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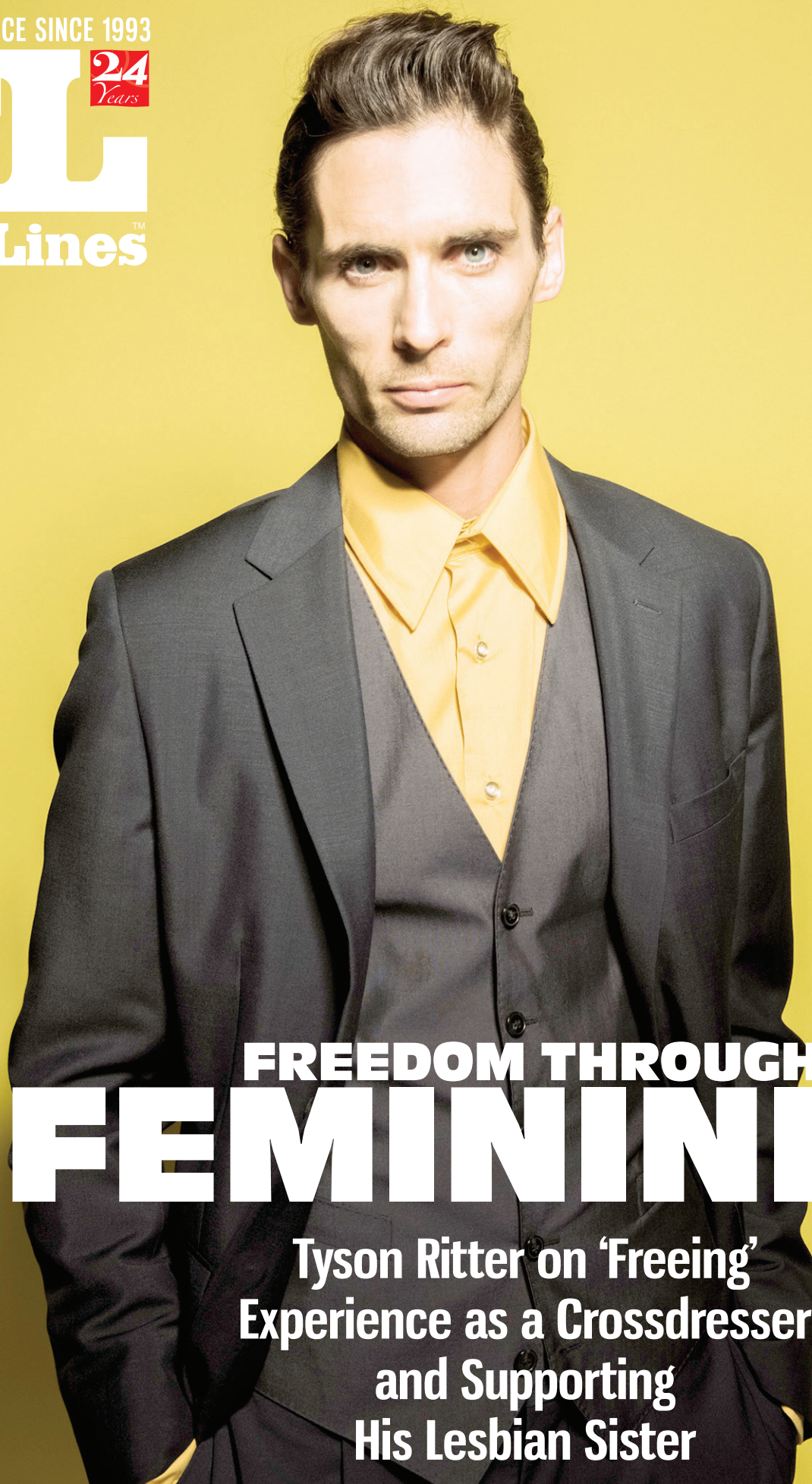
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**FREEDOM THROUGH
FEMININITY**

**Tyson Ritter on 'Freeing'
Experience as a Crossdresser
and Supporting
His Lesbian Sister**



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Lawmakers File Amendment to Block Trump's Trans Military Ban

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

Now that Congress has returned from August recess, lawmakers are in discussions about a legislative response to thwart President Trump's ban on transgender military service, according to Capitol Hill sources and LGBT advocates who spoke to the Washington Blade on condition of anonymity.

Action could come in the U.S. Senate as soon as this week when the chamber begins debate on the fiscal year 2018 defense authorization bill, a major defense policy bill that could be a vehicle for overriding Trump's directive to the Pentagon to ban transgender people from the armed forces.

As the Washington Post reported, Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine), who championed efforts in 2010 for the legislative repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," filed an amendment Monday to the defense authorization bill targeting the transgender ban. Meanwhile, Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Susan Davis (D-Calif.) are crafting standalone legislation along the same lines.

The plan in the Senate could work despite Republican control. With Collins support and the entire Democratic caucus support of the measure, 11 more Republicans would be needed to obtain the 60-vote threshold to overcome a likely filibuster. Any number of the Republicans who objected to Trump's transgender military ban – either the substance or the process – could be candidates, such as Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) or Joni Ernst (R-Iowa).

But one LGBT advocate said even a vote that falls short of the 60-vote requirement would still be helpful from a political standpoint if at least a majority of senators were on the record in opposition to Trump's transgender military policy.

"At a minimum, we want a majority of the Senate, or a supermajority of the Senate, to say they disagree with the president's approach, they disagree with a ban on trans service, and so that's the minimal we're going to try to get, and if we can get a little more, that's what we want," the LGBT advocate said.

One lingering issue about the plan is the scope of the amendment. One option, a non-

Grand Rapids Shelter Creates Designated Space for Trans Guests

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Early this fall, Mel Trotter Ministries in Grand Rapids is set to open what appears to be the first, and so far only shelter space of its kind in Michigan designated for the transgender community.

MTM has always served the transgender population, but what became clear to the Mission from those experiences and in conversations with advocates for the transgender community was the need for a designated space to best serve this population.

For the last year MTM has had a pilot program space where among others, transgender guests were staying.

"It was successful and the need began to grow in such a way that we decided the next step was to create a designated space for a population that is so often vulnerable and marginalized," said Dennis Van Kampen, CEO at MTM, which according to the Mission's website exists to demonstrate the compassion of Jesus Christ, through rescue and restoration for anyone experiencing hunger and homelessness.

"Not only were they intentional, but they are also committed and dedicated to making this happen," said Jeynce Poindexter, transgender victims advocate at Equality Michigan. Poindexter contacted Adrienne Goodstal, vice president of programs at MTM about a transgender client she was working with that is experiencing homelessness and had been turned away from other area shelters.

"Many times we hear 'We're going to do this,' but people never follow up. She did. It was the most beautiful thing. This is a deliberate act of love and inclusion and diversity and respect and it gets no better than that," said Poindexter, who traveled to MTM with Serena Johnson, director of victim services at EQMI, to learn more about their mission, to see the space that they currently use for housing transgender guests and to provide feedback on the new space.

"It is very important to us that we are opening this space with intentionality in better understanding this community and how we can best serve them," said Van Kampen, adding that EQMI was invited to come in and provide training to MTM's frontline staff.

A four-hour training session was focused around education in understanding not only the transgender community, but the entire LGBTQ community. Van Kampen said attendees were impacted by the staggering statistics of homelessness, assault and suicide that affect the transgender community.

"It was also really helpful for staff to have a safe non-judgmental space to ask a



“As a society, we should all be very bothered that anyone has to face the dangerous reality of living on the streets and putting their life at risk because they have nowhere else to go.”

– Dennis Van Kampen

the difference between a person ending up on the streets or in a shelter is due to a lack of relationships. MTM has become the safety net in the community for anyone who is experiencing homelessness, and that includes the LGBTQ population.”

All guests at MTM are offered safety, shelter, food and the basic essentials for a healthy life. Additionally, each guest has the choice to enter a restoration program based on their barriers to achieving stable housing and finances. These services include job readiness, housing readiness, addiction recovery, housing first, computer labs, medical clinics, ministry and relationships and community.

It takes approximately \$10 million in cash and gifts every year to sustain the building, programs and services that we provide. MTM does this through a network of individuals, corporate, foundation and church donors. However, as the needs increase so do the costs and MTM always welcomes new donors to support the ministry.

"Our mission and vision are clear. As Christians we are called to demonstrate the compassion of Christ to anyone experiencing homelessness, period. We are striving to help people leave homelessness for good. If a larger model for other organizations develop out of this, then we will be humbled," said Van Kampen.

"There is a lot to learn from the life of Jesus as recorded in the scriptures. We are simply trying to love people and walk with them in the same way he did. As a society, we should all be very bothered that anyone has to face the dangerous reality of living on the streets and putting their life at risk because they have nowhere else to go. The problem of homelessness is too big for one organization or policy to solve. But it is not so big that if we all come together we cannot solve it."

Mel Trotter Ministries is located at 225 Commerce Avenue SW in Grand Rapids. Call 616-454-8249 or visit www.meltrotter.org/home for more information.

transgender individual questions and to hear about their first-hand experiences," he said.

Poindexter said she was clear that "our trainings are not for people to feel they have to change their stance on their religious beliefs or to completely understand what it means to be transgender. This is to help them understand that you have a duty morally and ethically as a professional and a service provider. When this community comes in contact with you in that role, your duty is to do your best to provide adequate support and equally moral service to everyone."

MTM also consulted with staff and volunteers from the Grand Rapids Pride Center, who Van Kampen said have been "really supportive from the start of this journey that MTM is taking." MTM also received direct feedback from other individuals who are a part of the transgender community.

"There is great value in diversity. What we have learned, however is that certain populations are more comfortable and therefore more successful when they create and maintain their own space," said Van Kampen, pointing to other designated spaces at MTM for families with children, unaccompanied youth, elderly guests suffering from physical or mental illness, and others.

"We do not create these spaces to segregate people, rather to do what is best to serve the needs of the guests and to accomplish our vision of ending homelessness one life at a time through the power of Christ. Our number one goal is safety and security for all," he said.

"We have found that most people experiencing homelessness do not enter homelessness due to a lack of money, at least not at first. They enter because of a lack of relationship and community. Often,

See Block Trump Ban, page 14

The Face of Progress

Peter Spadafore's Run for Lansing City Council

BY JONATHAN THURSTON

LANSING – Six years ago, Peter Spadafore was a member-elect for the Lansing School Board. Now, after serving as the successful President of the Board, Spadafore is running for Lansing City Council, and he has a vision.

Spadafore is a fourth-generation Lansing resident, and, during his time as an MSU Spartan, studied Social Relations and Policy, becoming one of the Distinguished Young Alumni by the Michigan State Alumni Association in 2015. “I’ve been committed to this community for a long time,” he says. A major part of his dedication to community is evident in his work with the Lansing School Board. When he originally ran for the school board six years ago, he did not see clear goals for progress for education in the community or even the district’s role in serving both students and residents.



Peter Spadafore

Spadafore has always been an advocate for LGBT inclusivity in the Lansing area, and he intends to keep inclusivity on the table for discussions in the city council.

“In the last six years, we’ve spent a lot of time working on creating that vision, and putting the pieces into place to allow that vision to flourish over time,” he says.

However, now that Spadafore is moving on to city council, his vision has only expanded. Seeing flaws in the present disconnect between city and its people, he is fighting for a new standard of transparency and communication

so that the city can better represent the people of Lansing. He plans to work with the rest of the city council and the new mayor to develop a shared vision – one that encompasses a new bridge of communication between the residents and the city council.

He says, “You send your taxes downtown, and sometimes you feel like you’re getting your money’s worth, and sometimes you don’t. I want everybody in this community who’s paying attention to feel like there is a vision for why they’re sending those dollars downtown.”

Spadafore has always been an advocate for LGBT inclusivity in the Lansing area, and he intends to keep inclusivity on the table for discussions in the city council.

“The mayor’s always been very supportive,” Spadafore says, “and all of the candidates for mayor are as well, and I’d like to work with those folks to make sure that we keep that a priority, and keep Lansing a welcoming community.”

As Spadafore moves forward with his campaign, he is anticipating many of the challenges he will face in the council. One of the major concerns, he says, is overcoming inertia. “Doing things the way we’ve done them is always easier than changing and trying to do them differently.” For Spadafore, the challenge is to find people who do know the best way to move forward “and listen and try to construct that vision out of multiple inputs, whether it’s from neighborhood groups, or parent groups, or firefighters, or other members of city council.”

Spadafore urges Lansing area residents to get involved in this vision. “Go to your neighborhood meetings. Go to a city council meeting. Come find me at a coffee hour. We can do what we can do to try and pull input from the community, and take the input that we receive. But it takes everybody. You know, your voice can’t be heard if you’re not speaking up.”

He encourages people to “take advantage of the fact that you can communicate with your leaders in unprecedented ways: email, Twitter, Facebook, text messages, in person, even on the phone. All of those things. Take advantage of those opportunities, and really make sure your voice is part of the discussion. You’re not always gonna get your way 100 percent of the time, but it’s important that you weigh in. I think that’s how we get the citizens to buy into that shared vision, and help craft that shared vision for the future of Lansing.”

Peter Spadafore’s website can be accessed through peterspadafore.com. He welcomes feedback through his email peter@peterspadafore.com or his phone at 517-325-3898.

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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.



We're open, not unprepared.

We know who we are. And we make choices that fit our lives.


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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LGBT Immigrants Among DREAMers Facing Uncertainty

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

In the aftermath of President Trump's decision to nix an Obama-era immigration program allowing young, undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States, Tony Choi doesn't know his fate – but realizes one possibility is he'll be deported to South Korea.

Speaking to the Washington Blade by phone while taking part in a rally just outside Trump Tower in New York City, Choi said he felt uncertainty since news reports emerged Trump would phase out Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA.

"I've had a few weeks to think about it, but for the first two weeks, I was incredibly stressed out that my life was swinging on a pendulum, and I felt like I couldn't do anything about it," Choi said. "I didn't know what could happen."

Choi, a gay 28-year-old native of Seoul, South Korea, came to the United States as a child in 1998 with his family as an undocumented immigrant. When former President Obama created DACA in 2012, Choi obtained documentation under the program.

A graduate of Berea College in Kentucky, Choi is one of an estimated 800,000 immigrants in DACA as well as 75,000 LGBT immigrants who are eligible for DACA, 36,000 of whom are enrolled. They're known as DREAMers based on legislation known as the DREAM Act, which would grant them legal status.

Potential deportation to South Korea unless Trump reverses course or Congress passes an immigration bill allowing him to stay in the United States weighs heavily on Choi as well as thousands of other immigrants who face uncertainty about their future.

"It's been 20 years since I've last set foot in Korea," Choi said. "All my extended family is here in America or elsewhere. I don't know what I would do. My language skills aren't really up to par and I would have to serve in the Korean military because of mandatory conscription. It's something that I really, really wish didn't happen."

Being gay in Korea would be no walk in the park for Choi. In addition to mandatory conscription, homosexual acts are barred and subject to punishment in the Korean military.

Choi said the stress of potential removal from his home in New York City, where he works as the social media manager for the American Asian and



Tony Choi is an undocumented immigrant who obtained relief under DACA. Photo courtesy Tony Choi

Pacific Islanders group called 18 Million Rising, has manifested itself physically. Among the ailments he cited were not being able to sleep more than four hours at a time, sinus trouble and stiffness in his neck.

"I felt like my body was falling apart, just like everything in my world was," Choi said. "Everything that I had built in the past five years would be coming to an end."

The Trump administration announced Tuesday it would phase out DACA over a six-month period ending March 5. Although no new Employment Authorization Documents will be granted, DACA recipients with such authorization will be allowed to stay in the United States until that paperwork. After that, they lose their immigration status and their fate is unknown.

Trump explained his decision to rescind DACA – after making a campaign promise to cut back on one hand, but telling recipients they can "rest easy" on the other – by making the dubious claim the program is unlawful. In fact, immigration law grants the executive branch authority for "establishing national immigration enforcement policies and priorities," which includes deferred action on removals.

Negative consequences cited as a result of DACA by Trump were equally dubious. They included the humanitarian crisis under the Obama administration at the U.S.-Mexico border in which children from Central America were sent without their parents to the United States. Trump also suggested DACA contributed to the

rise of the transnational crime gang MS-13, whose members are principally of Central American origin.

Trump made the decision on the day Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said would be the deadline before he'd amend a 2014 lawsuit pending before federal court to end DACA through litigation.

But Choi, citing calls from faith leaders, members of Congress – even Republicans – to maintain DACA, rejected the idea litigation was responsible for Trump's decision and said the president capitulated instead because of internal pressure.

"We're here, I think, because Trump is caving into the influences within his administration that are very anti-immigrant," Choi said. "As you can see from people like Stephen Miller, Jeff Sessions, they are pretty heavily anti-immigrant within the administration, and they would like to see America shoot itself in its feet rather than letting us live with dignity."

Amid discontent with the decision to roll back DACA (75 percent of the American public supports allowing recipients to stay, according to a Sept. 5 Morning Consult poll, Trump has said Congress should pass a comprehensive immigration bill that would fix immigration law in favor of young, undocumented immigrants who obtained status under the program.

Choi, whose work documentation expires in December 2018 is clinging to the hope of congressional action within the six-month period before

Take Action: Michigan Civil Rights Commission Meeting

BY BTL STAFF

On Sept. 18, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission will consider a request to take action on anti-LGBTQ discrimination. The request was submitted by Equality Michigan and 37 other LGBTQ organizations.

Radical special interest groups supporting discrimination are mobilizing in an attempt to bully the commission into inaction. It's critical that pro-equality Michiganders make their voices heard by showing up at this meeting from 4-7 p.m. at the Capital Tower Building, 110 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 800 in Lansing.

Equality Michigan asked the commission in July to issue an interpretive statement to clarify that the prohibition against sex discrimination in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act includes protection against discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

In their request, EQMI pointed out that there is a lack of clarity in current law that leaves both employers and employees, landlords and tenants, and a host of others unsure of what state civil rights law covers. If accepted, it would clarify the ambiguity that exists surrounding the scope of sex discrimination currently prohibited by the ELCRA and bring Michigan law into alignment with the growing body of understanding from federal judges and legal scholars.

In order to ensure that it is considering all points of view, the commission solicited public input.

According to EQMI, the interpretative statement being requested would make it clear that anti-LGBT discrimination is unlawful in Michigan, clarifying the legal responsibilities of employers and individuals and giving notice to victims of discrimination that there are remedies available.

"The Michigan Civil Rights Commission has already issued a report concluding that anti-LGBT discrimination 'exists and is significant' in Michigan," said Nathan Triplett, director of public policy at EQMI. "The Commission has the legal authority and, in light of their own factual conclusions, the moral responsibility to act on anti-LGBT discrimination."

EQMI said if the commission grants the coalition's request, it will be an important incremental step toward protecting LGBT Michiganders from discrimination. At the same time, the organizations are agreed that the interpretation alone is not a substitute for legislative action to amend the ELCRA.

Questions can be directed to Nathan Triplett, via email at ntriplett@equalitymi.org.



See LGBT Immigrants, page 11.

Survivor's Safe Haven

YWCA Project Provides SAFE Services in Genesee County

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Once she made it to the hospital, authorities immediately routed her to the YWCA of Greater Flint's SAFE Center. In less than an hour, she saw a patient advocate, a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner and got an exam done to assess the damage from her assault. Authorities discovered that she had been a victim of human trafficking.

"We realized that she was actually held captive for a long period of time, so she didn't feel safe going to her family's house. We delivered her to a safe house, our shelter in our building, so she didn't have to leave," said Rachel Johnson, the YWCA's director of development and sexual assault services. "That was huge for me. To see how the program was working, that she didn't have to wait in a public hospital waiting room feeling unsafe, and have five, six, seven hospital personnel speaking to her about her story – and then calling us to figure out how to get her to safety."

Since her arrival at the YWCA several months ago, systems to relocate the client out of state have been put in motion – her name unreleased to maintain her safety. Johnson said a story like that is just the tip of the iceberg.

"With domestic violence it's so complex, because you have months and years going on, there's so many ties that those individuals have," Johnson said. "That was just a glimpse of what some of our sexual assault clients experience. I say it was a success story only because the processes worked."

But those processes have been vital for thousands of women annually. The YWCA has been helping victims of sexual violence since the '70s, but it wasn't until nine years ago that the organization officially rebranded from its former image as a fitness center.

Then, the Flint location experienced a huge shift in October of 2016, when it changed locations to the city's recently renovated Phoenix Building. There, the YWCA has

been fostering programs to aid victims of sexual assault and domestic violence through advocacy, crisis counseling, support groups and referrals to community resources. The services are not out of place, especially because Genesee County has "three times the national average for reported sexual assault," Johnson said.

However, even with the organization-wide rebranding and a switch to a new site, Johnson said that many people still confuse the YWCA's purpose.

"We still get phone calls almost daily asking about their health and fitness memberships and the customer service person has to continuously tell them that we're not the 'YM,' we're the 'YW,'" Johnson said.

Historically however, the YWCA has always had a hand in social justice; look at the more than 100-year-old organization's website, and you'll find that their mission is "dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all."

One of the ways the organization is able to complete its goals on a local level is by providing a unique blend of services, which for many, are unattainable elsewhere. Currently, the Flint YWCA is the only provider of SAFE services in Genesee County. These examiners are specifically taught how to deal with cases of sexual assault.

It is also fitting that the formerly all-women's organization provides these services, because women are also the most affected group in cases of rape and sexual assault – regardless of race or class. The 2016 Michigan Incident Crime Reporting statistics show that of the more than 3,000 victims of Criminal Sexual Conduct in the 1st Degree, 97 percent were women. Due to local demographics, in Genesee County, black and white victims numbered significantly higher than any other races.

The LGBT Community

The LGBT community doesn't escape sexual violence either. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that rates of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner are especially high among bisexual men and women. Bisexual women rank at 61 percent, compared with 44 percent



Kanisha Clemons, volunteer coordinator helping out at the YWCA Project's customer service desk.

of lesbians and 35 percent of heterosexual women. Bisexual men rank highest too, with 37 percent, versus 26 percent of gay men and 29 percent of heterosexual men.

That's why the YWCA does not help only women. Anyone who walks through its doors aged 14

and older can seek services. Many of the cases that the YWCA takes on are also linked to domestic, spousal abuse. This is why the Flint YWCA does not limit the amount of times a woman can come in to get help.

Counseling and Outreach Coordinator Ann Kita said that her department sees over 2,000 women annually. She said that because "every story is so different," it's vital that the center provide that service.

"It's not something for us to say, 'You have only 12 sessions and we have to fix this problem within 12 weeks.' They're here for the duration, period," Kita said. "They say on average, it takes a woman seven to nine times to leave her abusive partner and that's not on her, it's just that there are barriers to leaving, and I think that when she's ready to meet that next barrier, we're here to support that."

In keeping with that, the YWCA tries to ensure that women can stay for as long as they need; until they can feel safe again, or get back on their feet.

"Our average length of stay, because we do have to report on that for our funders, is right around 25 days. We really try not to put a timeline on it. Generally, we say we're a 30-day emergency shelter, but we've had plenty of women who have needed well more than 30 days," Johnson said. "We have some women who just need a couple of days – maybe until the warrant is out and he gets arrested and they feel safe going home, or they end up choosing to go back with them, or we get them to relocate."

And although the ideal is to maintain a system where every client can use the YWCA as a shelter for as long as they need, the YWCA's resources are not unlimited. Currently, the YWCA's funding remains under former President Barack Obama's Fiscal Year 2017 budget, which allocated millions of dollars to YWCA's under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of

Crime Act (VOCA) which the organization has been receiving for more than 15 years to help support its \$1.4 million annual operational budget.

However, under President Donald Trump's new budget for Fiscal Year 2018, many millions of dollars will be cut both directly and indirectly to the services that YWCA's rely on.

Beyond this federal funding, Johnson said the Flint YWCA relies on private donations and other grants from local organizations such as the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the Mott and Hagerman Foundations, and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint.

While federal dollars give the Flint YWCA the ability to give raises to staff members, implement new programming and fund new positions, fundraising efforts are required throughout the year to help with operational and administrative costs that federal funding does not support.

Johnson notes that all of the Flint YWCA's services are free of charge – meals, personal hygiene products and safe shelter amenities. This includes the needs of the women's children such as diapers and formula.

A recent statement by the YWCA's Interim CEO Cindy Hoffman said that "the full elimination" of the \$3 Billion Community Development Block Grant "will pull the rug out" from "safety nets around the country" and YWCA projects, like emergency and permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence.

But budget cuts or not, the YWCA is still providing valuable services for men and women alike. "I'm so fortunate that we're here, because it happens every day," Kita said. "We have walk-ins that come in every day and we have been their last resort and they just don't know what to do and it is about first and foremost the safety for them."

Connect with the YWCA Project at 801 S. Saginaw St. in Flint by calling 810-238-7621 or visit ywca.org/flint.

INFO

Call the 24-hour crisis line at 810-238-SAFE to speak with trained staff who are able to answer questions, provide information and referrals, assist survivor in accessing other YWCA services and begin the intake process for SafeHouse for those in need of safe shelter.

► LGBT Immigrants

Continued from p. 9

DACA is eliminated – which is unlikely in a Republican-controlled Congress – to ensure he and other DREAMers can remain in the United States.

“We’re really going to have to pivot to Congress to really find ways to find a solution for us,” Choi said. “It’s like living on a ticking time bomb because the program is supposed to end in six months. And six months, that’s not a long time, and to expect the Congress to come up with something when the House and the Senate are being held by Republicans, it’s very difficult, but what else can we do? We came this far.”

On the same day he announced he’d end DACA, Trump said he’d “revisit” the issue if Congress doesn’t come forward with a legislative solution. It remains to be seen if Congress will produce a solution, and, if not, whether Trump will change his administrative decision.

One action Choi said isn’t available to him under immigration law – despite his presence in the United States for 20 years and education at a U.S. college – is applying for U.S. citizenship to eliminate the risk of deportation. The lack of the option, Choi said, is what keeps undocumented immigrants in that status.

“There is no line that we can stand on,” Choi said. “Immigration law is very complex, and frankly, very broken in terms of people who want to become U.S. citizens. So there is no line we can stand on. There is no application that we can just magically go out and get rid of our undocumented-ness. We’re not undocumented because it’s all fun and games; we’re undocumented because our circumstances drove us here.”

Among those participating in rallies throughout the country Tuesday as the Trump administration announced it would roll back DACA were LGBT immigrants covered under the program.

Sheridan Aguirre, a 23-year-old queer undocumented immigrant who’s covered under DACA and resides in Austin, Texas, took in the protest outside of the White House on the day Trump made the announcement.

“DACA means the world to me,” Aguirre said. “It’s allowed me to graduate from the University of Texas, it’s allowed me to be able to provide an income for me and my partner and so if it were to be taken away, it would really disrupt my life and the life of my family.”

Born in Iguala, Mexico, Aguirre came to the United States with his mother in 1996 as an undocumented immigrant at the age of 1. The two joined his father who was already in the country working as a migrant worker picking cotton. After Aguirre enrolled in school and took part in advanced placement classes, his family decided to stay.

“I have no memories of living in Mexico,” Aguirre said. “There’s nothing left for me in the place where I was born and especially now,

particularly in Aguirre, Mexico. That’s the site of the murders of organizers and activists, the Ayotzinapa 43, and so since then, the city has changed dramatically, and if I were ever to be deported, I know it would not be safe for me to live authentically in my place of birth.”

Aguirre, an activist with United We Dream, said Trump’s decision to end DACA “is rooted in white supremacy” and part and parcel of the president’s actions against other minority groups, such as the travel ban on Muslim majority countries.

“It’s really about making sure that brown and black young people are not able to be a free part of the country where we call home,” Aguirre said. “It’s about putting us in danger of being incarcerated and being deported and having our families targeted.”

LGBT groups across the board have condemned Trump for eliminating DACA – calling it a betrayal of those who signed for up the program and are now at risk of deportation. As Slate’s Mark Joseph Stern points out, the reversal of the U.S. government’s position on DACA eligibility is similar to Trump’s elimination of transgender military service, which imperiled transgender troops who came out after the Obama administration lifted the ban on transgender service last year.

Among the LGBT groups taking action is the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance. On Tuesday, NQAPIA delivered to Trump 971 postcards from LGBT Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and allies in favor of preserving DACA.

“DACA was never a perfect program, but it was a step in the right direction,” NQAPIA Executive Director Glenn Magpantay said. “President Trump’s mean-spirited cancellation of DACA will force 800,000 people to live in even greater fear. Talented and hard-working DACA young people are the ones who are truly making America great. Again the president cuts back on the American dream and contributors to our economy.”

In the meantime, Aguirre said he’ll rely on ties to his community and family to get him through an uncertain time and a new immigration status.

“I really try to draw back on the fact that we’ve lived here for 20 years, and that’s not going to change,” Aguirre said. “I know that I have my community. I know that I have allies that are here with me to fight alongside me.”

Choi said he’ll try to keep pressure on Congress – and potentially encourage Trump to reverse course on DACA – as he remains with few options and the real risk of losing his home.

“We came this far,” Choi said. “A lot of us we built our livelihoods over the past five years, and it’s not just us. There are people who depend on us. Some of us have children, some of us have families that we support, so this is not a fight that we need to simply give up and go away. We really need to rally around and engage our members of Congress, really. We have the power to do this.”

Michael K. Lavers contributed to this report.



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GOP - Guardianship of Pornography



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I've no firsthand knowledge of the profession, but I imagine being a porn star isn't everything it's cracked up to be. Not by a long shot. But! somebody's got to do it.

(I've got a bad back, a trick knee, carpal tunnel issues, and no gift for butch, stud talk. It's not stage presence or acting talent I'm short on, it's ability to project convincingly – and zipper modestly.)

I fault no one for making an IRS-circumventing living. And I confess I've spent many catatonic hours watching the endless supply of showoffs eager to cavort naked in front of the camera – moon, moan, tastefully dilate – making what Shakespeare calls, with a touch of poetic lumbago, “the beast with two backs” Usually overly tattooed.

Here are some current data to chew on: 4.2 million: Number of pornographic sites on the Internet, approximately 12 percent of all websites; 68 million: Daily Internet searches for pornographic terms; 72 million: Individual visitors to pornographic websites each month; \$2.84 billion: Annual sale of online pornographic products and services in the United States.

Estimated number of work hours lost to cyberporn in America each year is 5 billion; 70 percent of porn-site traffic occurs between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. If nothing else, it's one way of getting a jump start on the day.

Pornography, of course, is nothing new. The Ancient Greek and Romans decorated their temples, their public baths, sometimes even their homes with panoramas displaying their rapacious gods, swans, beauties, beasts openly displaying who was doing what with which to to whom back then.

It was all part of what's been historically called “bread and circuses.” One more means of keeping control of the masses. Subliminally, It's also a tool that abets religious guilt. And, while most of American churchgoers don't murder, steal, rob, philander too excessively, a sizable number do indulge in X-rated viewing.

Got a favorite kink? Google Tumblr for available sights, er, sites. God only knows there are thousands. Among Fundamentalists, porn's a problem. Big time. Possibly a communist plot.

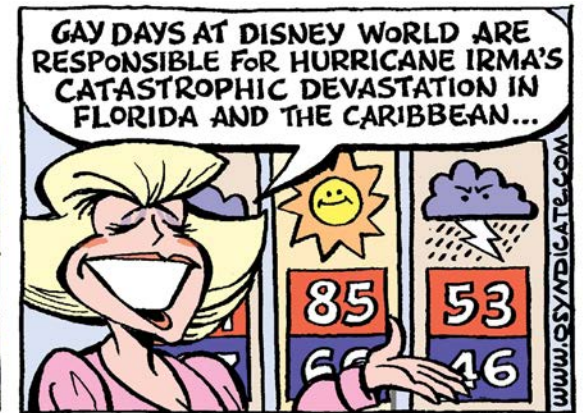
Indeed, the American Family Association recently issued a caveat: “The porn industry knows that it cannot survive, unless more users become addicted to their material. They also are specifically targeting more Christian communities, which is part why the Bible Belt leads the nation in consumption of porn.

“The porn movie “Fifty Shades of Grey” heavily targeted the Bible Belt with advertising and PR, which is why their highest concentration of box office ticket sales came out of the south. Number 25 in the Current Communist Goals from the book, “The Naked Communist,” published in 1958, is “Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, and TV.”

With Tumblr invited porn, whatever your supposedly unique special interest, you're not alone. Just preface your specialty choice with “hot male” (or, “hot female”, though I can't vouch for these sites). Your kink may be elbows, knees, ankles, eyebrows, chicks-with-dicks, flatulence. Just add “hot” as incentive.

We gay men spend extraordinary amounts of time, energy, libido, watching porn. Be warned. Gay porn is being given a new anti-LGBT kink. Many enticing Tumblr sites – with Alpha, Slave, Trade, Come Worship, Nazi Feet headings are cleverly intended to convey messages of inferiority, willing acceptance of physical abuse of gays, total superiority of straight males.

Fact is, porn bread these days too often comes baked in poisoned GOP wrappers.



Viewpoint



Trump's DOJ Tells SCOTUS There's a Constitutional Right to Discriminate Against LGBTQ People

BY JAY KAPLAN

The Trump Administration's Justice Department, headed by Jeff Sessions keeps batting a thousand when it comes to LGBT rights. After rescinding federal guidelines protecting transgender students from discrimination regarding bathroom use at school, after recently submitting a brief in the federal court of appeals for the Second Circuit arguing that sex discrimination laws do not protect LGBT from discrimination, the Department filed a brief last week in the United States Supreme Court, arguing that businesses that are open to the public have a constitutional right to discriminate against LGBT people.

This brief was filed in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case, the case in which a Colorado bakery refused to serve a same-sex couple seeking a cake for their wedding reception. Lower courts had previously found that Masterpiece Cakeshop violated Colorado's non-discrimination law when it refused service to David Mullins and Charlie Craig. Masterpiece's owner, Jack

Phillips has argued that he should be exempt from the civil rights laws because of his religious beliefs that marriage should be limited to same-sex couples.

Not only does the Justice Department argue that baking a cake for a same-sex couple “violates (Phillips’) sincerely held religious beliefs,” but also that baking a cake is a “form of expression” that is protected under the First Amendment. This prompted Louise Melling, deputy legal director of the National ACLU (which is representing David Mullins and Charlie Craig) to state: “The Justice Department has already made its hostility to the rights of LGBT people and so many others crystal clear. But the brief was shocking, even for this administration. What the Trump Administration is advocating for is nothing short of a constitutional right to discriminate.”

A constitutional right to discriminate against LGBT people. Make no mistake, the biggest threat to LGBT

See next page

The Masterpiece Cake Shop case is not a case about cakes. It's about people being turned away from a business simply because of who they are. Protecting people from discrimination is about treating others the way we want to be treated, and it is part of our constitution's promise of equal treatment under the law for everyone.

rights today are arguments like those made by the Justice Department, that certain individuals and businesses are exempt from civil rights laws based on their religious beliefs that to be LGBT is wrong. We've already seen it here in Michigan. Aimee Stephens is fired from her job at a funeral home when she discloses to her employer that she is transgender.

Federal District Judge Sean Cox agrees with the owner that his religious belief about transgender people exempt him from having to comply with federal civil rights laws and justifies the discriminatory firing. (This case is now on appeal in the Sixth Circuit). The Michigan legislature passes and Governor Snyder signs a law that permits faith based foster care and adoption agencies that have paid contracts with the state of Michigan (to act on behalf of the State of Michigan), to refuse to work with certain families (including LGBT families) based on those agencies' religious beliefs. This threat is already here in Michigan, as well as throughout our nation.

As a nation, we decided a long time ago that businesses that are open to the public should be open to everyone on the same terms, and that includes customers that are LGBT. Nobody should be turned away from a business, denied service, fired from their job, or evicted from their home simply because of who they are.

The Masterpiece Cake Shop case is not a case about cakes. It's about people being turned away from a business simply because of who they are. Protecting people from discrimination is about treating others the way we want to be treated, and it is part of our constitution's promise of equal treatment under the law for everyone. A business that opens its doors to the public to provide a commercial service like selling a cake isn't endorsing any customer, including that customer's marriage. We all have different beliefs and providing services to customers on equal terms just means that a business is following the law.

And businesses that sell products to the general public aren't above the law just because there is a creative element to their work. Allowing businesses that

offer custom products or creative services to break the law and turn away customers would mean that hairdressers could refuse to style hair for a bat mitzvah, printers could refuse services to people of color and more. It could mean a return to a time where commercial businesses engaged in blatant and rampant discrimination against people based on race, religion, gender, and more. Our constitution does not protect this kind of discrimination.

Freedom of religion is one of our most fundamental rights as Americans. It is strongly protected by the First Amendment. But that freedom does not give any of us the right to harm other people, to impose our beliefs on others, or to discriminate.

In the Masterpiece case, there was no discussion at all about any message on a cake. Refusing to bake a cake where the customer seeks to include a homophobic or racist message isn't the same as refusing service because the customer is straight or Christian or because of their race.

Bakeries are free to refuse to sell products with particular messages, as long as they don't do so on the basis of who is requesting the product. That's why it was legal for another Colorado bakery to refuse to decorate two cakes, one saying "Homosexuality is a detestable sin" and the other showing two grooms holding hands with a red X over them.

It's both disturbing and distressing that the Trump Administration does not understand this difference. In their brief to the highest court in our land, the final arbiter on constitutional issues, they have articulated a position that upends what our constitution is all about and threatens to gut essential civil rights protections. We put our trust in the United States Supreme court to reject the Trump Administration's dangerous and flawed legal arguments and to rule on the side of equal rights, just as the lower courts have.

Jay Kaplan is the staff attorney with the ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project. He can be reached at jkaplan@aclumich.org.

SEE STORY P. 16

Creep of the Week

Scott Lively

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



My wife and I just celebrated our 20th anniversary. And do you know who else is celebrating 20 years? World Nut Daily, a website that hosts conservative voices that not only don't consider my wife and I to be married, but don't even think that we should, or even do, exist.

One such marriage equality denier and man who has spent years authoring anti-LGBTQ hot takes is Scott Lively, president of Defend the Family International.

Lively's Sept. 8 column is basically a love letter to Exodus International, a totally discredited group that purported to turn gays and lesbians straight with prayer. The founder of Exodus eventually left and was all, "Welp, I'm still gay. This group is bullshit. Sorry."

Lively, however, thinks it was great.

"Though I have never experienced same-sex attraction," Lively begins making sure you know he ain't no homo, former or current, "I attended several Exodus conferences and other functions."

So why did Lively hang out at Exodus gatherings if he's a good heterosexual Christian? Because he loves gays, in a totally non-gay way, of course.

"I have always had a special place in my heart for 'gay' strugglers and have ministered to many individuals over the years as an aspect of my Bible-based Christian activism," Lively said.

Translation: "I think gay people are disgusting, incapable of God's love, and unworthy of romantic partnership and I have spent my professional life spreading that message because I am a creep."

The place in his heart for gays is so special that he claims they have a "compulsive behavioral disorder."

"As with any compulsive behavioral disorder, homosexuality is tough to overcome," Lively writes. "There's an aspect of physiology involved in all addictions - drugs, alcohol, food, gambling, video games, porn, whatever - that addicts the struggler to his or her own pleasure-related brain

You know those "pleasure-related brain chemicals" that are released when a person meets someone they are attracted to? When straight men and women feel that it's called love. When gays and lesbians feel it, it's called "addiction." Same feeling, different bodies.

chemicals that are released when they act out."

You know those "pleasure-related brain chemicals" that are released when a person meets someone they are attracted to? When straight men and women feel that it's called love. When gays and lesbians feel it, it's called "addiction." Same feeling, different bodies.

It's interesting that Lively claims to "have never experienced same-sex attraction," yet he's so sure same-sex attraction is a vice and addiction. He cites his own struggles with addiction as proof that he's an expert on addiction and recovery.

"I was miraculously healed of drug and alcohol addiction in 1986 - on my knees in prayer at a treatment center - after 16 years of bondage that started at the age of 12," he writes. "I never had another desire to drink or take drugs ever again."

Well, good for him if that's the case. But that doesn't make him an expert on how gay people feel or don't feel.

He can't understand why LGBTQ people and allies were so strongly against the ex-gay "cure" lie that Exodus pushed (and Lively still pushes).

"Exodus International," he writes, "suffered the wrath of the powerful LGBT political movement from Day 1 because every one of its members was living proof that homosexual self-indulgence is a choice."

No. Every one of its members was living proof that people who've been beaten down by discrimination and hate will subject themselves to psychological torture in the hopes that the pain will stop.

Hating LGBTQ people is a choice. Being Christian is a choice. Believing that Christianity is incompatible with LGBTQ people is a choice. Lively is living proof that anti-LGBTQ indulgence is a choice. No doubt Lively's own pleasure-related brain chemicals are released when he acts these indulgences out. No wonder he can't stop.

► Block Trump Ban

Continued from p. 4

discrimination measure that would require the U.S. military to accept transgender troops, may not obtain as much support among lawmakers in a Republican-controlled Senate compared to an amendment that would more modestly roll back Trump's directive.

The extent of the rollback would also be an issue. Overriding the portion of Trump's policy barring funding for gender reassignment surgeries, for example, may not be palatable to Ernst, who said she opposed U.S. military funds for that treatment.

"When you look at some of the statements of the conservative Republicans like Joni Ernst, for example, she didn't wholly endorse trans service and I don't think they are ready to sort of say we're going to tell the Pentagon to have trans service," one LGBT advocate said. "Hopefully, we can get to a point where the Pentagon is sort of given a free hand to look at what is best from a military readiness standpoint."

One Capitol Hill source said as of the end of this week a determination on content of the amendment hasn't been made final, although the more modest proposal to reverse the Trump ban seems more likely as opposed to a military civil rights bill.

Neither Gillibrand nor Collins' office responded to the Washington Blade's request for comment on their plan for an amendment against Trump's transgender military ban.

Key to the success of the amendment and whether it will even be allowed for consideration is McCain, who as Senate Armed Services Committee chair will have considerable sway over whether an amendment on transgender military service will be permitted on the floor. Recently diagnosed with brain cancer, McCain may be ending his time in the Senate and working on his final authorization bill.

"We're going back and forth in discussions with McCain staff and other Republicans



Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) is seen as key to an amendment against Trump's transgender military ban. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

to see what will be consistent with their statements when the ban was announced and be substantively helpful in keeping the ban from being fully implemented," one LGBT advocate said.

Although Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has authority on determining whether legislation will have amendments, he'd give McCain significant deference, the LGBT advocate said.

"If we have his support on an amendment, I think there's a high likelihood it gets a vote regardless of what Mitch McConnell wants," one LGBT advocate said.

McCain's office didn't respond to the Washington Blade's request for comment on whether he'd support – or at least favor allowing to come up – an amendment against Trump's transgender military ban.

Concurrent with a legislative process is litigation seeking to overturn Trump's transgender military ban. In one of the lawsuits filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights

and GLBTQ Advocates & Defenders, the legal team has sought a preliminary injunction, which could come down at any time and effectively lift Trump's policy.

The impact of a preliminary injunction, one LGBT advocate said, could go either way on legislation, either taking "the wind out of the sails" for that course or giving more space to lawmakers to vote against the policy after the judiciary repudiated it.

"Generally, I think it might be less helpful, but it's hard to say, and we could see a preliminary injunction at any time, but there's no guarantee we see one at all," the advocate said.

Even if the Senate approved an amendment against Trump's transgender military ban as part of the defense authorization bill, many obstacles could prevent it from becoming law.

For starters, the provision could be stripped out in conference committee when House and Senate lawmakers agree to a final version of the defense bill. The House already approved

its version of the legislation, which contains no provision on transgender service. (The House voted down an amendment proposed by Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.) to bar funding in the U.S. military for transition-related care, including gender reassignment surgery).

If the amendment survives the entire process in Congress, Trump would then be in a position of having to sign a defense bill into law that includes a measure overriding his directive to ban transgender military service, which the president would likely not be keen to do.

One LGBT advocate said he wouldn't sugar coat the difficulties in making an amendment against Trump's transgender military ban a success because there's no strategy for "a guaranteed win."

"I do think House Republicans are going to be resistant to it," the LGBT advocate said. "We don't know what the final NDAA process is going to be. There are a lot of issues around the bill unrelated to any of our issues as far as what the DOD funding level is going to be. There are other issues around specific weapons. It is very possible that the final bill is going to need Democratic votes in the House, which will give us tremendous leverage at that point, but those are sort of unknowables at this point"

One Capitol Hill source was nonetheless optimistic about the potential to override Trump's anti-trans directive through the legislative process – at least in the House – based on rejection of the Hartzler amendment.

"I think people recognize that this is a ridiculous overreach by the president that literally no one asked for," the source said. "Even Vicky Hartzler, her floor amendment was on health care, and in committee she pulled the amendment that would have been an outright ban. Even Vicky Hartzler was not asking for this in her amendment. I would feel pretty good about how this would go if it comes back over to the House, but obviously I can't speak to what the count is like in the Senate."

This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with



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Lawsuit Seeking Gay Protections Under Title VII Reaches Supreme Court

BY CHRIS JOHNSON,
WASHINGTON BLADE

The question of whether lesbian, gay and bisexual people are covered under current federal civil rights law has reached the U.S. Supreme Court – where a nationwide ruling would clarify anti-gay workplace discrimination is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In a 30-page filing, the LGBT group Lambda Legal makes the case the high court should take up to clarify the nationwide prohibition on sex discrimination in the workplace under Title VII applies to cases of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

“This Court should carry out that task without delay,” the petition says. “Ours is a national economy, and basic protections in the workforce should not depend on geography. More fundamentally, lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans will not enjoy true legal equality until their sexual orientation is irrelevant not only to their right to enter into consenting relationships and to marry but also to their ability to maintain jobs and pursue their livelihoods.”

The question presented before the court is “whether the prohibition in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against employment discrimination ‘because of . . . sex’ encompasses discrimination based on an individual’s sexual orientation.”

The petition seeks Supreme Court review of the U.S. Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals decision in case of Jameka Evans, a security guard who claims she was targeted for harassment and effectively terminated from her job at Georgia Regional Hospital for being a lesbian.

Bucking a nationwide trend of court rulings, a three-judge panel on 11th Circuit determined Title VII, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, afforded her no basis for relief because sexual-orientation was a separate issue. Earlier this year, the full 11th Circuit refused to reconsider the decision “en banc,” or before the full court.

The petition argues the Supreme Court should take up the case based on split rulings among federal circuit courts, citing a recent from the U.S.

Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in favor of gay protections under Title VII.

The filing also cites dissonance among the federal agencies. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. agency charged with enforcing federal employment non-discrimination law, determined in 2015 sexual-orientation discrimination amounts to unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII. The U.S. Justice Department under U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, however, recently argued against gay protections under Title VII in a separate case before the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

“That the federal agencies charged with enforcement of Title VII have staked out wholly contradictory positions regarding the scope of Title VII’s prohibition on sex discrimination further reinforces the need for this Court’s guidance,” the brief says.

But the brief also asserts the Supreme Court should take up the case because the 11th Circuit erred in ruling against Evans, arguing anti-gay discrimination is favor of sex stereotyping the Supreme Court rendered unlawful in earlier decisions.

“Petitioner’s claim rests on the fact that if she were a man, or if she dressed and behaved in a more stereotypically feminine way, or if she were attracted to men rather than to women, respondents would have treated her differently,” the brief says. “This is sex discrimination, pure and simple. Title VII nowhere carves out lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from its categorical protection against sex discrimination.”

For the high court to agree to grant a writ of certiorari, or decide to take up the case, a vote of at least four justices is necessary. The Supreme Court will likely schedule the petition for review at a conference after justices return from break this fall to determine whether to take up the case.

DOJ Argues Before Supreme Court for Baker who Refused to Serve Gays

BY CHRIS JOHNSON,
WASHINGTON BLADE

The U.S. Justice Department has voluntarily weighed in on a case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of a Colorado bakery asserting a First Amendment right to deny wedding cakes to same-sex couples.

The 41-page brief filed by the Justice Department under U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions makes the case Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, has the freedom of expression right to refuse to make same-sex couples a wedding cake.

“because the First Amendment protects the right of free expression for all Americans.”

“Although public-accommodations laws serve important purposes, they – like other laws – must yield to the individual freedoms that the First Amendment guarantees,” Ehram said. “That includes the freedom not to create expression for ceremonies that violate one’s religious beliefs.”

Charlie Craig and David Mullins, a same-sex couple, filed the lawsuit against Masterpiece Cakeshop after they asked Phillips to design and produce a wedding cake in 2012 for their wedding in Massachusetts.

Phillips refused based on his religious beliefs, but said he would be happy to make and sell them other baked goods.

In 2013, the American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU of Colorado filed a lawsuit on behalf of Mullins and Craig, alleging the bakery discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation. Representing Masterpiece Cakeshop is Alliance Defending Freedom, an anti-LGBT legal group designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group.

Among the arguments in the brief asserting the supremacy of Masterpiece Cakeshop right to refuse service over Colorado’s non-discrimination is the state’s own absence of marriage equality at the time the purchase was requested.

“In other words, the State itself did not acknowledge the validity of the union it sought to compel petitioners to celebrate,” the brief says. “It was not until October 2014, after federal courts had ruled that Colorado’s same-sex marriage laws were invalid, that the State began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Especially given that background, the State has not advanced a sufficient state interest to override petitioners’ weighty First Amendment interest in declining to create the expression at issue here.”

The Justice Department brief was filed Thursday before the Supreme Court on the same day many anti-LGBT filed similar briefs arguing in favor of Masterpiece Cakeshop.

It’s not the first voluntary anti-gay amicus brief the Justice Department filed under the Trump administration. The department also made a filing before the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals arguing Title VII of the Civil Rights of 1964 affords no non-discrimination protections to lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Louise Melling, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the filing was the latest in a series of anti-LGBT moves from the Trump administration.

“This Justice Department has already made its hostility to the rights of LGBT people and so many others crystal clear,” Melling said. “But this brief was shocking, even for this administration. What the Trump Administration is advocating for is nothing short of a constitutional right to discriminate. We are confident that the Supreme Court will rule on the side of equal rights just as the lower courts have.”

The brief is consistent with remarks Sessions gave in July at an Orange County conference for Alliance Defending Freedom in which he pledged to make protecting religious freedom a priority.

“The federal government will actively find ways to accommodate people of all faiths,” Sessions said at the time. “The protections enshrined in the Constitution and our laws protect all Americans, including when we work together, speak in the public square, and when we interact with our government. We don’t waive our constitutional rights when we participate fully in public life and civic society.”

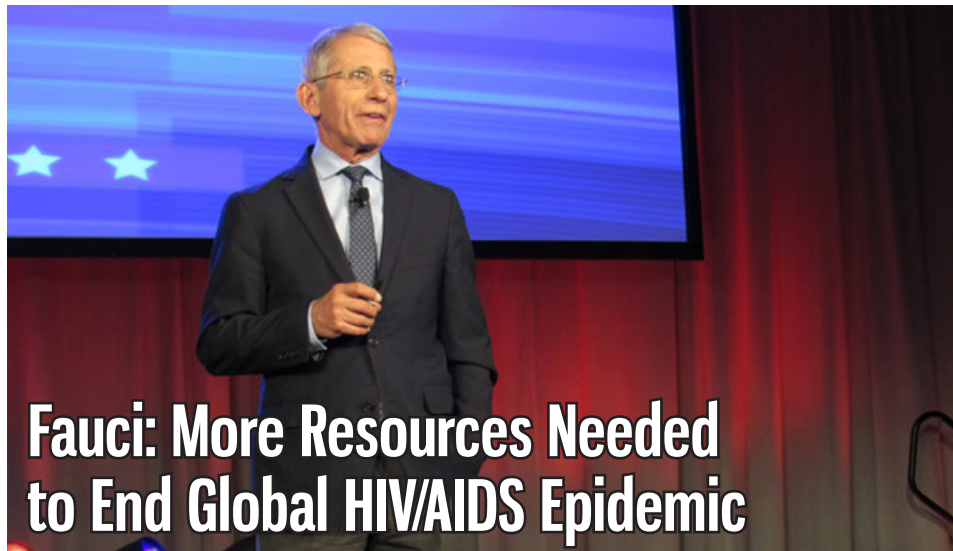
This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.



“Forcing Phillips to create expression for and participate in a ceremony that violates his sincerely held religious beliefs invades his First Amendment rights in a manner akin to the governmental intrusion in Hurley,” the filing says. “Colorado has not offered, and could not reasonably offer, a sufficient justification for that compulsion here.”

The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case in June after an administrative judge ruled Masterpiece Cakeshop illegally discriminated against a same-sex couple by refusing to sell them a wedding cake – a decision the Colorado Court of Appeals upheld in 2015. The Colorado Supreme Court has declined to review these decisions and let them stand.

Lauren Ehram, a Justice Department spokesperson, said the Justice Department filed the brief



Fauci: More Resources Needed to End Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks at the U.S. Conference on AIDS at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in D.C. on Sept. 9. Washington Blade photo: Michael K. Lavers

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

The director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infections Diseases at the National Institutes of Health on Saturday said more resources need to be devoted to ending the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Dr. Anthony Fauci in a presentation he gave at the U.S. Conference on AIDS at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in D.C. noted "individual countries" have met UNAIDS targets of having 90 percent of people with HIV knowing their status, receiving antiretroviral therapy and having undetectable viral loads by 2020. He pointed out "globally as a whole we are still far from the mark at 44 percent."

"We need to do much better," said Fauci. "You do much better with resources."

Fauci said 19.5 million of the more than 36 million people around the world who are living with HIV are on antiretroviral drugs. He noted there is a "treatment gap" of 17.2 million people.

"We are really far off the mark. so we need to do something at a global epidemiological level that involves not only people in this room, but governments, our own, international organizations that need to pull together for that," said Fauci.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in her remarks at the conference's opening plenary noted President Trump's proposed budget for the 2018 fiscal year would cut \$850 million from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and \$225 million from the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. She also criticized the White House for proposing cuts to the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act that provides assistance to low-income people with HIV and their families, the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health and the National Institutes of Health itself.

Fauci in his remarks did not specifically refer to the proposed cuts. He did say, however, there is a need for an HIV vaccine "to achieve what I call durable end of the HIV pandemic."

"We're not talking about the individual person who's living with HIV or what we can do for at the at-risk purpose, even in the absence of a vaccine," he said. "But globally and epidemiology if we want to end the epidemic, if it's durable we're going to need a vaccine."

'We Are a Movement for Social Justice'

Roughly 3,000 people attended the conference that NMAC – formerly known as the National Minority AIDS Council – organized.

NMAC Executive Director Paul Kawata on Saturday discussed Trump's proposed budget, noting it "has been a very difficult time in Washington."

"We are a movement for social justice," he said. "We are a movement for social justice that is dependent upon government funding."

Members of the U = U campaign – which describes itself as "a health equity initiative to end the dual epidemics of HIV and HIV-related stigma by empowering people with and vulnerable to HIV with accurate and meaningful information about their social, sexual, and reproductive health" – took to the stage before Kawata spoke and protested.

"I'm so happy today as a gay black man to be able to say that U = U," said Roscoe Boyd of Detroit. "I've been taking my medication every day and because of that I cannot transmit the virus to my partner. That empowers me to live a life that's full and free."

AIDS Alabama CEO Kathie Hiers echoed Boyd when she spoke.

"If you are undetectable. you are not a danger," said Hiers. "You can have a healthy sex life. you can have babies. the sky is the limit."



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FREEDOM THROUGH FEMININITY



All-American Rejects Frontman Tyson Ritter on 'Freeing' Experience as a Crossdresser and Supporting His Lesbian Sister

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Tyson Ritter strips down to nothing for the All-American Rejects' new queer project.

Fuzzy leopard-print top, blonde wig, fake eyelashes, low-cut skirt, stilettos – the frontman de-drags as he transforms from a prostitute, Betsy, to a seemingly married, suited-up man and life of the party, Robert.

The 11-minute short film conceptualizes identity and authenticity through the complicated and ultimately haunting duality of a single person. "Sweat," a swaggering glam-rocker, finds Betsy leaving her mark on the streets – and in a bathroom stall when things get hot and heavy with an androgynous hookup. But then, during the juxtaposing come-down "Close Your Eyes," we discover, tragically, Robert's "real" life comes at a price.

As the alt-rockers mount a musical comeback with the two-song EP and a forthcoming album – their first since 2012's "Kids in the Street" – Ritter, 33, opened up about his own femininity, being asexual for three years, his strong opinion on how "everybody's selling celebrity" and being there for his lesbian sister when their family was not.

Can you tell me about the concept of this short film and how you ended up using a crossdresser as your subject?

Jamie Thraves is a brilliant British film director who we were lucky enough – he's actually FaceTiming me right now. Hang on. (Laughs) We've become brothers over this, but he approached us with a simple one-line concept that just said, "I see Tyson playing a woman and I see him playing a

man named Robert whose fantasy is playing that woman." It broadened beyond that through our correspondence because, of course, I had immediate questions for him about the story of Robert and the purpose of this film. Once we boiled it down, it was just this concept of identity and how people in all walks of life are never the same person in any room they walk into. I think Robert's struggle to find himself was something that bled into my correspondence with Jamie, and we just started exploring all of our dark secrets together. It was really this cathartic thing to just talk about our lives and the regrets we've had and the compromising things we've done to become the person we were and are.

How have you had to come to term with your own identity? Have you ever questioned your own sexuality?

I absolutely have. I went through a really bad breakup when I was in my mid '20s and I was asexual for almost three years, just living in New York by myself, totally stone sober and trying to find myself. I was raised by my mom and my grandma, and that femininity and that balance within myself of the masculine and feminine has always been a yin-yang. It's pushing and pulling, always. And I embrace that energy because I think some of the strongest things about me are from what my mother and my Nannu gave me.

I feel like most alt-rockers are comfortable exploring the gender spectrum.

Iggy, man. I was covering my body in glitter in 2009 and everybody thought I was a

Photo: Interscope Records

lunatic. People forget about the spectacle of rock 'n' roll being something that is fearless. To be a superhero in a band is something that takes all powers. And when you're on the stage and giving yourself to thousands of people, you have to be this cartoon; it's beautiful to embrace that in your own life.

These tea dates, where you meet with fans and have tea, which I love, aren't exactly the most masculine thing. Have you had any tea dates with anyone from the queer community?

My tea dates have just started, so it's been such a mixed bag of all walks of life. It's incredible. People have been like, "Oh, you should journal about your tea time," and I'm like, "No, this is precious to me and private." A lot of people sell their time to their fans. Everybody is selling access now and I think that's the fucking complete corruption of what's going on with the music business. Everybody's for sale in a completely different, fucked up way.

Are you referring to certain mega pop stars who give themselves to their fans in charitable ways for the purpose of advertising their brand?

I mean, I can't even touch that, man. Everybody's selling celebrity. And we're a band that only sells music, and that was the most important part about this visual journey for this band. I grew up in front of the record button since I was 16 – how much have you fucking changed since you were 16? It's funny, people put these expectations on bands to sound the same, to stay in that little time capsule with their friends from high school and their dreams in their twin-size bed and it's like, no, art has to grow up; the artist can grow up with you, man. And so that's where we came at with this new offering of "Sweat"/"Close Your Eyes." We're coming back with purpose and I'm proud of that because, ultimately, I'm not trying to sell ad time on my Insta account. Everybody has to have access to

you now and so it's really kind of – I might be shooting myself in the foot because I'm not being this, you know, social whore that most people have to be to play in this crazy rat race of the music business.

As someone who's been acting for several years now, you may be aware of opposition to cis, white men acting as LGBT or queer. There's been a lot of pushback regarding this. How conscious were you of that sentiment while developing the storyline for this video?

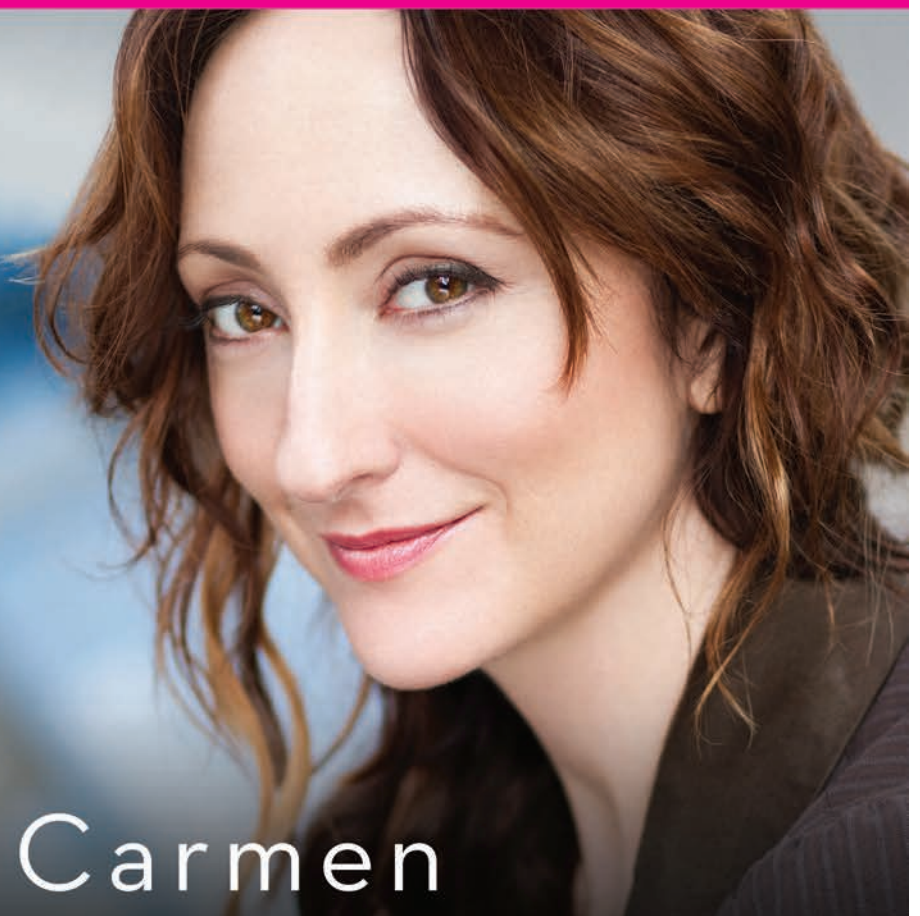
I always knew that (Betsy) was a fantasy of Robert and it's that suspension of disbelief that kept me grounded in the character. My wife helped me a lot. I just wanted to make sure that I grabbed onto all the femininity that I'm not afraid to show and put it into Betsy. I didn't wanna approach the character half-assed at all, and as far as it being a risk to play that role, to me it was an escape and a surreal journey through a fantasy of Robert's. At the heart of this story is a man named Robert who has a life and has a purpose, and I was serving him. So, I guess I didn't feel like there was a compromise given that the character I was playing was the true heart of this journey.

In what ways do you identify with Betsy when it comes to any overlapping femininity?

I think that's precious to me. I think if there is overlap, just top to bottom, it was the curation of getting her walk down. I would wake up almost every day and put on my heels and walk around my house for hours on end to find my gesticulations and where Betsy carries herself. I think it was some of (my) stage persona. There's a crazy confidence to Betsy that I loved being able to embrace and Robert didn't have that. Robert's this guy who hides from himself, and I think being able to embrace that was really a freeing thing. Honestly, it put me back in my own skin in a completely different way where even now on stage

Continued on page 21

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Prove How Jacked You Are (Even If You Don't Look Like It) at These 7 Fitness Challenges

BY MIKEY ROX

Summer bod will be hard to maintain as the sun sets on these final few dog days and the brisk breeze of autumn ushers in a serious craving for carbs. But you can keep the extra pounds at bay outside of beach season by participating in fitness and adventure events galore. From breaking a sweat in bouncy houses to pushing your limits through treacherous terrain, here are seven events widely available across the country to keep you in top shape – or at least at a steady weight so you can stuff your face all fall and winter long.

1. Vacation Races

Breathtaking views and the pursuit of healthy living converge in Vacation Races, which hosts 5Ks, half-marathons, Trailfests (multi-day, 50-plus-mile adventures) and Ultras (featuring 100K, marathon and half-marathon options), set in the most majestic places in the United States, like Yellowstone and Yosemite national parks, the Shenandoah Mountains, Mount Rushmore and Joshua Tree, among a dozen-plus other spectacular, getaway-worthy landmarks and historical locations.

2. The Color Run

Billed as the “Happiest Event on the Planet” – and arguably the one with the gayest sensibility – The Color Run 5K douses white-clad participants head to toe in a rainbow of colors (in the form of edible, nontoxic powders; they're not trying to poison you) as you run 3.1 miles through a course that this year includes a Dream Wall that allows runners to paint their aspirations, photo ops with giant unicorns, a colored Foam Zone and a Finish Festival with music and post-race sustenance. Runs are held from February to November, setting up shop in 31 states from coast to coast.

3. ROC Race

Ridiculous Obstacle Challenge (ROC Race for short) grew to more than 100,000 participants last year, all of whom were gunning to get wet, wild and a little banged up through a course of about a dozen obstacles – inspired by the ABC game show “Wipeout” – like the infamous Wrecking Balls, the menacing Sweeper and a finish-line glide down a



four-story waterslide. Locations for ROC are limited to northern and southern California, New England and D.C.; this year's last hurrah pops off in NYC on Sept. 10.

4. Warrior Dash

Elite athletes and first-timers alike will find the strength to conquer Warrior Dash's 12 world-class obstacles, including scaling walls, crawling through muddy trenches and jumping over fire, in this test of endurance that rewards finishers with medals and a post-race party with beer, music and a few thousand other crusty Dashers to mingle with.

5. Cotopaxi Questival Adventure Race

Grab a group of two to six of your closest friends and set off on a journey of adventure, exploration and a lifetime of memories during this 24-hour scavenger hunt-meets-outdoor discovery excursion that sets you on a beat-the-clock list of challenges that traverse the terrain, from urban jungle to mysterious forests to the splashy shores of our expansive coast lines. The best part is, you don't know what you're in for until you get there.

6. Tough Mudder

If you've checked the popular 5K races and courses off your weekend-

warrior bucket list, graduating to the Tough Mudder is the next logical progression in your total fitness-event domination. Here, you'll work your way through 10 miles of mud (tie those shoes tight!), completing challenges that include scaling a 15-foot wall, scrambling up a slippery slope, and – nipple alert! – plunging into a dumpster packed with 10 tons of ice.

7. Rugged Maniac

Consider wearing disposable clothing to the covered-in-sludge Rugged Maniac 5K and Obstacle Course, which boasts more than 25 physical challenges like gymnastic rings above a muddy moat, army crawls beneath barbed wire and underground tunnels over a three-mile course. When you've passed the finish line, clean up at available showers and join the party featuring food and bevs, a live DJ, mechanical bulls, and pie-eating and stein-holding contests. Host cities include Denver, Atlanta, Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles, among 20-plus other areas in the United States and Canada.

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



► Tyson Ritter

Continued from p. 19

I'm finally feeling comfortable to embrace everything that I am.

Growing up in Stillwater, Oklahoma, what was your introduction to the LGBT community?

My sister. I was 10 years old when my baby sister was born and my parents had a complex, tumultuous Oklahoma divorce, and I was there to sort of raise her in a lot of ways. When I had to get on the road when I was 16, leaving her was... even talking about it, it kind of echoes a heartbreak for me. We kept our correspondence, and as she grew, I was on the road. When she was 15, she came out.

Getting the family's acceptance in Oklahoma at 15 – I mean, probably one of the most difficult things I've had to help her survive. She helped me survive getting through just being an artist, too, because my parents haven't always supported me. So we were holding each other's hand as she got to 18, and now she's engaged to be married. But I kind of saw a lot of (the LGBT community) through her eyes.

There are few things harder than not being accepted for who you are, but it sounds like you had each other to lean on.

We did. At Christmases we were holding each other in the corner. We were the two weirdos, but at least we had each other.

What does she think of "Sweat"/"Close Your Eyes"?

She loves it. She was so proud of me. I was really nervous. I was like, "I hope you love it and I hope you think I did good." And she called me and she still has that Southern voice: "Aw, man, 'Sweat' is so good. You did so good, bubba."

There's an album in the works. What can the gay community look forward to?

This music is gonna be out, man. This isn't gonna be an All-American Rejects record. This is a record that is gonna feature a lot of evolution. People are either gonna be grabbing onto it or they're gonna be letting go, and I welcome both.

You've given the LGBT community many encouraging songs over the years, including "Move Along." Can we expect more along those lines?

I realize that, in these divisive times, there is so much hate and division. The thing that breaks my heart right now in the world is just how divided we are. Even my parents didn't go through this shit. I think it's pouring out of me right now, so the things that I see and feel in the world are the things that I'm gonna be writing about. There are gonna be songs for people who just want to sing out as an escape, but this isn't gonna be empathetic pandering – rock 'n' roll is the escape, man, and I feel like we've lost that sentiment with celebrity. People are forgetting about the music.

When you come to a Rejects show, it's non-denominational; it's a congregation of people who are there to let go of the outside world. The greatest thing that we can do as a people is gather without any sort of ill-will, especially nowadays. So, the beautiful thing about this next Rejects record? It's gonna be something that sets people free. That's what it's doing for me, man.

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

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Hillary Clinton Talks 'What Happened' in Ann Arbor on Book Tour

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR - Ready for a behind-the-scenes look at Hillary Clinton's campaign and the November 2016 loss to Republican Donald Trump for the presidency? The former first lady, U.S. senator, secretary of state and Democratic presidential candidate is stopping through Ann Arbor as part of a nationwide tour to promote her new book, "What Happened."

"In the past, for reasons I try to explain, I felt I had to be careful in public, like I was up on a wire without a net," Clinton wrote in the book's introduction. "Now I'm letting my guard down."

Simon & Schuster, publisher of Clinton's book, says it is an intense look at her campaign as the first woman to be a major party presidential nominee and a campaign featuring "rage, sexism, exhilarating highs and infuriating lows."

The book, published Sept. 12, is available for pre-order on the website hillaryclintonmemoir.com.

Tickets to see Hillary Clinton speak at the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium on

Oct. 24 are now on sale via Ticketmaster, with front-row seats going for nearly \$600. The pre-sale is happening now, with the public sale set to begin at 10 a.m. Sept. 18.

VIP ticket packages are being offered for anywhere from \$372 to \$597, with the most expensive ticket including a front-row seat with a souvenir laminate, a signed first-edition copy of Clinton's new book and a pre-event photo op and formal meet and greet. Those who opt for the VIP experience must be at the venue by 6:45 p.m., with the photo and receiving line starting at 7 p.m. sharp.

MLive.com reports that Clinton didn't make any appearances in Ann Arbor during her 2016 presidential campaign, but she has visited multiple times in the past, including as first lady in the 1990s when she was greeted by loyal members of her fan club in Ann Arbor, at one point said to be the biggest chapter of the Hillary Clinton fan club in the world.

For more information on how to register to attend, visit <https://hrclive.formstack.com/forms/annarborsignup>.

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AIDS Walk Detroit 2017

Since its inception in 1991, AIDS Walk Detroit has become the largest grass roots HIV/AIDS fundraising entity in Michigan. This year's event, presented by Delta Air Lines, happens Sept. 17 at the Royal Oak Farmers Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Road. The goal is to raise \$200,000 and mobilize over 2,500 participants to walk. For more information, to register or join a team, call 248-399-9255, email info@aidswalkdetroit.org or visit aidswalkdetroit.org.



Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Sep. 14

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

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

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, Sep. 15

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

Saturday, Sep. 16

Women Build: Exploring Careers in Construction 8 a.m. Call for more information. Women's Center of Greater Lansing, 5708 Cornerstone Dr., **Lansing**. 517-372-9163. womenscenterl@gmail.com www.womenscenterofgreaterlansing.org/events/

Trinity/Clarita Park Beautification 10

a.m. Call for more information. Detroit Block Works, 18908 Trinity St., **Detroit**. 313-451-3424. detroitblockworks.org/

Transgender Health Fair 1 p.m. Exhibits, vendors, speakers and panels dedicated to the health of the transgender community. Event is free. Transgender Michigan, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.transgendermichigan.org/events/health.html

Bisexual Peer Group 5 p.m. Meetings are a freeform discussion of current bi/pan/omni news, events, and other LGBT topics. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. paylor9@mac.com www.jimtoycenter.org/

LGBTQ with HPV 6 p.m. Support, discussion and activity group for anyone with HSV1/2 and HPV. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. haymer@goaffirmations.org www.goaffirmations.org

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Topic: What makes someone attractive to you? Do you have a type? Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. www.goaffirmations.org

Sunday, Sep. 17

28th Ohio Lesbian Festival Check the website for performance lineup. OhioLBA, **Thornville**. www.ohiolba.org

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

PFLAG Monthly Meeting 2 p.m. Entry from parking lot behind church. Every

third Sunday. PFLAG Ann Arbor, 306 N. Division at Catherine Street, **Ann Arbor**. 734-741-0659. info@pflagaa.org www.pflagaa.org

Monday, Sep. 18

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

Tuesday, Sep. 19

Fostser Care and Adoption Orientation 6 p.m. Orchards Children's Services is seeking adults from all counties to provide temporary care in their home for children ages 0 to 17 for foster care or independent living. Financial reimbursement, training and support system provided. Orchards Children's Services, 24901 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 601, **Southfield**. 248-530-5370. smarks@orchards.org www.orchards.org

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

Addiction and Families 7:30 p.m. Dr. Lynn Kleiman Malinoff, Ed.D. will facilitate. 1.5 hours of free C.E. approved by MCBAP (Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professionals) is provided. A certificate to document attendance is provided on request. Dawn Farm, 5305 Elliott Drive, **Ypsilanti**. 734-485-8725. info@dawnfarm.org www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series

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

Editor's Pick

Trinity/Clarita Park Beautification

One block at a time, Detroit Block Works - a collaboration between Jason Lugo and Doug Russell - has motivated communities to help rebuild their neighborhoods through community involvement and good old fashioned sweat. On Sept. 16, go out anytime between 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and help put the finishing touches on the Trinity/Clarita Park space at 18908 Trinity St. in Detroit. Call 313-451-3424 or visit detroitblockworks.org/ for details.

Detroit
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995-9867. www.jimtoycenter.org/

Wednesday, Sep. 20

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

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

Thursday, Sep. 21

Polyamory Network 7 p.m. Open and inclusive community of people living polyamorously, people interested in polyamory and people of, friendly to and curious about polyamory. Welcomes diversity of sexual orientation and

gender identity. Polyamory Network, 319 Braun Ct., **Ann Arbor**. 734-995-9867. jimtoycenter.org

Saturday, Sep. 23

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

goaffirmations.org

MCC Detroit 45th Anniversary Event 6:30 p.m. Featuring the Dynamic Duo Dueling Pianos Singalong and music provided by DJ Quinnetta Burke. Tickets: \$60, which must be purchased by Labor Day. MCC Detroit, 17100 Laurel Park Drive North, **Livonia**. www.mccdetroit.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, Sep. 24

Gay Subtext Book Club 2 p.m. Email for more information. Gay Subtext Book Club, 610 Woodmere Ave., **Traverse City**. gaysubtext@gmail.com www.tcpolestar.org/

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



Editor's Pick

A Benefit for Freedom House Detroit

Come together at 2 p.m. on Oct. 7 as three of Michigan's moped groups come together for "Open Ports, Open Arms," a ride, party and raffle to benefit Freedom House Detroit, a temporary home for survivors of persecution from around the world who are seeking asylum in the United States and Canada. Detroit's MCR, Ypsi's NoNo's, and Southeast Michigan's Femme Pedals are showing support to their neighbors and fighting hate together with this event which begins at West Cross Station, 517 W. Cross St. in Ypsilanti. For more information, visit <http://gaybe.am/hv>.



OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 2693494234. www.outfrontkalamazoo.org

LGBTQ Support Group 5 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6726 Center Road, Traverse City. www.tcpolestar.org/

Pride AA Weekly Meeting 6 p.m. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 2693494234. www.outfrontkalamazoo.org

Pride NA Weekly Meeting 7 p.m. OutFront Kalamazoo, 340 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. 2693494234. www.outfrontkalamazoo.org

Monday, Sep. 25

Department of Victim Services Open Office Hours 11 a.m. Contact Genny Maze, lead advocate, or Jeynce Poindexter, transgender advocate at jpindexter@equalitymi.org, to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Equality Michigan, 121 S. Garfield Ave. Suite A, Traverse City. 866-962-1147. gmaze@equalitymi.org www.tcpolestar.org/

Lambda Group Open LGBT AA Meeting 5:30 p.m. Lambda Group, 341 Washington St., Traverse City. 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

New Member Night 7 p.m. Washtenaw County's original mixed LGBT chorus. Opportunity to join LGBT chorus group. No commitments, just see if we're the right group for you. All are welcome--LGBT & allies. No sight reading skills or audition are required. Out Loud Chorus, 1400 W. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-265-0740. outloudchorus@gmail.com www.olsonline.org

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

MUSIC & MORE

Benefits/Social Events

Ozone House "An Evening with Ozone House" Event will feature youth speakers, silent auction, and family-style dinner catered by Moveable Feast. Domino's World Resource Center, 30 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive, Ann Arbor. 6:30 p.m. Sep. 23. 734-662-2265. <http://ozonehouse.org/calendar-old/evening-with-ozonehouse/>

Concerts

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Strange Beautiful Music 10 Feat. New Music Detroit" Tickets start at \$15. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 2 a.m. Sep. 24. 3135765111. www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4561&prod=4556

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Strange Beautiful Music 10 Feat. New Music Detroit" Tickets start at \$15. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 5 p.m. Sep. 22. 3135765111. www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4518&prod=4517

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Strange Beautiful Music 10 Feat. New Music Detroit" Tickets start at \$15. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 2 p.m. Sep. 23. 3135765111. www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4555&prod=4553

Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Cube "Strange Beautiful Music 10 Feat. New Music Detroit" Tickets: \$15. Max M. Fisher Music Center, Music Box, 3711 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 2 p.m. Sep. 23. 3135765111. www.cubedetroit.org

Film & Video

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Never Stop: A Music That Resists" Suggested donation: \$5 for an introspective look at four pioneers of Detroit Techno - Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Carl Craig and Jeff Mills. MOCAD, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Sep. 14. 313-832-6622. <http://gaybe.am/7A>

Other

Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers "DIY Street Fair". Downtown Ferndale, Woodward between E. Nine Mile Road and Troy Street, Ferndale. Sep. 22 - Sep. 24. www.ferndalediy.com/

Shows

Fancy Pants Arts & Entertainment "5th Annual Michigan Burlesque Festival" Tickets: \$25-30. 18+. Hasting Street Ballroom, 715 E Milwaukee, Detroit. 7 p.m. Sep. 16. 7349269629. <https://michiganburlesquefestival.com/>

Fancy Pants Arts & Entertainment "5th Annual Michigan Burlesque Festival" Tickets: \$25-30. 18+. Hasting Street Ballroom, 715 E Milwaukee, Detroit. 7 p.m. Sep. 15. 7349269629. <https://michiganburlesquefestival.com/>

THEATER

A Night of Stars with Tennessee Williams Tickets: \$12. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, 460 Hilton Rd., Ferndale. Through Sep. 17. 313-986-9156. www.slipstreamti.com

Sister Act Tickets \$23-26.50. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. Through Oct. 1. 248-541-6430. www.stagecrafters.org

The Revolutionists Michigan premiere by Lauren Gunderson. Four beautiful, bad-ass women lose their heads in this irreverent, girl-powered comedy set during the French Revolution. Theatre Nova, 410 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through Sep. 17. 734-635-8450. www.theatrenova.org

Professional

Death by...Whatever! A '90s murder mystery dinner. Tickets: \$30 includes buffet dinner and show. Costume contest and prizes. The Detroit Actor's Theatre Company, Boo's Music Lounge, 215 S. Main St., Royal Oak. 7 p.m. Sep. 15. 248-632-9589. www.thedatc.org/second-stage

Evil Dead: The Musical Tickets: \$30. Sweat Equity Studio and Olympia Entertainment, City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 28 - Oct. 28. 313-471-6611. www.olympiaentertainment.com

God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza Purple Rose Theatre Company, Purple Rose Theatre, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Oct. 29. 734-433-7673. www.purplerosetheatre.org

ART 'N' AROUND

Affirmations "Remix Reframe: the Work of Aimee Michele Coldren" Opening reception Aug. 3 at 7 p.m. Pittman-Puckett Gallery, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Aug. 3 - Sep. 30. www.goaffirmations.org

DIA "Art of Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement" Explore powerful artworks by African American artists who formed collectives during the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s and '70s. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. July 23 - Oct. 22. 313-833-7900. www.dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Art on Tap" Tickets: \$35-50. Enjoy more than 100 craft beers, delicious cuisine from The Palette Cafe, live music by the Genesee Ramblers, a silent auction and incredible glassblowing demonstrations. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 6 p.m. Sep. 23. 810-234-1695. <https://flintarts.org/events/special-events/beer-tasting>

Lawrence Street Gallery "Sherry Adams Foster - Play of Light" Opening Reception is Sept. 8 from 6-9 p.m. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Avenue, Ferndale. Aug. 30 - Sep. 29. 248-544-0394. www.lawrencestreetgallery.com

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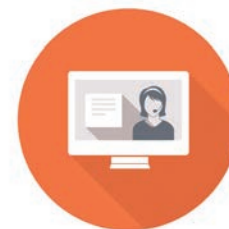
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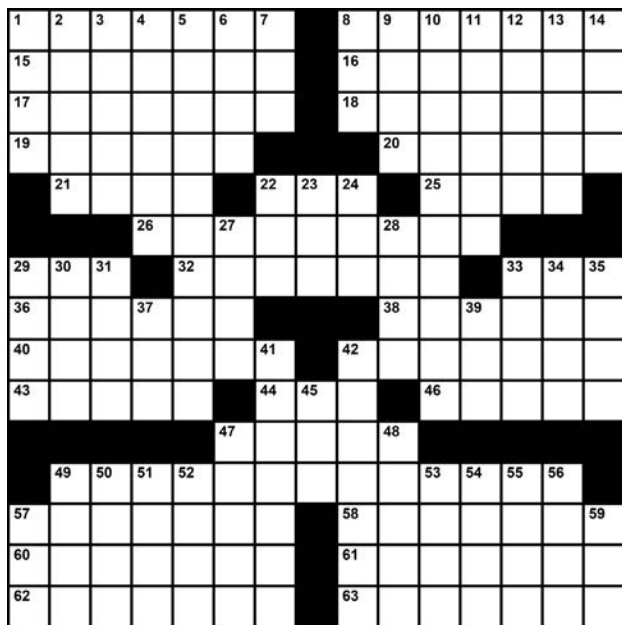
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Q Puzzle



42 Comportment of hairy gay guys?
 43 With 49-Across, movie with Leslie Jordan and Alec
 44 Sleep (with), to Shakespeare
 46 Alec's character
 47 Beloved princess
 49 See 43-Across
 57 "___ to Watch Over Me"
 58 Tinkerbell and others
 60 Lou Grant on MTM's show
 61 Gets fired up like lesbians
 62 Just Plains folks
 63 Prick stimulators

29 Alec of this puzzle's theme
 30 Theodore Cleaver, to Wally
 31 Michelangelo's painting and sculpture
 33 Direction from Stephen Pyles
 34 Digs play about leased digs
 35 Blowout
 37 Bruin Bobby
 39 Parseghian of Notre Dame fame
 41 Some pitches, in Billy Bean's sport
 42 Work perk
 45 Swerve, at sea
 47 Kevin Bacon movie of the '80s
 48 "Lesbians ignite!" e.g.
 49 Ingredient in highballs
 50 Sharif "Funny Girl"
 51 Silence for Bernstein
 52 "She ___ Him Wrong" (Mae West film)
 53 Emily in "Butterfield 8"
 54 "The Bell" author Murdoch
 55 "Nick at ___"
 56 Will of _The Waltons_
 57 Debussy's dry
 59 '60s draft org.

Down

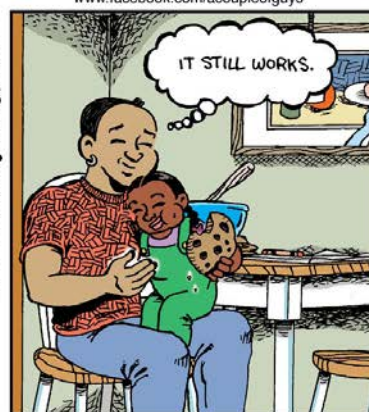
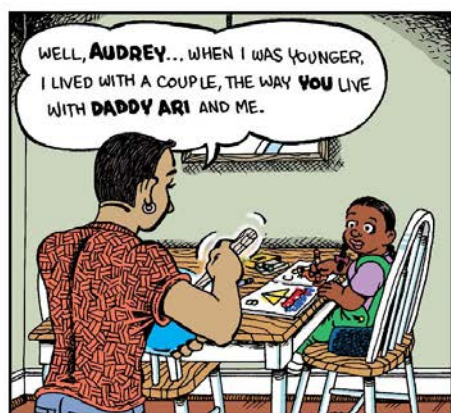
1 Hurt, like a Broadway Auntie?
 2 Caligula's year
 3 Social group
 4 All shook up
 5 Stage name for Leslie's character
 6 Way to have one's meat
 7 Mouth-to-mouth pro
 8 Lander at JFK, once
 9 "___ Afraid of Virginia Woolf"
 10 Leslie's character
 11 Gore Vidal novel
 12 Dorothy, to Em
 13 Pulled the plug on
 14 Role for Bela
 22 Bottom line
 23 Letters on an LP
 24 Bears' home, briefly
 27 Property claim
 28 Fairy tale start

Alec and Leslie

Across

1 Like "The Rocky Horror Picture Show"
 8 Sondheim's Todd
 15 "Lisa Ben" to "lesbian"
 16 S&M activity
 17 "To sum up ..."
 18 Send to the bottom
 19 Change in form
 20 Clumsy circumciser?
 21 Sheer material for a drag

queen
 22 Popular vote winner, initially
 25 Put out
 26 Ani DiFranco's "Letting the ___ Ring"
 29 CEO's degree
 32 Anal stimulation
 33 Sign of a Broadway hit
 36 It needs oxygen
 38 Hole revealed when you moon someone?
 40 Regulars at a gay bar



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MDARD Announces Grant Opportunity for Food Processing, Food Hub Development

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING - The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development is now accepting proposals for a competitive grant program aimed at helping promote and enhance Michigan's \$101.2 billion food and agriculture industry.

The Value-Added Grant Program is intended to help expand value-added agricultural processing and food hub development in the state, as well as improve access to fresh nutritional Michigan grown foods. Those interested in applying should visit www.michigan.gov/mdardgrants to view the application and program overview.

The grant will award a maximum amount of \$125,000 per proposal. Each project will require a minimum 30-percent match. The value-added proposals will be evaluated through a competitive process. Applicants for grant funds will be asked to describe how the project will impact and produce measurable outcomes for the state's food and agriculture industry.

Proposals must be received via email at mda-grants@michigan.gov no later than 3 p.m. (EST) on Nov. 7. Proposals received after 3 p.m. will not be considered.

Any additional communications concerning this Request for Proposal should be sent to mda-grants@michigan.gov.

For more information on MDARD's grant programs, visit www.michigan.gov/mdardgrants.

Affirmations LEAD Institute Accepting Applications through Sept. 22

BY BTL STAFF

FERNDALE – Affirmations LEAD Institute is now accepting applications for its fall cohort. The LEAD Institute is a transformational leadership program designed specifically for LGBTQ+ professionals. Self-knowledge and reflection form a foundation upon which Fellows build skills and plan for their futures. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about yourself, build skills for your career, and connect with peers. Read the full brochure online at www.pridesource.com/btl-db/images/2537/LeadBrochure.pdf.

LEAD Institute Fellows will meet as a cohort for four full-day sessions in October and November at Affirmations' Community Room, 290 W. Nine Mile Road in Ferndale.

Apply online at www.goaffirmations.org/lead. Applications are due Sept. 22.

Contact Becca Budde at 248-677-7226 or bbudde@goaffirmations.org with questions.



BY KATE OPALEWSKI

In an effort to raise awareness and connect members of the transgender community with affirming healthcare service providers, Affirmations in Ferndale will host Transgender Michigan's sixth annual transgender health fair from 1-4 p.m. on Sept. 16.

"Trans people need affirming holistic healthcare because we matter. Often providers error on the side of being sensitive and not really know what that means. It's essential that every staff member in a medical system from the front line to medical providers, understand the diverse trans needs. Trans people are so different, and our transition differs. We need providers who are willing to see that difference and offer us true respectable, preventative healthcare. Specifically for trans women of color, who often get insulted at their doctors or have no access to go to trained medical specialists," said Lilianna Angel Reyes, program services director at the LGBTQ community center.

"Come just to make friends with others like yourself," said Rachel Crandall Crocker, executive director and co-founder of TGMI.

Last year, the transgender health fair attracted attendees from Ohio and Indiana. "Reaching people from out of state is something we hope to do again," she said, adding that TGMI is bringing together a variety of exhibitors for a "one-stop shopping experience for trans healthcare."

She is excited to celebrate the organization's 20-year anniversary with local businesses and sponsors that will hand out free giveaways and offer up critical information through conversation, the distribution of literature and workshops titled "Voice for the Transgender Individual," "Explaining the Process from the Provider Perspective and Preventative Health," and "How to Choose a Therapist."

Crandall Crocker said services provided this year differ from previous years with a more hands-on approach including free mini-massages and blood pressure screenings.

Offering up a unique alternative to traditional healing methods will be art therapist Theresa Quinn, ATR, LMFT - the owner of Quinn Art Therapy in Southfield.

"Art therapy is beneficial to anyone who is open to trying it. It uses art to explore issues of concern, and to identify solutions if need be. For some people, expressive language can be a barrier to exploration, so art making can be helpful in the process," said Quinn, who will attend the fair as a member of the LGBTQ community that wants to provide a supportive presence.

"I want to share what I have to offer to interested individuals. Access to affirming care of any kind is critical to the trans community, as there are so many barriers to such care out there. Everyone deserves to have their authentic self honored and cared for," said Quinn.

Patrick Yankee, development officer and spokesperson for Corktown Health Center in Detroit said, "We are looking forward to introducing ourselves as we are ready to open our new medical home for the LGBTQ community of southeastern Michigan. Our health center will provide comprehensive care in an affirming environment to all persons in the transgender community. This effort has been in the making for a long time, but it is one hope will begin a new era of queer focused health services for the region."

Brayden A. Misiolek, co-founder and executive/operations officer with Transcend the Binary in Ferndale said, "It's an honor to once again be a part of such a unique and critical health fair for the trans* community. Events like the transgender health fair are so incredibly important because it takes a collective impact of resources and support so everyone in our community has the equality and peace of mind they deserve."

Transcend the Binary is one of many components in that collective. It's a trans*-led organization that believes the term 'healthcare' is too often over-simplified. To this organization, healthcare is physical, mental and social well-being, and they have built their services to reflect

SAVE THE DATE

Transgender Health Fair

Sept. 16 from 1 - 4 p.m.
Affirmations Community Ctr
290 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale

>> For more information visit Transgender Michigan on Facebook <http://gaybe.am/sK> or on the organization's website www.transgendermichigan.org

that, according to Misiolek. Those services range from consultations to hormone education, to a gym buddy program and community groups - all so people constantly feel surrounded by support.

"Our services are free, too, because there are enough barriers facing trans* folks in terms of culturally and medically competent physicians and insurance coverage, as well as income restrictions," said Misiolek. "That's another reason the fair is so incredible - in a time like we live in, it's good to know you have a friend in your journey, and events like this one show you who those folks are."

The full list of this year's exhibitors include the University of Michigan Medical School; Transcend the Binary; Massage Therapy by Allen Fender; Quinn Art Therapy, PLLC; Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Navigation Program; Area Agency on Aging 1-B; Detroit HealthLink (Karmanos Cancer Institute, Wayne State University); Health Emergency Lifeline Programs; Excel Employment Options; Lisa Rowinski, Senior Counseling Services, LLC; Safe Space Therapeutic Services; Detroit Health Department; Support the T; FairSky Foundation; Two Paths Integrative Wellness; and Transformative Solutions Counseling Service.

David Ryals contributed to this report.

Birmingham Street Art Fair Benefits Common Ground

BY BTL STAFF

BIRMINGHAM - Common Ground is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping teens, young adults and families move from crisis to hope, but help from the community is needed to bolster the organization's underfunded programs.

The community will have an opportunity to help during this year's Birmingham Street Art Fair. A silent art auction will be held to benefit Common Ground, which features artwork donated by the artists participating in the event.

"The artwork donated by the Guild Artists and Artisans truly makes this auction so special," said Heather Rae, president and CEO of Common Ground. "We value their support and encourage everyone to come out to see what they contribute this year."

Common Ground continues to work in collaboration with the Guild of Artists and Artisans a non-profit, membership association of independent artists, best known for its award-winning Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair.

"Each year I look forward to this event," said Karen Delhey, executive



director of the Guild of Artists and Artisans and the event organizer. "The art is always changing and always evolving. In addition to the new artists this year, we are seeing many of the crowd's old favorites with lots of new work, with the added benefit of supporting an important organization such as Common Ground."

More than 150 juried artists will be featured, representing a diverse array

of art mediums, including ceramics, painting, photography, glass, jewelry, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and more. There will also be free hands-on children's art activities at this year's event. Kids will have the chance to create their own art and take it home.

More than 80,000 people are expected to attend the weekend event from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Sept. 16 and from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Sept. 17.

Common Ground offers several crisis management options such as mental health and anxiety services, substance abuse disorder programs, a 24/7 resource and crisis hotline, a text and chat crisis hotline and programs for runaway homeless youth. The center served more than 82,000 people through all of its services last year.

Admission is free for the Birmingham Street Art Fair located on South Old Woodward between Maple Road and Frank Street in downtown Birmingham.

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

Stand With Trans Seeks Support Group Facilitators

Stand With Trans has recently developed a Support Group Training Program for those interested in becoming

facilitators. The organization is looking for parents of trans kids that would be interested in running a group in the following areas: Adrian, Livonia/Westland, Flint and Lansing. A few things to mention - Stand With Trans would



like those interested in training to attend a currently running support group at least two times to get a feel for how they operate. The training will take about 2.5 hrs and will be scheduled once a list of those interested are identified and the visits to the other groups have been completed. Support groups for kids will be run by therapists along with a helper. Both the Parent Group and the Kids Group are not therapy, but purely "supportive" in nature.

Those who are interested in becoming a facilitator are welcome to contact Lisa Goyette via email at lisa.goyette@sbcglobal.net.

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Find over 300 Non-Profit Listings Serving Michigan's LGBTQ Online @ www.pridesource.com

Editor's Note: This is a sampling of the hundreds of Michigan non-profits working with the LGBTQ community across the state. From time to time this print resource will emphasize different sectors as space permits.

AIDS/HIV

There are dozens of AIDS/HIV organizations and resources listed at www.pridesource.com. Here are just three of them:

AIDS Walk Detroit

Contact info@aidswalkdetroit.org or 248-399-9255 for more information. The walk takes place this year on Sunday, Sept. 15, 8:30 a.m. at the Royal Oak Farmers Market

Macomb County STD Clinic

27690 Van Dyke
Warren, MI 48093
586-465-9217
<http://health.macombgov.org/Health-Programs-HPDC-HIVAIDSCounselingTesting>

Matrix Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

120 Parsons Street
Detroit, MI 48201
888-226-6366
248-545-1435
www.matrixhumanservices.org/programs/ryanwhite/

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond

3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
313-446-9800
www.miunified.org
Michigan HIV/STD Hotline
800-872-2437

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

19641 W. 7 Mile, Detroit, MI
313-537-7000
equalitymi.org
[Facebook.com/equalitymichigan](https://www.facebook.com/equalitymichigan)

Campus

Currently there are 19 organizations listed as active online at www.pridesource.com/ yellow pages. The following are some in the southeast Michigan area:

U-M Ann Arbor

Spectrum Center
Spectrumcenter@umich.edu
<http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

gsc@oakland.edu
www.oakland.edu/gsc
248-370-4336

Eastern Michigan University

LGBT Resource Center
emich.edu/lgbtrc
734-487-4149

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW

[Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW)
wsujigsaw@gmail.com

Community Centers

Michigan has nine active LGBTQ community centers, with a tenth planned in Lansing. Here are three of them.

Jim Toy Community Center

Ann Arbor
www.jimtoycenter.org
www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.
319 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI
734-995-9867
LGBT Detroit

Detroit

www.lgbtdetroit.org
www.facebook.com/lgbtdetroit
or follow them on Twitter @LGBTDetroit.
20025 Greenfield Road
Detroit, MI
Phone: 313-397-2127

Affirmations

Ferndale
<http://goaffirmations.org>
www.facebook.com/Affirmations/
or follow them on Twitter @GoAffirmations.
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI
248-398-7105

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

Jay Kaplan, Staff Attorney, LGBT Project
2966 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI
www.aclumich.org
313-578-6800

Fair Michigan

PO Box 6136
Plymouth, MI 48170
877-432-4764, 313-556-2300
fairmichigan.org
[Facebook.com/fairmichigan2016](https://www.facebook.com/fairmichigan2016)

Know Your Rights Project

Outlaws U-M student group
outlawslegal@gmail.com
734-995-9867

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

290 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale, MI
313-578-6812
sagemetrodetroit.org
Facebook: SAGE Metro Detroit

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

[Facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP](https://www.facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP)

Stonewall for Revolution

www.facebook.com/stonewall4revolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 32446
Detroit, MI 48232
detroitlgbtchamber.com
1-800-DET-LGBT

Ties Like Me

Professional networking events
third Weds. 5:30 - 8 p.m.
TiesLikeMe.org

Suits And The City

Lansing, MI
suitsandthecity@gmail.com
www.suitsandthecity.org

Transgender

FtM Detroit

<https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/>
ftmdetroit@gmail.com

FtM A2 Ypsi

ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/>

Transgender Michigan

23211 Woodward Ave.
Ferndale, MI
info@transgendermichigan.org
www.transgendermichigan.org
800-842-2954

Trans Sistas of Color Project

19641 W. 7 Mile Rd. in Detroit
313-537-7000 Ext 107
info@tscopdetroit.org
www.facebook.com/TSCOPD/

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center

77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI
48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
Facebook: Ruth Ellis Center
313-252-1950

Ozone House

102 N. Hamilton Street
Ypsilanti, MI
734-662-2265
734-662-2222

Stand With Trans

Farmington, MI
www.standwithtrans.org
248-739-9254



Find a digital version of PrideSource Magazine online under Our LGBTQ Yellow Pages

Find these resources online

- Adoption Services
- AIDS/HIV Hotlines
- AIDS/HIV Organizations
- Alzheimer's Association
- Animal Shelter
- Anti-Violence
- Archives/Collections
- Campus; Student and Alumni Groups
- Cancer Support Groups
- Choruses
- Community Centers
- Employee Resource Groups
- Families and Parents
- Foster Care
- Foundations and Funders
- Hotlines & Switchboards
- Labor Union
- Legal Organizations
- Museums
- Music Groups
- National Organizations
- Political Organizations
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- Women's Health
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You can add your event to the Pride Source Calendar online and in print by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to editor@pridesource.com

World AIDS Conference Report

BY DR. PAUL BENSON

It was a momentous week (July 27 -29, 2017) at the International AIDS Society's (IAS) 9th Conference on HIV Science taking place in Paris, France. Nearly 8,000 clinicians, community leaders, policy makers, and HIV advocates from more than 140 countries were in attendance. I've been able to attend every HIV world conference annually since they began in the 1980s. Optimism increases each and every year. There were so many presentations occurring simultaneously that it would be impossible for one person to take in all that was offered. I will attempt to report on what was meaningful to me and hopefully to you.

Globally, there has been a 16% reduction of newly diagnosed HIV cases between 2010 and 2016. This contrasts with a 29% increase in new cases observed in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There are currently 19 million HIV-infected individuals on therapy. This is slightly below the goal set forth by the World Health Organization of 30 million people on therapy by 2020.

Three-drug antiretroviral therapy (ART) has been the standard of care in the United States and other parts of the world since 1996. This approach has been responsible for maintaining successful therapy by keeping viral loads below the level of detection and allowing those HIV-infected to live well without getting sick. Newer drugs and combined formulations have made it as easy as one pill once a day, while avoiding toxicities. We've become quite comfortable with triple drug therapy, but it may be time to stretch our comfort zone and re-think this strategy by using two drug therapies instead. If effective, this could possibly reduce potential long-term toxicities and lower costs. The European AIDS Clinical Society has already approved dual drug therapy as an acceptable alternative.

This conference presented several smaller studies which suggested that dual therapy is efficacious. These studies included the ACTG 5353, the Paddle study, the Gardel study, and the Andes study. The Gemini study, a very large cohort which is now underway should answer the question of dual therapy effectiveness. The

Be Well Medical Center is one of the research sites participating in the Gemini studies. Enrollment is closed and week 48 results are expected next year. The Emerald study's 48-week results were presented using the single pill fixed dose combination of darunavir, cobicistat, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide compared to these individual agents separately. The Be Well Medical Center is also participating in this study. The single tablet was non-inferior to the multi-tablet regimen at 48 weeks. When approved, this will be the first single tablet complete protease inhibitor based regimen.

There is a future in long acting injectable therapy for both treatment and prevention of HIV. One injectable with promise is the long acting integrase inhibitor Cabotegravir. Two year results from the LATTE study demonstrated that monthly or bimonthly injections of Cabotegravir combined with another injectable rilpivirine (rilpivirine is currently available in an oral formulation) may be an option to replace daily oral regimens for HIV. The SWORD study presented 48 week data in experienced patients who switched from oral medication to this dual drug injection therapy. The results so far demonstrated equal efficacy.

The Gilead 1489 clinical trial presented 48 week results using the new Integrase inhibitor Bictegravir. It demonstrated 92.4% efficacy which was equal to the comparator arm. It demonstrated no resistance and was very well tolerated. The Be Well Medical Center is participating in the Gilead 1489 trial as well as three other trials using Bictegravir in both experienced and naive patients. The future is going to have a myriad of options to choose from. Bictegravir-containing regimens should be available commercially very soon.

A promising new nucleoside reverse transcriptase translocation inhibitor was described. Its current name is MK-8591. It is a very potent and has an extremely long half life. It is being studied for both HIV treatment and in prevention. Doravirine, a new non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor in development, has improved potency, a better resistance profile, and improved tolerability over other drugs in this class. Immunotherapies with monoclonal

and broad spectrum antibodies continue to be investigated for both prevention and treatment. VRC01 is the first such vaccine now in clinical trials. It was discovered from elite controllers of HIV. Vedolizumab, a monoclonal antibody, is being studied as part of HIV medication interruption therapy.

This Paris conference weighted heavily with discussion about HIV prevention. There were wmore presentations on this topic than anything else. Daily use of Truvada (PrEP) continues to be the gold standard with more and more countries approving this therapy. 80,000 unique individuals have been prescribed Truvada between 2012 and 2015. It is a safe preventive option with tangible benefits and very small risks. Correct adherence to dosing is imperative for success.

There were several studies evaluating Truvada on demand, instead of daily. The HPTN 067 (HIV Prevention Treatment Network) trial included 3 different methods of administration. There was daily administration, time driven (twice a week and one dose post a sexual encounter), and event driven (one tablet of Truvada before sex and one tablet after) arms in the study. The conclusions of the HPTN 067 suggest that on demand therapy is a viable option. It concluded that the event driven arm is a reasonable approach for those having infrequent sex. It's a favorable approach in this group because fewer doses are required compared to daily use. The disadvantage for event driven therapy is that it requires sex planning and the availability of the medication at the time of need, so one would always have to be prepared. Also, timing in event driven dosing is a little more complicated. One should not take more than one dose in a two hour period. Success depends upon the post sexual dose to be taken in the event driven method. Surveys suggested that younger individuals, or those having frequent and/or multiple sexual encounters, preferred daily dosing over an on-demand dosing schedule.

The IPERGAY study evaluating intermittent PrEP dosing had the same conclusion on the effectiveness on intermittent therapy. Caution is advised because Truvada is currently approved only for daily dosing therapy in the United States and according to the World Health Organization. The European AIDS Clinical Society does include on demand PrEP in their guidelines. All recommendations still include

a comprehensive prevention approach and the use of condoms for HIV prevention. The rate of sexually transmitted diseases were high in all of these prevention trials.

The nice thing about the future of HIV prevention is that individuals will have a variety of modalities to choose from. The HPTN 077 is studying the previously described Cabotegravir which involves an injection every 8 or 12 weeks for prevention. Phase 3 trials are underway to answer the questions about the use of this drug for prevention.

The SLAP (Sustained Long Acting Protection from HIV) study investigated reservoir implants using rods that osmotically control the release of HIV medication for prevention. The drug mentioned previously, MK-8591, is being investigated for use in this way. Medicated intravaginal rings and rectal lubes are also being studied for HIV prevention.

Individual choice for prevention will be important to meet diverse needs. Stigma still remains an important barrier. Many individuals are ashamed to ask their providers for this preventive treatment. Other providers may lack the knowledge to prescribe PrEP or take a detailed sexual history to determine who is at risk. Some individuals, for whatever reason, do not perceive themselves as being high-risk. Messaging and distribution for PrEP needs to be positively focused and simple. Peer support and education such as Adherence Clubs for PrEP may be of benefit. High-risk individuals choosing PrEP usually add Truvada to their own particular strategy that they are already practicing.

The consensus of scientific data presented at the conference shows that an HIV-infected individual who is being successfully treated, by having an undetectable viral load, is virtually non-infectious to their partners. This is described as treatment as prevention.

In summary, an individualized approach is a key and necessary challenge. Dual therapy is a realistic option. The treatment pipeline has newer agents that are being investigated. HIV treatment is more than simply obtaining an undetected viral load. PrEP not only has transmission benefits, but psychosocial ones as well. PrEP can reduce and replace fear, improve quality of life, remove guilt, and increase intimacy; all of which may be liberating as well.

Next year's conference will be in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

INTERNATIONAL AIDS SOCIETY CONFERENCE UPDATE

Presenter: Dr. Paul Benson

Sponsored by Be Well Medical Center

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

6:30 P.M. Dinner

7 P.M. Program

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