, Tsare is still deeply involved in doing community work, and for free. He has done mass incarceration work at former President Obama's church, Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. He was the vice president of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the National Black United Front and he was the director of development for New Era Detroit.

"I've never gotten paid," he said. "I sometimes couldn't pay my own bills because I wasn't working as much. That's the leadership that we deserve."

One Dollar One Dream

Looking ahead, Tsare hopes to implement a revitalization program he calls One Dollar One Dream.

Small businesses can opt to let their customers add a dollar onto their purchases, he said, and that dollar will go into a District 2 account. On an annual basis the program will use the money to help residents purchase their first home or start their first business. Tsare said the program will also help current business owners, "who've invested so much into the district," to undergo innovation projects to either increase business or scale.

"I really think we have the opportunity in Detroit to show the rest of the country this is how you bring a city back for everybody. But we're not on that trajectory right now. And it's going to take people like me running for these positions and instilling a culture in our political establishment that values the people who have truly stuck it out with this city from day one," he said. "I genuinely want to see the people of my city have more and do better and receive better treatment from the people who run to represent them. And I'm in this race because I generally believe that I'm that person."

To learn more about Nguvu Tsare's campaign or to contribute, visit www.nguvutsare.com.

Washington Florist Seeks OK From Supreme Court to Refuse Service to Gays

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

A Washington State florist who refused to service a gay couple's wedding for religious reasons is calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse state court rulings that she violated the state's LGBT non-discrimination law.

Barronelle Stutzman, the sole owner of Arlene's Flowers in Richland, Wash., filed the petition for certiorari on July 14 before the U.S. Supreme Court asserting the rulings against her violate her freedom of speech and religion.

Stutzman, who denied floral arrangements in 2013 for the same-sex wedding of Rob Ingersoll and his spouse Curt Freed, said in a statement her refusal to serve their wedding had nothing to do with them being gay.

"Rob Ingersoll and I have been friends since very nearly the first time he walked into my shop all those years ago," said Stutzman. "There was never an issue with his being gay, just as there hasn't been with any of my other customers or employees. He just enjoyed my custom floral designs, and I loved creating them for him. But now the state is trying to use this case to force me to create artistic expression that violates my deepest beliefs and take away my life's work and savings, which will also harm those who I employ. I'm not asking for anything that our Constitution hasn't promised me and every other American: the right to create freely, and to live out my faith without fear of government punishment or interference."

In February, the Washington Supreme Court decision the ruling against Stutzman by the Benton County Superior Court, which found she violated the Washington Law Against Discrimination and fined her \$1,000. The American Civil Liberties Union and Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson led the charges against her resulting in the penalty.

The for certiorari presents two questions

before the U.S. Supreme Court: 1) Whether the creation and sale of floral arrangements for weddings is artistic expression, and if so, whether compelling that creation violates the Free Speech Clause; and 2) Whether the compelled creation and sale of floral arrangements for weddings and attendance of that wedding against one's religious beliefs violates the Free Exercise Clause.

The petition argues Stutzman didn't refuse service based on discriminatory reasons because she had previously provided service to Ingersoll for purposes other than weddings and because she has employed LGBT people at her floral shop.

"Contrary to Respondents' claims, Barronelle does not engage in sexual orientation discrimination. Barronelle hires LGBT employees and serves LGBT clients on a regular basis...and she had a 'warm and friendly' relationship with Robert for over nine years, designing dozens of arrangements for him and Curt," the petition says. "But part of Barronelle's wedding business involves attending and facilitating the ceremony itself and Barronelle simply could not reconcile her faith with celebrating and participating in a same-sex wedding."

Representing Stutzman in the case is Alliance Defending Freedom, an anti-LGBT legal firm recently designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

"If the government can ruin Barronelle for peacefully living and working according to her faith, it can punish anyone else for expressing their beliefs," Alliance Defending Freedom senior counsel Kristen Waggoner said in a statement. "The government shouldn't have the power to force a 72-year-old grandmother to surrender her freedom in order to run her family business. Anyone who supports the First Amendment rights that the U.S. Constitution guarantees to all of us should stand with Barronelle."

On the same day Alliance Defending Freedom filed the petition before the Supreme Court, it published a video titled "The Barronelle Stutzman Story," which depicts her as a sympathetic figure for facing penalties after refusing service to gay couples for religious reasons.

It remains to be seen whether the Supreme Court will agree to review the case, although that's unlikely to happen while justices are in recess during the summer. It takes a vote of four justices to agree to grant a writ of certiorari – or agree to take up a case.

If justices agree to review the decision against Stutzman, they would heard the case at the same time they're considering a lawsuit filed by Masterpiece Cakeshop in Colorado, which is asserting a right to deny services to same-sex couples based on religious objections. Alliance Defending Freedom is the counsel to the plaintiffs in both cases.

The petition itself asks the Supreme Court to consider both cases simultaneously, or at least hold the Arlene's Flower's petition until a decision is handed down in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case.

"Reviewing the two cases together would aid this Court in deciding the important First Amendment questions presented," the petition says. "The record in this case is particularly well developed and comprehensive, including numerous depositions and declarations, as well as expert testimony. Such exhaustive evidence will facilitate the Court's "independent examination of the record as a whole" to determine whether artistic expression, like Barronelle's custom floral designs, are 'protected speech.'"

Chris Johnson is Chief Political and White House Reporter for the Washington Blade. This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade www.washingtonblade.com and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.

and Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-Southfield).

Aug. 27
2-4 p.m.
Clinton-Macomb Public Library
40900 Romeo Plank Rd., Clinton Township, MI 48038

Hosted by members of the Northern Macomb and Clinton Township Democratic Parties and Congressman Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak).

Sept. 9
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Birmingham Unitarian Church
38651 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Hosted by members of the Oakland Democratic Party.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Monroe County
Hosted by members of the Monroe County Democratic Party.

Town halls hosted by members of the Bay County Democratic Party, the Indivisible District 4 and members of the Kalamazoo County Democratic Party are to be determined. For updated information and additional meetings times and locations, visit <https://michigandems.com/> or <http://www.michiganindivisible.org/>.

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► Health Care Town Halls

Continued from p. 5

Aug. 20
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Traverse City
Hosted by members of Indivisible District 1 and Leelanau, and State Rep. Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills).

Aug. 26
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Shriners Silver Garden Event Center
24350 Southfield Rd., Southfield, MI 48075
Hosted by members of Indivisible Michigan

HOTTER THAN JULY

Hotter Than July Schedule

JULY 25

Hotter Than July Candlelight Vigil

6-9 p.m.
Palmer Park, 910 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit

JULY 26

Hotter Than July Opening Party

5-9 p.m.
Woodward Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave., Detroit

JULY 28

Hotter Than July Annual Gathering for LGBT Issues

9 a.m.
University of Michigan Detroit Center, 3663 Woodward Ave., Suite 150, Detroit
The mayoral forum facilitated by Phillip Simmons is hosted by David Nelson Jr. and Alfredo D. Smith featuring local area candidates Brenda Jones, Garlin Gilchrist, Nguvu Tsare, Ingrid LaFleur, Coleman Young II and Tamara "Liberty" Smith.

Friday Soiree hosted by the Billionaire Boys Club

6-11 p.m.
Menjos Complex - Olympus Theater, 928 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit

JULY 29

Hotter Than July Palmer Park Picnic

11 a.m.
Palmer Park, 910 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit

Day at the Park with the Mizrahi's

6-8 p.m.
Palmer Park, 910 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit
HTJ Mini Ball featuring cash and prizes

JULY 30

Hotter Than July Sunday Worship Service

11 a.m.
Whosoever Ministry United Church of Christ, 2930 Woodward Ave., Detroit

Sunday Brunch hosted by the Billionaire Boys Club

12-3 p.m.
Granite City Food & Brewery, 100 Renaissance Center, Suite 1101, Detroit

For more information, visit www.hottethanjuly.org.

The Tradition of Connectedness

An Ancient African Philosophy Inspires Hotter Than July



BY CURTIS LIPSCOMB

It is that time again, and after months of strategic planning and securing partnerships, Detroit comes alive. The summer heat, the creative energy, and the festivities are highlighted accomplishments and challenges of same gender loving people. How hot is it? It's Hotter Than July!

In its 22nd year, Hotter Than July has been identified by the national organization Center for Black Equity as the world's second oldest Black Pride celebration – which is quite an accomplishment, if I do say so myself. Over the years, it has grown to embrace multicultural dynamics which serves to support and celebrate the essence of Black Pride. The event continues to demonstrate togetherness and solidarity within Michigan and Midwest America and it attracts people who are black, white, brown, Asian, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, young, mature, straight, lesbian, gay, bi-attractional and transgender to attend the event annually. For 22 years, the flagship event Hotter Than July Palmer Park Picnic remains a staple as a free, open and roaming activity where anyone can self-express without fear or limitations. The event has morphed into a travel destination event, where friends visit and family gather to bond, love, laugh, people watch, celebrate and reminisce.

This year's theme derives from the ancient word "Ubuntu – I Am Because We Are." This philosophy serves as the

“Hotter Than July is as relevant today as it was 22 years ago in spite of new challenges to address as it relates to providing safe spaces that respect and promote the dignity and worth, which is a basic human right, to members of the LGBT community.”

inspiration for this year's celebration as the essence of Ubuntu dictates compassion, virtue and humanness which are relevance to the culture of the celebration. It also promotes an interconnectedness which is pivotal to solidifying unity and strength within us. According to this principle, one cannot be human all by oneself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your humility and generosity.

Since the initial development of a national Black Pride Day in 1991, this unique experience remains relevant as it continues to provide a safe space and unite to celebrate the duality of being both racially different and a member of LGBT communities. Historically, there is little room at the "traditional" community LGBT pride events to do so; however Black LGBT communities celebrate a black pride in the same spirit in which other Americans are encouraged

See next page



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► Lipscomb: Connectedness

Continued from p. 14

to celebrate their heritage with Columbus Day, Von Steuben Day, Israel Independence Day, St. Patrick Day, and the Pulaski Day parades as well as other ethnic festivals.

When I “came out,” there were limited spaces to freely express and celebrate my pride in community oriented ways. As an urban youth, the city hosted establishments that welcomed adult patrons — bars, bookstores, and bathhouses, to name a few - remain common (to most males) individual’s experience in gay culture. As a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, additional locations have become commonplace — clinics, hospitals, and funeral homes. Between this juxtaposition of joy and pain, the LGBT spaces where people gather are of paramount importance in the increasingly hostile political climate.

Hotter Than July is as relevant today as it was 22 years ago in spite of new challenges to address as it relates to providing safe spaces that respect and promote the dignity and worth, which is a basic human right, to members of the LGBT community. Thanks to the national organizations and freedom fighters within the Obama Administration years, the fight for marriage equality became a reality and was a new galvanizing point for the community; however, other equally important struggles remain.

Poverty: The City of Detroit has a poverty rate of almost 40 percent, making it the most impoverished major American city.

Healthcare: Detroit has the largest percentage of residents infected with HIV.

Tobacco: LGBT people have smoking rates about 33 percent higher than heterosexuals in Michigan.

Hate crimes: A consistent threat and concern.

To successfully overcome these challenges it is imperative that we continue to build strong partnerships and collaborations at the community organizational level with both LGBT identified and non-LGBT identified organizations to achieve an arena that exemplifies Ubuntu. Our strength is in our numbers and our ability to coalesce around common goals and objectives to achieve a safer and more inclusive space for all.

In spite of the advancement of technology and limited resources, our nation remains divided and that divide can only be bridged by a meeting of minds and a concerted effort to coexist with respect and inclusion for all and in utilizing the principle of Ubuntu. Communication has become more difficult as conferences, front porches and dinner table conversations have become a gladiator arena where blood is drawn and enemies emerge. This has spilled over in every sector, including in gay lesbian bi and transgender rooms.

This year’s Hotter Than July theme “I

Am Because We Are” serves to inspire and promote a keen awareness and resolve for us to unite in the struggle and to do so collectively - whether we succeed or fail in our struggles.

HIV/AIDS still kills young gay men and trans women. Poverty remains rampant in urban and rural America. State legislative discrimination exists. There exists 51 weekends within the year to club, party, or either turn-up. I argue that the onus is on us to use this special multi-day event, Hotter Than July, to educate ourselves on the issues, to learn about causes and struggles that impact others, and how we can effect a positive change.

In my archival library, I have a video footage of the very first Hotter Than July Palmer Park Picnic in 1996, and even today I am in awe of the attendance, and the impact it had on the community. I remain emotionally fulfilled and gratified. It almost inconceivable that even today this achievement remains significant to so many as many young adults have confirmed their commitment to the movement and have continue to promote the legacy of Hotter Than July.

The LGBT Detroit Leadership Academy has effectively identified new Michigan leadership to continue and enhance the work necessary to meet future challenges for equality for generations to come. Recently, two talented and hardworking young adults played a pivotal role in the development of the #SafeBraveSpace Campaign, which helped secured a new office site on Greenfield Road in Detroit’s Murray Hill neighborhood, which facilitates networking, an exchange of ideas and a place to strategize new realities for same gender loving people. Another member of the LGBTQ community, Nguvu Tsare, is running for a seat on the Detroit City Council and his platform includes working towards social change within the LGBT community by means of creating change in the local legislature. I support him and I wish him a great electoral win!

Times have definitely changed – very challenging in some cases. We are currently experiencing the other side of the great recession which has impacted employment, blighted urban development and is changing the faces of neighborhoods – for some, not the better.

Ubuntu should remind us of the need to unite, to solidify and brave any storms that come our way.

Looking ahead to Hotter Than July 2018, it is our hope that we will be able to examine our success, identify our path forward and remain diligent in our commitment to the LGBTQ community in making the world a better community for all and in doing so; together we can continue the tradition of connectedness with the guiding principle of Ubuntu.

Curtis Lipscomb is the executive director at LGBT Detroit and co-founder and project manager of Hotter Than July. Connect with him at www.lgbtdetroit.org.



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DJ Romeo On Love, His Brand and How Music Saved Him

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When Walter Cooper started going out at the age of 17, he would frequent Inuendo Nightclub in Detroit.

“As a young person coming out, going to the club is a big deal. It’s very exciting to see the drag shows and people feeling so comfortable in their own skin,” said Cooper, who started his career in the LGBT community as a lip sync performer named Romeo Milliown.

“I spent a lot of time in the club listening to other DJs,” he said. “I would always want to hear certain songs, so instead of always asking the DJ to play what I wanted to hear, I decided to become a DJ so I could play what I want to hear.”

Cooper built a good relationship with the establishment where he became resident DJ on Friday nights with DJ Ray. When asked why he calls himself Romeo, he said it’s his “handsome babyface. So dreamy.”

That kind of confidence was instilled in him by his mother and father who are about to celebrate 15 years of marriage this September.

“They are the couple that I really look up to,” said Cooper, who grew up in Detroit as the oldest of three. “They have been supportive of everything that I do. Anything that keeps me out of trouble and makes me happy, they are 100 percent behind me.”

As Cooper gets ready to release a new mixtape, “Savage Beats, Volume 3,” he talks briefly with BTL about his professional experience as a DJ in Detroit.

Have you always wanted to be a part of the music industry?

It’s so funny. As a kid, and still to this day, I think I can sing. But I’m totally terrible. I know I’m terrible. I always said, though, if I can’t be the person that’s singing, I want to be the person who helps the singer, as a producer or a DJ.

Why is music so important to you?

Back in 2013, I was in a different relationship in another city distanced from family and friends. To be honest with you, I was lost. All I had was my music that I



Photo courtesy of Gerald Terrell

listened to every day, so I invested in that. I went out and bought a mixing deck and I got lost in my music. Whenever I felt lost and alone, I picked up my headphones, my laptop and my deck and just played. Music really saved me and brought me out of that situation. The grace of God took me out of that place and now I’m in a better place. This is a blessing to be doing what I’m doing. I never thought I would get this far and I’m not stopping.

What kind of music is on your playlist?

I’m the kind of DJ that listens to and plays all kinds of music. When I say that I mean everything from country to rock. I love to play with many different genres. My strength is hip and R&B. My favorite artist is Chris Brown. I love his energy. His old stuff gets you into a groove and gets you dancing.

What have you learned in this industry?

I didn’t get as much support starting out as I do now. You have to really work hard for your support. I didn’t think in a million years that I’d be DJing Hotter Than July two years in a row, let alone the first year. Just because you’re a DJ doesn’t mean you’re going to get the first booking that you want, or the second, or the third. You have to build relationships, support other local artists, DJs and promoters. They’re the ones who are going to book you. And take advantage of opportunities presented to you. If a party is lame, you still play like there’s a million and one people there because your client deserves it and you never know who’s listening.

Have you met any DJs that you look up to or are inspired by?

DJ Don Q from WJLB is a really cool guy. He came to support me

at Inuendo, which is shocking because I’m a fan of his. So for him to say “I love your style” and support me makes me feel like I’m doing a really good job.

Tell me about OneFour3 Entertainment.

It’s a company my fiance, Gerald Terrell, and I started in October of 2015. He is a photographer. We created this entertainment group to offer DJ, talent and photography services. We came up with the name around the time we expressed our love for each other. We got engaged in December 2016. We’re planning our wedding for June 24, 2018. That’s a special day for us because that’s the day we got together so it’s our three-year anniversary.

How important is it for you represent gay culture in your profession?

I don’t label myself a gay DJ, but I’ve always been an open person.

My clients always know. I mean, let’s be honest, it’s in my voice, it’s in my demeanor, but even outside of being a DJ, I don’t push myself on anybody. This is me. You accept me or you don’t.

What does celebrating black gay pride mean to you?

It’s a celebration of who you are. We are having safe fun, being ourselves, relaxing with and around other people like us that we have something in common with. Just enjoying each other’s company.

Mix it up with DJ Romeo on July 29 at the Hotter Than July Pride Picnic in Palmer Park, 910 Merrill Plaisance in Detroit. Check him out at Inuendo Nightclub, 744 E Savannah St., on Friday nights. Available for bookings through OneFour3 Entertainment online www.facebook.com/onefour3entertainment/.

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Rico Pruitt Dishes on Becoming a Porn Star

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Rico Pruitt is new on the adult entertainment scene and is making quite an impression. His debut scene on BlackBoyAddictionz.com broke records in March with the most downloads on the six-year-old website.

Pruitt's internet fame began while starring in the web series "Living 4 The Weekend," created and directed by Corey Knott, owner of the HD Productions brand. Pruitt auditioned for "About Him," produced by Henderson Maddox on Signal 23 Television and landed the role of Justin. His character became so popular, he was offered his own spinoff, "About Justin," but plans for the show were scrapped when Pruitt and Signal 23 TV disputed over money.

"Playing Justin was fun. I wish I would have finished out the series because I really loved the character. I related a lot to him," said Pruitt, who was known for a risqué outdoor love scene in "About Him" near a dumpster that involved full frontal nudity. The scene was shown exclusively on Signal 23 TV's website because it was too graphic for YouTube.

Just by looking at his social media accounts, one can see that Pruitt is comfortable with being naked.

"I'm comfortable with my body," he said. "I think my body is art. I think everyone should feel comfortable in their skin and feel their body is beautiful."

Pruitt revisited the dumpster scene on BlackBoyAddictionz.com after he was approached by and signed an exclusive one-year agreement with Michael Galletta, owner of the website. Galletta admits online that he is "addicted to black boys and started making my own amateur homemade movies as a way to explore my personal fantasies and share my addiction with others."

Pruitt was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee and currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia. The self-proclaimed "homebody" took a break from watching Netflix and



Photos courtesy of BlackBoyAddictionz.com

“I'm comfortable with my body,” he said. “I think my body is art. I think everyone should feel comfortable in their skin and feel their body is beautiful.”

playing video games to talk briefly with BTL about what he enjoys – and doesn't enjoy – about his work, how he feels about his image and his hopes for other young gay people trying to find their way in life.

Why BlackBoyAddictionz?

I feel like BlackBoyAddictionz is the perfect brand to work with. They've been around for a long time. And I feel it's great to be

with a brand that makes sure their content is exclusively on their site. I'm proud to be signed with them. I want to help take BlackBoyAddictionz to the next level. Not to be too Afrocentric, but I want to show how the black man is strong and powerful and beautiful.

You ventured into the world of adult entertainment, but not without backlash. How do you respond to the haters?

All of this is new to me. I don't know how to respond to negativity. I really don't focus too much on what people say. I have too much other stuff going on.

What do you say when people question you about performing without condoms?

I don't really like the fact that I am at risk but I'm doing my best. I'm taking the precautions needed to make sure that I'm doing what I need to do to remain healthy and stay on the right path and continue doing what I do.

You don't seem to be fazed by the criticism.

I want to show people that sex is beautiful. I enjoy it. Sex, first of all, is powerful, especially when you have it with one person and you continue having it with that person over and over again. But porn gives you that fantasy, that illusion. I know most of my fans want to have sex with me. I know they fantasize about me. So if I can give them that and they can just see my expressions and see me feeling how I feel and they can just imagine how it would feel if they were there with me...It's kind of freaky. I want to be that fantasy. I want to be their desire.

Is there anything you don't like about doing porn?

I don't like having sex with multiple people and I really don't like bottoming randomly. I enjoy bottoming for the person I love. But it comes with the territory, I guess. I just don't like letting too many guys back there. Even though it may look like it – sometimes it does feel good, I won't lie – I don't like to have too many guys enter me like that. People think that I'm just a piece of meat. Even though I am selling that fantasy, I am selling sex. But, Beyoncé sells sex that way. Nicki Minaj - every entertainer is selling some form of sex through their lyrics, their wardrobe, whatever. I just hate when people feel that I must be a ho, because I'm not. I'm just doing something they do for free and getting paid for it.

What are your aspirations beyond this?

Starting a youth program is something I always wanted to do. I get a ton of messages from kids, like 12 to 18, and they're just really looking for guidance. I really don't want them to go down the path and see something that I'm doing and think they can do it. Something that works out for me might not work out for you. Everyone has their own dreams, their own fantasies, their own destinies. I'd like to work with gay youth and for these young men to know who they are in their world and where they are headed in the future. I want them to know there's more to life. I've been on the brink of suicide a couple of times when I was younger and I just want to let them know there's another way. It's hard when you feel that nobody understands you or nobody cares.

Meet with Rico Pruitt during the Hotter Than July Pride Picnic at 11 a.m. in Palmer Park on July 29. Find Pruitt later that night at the Woodward Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. See Pruitt online at www.blackboyaddictionz.com.

Billionaire Boys Club Turns 30

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

In 1987, a group of black, gay men decided to form an upscale social club that has come to be known as the Billionaire Boys Club.

Robert Tate, a founding member, said Byron Combs was responsible for the idea following a friendly gathering for a meal at his home one night. Every month thereafter, a different member of the club began hosting dinner parties at their home.

"It was classy within each member's means financially," said Wayne Johnson, also a founding member. "Everyone wouldn't necessarily have the same budget for an event like that. With that being said, the quality of the event from a brotherhood or spiritual perspective it was up there."

As the months passed, new members came and went, but at the heart of the club, Johnson said, "I remember genuine and sincere efforts to establish friendship. Friendship was at the epicenter of what we were attempting to accomplish. Filling a void in the black gay community for people who wanted to socialize on a scale outside of the bar scene in more intimate spaces. Real socialization as opposed to the kind of partying people do when they're out at the bar."

To celebrate this camaraderie, the BBC would throw an anniversary party each year. The response from the community after the first year at Tate's home grew so large that the club needed to find a new venue for their second anniversary. The BBC hosted a party at On Stage, a restaurant on Adams Street near the old Adams Theater in Detroit.

After three to four months there, the club moved to Jimmy's on Woodward just south of Campus Martius where they gathered for about a year. As the years passed, the BBC continued to host parties and events at places the gay community had often not yet ventured into like the Top of the Ponch and the Hotel St. Regis. The BBC socialized in private spaces, too, like the Detroit and Renaissance Clubs.

"This was at a time when gay and lesbian entertainment experiences were limited," said Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of LGBT Detroit. "So Robert and the BBC would take spaces that were traditionally operated for straight folks and make them into unique experiences for us."

In 1993, June Washington, one of three women who were a part of the BBC throughout the years, was co-chairing the annual Human Rights Campaign dinner event.

"That was the first year the HRC dinner committee had a people of color committee," said Washington. "The BBC was a part of doing the outreach with me to bring in more people of color. That year was their biggest dinner up to that point. The BBC was a big part of that."



Members of the Billionaire Boys Club are pictured here at the 1993 Human Rights Campaign Detroit Dinner Event. Photo courtesy of Billionaire Boys Club

Three years later, a group of activists created Hotter Than July – Detroit Black Gay Pride. The weeklong celebration was actually built around the successful BBC anniversary weekend in July, which by this time included a Sunday brunch.

BBC member Reggie Hamilton, remembers "wonderful" anniversary parties held at places like the YWCA on Jefferson and the Scarab Club on Wayne State University's campus.

"I remember what stood out mostly was their class," said Anthony Winn of Anthony Winn Productions, who started Strongarm Productions in the '90s and produced parties of his own.

"The BBC was the classiest, sharpest group of men that I had ever seen at that particular time," Winn said. "They were professionals. They were mature. And it was a different type of party than I had ever been exposed to. Period. Straight or gay. Here's the thing, despite how classy and sharp everything was, they still knew how to throw a party. It wasn't classy stuffy, or classy bourgeois, or classy arrogant. They still knew how to bring a party in the midst of that. That's what stood out to me. That's the thing I've never forgotten about them and it's something I have not really seen since."

While the members have aged and BBC does not party like they used to, Johnson said, "We still feel very much among ourselves an organization. As brothers and sisters we still very much have that same camaraderie. Thirty years is a significant amount of time. We'd be doing ourselves a disservice by not hosting something this year for our anniversary. Not saying this is a rebirth of event giving, but who knows. One step at a time."

The Billionaire Boys Club will host a soiree from 6-11 p.m. on July 28 at Olympus Hall in the Menjo's complex, 928 W. McNichols Rd. in Detroit. Meet the BBC from 12-3 p.m. on July 30 for brunch at the Granite City Food & Brewery, 100 Renaissance Center in Detroit. For more information visit www.facebook.com/bbcsocialclub/.

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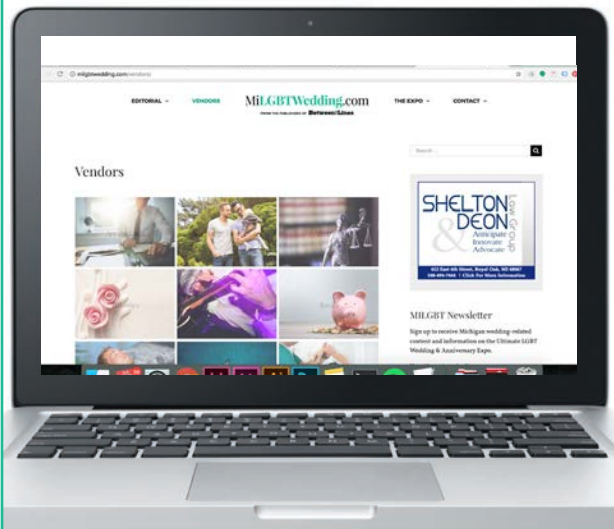
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HOTTER THAN JULY

Creativity Connects the Community

BY BTL STAFF

A diverse group of artists will come together in support of each other during Hotter Than July's Fine Arts Reception from 6-8 p.m. on July 27 at the Wayne State University Integrative Biosciences Center on 6135 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. Geno Harris, director of the Poor Man's Art Collective, will curate the event for the third time this year. PMAC was established in 2003 by Harris and fellow artist Mychal Noir as a way to help emerging artists of all backgrounds. "There will be so many great artists on hand that have some incredible art for viewing and purchase," he said, noting that a portion of the proceeds will be donated to LGBT Detroit. "I am so excited for everyone to get a chance to see the exceptional artwork these artists create."

Geno Harris

"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it." – Pablo Picasso, 1883-1973.

Being a self taught artist and choosing "Decoupage" as my form of expression, I did not have rules and/or techniques on how to create art for a guide, I jumped in and followed my instincts and formed my own ideas and rules which exemplify the very meaning of "creativity." Fighting for my life on dialysis, bouncing back from addiction to gambling, it was my art that gave me purpose. I come from a world that has always tried to tell me what I should and should not do, how I should act, to speak and even love. I felt I had no voice, but the imagery I create in my pieces are conduit for emotional release and creative growth

Jan Brown

From her beginnings in Detroit, Michigan, Jan Brown has always showed an inclination to art. A first grade teacher once commented on her report card, "Shows artistic talent." Always sketching or doodling as a child, Brown fondly remembers her elementary art teacher, Ms. Holmberg, who taught the human



Left: Geno Harris. Right: Jan Brown. Bottom: Reggie "Abstrkt" Singleton

figure through the use of a skeleton as a model. That teaching gave Brown a firm basis in the structure of the human form that continues in her work today. Brown was faced with finding an occupation that would support her and eventually chose teaching, though the subject and grade level changed every year. Then an off-the-cuff remark from a respected college professor steered her in the direction of art education. She went on to earn a BFA from Michigan State University with an emphasis in printmaking.

Reggie "Abstrkt" Singleton

Reggie "Abstrkt" Singleton began his artistic career in 1998. He attended

Wayne State University, seeking a Bachelors of Fine Arts. He soon graduated into his own artistic state of mind. Through inner study, Singleton began to make ink drawings and wood sculptures that spoke of the human condition. His work has appeared in many shows throughout the state of Michigan. In 2008, he joined the Poor Man's Art Collective and is currently a member.

For more information about Hotter Than July events, visit the organization's Facebook page www.facebook.com/DetroitHTJ/. Check out the Poor Man's Art Collective at www.facebook.com/PMACART/.



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There will be several opportunities in August for volunteers to help protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas and to foster an environmental ethic among its citizens. During stewardship workdays, volunteers will conduct plant and animal inventories, ecological monitoring and stewardship projects in Ann Arbor parks with guidance from staff with the city of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation group. Volunteers are encouraged to wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Every participant must present a completed release form, and all minors should be accompanied by a guardian. Tools, snacks and know-how provided. For more information about NAP, visit www.a2gov.org/NAP.

Stewardship Workdays

Aug. 5

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Olson Park

Volunteers are needed to hand-pull invasive weeds where they are invading open meadows. Meet at the entrance on Dhu Varren Road, just east of Pontiac Trail.

1-4 p.m.

Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Volunteers will work on removing summer invasive plant species, like Japanese hedge parsley, which have a negative impact on wildlife habitat. Meet us on Tibbits Court, off of Pontiac Trail.

Aug. 19

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Bird Hills Nature Area

Volunteers are needed to help remove invasive weeds like Japanese hedge parsley throughout the park. Join us at the Bird Road entrance to this park, west of Huron River Drive (additional parking in Barton Nature Area Dam entrance).

Aug. 20

1-4 p.m.

Mary Beth Doyle Park

Help remove invasive weeds in the open areas of this park. Meet us on Verle Avenue, off of Platt Road.

Aug. 26

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Bandemer Nature Area

Help maintain this patch of special habitat by hand-pulling exotic weeds. We will meet at the main parking area off of Barton Drive.

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The YpsiTasty Grub Crawl – a joint venture and local food celebration to support the mission of the A2Y Chamber and Growing Hope – is a chance for food lovers to enjoy the best locally grown food and beverages Ypsilanti restaurants have to offer. On July 25, guests are invited from 5-9 p.m. to indulge in delicious samples offered by Aubree's Pizzeria & Grill, Cultivate Coffee & Taphouse, Encuentro Latino (at Ypsilanti Farmers Market til 7pm), Go! Ice Cream, Ma Lou's Fried Chicken, Maiz Mexican

Cantina, Ollie Food + Spirits, Red Rock Downtown Barbecue, Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea, The Wurst Bar, Ypsi Alehouse, Ypsilanti Farmers Market (til 7pm) and Ypsi Food Co-op. Guests will arrive between 5:00-6:30 pm at their first assigned location to receive their ticket, which is \$25 for adults and \$5 for kids 12 and under. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://gaybe.am/hN>. Guests can attend each of the restaurants once anytime between 5-9 p.m. All profits will be divided between both organizations.

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Happenings

1967 Detroit Rebellion Anniversary Celebration

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion and the opening of “Say It Loud: Art, History, Rebellion” at this commemoration rally at 8:45 p.m. on July 23. There will be African drumming, artistic expressions and a special fire ceremony at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History on 315 E. Warren Ave. in Detroit. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 313-494-5800 or visit the museum’s website <http://gaybe.am/ha>.

OUTINGS

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-attractual individuals. RSVP to Sharron Fincher via email. Woman 2 Woman, 20025 Greenfield Road, **Detroit**. sharronfincher@lgbtdetroit.org www.lgbtdetroit.org

Extremism, Hate Groups & the Media: Community Forum and Dialogue 7 p.m. Panel discussion with Jam Sardar, News Director, WLNS TV6; Lester Graham, Michigan Public Radio Host; Todd Heywood, Investigative Journalist; Philip Rodney Moon, Archivist of YAF Watch Blog; Vicki Levengood, Communications Director, Michigan Department of Civil Rights; and Carol Siemon, Ingham County Prosecutor. Todd Heywood, Investigative Journalist, 204 E. Mt. Hope, **Lansing**. press@thersarasado.com www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Rosado-805030536302750/

Saturday, July 22

Facilitator Training 1 p.m. Any individual wishing to facilitate a support or discussion group must begin with volunteer orientation and training prior to attending facilitator training. Email Heather Aymer for more information. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. haymer@goaffirmations.org

www.goaffirmations.org

Smeared Lipstick 3 p.m. A discussion group for self identified feminine lesbian women to identify issues specific to them. The group also does a monthly community service project to increase their visibility in every community. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

LezRead 4 p.m. Email Kerene Moore to join Ann Arbor’s premier book club for lesbians. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. kerenem@jimtoycenter.org www.jimtoycenter.org/

Men’s Discussion Group 6 p.m. Topic: Marketing to the LGBTQ community Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Own Your Gender 7 p.m. For transgender, non-binary and gender and gender questioning people Grand Rapids Pride Center, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, **Grand Rapids**. www.grpride.org

Sunday, July 23

Camping Weekend Bring your tent or RV Amazon Sisters, **Grand Rapids**. 616-443-6563. amazonrisingwbw@gmail.com

Trans Detroit Outreach Day 4 p.m. Free pizza and pop party, free testing and health support from ACCESS, free toiletries and dry food goods courtesy of Julisa Abad, Menjos and Tim McKee. Menjos, 940 W. McNichols Ave., **Highland Park**. <http://gaybe.am/Wd>

Transcend 4 p.m. For transgender and gender non-conforming individuals

OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., **Kalamazoo**. 2693494234. www.outfrontkzoo.org

Monday, July 24

Department of Victim Services Open Office Hours 11 a.m. Equality Michigan, 121 S. Garfield Ave. Suite A, **Traverse City**. 866-962-1147. gmaze@equalitymi.org www.tcpolestar.org/

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

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

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

Democratic gubernatorial Forum: LGBT and Women’s Issues 7:30 p.m. Confirmed candidates: Abdul El-Sayed, Bill Cobbs and Shri Thanedar. Meet the candidates for Michigan and engage with them as they answer questions. Karyl Deems Baker and Stonewall for Revolution, 510 W. Ottawa, **Lansing**. vankirk@msu.edu www.facebook.com/groups/stonewall4revolution/

Editor’s Pick

‘The Detroiters’

In 2016, Caldecultivo, a Colombian artist collective, was invited to Detroit by Ideas City and participated in a residency at Pops Packing. These experiences moved Caldecultivo to document the work of spoken-word artists based in the city, best described in their collective statement: “the ghost city,” “capital of crime,” and “ruin.” These are the terms used to talk about Detroit, all of them ahistorical and biased, but also useful to speculators seen as the saviors of a “hopeless” city. Following a Detroit Film Theatre screening of “The Detroiters” at 6 p.m. on July 22 and at 4 p.m. on July 23, Caldecultivo and the artists that appear in film will discuss their work with the audience. The theatre is located at 5200 Woodward Ave. inside the DIA. Tickets are \$7.50-9.50. To purchase tickets, or for more information, call 313-833-7900 or visit <https://www.dia.org/events>.



Tuesday, July 25

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

Wednesday, July 26

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. thepastorin@outcenter.org www.outcenter.org

Free HIV/STI Testing 6:30 p.m. Last client

taken at 8 p.m. Matrix MAC Health, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-545-1435 Ext 123. www.goaffirmations.org

Thursday, July 27

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

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

Continued on pg. 29

Seeing History Queerly: A Review of Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World, By Sarah Prager

BY LIZ BAUDLER

259 pages Harper, \$17.99

Queer people permeate history, but it's only recently that people have focused on trying to catch up with the queers of bygone years. When LGBTQ issues are barely addressed in the classroom, even the most well-educated people are sometimes shocked to learn that so-and-so was gay.

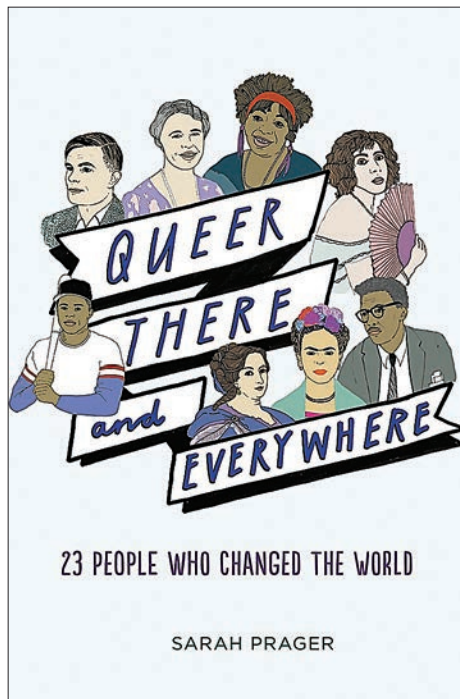
The cleverly titled "Queer, There and Everywhere" by Sarah Prager, introduces readers

to 23 historical figures, some familiar, some brand-new even to the most ardent LGBTQ history nerd (aka your reviewer). While geared towards a YA audience, the easily digestible biographies it contains are absolutely worth brushing up on, no matter how old you are.

Applying modern-day labels to history is always tricky, but Prager offers upfront context and explanation for her decisions. She sometimes chose pronouns based on how the person preferred to relate to their world, for instance, using "they" for the legendary dreamboat Queen Christina of Sweden, who was ambivalent about being assigned female at birth.

She mentions that she deadnames individuals at times, but helpfully advises that this is rude in real life. She even gives an abbreviated history of queerness itself, across time and geographic region. And a shout-out to the chapter-heading illustrations, which might pique the interest of more visual or reluctant readers.

The mini-bios feel well crafted, if occasionally flip in tone and description, like Prager's trying to appeal to teenagers but isn't sure what they might like. Regardless, they will surprise you. While rumors of Abraham Lincoln's close relationship with Joshua Speed have circulated for years, it's startling to learn that Lincoln was tipped into suicidal depression by Speed's departing their home to look for a wife. Sylvia Rivera is beloved as the first brick-thrower of



Stonewall (maybe), but to hear that she also began a legacy of housing queer and trans youth gives even more dimension to a remarkable person. Prager has a knack for including charming little details to humanize her subjects, like Mercedes de Acosta's habitual black-and-white uniform of silver-buckled shoes, long capes, and a tricorne hat, which Prager describes as "mod pirate." And Phyllis Lyon throwing Del Martin's shoes out the window because the latter had the

temerity to leave them in the middle of the floor – haven't we all been there?

There is an emperor and a soldier, an artist (Frida Kahlo), a scientist (Alan Turing), and statesmen and women (Bayard Rustin, Eleanor Roosevelt. What, you didn't know Eleanor liked ladies? OH HONEY), athletes and activists. It's a wide range of individuals, quite a few Black, Latinx, and Asian, with no letter of the queer alphabet ignored. Modern choices like Fr. Mychal Judge, a chaplain who was the first official casualty of 9/11, and "Star Trek" actor and internet sensation George Takei, are especially welcome. Only one stands out as a bad fit.

As much as Joan of Arc is a historical badass, including her on the basis of cross-dressing is a weak argument. Joan (or Jeanne D'Arc as Prager spells it) believed that God was telling her to lead an army. It stands to reason that he might have also suggested she wear a suit of armor; part of a larger scenario rather than a genuine preference, and there's nothing else to suggest any predilection for a certain kind of relationship or identity.

One could wish for some less familiar names: if you're really a student of queer history, you'll know there's a whole legacy of queer scientists, writers, and filmmakers "Queer, There and Everywhere" doesn't even touch. But Prager's book manages to cover enough of the "everywhere" to make it feel like a great start for the curious, possibly queer teenager looking for themselves in the past.

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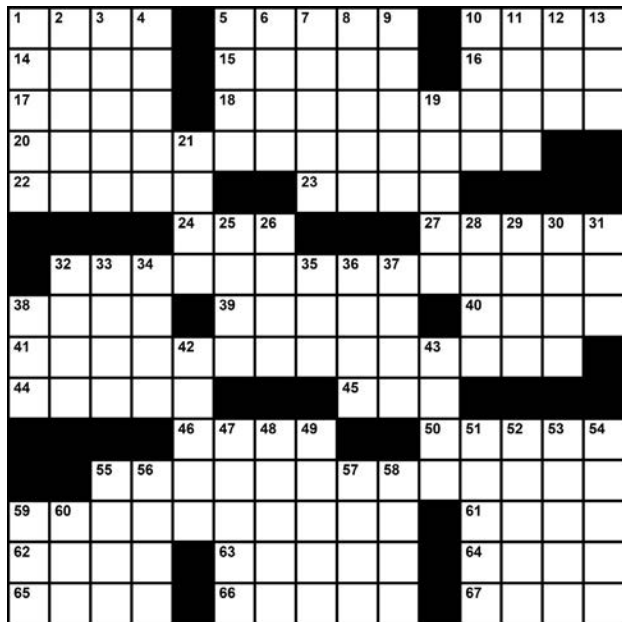
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Q Puzzle



Time for Kids

Across

- 1 Pool players put their balls here
- 5 Perils for Patty Sheehan
- 10 Tubbies' prefix
- 14 Sparkle
- 15 Play too broadly, on Broadway
- 16 Pious ejaculation
- 17 First-rate
- 18 Extreme thespian activity

- 20 Harold Pinter Theater production of 2011, with "The"
- 22 "Queer Eye" discernment
- 23 Bruce or Laura of film
- 24 Dottermans of "Antonia's Line"
- 27 Michael of "Miss Congeniality"
- 32 Karen portrayer in 20-Across
- 38 "Xena" deity
- 39 Capone colleague

- 40 Muskogee native
- 41 Author of 20-Across
- 44 To eat, to Ulrichs
- 45 Noted Warhol subject
- 46 Granada greeting
- 50 Elizabeth Perkins' "Weeds" role
- 55 Martha portrayer in 20-Across
- 59 David Hyde Pierce sitcom role
- 61 They're tops on the beach
- 62 Bear that roams the night
- 63 Places for quickies, perhaps
- 64 Canal of New York ferries
- 65 One with a foamy head
- 66 Film units
- 67 Targets of Roy Cohn

Down

- 1 Fail to keep a poker face
- 2 "Mr. ____" (Esera Tuaolo nickname)
- 3 Caesar's dog
- 4 Acknowledged a queen
- 5 Missile shot off by the Air Force
- 6 "Spamalot" review, perhaps
- 7 Change the constitution
- 8 Fem accessory
- 9 Presbyterian minister Jane
- 10 Russian singing duo
- 11 Islamic leader
- 12 Sportscaster Berman
- 13 Wm. Shakespeare's tongue
- 19 Spiral shell
- 21 Maria's "do" equivalent
- 25 Chloe's role in "Boys Don't

- Cry"
- 26 Bones partner
- 28 "Exotica" director Egoyan
- 29 Chase on the screen
- 30 Roehm's refusal
- 31 Ball in the skull
- 32 "Charlie's Angels" role
- 33 Phallic fishes
- 34 Lesbos, for one
- 35 Math degree
- 36 Gay fries at McDonald's, e.g.
- 37 River to the Colorado
- 38 Porter, but not Cole
- 42 Vonda Shepard's "It's ____ Kiss"
- 43 Barrie's lake
- 47 Kidman's award for "The Hours"
- 48 Porn director Chi Chi
- 49 Ease off
- 51 An old flame?
- 52 Short Peter on the screen
- 53 "Let me repeat ..."
- 54 Boobs or butts
- 55 "Showboat"'s "Nobody ____ But Me"
- 56 "Hot L Baltimore" producer
- 57 Organic compound
- 58 Dick Tracy's girlfriend Trueheart
- 59 Result of excessive circumcision
- 60 Land of singer S. O'Connor

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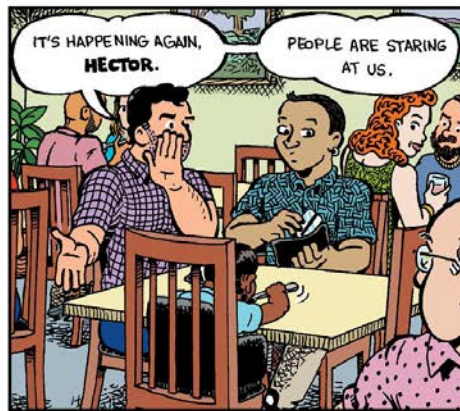
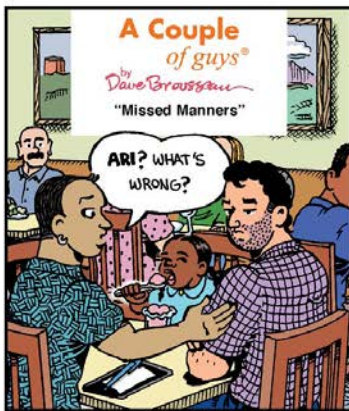


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Nominations Are Out for The 2017 Wilde Awards

Theater professionals from across Michigan will gather Aug. 28 when The 2017 Wilde Awards are presented at The Berman Center for the Performing Arts in West Bloomfield. Presented by EncoreMichigan.com, The Wilde Awards were established in 2002 to honor the excellent work produced by Michigan's professional theaters.

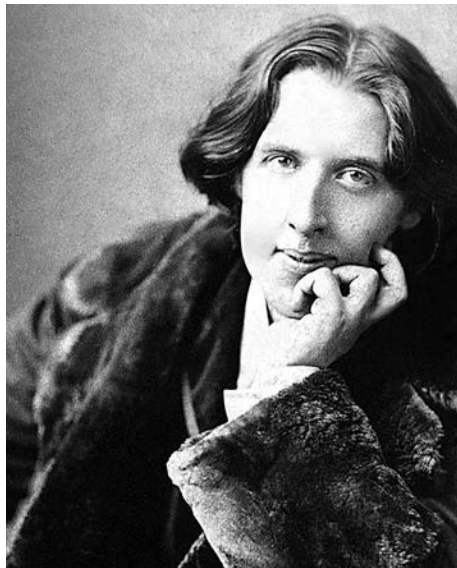
"After reviewing a record-breaking – and sometimes resource-stretching – number of productions at theaters all across the state during the 2016-17 season, our team of critics sifted through their extensive notes and determined which were the best productions, performances and designs of the year," said David Kiley, publisher of EncoreMichigan.com and producer of The Wilde Awards. "And trust me: It wasn't an easy task!"

Now celebrating its 16th year, The Wilde Awards – named in honor of 19th century playwright Oscar Wilde – honor the best productions, performances and technical work produced or presented by professional theaters throughout Michigan. Nominations are based on reviews written by EncoreMichigan.com's team of professional critics. Only shows produced or presented by Michigan's professional theaters and opera companies – both union and non-union, large and small – and reviewed by EncoreMichigan.com's critics during the 2016-17 season were eligible for a 2017 Wilde Awards nomination.

In total, there were 242 reviews of shows produced or presented by 69 theaters across Lower Michigan that EncoreMichigan.com considered. Forty-seven producers and presenters received nominations. The top nominated theater was the Barn Theatre in Augusta with 12, followed by Williamston Theatre in Williamston with 10. Overall, 100 productions earned at least one nomination.

The top nominated show was "The Little Mermaid" at the Barn Theatre, followed by "Assassins" produced by The Encore Musical Theatre Company in Dexter. A total of 174 artists – including actors, directors, designers and playwrights – earned a nomination. Of those, only 17 earned more than one. Leading with three each are David Wolber, Dyan Bailey and Shawn Handlon.

This year's nominations and winners were chosen by EncoreMichigan.com's team of critics, which included Paula Bradley, Don Calamia, Tom Emmott, Marin Heinritz, Tanya Gazdik Irwin, Graham Mitchell, David Kiley,



Martin F. Kohn, Jenn McKee, Sue Merrell, Kym Reinstadler, Amy J. Parrent, Frank Anthony Polito, and Bridgette M. Redman. "I doubt many mainstream media companies have ever utilized the services of so many critics to cover the arts in general, let alone a single discipline," said Kiley.

Awards will be presented in 30 categories. A handful of special awards will also be presented.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. for The 2017 Wilde Awards sponsored by Pride Source Media Group, Actors' Equity Association and The Berman Center for the Performing Arts. Hors d'oeuvres will be served during a cocktail reception. The awards show, hosted by David Kiley and Roy Sexton, with special guest participants, will begin promptly at 8 p.m. Single-fee wristbands for the bar will be sold on site. The bar will also take cash.

Admission is \$26 per person or \$20 for E-casting members of EncoreMichigan.com. Tickets are on sale now at The Berman's box office, by phone at 248-661-1900, or online at <http://theberman.org>. Tickets may also be purchased at the door. The Berman Center for the Performing Arts is located at 6600 W. Maple Road, on the campus of the Jewish Community Center at the northwest corner of Maple and Drake Roads. Parking is free.

View the 2017 Wilde Award nominations online www.encoremichigan.com/2017/07/2017-wilde-award-nominations-2/.



U-M Announces LGBTQ Alumni Group

The University of Michigan Alumni Association has announced the formation of a new LGBTQ alumni group. A former group did exist, but it became inactive, so a new organizing committee came together to form U-M LGBTQ Alumni. The primary purpose of the group includes:

- To keep LGBTQ alumni informed of the concerns, needs, goals, interests and progress of the University of Michigan, especially as related to issues around gender and sexual orientation.

- To provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and resources in an effort to improve engagement and service among University of Michigan LGBTQ alumni, students, faculty and staff.

- To establish a formal mechanism for extending community and camaraderie among LGBTQ alumni, students, faculty, staff and allies.

- To further the recruitment and retention

of students, faculty and staff at the University of Michigan, by insuring that people of all gender identities and sexual orientations will be part of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

- To provide scholarship support, service opportunities, and programming for current students and future alumni.

For those interested in staying connected with U-M LGBTQ Alumni, sign-up online at <http://gaybe.am/Rs>. To ensure that the group is connecting with as many LGBTQ alumni as possible, please consider sharing this information with other alumni, friends or supporters, asking them to sign up too. This is an exciting time for U-M LGBTQ alumni as the group intends to build a foundation and create a space for the community to advance their opportunities.

Email U-M LGBTQ Alumni at lgbtqalumni@umich.edu with questions. Visit <https://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/> for more information.

Stand with Trans 2nd Annual Family Fun Day Picnic

The overall goal of this year's Family Fun Day Picnic hosted by Stand with Trans is "to give families a safe place to just be," said Roz Keith, founder of the non-profit organization.

"A place to hang out and connect with other families with transgender children. The young kids can run around and play without worry about labels and secrets. The teens can skate, play cards, and hang out. Everyone makes new friends. It's a win-win," said Keith about the alcohol-free event at 1 p.m. on Aug. 13 at Memorial Park, 31100 Woodward Ave. in Royal Oak.

Seth Tooley of Belleville said community events like this are important for young people because "friends become like family - understanding people who know what you're

going through."

Making a new friend and meeting like minded people is "so exciting" for Melissa Enyhart of Warren who said, "The feeling of not being alone through this journey is priceless. I can't wait for the picnic."

There are grills, picnic tables, and shelter (reserved). Bring frisbees, lawn games, and a side dish to share. Stand with Trans will provide the hot dogs, buns, condiments, water, and paper goods. Memorial Park also has a skate park, play structures, and a large picnic shelter, where the organization will be meeting.

Email roz@standwithtrans.org by Aug. 7 to RSVP so Keith has an idea of how many will be attending. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/standwithtrans/.

Editor's Pick

Trans Detroit Outreach Day

Members of the LGBTQ community and its allies are invited to a transgender community outreach event from 4-8 p.m. on July 23 at Menjos Complex - Olympus Theater. Menjos at 940 McNichols Road in Highland Park has teamed up with community partners to offer support to local transgender people in need of help. Free pizza and pop will be offered in addition to free testing and health support resources from ACCESS, free toiletries and dry food goods courtesy of Julisa Abad and Tim McKee, general and marketing manager at Menjos. For more information, visit <http://gaybe.am/Wd>.



▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 24

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

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 28

30th Anniversary Weekend Kick-off Party 6 p.m. \$10 cover. DJ Melvin "Raw House" Hill. Billionaire Boys Club, 940 W. McNichols Ave., Detroit. <http://gaybe.am/tf>

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

Saturday, July 29

Smart Recovery 10 a.m. Smart Recovery offers people with any type of addiction a place to learn how to change unwanted behaviors through cognitive based methods. This is a non-12 step program, led by Smart Recovery trainers, and does not require abstinence. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org/programs-services/support-discussion-groups

Open LGBT AA Meeting 11 a.m. Grace Episcopal Church, 341 Washington St., Traverse City. www.tcpolestar.org/

Lez Read Ann Arbor 4 p.m. Book group for lesbians. Email Kerene Moore for more information. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. kerenem@jimtoycenter.org www.jimtoycenter.org

Day at the Park with the Mizrahi's 6 p.m. Hosted by Princess Mami Precious, the new voice of ballroom. 14 performance categories. Check them out online. Cash prizes available. Hotter Than July, Highland Park. www.facebook.com/DetroitHTJ/

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Topic: Animal Research Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

GLBT AA 8 p.m. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. www.jimtoycenter.org

Kiki Saturdays 9 p.m. 18+, guest entertainers, 10 p.m. drag show Spiral, 1247 Center St., Lansing. www.spiraldancebar.com

DJ & Dancing 10 p.m. Aut Bar, 315 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. www.autbar.com

MUSIC & MORE

Benefits/Social Events

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

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" . Light Box, 8641 Linwood St., Detroit. 8 p.m. July 28. www.facebook.com/events/1249505231839586/

Detroit Film Theatre "The Detroiters" Tickets: \$7.50-9.50. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. July 22 - July 23. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org/events

Matrix Human Services "#313 in the D rooftop party" Tickets: \$50. Hosted by Channel 955's Joey Radio from Mojo in the Morning. Heavy appetizers, a welcome drink, cash bar, entertainment by DJ Chris Guyer, dancing, raffles and silent auction. Proceeds benefit The Matrix Center. 3Fifty Terrace, 350 Madison, Detroit. 5:30 p.m. July 27. 313-831-1000. www.matrixhumanservices.org/313inthed/

THEATER

Civic/Community Theater

Murder Mystery Dinner: Till Death Do Us Part Tickets: \$60-79. The Murder Mystery Company, Pietros Italian Restaurant, 2780 Birchcrest Dr SE, Grand Rapids. 6 p.m. July 22. 888-643-2583. www.grimprov.com

Professional

Day 1: Introduction to the Meisner Technique Sanford Meisner's innovative, step-by-step series of improvisational exercises. Class is \$99 or \$150 for Day 1 and 2. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. 10 a.m. July 22. 3139869156. www.slipstreamti.com

Day 2: The Meisner Approach to Auditioning Gain tools to personalize audition text (whether sides or monologues), find spontaneity in the room and ground your acting in the truth of the moment. Class is \$99 or \$150 for Day 1 and 2. Slipstream Theatre Initiative,

Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. 10 a.m. July 23. 3139869156. www.slipstreamti.com

Dirty Prancing Tickets: \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Aug. 7. 2485455545. www.theringwald.com

The Seagull Tickets: \$12 . Slipstream Theatre Initiative, Slipstream Theatre, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. July 22 - Aug. 13. 3139869156. www.slipstreamTI.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Casa de Rosado "Intersections: a Todd Heywood photo exhibit" Casa de Rosado, 204 E. Mt. Hope, Lansing. July 16 - Aug. 6. www.facebook.com/Casa-de-Rosado-805030536302750/

Cranbrook Art Museum "Uncovering the Fantasy and Magic of Alexander Girard" Free with museum admission: \$10, seniors \$8, students with ID \$6. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. 1 p.m. July 22. 248-645-3320. www.cranbrookartmuseum.org

DIA "Art of Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement" Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. July 23 - Oct. 22. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

Ferndale Pride "Summer of Pride Art Show" Pittman-Puckett Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. June 1 - 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. June 22 - July 30. 810-234-1695. www.flintarts.org

Hot Works, Inc. "15th Annual Orchard Lake Fine Art Show" 175 juried fine arts and craft artists. Tickets: \$5, 12 and under free. Hot Works, Inc., 6900 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. July 29 - July 30. 248-684-2613. <http://hotworks.org/orchardlakefineartshow/>

Lawrence Street Gallery "Summer Invitational '17" 22620 Woodward Ave, Ferndale. July 5 - July 28. 2485440394. 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. June 23 - Aug. 6. 313-832-6622. www.mocadetroit.org

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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Netflix picks up trans activist Marsha P. Johnson's story

"The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson," the most recent project from acclaimed documentary filmmaker David France (Academy Award-nominated for "How To Survive a Plague") will be getting a global platform with Netflix. The streaming service has picked up the film, where it will debut for audiences later in the year. Johnson was a trans woman and self-described "street queen" of New York's gay population in the late 1960s. Alongside Sylvia Rivera, she co-founded STAR (Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries), the first trans activist organization. Her death by apparent homicide in 1992 was ignored by law enforcement, and France's film (for which the director worked alongside transgender consultants) follows investigators working to piece together information about the crime, as well as providing an overview of Johnson and Rivera's groundbreaking work on behalf of gender-nonconforming people and trans people of color, who remain disproportionately targeted for violence during the Trump era. "Death and Life" recently screened at New York's Tribeca Festival and Los Angeles' Outfest, is a moving tribute to this important figure in LGBT history, and we can't wait to add it to our streaming queue.

Harvey Fierstein revives 'Torch Song'

Tony and Oscar winner Mercedes Ruehl is heading back to the stage to co-star with Michael Urie in the revival of Harvey Fierstein's "Torch Song Trilogy," now to be known as simply "Torch Song." Urie will step into the lead role that earned playwright and original star Fierstein a Tony Award, that of drag performer Arnold Beckoff, a man looking for love in 1970s New York City. Ruehl will play Arnold's unsupportive mother, a part taken by Anne Bancroft in the 1988 film version. Moises Kaufman ("The Laramie Project") will direct the production, which will open at Second Stage, off-Broadway, this fall. This is great news for fans of Ruehl, whose relatively low profile after winning an Academy Award has always felt unjust. It's also great timing for a revival of this play in particular, a chance for younger audiences to get a taste of vintage, post-Stonewall, pre-

AIDS gay life, when the struggle for civil rights was kicking into high gear. It wasn't all poppers and seeing Bette Midler at the Continental Baths, you know.

J.J. Totah has 'Magic' to do

We tend to fret over the wellbeing of child actors, but there's a kid out there named J.J. Totah who we don't worry about at all. He sings, he dances, he does stand-up, but mostly he plays lots of gay child roles (and/or exacting and competitive children who read as gay) and he does so hilariously and with a commanding presence. From "Glee" to "Jessie" to his breakout role in last year's acclaimed indie comedy "Other People," he makes audiences pay attention and say, "Wait, who is this kid?" He's currently stealing a little moment in "Spider-Man: Homecoming" that we won't spoil here, but if you're ready to follow the 15-year-old's growing career, he'll soon be seen in the comedy "Magic Camp." From director Mark Waters ("Mean Girls"), the movie follows a struggling magician (Adam Devine) trying to rehab his career with a magic camp for kids. Totah will be the kid with the take-charge personality and – we're fairly confident in saying this – the sassy dialogue. You might not even know what he looks like yet, but you won't miss him when the film hits theaters next spring.

'Dear White People,' the sophomore year

If only you were following Justin Simien on Instagram like we do, you'd know this already, but Netflix just announced some very good news for fans of Simien's hilarious sitcom, "Dear White People": a second season is on the way. All the stars from season one seem to be returning, with Logan Browning, Brandon P. Bell, Antoinette Robertson, DeRon Horton, John Patrick Amedori, Ashley Blaine Featherson and Marque Richardson all coming back for the 10-episode run. And if you haven't started watching yet, what are you waiting for? It's a wildly inventive show set among the black students at a predominantly white Ivy League university, one where racial friction sets the stage for a brilliant ensemble cast to explore love, sexual identity and the inevitable political realities of being a person of color in a white world. You've got a little time – the new episodes will air in 2018 – so fit it into your binge TV schedule.



Harvey Fierstein. Photo: KathClick



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