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Michigan State Senate
Candidate Jeremy Moss
Calls February 'Bad Month'
for LGBTQ Michiganders

BTL Endorses Dana Nessel
for Attorney General

LGBT Groups Condemn
Fla. High School Shooting,
Nationwide Protests
Planned March 24

A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a black sleeveless dress and high heels, stands on a set of railroad tracks. The tracks run parallel to each other, receding into the distance. The background shows green trees and a utility pole under a bright sky. The woman is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

BEHIND EVERY GREAT WOMAN ...

'27' Soprano Monica Dewey on Playing
Alice B. Toklas in Southeast Michigan

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14 Monica Dewey. Photo by Synthia Steiman.

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PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
 Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association
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 National Gay & Lesbian Chamber
 Q Syndicate



EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 102
 susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 106
 chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Feature News Editor

Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 108
 kate@pridesource.com

Editorial Assistant

Eve Kucharski, 734.293.7200 x 105
 eve@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers

Emell Derra Adolphus, Michelle Brown, Todd A. Heywood, Ellen Knoppow, Jason Michael, Drew Howard, Jonathan Thurston

CREATIVE

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Columnists

Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown, Mikey Rox, D'Anne Witkowski, Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Cartoonists

Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Alexander Godin, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 101
 jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 103
 anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 104
 donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Michigan State Senate Candidate Jeremy Moss calls February 'Bad Month' for LGBTQ Michiganders

BY BTL STAFF

February hasn't even ended, but anti-LGBTQ actions this month have prompted State Rep. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) to dub it "bad" for LGBTQ Michiganders. Moss is referring first to the appointment of Bishop Ira Combs Jr. of Jackson to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. The Commission has eight members appointed by the governor who investigate civil rights complaints and recommend new laws to him.

Combs has a long history of anti-gay activity. He opposes same-sex marriage and ordinances banning LGBTQ discrimination. He fought against passage of the Jackson anti-discrimination ordinance last year. Combs told the Detroit Free Press that "the gays that are complaining"

about his opposition to gay rights "are economically advantaged" earning more than most Americans.

Moss is also opposed to the practices of a Southeast Michigan Pastor, Jeremy Schossau of Metro City Church, who promotes what some are calling conversion therapy. Moss, along with other legislators, has moved to ban the practice in Michigan.

On Feb. 8, State Reps. Adam Zemke (D-Ann Arbor), Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstone Township), Tim Sneller (D-Burton), Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) along with Moss, wrote a letter to Attorney General Bill Schuette to denounce the practice.

The letter's goal is to discredit the validity of the workshops offered by Metro City Church and FORGE Ministries, which target their services to girls ages 12 to 16 "by birth" who feel that they might be "Trans — Bi — Gay or other" and charge \$200 for attendance. The letter reads: "There is a long-standing consensus among our nation's leading mental health experts, including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of Social Workers, that these practices are extremely dangerous and often lead to depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, and even suicide."

On Feb. 8, House Bill 5550 was introduced which would stop mental health professionals from attempting to change the sexual orientation and gender identity of minors. If Michigan were to pass this bill, it would be the 10th state to have laws against the practice of conversion therapy.

Moss, who is running for Michigan State Senate this year, said that both the appointment of Combs and the necessity of the bill is a "wake up call to all Michigan representatives that fight for equality."

"The fight didn't end in June 2015 with marriage equality," Moss said. "People can change this if they vote for LGBTQ interests in 2018 based on which candidates support our community."



State Rep. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield)

New PrEP PSA Unveiled at National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Conference

UNIFIED – HIV Health & Beyond Targets Cisgender, Heterosexual Women in Ad, Receives Mixed Reviews

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The National Black Leadership Coalition on AIDS – Detroit Chapter hosted a National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day conference on Friday at Michigan State University – Detroit Center. The conference, which attracted around 25 people, marked the premiere of UNIFIED – HIV Health & Beyond's new public service announcement, "#PrEPProtects."

The two-minute, 10-second spot - the first of three UNIFIED plans to produce - was geared toward heterosexual, cisgender women and featured a voiceover by American Broadway performer and singer Frenchie Davis. Images in the video feature a heterosexual couple while Davis is heard telling the story of a heterosexual woman who contracts HIV from her heterosexual male partner.

The statement, "When the condoms are left on the dresser or still in the store don't forget to check under the bed for the demons on the floor," is repeated multiple times throughout what viewers described as a "dark" and "haunting" video.

"We wanted to break the stigma that PrEP is only for MSM - men who have sex with men - and only for the gay community," said Christopher Woolfolk, a linkage to care specialist with UNIFIED. "So we broadened it up and added a heterosexual couple where the woman was exposed to HIV. We wanted to break the stigma, because at one of our meetings we had a heterosexual female who said, 'I feel like I'm not being represented in any of these images we're seeing. I feel like when we talk about HIV I'm not included.'"

But the way the video depicted that inclusion and the repeated usage of the word "AIDS" instead of "HIV" made some in the room feel uncomfortable.

"It's a nice commercial however I am not one who would be willing to show this to clients or to even have people see it," said Satrise Tillman, a linkage specialist for Link-Up Detroit. "One, it's too long. Second, I don't like the fact that she's

mentioning AIDS, AIDS, AIDS. Let's start with HIV first and then get to the AIDS part. And the third thing I felt like she was saying is that it's his fault all through the commercial."

Chunnika Hodges, program coordinator for the National Black Leadership Coalition on AIDS – Detroit Chapter and GEM-EIS specialist for UNIFIED, justified the usage of the words AIDS in the video.

"How many clients that you deal with actually have that thought, and perception and that real fear?" she said. "Those thoughts are things I hear from women every day."

Hodges, who identifies as heterosexual, was direct.

"I'm a cisgender woman who was in a two-year relationship who contracted HIV and I did everything under the sun to protect myself other than to say, 'Hey, baby, let's go get tested,'" she said. "This is a series that we started, but we wanted to speak to the heterosexual woman because our voices are not being heard in any prevention messages or PrEP messages at all. So this is geared to our fears, our thoughts, and perceptions."

In the audience was Undrea Goodwin of Detroit, who believes "If you're a worker showing that to a consumer it's good. But a lot of people that I surround myself with - they can be older women and they have no clue. I'm thinking about those people. Not the ones you can sit down and talk to, but the ones who have no clue. The whole video just screamed AIDS, so that will feed into exactly what it is they think and they don't have anyone to explain it to them," said Goodwin.

Some took issue with the fact that the video is available for public dissemination on YouTube.

"If someone happens to see that and they don't have that support that's going to be an issue," said Clarence Peoples, a community outreach specialist with the Detroit Health Department.

"My initial reaction was that it was dark. I watched it three times. The first time I was thinking I don't like it because it's dark and she talks about dying soon and it perpetuates all those stigmas. But when I watched it and read the words and listened it was pretty powerful. But depending on where you are you might miss it at first."

Terrance Crenshaw of Detroit, also in the audience, said he liked the video and he understood it and its purpose.

"I'm really good at reading between the lines," Crenshaw said. "There was a message there that a lot of people didn't pick up on. It was saying pay attention to this message because there's more to this disease than you realize. A lot of you paid attention to the negative aspects of this video, but she's talking about something that everybody needs to be aware of. Pay attention to the message. That's all that piece was doing was trying to get you to think deeper."

Woolfolk said the video was designed to get viewers thinking.

"This is not the answer," he said. "This is the start of a conversation."

To view the video on YouTube, search for #PrEPProtects. For more information, visit miunified.org/Home.



Christopher Woolfolk (from left) from Unified - HIV Health and Beyond, Famika Edmond from the Detroit Health Department and National Black Leadership Coalition on AIDS - Detroit Chapter Program Coordinator Chunnika Hodges listen to concerns voiced after the viewing of the Unified PrEP PSA. (BTL photo: Jason A. Michael)

UPCOMING EVENTS



TRACY MORGAN
MARCH 24



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MARCH 30



Pat Benatar
& Neil Giraldo
MARCH 31



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APRIL 13

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Plea Deal Accepted by Man Accused of Robbing, Shooting Transgender Woman

BY BTL STAFF

Rather than serving life in prison, 19-year-old Jajuan Williams has accepted a plea deal. Williams was one of two men accused of robbing and shooting a transgender woman in Detroit's Palmer Park neighborhood last November. Williams' agreement calls for a sentence of 10 to 30 years in prison, plus an additional two years.

On Feb. 9, Williams pleaded guilty to the armed robbery which resulted in the serious injury of Sharita Maxwell. Maxwell is a transgender woman who was walking on Woodward Avenue on Nov. 17, 2017 at 1:50 a.m. when she was assaulted by two men in hooded sweatshirts and masks.

Surveillance tape revealed a man who is believed to be William's co-defendant, Charles Brown, to have jumped out of a GMC Yukon that pulled up to the curb next to Maxwell while holding a rifle. After a brief exchange, Maxwell dropped her purse and started to run away.

As the other man, believed to be Williams, went to pick up the purse, the gunman shot Maxwell in the back and the arm. It remains unclear if Maxwell was targeted because she was transgender, or if the crime was random.

The Detroit Free Press reports that Williams was originally charged with "armed robbery resulting in serious injury, armed robbery, use of a firearm in connection with a felony, felon in possession of a firearm, and being a habitual offender, fourth offense.

The Free Press reports that, "Brown is charged with assault with intent to commit murder, assault with intent to commit great bodily harm, armed robbery resulting in serious injury, armed robbery, fleeing and eluding, use of a firearm in connection with a felony, felon in possession of a firearm, and being a habitual offender – a second offense."

Brown, 21, is scheduled for trial on March 17.

Stone Roads: Fight for Better Infrastructure

ELECTIONS 2018

BY JONATHAN W. THURSTON

Brian Stone has announced his candidacy for Wayne County Commissioner in District 13. Members of the community who vote in the City of Dearborn or the City of Allen Park, are able to vote this race. Commissioner Gary Woronchak is the current county commissioner. He is running for state senate, so there will be no incumbent in the 13th district seat.

Stone, who ran for state senate in 2016, is the communications director for State Rep. Steve Bieda (D-Warren). Bieda is running for Michigan's 9th Congressional District.

Stone, a Navy veteran, has received numerous awards and medals for his distinguished service while serving from 2008 to 2012. As a leader in the community, when Stone found out major universities like the University of Michigan and Michigan State University were charging veterans out-of-state tuition, he mobilized veterans across the state to advocate for new policies.

When Michigan legislators proposed discriminatory legislation against Arab-Americans in 2016, Stone led the public relations counterstrike that forced both Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan legislature to back off. He's consistently spoken out about the way in which Arab and Muslim-Americans are mistreated by the media and the public, and frequently speaks out against misrepresentations of Dearborn being under "Sharia Law."

The Wayne County Commission and its employees are the legislative branch of county government. The chief role of the commission is to adopt a budget and enact ordinances. The commission also approves contracts, appointments and rules. The money is spent and ordinances are enforced through the administrative branch.

Wayne County, the most populous county in Michigan, is divided into 15 districts, and commissioners are elected every two years in even-year elections.

BTL spoke with him about his platform and his goals for LGBTQ equality in his district.

Can you tell us some about your current platform?

My current platform revolves around three key issues facing Wayne County – public safety, infrastructure and caring for our senior citizens. Right now, Wayne County has a lot of fundamental problems with violent crime. Crime impacts our residents and our image in a negative way. The fact is, everyone deserves to live in safety, no matter who they are. That's why I'm proud to say I worked with my current county commissioner, Gary Woronchak, to secure a public-private

Honestly, there's quite a few improvements we can make as a county on LGBTQ issues. For one, I think we can ensure the county requires that contractors and those receiving grants have a non-discrimination policy that applies to sexual orientation and gender identity.

partnership in funding the investigation and prosecution of LGBT hate crimes. The Wayne County partnership with Fair Michigan's Justice Project amounts to a \$1.6 million investment in public safety over the next 10 years. As the county commissioner for Dearborn and Allen Park, I will continue to support efforts to improve public safety in Wayne County.

In regards to infrastructure issues, there's no way around it: Wayne County roads and bridges are the worst. Here in Dearborn, we've had to close the Miller road bridge outside of the Rouge plant because of how unsafe it is. It will cost approximately \$5 million just to keep it open for five more years after repair. All of that industrial traffic is being diverted to Wyoming street, which is another heavily damaged county road.

Much of our roads issues are due to a lack of funding from the state legislature and congress, but I'm confident I'll be able to work with our county executive so we can improve processes for identifying when roads and bridges need repair, as well as doing more preventative maintenance that extends their lifespan. Lastly, the county provides many resources that help our seniors. Our current commissioner, Gary Woronchak, has been fantastic about regularly holding educational sessions for local seniors. I want to take the outstanding work he's done as a commissioner and continue to improve and expand on it.

Why are you the best person for the job?

I'm the only person running who's served my country in the military and the only one with real experience working with the commission to get funding on the table for public safety. I think I've proven, by getting the grant funding to fight hate crimes in Wayne County, that I can be an effective commissioner starting on day one.

How do you hope to fight for LGBTQ equality/ issues when you win the election?

Honestly, there's quite a few improvements we can make as a county on LGBTQ issues.



Wayne County Commissioner Candidate Brian Stone.

For one, I think we can ensure the county requires that contractors and those receiving grants have a non-discrimination policy that applies to sexual orientation and gender identity. I also think that we can do more for the public health needs of LGBTQ citizens by ensuring we're providing accurate information regarding substance abuse and doing our best to reduce the spread of HIV. Lastly, I think we have the opportunity to do more training in our courts, prisons and with our police on cultural competency in regards to the LGBT community. In particular, making sure that victims of crime aren't accidentally re-victimized by officers or judges who might not have any experience interacting with members of our community.

How has being openly gay affected (or not affected) your recent political activity?

In my experience, voters don't care about it. Voters care a lot more about the fact I'm a Navy veteran and about what I'm going to do to fix the roads. Frankly, if I didn't have a plan to fix the roads, I wouldn't like me very much either.

What's the best way for members of the community to support you leading up to the election?

Donating even a small amount can make a big difference. If you or any of your friends live in the area, volunteering can also be a big help. Votestone.com is a great place to start for both. Last, but not least, if you live in the area but can't volunteer, consider sharing my campaign's posts on social media. Anything that helps me get the message out is a big help.

TAKE THE LEAD



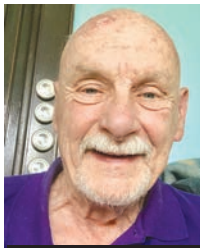
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Ten in Seventh Heaven (Pt. 1)

Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

MODEST DISCLAIMER: There are several books about afterlife experiences on the New York Times Best Seller list, including one by a 5-year-old kid (with a little grammar and spelling help from his word-savvy dad).

Another anesthesia-induced afterlife tale is by a bonafide MD who surely is more interested in immortal research rather than in eternal revenue. (Be that as it may, it's a real metaphysical progress that for the first time a rainbow voice – mine! – is granted heavenly consideration.)

Many such intriguing tales are what's called in the metaphysical publishing business, out-of-body experiences. Now and then, these fabrications are identified as lucid dreams. (Unfortunately, too many of my recent lucid dreams have been about Log Cabin Republicans with Donald Trump hairdos and golfing over – and/or under – hangs.) Oh, well.

This is my own, rather extended, OBE account. Though tempted, I'm not writing this for the money (Just want to keep that IRS-tracking record, er, straight. Criss cross my heart. Hold your breath, but not for too long.):

It's 12:02 a.m. according to my VeriSmart iPhone when, preoccupied with my Grindr messages from a busy Sunday – that fortunately included, by coincidence, attendance earlier at an ecumenical, non-evangelical, Trump-supporting church – I fall into an extra-large, long-standing, Gov. Engler-initiated, GOP-scanctioned pothole – for which tourist-traveled Michigan is noted and so favorably acclaimed nationally.

No sooner have I lost my mortal LGBTQA consciousness when I see the proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel.” Intrigued, I move closer and closer, somewhat startled, pleasantly surprised, that the light is bright rainbow colors. Suddenly, the air is filled with an overwhelming scent. No! It's not pot. It's ... patchouli! (Truly a heavenly sign.)

Not quite sure that I am, so to speak, “not in Kansas anymore,” I cautiously look about. And while the afterlife streets here are not made of 24 karat Cartier gold, they're not unlike Dorothy's Yellow Brick Road. Each brick carries a name and a date marked in cursive writing, “Came Out . . .”

And, seemingly out of nowhere, 10,000 off-Broadway voices begin to sing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”. The familiar medley is interrupted by my cellphone ring. (I pray my phone's brilliant pixel capacity does justice to the zillions of showbiz pictures I'm planning to take.)

“Hey, Big Guy, welcome home. Head to Seventh Heaven Condos, corner of Oscar Wilde Boulevard and Alice B. Toklas Avenue. Ask for Truman Capote, concierge. Say Between The Lines sent you. Trump will love that. Oh, yes! Be sure to bypass the nearby GOP cul-de-sac. It leads in the opposite direction.”

I type in GPS – not GOP – directions, kick up my heels – suddenly realizing my size 13s are red – and start to float effortlessly above a crowd of well-wishers below me waving banners. “Get you, Mary!” “You look Heavenly!” “Don't look a day over 30-something!” “Hubba Hubba Hallelujah!”

My aerial acrobatics are elating, joyful and free-spirited. Surely, I'm dreaming I say to myself as I soar effortlessly into the wild blue yonder,

My flight of newfound fancy lands me abruptly, but ever so softly, in front of Seventh Heaven: 121. Its sign reads, “It Takes One to Know One!”

“Welcome. Mary! It's your guardian angel, Tru.”



BTL Editorial

BTL Endorses Dana Nessel for Michigan Attorney General

BY SUSAN HOROWITZ AND JAN STEVENSON

The role of the Michigan Attorney General is a powerful, important position in the state. The office represents the people of Michigan in criminal and civil actions. They are supposed to be the hero that rides in on a steed to save Michiganders from the unscrupulous and criminal. That is the history former Democratic Attorney General Frank Kelley established in his 37 year-run in the office.

But in the last 16 years, that's changed. Under two Republican Attorneys General, Mike Cox and Bill Schuette, the average Michigander has been a target of the office. Whether it was action to erode the voter-approved medical marijuana law, defending the state's ban on same-sex marriage or joining other right-wing Attorneys General from across the nation to erode a woman's right

to choose; the Michigan Attorney General's office has become another arm of the Republican party's assault on everyday Michiganders in support of exploitative policies to restrict rights and protect the corporations.

In 2018, Michiganders have an opportunity to stop this politicalization and erosion of our rights. We need an Attorney General that understands that justice should be accessible to all Michiganders, not a select few powerful donors. Between The Lines believes that Dana Nessel is that leader as do prominent political action committees like the Victory Fund and LPAC, both of which endorsed her.

Nessel is recognized as one of the premier litigators of LGBTQ issues in the state who is known for taking the precedent-setting case DeBoer v. Snyder to the Supreme

See next page

To ensure Dana Nessel is nominated for the position of Michigan Attorney General, members of the community who wish to vote must be a member of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least 30 days prior to the endorsement convention on April 15 at Cobo Center in Detroit.

Court to win same-sex couples the right to marry in 2015.

Nessel embodies the “urgency of now” as it relates to seeking justice and equality. That urgency has put her at odds at times with progressive organizations like Equality Michigan and the ACLU of Michigan. She’s cantankerous and vocal; but those are not necessarily attributes that exclude her from the Attorney General’s office. Indeed those are qualities which uniquely position her to fight for Flint residents and their poisoned water, uncover sexual assault and harassment at Michigan State University and push for full equality of Michigan’s LGBTQ community.

That is something Nessel has been working toward since July 2016 when she launched the Fair Michigan Justice Project in collaboration with the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office. Since then, Nessel and her team have a 100 percent conviction rate pursuing hate crimes committed against people who are LGBTQ.

Patrick Miles, Nessel’s principal opponent and a private practice attorney, did not prosecute a single hate crimes case during his tenure as former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan. And his history as the U.S. Attorney raises serious issues. While in one breath claiming that he would not prosecute a person who was in compliance with Michigan’s Medical Marijuana Act, in the other he was charging several Okemos residents with enough felony charges to land them in federal prison for 100 years. Their sole crime was growing marijuana for patients – all legal under Michigan law.

While Miles has claimed in interviews with BTL that he will be an advocate for the LGBT community if elected as Attorney General, we

are not convinced, based on his history, that this will happen. Miles opposed marriage equality. Miles and his family have served for many years on the board of Grand Rapids Christian Church which hired anti-LGBTQ Pastor Rick Lippert. He has also served on the board of Aquinas College in Grand Rapids. That college has a long, sordid history of anti-LGBT actions, including barring a speech by Dr. John Corvino in 2008 while Miles served as president of the organization’s board. He did not fight for the community, he stood behind bigotry.

Miles has shown with his history that he is not the progressive people’s champion who Michiganders need and deserve in the Attorney General’s office. Nessel has proven that she’s willing to take on the unpopular and controversial – fighting against the conventional wisdom – in the pursuit of justice and equality for all. That is the leadership Michigan deserves in the Attorney General’s Office.

To ensure Nessel is nominated for this position, members of the community who wish to vote must be a member of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least 30 days prior to the endorsement convention on April 15 at Cobo Center in Detroit where the Democratic candidate for attorney general will be pre-determined. A nomination convention will take place Aug. 25-26 in Lansing. Members of the community who wish to vote must fill out an MDP membership application via mail or online before March 15.

For more information contact the MDP by phone at 517-371-5410 or by email at midemparty@michigandems.com.

Creep of the Week

Brian Brown

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

When I was a kid I knew of Bermuda only from songs, specifically “Kokomo” by the Beach Boys (“Bermuda, Bahama, come on pretty mama”) and “Bermuda Triangle” by Barry Manilow, a mysterious love story of sorts that includes the lyric, “Lying with my



Brian Brown

woman on the island sand.” Ha ha ha. It’s funny Because Manilow is gay.

In fact, after hiding their relationship for decades, Manilow married his husband Garry Kief in 2014.

But Manilow did not marry Kief in Bermuda. In fact, he couldn’t have because there was no legal marriage for gay couples in Bermuda in 2014. In fact, there was no marriage equality at all in Bermuda until a 2017 ruling by the country’s Supreme Court.

And then, on Feb. 7 marriage equality was gone again with the passage of the Domestic Partnership Act, which basically tells same-sex couples they can’t get married, though they can form domestic partnerships which will have rights similar to marriage.

And wouldn’t you know it, the National Organization for Marriage is very excited about Bermuda’s divorce of gay marriage.

In a Feb. 9 fundraising plea, NOM’s president Brian Brown crowed, “The country of Bermuda became the first nation in the world to repeal gay ‘marriage’ this week!”

He then claimed credit for it.

“NOM played a significant behind-the-scenes role in the tremendous victory in Bermuda,” Brown writes. “Our team advised pro-marriage supporters there on strategies to preserve marriage and I travelled there twice to meet with activists from Preserve Marriage Bermuda to discuss potential strategies.”

Well, how nice of him.

Brown is especially excited about this Bermuda “victory” because he claims it exposes the “lie” that the arc of history bends toward justice.

“The biggest lie about same-sex ‘marriage’ is that it is inevitable,” Brown

Brown sees marriage equality not as civil rights and functioning to strengthen bonds in families and the communities those families live in, but as a tyrannical imposition on “people of faith.” As if there aren’t LGBTQ people who have faith. As if having faith is a prerequisite for equal rights.

writes. “LGBT activists and their partners in the media regularly trot forth with falsehoods such as gay marriage is somehow part of an ‘arc of history,’ and that everybody needs to embrace it if they want to be ‘on the right side of history.’”

By “partners in the media” I’m assuming he’s referring specifically to Rachel Maddow and Anderson Cooper, and I am so here for that. However, it isn’t like this whole “arc of history” business is something silly gays made up, it’s something that came from two ministers. First abolitionist Theodore Parker, then Martin Luther King Jr.

And yet Brown sees marriage equality not as civil rights and functioning to strengthen bonds in families and the communities those families live in, but as a tyrannical imposition on “people of faith.” As if there aren’t LGBTQ people who have faith. As if having faith is a prerequisite for equal rights.

According to Brown, backers of same-sex marriage “want people to accept the lie that since the U.S. Supreme Court imposed gay marriage on the nation in 2015 with their illegitimate and anti-constitutional Obergefell decision, that the issue is resolved for all and that it’s time to accept it – no, more than accept it, everyone must openly embrace and celebrate it.”

Here Brown is right, but only partially. Gays most definitely want acceptance and celebration, which is why it’s the ultimate goal of the LGBTQ Shadow Government to make gay marriage mandatory for everyone as soon as President RuPaul and Vice President Latrice Royale are elected in 2020. You have to admit, “RuPaul/Royale” has a great ring to it. The arc of history is fierce, honey, and eventually people like Brown who are on the wrong side are, sooner or later, going to have to lip sync for their lives while the rest of us serve up equality realness.

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

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LGBT Groups Condemn Fla. High School Shooting

March Planned

On March 24, the children and families of those affected by the recent Florida shooting are planning to march on Washington D.C. to protest for more gun control. March for Our Lives is the group that is organizing this event and is being led by students across the U.S. The organization is also providing a means for rallies to be held around the U.S. for those who won't be able to go to the D.C. protest.

"March For Our Lives is created by, inspired by, and led by students across the country who will no longer risk their lives waiting for someone else to take action to stop the epidemic of mass school shootings that has become all too familiar," The page's mission statement said. "In the tragic wake of the seventeen lives brutally cut short in Florida, politicians are telling us that now is not the time to talk about guns. March For Our Lives believes the time is now."

The website is now accepting donations to sponsor marches nationally and selling T-Shirts to collect proceeds for its efforts. More information about the organization and upcoming marches can be found online at marchforourlives.com. They can also be reached at marchforourlives@gmail.com.

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

LGBT advocacy groups on Feb. 15 condemned the shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, that left at least 17 people dead and more than a dozen others injured.

The Pride Center in Wilton Manors, which is located roughly 20 miles southeast of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, on Wednesday said in a Facebook post that "at least 17 families and countless loved ones face unspeakable tragedy tonight in Broward County."

"Our hearts break for the students, teachers, administrators and families at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School," reads the post. "May they find comfort and strength in the face of untold loss."

Equality Florida, a statewide LGBT advocacy group, and the Human Rights Campaign are among the other groups that echoed the Pride Center.

"Equality Florida joins our fellow Floridians and the nation in grieving the 17 lives taken and those injured in yet another school mass shooting," said Equality Florida in a statement.

A 19-year-old man who was expelled from the high school has been charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder. Authorities say the alleged gunman used an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle that he legally bought in the shooting.

President Trump is expected to visit the high school in the coming days.

The shooting took place less than four months after a gunman killed 26 people and injured 20 others inside a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

A gunman on Oct. 1 killed 58 people and injured more than 500 others when he opened fire during a country music festival in Las



Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. (Photo public domain)

Vegas. A gunman killed 49 people inside the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla., on June 12, 2016.

The Pulse nightclub massacre was the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history until the incident in Las Vegas.

The mass shooting has once again renewed calls for gun control.

"We remain as deeply committed today as we were two years ago, in the aftermath of the massacre at Pulse, to the fight for common sense gun legislation," said Equality Florida in its statement.

"We are not helpless," it added. "We do not have to be hostages to special interests who believe that weapons of war should be available to everyone, anywhere, all the time. We can and we must stop this carnage with laws that are proven to make a difference.

This violence will only stop when we decide to stand up to a handful of voices with undue influence. The time has come to make common sense gun safety legislation a litmus test for anyone asking for our votes."

The Pride Fund to End Gun Violence, a political action committee that formed after the Pulse nightclub massacre, pointed out that the Feb. 15 shooting is the 18th such incident at a school this year.

"We need elected leaders who are committed to public safety," said the Pride Fund to End Gun Violence on its Twitter page. "If they are not up to the task, it is up to us to vote them out of office. Our children are counting on us to keep them safe from harm."

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

Panama Supreme Court Judge Withdraws Draft Ruling Against Marriage

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

A judge on the Panama Supreme Court who drafted a ruling against marriage rights for same-sex couples has withdrawn it.

Justice Luis Ramón Fábrega last October in his draft ruling wrote the provisions of Panama's family code that prevent gays and lesbians from marrying in the country are not unconstitutional. Fábrega also suggested members of Panama's National Assembly should consider "civil unions between people of the same sex."

La Estrella, a Panamanian newspaper, reported Fábrega on Thursday asked the court to withdraw his ruling.

The Panama Supreme Court last year heard oral arguments in a case that would extend marriage rights for same-sex couples in the Central American country. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights on Jan. 9 issued a landmark ruling that recognizes same-sex marriage and transgender rights.

The Costa Rican government requested an advisory opinion on whether it has an obligation to extend property rights to same-sex couples and allow trans people to change

their name and gender marker on identity documents. The government of Panama — which is among the countries that recognize the American Convention on Human Rights the Inter-American Court of Human Rights enforces — has signaled it will comply with the decision.

It remains unclear whether conservative justices on the Panama Supreme Court will argue the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' decision is not legally binding in the country.

Iván Chanis Barahona, president of Fundación Iguales, a Panamanian advocacy

group, is a lawyer who is working pro bono on the Panamanian same-sex marriage case. He told the Washington Blade on Friday he welcomes Fábrega's decision to withdraw his ruling.

"I want to see it as a very good sign of him realizing the (Inter-American Court of Human Rights) advisory opinion needs to be taken into consideration for the ruling," said Chanis.

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



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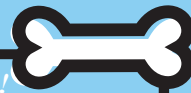
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Another Trump Budget, Another Attempt to Cut HIV/AIDS Programs

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

New year, new cuts to HIV/AIDS programs. President Trump's proposed \$4.4 trillion budget for fiscal year 2019 is most prominently characterized by soaring deficits, but also calls for varying degrees of cuts to HIV/AIDS programs reminiscent of his earlier request.

The proposed cuts for HIV/AIDS overall are significantly less than the cuts that were called "pretty shocking" in last year's request. But compared to current funding that was actually appropriated by Congress, fewer dollars are requested for domestic programs as the epidemic continues in the United States while global programs see dramatic cuts.

The reductions come at a time when HIV/AIDS continues to affect the LGBT community as well as populations within the United States and abroad. An estimated 1.2 million people have HIV/AIDS in the United States and 37 million have the disease worldwide.

Substantial reductions are proposed for Medicaid, which would be cut by \$1.1 trillion over the next decade. That program is important to low-income people with HIV/AIDS because an estimated 40 percent of Americans with the disease receive care under Medicaid.

In the aftermath of the tax reform package's undoing of the individual mandate in Obamacare, the Trump budget proposes to complete the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act by passage of the Graham-Cassidy proposal in Congress.

That would repeal the Medicaid expansion in Obamacare and reinvent the program as a block-grant program to the states, which is more limited and would raise questions about access to care if it were implemented.

But the Graham-Cassidy proposal was already rejected by Congress last year where there wasn't sufficient support to bring up the measure, prompting HIV/AIDS advocates to guffaw at the proposed change.

Carl Schmid, deputy executive director of the AIDS Institute, said the prospects for Congress passing the proposal were so low he hadn't considered it a serious concern.

"I think a lot of it is rehashing things that they proposed before, but there's no appetite in Congress to do it, particularly because of the Senate," Schmid said. "They're not going to do reconciliation this year, and so, they're going to have to get 60 votes to do these things, and I just don't see the appetite."

Schmid, however, did express concern about the proposal in the budget that would build on Medicaid work requirements the Trump administration allowed states to implement. The work requirement, Schmid said, exempts people with HIV/AIDS, but

wouldn't include people seeking to take PrEP to prevent HIV infection.

Daniel Bruner, senior director of health at the Whitman-Walker Health, said Congress is unlikely to pass the proposed cuts, but they nonetheless raise concern.

"The president is proposing very substantial cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and public assistance programs that support health, such as food stamps," Bruner said. "These cuts, if Congress agrees – and they likely won't agree with all of the cuts – would make it much harder to combat the HIV epidemic."

Other cuts are proposed for programs specifically designed to combat HIV/AIDS, although the reductions aren't as significant.

The budget calls for \$2.26 billion in funds for the Ryan White Care Act, which is a 2 percent reduction compared to existing funding levels. Those reductions are the result of zeroing out Special Projects of National Significance and AIDS Education & Training Centers, not services such as the AIDS Drug Assistance Program.

The Centers for Disease Control would see a \$40 million cut for HIV prevention efforts and a \$23 million cut for global health programs. That's a 5 percent cut from current funding, but not as big as last year's proposed cut, which was three times as much for HIV services.

HOPWA, or Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, had previously been flat-funded at \$330 million. The appropriations increased to \$356 million in current spending levels, but the budget calls for returning the level of funds to the \$330 million level.

Jennifer Kates, director of global health and HIV policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation, said although the cuts to domestic programs are relatively small, they could have an impact.

"Looking at the epidemic in the United States and where we are, there's more to be done and there's still lots of challenges, particularly, in some parts of the country for some populations," Kates said. "There's already a sense that there needed to be additional funding, particularly in prevention, so last year and this year's proposed decreased funding kind of go in the opposite direction."

Despite the reductions, the budget also calls for the creation at CDC of a new demonstration initiative that would "jointly eliminate multiple infectious diseases using intensive prevention, screening, and treatment/referral as treatment efforts."

"This initiative would focus on at least five states/jurisdictions, particularly those that are seeing a rise in infectious diseases related to opioid abuse," the request says.

Schmid said the proposal for the initiative is consistent with goals of HIV/AIDS advocates to allocate funds to HIV/AIDS prevention



“They did that at the expense of the HIV funding, so that’s not positive,” Schmid said. “We need to keep the HIV money there plus we need additional money to deal with opioids and infectious diseases.”

Schmid said HIV advocates are working with the Congress for HIV/AIDS connections to opioid abuse “because the administration hasn’t included that in their budget” and for the current fiscal year as opposed to FY-19.

For HIV/AIDS research, the budget roughly flatlines the National Institutes for Health at \$34.7 billion, which is about \$2 billion less than current levels of funds. That stands in contrast to the \$7.2 billion in cuts proposed in Trump’s previous request.

Mick Mulvaney, White House Director of the Office of Management & Budget, told reporters during a briefing Monday that flatlining was the result of Congress rejecting the cuts in the previous request.

“Congress, when they passed the appropriations bill in April, said not only are we going to plus it back up to the \$35-odd billion dollars or whatever it is, but they put a rider in that said it was against the law to spend any money to do analyses on the administrative costs,” Mulvaney said. “So they prevented us, by law, from trying to save money.”

But that flatlining might not be what it seems. According to the HIV Medicine Association, the budget appears to cut funds for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases by \$111 million, which could hamper biomedical answers to HIV treatment and prevention.

The modest cuts to domestic HIV/AIDS programs, however, pale in comparison to proposed reductions for global initiatives.

The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, would see a reduction of 17 percent compared to existing funding levels, down from \$4.65 billion in FY-17 to \$3.85 billion.

Contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria are down are whopping 31 percent. While the current level is at \$1.35 billion, Trump’s request calls for \$925 million in funds.

Kates said the dramatic cuts to global HIV/AIDS programs – similar to the reductions found in last year’s budget request – would have a serious effect overseas given the dependence of these programs on U.S. funds.

“The cuts are similar in magnitude as last year,” Kates said. “We did an analysis and we found that that could have a dramatic impact of health outcomes around the world, so the U.S. is such a large funder of global health efforts that cutting back on HIV efforts around the world could have a real impact.”

Asia Russell, executive director of the Health Global Access Project, took particular issue with the proposed cuts to global AIDS programs in a statement.

“This is not a time to back down,” Russell said. “U.S. funding for global AIDS programs has been critical in reducing deaths and new infections to the point where defeating AIDS is within reach. But after several years of flat funding from Congress, the response is running out of gas. At the very moment we should be on the brink of ending AIDS, Trump’s deadly budget would shift the global AIDS response into reverse.”

The White House Office of Management & Budget didn’t respond to the Washington Blade’s request to comment on the justification for cuts to domestic and global HIV/AIDS programs.

Melanie Thompson, chair of the HIV Medicine Association, said in a statement the budget proposal for both domestic and global programs is marked by a “regressive approach to public health” and HIV/AIDS.

“The plan released by the White House on Monday is short-sighted, damaging, and would erode the fabric of programs that people with HIV and millions of other Americans count on for access to the care and services that prevent and treat infectious diseases.

Even though the administration has proposed these cuts to HIV/AIDS programs, lawmakers need not agree to them and

likely won’t. In fact, after the administration proposed even more serious cuts last year, Congress kept the funding as it had been in years past.

Schmid predicted Congress would do the same in response to the FY-19 budget request, citing the recent two-year budget deal raising spending caps for non-discretionary spending to \$300 billion as evidence of plenty of room for spending.

“Congress rejected cuts to the Ryan White programs, cuts to the CDC last year, so we anticipate that’s how they’ll react this year, particularly because they have this budget agreement that has all this additional funding for the budget,” Schmid said.

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

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Behind Every Great Woman ...

PROFILE

Q&A With '27' Soprano Monica Dewey

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

A night out in Paris is never a mistake. And in the early 1900s, a trip down its cobble-stoned streets to the salon at 27 rue de Fleurus was an excellent decision. On an ideal night, one could make the acquaintance of Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and even more artistic leaders of the time. In charge of it all was Gertrude Stein, who is perhaps the best-known lesbian author in history. And, at her side, was always her wife Alice B. Toklas.

Toklas herself was a fixture of the Parisian avant-garde, and though she was never known to the degree of Stein, it was her support that kept the couple afloat for nearly four decades. That relationship, and everything that came with it, is explored in depth in Ricky Ian Gordon's opera "27," slated to appear on March 2 and March 3 as part of the Michigan Opera Theatre's 2018 season. Twenty-seven-year-old soprano Monica Dewey will be tackling Toklas' role.

Dewey is an award-winning singer who holds a bachelor's degree in music and arts administration from the University of Kentucky and a Master of Music degree from Indiana University. Most recently, in the spring of 2017, the Georgia-born singer was awarded first prize in the 10th International Hilde Zadek Voice Competition at the Musikverein in Vienna and received a Sullivan Foundation Award. Though she has played a variety of roles throughout her career, Dewey, who is openly gay, said she was excited to play a character whose sexuality she can identify with.

Between The Lines caught up with Dewey to get her take on playing Toklas, explore her love of opera and learn about her perspective as an LGBTQ opera singer.



Monica Dewey (left) sang her first opera at 19. Now, at 27, she is gearing up for a performance as Alice B. Toklas in "27." Here she is pictured with her photographer girlfriend Synthia Steiman.

Were you always musically inclined as a kid, or did you take interest in it later?

I grew up in a musical family. My dad really encouraged music making in the house. I'm the youngest of four, so at special events or parties, it always ended up with us around the piano and my dad playing and all of us singing. Another interesting and unique thing to my family: We grew up with a music room in our house. So, the extra room that is usually like a TV room or a study, my dad wanted it to be a music room.

We had an awesome grand piano and tons of different instruments like drums; there were always three or four accordions sitting around, trumpets, a violin, a harmonica. So, it was just kind of encouraged, and it was a big part of my upbringing.

With all of those instruments available, what drew you to singing?

I really fell in love with piano and was encouraged to continue with piano through high school and senior year, and I developed a great relationship with my piano teacher. I also played oboe in middle school. So, it's

funny, I kind of came to singing last.

I started singing when I was 16, and it was kind of like all these previous experiences in music culminated into just one amazing art form that was singing. I kind of knew right when I started singing that this was going to be it.

I started taking lessons when I was 16 and continued doing voice in college. The window of opportunity is quite small as a singer, you know? You really gotta start at 16, see what the voice does at 21, and then by 22, 23 you're doing your degree, and by the time you're out of there with your degree at 25, 26, you're hoping things will line up. So, that's about where I am right now.

What's the biggest challenge for you as a soprano?

Definitely the biggest challenge is that there are going to be twice as many sopranos as every other voice type. It can be difficult for opportunities; you've just got more people competing for the same part. The opera world is interesting. It's always going to be tough; it's a tough career and you know that going in.

INFO

27

"27" will make its Michigan premiere on March 2 and 3 at the Arthur Miller Theatre in Ann Arbor, and on March 10 and 11 at the Macomb Center for Performing Arts.

Tickets start at \$30. For more ticketing and directional information go to michiganopera.org/opera/ricky-gordons-27. For more information about Monica Dewey, visit monicadewey.com.

Knowing that, did you feel any intimidation trying to break in to the world of opera?

You know, I didn't feel that way. It may be because my interest in opera started on YouTube (laughs). I started watching videos of really popular, recognizable videos like "Queen of the Night," and I knew the melody, but I never knew she was this amazing character and all the amazing stuff she did on stage. That was when I was like, 'Oh, cool! It's not just these recordings. It's an art form on stage.' That element was really enticing to me, because as a piano and an oboe player, I never had the chance to experience the music through acting, and that became just a really great part of singing for me.

What's the best part about performing for you?

I think the coolest part is how it always changes – and this is with any music – but no performance is going to be the same, and the great thing about being onstage with others is you get to feel their energy each night in a different way. The things you've done in the rehearsal room the same way, it may change onstage and you have to go with it. So, there's this spontaneous element of acting and working with others that I really enjoy.

You've been in operas since you were 19. Is Alice B. Toklas the first LGBTQ role you've ever played?

Absolutely. Most of the characters that I portray as a light-lyric soprano are kind of like the ingenues, they're usually using their sexuality to get what they want, they're trying to get the attention of all the men onstage – the tenor, you know. Sometimes they'll be the maid and sometimes it's comic relief. So, yeah, I've never had the opportunity to play a character like Alice, and it's cool because I really relate to her on many levels.

Did you know anything about her going in?

I knew who Gertrude Stein was, and I knew she was a lesbian icon, but Alice is kind

“ I hope people see the quirky elements in Alice (B. Toklas), and the just pure power couple that Alice and Gertrude were. I hope they go away thinking, ‘Wow, these women really ran the Paris art scene at the time, and how cool is that?’ ”

of in the shadows, so I didn't know much about Alice until I started doing some research. It's been really cool getting to know her character and getting to know her relationship with Gertrude and their time together in Paris, where they had basically celebrity status among the elite artists.

You only came out recently. Were you worried about being open about your sexuality?

Yeah, to be honest. I will say that the operatic community and the classical music community is very supportive, and it's a family. Coming out, it was just an extension of that family. It was not an issue at all, but I did worry a bit as a woman, would it be hard for me to portray these female leads that are in love with men? But that hasn't been an issue at all, actually. If anything, being open with my colleagues and being true to myself, it helps us create a better story together.

And such a big part of theater is honesty. If anything, me being true to myself, it allows me to explore deeper into characters and, I think, reach audiences in a deeper way.

Is there anything in the performance that you identify with specifically?

Yes. In the first scene, they are in their

salon and all these people are there kind of chattering and they say, “Come see the writer. The writer and her secretary.” I interrupt them, and I say, “Her wife.” They say, “The writer and her companion.” And I interrupt again, and I say, “The wife!” Like, I'm not just her secretary, I'm not just her companion; please use the real term, I'm her wife.

That was a big part of me coming out. A lot of people called my girlfriend “my friend” or “my special friend.” And I almost get tears each time that moment happens in the opera, because we're talking over 100 years ago, and she was willing to say, “No, I'm her wife and you guys are going to recognize that.” And they did! And Gertrude, it was such a man's world in art and painting and writing, and she turned it around. They were coming to her and begging for her attention.

What's the one message you'd like the audience to leave “27” with?

I hope people see the quirky elements in Alice, and the just pure power couple that Alice and Gertrude were. I hope they go away thinking, ‘Wow, these women really ran the Paris art scene at the time, and how cool is that?’



Monica Dewey performing from Handel's "Alcina" at Indiana University Opera Theatre. Photo: Patrick Eddy



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Between the Lines

Meet Waterfall Jewelers 2017 Couple of the Year

MILGBTWEDDING

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

When Christi Brown worked with Diana Balbaugh and Danielle Beaugard during their wedding preparations she “saw a love between them that you don’t see too often. These two are the epitome of true love and we are so excited to share their journey with them.”

The Waterford couple met Brown, business marketing coordinator at Waterfall Jewelers, while working out at the Powerhouse Gym in Clarkston.

“We told her we were looking for a band for Danielle,” said Balbaugh, 36. “From the moment we walked into the store it was a friendly, open atmosphere. We got along with the staff, chatting and laughing.”

Brown said that’s because “We are an extremely welcoming, family-owned business. Our goal is to make people happy, no matter what their sexual orientation might be.”

Both Balbaugh and Beaugard took a chance and entered the Waterfall Jewelers Couple of the Year contest on Facebook. They were invited with the top 40 couples to a VIP party where Waterfall Jewelers gave away prizes, special discounts and revealed the winner.

“We got 1,401 votes. Second place got 807,” said Beaugard, 36. “So not only were we the first same sex couple to win, but we got the most votes ever.”

In addition to a \$1,000 Waterfall shopping spree, they received a free nights stay at the Royal Park Hotel, a free Cadillac car rental for a weekend, and their picture on the Waterfall Jewelers 2018 billboard.

Beaugard said, “At the end of the night I said to Christi, ‘I just want to say thank you. Never once have I felt not welcome or different.’”

#DB2gether

While playing softball in college - Balbaugh at Saginaw Valley State and Beaugard at Northwood University in Midland - the couple’s athletic teams hung out together. They met during these social gatherings and their paths continued to cross at various sporting events over the years. They eventually ended up on the same slow pitch softball team.

Waterfall Jewelers 2018 Couple of the Year Contest

Those who have purchased their wedding or engagement rings from Waterfall Jewelers are eligible to become this year’s Waterfall Jewelers 2018 Couple of the Year. Winners receive a \$1,000 Waterfall shopping spree, a free nights stay at the Royal Park Hotel, and their picture on the Waterfall Jewelers 2019 billboard. The top 40 couples are invited to a VIP party where Waterfall Jewelers will give away prizes, special discounts, and reveal the winner. To enter or vote, visit woobox.com/3pmtxe. Voting ends on March 4 at midnight. Waterfall Jewelers is located at 5649 Dixie Hwy in Waterford Township. Call 248-623-9422 or visit waterfalljewelers.com/ for more information.

“The timing wasn’t right though,” said Balbaugh. “We were both always involved with other people. But we promised each other that if we were one day 60 and single, we would get married.”

As fate would have it, both women ended up being single in their early 30s in 2012 and started dating.

“We talked about getting married



Danielle Beaugard and Diana Balbaugh were married on June 28, 2017 on the beach at Hard Rock Hotel in Riviera Maya, Mexico. Photography by Alyssa McElheny

when it became legal,” said Balbaugh. “We said what the heck, why not? This is something we want to do and we get to do it. We said let’s make it happen.”

Their journey toward lifelong commitment began during a trip to Pictured Rocks in Munising. Beaugard surprised Balbaugh with a proposal at Sand Point Beach.

She said it was a challenge to get Balbaugh to sit on a six-foot piece of washed up driftwood so she could take her picture, but once she gave in, Beaugard snapped the photo then asked Balbaugh to approve them.

“While she was looking through the pictures, I knelt down in front of her and pulled the ring out of my pocket,” said Beaugard, adding it was a ring from the Hearts on Fire Collection from Waterfall Jewelers. “After I popped the question to Balbaugh she did tell me ‘Thank you for not waiting until we were 60.’”

When asked what they love about each other, Balbaugh said, “Danielle is a very funny person. I love her humor. She is quick-witted in all types of situations, but also very heartfelt ... she is kind and generous.”

During their last six years together, Beaugard said she has learned a lot about herself.

“Diana has taught me to accept myself for who I am. I’m enough. I didn’t have a very accepting upbringing, but with Diana, I have learned how to be loved.”

Making It Happen

The couple said they were nervous about what would happen

See Couple of the Year, page 18



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Website Helps LGBT Couples Write Their Own Rules for Their Celebrations

BY BTL STAFF

Over the last seven years, the Ultimate LGBT+ Wedding & Anniversary Expo has grown exponentially, allowing us to offer a one-stop shopping experience where you and your entire wedding party can walk along aisles and aisles of the area's best wedding products and services in one convenient location.

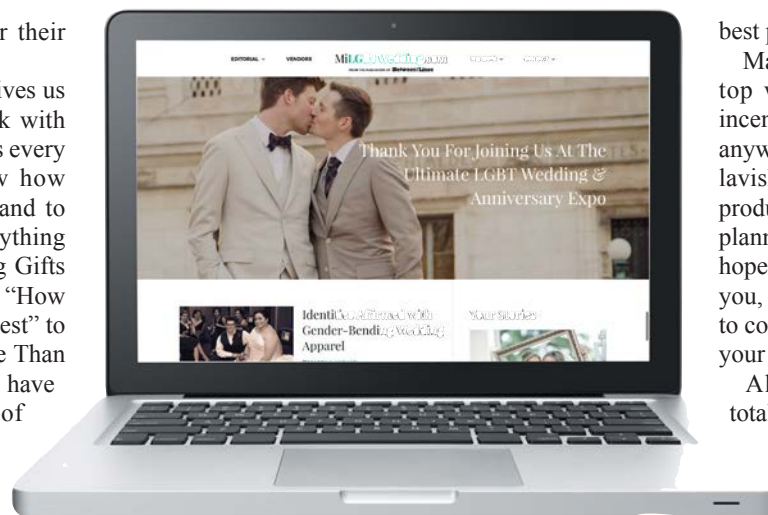
In an exciting step toward enhancing your experience, we launched a brand new website last month. MILGBTWedding.com is designed with LGBT couples and their allies in mind to make wedding planning accessible, easier and more fun.

We understand the needs of LGBT couples that are quite nontraditional in their wedding planning. The website can help LGBT people

write their own rules for their celebrations.

Our range of articles gives us the chance to meet and talk with the professionals that do this every day – the ones that know how special we are as couples and to each other. We cover everything from “10 Practical Wedding Gifts For Your Gay Buddies” to “How To Be A (Gay) Wedding Guest” to “Gay Wedding Cakes: More Than Just Dessert,” ensuring you have access to a full spectrum of information and advice. Our revamped editorial section now features Wedding Snapshots – stories about local LGBT couples and how they celebrate their love.

Fully optimized for mobile devices, the website for the Ultimate LGBT+ Wedding & Anniversary Expo will allow wedding planners to learn more about what we do, how we do it and the LGBT-inclusive vendors we work with across the state of Michigan, whether you're at your desk or on the move.



Beyond The Ultimate LGBT+ Wedding & Anniversary Expo, our website is the place to find one-of-a-kind show specials from more than 100 of these vendors – bakers, photographers, banquet halls, hotels, cruise lines, travel agencies, caterers, wedding planners, officiants and churches, and adoption agencies – all ready and willing to work with LGBT couples to make our celebrations the

best possible.

Many of our exhibitors from Michigan's top wedding merchants offer booking incentives and special discounts not found anywhere else. They are on hand – with lavish exhibit displays showcasing their products – to answer all of your important planning questions. With our website, we hope to build on the service we offer to you, our clients, and are looking forward to continuing to work with you to develop your people, teams and cultures.

All of us at Between The Lines are totally excited about the Ultimate LGBT+ Wedding & Anniversary Expo at the MotorCity Casino Hotel, March 11 from 12-4 p.m. We hope that you will join us for this fabulous celebration complete with the companies and business people who value us not just as potential customers but as full celebrants of marriage equality. They are happy for and with us.

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► Couple of the Year

Continued from p. 16

after Donald Trump was elected president so they planned a vow exchange on Dec. 5, 2016. An intimate ceremony officiated by the couple's friend Tom Klee was held at The Inn on Ferry Street in Detroit. Photographer Meghan Melia captured their special day before lunch at The HopCat in Detroit.

Despite the Trump Administration's anti-LGBT rhetoric following the election, the couple finally planned the destination wedding of their dreams on June 28, 2017 to include 45 of their family members and friends. Their marriage, officiated by Balbaugh's sister Angela Korte, was celebrated at the Hard Rock Hotel in Riviera Maya, Mexico.

During the ceremony, Beauregard shared an anecdote about Balbaugh - a self-proclaimed “nerd” - who used flash cards to study in college, even while hanging out at the bar.

“The first time I saw her at the bar I was like, ‘Who’s the pretty girl in the corner with flash cards?’ said Beauregard. “So I found it only appropriate that I read my vows on flash cards.”

Balbaugh chose to wear a dress from The Wedding Shoppe in Berkley. Beauregard purchased her wedding attire at Express.

“I never thought I was going to get married. I never had flowers and colors and all that crap picked out,” said Beauregard.

So it worked out perfectly, she said, that the Hard Rock Hotel offered specially

crafted wedding and honeymoon packages designed by Colin Cowie. They chose the \$3,500 Elegant Ivory package complete with flowers, a boutonniere, a cake and table toppers, a beach wedding setup, a reception and food. The package included an \$1,800 limitless resort credit (per room) for time together at the spa, excursions, upgrades and activities like swimming with the dolphins.

“They were so inclusive. A section of their website is dedicated to LGBTQ couples. During our pre-wedding visit in March they showed us brochures and picture packages, all of which had same sex couples on them,” said Balbaugh, adding that they did all their wedding planning in the U.S. through Ruby's Travel out of Boston for their 12-day stay. Three weeks before the wedding all of their plans were turned over to a wedding planner in Mexico.

“We never got snubbed one time there,” said Beauregard. “We were the third or fourth same-sex couple at that resort when we got married. We are so glad we did this.”

As newlyweds, it's not easy to give advice to other LGBTQ couples, but the two suggest making time for counseling.

“We call it our ‘Power hour,’” said Beauregard. “We spend a lot of time on preventative maintenance. We have a gym membership. Our health is important. We invest in ourselves. I think it has really helped us grow. It helps us to communicate and understand each other. Our motto is ‘Don't fight to win, fight to understand.’”



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Grammy-Nominated Songwriter on Career Reinvention and How His Queerness Helps Nurture Pop Princesses

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Who needs awards when you have Oprah?

True, walking away with a shiny, golden statue has its own perks, but for songwriter-to-the-stars Justin Tranter, just being nominated for a Grammy *and* a Golden Globe this year was a triumph. Now, too, he can officially add “sat in the same church as Oprah” to his prolific résumé (OK, whatever, the Beverly Hilton in L.A.) while the queen shook the world with her epic Globes speech in early January.

“I lost and I survived, and had a fucking blast, and got to watch Oprah’s speech live in person after I lost,” says Tranter, 37. “I could’ve swerved out, but I was having the time of my life.”

Lately, life’s been good to Tranter. Aside from picking up a Song of the Year nod at the Grammys for “Issues,” performed by Julia Michaels, and Best Original Song at the Globes for the Nick Jonas-sung “Home” from the animated fantasy “Ferdinand,” the former Semi Precious Weapons frontman has amassed four pop radio Top 10s (including Maroon 5’s “Cold” and Halsey’s “Bad at Love”), co-wrote all the original songs on Gwen Stefani’s 2017 Christmas album, and was named BMI Pop Songwriter of the Year 2016.

The wordsmith behind pop behemoths by Kelly Clarkson, Britney Spears, Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez and Kesha recently discussed the “delusion” involved in becoming a pop songwriter, how his queerness helps to nurture his bonds with the female artists he writes for and his mission to give marginalized artists a voice.

When I spoke to Gwen Stefani in 2016 about her “This Is What the Truth Feels Like” album, she said, “He was so supportive of me and so confident in me, and I had lost a lot of my confidence, so he really brought that out of me.” Do you hear this from other artists you work with?

I do hear that, and it makes me feel amazing – and it makes me feel even better to know that someone like Gwen is saying that to other people too. It’s such an awesome thing to do. After 10 years of my band getting to wear

JUSTIN TRANTER'S DELUSION COME TRUE

Photo: Luke Fontana

and sing and say and be exactly who I was and do exactly what I wanted to do – my band members were amazing with following my vision for so long – I take really great pride in helping other people feel confident enough to share their truth. Of course, with Gwen, it was the easiest because I'm a Gwen superfan.

I bet you had a blast working with Erika Jayne on "How Many Fucks?"

Luckily, Erika and I have a past. We've been friends for a minute, and I was like, she's fierce and she's fearless and she's fun, and she deserves the best song someone can give her.

And you knew gay men would be all over that one.

Well, I mean, come on – I was all over it, so hopefully other people in my community would be!

I was driving through Mexico last year with a group of gay friends and the song was on loop.

I love it! And the "see you next Tuesday / number ones, yeah, number ones / I got eight" line? I thought she only had six (dance) number ones, so when I originally tailored that line it rhymed perfectly. "Number ones, yeah, number ones / I got six / so everyone can suck on my dick." But she was like, "Oh no, I have eight number ones."

Do you think being queer helps you connect with these female artists, who so many gay men revere, in a special way?

Being queer has shaped absolutely every single thing I have ever done and helps me understand the underdog point of view, because I am an underdog. A lot of homophobia is based in misogyny, so I can relate to a lot of these things, whether that's just in terms of writing lyrics or how I work with women. I think we've faced similar challenges. I still think in a lot of ways, especially in the professional world, women have it a lot harder than queer men do. But in terms of bullying and feeling ashamed of our sexuality, there's common ground there.

When I was young, women writers, women artists, women songwriters, women comedians – they're all I ever cared about. I never really related to the traditional point of view. The experience of being queer helps me relate to marginalized people, but also, I'm just a fan. I just love what women have to say and how they look at the world.

When has that bond been especially strong in the studio?

That's a great question. With Julia and Gwen. And Halsey and I – we worked together very quickly. We only wrote one day together and, luckily, we wrote "Bad at Love," which turned out to be a great success for both of us. But that song felt really easy. There was the New York bond, and we're both part of the LGBTQ community. So, when she was working on the lyrics for the first verse using

male pronouns, and then in the second verse using female pronouns, of course she knew I wasn't going to flinch and that I was only going to celebrate that. Julia and Gwen are the ones I've written the closest with and spent the most time with writing. And Britney – she knows that I'm a fan, and I think that brings a confidence to the writing and recording sessions. I respect Selena in such a huge away and she knows that.

How would you describe your connection with Britney and how do you think that influenced the upcoming music you've written for her?

The connection is just fun and it's sweet and it's safe, and me and Julia did the best that we could do. With Britney, I was always there with Julia, so I think you have the younger, smart, strong women and you have me and Britney, who are around the same age. So, we just did the best we could to make everybody – not just make her feel safe, she made us feel safe! We're in the room with a fucking icon! She's the icon. We're just fucking studio geeks.

Kesha's another great one. Kesha was so funny, because that's the first time I'd ever written with someone who I'd been friends with for a really long fucking time before we worked together. Kesha and I have been friends since 2010 and we wrote together in 2017, so there's seven years of friendship, which was kind of really cool. We toured together, so we've watched each other perform hundreds of times; but we'd never seen how the other one works in a writing session, so that was really amazing.

The day we wrote was two days after I rescued my dog, and we left the session twice to come check on my dog, just to make sure he was OK. I was a new dog mom and Kesha, of course, is a huge animal lover and animal rights activist.

Do you explain to the artists you work with what inspires the songs you write?

If the artist wasn't there during the writing process – if they're just cutting the song – you kind of have to feel it out because you want the artist to make it their own.

What's the most personal song you've written about your life that somebody else ended up singing?

Wow, I don't think I've ever been asked that question before. Early on, "Nostalgic" by Kelly Clarkson was very much about me and an ex-boyfriend. That was super-duper personal and a crazy moment. I sang the demo on that one, and so I was listening to my demo of that for a year, and then I went to the RCA offices in New York to hear Kelly's version. I was very new in my pop songwriter career and I started crying (laughs). It was just so cool because her voice is so good. I got to sit next to her at the Golden Globes, so that was a really cool full circle moment.

See next page

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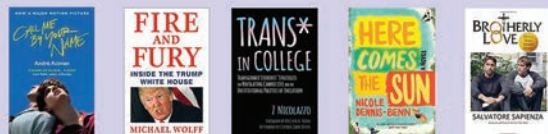


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▶ Tranter

Continued from p. 21

“Centuries” is really personal to me, but not my life, if that makes sense. It was inspired by a short documentary with (African-American gay liberation activist) Marsha P. Johnson I was watching on YouTube and the lyric “you’ll remember me for centuries” came to mind. I was really clearly setting out to make it a sports anthem because I was thinking of Freddie Mercury writing all these huge sports anthems, and I was like, “Oh, there’s something about the queer and underdog perspective that really works in that literal arena.”

So, I set out to write this song where the main lyric was inspired by Marsha and have it be a sports anthem. Before the song even came out, it was confirmed to be a college football theme song, so it was pretty amazing that it was this very specific moment about Marsha P., the queen of the LGBTQ rights movement, but I wanted it to be a sports anthem. Fall Out Boy wrote their own verses and they wrote the bridge and did all that themselves without us there, so obviously the song became something different for them, which is beautiful and that’s the whole point. I think it’s so funny blogs talk shit, like, “Oh, there’s five writers on this song or there’s seven writers on this song,” and it’s like, “No, that’s just cool.” Collaboration is cool. A movie literally takes 1,000 people to make and we’re not mad at them.

I read recently you’re a Patty Griffin fan, and considering you write pop songs, I didn’t expect you to name-drop her.

Patty Griffin is one of the greatest songwriters of all time. If people aren’t name-dropping Patty Griffin, they’re not listening to songs.

You recently signed Shea Diamond, a trans woman of color, to your record label. Are you making it your personal mission to bring more queer musicians into the fold?

Of course it’s more queer people, but it’s also just people whose voices aren’t normally heard, so whether that means more young women, LGBTQ people, racial minorities – whatever it means, I just want to give as many marginalized people a voice as I possibly can. I feel like if we’re not paying our privilege forward, then what’s the fucking point?

Regarding your Golden Globe and Oscar nominations, is it really an honor just to be nominated?

It really is an honor just to be nominated. I’d kind of written it off. I had all these huge

dreams, but I’d said being nominated for those big awards wasn’t part of my dream because the chances are so slim. And being a BMI Pop Songwriter of the Year in our community is kind of the highest honor, so I thought I’d already done it. Then to wake up and there’s the Grammy nominations, and then to wake up a couple of weeks later and there’s the Golden Globe nominations, it was like, “What the fuck is happening?” It was crazy.

So, no Semi Precious Weapons anymore?

Correct.

Do you see yourself being in a band again?

No, I don’t see myself being in a band again. I don’t see myself releasing my own music anymore. I’m just having so much fun, and it’s just so cool to help other people tell their stories and focus their visions into something great. I’m loving it. And if I ever do perform again, I’ll come up with some weird way to do it, like write myself a rock opera.

Besides Stevie Nicks, which other gay icons would you want to work with?

I would kill to work with Beyoncé, obviously. That would be insanity. Madonna would be insanity. Elton would be insanity. There are so many. And I’ve gotten to work with Gwen, which is a dream come true, and I’ve gotten to work with Courtney Love, which is a

dream come true.

It’s funny: We all have these ideas of what our dream come true is and then some crazy shit happens, and everything completely changes, and a different dream comes true, and you realize it’s what you always wanted but you didn’t know.

I always say everything’s meant to be as long as you don’t quit. If I would’ve quit when the band thing had reached its end, none of this would’ve happened. Luckily, I’m a crazy person and delusional and was convinced that if I just kept writing, something good would happen and it did.

Or you could say you were really determined.

At 34 years old, to completely reinvent what I’m gonna do in this industry, I think that definitely took some delusion. In creative fields, most people give up a lot earlier. It was more than determination. It was definitely a delusion.

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

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9 'New' Date-Night Ideas to Spend QT With Your OG



The Frivolist

BY MIKEY ROX

If you've been with your partner a while, it can be hard to come up with exciting date ideas. Maybe you're stuck in a dinner-and-a-movie rut – if you're making time to “date” at all – or perhaps you're so active that you've already done *everything*. Or so you think. Relight the fire in your hearts by spending quality time with that ol' gayngsta you call boo with these full-of-fun, new-to-you date nights.

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rides have a purpose, like a food or booze tour of an area to get you good and snookered. Great as a just-you-two date if you like meeting other couples, or get your whole squad together for this tipsy cardio workout.

2. Datebox

Once a month you'll receive a box in the mail (based on your likes and dislikes determined through a preliminary personality test) that contains the makings of a memorable date designed to rekindle the romance. Could be a date night in with curated activities and snacks or you might venture out to explore never-before-visited places in familiar territory. Choose from four options – Serious, Steady, Flirting, and Digital Only – that range in price from about \$33 down to \$8 per month. Datebox is a monthly subscription that renews automatically, but you can cancel at any time with no penalty.

3. Hatchet Throwing

Stressed out? Hurtle your aggression across a room with a mini ax! Joints like Stumpy's Hatchet House in New Jersey (but popping up in more locations across the country) arm you with a sharpened weapon to aim toward a target that awards points for where the hatchet lands on the board. Love it enough and you could make it a weekly event by joining a league. Beats boring ol' bowling.

4. VR Experience

Virtual reality for public consumption has been around for a few decades, but it's become quite sophisticated in the past few years, so much so that facilities dedicated to the experience, like Ctrl V, are now opening. There are more than 20 games from which to choose at many locations that allow you to explore mountain ranges,

venture into space, and become a soldier in fully immersive scenarios that give players an hour in a variety of games for about \$25 per person.

5. Fun with Science

You'll get a hands-on education during a visit to a science center. Places like the Philip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science in Miami offer plenty of interactive activities to do with your partner, like kissing underneath the stars in a planetarium, making paper airplanes, petting stingrays and studying the human body. Consider the last one a refresher course.

6. Make-and-Take Activities

Huge fan of make-and-take activities over here, and I'm always looking for the next best to-dos. Recently my boyfriend and I participated in Plant Nite – an offshoot of the very popular

sip-and-stroke Paint Nites – where we designed our own succulent terrariums. We've also rolled up our sleeves to make candles, blow glass and create DIY projects in the free workshops offered by Home Depot.

7. Fitness Challenges

My guy and I participate in the Rugged Maniac race every summer – it's a great workout with a lot of teamwork and even more laughs – and we sign up for other fitness challenges when we're feeling competitive, like Cupid's Undie Run, billed as the nation's largest pantless party. That's reason enough for us.

8. Period Dress for a Road Trip in a Classic Car

Get dressed like you're going to a sock hop, rent a '57 Chevy, and roll into an unexplored town like you just drove through a hole in the space-time continuum. You'll turn a few heads for sure.

9. Campy Camping

Upscale camping becomes even more accessible thanks to companies like Hipcamp and Glamping Hub, which helps wanderlusts find the beyond-cool accommodations they never knew they wanted. Like this 1930s Navy bunker on Mare Island Preserve in Vallejo, California. If you prefer a little more luxury and filth in your vacay, check into Club Getaway's Camp John Waters (there's currently a waitlist), offering a weekend in the woods of Kent, Connecticut with everyone's favorite pencil-'stached homo-con and featuring activities like *_Hairspray_* karaoke, burlesque lessons, a JW film marathon and a one-man show from Mr. Counter Culture himself.

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

In adults with HIV on ART who have diarrhea not caused by an infection



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Mytesi is a prescription medicine that helps relieve symptoms of diarrhea not caused by an infection (noninfectious) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Important Safety Information

Mytesi is not approved to treat infectious diarrhea (diarrhea caused by bacteria, a virus, or a parasite). Before starting you on Mytesi, your healthcare provider will first be sure that you do not have infectious diarrhea. Otherwise, there is a risk you would not receive the right medicine and your infection could get worse. In clinical studies, the most common side effects that occurred more often than with placebo were upper respiratory tract (sinus, nose, and throat) infection (5.7%), bronchitis (3.9%), cough (3.5%), flatulence (3.1%), and increased bilirubin (3.1%).

For Copay Savings Card and Patient Assistance, see Mytesi.com

Please see complete Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com.

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This is only a summary. See complete Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or by calling 1-844-722-8256. This does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is Mytesi?

Mytesi is a prescription medicine used to improve symptoms of noninfectious diarrhea (diarrhea not caused by a bacterial, viral, or parasitic infection) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on ART.

Do Not Take Mytesi if you have diarrhea caused by an infection. Before you start Mytesi, your doctor and you should make sure your diarrhea is not caused by an infection (such as bacteria, virus, or parasite).

Possible Side Effects of Mytesi Include:

- Upper respiratory tract infection (sinus, nose, and throat infection)
- Bronchitis (swelling in the tubes that carry air to and from your lungs)
- Cough
- Flatulence (gas)
- Increased bilirubin (a waste product when red blood cells break down)

For a full list of side effects, please talk to your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

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

Should I Take Mytesi if I Am:

Pregnant or Planning to Become Pregnant?

- Studies in animals show that Mytesi could harm an unborn baby or affect the ability to become pregnant
- There are no studies in pregnant women taking Mytesi
- This drug should only be used during pregnancy if clearly needed

A Nursing Mother?

- It is not known whether Mytesi is passed through human breast milk
- If you are nursing, you should tell your doctor before starting Mytesi
- Your doctor will help you to decide whether to stop nursing or to stop taking Mytesi

Under 18 or Over 65 Years of Age?

- Mytesi has not been studied in children under 18 years of age
- Mytesi studies did not include many people over the age of 65. So it is not clear if this age group will respond differently. Talk to your doctor to find out if Mytesi is right for you

What Should I Know About Taking Mytesi With Other Medicines?

If you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medicine, herbal supplements, or vitamins, tell your doctor before starting Mytesi.

What If I Have More Questions About Mytesi?

For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

To report side effects or make a product complaint or for additional information, call 1-844-722-8256.

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Sex in the Dark: MSU LGBT Resource Center Program Offers Sex-Positive Ed

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

If one looks back to their high school sex ed class, they probably can imagine an uncomfortable teacher demonstrating the application of a condom and condemning sexual activity as a near-criminal act. Although these courses did mention the potential danger in contracting STDs, HIV and AIDs, they likely promoted an abstinence-only outlook. The Guttmacher Institute has found that these kind of programs that “promote abstinence-only-until-marriage—now termed ‘sexual risk avoidance’ by proponents—have been described as ‘scientifically and ethically problematic.’ They systematically ignore or stigmatize many young people and do not meet their health needs.” And, the institute reports that within each state, “relatively few high schools offered instruction on HIV, STDs or pregnancy prevention specifically relevant to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,



queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth in 2014; the proportion ranged from 11 percent in South Dakota to 56 percent in Vermont.”

Bearing in mind that many high schoolers went without an inclusive, honest discussion around sex, MSU’s LGBT Resource Center is hoping to change that. On Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m., in the Erickson Hall

Kiva classroom, students will be able to enter a “sex-positive space.”

According to the event Facebook page, students can “ask those questions you may be too afraid to ask your peers.” And, the group will provide opportunities for students to learn about safer sex behaviors and resources through a panel of “professional educators and MSU students who will be prepared to answer all queer and trans sex questions.”

For information about registration, or accommodations, please contact Frankie Resto at vpsas.restofra@vps.msu.edu.

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Tommy Igoe Joins The Birdland All-Stars at The Wharton Center

EAST LANSING, Mich. — A night of jazz comes full circle onto the Pasant Theatre stage when the renowned Birdland All-Stars featuring Tommy Igoe come to the Wharton Center on Saturday, Feb. 24.

The Birdland All-Stars have been together for over a decade. Although the New York-based group hasn't been on tour for five years, they have created brand-new arrangements that feature the work of David Bowie, The Police and Steely Dan. The jazz band also gives "fresh treatments of iconic compositions by Charlie Parker, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock," according to its website.

Tommy Igoe will be accompanying the band. He is a world-renowned drummer, bandleader and music education author. His published works have been number one selections on Amazon and attained bestseller status on worldwide lists. Igoe's works have also become required reading for collegiate music schools



Photo courtesy of the Wharton Center

and conservatories. He has also been credited on several Grammy Award-winning tracks, winning the 2014 Modern Drummer reader poll for the "Best Jazz Drummer."

Notably, Igoe has also created the drum set book for Disney's Broadway production of "The Lion King" where he served as the musical's associate conductor.

The performance will be held on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$63, and student and group discounts are available. Tickets and more information about the performance can be found online at whartoncenter.com or by calling 517-432-2000. The Wharton Center is located at 750 N. Shaw Lane, East Lansing.

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Transgender Day of Visibility Turns into Month-Long Celebration

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Nine years ago, founder of Transgender Michigan Rachel Crandall-Crocker took her advocacy a step further – she created the International Transgender Day of Visibility. The March 31 holiday has since been celebrated all across the world, even in spots where being openly transgender is prohibited by law. Now, Crandall-Crocker has decided that it deserves a month-long celebration.

“A statewide event is really what I’m aiming for. I want to have a calendar of events all over Michigan,” Crandall-Crocker said. “Grand Rapids does a great visibility week, and they’re partly responsible for inspiring me to do a whole month. On visibility day, they’re having someone drive down to my area, pick me up and drive me all



Photo by Alex LMX.

the way to Grand Rapids, and I’m the main speaker for their event.”

And, events like that peppered throughout the month is what Crandall-Crocker is hoping for. She said that making the needs visible of

the thousands of transgender people across the state is of the utmost importance, particularly because of recent changes in legislation.

“I’m also thinking of doing a transgender night on the town. I

want to create a safe environment where people, who may not usually go outside, may feel safe,” she said. “I know friends who only go out as their real selves once a year, and what’s going on is even scaring me. With this religious freedom rule, he (Trump) is going to make it so even emergency doctors will not have to work on us.”

Crandall-Crocker said that without the visibility of the transgender community, she fears events like the death of Tyra Hunter in 1995 could become commonplace.

“She was in a car accident and they had to cut off her clothes, and it was obvious that the person had a male part,” Crandall-Crocker said. “The EMT laughed and watched the person die.”

Although she is still planning specifics, she said that the month’s flagship event is already set up.

“It will be Monday, March 26 at 6 to 9 p.m. The event is an open mic,” Crandall-Crocker said. “We always have musicians, poets and last year we had a playwright and an author. And for the Friday of that week we are having a transgender art workshop. It’s kind of a cross between a class and a workshop. However, as opposed to a place like Painting with a Twist, this is going to be much more coming from what’s inside of everyone.”

The flagship event will be held at Five 15 Media Mojo & More, located at 515 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak. The store can be reached online at five15.net, or by phone at 248-515-2551. For more information about the event, go to transstudent.org/t dov.

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Moliere's 'Tartuffe' Moves to Detroit

BY ENCORE MICHIGAN STAFF

FERNDALE—Slipstream is slated to present their own version of Molière's "Tartuffe" from Feb. 23 through March 18. The company will also offer audiences an opportunity to answer the question: "Do we extinguish the things that challenge us, or do we let them burn themselves?"

The comedy follows the perhaps familiar story of a sly con-man with huge ideas. He convinces people that he can make them great again, and suddenly everything runs amok.

Set in the founding age of Detroit, Slipstream's "Tartuffe" re-imagines the cast as the Campau family.

The play will also offer insight into the story behind the street names in Michigan like John R and Dequindre. Detroit's rich history and the idea of being willing to try anything and everything to be successful serve as running themes in this production. How do the founders of Detroit build a successful city if they follow the advice of the eclectic outsider, "Tartuffe"? How will the family be torn apart and brought together in order to save the city they believe in creating? These questions and more are asked.

This ensemble production serves as Slipstream company member Mandy Logsdon's directorial debut and features a well-known cast. Associate artistic director and Wilde Award Winner Luna Alexander plays Adelaide Dequindre. Rising-Star Wilde Award winning actor and critically acclaimed

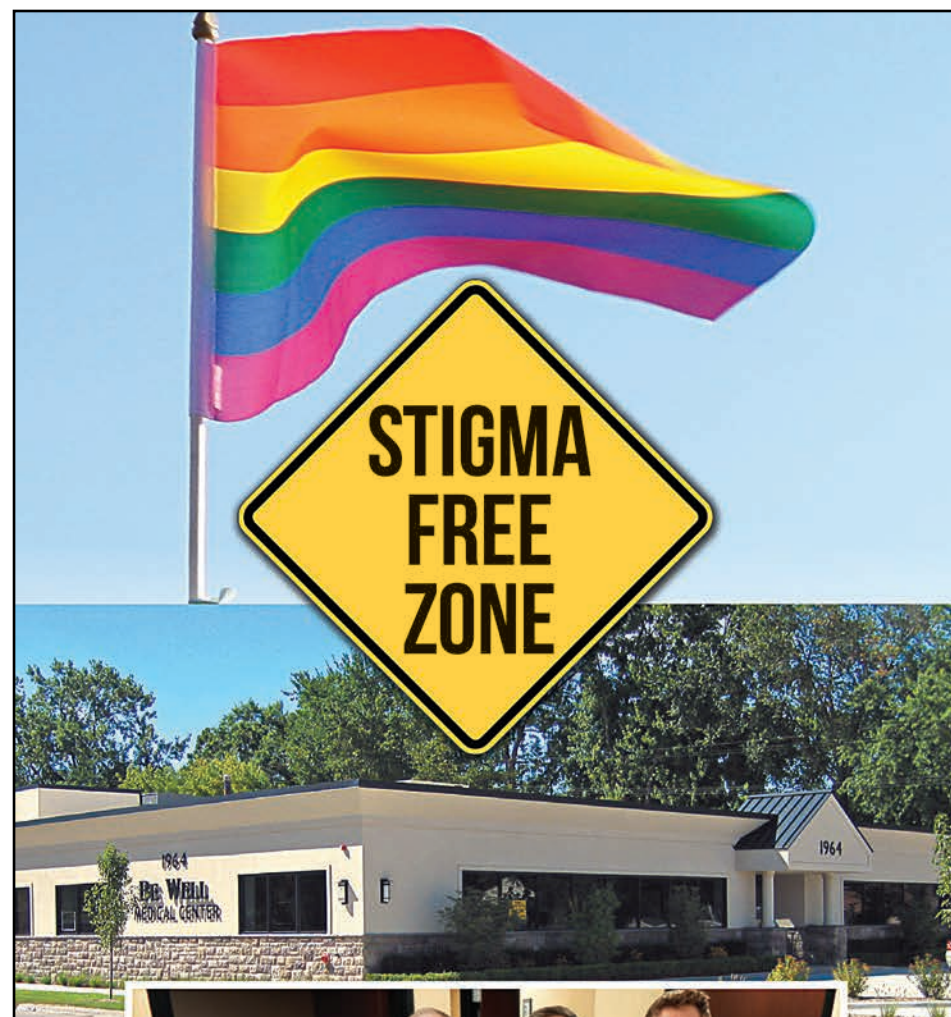
playwright ("P.Y.G.," "A Night of Stars with Tennessee Williams") Maxim Vinogradov plays Frances Palms — the largest landowner in Michigan at the time. Detroit Repertory Theatre Subscriber Award-winning actor Dan Johnson, fresh off his lauded performance in "Tales from the Mitten," plays Joseph Campau.

High school junior Grace Jolliffe plays the effervescent Campau daughter, Catherine, after stellar reviews for her performance of "Night of Stars." Founding company member Victoria Rose Weatherspoon — soon to be seen as Billie Holliday in "September" — plays Marie-Cecellia.

New additions to the company this year, Rachel Biber and Nancy Dawdry Penvose, play the obnoxious family maid, Dorine and the family matriarch — among other roles — respectively. In the title role of "Tartuffe" is Slipstream co-founder Jay Jolliffe. Artistic Director Bailey Boudreau plays the John R, finishing out the cast.

Tiaja Sabrie serves as costume designer, and technical director Ryan Ernst serves as the show's technical designer. Finally, newcomer to Slipstream but Metro Detroit stage regular, Meredith Deighton, serves as assistant director and stage manager.

Tickets are \$12 and available via www.slipstreamti.com or by emailing InsideTheSlipstream@gmail.com. This article originally appeared on encoremichigan.com.



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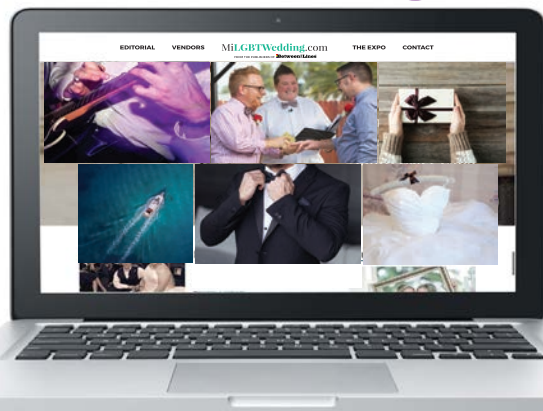
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22nd Annual Michigan LGBT Comedyfest Comes to Detroit

Jam-packed with four LGBTQ comedians, the comedy festival will feature performers who each bring their unique blend of observational, situational and all-inclusive humor: Julia Scotti, Andre Kelley, Pat Regan and Suzanne Westenhofer. Tickets for the show cost \$30 and \$35 at the door. The show will be held on Saturday, March 3 at 8 p.m., at Dearborn's Ford Community & Performing Arts Center. The venue is located at 15801 Michigan Ave., at Greenfield. More information about ticketing and the event can be found online at comedyfest.org.

OUTINGS

Saturday, Feb. 24

The Erotic Poetry & Music Festival
8:00 pm "An eclectic celebration of the erotic arts!" The infamous "Erotic Poetry & Music Festival" is Detroit's oldest community arts festival. "An eclectic celebration of the erotic arts!" it features provocative poetry, dirty spoken word, erotic Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit. 2484451277 <http://www.facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival>

Tuesday, Feb. 27

Relapse Prevention 7:30 pm By Erik Anderson LMSW, CAADC will describe creative, effective strategies to handle both every-day and high-risk situations in recovery from addiction. Free. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725 <http://www.dawnfarm.org/>

programs/education-series

Tuesday, March 6

2018 Career Fair 2:30 pm The 2018 Spring Career Fair at Washtenaw Community College expects to include representatives from more than 70 regional employers looking to immediately fill current and many job openings. The event is free and open to

Sunday, March 11

BTL's LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo! 12:00 pm It's back! Don't miss the fun! Watch for details! 2 Free tickets with code: BTL2018. Register @ MiLGBTWedding.com Motor City Casino, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 866-782-9622 donelle@pridesource.com

MUSIC & MORE

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups

Feb. 22, 7:00 pm All youth are welcome to attend this FREE group. This group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. FREE and OPEN to the community. Orchard United Methodist Church 30450 Farmington Rd, Farmington Hills An event every month that begins at 7:00pm on day Second of the month, repeating indefinitely An event every month that begins at 7:00pm on day Fourth of the month, repeating indefinitely Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620 www.oaklandumc.org <http://www.standwithtrans.org>

Ravel's "The Child and the Spells" and Poulenc's "The Breasts of Tiresias" Feb. 22, 23, 24, 25:30 pm Tickets: \$25 adults, \$15 students Jam Handy, 2900 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-451-0806 <http://www.operamodo.com>

Afternoon of Spirituals Feb. 24, 2:30 pm Join me for An Afternoon of Spirituals! In honor of Black History Month, I am

continuing my "Favorite Things" concert series with a compilation of all of my favorite spirituals. Experience heartfelt melodies to touch Walled Lake United Methodist Church, 313 E. Northport St., Walled Lake. <https://www.facebook.com/events/274419413088758/>

Les Nubians + DJ Cambeaux Feb. 24, 9:30 pm Vocal Duo Les Nubians, comprised of sisters Hélène and Célia Faussart from Paris France, brings their distinctive Afropean, Urban, R&B sound to The Cube for an evening not to be missed. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3135765162 <https://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4749&prod=4748>

A2CT's 9th Annual Chili Cook - Off Feb. 25, 2:00 pm Ann Arbor Civic Theatre announces its ninth Annual Chili Cook-Off on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 2-5 pm at The Wolverine State Brewing Company at 2019 West Stadium Blvd, A2, MI, 48103.

Editor's Pick

'The Sound of Music' Comes to the Fox Theatre

Lauded as the "most successful movie in in musical history," "The Sound of Music" has been viewed by more than 44 million people worldwide. Now, it is touring across the U.S. as a Broadway production. Coming to the Fox Theatre, the performance will feature the music of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Tickets start at \$30 and it will be performed from March 30 through 31. More information about the show can be found at olympiaentertainment.com. The Fox Theatre is located at 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.



Tickets for the event Wolverine State Brewing Company, 2019 W. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-369-2990 www.wolverinebeer.com <http://www.a2ct.org>

22nd Annual Michigan LGBT Comedyfest March 3, 8:00 pm Motor City Pride presents their annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Comedyfest featuring 4 outstanding comedians, Suzanne Westenhofer, Pat Regan, Andre Kelley, and Julia Scott, on Saturday, March 3rd at 8:00pm. Tickets are \$30 in advance Dearborn Ford Community & Performing Arts, 15801 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. 313.943.2350 <http://www.dearbornfordcenter.com/> <http://www.motorcitypride.org>

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups March 4, 6:30 pm Event Time: 6:30-8:00 PM FREE and OPEN to the community. For parents of transgender kids, this group meets the 1st Sunday of each month from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Hilltop Counseling 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian, MI An event every month that begins at 6:30pm on day First of the month, repeating indefinitely Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee Street, Adrian. 313-909-5408 www.standwithtrans.org <http://www.hilltopcounseling.org>

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups March 6, 7:00 pm Event Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. FREE and OPEN to the community. For parents of transgender kids, this group meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:00-8:30 pm. St. Mary's In-the-Hills Episcopal Church, An event every month that begins at 7:00pm on day First of the month, repeating indefinitely St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663 www.stmarysinthehills.org <http://www.standwithtrans.org>

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>

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>

The Erotic Poetry & Music Festival Feb. 24, 8:00 pm "An eclectic celebration of the erotic arts!" The infamous "Erotic Poetry & Music Festival" is Detroit's oldest community arts festival. "An eclectic celebration of the erotic arts!" it features provocative poetry, dirty spoken word, erotic Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit. 2484451277 <http://www.facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival>

Social Healing Film Event Feb. 25, 12:00 pm This first-time networked LIVE online event features ministers and leaders from multiple New Thought centers around the U.S. who will view and discuss a timely film by author and producer, Tim Wise. The

documentary explores Unity of Livonia, 28660 Five Mile Road, Livonia. 734-421-1760 events@unityoflivonia.org unityoflivonia.org

Penny Stamps Series presents Giorgia Lupi: Data Humanism March 8, 5:10 pm Giorgia Lupi is an award-winning information designer, author, and co-founder of Accurat, a data-driven design firm where she serves as design director. She is also the co-author of Dear Data, an aspirational hand-drawn data visualization Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397 https://stamps.umich.edu/stamps/detail/giorgia_lupi

THEATER

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Editor's Pick

Big Gigantic at the Masonic Temple

Since the group's inception in 2008, Big Gigantic has been revolutionizing the Electronic Dance Music scene. The group is composed of Dominic Lalli and Jeremy Salken who blend a combination of "musically mature melodies with addictive beats and samples, that are familiar to a Kanye West or LCD Soundsystem single, and crosses all styles of music from jazz to hip-hop, funk to dubstep," according to the group's press release. The internationally famous group will be at Detroit's Masonic Temple on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 7 p.m. The show is for ages 16 years old and up, and tickets start from \$29.50. More information can be found online at themasonic.com. The venue is at 500 Temple, St., Detroit.



williamstontheatre.org

Bug Tickets \$20 Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 2485418027 <http://www.stagecrafters.org>

First Date @ A2CT March 8, 7:30 pm Chronic Singles Aaron and Casey meet up for their arranged blind date and invite every doubting voice in their heads along for the ride. How will it go, and where will it lead? First Date One event on March 9 at 8:00pm One event on March 10 at 8:00pm One event on March 11 at 2:00pm Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538 http://smt.d.umich.edu/about/facilities/north_campus/walgreen/arthurmiller/

A2CT Workshop: Creating Magical Spaces March 10, 1:00 pm CREATING MAGICAL SPACES: SET BUILDING AND PAINTING Instructors: Brice O'Neal and Debra Golden March 10, 1:00-4:00 PM Ages 16+ \$20 for A2CT members / \$25 for non-members Hands-on workshop constructing basic set pieces out A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 <http://www.a2ct.org/classes-and-workshops>

A2CT Workshop: Auditioning for Musical Theatre March 17, 1:00 pm AUDITIONING FOR MUSICAL THEATRE Instructors: Jared Hoffer and Jonathan Sills March 17, 1:00-4:00 PM Ages 16+ \$20 for A2CT members / \$25 for non-members Practical tips for musical theater audition prep, including how to A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228

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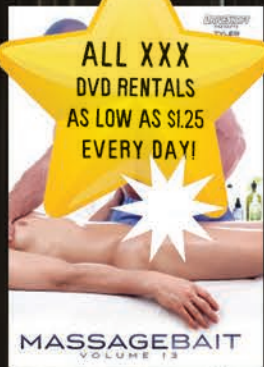
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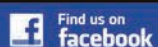
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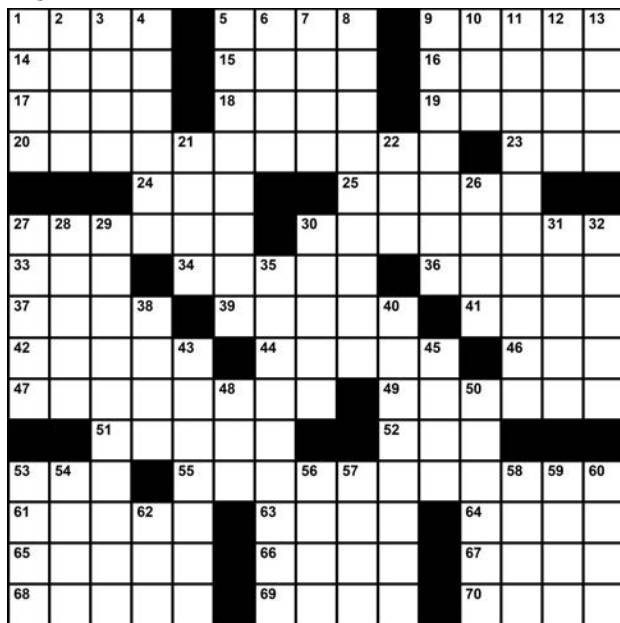
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Q Puzzle



- 39 Almodovar's mister
41 Practice hitting a shirtless man
42 One of Caesar's stones
44 Dead duck
46 Fruit sugar ending
47 Female impersonator's pencil application
49 Sex toys, for some
51 The S of WASP
52 Mauna ____
53 What thespians do with each other
55 Kenworthy is often called this for being vocal about LGBTQ issues
61 Feature of Langston Hughes' work
63 Sitarist Shankar
64 Nuts
65 Whoopi in "The Color Purple"
66 Ghostbusters role
67 Chimp that was out in space
68 Sailor's rear
69 Emulated Rufus Wainwright
70 Hungers
- 9 Cop show about catching some queens?
10 Sham locks
11 First openly gay man to qualify for the Winter Olympics
12 Car that used to be yours
13 Like love, for some
21 Fruit of Peter Pears?
22 k.d. lang's "The ____ That I Breathe"
26 Sapphic poetry
27 Big name in computers
28 Be unfaithful to your lover
29 One of Kenworthy's event
30 Bruce Wayne kept his Dick in one
31 Style Tracy Turnblad's hair
32 Toast opener
35 De Rossi's wife
38 Kunis of "Black Swan"
40 Dealing with an invitation
43 "____ Going on Seventeen"
45 P's for Socrates
48 Drama in the land of Samurai
50 YouTube personality Tyler
53 Curve and others
54 Guitarist Atkins
56 "Do What U Want" Lady
57 Shakespeare could have bathed in it
58 Skye on screens
59 Supply-and-demand subj.
60 Diana, who was once a Supreme being?
62 To me, to Hirschfeld

Don't Cuss, Call Gus

Across

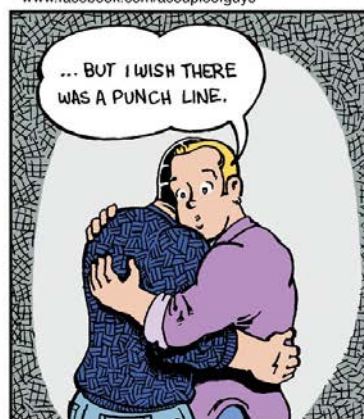
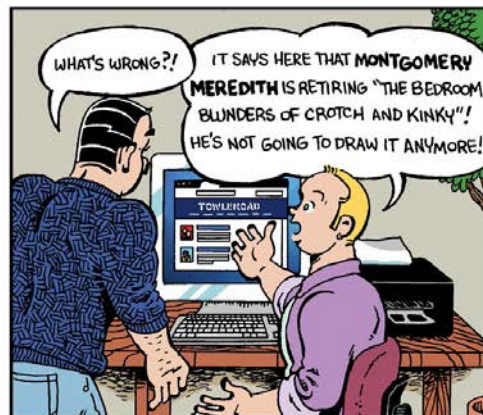
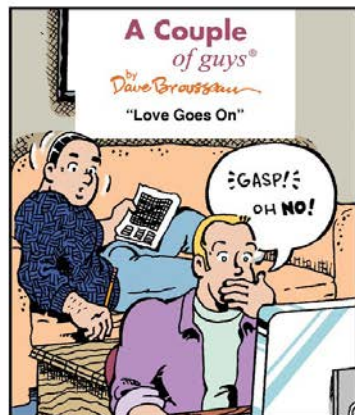
- 1 "The Death of Friends" author Michael
5 The A in GLARP (abbr.)
9 Fairy story figure
14 How far up it goes (abbr.)
15 Syngman of Korea
16 Dykes on Bikes member, e.g.
17 "Hairspray" handle
18 Bamako's country
19 With a wide-open mouth

- 20 Gus Kenworthy displayed this in a Head & Shoulders commercial
23 "The Simpsons" bartender
24 Hard top?
25 Kind of key, for Jerry Herman
27 Town in da Vinci's land
30 "The Music Man" composer Willson
33 Tammy Faye's old club
34 Wood that doesn't need moth balls
36 Tonto's erection
37 "Pretty in Pink" setting

Down

- 1 Not even once, to Dickinson
2 Alan of "And the Band Played On"
3 Part of Caesar's boast
4 Ahead, in da Vinci's land
5 Powder rooms?
6 Peggy of WOW Cafe
7 Word with gratification or abuse
8 "Hairspray" coproducer with Craig Zadan

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com



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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

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

AIDS/HIV

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

AIDS Walk Detroit

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

Macomb County STD Clinic

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

Matrix Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

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

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond

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

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

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

Campus

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

U-M Ann Arbor

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

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

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

Eastern Michigan University

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

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW

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

Community Centers

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

Jim Toy Community Center

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

LGBT Detroit

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

Affirmations

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

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

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

Fair Michigan

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

Know Your Rights Project

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

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

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

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

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

Stonewall for Revolution

www.facebook.com/stonewall4reolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

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

Ties Like Me

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

Suits And The City

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

Transgender

FtM Detroit

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

FtM A2 Ypsi

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

Transgender Michigan

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

Trans Sistas of Color Project

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

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center

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

Ozone House

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

Stand With Trans

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



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

Find these resources online

- Adoption Services
- AIDS/HIV Hotlines
- AIDS/HIV Organizations
- Alzheimer's Association
- Animal Shelter
- Anti-Violence
- Archives/Collections
- Campus; Student and Alumni Groups
- Cancer Support Groups
- Choruses
- Community Centers
- Employee Resource Groups
- Families and Parents
- Foster Care
- Foundations and Funders
- Hotlines & Switchboards
- Labor Union
- Legal Organizations
- Museums
- Music Groups
- National Organizations
- Political Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Religious & Spiritual
- Senior Living
- Seniors
- Social/Community Organizations
- Sports
- Substance Abuse
- Transgender Groups/Services
- Women's Health
- Youth Services

Get Listed, Promote Your Events

You can add or update any listing by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Yellow Pages. Once you submit your listing, our staff will contact you to confirm your information.

You can add your event to the Pride Source Calendar online and in print by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to editor@pridesource.com

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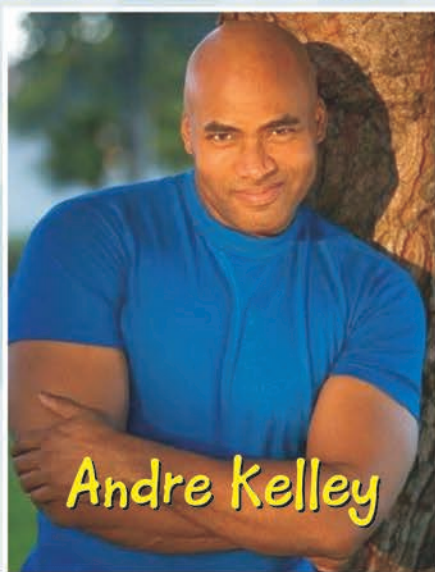


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