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Making History Danica Roem Comes to Richmond, Virginia

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

RICHMOND, Va. – It was shortly before 10 a.m. on Jan. 10 when Danica Roem was adding additional language to her bill that would protect credentialed journalists from revealing their sources.

Two reporters and their respective photographers were in Roem's small office on the second floor of the Pocahontas State Office Building near the Virginia Capitol as she worked on her personal laptop. A coffee mug from the Newseum in D.C., a copy of the 2018 budget bill and a name tag that identified her as "delegate-elect Danica Roem" had been placed on her desk before she arrived less than an hour before.

Roem pointed out to the reporters and two of her aides — Maria Salgado and Gabrielle Slais — that earlier in the day she was listening to "Bullet Ride" and "Pinball Map" from "Clayman," an album that In Flames, a Swedish heavy metal band, released in 2000. Roem asked Slais whether her 9-year-old stepdaughter could bring her tablet into the chamber of the Virginia House of Delegates before she filed her bill.

The deadline for lawmakers to pre-file bills before the 2018 General Assembly began was 10 a.m.

Roem filed her bill at 10 a.m.

"That's how we do things," she joked.

She was sworn in slightly more than two hours later.

'My job is to serve my constituents'

Roem, a former journalist, last November defeated Bob Marshall, an anti-LGBT Republican who had represented the 13th District since 1992. Roem, who is a Democrat, is the first openly trans person seated in any state legislature in the U.S.

Althea Garrison in 1992 became the first trans person elected to a state legislature when she won a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, but she did not publicly discuss her gender identity during her campaign. Stacie Laughton in 2012 became the first openly trans person elected to a state legislature when she won a seat in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, but she ended her bid to sit in the chamber after her convictions for credit card and identity fraud became public.

State Dels. Marcus Simon (D-Falls Church) and Richard "Rip" Sullivan (D-Fairfax County) are among those who stopped by Roem's office on Wednesday. Roem's former campaign manager, Ethan Damon, who is now



Virginia state Del. Danica Roem (D-Manassas) attends her first session in office in Richmond, Va., on Jan. 10. Photo courtesy Washington Blade by Michael Key.

her senior advisor, was with her throughout the day.

Salgado and Slais tried to get Roem to leave her office shortly before 11 a.m. in order to attend a House Democratic Caucus meeting. Roem quickly used the women's restroom near a bank of elevators in the Pocahontas Building before she, her staff, the reporters and their photographers walked across North Bank Street and entered the Capitol.

Marshall in 2017 introduced a bill that would have banned Roem and other trans people from using public bathrooms in Virginia that correspond with their gender identity. A House subcommittee killed it by a voice vote.

"My job is to never, ever discriminate against my constituents," said Roem in her office before she walked to the Capitol. "My job is to serve my constituents and no one who lives in the 13th District should feel unwelcome to be there because of what they look like, where they come from, how they worship, who they love.

"They should be celebrated, respected and welcomed because of who they are, not despite of it and not for what other people telling them what they should be," she added. "I hope that what we're doing today sends that message very loud and clear that you can succeed because of who you are, not despite it."

Roem described as 'a rock star'

Members of the House of Delegates — Democrats and Republicans — hugged Roem as she entered the House chamber shortly before noon. She walked to her desk and stood as more than half a dozen photographers from across the country took her picture.

Roem's family was in the House gallery when she and the 14 other new delegates were sworn in. These include state Del. Dawn Adams (D-Richmond), who is the first out lesbian elected to the Virginia General Assembly.

State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria) and state Dels. Mark Levine (D-Alexandria) and Mark Sickles (D-Fairfax County) are openly gay.

"Dawn and I both made history," said Roem before leaving her office, noting that Adams is her roommate during session. "This is not just one of us here."

Roem on Wednesday wore around her neck a rainbow-colored lanyard for her General Assembly badge that her stepdaughter gave her for Christmas. She also held her trademark rainbow headscarf in her left hand when she was sworn in.

Roem was wearing the headscarf a few hours later when outgoing Gov. Terry McAuliffe delivered his final State of the Commonwealth speech.

Roem told the Blade during an impromptu interview on the House floor shortly after 3:30 p.m. that she decided she would leave the headscarf on her desk when she was not in the chamber so "our LGBTQ community knows we're hand in hand on the floor of the House of Delegates. Former House Speaker Richard Cranwell and his wife, House Minority Leader David Toscano (D-Charlottesville), Sickles and two House staffers all approached Roem and began speaking with her.

"My very presence in this body is the statement," said Roem.

Toscano described Roem to the Blade as a "rock star" before he left the chamber.

Route 28, FOIA among early legislative priorities

Improving Route 28 in order to reduce traffic congestion and extending the Virginia Railway Express commuter trains to Innovation Technology Park as a way to bolster the area's high-tech industry are among the issues on which she campaigned.

Roem on Jan. 8 introduced two resolutions

that call upon the Virginia Department of Transportation to study ways to improve Route 28 and expand and maintain commuter trains in the state. One of the bills that Roem filed before Wednesday would require the attorney general's office to create an ombudsman to ensure state agencies comply with Freedom of Information Act requests.

Roem has requested to be assigned to the Transportation; General Laws and Counties, Cities and Towns Committee.

The General Laws Committee typically considers LGBT-specific bills.

Roem told the Blade on the House floor that it is "really tough for me to get on" the committee. She nevertheless said it is "important."

"FOIA goes through there and nondiscrimination and discrimination goes through there," said Roem. "I'm really big on the idea that a trans woman should be on a committee that deals with LGBTQ discrimination issues."

"I believe strongly that if you're going to vote on an issue that discriminates against one of your colleagues then you have to look your colleague in the eye while you're presenting that bill," she added.

Roem on Friday tweeted she has been assigned to the Counties, Cities and Towns and Science and Technology Committees.

"Of course I'm disappointed I won't be on the Transportation Committee but I'll do my best to represent HD13 on these committees," she wrote. "It's an honor to even be here, above all else."

Roem on Wednesday did not speak on the floor of the House, which Republicans control by a 51-49 vote margin.

The House voted unanimously to elect state Del. M. Kirkland Cox (R-Colonial Heights) as their next speaker. It also voted to record subcommittee votes during the 2018 session.

"That's a win for transparency advocates," said Roem.

Cox has said he would stop the tradition of using gender-specific titles to refer to lawmakers if he were to become speaker. A woman with whom the Blade spoke in the Pocahontas Building on Wednesday used an expletive when she said Cox should refer to Roem as the "gentlewoman from Manassas" when he acknowledges her on the House floor.

"It is really obnoxious to have that be the lead question for two days in a row when I'm trying to deal with serious public policy," Roem told the Blade on Thursday during a phone call.

She said in her office on Wednesday before she was sworn in that her election proved trans people can win elections in spite of their gender identity. Roem also showed the Blade a text message she received from the mother of an 11-year-old trans girl in Roanoke earlier in the day.

The mother told Roem that she has inspired her daughter. She also wished her well on her first day in office.

"Here we are; Room 221; Pocahontas Building," said Roem. "To have had the number of trans kids reach out to me and people who desperately needed someone to champion what they believe in, especially what happened in 2016, this is special."

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



State Del. Danica Roem (D-Manassas) greets state Del. Chris Hurst (D-Blacksburg) on the floor of the Virginia House of Delegates on Jan. 10, 2018. Photo courtesy Washington Blade by Michael Key.

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It's About More than Cake

Three Debate Experts Explore Masterpiece Cakeshop Case

NEWS

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

In a world of hugely polarizing politics, it is rare that discourse between left and right-wing opponents can be civilized and constructive, but that's what happened on Jan. 10. Wayne State University Professor and Philosophy Chair Dr. John Corvino hosted the co-authors of his new, point-counterpoint book "Debating Religious Liberty and Discrimination" to debate both sides of the Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission case. The two co-authors are William E. Simon Senior Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation Dr. Ryan T. Anderson and Princeton Ph.D. candidate in philosophy Sherif Girgis.

The case in question is currently under review by the U.S. Supreme Court. In July 2012, David Mullins and Charlie Craig, accompanied by Craig's mother, visited Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado, to buy a cake for their wedding. Jack Phillips, the shop's owner, promptly informed the couple that the bakery didn't sell wedding cakes to same-sex couples because of his religious beliefs. The couple filed a complaint with the Colorado Human Rights Commission, and by Dec. 5, 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments to determine whether Phillips had the right to refuse service to same-sex couples.

Corvino, an openly gay man, said that both Anderson and Girgis were the perfect candidates for thoughtful discussion both for the book and the live debate.

"We came to know each other in the context of the marriage-equality debate, where they were up-and-coming voices for the traditionalist position," Corvino said. "We had participated in a number of events together in that context, including some debates. They're both very smart, and when I started imagining this book, they quickly landed on the short list of possible opponents. For various reasons it made sense for them to co-author their side: They've collaborated before, and they work well together."

Over the course of the two years that the trio worked on the book, Corvino said that they were able to refine their arguments immensely – though not without occasional rough patches.

"One good thing about choosing

interlocutors who are smart and rigorous is that there was a lot of back-and-forth refining the arguments," he said. "One bad thing about choosing interlocutors who are smart and rigorous is exactly the same: there was a lot of back-and-forth refining the arguments."

The results of the finished product were what was presented during the debate. What follows is a collection of the evening's highlights. The full debate can be viewed online at gaybe.am/yK.

Debate Overview: Corvino Begins

The evening's format began with a 15-minute argument from Corvino, asserting that Phillips broke a section of Colorado law that said it is "a discriminatory practice and unlawful for a person, directly or indirectly, to refuse, withhold from, or deny to an individual or a group, because of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation ... the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of a place of public accommodation"

He said Phillips did not mention a specific design he objected to on the couple's cake, so he could not claim artist differences as the reason for his refusal to grant the couple's request. He compared this to a similar case that occurred a year after this one concerning Azucar bakery in Denver.

"A customer comes in and asks the baker, Marjorie Silva, for a bible-shaped cake, and on one side he wants two grooms with a red X through it, and on the other side he wants Leviticus 18:22, 'homosexuality is a detestable sin,'" Corvino said. "Marjorie Silva said, 'I don't believe in that, I can't do that.'"

The difference in this case is that Silva agreed to provide the customer with the materials to make whatever design he chose. Among other points, Corvino then stated that some traits are intimately connected to some activities, so to discriminate against one would be to discriminate against the other.

"Jack Phillips might say, 'Hey, I'm happy to open my bakery to gay and lesbian people, I just won't sell them cake for a wedding.' But that's kind of like saying, 'Look, I'm happy to open my bakery to Jewish people, I just



Pictured left to right: Debaters and fellow authors Sherif Girgis, John Corvino and Ryan T. Anderson pictured post their "Let Them Buy Cake? Religious Liberty, Discrimination, and the Masterpiece Cakeshop Case" discussion at Wayne State University.

won't sell them anything for a Bar Mitzvah, not even cupcakes, not even cookies. No, I just don't believe in that kind of celebration," Corvino said.

Anderson Steps In

Anderson went next, 10 minutes, positing primarily that sexual orientation wasn't on Phillips' mind when he refused to serve Mullins and Craig. He backed up this point by mentioning the strict set of rules that Phillips followed before deciding to bake a cake, such as rejecting all Halloween cakes, cakes with alcohol, anti-patriot cakes and once, he declined a celebratory "divorce" cake.

"Is he therefore discriminating on the basis of whatever the identity of the customer asking for that cake? And the answer is no. It doesn't matter who asks him for the cake celebrating the event that he can't support."

Anderson also brought up that refusing service to someone who would like a religious message on their cake could be considered discriminatory.

"The Colorado Court of Civil Rights said it wasn't discrimination on the basis of religion, even though religion is a protected category, but it was discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation," Anderson said. "Several of the Supreme Court justices asked about this during oral arguments. They said that they smelled a double standard."

Anderson finished with Justice Anthony Kennedy's quote, "Your identity thing is just too facile," regarding the argument that the cake order was rejected on the basis of the couple's sexual orientation.

Gergis Closes

Gergis began by citing compelled speech doctrine.

"At the very broadest level, compelled speech doctrine says that it's against your first amendment rights to be forced to say or do or create something expressive that carries a message you reject," Gergis said. "Unless forcing you will serve a compelling state interest, will pass the highest bar in the constitution for figuring out if a particular regulation serves a good enough goal that it can justify burdening your constitutional rights."

Gergis said that not only was attempting to force Phillips to design the cake unjust, but that it infringed on his rights as an artist to not deliver a message he disagreed with.

"You don't include a wedding cake at the reception because you're worried people will still be hungry after the salmon or filet or quinoa – I don't want to offend anybody – but because you want it to be, first, the visual centerpiece, and then a part of the live programming of this party whose sole and explicit message is, 'Hooray for this marriage,'" Gergis said.

Lastly, Gergis stated that though the dignitary harm associated with the Cakeshop case was hurtful, it was not illegal.

"I want to acknowledge that that's a real pain, and it's a real difficulty and it causes real distress, but the first amendment's whole point is to preserve the ability of citizens to express messages that someone finds deeply offensive," Gergis said.

Corvino Rebuts

When Corvino took the mic for the second time, he again touched on the fact that Phillips didn't discuss design with the couple, and that certain activities are so tied to identities that not providing a wedding cake was "tantamount" to denying a homosexual person's identity. He also compared Phillips to a Louisiana Justice of the Peace Keith Bardwell, who in 2009 refused to perform interracial marriages, posing a hypothetical Bardwell Bakery in place of Masterpiece Cakeshop.

"Now, Bardwell could do so many of the things that both Ryan and Sherif said. They could say, 'Look, I have no problem with black people generally. I'll sell them birthday cakes, I'll sell them shower cakes and so on, but I just don't believe in interracial marriage, that for me is too much,'" Corvino said. "And I say, 'Yeah, we don't want to interfere with his freedom of speech, but when he is unwilling to sell interracial couples the very same items that he sells to same-race couples, he is engaged in racial discrimination and it's not a free speech issue, it's an issue about equal protection. It's an issue about being able to enter into the public sphere and enjoy the same rights and privileges as other people.'"

Finally, Corvino approached the argument of dignitary harm, citing the cake case as "the straw that broke the camel's back."

"I say, it's not just about cakes and flowers, it's also about essential services like funeral services," Corvino said. "Second, it's not something that happens in isolation from a larger social context."

Public Discussion

As divisive as the night's attacks and rebuttals were, the evening's debate ended on a surprisingly smooth note, followed by nearly an hour-long question and answer session. This session, too, was by and large handled with an even keel by all participants. Corvino said that ultimately, that was his goal: for the public to gather with deeply opposing views, and to leave thoughtfully.

"That these questions are hard, and that we all need to resist the tendency to make what in the book we call "The Puritan Mistake": The idea that liberty means liberty to do things 'my way,'" Corvino said. "It's a temptation on both sides, but as I argue in the book, I think the right-wing in this debate has particularly fallen prey to it."

However, Corvino said the beauty of topics like this one, is that the debate, and therefore the thoughtful conversation, can continue.

"... At times, it seemed as if the process would never end! And in a way, it doesn't: Even though the book is finished, the conversation is ongoing."

The full debate can be viewed online at gaybe.am/yK.

'Sexual Health' in Building Signage Refused Therapist Joe Kort Vows to Fight Landlord

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

If you're a regular reader of *Between The Lines* or its sister publication the *PrideSource* directory, you've probably seen the ads: Joe Kort and Associates and the Center for Relationship and Sexual Health. It's a rather innocuous listing. Nothing seemingly controversial or inappropriate contained therein. But the brothers behind Atesian Properties, Inc., who own the Huntington Medical Building in Huntington Woods, felt the title was too provocative – perhaps even indecent – and declined to allow Kort to identify his practice by its name either on the building or on its directory.

This was not initially the case. Kort signed a multi-year lease for a 1,500 square foot space in the building with simply the name Joe Kort & Associates on the document. He says he was assured, however, that the full name of the practice would appear on any signage. Building management initially put the full name on the building directory, but then quickly notified Kort that it would have to come down.

"We told them the full name in the beginning and they knew that I would need two signs, one for both businesses," said Kort, who incorporated the Center for Relationship and Sexual Health into his practice in 2009. "It also was on the rental application and they were fine with that. But after they put it on the building directory a pediatrician in the building said they didn't like it."

Kort received the news via a phone call. "The owner said, 'We want to have a neutral building that does haven't any words that are upsetting to people,'" Kort recalled. "I said, 'You should have told me before I signed a lease and we're in the 11th hour.' We're scheduled to move in February 1st."

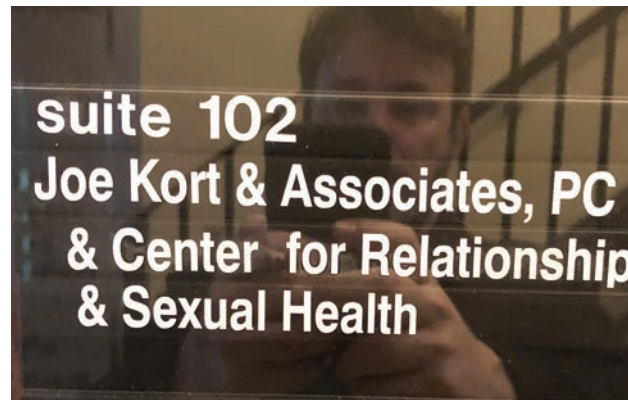
Does Sexual Health allude to Sex Offenders?

The problem, said Darren Atesian, the building's owner, is that the words 'sexual health' may lead someone to imply that there are actually sex offenders in the building.

"If you were a patient for the tenant upstairs you are now uncomfortable because you think there are sexual predators in the building because it is a sexual therapy clinic," said Atesian. "It just seemed to come off that they're servicing people who are sexual predators. We're not the only ones who felt this way. Forget our tenants. We asked other people if this could be misconstrued and they said yes."

Kort was aghast when Atesian broached the subject.

"He asked me if I worked with sex offenders and I told him no," said Kort. "I said, 'We're not even trained to work with sex offenders.' It didn't even occur to me



“I intend to educate and push forward that the word 'sexual' is not a risk to children or to anyone else for that matter.”

– Joe Kort

that anyone would think that.”

But Atesian, obviously, did – or at least he believed others might.

"I know that's not what Joe's business is but that's something we're looking to get in front of because it doesn't need to be something there that I'm being asked that question, what kind of patients are you getting in there?" Atesian said. "Really it's no one's business other than Joe and his patients. But it is a position that I may be in if it's something that advertises and then it's misunderstood what the business actually is."

Apples and oranges: Does gay equal sex?

Struggling to accept his new landlord's discomfort with the name of his business, Kort said the ordeal reminded him of what it was like owning a practice that focused on the gay community in the 90s.

"It felt like I was back in the 90s," said Kort. "I received similar responses back then to the word gay. One place I rented from wouldn't even let me put the Advocate in the waiting room unless I put in bold print it belonged to Joe Kort. Now here we are in 2018, and to many people gay equals sex.

It's the same problem just a different word."

Not so, said Atesian, who was adamant he'd have no issue if the words gay or lesbian appeared on the signage.

"I think we're talking apples and oranges here," Atesian said. "That really is not the case at all. Every circumstance has a specific case that we were worried about. This one specifically had to do with children and the idea that there may be a sexual offender in the building."

For now, landlord and tenant are at an impasse. Atesian continues to decline to put the whole name of the

business on the building's signage and on its directory. Instead, the acronym CRSH is being used. Kort remains displeased but sees no other option but to accept it.

"We said let's leave it off the sign right now and let's see what kind of response we get to the acronym," said Atesian. "I told him if this is affecting your business we'll circle back down the line."

But Kort is not appeased.

"They keep telling me this isn't personal," Kort said. "And I said, 'I'm not taking this personal. This is business.' I spent a lot of time building this business. I've been building it since 2009. To put Joe Kort on the window is not enough. That's not what people are coming to me for."

Kort said he will keep on fighting for the liberation of his life's work and the name he chooses to do business by.

"I'm so incredibly shaken by this," said Kort. "However, I intend to educate and push forward that the word 'sexual' is not a risk to children or to anyone else for that matter."

LGBT Candidates Hoping to Ride Democratic Wave

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

With President Trump facing low approval ratings, signs continue to point to a political wave against him in this year's mid-term elections and LGBT candidates are hoping to benefit.

A record number of openly LGBT candidates are running for office, many in high-profile statewide races, which could result in a milestone election for a group that has been historically underrepresented.

Annise Parker, CEO of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, predicted LGBT candidates endorsed by the organization in 2018 "are going to do well."

"We're in this business because we think our candidates are going to do well in any election, but we don't see just a Democratic surge, we actually see a progressive surge across the United States," Parker said.

Parker added, "we're going to have more LGBT candidates than we have had ever in our history," but also candidates who are women and people of color also stand to make historic wins.

"Even though those candidates who aren't from our community and wouldn't be our endorsed candidates, I think they're going to help carry the banner for us a little bit," Parker said.

Signs are strong that Democrats will pick up seats in 2018, which is consistent with the historical trend of the party in opposition to the party of the president gaining seats in the mid-term elections.

In every mid-term election, the president's party loses an average of 32 seats in the U.S. House and two seats in the U.S. Senate. (The only exception to these losses in recent years has been in 1998 and 2002 due to extraordinary circumstances. In 1998, there was outrage over the impeachment of President Clinton. In 2002, there was an anti-terrorism sentiment after the attacks on 9/11.)

A CNN poll published in December found 56 percent of respondents say they'll most likely vote for a Democrat in the mid-term election compared to 38 percent who say they'll vote Republican. According to CNN, that 18-point advantage is the biggest since the organization began polling on the 2018 election and the widest margin in two decades at this point in the election cycle.

Democrats have their goals in sight. To win control of the House in 2018, Democrats needs 24 seats. To win control of the Senate, Democrats need just two thanks to the surprise victory of Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) in the special election late last year.

Part of the effort for Democrats to win



From left, Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), Virginia state Sen. Rich Madelino (D-Montgomery Co.) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) (Washington Blade photos by Michael Key).

control of Congress will be LGBT candidates seeking election to the House and Senate. In Wisconsin, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), the only out lesbian in Congress, will seek to keep her seat in the Senate.

That seat might be a challenge for Democrats to hold even in a good election cycle. The Huffington Post's Amanda Terkel published an article this month titled, "Wisconsin Is Quietly Becoming The Top Senate Race Of 2018."

According to the article, conservative groups have reported spending at least \$3.1 million against Baldwin, which is more than what all the other Democratic Senate incumbents on the ballot this year have faced combined.

But that only counts the reported money, not the dark money coming from groups that don't have necessarily have to report their contributions to the Federal Election Commission. Nine groups have spent more than \$4.7 million on ads that attack Baldwin or boost one of the Republicans seeking to unseat her, according to the article.

Parker said conservative groups are targeting

Baldwin because she's "focused and effective and doing a great job in the Senate."

"It's going to be a tough re-elect for her, not just because she's going to have opposition on the right, but because there's already evidence of a massive independent expenditure campaign against her," Parker said. "If she weren't so effective, I don't think they'd be dropping the millions of dollars that they are to try to defeat her."

Among the groups spending money against Baldwin is Americans for Prosperity, the Super PAC funded by the Koch brothers that has sought to unseat Democrats in Congress. According to the Huffington Post, Americans for Prosperity has spent \$861,669 in the race.

Parker said she doesn't believe these groups are targeting Baldwin because of her sexual orientation, but because "she has been an effective progressive voice in the Senate."

"They're looking at the last presidential campaign and trying to project from that," Parker said. "I don't think that that's going to be successful."

Meanwhile, Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.)

is running for the U.S. Senate seat in Arizona being vacated by retiring Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.). If Sinema is elected, she'd be the first openly bisexual person elected to the Senate.

Sinema's race could be interesting because a slew of right-wing candidates seeking the nomination could be her opponent in the general election.

The newest entrant in the race is Joe Arpaio. President Trump pardoned the former Maricopa County sheriff last year after he faced jail time for unconstitutionally enforcing immigration law to target immigrant communities.

Parker said the Victory Fund is "working hard" on Sinema's race because "that's an opportunity to move a seat into a progressive column."

"Considering who's on the Republican side of that race, it's going to be a very clear pro-LGBTQ progressive candidate versus a right-wing ideologue, whichever one of them comes through," Parker said.

A number of non-incumbent LGBT

► LGBT Candidates

Continued from p. 8

candidates are also running in U.S. House races and seeking to take seats from Republican candidates.

Non-incumbent candidates with good shots of winning are Lauren Baer, who's running in Florida's 18th congressional district; Angie Craig, who's running in Minnesota's second congressional district; Albuquerque City Councilor Pat Davis, who's running in New Mexico's first congressional district; Gina Ortiz Jones, who's running in Texas's 23rd congressional district; and Florida State Rep. David Richardson, who's running in Florida's 26th congressional district.

Richardson is running for the seat currently occupied by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), who's considered the most pro-LGBT Republican in Congress and announced she'd retire at the end of this year. Richardson's prospects are strong in the heavily Democratic district that Ros-Lehtinen has maintained for years.

Meanwhile, gay Reps. David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) and Mark Takano (D-Calif.) are seeking to keep their seats in the House and will likely prevail given their incumbent status, favorable districts and strength of Democrats in 2018.

Other LGBT candidates could replace Democrats who are leaving their seats at the end of this year. In New Hampshire's first congressional district, State Rep. Chris Pappas is seeking to claim the seat being vacated by retiring Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-N.H.).

The race to replace retiring Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.) in Massachusetts' 3rd congressional district is a veritable free-for-all of LGBT candidates.

No fewer than 12 candidates are seeking the Democratic nomination, including three LGBT candidates. They're Rufus Gifford, who's gay and served as U.S. ambassador to Denmark in the Obama administration; Steve Kerrigan, who's gay and ran to become Massachusetts lieutenant governor in 2014; and Alexandra Chandler, who's transgender and a former Navy intelligence specialist.

Other gay candidates are in uphill battles seeking to claim seats in Republican strongholds. Among them is John Duncan, a gay HIV/AIDS activist running in Texas' sixth congressional district. Another candidate facing a challenge is Dan Canon, who's straight, but fought as an attorney for marriage equality in Kentucky and is running in Indiana's conservative ninth congressional district.

If LGBT House and Senate candidates win each of these races, it could significantly shake up LGBT representation in Congress and potentially more than double the number of seven openly LGBT public officials currently serving. A victory for Chandler would make her the first openly transgender person elected

Conservative groups have reported spending at least \$3.1 million against Tammy Baldwin, (D-Wisconsin) which is more than what all the other Democratic Senate incumbents on the ballot this year have faced combined.

to Congress.

LGBT candidates are involved in other significant state races. At the top of the list are the gubernatorial campaigns of Rep. Jared Polis in Colorado and State Sen. Rich Madaleno in Maryland. Should either of them win, they'd claim the distinction of being the first openly gay person elected as governor in the United States.

In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown, who's bisexual, is seeking re-election. In 2016, she already claimed the distinction of being the first openly LGBT person elected as governor.

In Nevada, State Assembly member Nelson Araujo (D-Las Vegas) is running to become Nevada secretary of state. If he wins, he'll become the first openly gay person of color to win statewide election anywhere in the United States.

In the wake of major victories for transgender candidates in 2017, other transgender hopefuls, such as Chandler in Massachusetts, could see victories. In Maryland, transgender activist Dana Beyer is seeking Madaleno's seat as he pursues the bid for governor and could be the first openly transgender candidate elected to a state Senate anywhere in the country.

In Texas, the "blue" wave could result in the election of a record number of LGBT candidates running for office at various levels of state government. The Houston-based OutSmart Magazine reported 42 people are running for office in Texas, including two candidates for governor: former Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez and Dallas businessperson Jeffrey Payne.

Parker declined to identify her highest priority race for 2018, but said the Victory Fund's "bread and butter is local races." Also important, Parker said, are Baldwin and Sinema's races for Senate seats and the gubernatorial elections with gay candidates.

When analyzing candidates to support, however, Parker said the Victory Fund doesn't take into account whether a year will be a Republican or Democratic wave.

"It's going to be great for our candidates, but it's not what we depend on, it's not what we look at when we're vetting them," Parker said. "It's just means that if it happens, we're going to take advantage of it."

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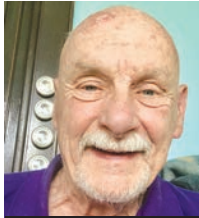
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Tattoos Upward for Justin!

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Were I 50 years younger, and given a now wishful-thinking opportunity, I just might make a pass at Justin Bieber, troublesome idol turned born-again celebrity entertainer.

What has captured my foolish, libidinous attention is his bare-chest, tattoo-embellished, Instagram photo of himself devoutly reading an open Bible, spread invitingly across his young seductive lap, and comfortingly limber, new testimonial lower torso.

(There's no question about it: it's a novel way to read holy scripture; and for one and all to kneel in prayerful adoration and homage at the same time.)

The Justin Bieber image apparently has touched the lives of 95 million of his Instagram followers, of which, I confess in all honesty – as something of a free-thinking skeptic of his faith conversion – I am not a daily image recipient or, for that matter, a fan.

(Justin could, however, instagram me at anytime he wanted to. But that's neither here nor there. As long as he does it without hymn singing or flexing his biblical biceps too long or too embarrassingly hard in my face.)

What I have done, however – in fairness to Bieber's sincerity of conviction to have Jesus as his entertainment and moral ally (one presumes Bieber will tithe his music revenues accordingly) is to look closely at the biblical content, if any, of his tattooed chest and arms.

To that end, I have enlarged the intriguing Instagram photo several times, in hope of finding a Bible verse or two artfully woven, say around his nipples – indicating nourishment for the soul – or his belly button, indicating union to life-stimulating, uncompromising urges and energies of an earthy, somewhat cosmic nature.

Alas, skeptic that I am, I found nothing. (God knows I looked and looked. And, yes, I looked again. Not a verse. Not one hint of a carefully drawn proverbial camel going through the eye of a subliminal erotic needle. Or, crosses on a far-distant Mar-a-Lago golfing outback.)

I suppose it does speak well of Justin in the long run, however, in that he knows where to draw the line. Full Garden of Eden nudity, while traditionally biblical, is a bit too much. Even for him.

Size modesty is, with the exception of Trump, a sin-free virtue. Yet! A simple fig leaf just might put Justin Bieber in contemporary competition with Michelangelo's Biblical hero David.

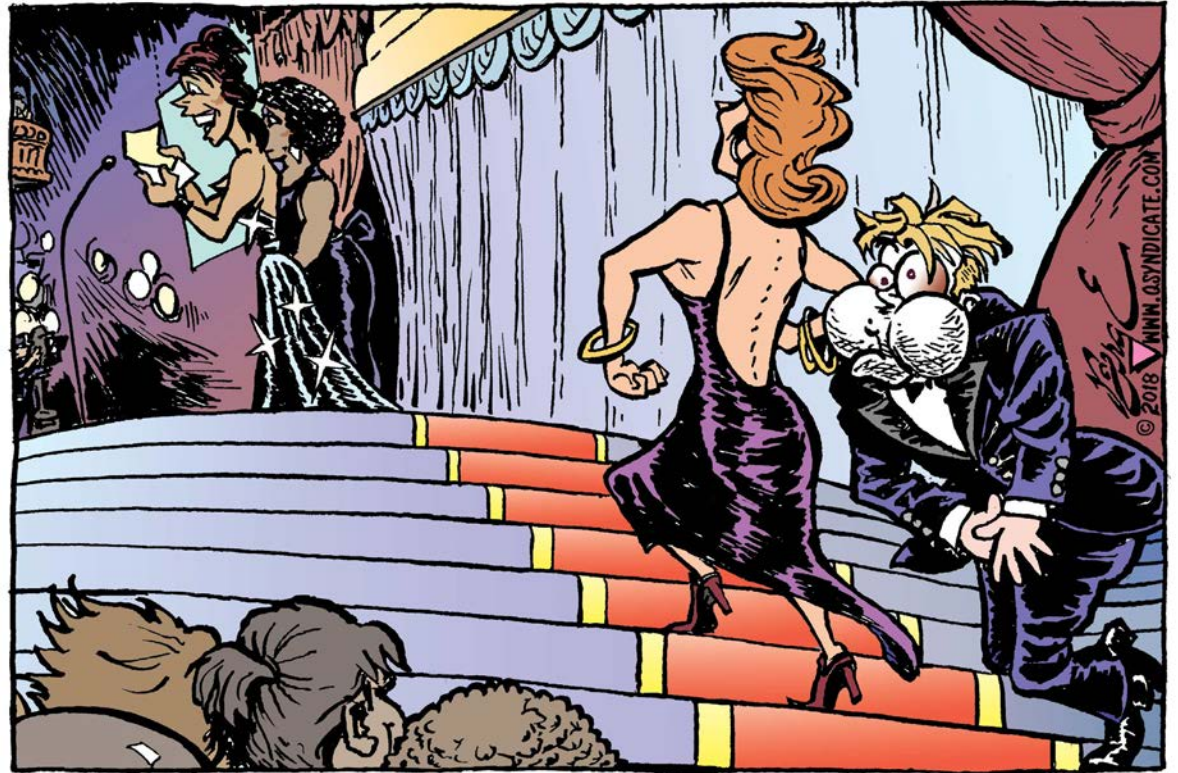
As the saying goes, heaven works in mysterious ways its wonders to perform; and a timely strategy from the Justin Bieber visual testimonial might work wonders for evangelical groups like the American Family Association.

The AFA is currently offering a step-by-step, six disc, \$129.95 series, "How to Quit Porn for God and Country" for those of its members and others likewise addicted to the ages-old preoccupation with nudity and its eternal provocation to sin.

The AFA claims 500,000 were since saved from the hellfire of porn. Interestingly enough, recent social analysis of internet porn site usage all indicate higher than national average usage in those states comprising America's Bible Belt of the South.

Perhaps Justin Bieber is on the right track to reaching America's fastest-growing social media addicted populace. An open lap Bible. Semi-Nudity. And! Why not? Tattoos with Bible verses added. Adam and Bieber the Belieber. Amen!

Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Face Book images). He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBT CENTER Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at Charles@pridesource.com.



"ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR BROCK STÖDER WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT IS A WOMAN HE CORNERED IN THE BATHROOM AT A 2003 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY."



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

2018: Stand Up

By the time this column reaches you, the confetti will be swept out of Times Square and the Rose Bowl parade floats will exist as only a memory. Nevertheless, we shall still be feeling the effects of the previous year.

In 2017, we witnessed the Trump Administration – as they enacted travel bans focused on predominantly Muslim countries, threatened Dreamers, and continued to try to forge ahead on a border wall – take aim at transgender people.

The administration pushed for judges who are anti-transgender, even one who claimed transgender people were a part of "Satan's plan." They also instructed the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to not use the word "transgender" in their documents. The Justice Department instructed its attorneys that the law doesn't protect transgender employees from discrimination and that 1964 Civil Rights Act doesn't protect people based on gender identity.

Most notably, they worked to discharge active duty transgender people from the military, bar new transgender recruits and halt the medical treatment of transgender people within the armed services.

This is only scratching the surface of course. There were dozens of other steps, large and small, that impacted

See next page

Now, as we turn our calendars to the New Year, it becomes all the more important that we do more than just survive the next 12 months. We need to win, and we need to thrive against all the odds.

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 8

transgender people directly, and plenty of others that will affect trans folks as they hurt all marginalized people in the country.

We have started to see gains elsewhere this year, with bathroom bills losing traction in state legislatures. Most notably, a threatened pair of anti-transgender bills in Texas stalled, were revived in a special session and still failed to become the law of the Lone Star State.

In the midst of all this, we saw a record number of transgender people gain elected office. Perhaps most notable of these is Danica Roem, who beat Bob Marshall, a longtime lawmaker in Virginia who himself pushed the state's own failed bathroom bill. Six other transgender people won office in 2017, with many more ramping up their own campaigns.

Yet the climate fostered by the Trump administration casts a pall over us all. Anti-transgender violence remains at a high in spite of the waning of bathroom panics across the country. We still face bigotry from the left and right in this country and abroad, with the UK in particular becoming increasingly hostile toward transgender people.

Many of us out in the trenches are tired. We have had to fight all year, not only calling and writing our elected officials on our own behalf, but standing for the rights of everyone oppressed by a hostile government. It is, nevertheless, a testament to the strength and fortitude of so many transgender, non-binary and gender fluid activists – and all of our sibling activists fighting alongside us – that so many of us have survived 2017.

Now, as we turn our calendars to the New Year, it becomes all the more important that we do more than just survive the next 12 months. We need to win, and we need to thrive against all the odds.

Yes, we have to keep fighting. While the Trump administration has backed down on the military ban after several legal challenges did not go the way they hoped, they will continue to push against us and others. They will continue to push trans-hostile judges, will continue to push policies that harm transgender people and will not hesitate to

move against us when they can.

As we fight, though, we need to keep our focus. There are plenty who are willing to keep us tired, outraged and unfocused. We need to keep our wits about us, and avoid being baited and trolled. We know what we have to do, and need to remain on target. Those who seek to do little more than provoke us only have as much power as we cede to them: let us give them as little as we can.

We cannot, and should not, lose the fights ahead. We will need to work to protect every unalienable right we are afforded. It is all the more vital that trans and other organizations step up the battle, and push back hard. We need to do all we can to not give our enemies a single inch — or at least make them pay dearly for any they do get. Like Bob Marshall, the bigotry of others should come at a high cost to them.

All this said, we also should not lose sight of what we're fighting for. We need to be there for each other, and find our joy when we can. We need to make sure that we can thrive, even as we struggle against our anti-transgender foes.

Finally, I want to remind everyone of one important thing: we have come a long way. In my lifetime, we've gone from an era where transgender people were viewed as criminals just for expressing ourselves. We have survived an era where we were a medical curiosity, forced through the hoops of gatekeepers who were more interested in their own biases than in our care. We've come from a place where non-transgender politicians would never have stood up for us, to a time when an increasing number of politicians are transgender. We shall not go quietly.

In 2017, we survived, a tough sprig that somehow survived to take root in spite of everything. In 2018, we will grow, we will stand resolute and bloom into something beautiful and strong. What's more, we shall not stand alone, as others stand alongside us, and push back against hatred, bigotry, xenophobia, racism and the myriad of ills we face today.

The next time the ball drops and marching bands take to Colorado Boulevard, we will be in legion.

Gwen Smith won't back down. You'll find her at www.gwensmith.com.

Creep of the Week

Mat Staver

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



It's a shrewd argument: if a judge and a plaintiff's identity conflicts in any way then a fair ruling is impossible. So we must keep LGBTQ people off the bench.

What I'm about to tell you may surprise you. It may shock you. It may even upset you. But it must be said. Here goes: Judges are people. And, if that's not enough: Some people are gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender, too.

Honestly, I figured the secret infiltration of human gays onto courts across the U.S. was, well, secret.

But right-wing luminary and alleged human Mat Staver is on to us.

On Jan. 11, Staver was a guest on a right-wing radio show and was asked about Andrew McDonald, the first openly gay man nominated to be justice of Connecticut's Supreme Court. Spoiler alert: Staver no like.

You see, according to Staver, a gay judge couldn't possibly be fair to Christians who appear before him. Probably because the mere presence of Christians causes an LGBTQ person's skin to turn red and start smoldering. Prolonged exposure causes horns to sprout and leads to spontaneous combustion.

So you can imagine the terrible scene that would commence if, say, anti-gay cake bakers appeared in front of McDonald arguing that they shouldn't have to bake cakes for homos. McDonald wouldn't even be able to hear them over his agonized cries while he bursts into flames. And then, before you know it, the court room turns into the very pit of Hell and everybody dies.

No wonder Staver's upset.

Referencing bakers in Colorado and Oregon who have been found by courts to be guilty of discrimination against gay couples, Staver tells radio host Jim Schneider, "What we typically see is someone's identity, their being, completely wrapped up in their sexual practices, meaning that — do you think that if you had an Aaron and Melissa Klein or a Jack Phillips bakery or anything else like that where you have the LGBT clash with religious freedom or freedom of expression come before [McDonald], do you think

this judge is going to be open and fair irrespective of what he does to rule based on the Constitution and the rule of law? I don't think so."

Note that Staver says "irrespective of what he does," not "of who he is." That's because to Staver, a gay man isn't a human being so much as a series of sexual acts that Staver finds disgusting and considers immoral.

Staver compared McDonald to Judge Alex Kozinski who recently resigned in disgrace from his position on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals after multiple women alleged that he showed them pornography on his computer when they worked as clerks in his court.

"So, imagine a case coming before [Kozinski], and he's so wrapped up into this pornography, and [the case is] about pornography or it's about sexual molestation of someone. Do you think you're going to get a fair shake out of that guy?" Staver muses. "I don't think so."

Since porn and molestation are not the same thing, it's unclear what Staver is getting at besides an expectation that Kozinski might end each ruling with, "I rule in favor of porn because porn rules [eggplant emoji]."

"The question is: are you going to get a fair shake out of [McDonald] who identifies as someone based upon his sexual practices, who is identified and identifies himself based upon certain behavior?" Staver said.

It's a shrewd argument: if a judge and a plaintiff's identity conflicts in any way then a fair ruling is impossible. So we must keep LGBTQ people off the bench. Though if we were to follow Staver's logic, people who identify as heterosexual must also be kept off of the bench since that, too, is an identity based in part on sexual practices and certain behavior. So I guess the only solution is to have only robot judges.

Thank God there isn't a lot of robot research these days devoted to the creation of sex robots, right? [Searches "sex robot research" on Google] Oh, wait. Never mind.

'Shithole' Uprising

The past year has given citizens hundreds of reasons to continue resisting Donald Trump. The following is a small sample of reactions to his latest debacle:

The Michigan Democratic Party issued the following statement on behalf of Party Chair Brandon Dillon, in response to Donald Trump's racist comments Jan. 11 during a bipartisan meeting on immigration, when he referred to immigrants from Haiti and Africa as coming from "shithole" countries:

"Vile? Immoral? Racist? What words are left to describe this so-called president that haven't already been used before? Donald Trump is a vile, immoral racist, but in the end, just like he's always been, he's a loser. Only a loser would be so insecure and hateful toward fellow human beings, let alone fellow Americans and the very people it's his job to serve while he occupies our nation's highest office. Donald Trump was a loser decades ago when he first revealed he was a racist, he's a loser now, and he's going to be a loser on Election Day 2020 if he even makes it that far."

Washington Blade:

LGBT rights advocates in Haiti on Friday condemned President Trump after he reportedly described their country as a "shithole."

Reginald Dupont, executive director of Foundation SEROvie, an HIV/AIDS service organization that is based in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, described the comment as "a major affront to the dignity of peoples." Josué Azor, a photographer who documents Port-au-Prince's LGBT nightlife, on Friday said there are "a lot of people reacting after the Trump comment."

"Most of them are expressing how shocked and pissed off they are," Azor told the Blade.

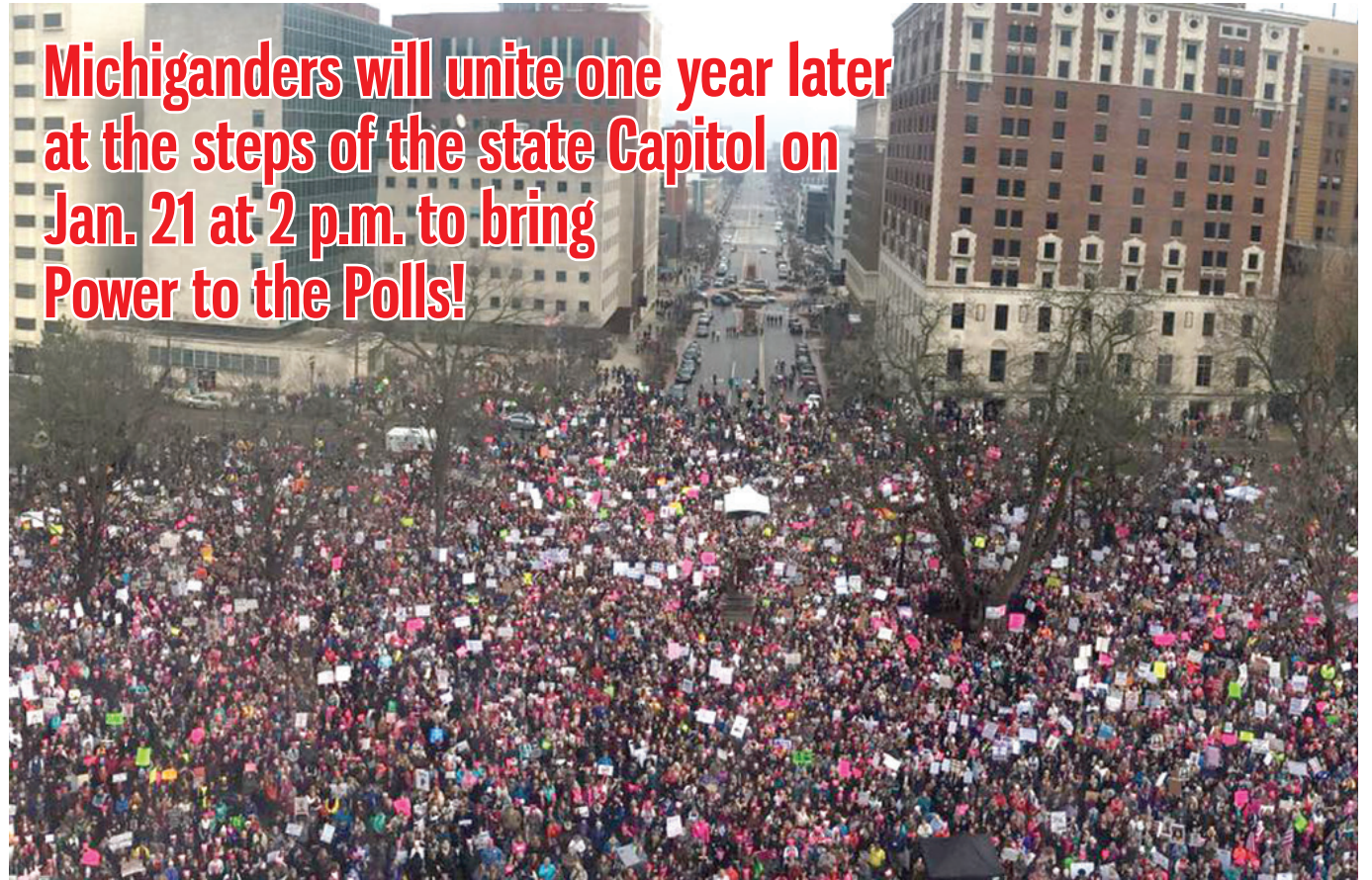
ACLU:

Lorella Praeli, American Civil Liberties Union director of immigration policy and campaigns, said:

"President Trump has been consistently honest about the white nationalism behind his immigration policies. His latest salvo is directly contrary to the decision Congress made in 1965 to do away with the racist per-country quotas of the past and bring our immigration policies in line with the civil rights era.

"The crisis facing Dreamers, manufactured by the Trump White House, is an urgent one. It is incumbent on responsible members of Congress to stand up for a different vision of our country, to reject attempts to derail legislative progress, and to deliver on the urgently needed legislative solution for Dreamers."

Michiganders will unite one year later at the steps of the state Capitol on Jan. 21 at 2 p.m. to bring Power to the Polls!



File photo: March on Lansing, Jan. 21, 2017 as part of over 650 worldwide marches that took place in response to Trump's becoming the 45th president of the U.S. Organizers are planning a rally at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 21 as part of an organized group of rallies across the country resisting the Trump presidency.

Power to the Polls, Again

Women's March Michigan 2018 Kicks Off Jan. 21

BY BTL STAFF

According to the Center for American Women and Politics, "in every presidential election since 1980, the proportion of eligible female adults who voted has exceeded the proportion of eligible male adults who voted." Yet even with this trend, fewer than 25 percent of women are a part of Michigan legislature, according to The Women's March Michigan; march organizers hope to change that.

On Sunday, Jan. 21 Women's March Michigan will meet one year after the 2017 Women's March to bring Power to the Polls to encourage women to vote, run for office and participate in local politics. The March is also in support of diversity and inclusiveness, supporting a society in which "women – inclusive of African American women, native women, poor women, immigrant women, disabled

**WOMEN'S
MARCH
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women, Muslim women, lesbian, queer and trans women – are free and able to care for and nurture their families, however they are formed, in safe and healthy environments free from structural impediments."

The Rally will include a variety of speakers, including WC Safe's Nicole Denson, Equality Michigan's Jenyce Poindexter, community activist Lilianna

Reyes and many more. A full list of speakers can be found online, as well as information about the event day-of at womensmarchmichigan.org. Organizers are encouraging attendees to wear boots to the event as the lawn was recently torn for construction.

FACEBOOK

Facebook Event Page For Lansing: <https://www.facebook.com/events/193884877838229>

Facebook Event Page for Marquette: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1984984658443283/>

The rally will meet outside on the Michigan State Capitol steps at 100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing at 2 p.m.

Southeast Michigan YouTubers Release Coming Out Story

COVER

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Coming out is almost never easy. Couple that with heavily Christian, highly conservative parents, and it becomes nearly impossible. That's why twins Michael and Zach Zakar, 24, fully intended on keeping it a secret from their family forever.

"Now, it's weird because we're openly known for being gay, Arab twins," Zach said. "We never ever thought that that would be our market. We were going to tell our mom, like, on her death bed. Before she'd flat line, we'd be like, 'Mom, we suck dick!' That was the original plan."

But as with many of life's plans, things rarely go smoothly. Their mother directly asked them if they were gay, and at 18 they came out.

"She tried to de-gay us with holy grace as well," Zach said. "Within a week she tried two, pretty significantly fucked up things, and then we were like, 'OK, that was kind of weird.'"

And, in fact, the aftermath of their coming out was weird enough that it inspired the two models, app developers and YouTubers to write a book about it, called "Pray the Gay Away." The story is told through the eyes of both twins in various, important points in their coming out process, from the first time they have a rendezvous with a man, to the moment their mother found out about their homosexuality and the aftermath of that. Before the book could truly take shape, however, it had small beginnings.

"It started out with sticky notes," Zach said. "Mom would say stuff, demeaning things."

"Originally, in our heads it started out as a film," Michael said.

Soon after coming out, the two brothers began attending film school to become directors, which they still intend to do.

"It started kind of as a hateful thing. We wrote it because we were angry that she reacted in such a demeaning way," Zach said. "Then, over time, the project, it really resulted in kind of a beautiful thing. We were growing with the book, it was growing with us."

Throughout the process, the twins



Coming out in a religious family can be difficult, and it certainly was the for the Zakar twins. Now, the YouTuber duo has released a book called "Pray the Gay Away" that talks all about their strained relationship with their family, and how they knew they were gay.

realized that they were involved in a very relatable project not only to members of the LGBTQ community, but to members of the Southeast Michigan Arabic population.

"When we originally wrote it, we didn't expect it to hit a market, but we were thinking about it. We are one of the most highly concentrated Arabic people in the U.S., so I think a lot of people can relate," Michael said.

"Our book is primarily to shed a new light on the Arabic community, as well as to show people that things with our mother aren't perfect, but they get better in their own messed up way," Zach said.

Over the lengthy five-year process of the book's creation and release, the twins began to realize that the slow reparation of their relationship with their mother was a positive spin on something that frequently was very tragic. Zach said that '80s LGBTQ literature was where they drew much of the inspiration for their creative work.

"Back in the '80s it was very sad and almost suicidal. I understand where it was coming from, it was a very sad time," he said. "I think our book is very fun, and (done) in almost a joking manner throughout the whole thing."

That humor is part of the Zakar brand, both evident in the twins' YouTube channel and and on the cover of their book, which features them and a drag

queen dressed as a nun. Released barely over a month ago, the twins have already achieved a spot in the top 100 LGBT book list on Amazon.

That early success is driving the Southeast Michigan duo to create more, and the two already have future projects lined up.

"Everyone has their own unique story. Fortunately for us, we just wrote ours down," Zach said with a laugh. "The book is done, but it's not finished. We're writing two more books about different things."

The twins said that they hope that the for people planning on coming out who read "Pray the Gay Away" take its overarching message with them.

"You cannot forget the bigger picture. It feels like life is caving in to a lot of people when it first happens. I think that's one of the scariest things. Because all I was worried about, was when you grow up, there's so much involved in the bigger picture," Michael said. "That's what I tell people, just realize there is light at the end of the tunnel even if it feels almost impossible."

"We're still learning who we are (too)," Zack said.

Follow the Zakar twins on Facebook at facebook.com/zakartwins/ or on Twitter @ZakarTwins. To purchase the book, visit zakartwins.com/new-page/.

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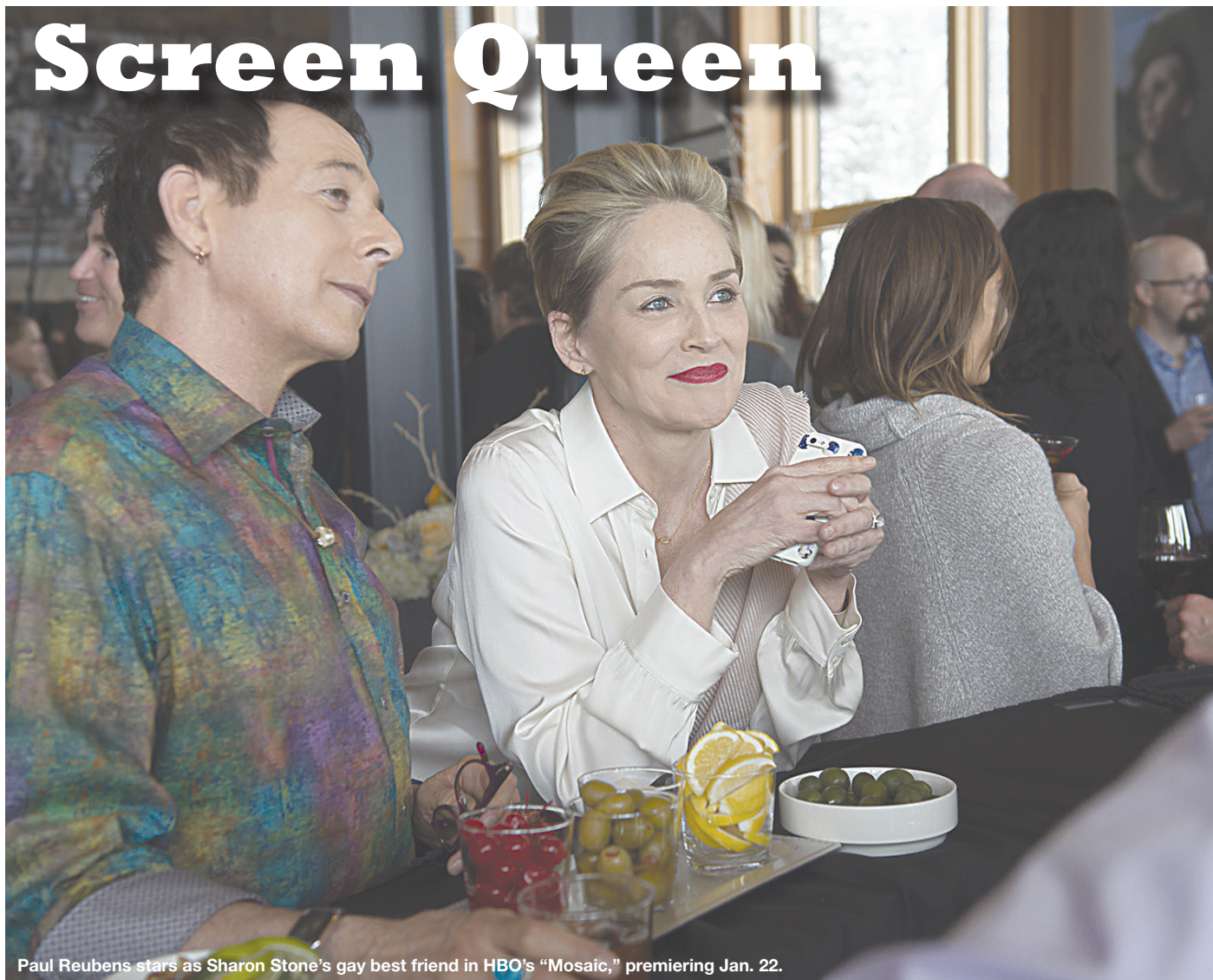
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Screen Queen



Paul Reubens stars as Sharon Stone's gay best friend in HBO's "Mosaic," premiering Jan. 22.

From 'Battle of the Sexes' to 'The Breakfast Club,' Here's Cuddle Content You Can Count On

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Tap that Grindr cuddle buddy of yours – winter is officially here, and brr, it's time for some Netflix and chill. Or HBO and chill. Or Blu-ray and chill. Whatever your media of choice, here's a peek into some films and TV shows you can use to lure your lover du jour into "watching a movie."

"Mosaic," HBO

Steven Soderbergh, hetero creator of things gays want to see, like Channing Tatum stripper movies and Michael Douglas and his as-portrayed-by-Matt-Damon boytoy in "Behind the Candelabra," also knows you've been wondering where the hell Sharon Stone has been. Sure, the actress who introduced me to lady parts thanks to "Basic Instinct" went brunette for 2013's Rob Epstein- and Jeffrey Friedman-directed eponymous "Deep Throat"-centered feature "Lovelace," as in porn star Linda Lovelace, and more recently had a brief stint as a film agent in Golden Globe winner James Franco's "The Disaster Artist," but Stone's mesmeric presence has been sorely lacking from screens of all types. But Soderbergh's limited six-episode tube run of "Mosaic," a twisty crime procedural filtered through the filmmaker's famous iridescent blue and mustard yellow hues, is just the canvas for Stone to paint with every dramatic shade contained within her successful socialite character, Olivia Lake, a world-famous children's book author who, on the surface, has the TV version of what a very lonely woman needs: a picturesque compound in the ski town of Summit, Utah, and a gay confidante, who is, as if Soderbergh

is trying to out-gay himself once again, played by Paul Reubens, aka Pee-wee Herman. And then there's "Mudbound" star Garrett Hedlund, who portrays Joel, a budding artist Olivia offers to mentor by giving him a place to live at her lodge because a) it's convenient b) he's hot and young, and she wants to feel both again. Stone still gets too-little screen time, and the series eventually dissolves into a patience-testing and ultimately frustrating

game of whodunit – if you like closure, this isn't the series for you – but when it comes to casting eye candy and beloved gay childhood idols, at least Steven Soderbergh was looking out for you.

"Battle of the Sexes," Blu-ray/DVD

During a time when women are asserting their power, bringing the glass-ceiling-shattering victory of lesbian tennis trailblazer Billie Jean

King over chauvinist Bobby Riggs to today's still-gender-unequal world makes total sense. A #TIMESUP icon before #TIMESUP was a hashtag, King (played by an emotionally rich and captivating Emma Stone) harnessed immense anti-establishment defiance, campaigning for anti-gender discrimination law Title IX and, the next year in 1973, crushing Riggs (Steve Carell) during their iconic, televised match – a win for King,



and an even bigger win for women's rights, female athletes and queer acceptance. The match was coined the "Battle of the Sexes." Also, a great name for a film, as "Little Miss Sunshine" filmmaking-duo Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton realized – especially when "Battle of the Sexes" coincidentally encapsulates the gender wars of the 2016 presidential election. But here's the great thing: Faris and Dayton have also made one of the queerest films of 2017. Fully acknowledging that King's stifled relationship with a woman, hairdresser-turned-lover Marilyn Barnett (Andrea Riseborough), weighed heavily on her, it's also evident that their intensely sensual relationship was a crucial personal victory for King, as she'd come to see her own body as more than just a tennis-playing machine. "Billie Jean King: In Her Own Words," wherein King reflects on her social justice work, her Riggs-winning strategy and her forecast for gender equity, stands out among a modest set of special features.

"End of the F***ing World," Netflix

Boy meets girl, boy wants to savagely kill girl. Yes, welcome to the weirdly swoon-worthy romanticism of "End of the F***ing World," Netflix's bingeable Wes Anderson-meets-"Bonnie and Clyde" series based on Charles Forsman's graphic novel in which two teenage runaways flee their wrecked home lives and neglectful parents for greener pastures and the occasional bludgeoning. Impressively played by 22-year-old Alex Lawther, star of the new IFC Film "Freak Show" (based on James St. James' novel and starring as gender non-conforming alongside Bette Midler and Laverne Cox), James is a 17-year-old self-proclaimed psychopath whose greatest childhood thrill involved knifing cats and hamsters. And now he's out for blood again – human blood. Enter Alyssa (an icy-but-empathetic turn from Jessica Barden), his amusingly acerbic schoolmate. Has he found the one? Throughout the show's charmingly breezy, venturesome and beautifully scored eight episodes – during which James has an unexpected urinal experience with an older man that has Alyssa questioning his sexuality, and a pair of everyday lesbian cops try to track them down – his plans for Alyssa unthread as their romantic and deadly kindred-spirit bond see them through to the show's bitter, bloody good, you're-gonna-cry end.



"mother!," Blu-ray/DVD

Behold every last glorious strand of Jennifer Lawrence's constantly transforming hair – silky waves! French braids! – as Darren Aronofsky's dark allegorical descent into Trumpland and man's ravaging of Mother Nature takes you to new crazy places. Just try looking away from the director's maddening and mysterious follow up to "Black Swan" as a grippingly freaked J. Law

wanders her home in the same lost manner I imagine our own president does every day in his, trying to understand what's up with the fact that her artist husband (Javier Bardem) has opened their door to strangers who are maybe, probably – OK, definitely – up to no good. Those strangers are ominously portrayed by Ed Harris and Michelle Pfeiffer, and if you needed another reason to squirm through this messy rabbit hole of doom and gloom and insane plot points, it's to watch a sketchy Pfeiffer steal scenes as the vaguely titled character "Woman" (J. Law is, you guessed

See Screen Queen, page 17



Photo by Dario Acosta



Photo by Sim Canetty-Clarke

ums
BE PRESENT

Janai Brugger, soprano Martin Katz, piano

Wednesday, January 31 // 7:30 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre

At the Metropolitan Opera competition in 2012, the *New York Times* wrote, "Only one singer inspired me to look forward to a full performance. Janai Brugger sang with poise and style, quiet intensity, and superb phrasing... The emotion was in her sound, which projected, with silvery ease, relaxed but focused bliss and then haunting melancholy."

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8980: Book of Travelers

Gabriel Kahane, vocalist and composer
Directed by Daniel Fish
Set and video design by Jim Findlay
Friday, February 2 // 8 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre

The morning after the 2016 presidential election, singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane packed a suitcase and set out for a two-week train trip across the US with no phone or internet, embracing 8,980 miles of a reclusive Amtrak existence. The result is this hymn to the analog intimacy of American rail culture as an antidote to the fragmentation and efficiency of modern life.

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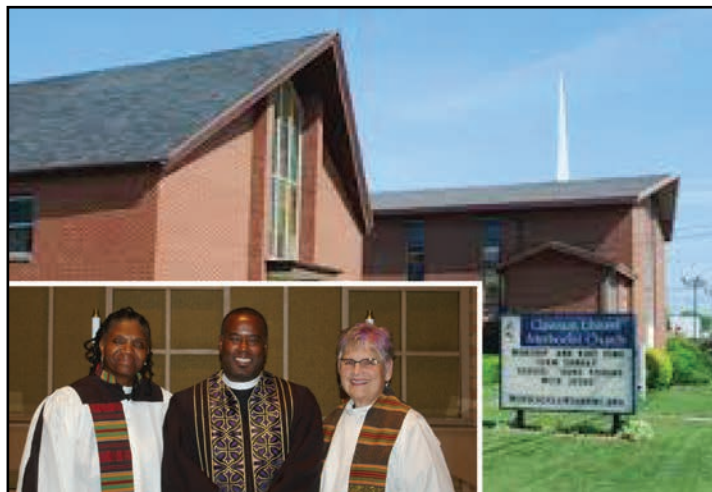
Schubert's *Winterreise* Ian Bostridge, tenor Julius Drake, piano

Sunday, February 4 // 4 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre

Of recent performances in England, the *Financial Times* observed that "Bostridge gets inside the very soul of Schubert's tortured winter traveler." *The Telegraph* raved, "This was without doubt the most extraordinary, riveting, uncanny performance of Schubert's great song-cycle I have ever witnessed."

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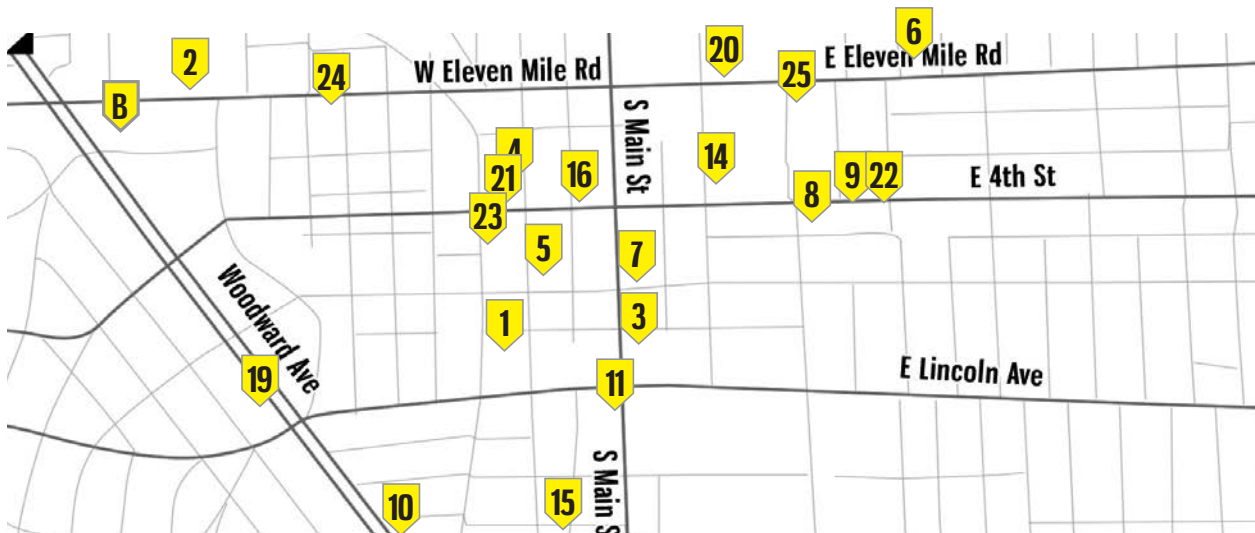
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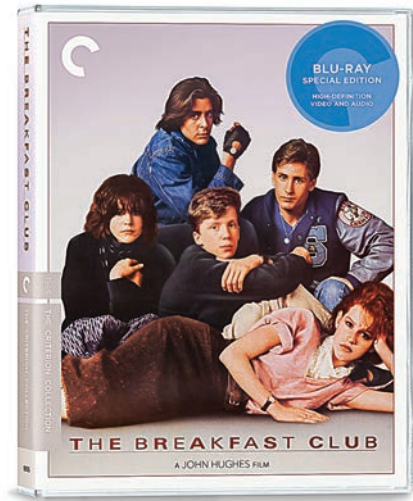
► **Screen Queen**

Continued from p. 15

it, the eponymous “Mother”). Inhabiting the role of horny housewife with a delicious mean streak, Pfeiffer sets her scenes on fire as the film blazes a dreary path of political commentary that sometimes feels like an art student’s final project gone awry. Aronofsky’s commitment to the absurd and chaotic is certainly, at the very least, commendable. But guys, that hair...

“**The Breakfast Club,**” **The Criterion Collection, Blu-ray**

John Hughes’ quintessential coming-of-age classic, “The Breakfast Club,” is as timeless as the misfit archetypes the late filmmaker sought to explore and subvert when he wrote and directed one of teen-hood’s greatest artistic depictions. Simply put, few filmmakers are as synonymous with the ’80s as Hughes. Within the depths of his everyday characters – in “The Breakfast Club,” specifically, that includes Andrew Clark (Emilio Estevez), Brian Johnson (Anthony Michael Hall), John Bender (Judd Nelson), Claire Standish (Molly Ringwald) and Allison Reynolds (Ally Sheedy) – we could see ourselves, or the people we once were (the writer-director’s Duckie in “Pretty in Pink” was an early queer idol). The empathy-engendering, zeitgeist-capturing “The Breakfast Club” encouraged generations of fronting schoolkids – and, perhaps, the adults they eventually became – to let their



true colors show. Criterion Collection’s new Blu-ray release respectfully offers the film’s most comprehensive set yet, delivering on all levels: a superb 4K restoration, along with new sit-downs featuring Sheedy and Ringwald, who acknowledges Hughes for being an early supporter of nonconformist leading ladies.

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

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Royal Oak Music Theatre to Host Bianca Del Rio

BY BTL STAFF

Four years ago, Roy Haylock shot to fame when he appeared on season six of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” and won with his drag alter ego Bianca Del Rio. Before that, Haylock worked at a theater doing shows. In an interview with Time Out, he said he first developed the character at a gay wedding.

“I was kind of pooh-poohing the idea going, ‘Nah, I don’t want to do it.’ But then they said it was \$500 and I said yes,” Haylock said with a laugh. “Some people who were at the wedding worked at the local bar and they asked me if I wanted to do a guest spot, and that just kind of snowballed into my life. First it was one night a week, then it was two nights a week and then it became five nights a week.”

Now, Bianca Del Rio is famous for her lightning-quick wit, snappy comebacks and foul mouth. In the four years since she became nationally famous, she has already had two stand-up specials “Rolodex of Hate” and “Not Today Satan,” as well as a feature film “Hurricane Bianca.” Now, she returns to the stage with her newest stand-up show “Blame

it on Bianca Del Rio.”

At these shows no topic is safe from her humor, least of all the audience members as Del Rio is known for her ability to draw comedic inspiration from her surroundings. One Australian review by Jesse Chaffey for Scenestr gave Del Rio 4.5 stars out of 5 in large part for this ability.

“Brisbane, in particular, gave Bianca a straight mother who had once dabbled in the lady pond, a particularly ‘bitchy’ looking man in the front row and a married woman who had left her husband at home to see the show,” Chaffey wrote. “For me, a great deal of the laughs came from these on-the-fly moments where Bianca used her razor-sharp, lightning speed wit to outsmart fans who – let’s be honest – loved every second of her hatred.”

Bianca Del Rio will perform at the Royal Music Theatre on Friday, Feb. 23. Tickets start at \$39.50 and more information about the performance can be found online at royaloakmusictheatre.com or thebiancadelrio.com. The Royal Oak Music Theatre is located at 218 W. 4th St., Royal Oak. 248-399-2980.

Detroit Mercy Theatre Company Hosts Anatomy of a Scene

Whether one is interested in acting, writing or directing, it is vital that one understands the basics of storytelling. For both movie buffs and theater fans alike, the Detroit Mercy Theatre Company is offering a seminar at the Royal Oak Public library to teach the basics of scene structure.

The lesson will be an interactive one, borrowing key scenes from “A Bright New Boise” by playwright Samuel D. Hunter. Hunter’s work begins as a comedy in the break room of a Boise, Idaho, Hobby Lobby, and then slowly turns into a darker tale of scandal

and confrontation. Students of Detroit Mercy’s class will learn about the importance of both the information in a scene, and how the way that information is presented can affect an audience’s perception of the story. Attendees of the free event will also familiarize themselves with the common choices that scene writers make in order to convey a point.

For more information about the event, go to thetheatreco.com. The Royal Oak Public Library is located 222 E. Eleven Mile Road, Royal Oak. 248-246-3700



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'A Chorus Line' Comes to the Fox Theatre

For those who love theater, "A Chorus Line" is almost as good as a behind-the-scenes look. The Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical follows the story of 17 dancers who are auditioning for an upcoming Broadway performance. The show comes to the Fox Theatre on Feb. 17, with tickets starting at \$30. More information can be found online at olympiaentertainment.com and at ticketmaster.com. Tickets can also be purchased by phone at 800-745-3000.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Jan. 18

45+ Club 12:00 pm Activity and community group for persons age 45 and up. Play games and socialize in the Affirmations' Game Room. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

Saturday, Jan. 20

Friends and Families 12:30 pm Support group for friends and families of LGBTQ identifying persons. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

LGBTQ with HPV 6:00 pm Support, discussion and activity group for anyone with HSV1/2 and HPV. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

Winter Gala 7:00 pm Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 South Park

St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234 <http://wintergala2018.eventbrite.com>

Tuesday, Jan. 23

How to Support Recovery and Not Support Addiction 7:30 pm By Chuck Gehrke, MD, FACP, FASAM. Simple, effective actions for family, friends and others to avoid enabling addiction and support recovery. Free. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725 <http://www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series>

Wednesday, Jan. 24

2018 Creating Change Conference 1:00 am Alexa Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ben de Guzman, Eliot Sutler, Rodney McKenzie, Jr., and Terrance Laney will be serving as host committee co-chairs. Marriott Wardman Park, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, D.C.. <http://www.thetaskforce.org>

Thursday, Jan. 25

2018 Creating Change Conference 1:00 am Alexa Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ben de Guzman, Eliot Sutler, Rodney McKenzie, Jr., and Terrance Laney will be serving as host committee co-chairs. Marriott Wardman Park, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, D.C.. <http://www.thetaskforce.org>

45+ Club 12:00 pm Activity and community group for persons age 45 and up. Play games and socialize in the Affirmations' Game Room. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

Friday, Jan. 26

2018 Creating Change Conference 1:00 am Alexa Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ben de Guzman, Eliot Sutler, Rodney McKenzie, Jr., and Terrance Laney will be serving as host committee co-chairs. Marriott Wardman Park, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, D.C.. <http://www.thetaskforce.org>

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Saturday, Jan. 27

2018 Creating Change Conference 1:00 am Alexa Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ben de

Guzman, Eliot Sutler, Rodney McKenzie, Jr., and Terrance Laney will be serving as host committee co-chairs. Marriott Wardman Park, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, D.C.. <http://www.thetaskforce.org>

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Friends and Families 12:30 pm Support group for friends and families of LGBTQ identifying persons. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine

Editor's Pick 'The Most Beautiful Woman' at DIA

When many think of the Austrian-born film noir star of 1930s, '40s and '50s, few realize that Lamarr's work extended off-screen as well — as an inventor. Lamarr's mechanical inventions not only helped to defeat the Nazis in World War II, but helped spur technological breakthroughs that led to common-day necessities like Wi-Fi and GPS. "Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story" is a documentary on her inventions and will be held at the DFT Auditorium on Jan. 20 at 4 p.m. Admission is \$9.50, with a \$2 discount for seniors, students and DIA members. The auditorium is located at 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. More information can be found at dia.org.



Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

Sunday, Jan. 28

2018 Creating Change Conference 1:00 am Alexa Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ben de Guzman, Eliot Sutler, Rodney McKenzie, Jr., and Terrance Laney will be serving as host committee co-chairs. Marriott Wardman Park, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, D.C.. <http://www.thetaskforce.org>

Tuesday, Jan. 30

Trauma, Chemical Use and Addiction 7:30 pm By Tana Bridge, PhD, ACSW, LMSW, ACTP. Learn about the relationship between addiction and trauma, and recovery from both conditions. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725 <http://www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series>

MUSIC & MORE

East Lansing Roller Derby Mitten Mavens Basic Skills Bootcamp 6:00 pm Are you looking for a new hobby for the new year? It's time to try roller derby! It will change your life. If you are looking for an activity that is athletic, a good workout, Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. 989-205-1888 join@mittenmavens.net <http://mittenmavens.net/join/bootcamp> <https://www.facebook.com/events/367622083700196/?ti=icl>

The Novi Home Show Jan. 24-26 2:00 pm Suburban Collection Showplace, 4, Novi. 5867526381 gmonette@allseasonscommunications.com www.novihomeshow.com

41st Ann Arbor Folk Festival 6:30 pm The 41st Ann Arbor Folk Festival, a fund-raiser for The Ark, Ann Arbor's non-profit home for folk, roots, and ethnic music. Doors Open: 6:00 pm Show Starts: 6:30 pm Ticket Price: \$42.50-\$200 (one night); \$75-\$360 One event on Jan. 27 at 6:30pm Ann Arbor Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 555-555-5555 <http://www.theark.org>

Valentine's Day With Cyrille Aimée 7:00 pm "A massively talented international chanteuse," exclaims the New York Observer. Spend this Valentine's Day with your special someone and French cabaret vocalist Cyrille Aimée. TICKETS: \$49 - VIP Experience -Includes reserved section premium seating and Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3135765162 <https://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4765&prod=4764>

[dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4760&prod=4759](https://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4760&prod=4759)

Le Ciné Cube 10:30 pm Film Shorts + Live Music by the Andrew Alden Ensemble Silent French films come to life with live music performed by the Andrew Alden Ensemble. From 1920's Avant-Garde horror to famous shorts by French Filmmaker Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3135765162 <https://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4765&prod=4764>

Le Ciné Cube 5:30 pm Screening of Round Midnight + Q&A Bertrand Tavernier's 1986 American-French musical drama film Round Midnight stars legendary jazz saxophonist Dexter Gordon, François Cluzet, and Herbie Hancock and captures the Paris jazz scene of the 1950s. Martin Scorsese, Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3135765162 <https://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4762&prod=4761>

ART 'N' AROUND

Monet - Framing Life 9:00 am One ticket sends you on two artistic adventures — Monet: Framing Life and Church: A Painter's Pilgrimage. Travel to distinct places and time in history to experience the world as these two artists did. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900 <http://www.dia.org>

Church - A Painter's Pilgrimage 9:00 am One ticket sends you on two artistic adventures — Monet: Framing Life and Church: A Painter's Pilgrimage. Travel to distinct places and time in history to experience the world as these two artists did. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900 <http://www.dia.org>

The Art of Containment 12:00 pm 50 plus Vessels from Bloomfield Hills resident Sidney Swidler's Collection, curated & amassed over 30 years! Tickets: Adults \$7, Kids \$5, Senior Citizens \$5, Free under 12, FREE SATURDAYS! Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-234-1695 <https://flintarts.org>

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Directed by Carla Milarch. Theatre Nova, 410 W. Huron, Ann Arbor. Jan. 26 - Feb. 18. 7346358450. <http://www.theatrenova.org>

Professional

Finding Neverland Far and away the BEST musical of the year! Broadway In Detroit, Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Feb. 6 - Feb. 18. 313-872-1000. www.broadwayindetroit.com

Into The Woods Tickets \$23-\$26.50. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. Jan. 19 - Feb. 11. 2485418027. www.stagecrafters.org

Our Lady of Poison Giulia Tofana and her daughter Girolama are beloved apothecaries, and skilled poisoners. This mother-daughter team run an infamous underground operation to provide unfortunate wives with an escape from untenable marriages. Based on historical events. Check website for details. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. Jan. 25 - Feb. 25. 517-655-SHOW. www.williamstontheatre.org

Editor's Pick

2Cellos at Fox Theatre

Besides guitar and bass, rarely are string instruments associated with genres other than classical and country, but cellists Luka Sulic and Stjepan Hauser prove that that doesn't have to be the case. The duo, known as 2Cellos, has performed rock, pop, classical and film music. Now, the group heads to the Fox Theatre on Jan. 23. at 8 p.m. More information about the performance can be found online at 2cellos.com.



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Fair Michigan Hosts Partners for Justice Fundraising Dinner

BY BTL STAFF

The Plymouth-based organization Fair Michigan is gearing up for a fundraising dinner in order to maintain its advocacy for LGBTQ issues. On Feb. 7, Emmy Award-winning Fox 2 News Anchor Amy Lange will accompany Michigan Radio reporter Jack Lessenberry to the Fair Michigan Justice Project Dinner.

The Justice Project is a collaboration between Fair Michigan and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office in an effort to focus on the the homicides and capital offences committed against LGBTQ people. The effort is exclusively funded by Fair Michigan, and has so far had a 100 percent conviction rate.

At the dinner, Fair Michigan will award Champions of Justice Awards to people involved in the project, as well as provide updates on Fair Michigan's progress. A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available starting at \$60 for benefactors, ranging to \$500 for table sponsors.

More information about the fundraising dinner can be found online at fairmichigan.org/JusticeDinner/. The event will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 7 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Burton Manor 27777 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia.

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'Let All Your Colors Be'

Detroit Recording Artist to Launch New Album

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's been nearly five years since Detroit-based recording artist Logan Mario sat down for an interview with BTL. Since that time, Mario has been busy. When last we spoke Mario had just released "Love is Love," a bonafide pride anthem. In 2015 he released a Valentine's Day EP called #VDAY and later in the year a full-length mixtape called #BlueHeart.

His output in 2016 was minimal – just one single, "New Year" – but nevertheless Mario was hard at work on his latest masterpiece. On Jan. 26th, Mario will release a full-length album titled Emerge.

"It symbolizes existing in all your facets, all your colors," Mario said. "Truly being all that you are and all that you were meant to be. Like my song 'Human' says, 'You're not monochromatic. Let all your colors be.' I've learned to do that."

The album, Mario said, is about life lessons and what he's learned in the time between releases.

"These songs honestly are the lessons I've learned over the last year and a half when it comes to life and love," he said. "These songs show my orientation towards self-love above all other forms of love. Cause it all starts with me."

That is why Mario chose his 30th birthday as the release date for the project.

"It's significant because I've never felt like more myself than I do right here, right now," said Mario. "I am a singer and songwriter. I'm past the point of talking about it. I'm doing it. After all, you can't chase the dream forever. Eventually you catch it. You live it. Like my classmate Big Sean said, you 'Dream it' then 'Real-life it.'"

With this collection of songs, "my entire vantage point is different," Mario said. "I've started allowing myself to have fun. I know what I bring as an artist and am comfortable standing on that, versus trying to convince people. I'm not afraid to be sexy. Confident. Independent. Vulnerable. I'm letting this music speak for itself."

A prolific lyricist, writing, Mario



Logan Mario. Photo by Manessa Riser

said, comes naturally to him.

"Writing is such a magical process for me. When I find a track that I respond to, I can already hear the song before I write anything. It's like it's already there, I just have to sing it. Isn't that crazy? I honestly feel like more of a listener than a songwriter. I sing what's already there."

Despite the simplification, Mario's lyrics are mature and sophisticated. His rhymes and hooks capture you quickly and lure you in to that place where you can really feel the emotion of his words. A self-produced artist, Mario is adept at weaving tales that pull at the heart strings and actually sting with the ring of truth when he talks about lost and unrequited love.

A reformed perfectionist, Mario said now he has learned to relax when making music.

"I used to be a perfectionist but I had to let that shit go," he said. "It was stifling. I replaced that with artistic freedom, which is much more valuable

to me. I had to get to a place where releasing music was simple. When you produce yourself you can keep editing and adding and editing and adding ... you can get lost in that loop. Now that I've let that go, I'm able to maintain the quality of my sound, celebrate what's been created and get out. It's that simple.

INFO

The day following the album release, Saturday, Jan. 27, Mario will be performing a special album release concert at Spread Art, located at 5141 Rosa Park Blvd. in Detroit. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased at the door. Hard copies of Emerge: Deluxe Edition will be available for purchase at the show. The album will also be available through iTunes, amazon.com and other online retailers.

For more information, visit www.loganmariomusic.com.

TG Detroit Invades Detroit for the 4th Time

BY BTL STAFF

For the fourth year in a row, TG Detroit has been hosting quarterly Detroit Invasion events in an effort to foster a sense of community among transgender individuals in the city. The organization said on its website that it hopes the events will create an environment that is “welcoming all individuals under the transgender umbrella, whether part time, full time, post-op, pre-op or non-op, along with all allies and supporters, and with no labels and prejudices. All are welcome in our local family.”

Now in its fourth year of hosting these events, its upcoming Jan. 25 event will be its 13th so far. The event is structured like a walkthrough of the city, with a variety of Detroit hotspots to check out. Some activities featured in January’s Invasion will feature a visit to the North American International Auto Show, ice skating

downtown and an oldies-themed disco party with music from the ‘70s to the ‘90s.

Newcomers to the event are also welcome to participate in TG Detroit’s Big Sister Program which pairs up first-timers to Detroit Invasion with a “veteran.” TG Detroit hopes that these matches will allow people who might be uncomfortable with going to event alone more relaxed.

“... a Big Sister is not here to dress you or do your makeup for you ... rather a Big Sister is here to answer basic questions and essentially be waiting for you when you arrive to make sure you get out of your car and that you meet some people once inside. The rest is up to you. After all, big sisters like to have fun at Invasion, too. But having someone to keep an eye on you can be an awesome thing,” according to the TG Detroit website.

The event costs \$5 for admission and will begin at 4 p.m. and run until 2 a.m. A full itinerary can be found online at tgdetroit.com.

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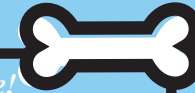
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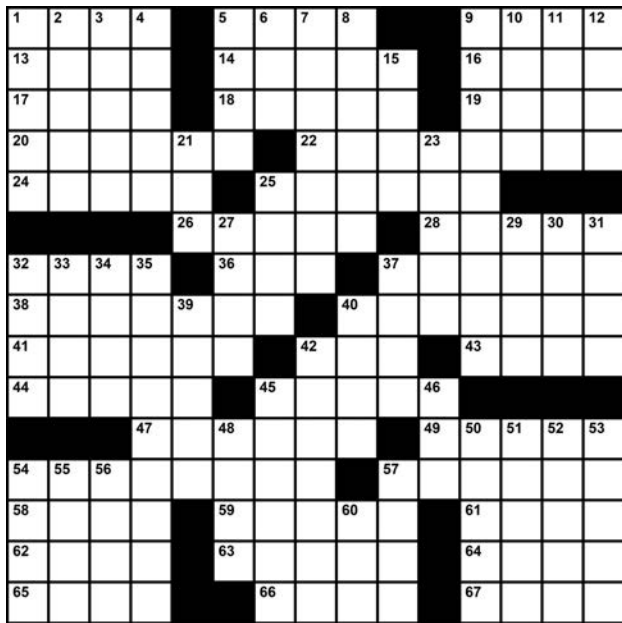


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Q Puzzle



- 38 *Billy of "American Horror Story"
 40 *"I Love Dick" creator Jill
 41 It may cream your face when you bite it
 42 "Argo" employer
 43 Miss, to Mauresmo
 44 ___ Ste. Marie, Mich.
 45 Network of "Wedding Wars"
 47 Makes up
 49 Ass-kissers' responses
 54 *LGBTQ rights activist Jazz
 57 Like the people in this puzzle whose clues are starred
 58 Glenn, in "Fatal Attraction"
 59 1971 Jane Fonda movie
 61 Bishop's "Creep ___ Thy Narrow Bed"
 62 Title for Edna or Judi
 63 Evita's married name
 64 At no time, in verse
 65 Mireille of "World War Z"
 66 *"Out in Left Field" host Goldberg
 67 Verdon, who played Lola
- 15 Tickle pink
 21 La mer, to Debussy
 23 Like Shirley MacLaine's magnolias
 25 HI, once
 27 He may have crystal balls
 29 Poem of 22-Across
 30 Anal alternative
 31 Lid problem
 32 Links athletic supporters
 33 Affluent, to Lorca
 34 Sometime defender of gay rts.
 35 Units in Alexander's army
 37 Thoroughfare with yellow bricks
 39 Untouchable target
 40 Homophobia and such
 42 Pause in Dickinson's "I'm nobody! Who are you?"
 45 Avoided going straight
 46 Look in a gay bar
 48 Peeling fruits for soldiers, e.g.
 50 Georgetown Hoyas' coach Patrick
 51 Muscle Mary's pride
 52 Makeup maker Lauder
 53 Like a clipped sheep
 54 Green stones material
 55 Zip
 56 DeGeneres' "Finding ___"
 57 Malone of "Life as a House"
 60 Amount of bricks

Down

- 1 Hawaiian howdy
 2 Shakespearean king's daughter
 3 Bloody queen
 4 Ready for bed
 5 Early sneaker brand
 6 Be in the hole
 7 "South Pacific" composer
 8 Furry balls
 9 Spank a passive one?
 10 Pain held in by Schumacher?
 11 Othello, for example
 12 Like a tight opening

LGBTQ-J

Across

- 1 Prepares to shoot off
 5 *"Project Runway" judge Michael
 9 Broadway scenery chowers
 13 Ballet move
 14 Cuddly creatures of Endor
 16 Click it to go to AfterEllen.com
 17 Fairy tale bad guy
 18 "Fiddle-___!" (Scarlett's saying)

- 19 Pronoun for King James
 20 *New Queer Cinema pioneer Todd
 22 *"The Fall of America" author Allen
 24 Antigay crusader Bryant
 25 Take care of
 26 Visitors at lesbianation.com
 28 Gay cultural values, e.g.
 32 Peril for Patty Sheehan
 36 Hems and haws
 37 Oral zinger

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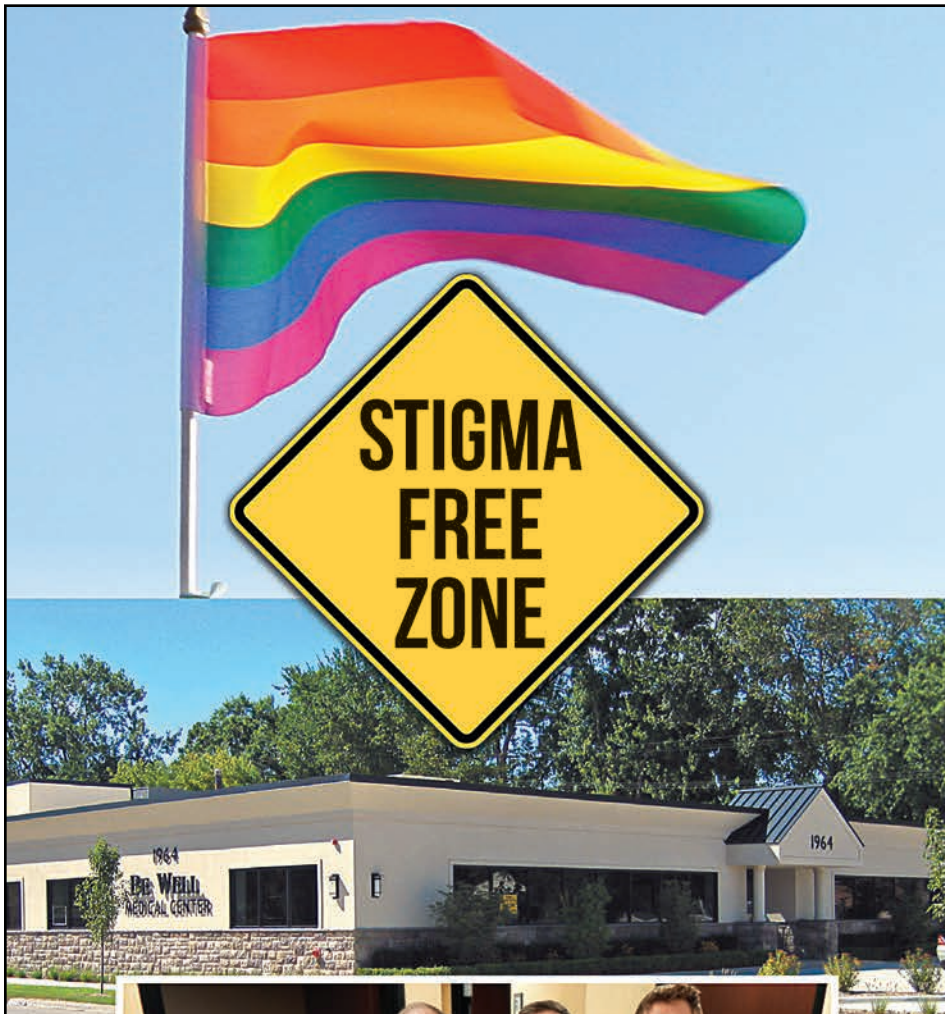
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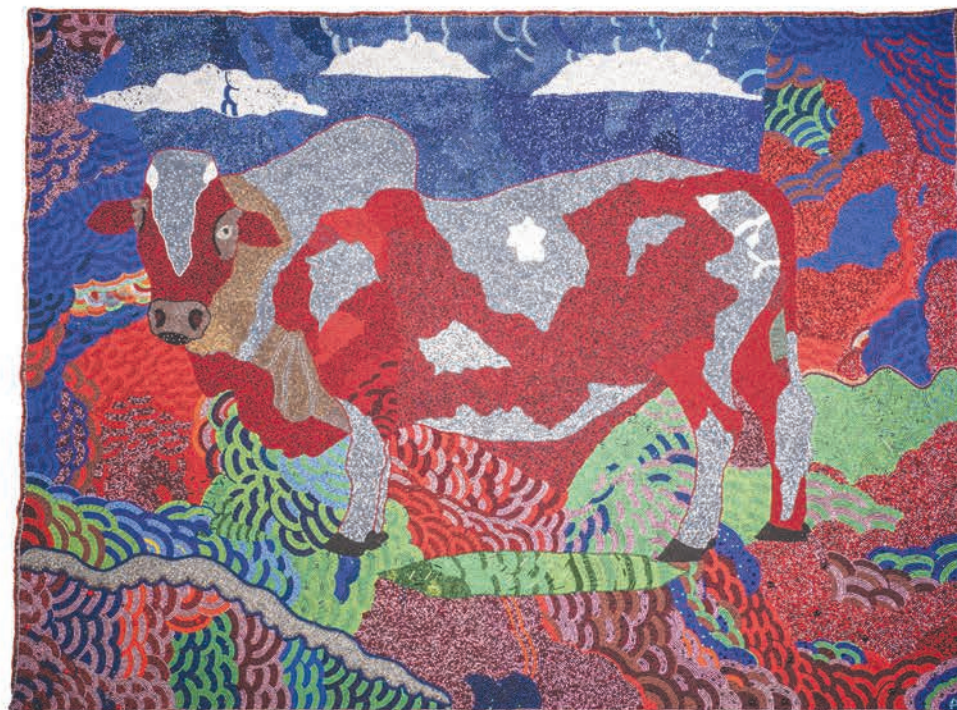
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Zondile Zondo, b. 1969, *I am ill, I still see Color and Beauty: Jamludi The Red Cow*, 2012, Glass beads sewn onto fabric, 49 x 64 1/4 x 2 inches, Private Collection.

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