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Kalamazoo County Has a Brand New ID Program... and Norah Getz Wants to Tell You All About It

COVER STORY

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

On May 2 Kalamazoo County rolled out its new ID program after more than year of hard work and packed community meetings. Designed for people who are able to prove their identity but lack the documents to obtain a driver's license or state ID, the Kalamazoo County ID's stated purpose is, "To recognize all Kalamazoo County residents and enable them to connect with public safety, civic and community services."

Uses include identification for opening a bank account and cashing checks at participating institutions, picking up prescriptions and proving identity to law enforcement. Specific populations that stand to benefit from the new ID include homeless people; transgender residents of the county; seniors and other individuals who do not have a birth certificate; people who have recently been released from prison and others who are under documented. It cannot be used to gain citizenship, for voter identification or for obtaining a driver's license. Nor can it be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco or firearms.

To secure the new ID, applicants must produce documents totaling a certain number of points following the ID program's point system. Qualifying documents include high school diplomas, Michigan Department of Corrections prison ID card, pay stubs and many others. The ID costs \$10 and scholarships are available.

Initially, many commissioners were skeptical of the proposed ID program, but thanks to a grassroots effort and a task force of 40 people from a broad range of organizations, they were able to pass a resolution for the ID by a 6-5 vote along party lines.

Recent Kalamazoo College graduate Norah Getz was part of that effort. Getz, who is in the process of transitioning to her authentic female self, spoke to the importance of having affirming identification.

"It means me and people like me can get an ID with their name on it without having to go through ... so many hours and so much money to be able to get an ID through the [state or federal] government with their name on it, in a very easy and affordable way," she said. "It's very fulfilling for me ... I'm very grateful for the people who helped make it possible ... it means a lot, it really does."

Being able to use one's preferred name on the front of the ID (with one's legal name on the back), and choosing the gender to be



Norah Getz's first government-issued ID with her preferred name on it. BTL photos: Andrew Cohen

displayed rather than being required to use one's assigned sex at birth, or even the outright removal of gender as an identifying category is a tremendous benefit to the local transgender community. Getz gave an example of one of the ID's practical uses

"If you get pulled over you have some ID to show if you normally wouldn't have a driver's license, or would rather not out yourself by showing people an ID with your dead name on it," Getz said. "It's very important that we have this resource so easily accessible, because getting a legal federal name and gender marker change is really hard. I'm just starting with the process and there's a whole

lot of bureaucracy."

At the time of her interview with BTL, Getz was attending a re-election fundraiser for Kalamazoo County Commissioner Tracy Hall. As co-chair of the county ID task force, Hall was instrumental in its passage (see page 11.)

In addition to addressing an unmet need for certain residents of the county, the initiative has also served as a community-building effort. The county website summed up the issue well, "Without a form of identification, a person is not recognized as a member of the community and not afforded the same opportunities as other community members. Having a form of credible identification

“What it means to me personally, is it means me and people like me can get an ID with their name on it without having to go through ...so many hours and so much money.”

– Noah Getz

enables people to become fully participating members of the community.”

Getz pointed out the number of businesses that are on board with the new ID, giving a shout out to Los Amigos for their discount to people showing their ID at the local Mexican restaurant chain.

"In a way, you're probably saving money by buying this thing," she said, encouraging people who might not otherwise need to have a county ID to get one.

Getz went on to stress that this is for the "general community."

"Even beyond just the queer community. This is really important to highlight that this is an ID for everyone to get," she said. "The more people use it, the more normalized the ID becomes and it's less likely for the ID to become known as 'the trans card' or 'the homeless card' or 'the under-documented card.'"

But Getz is not satisfied with the county ID program ending with Kalamazoo County, and was surprised to learn that Washtenaw and the city of Detroit in Wayne County are the only other places in Michigan that has such an ID. The activist thought out loud about other places in Michigan where this is needed and plans to contact friends to spread the word.

"I think it's really politically possible, and also kind of necessary to get this in places like Kent and Wayne County but we'll see what happens," she said. "We'll start making some more noise."

INFO

Overview of the Kalamazoo County ID Program:
> kalcounty.com/clerk/id

Businesses offering discounts to Kalamazoo County ID holders:
kalcounty.com/clerk/id/participating_businesses.htm

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Attorneys Who Argued Gay Rights Cases Reflect on Kennedy Legacy

NEWS

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

U.S. Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy is stepping down from the U.S. Supreme Court after writing four milestone cases in favor of gay rights over the course of his 30 years on the bench.

The Washington Blade contacted the attorneys who argued each of those cases – *Romer v. Evans* in 1996, *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003, *U.S. v. Windsor* in 2013 and *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015 – for their reflections on those decisions and LGBT rights in the aftermath of Kennedy’s retirement.

Here are their responses:

Romer v. Evans – Colorado’s Amendment 2 is unconstitutional because bare animus cannot justify anti-gay measures

Kennedy: *“Even if, as the State contends, homosexuals can find protection in laws and policies of general application, Amendment 2 goes well beyond merely depriving them of special rights. It imposes a broad disability upon those persons alone, forbidding them, but no others, to seek specific legal protection from injuries caused by discrimination in a wide range of public and private transactions.”*

Attorney: Jean Dubofsky, first female justice in 1979 appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court and the youngest person ever appointed to the court at 37. She later returned to private practice and led the legal team against Amendment 2.

What was the significance of Kennedy’s opinion in *Romer* to the advancement of LGBT rights?

Dubofsky: When Justice Kennedy asked the first question in the *Romer v. Evans* argument: Has there ever been a law (he was referring to Amendment 2 to the Colorado Constitution, which prohibited any remedies for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation) as bad as this? I knew that we had a chance of winning. Until then there was no precedent that supported gay rights. It’s not surprising, given no precedent, that Justice Kennedy’s opinion did not follow customary equal protection analysis. *Romer* became the starting point for the gay rights cases that followed.

Now that Kennedy has announced his



From left, Jean Dubofsky, Paul Smith, Roberta Kaplan and Mary Bonauto (Photo of Dubofsky courtesy of Dubofsky, Washington Blade photos of Smith, Kaplan and Bonauto by Michael Key)

retirement, to what extent is his legacy on LGBT rights in danger?

Dubofsky: I’d be surprised if *Romer* and its progeny are overturned (Chief Justice Roberts, then an attorney in private practice, helped me prepare for the argument). Protection for religious expression, however, may allow those who provide services for gay weddings to discriminate.

Lawrence v. Texas – state laws criminalizing intimate relations for same-sex couples are unconstitutional

Kennedy: *“Liberty protects the person from unwarranted government intrusions into a dwelling or other private places. In our tradition the State is not omnipresent in the home. And there are other spheres of our lives and existence, outside the home, where the State should not be a dominant presence. Freedom extends beyond spatial bounds. Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression and certain intimate conduct. The instant case*

involves liberty of the person both in its spatial and more transcendent dimensions.”

Attorney: Paul Smith, who argued the case for Lambda Legal on behalf of John Geddes Lawrence Jr. and Tyron Garner, now a faculty member at Georgetown University Law Center

What was the significance of Kennedy’s opinion in *Lawrence* to the advancement of LGBT rights?

Smith: *Lawrence* was central to the achievement of further advances for LGBT rights. First, it eliminated the sodomy laws, which were excellent instruments of oppression because they made it difficult for people to live as gay men or lesbians out in the open in some states.

Second, it eliminated the odious decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which upheld sodomy laws in 1986 and which undercut almost any constitutional argument that could be made in favor of LGBT civil rights under the Constitution.

Finally, the way Justice Kennedy wrote the *Lawrence* opinion made it a springboard toward legal recognition of same-sex relationships. He made clear that our relationships have the same value and play the same role as different-sex relationships. He also established firmly that

the government has no right to make moral judgments condemning individual choices about what kind of relationship or family to form. In our free society, those are choices individuals get to make.

As Justice Scalia noted in his dissent in *Lawrence*, those two moves made it difficult to oppose claims to marriage equality. Our opponents struggled for the next 12 years to explain why same-sex couples could be excluded from marriage, once they could no longer offer up the kind of moral arguments that *Lawrence* forbade.

Now that Kennedy has announced his retirement, to what extent is his legacy on LGBT rights in danger?

Smith: I would anticipate that the new Court will be supportive of claims like that made in *Masterpiece Cakeshop* for individual private exemptions from state or federal laws banning anti-gay discrimination.

I would be surprised, however, if the Court were to overrule *Obergefell* and authorize states to refuse to marry more same-sex couples. Marriage equality is too ingrained in our national understanding of fairness and justice. But we should be watchful nonetheless.

United States v. Windsor, Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which barred federal recognition of same-sex marriage, is unconstitutional

Kennedy: *“DOMA instructs all federal officials, and indeed all persons with whom same-sex couples interact, including their own children, that their marriage is less worthy than the marriages of others. The federal statute is invalid, for no legitimate purpose overcomes the purpose and effect to disparage and to injure those whom the State, by its marriage laws, sought to protect in personhood and dignity.”*

Attorney: Roberta Kaplan, who argued the case on behalf of New York widow Edith Windsor, now founding partner at Kaplan & Company LLP.

Editor’s Note: The Blade submitted questions to Kaplan on the significance of the Windsor decision in the aftermath of Kennedy’s retirement, but she declined to provide responses before deadline.

Obergefell v. Hodges, state laws barring same-sex couples from obtaining marriage licenses and prohibiting recognition of those marriages are unconstitutional

Kennedy: *“No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves.”*

Attorney: Mary Bonauto, civil rights project director at GLBTQ Advocates & Defenders who argued the case on behalf of Ohio widower Jim Obergefell and other plaintiffs

What was the significance of Kennedy’s opinion in Obergefell to the advancement of LGBT rights?

Bonauto: Obergefell is significant on many levels. In practical terms, it says the constitutional right to marry includes

LGBT people’s aspirations to marry the person of their choice. There are no “skim milk” marriages: The same “constellation of benefits” and responsibilities government allocates to others must be available to married same-sex couples.

Ideas of liberty and “central precepts of equality” both animate the ruling. The Court’s reasoning extended beyond the concrete protections of marriage to talk about the “grave and continuing harm” and “disrespect and subordination” imposed on LGBT people vis-à-vis others by our exclusion from marriage. That powerful insight is both a sword and shield to attack laws and proposals to degrade us, our families and marriages.

With “equal dignity in the eyes of the law,” Justice Kennedy’s rulings have helped make meaningful changes in LGBT people’s lives, enabling us to live more openly and moving us closer to equal citizenship.

Now that Kennedy has announced his retirement, to what extent is his legacy on LGBT rights in danger?

Bonauto: Justice Kennedy’s legacy will be a lasting one in part because he modelled what Justice Ginsburg described in 1996 – the story of our Constitution is one of including those who had formerly been excluded.

Every generation may search for meaning and refuge in the enduring promises of liberty, equality and due process, and so he listened to LGBT people who had been “outlaw[s]” and “outcast[s].” In Romer, then more boldly in Lawrence, Windsor and Obergefell, Justice Kennedy saw LGBT people as part of the “us” in our nation. The common humanity of LGBT people is irreversible.

Justice Kennedy rejected government attempts to impose double standards on LGBT people when discrimination was framed up as objections to gay people’s conduct, rather than gay people’s status, by correctly seeing them as the same.

I believe the four rulings are solid, and Obergefell even explained why marriage is a fundamental right and established access to and treatment of marriages as an equality issue.

But this part of his legacy will be tested repeatedly, as we already face attempted service refusals by businesses and new limits on LGBT peoples’ ability to adopt and foster children. Even as powerful people take aim at marriage in both the short and long term, one of our community’s legacies throughout the time of Justice Kennedy’s career is a commitment to engagement on LGBT and other civic issues, and to the political process at every level.

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



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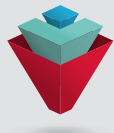
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- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%).

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Tracy Hall: 'I Am Who I Am'

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Tracy Hall had always loved politics, but never anticipated a career as an elected official.

"I was one of those weird – and I mean this in a really nice way – children. I loved things about politics and law, and I got that from my grandparents," said the Democrat running for a second term on the board of the Kalamazoo County Commission.

Through her school years, Hall worked on campaigns but always saw herself as only being involved behind the scenes. Back then, she experienced self-doubt – due in part to the anxiety she has since overcome – but was inspired by three Michigan women to take the next step.

"It was women like Gretchen Whitmer, [who] was fighting for Elliott-Larsen. She was speaking out for the community before in some ways it was kind of cool to, before a lot of politicians evolved on the issues. Around the same time ... you have Lisa Brown and Barb Byrum, who were silenced for using the words "vasectomy" and "vagina" in the state legislature. And I remember thinking, 'If there are these three women that are fighting for things I care about, that are near and dear to my heart, I can do something locally.'" It was with those women in mind, and her mother as well, that Hall ran for the Kalamazoo City Commission in 2013. Of 15 candidates, seven would be elected. Hall came in eighth, losing by a very slim margin.

She planned to run again in 2015, but chose not to after her mother died unexpectedly.

"My mom is still so much part of my story," she said. "Being raised by a single mom, in poverty, her working; I wouldn't be here today without who she was ... I couldn't share that story and not get emotional about it."

Also around that time, Hall was recruited by her county commissioner when he chose to run for county clerk, because, as he told her, "he would love to see a progressive woman in that seat."

That's when Hall decided to go ahead, winning all seven precincts with 70 percent of the vote.

"And I love it," she said. "I absolutely live being a county commissioner."

In her first term, Hall helped get a senior millage on the ballot which will be voted on this August. She has also coordinated efforts with animal services to reduce the kill rate in the county. But the accomplishment she is most proud of is Kalamazoo County's ID program, brand-new as of this May.

As Hall tells it, it was only her first or second

meeting when they asked for people to serve on the task force.

"And I don't remember why it happened, it just happened and I raised my hand and I thought, 'This could help a lot of people,' but I didn't really know much about it ... and I

homelessness.

"We have a huge homelessness problem, that I think that as a county government, we can act as the convener," she said. "We have wonderful resources in Kalamazoo – in the city and in the county – that I think in some



remember thinking, 'What the heck did I just sign up for,' she said with a laugh. "Knowing that so many people would rely on this, and what if I failed?"

But with the help of a task force of 40 from various organizations and walks of life, Hall most certainly did not fail. In fact, as co-chair of the task force, she helped score a huge win for the residents of Kalamazoo County (Read more about the ID program on page 4).

If elected, Hall plans to address various challenges that the county faces, including

ways are siloed."

She said she envisions bringing people to the table to work together on the cause. Another critical issue, the senior millage mentioned earlier, is personal for Hall.

"My grandma, before she passed away – we didn't know this – would often have to choose between her prescription drugs and eating," Hall said. "No grandma or grandpa should have to live like that."

When asked if she has experienced any homophobia in her career, she was frank.

"A little bit," Hall said. "That's definitely a real experience, but it's definitely more subtle than overt."

Though overall she said that even the more conservative members of the commission have treated her with nothing but respect, and that

“When Women Run, Women Win”

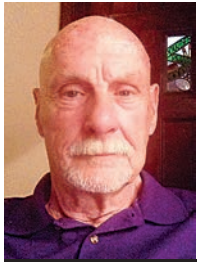
- Theme of Tracy Hall's re-election kickoff event

she was able to pass a Pride Month resolution for the county last year. Still, it wasn't all smooth sailing.

"I heard rumblings about me having a 'gay agenda' – which I think is kind of funny, 'cause I didn't think that was still a thing! And, certainly, one of the things I was advised early on in 2013, (was to) maybe not to be so 'out.' And I'm like, 'No, that's not who I am,' she said. "I'm a walking, talking stereotype in many ways: I teach the stuff, I have worked for, pay for and volunteer for on behalf of my community."

In addition to her political involvement, Hall is also an instructor in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at Western Michigan University and teaches political science and sociology at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. She also serves on the boards off OutFront and CARES (Community AIDS Resource and Education Services). When asked why she is so active in the community, she said she would like to be a role model for LGBTQ youth – especially women.

"I'm proud to represent our community in some facet. We are so underrepresented in electoral politics and in many other areas of life. And if I can help some younger woman or girl that ... might have an interest in politics but because of societal messages may not [pursue that interest], but she sees me – there's a lot of value in that," Hall said. "I try to be that role model, without sort of that arrogance that's ... with that. I just want to do good for the community."



Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

In Cass Park with Bobby Burns

Detroit's imposing, massive, block-wide Masonic Temple was built in 1922 – cornerstone-dated 5022 – following the Hebraic custom of noting esoteric history.

At one time in the 1960s every major dance company in the world, classical musician, orchestra and performer appeared there; many brought to the city by famed impresario Sol Hurok.

I heard Paul Paray many times conduct the DSO, thrilled to include soprano Maria Callas in red-carpet recital – her conductor arrested at the long-closed, seedy Stone Movie Theatre – I saw Russian defector Rudolph Nureyev and Dame Margot Fonteyn dance a memorable “Swan Lake” (curiously, too, a few years ago I attended a freak gathering in a small masonic auditorium, where leathermen and women, BDSM devotees, straight and gay kink comrades gathered for an evening of mutual exposure, mental angst and playpen seduction. A BTL former editor was a self-styled dom. I, her 95 percent vanilla guest.)

I suppose I was about 16 one mid-June, no-school day as I sat alone relaxing, soon to be joined by an older, athletic-looking guy who was probably about 30. He asked if he might join me and I said, “Yes,” pleased for the company.

Across from the Masonic Temple is Cass Park, named for former Michigan governor Lewis Cass. As a kid I spent my summers playing there, wading its centrally-located fountain, and, as a nascent gay, enjoying looking at my collection of Strength and Health magazines, admiring muscle idols Clarence Ross and Steve Reeves.

At the edge of the park is a statue of Scottish poet Robert Burns. When the statue was dedicated in 1923, thousands

gathered for a mass picture taken that honored the unveiling (how many today know or care who Robert Burns was?).

I played tag around the statue. On three sides are poetry quotes I learned by heart: Nae man can tether time nor tide / From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs / Wee modest crimson flower, thou has met me in an evil hour.

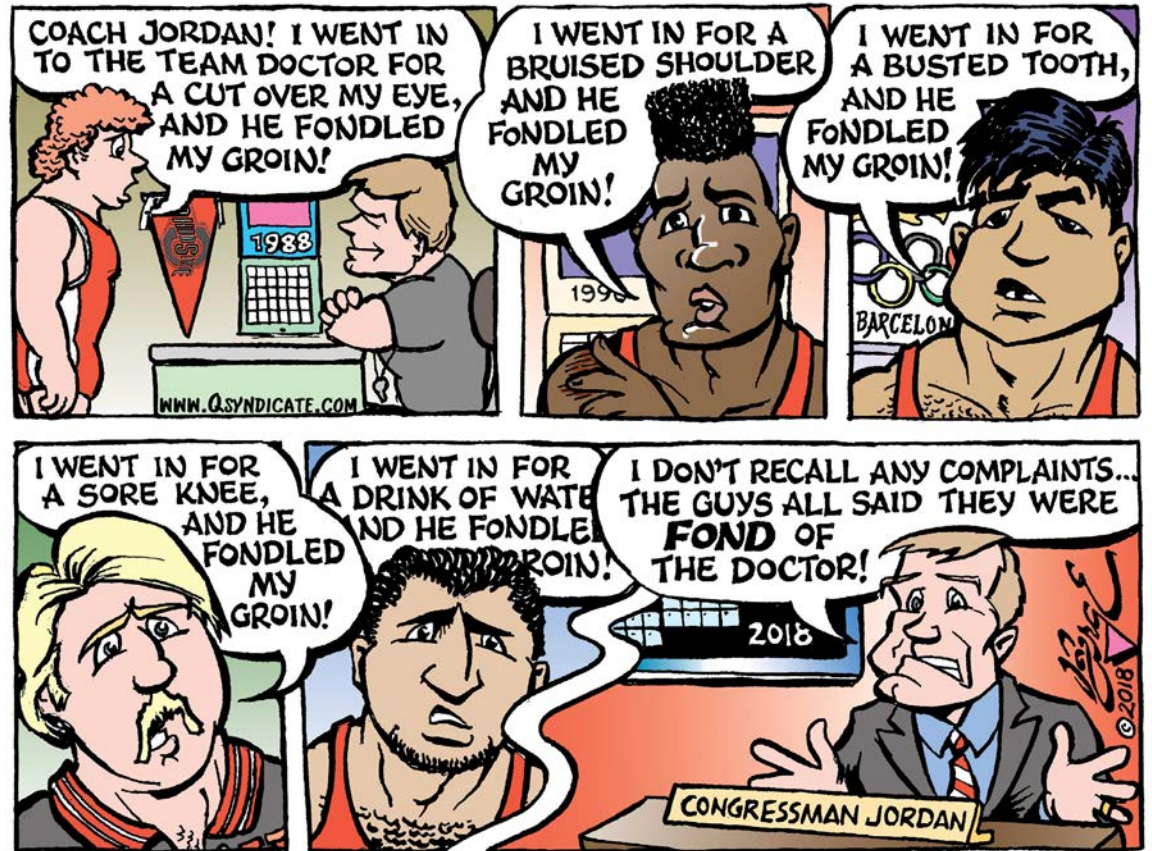
For fun, my friend Joan McGonical and I would pretend we were European survivors of World War II. We'd fake German accents, and talk in earshot of park benchers about bombings, blackouts and the horrors we had endured. Occasionally, listeners who felt sorry for us – or liked our performances – gave us nickels and dimes.

I suppose I was about 16 one mid-June, no-school day as I sat alone relaxing, soon to be joined by an older, athletic-looking guy who was probably about 30. He asked if he might join me and I said, “Yes,” pleased for the company.

His name was Marcus and he said he was home on leave from the navy. He was visiting a friend who lived nearby.

“Would you like a Coke?” he offered, pointing to a nearby drug store.

See next page



BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Viewpoint

Our Voice, Our Vote! Now More Important Than Ever!

I think about the power of our vote a lot.

Maybe it's from hearing my grandmother talk about all they had to endure to have the right to vote. Maybe it's from being with my godmother, walking up and down the streets of her neighborhood, passing out flyers to inform and get her neighbors to the polls. And I know a big part of it is from listening to my mother and going with her to the polls to vote at each and every election.

I think about the power of our vote because, before School House Rock, I knew there were three branches of government and often the courts were our last defense in protecting our rights, interpreting the sometimes-archaic language of the constitution to reflect our changing society. I learned it in school.

When the election outcome wasn't quite as we expected, I learned from these three amazing women that you can't win the game if you're not in the game. So, I think about the power of our vote a lot.

In my gospel of the importance of voting, I always cite the Supreme Court. SCOTUS is generally the final interpreter of federal law including the U.S. Constitution.

Although we don't directly vote for these nine justices, our vote or lack of determines who sits on the high court often for decades! They are nominated by the president and confirmed by the senate. It's a

lifetime job unless they resign, retire or are removed after impeachment.

It's sort of like an arranged marriage which has been bumpy, evolved to include women and people of color, been full of surprises (the biggest of late being the decision on LGBTQ marriage). Now, with the announcement of Justice Kennedy's retirement and questions about how much longer Justice Ginsberg might remain on the bench, all bets are off.

Because the 2016 election was determined by the electoral college and not the popular vote the GOP took power over two of the three branches. It is now poised to complete the trifecta and swing the Supreme Court so far to the right that it's frightening.

We've already seen it happening and the rhetoric coming from the right, regarding this appointment, promises to take us all back to a future where diversity and inclusion advances might not only be severely setback but possibly erased.

Since 2016 we've seen words and actions that have us not just wondering what's next but how bad will things get. And, more importantly, how will we recover to get back on that high ground that for eight years held such great promise for our community.

Each day we have to go to work, interact with people

See next page

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 12

who feel free to say whatever they want and go home to watch this train wreck unfold in front of us on the daily news.

The questions I have heard or been asked most frequently are, “How do we talk to each other when so much hatred has been spewed, so many lies told? And What are we going to do?”

We can’t all pack and move to Canada or stay in our beds with our heads covered hoping it was all just a bad dream while sending up hopes and prayers that sanity will somehow prevail.

Now more than ever it’s time to be visible, to be vocal and to create change.

How do we do this? By being visible every day and everywhere. At our jobs, where we shop, at community meetings, where we worship, at our schools and universities and in our neighborhoods even over the fence in our backyards.

It is not the time for us to be silent, to be fearful, to go back in the closet or to give up on building bridges and alliances. Our vote counts. Every vote counts. We have to bring every vote – LGBTQ and all our allies - to the polls beginning now and send these chickens home to roost.

When you hear hate speech or misinformation about the LGBTQ community set the record straight and be out about things other than LGBTQ issues. Don’t let politicians pigeonhole us or write our narrative.

We want protection in the workplace and security for our families, but our fight for equality is far from over. We also want safe schools, good roads, better government, a clean environment and peace.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

“Sure, why not?” I agreed, somewhat eagerly. After our coke and conversation, he asked if I’d like a ride to Palmer Park.

“I’d like to, but I have to be home for dinner soon,” I hesitated. “Can we meet tomorrow?” I offered, hopefully.

“Sure. Let’s meet at noon,” Marcus smiled, patting me on the shoulder. “Anchors away!”

The next day, I put on a clean shirt and

We exist! We persist! And when our equality and the safety of our families or community is threatened, we will resist!

Let’s amplify our voices by marching in solidarity with women because when they say #MeToo it means #UsToo because we are also victims of abuse, harassment and are survivors.

Let’s amplify our voices by marching in solidarity with immigrants because LGBTQ immigrants seek refuge, asylum from persecution even death and seek the promise of freedom this country was founded on.

Let’s amplify our voices by standing in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter and #TransLivesMatter activists because all of our lives matter. There is no them and us. There must be one beloved community where every voice regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or gender expression is lifted up, valued and included.

Let’s create change in our municipalities, in our counties, in our state and in our country by showing up not just at the big elections but at every election to elect fair minded officials to restore a government by, for, and of the people from the schoolhouse to the White House.

Malcolm X once spoke of “chickens coming home to roost.” His remarks referred to an old proverb, actually a curse, going back over half a millennium meaning basically that one’s previous actions will eventually have consequences.

Well we’ve had a group of chickens laying eggs of bigotry, bias, intolerance and inequality for some time now. Now they are emboldened by the rhetoric of a big orange rooster.

It is not the time for us to be silent, to be fearful, to go back in the closet or to give up on building bridges and alliances. Our vote counts. Every vote counts. We have to bring every vote – LGBTQ and all our allies - to the polls beginning now and send these chickens home to roost.

Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. Her weekly podcast “Collections by Michelle Brown” airs every Thursday at 7 p.m. and can be heard on Blog Talk Radio, iTunes, Stitcher and SoundCloud. Follow her on Facebook at “Collections by Michelle Brown.”

Brylcreemed my hair - “A little dab’ll do ya,” ran the radio commercial – and arrived at 11:15. I sat there for an hour. Waiting, waiting. Marcus never showed. Soon, it began to rain. It was a disappointment. The first of many in my young, just-coming-out, gay life.”

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

Creep of the Week

Trump Voters

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

The other day I heard a self-proclaimed democrat who voted for Trump say he didn’t like Hillary.

“Bernie would have won. We told them we wanted Bernie,” he said, referring to Sanders winning the primary election in Michigan. “But they didn’t listen to us.”

He didn’t exactly admit that voting for Trump was a mistake, but he did acknowledge that Trump was not a good president. He was also (spoiler alert!) a straight white guy.

While listening to this man talk I thought I was going to grind my teeth into powder.

This was just a few hours before Trump was to announce his U.S. Supreme Court pick. Something I felt literally sick over.

You see, the Supreme Court is pretty important to me. In June, 2015, I was sitting in a chemo ward getting poisoned pumped into my body as part of my treatment for breast cancer. I was more miserable than I’d ever been, and not just because I was bald, bloated and nauseous.

The clock was ticking. Not on my life so much, as treatment — though hellacious — was going well and I had a good prognosis. But my insurance was running out. Aug. 31 would be my last day with insurance and I was only half way done with treatment. I was terrified that saving my life would bankrupt my family.

Before the Supreme Court in June 2015 were two cases over issues that would decide my fate: marriage equality and the Affordable Care Act.

See, I was legally married to my wife. We had a legal document from California as proof. But that wasn’t recognized in Michigan. And so my wife’s health insurance, far better than mine, was out of reach. So I’d planned to buy insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

Yet the court’s ruling could’ve effectively dismantled the ACA. And the court’s ruling on marriage equality could’ve effectively rendered me permanently without a legal spouse.

So when the Supreme Court ruled that the ACA was safe (for that time being), I was relieved. And when they ruled that yes, my marriage was real and Michigan damn well better recognize it, I was, well, I was very sick, so it was hard to feel especially celebratory, but I did feel like a huge weight had been lifted off of me and my family.

The next day my wife called her HR person to add me to her insurance. I was expecting a fight. They just said, “Okay,

can you spell her name?” We then went to our lawyer to have papers drawn up to make me, finally, the legal parent to my son. It was literally life-changing.

So to all of the people who voted for Trump because they “just didn’t like Clinton,” I cannot forgive you. You put America’s most vulnerable populations in peril because you didn’t like a lady’s laugh.

You didn’t *<ital have>* to vote *<ital for>* Clinton. You could’ve voted for the Supreme Court. You could’ve voted *<ital against>* the candidate endorsed by Nazis. You could have voted *<ital against>* the candidate that bragged about sexually assaulting women. You could have even voted for no one!

The problem is, of course, that Mr. “Bernie would’ve won” didn’t have a lot at stake when casting his vote. Being white, male and heterosexual is pretty much a superpower in America. Very little hurts you. This superpower is even stronger in men with money.

Under Trump, every day’s a new nightmare for minorities and women (and, yes, I know that white women also went for Trump; whiteness is a hell of a drug). His administration has attacked (and this is a partial list) transgender people, the sick, immigrants, asylum seekers, black people, Mexicans, women, the disabled, the press, lesbians and gays and anyone who doesn’t look like Stephen Miller.

If you voted for this and you’re happy about what’s happening, well, congratulations. Enjoy it, I guess. I hope it filled the void in you where empathy is supposed to be.

And if you voted for this and you’re not happy about it? You have a lot of work to do! But it will first take the ability to look at yourself in the mirror and say, “I did a selfish and shortsighted thing and I am personally responsible for hurting lots of people.” Which isn’t an easy task. It’ll suck, but not as badly as having your civil rights stripped from you sucks.

As they say, actions speak louder than words. Volunteer for a democrat’s campaign (because under Trump Republicans have proven to all be trash). Donate money to progressive causes that help people being hurt by Trump’s policies.

Don’t you dare ask me or anyone else who wakes up every day terrified by the erosion of our rights and our democracy for forgiveness. The road to redemption is long. And no, we will not give you a ride. You walk and think about what you did.

British Government to Ban Conversion Therapy

Trump Nominates Brett Kavanaugh to Supreme Court

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

President Trump on Monday nominated Brett Kavanaugh to succeed retiring U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Kavanaugh, 53, has been a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit since 2006. Kavanaugh also clerked for Kennedy.

Kavanaugh's nomination comes less than a month after Kennedy announced his retirement from the Supreme Court.

Kennedy wrote several landmark gay rights rulings; including the 2015 decision in the Obergefell case that extended marriage rights to same-sex couples throughout the country. LGBT activists are among those who have expressed concern over who Trump would nominate to succeed Kennedy.

"Justice Kennedy kept the court in the mainstream by having an open mind and a commitment to an evolving Constitution," said American Civil Liberties Union Legal Director David Cole in a statement. "Senators should ask Kavanaugh whether he agrees that constitutional law evolves with the times, as it did in recognizing that segregation is unconstitutional, that sex discrimination violates the Equal Protection Clause, and that marriage equality is constitutionally

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

The British government on Tuesday announced it will ban so-called conversion therapy in the U.K.

The ban is among the 75 recommendations to promote equality and fight discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity that the government made in response to a nationwide survey of more than 108,000 LGBTI people it launched in July 2017.

Women and Equalities Minister Penny Mordaunt in the survey's executive summary notes two percent of respondents said they had "undergone conversion or reparative therapy in an attempt to 'cure' them of being LGBT" and another five percent of respondents said they "had been offered it."

"We will bring forward proposals to end the practice of conversion therapy in the U.K.," said the government in its "LGBT Action Plan: Improving the Lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexuals and Transgender People" document that it submitted to Parliament. "These activities are wrong, and we are not willing to let them continue."

The Government Equalities Office will lead efforts to ban the highly discredited practice.

"We will fully consider all legislative and non-legislative options to prohibit promoting, offering or conducting conversion therapy," said the government. "Our intent is to protect people who are vulnerable to harm or violence, whether that occurs in a medical, commercial or faith-based context."

The government added it is "not trying to

to stamp out this demeaning and unethical act." Hunt also welcomed the government's recommendations as "an important first step."

"But we must see action that leads to tangible change," added Hunt.

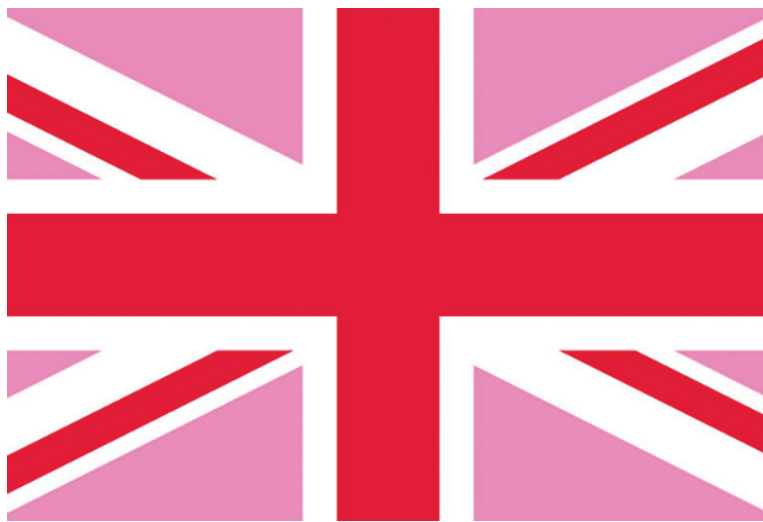
The government released the results of the survey and its recommendations less than three months after Prime Minister Theresa

May said she "deeply" regrets colonial-era laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual relations the U.K. introduced in Commonwealth countries. British Ambassador to the U.S. Kim Darroch last month urged these nations that have yet to repeal these laws to do so.

"We just urge all of our friends and partners in other countries around the world to move on as we have done to make their societies more open, more liberal, to embrace anti-discrimination in relation to the LGBT community as we have," Darroch told the Washington Blade during an interview at the British Embassy in D.C. before its annual Pride month

reception. "It just makes your society a better place."

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



prevent LGBT people from seeking legitimate medical support or spiritual support from their faith leader in the exploration of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Ruth Hunt, chief executive of Stonewall, a British LGBTI advocacy group, in a statement said it is "absolutely vital that more is done

Mexico's President-Elect Cites LGBT Community in Victory Speech

BY GRACE PERRY

Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Sunday became Mexico's first leftist president in decades, winning in a landslide victory with more than 50 percent of the vote.

López Obrador — commonly known by his initials AMLO — has a long history in politics. He was Mexico City's mayor from 2000 to 2005, and he ran (and lost) in the two previous presidential elections. A member of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), López Obrador ran on an anti-corruption platform and a narrative of social change centered around eradicating poverty. His win represents a clear rejection of the status quo and political establishment and a desire for widespread change.

Gaby Soberanis, president of Diversidad Guerrero in Acapulco, said she hopes the changes brought about by his election and presidency are "for good," and that he's able

to combat the country's systemic "violence" and "insecurity" through "alliances, programs and public policies in favor of the collective."

Current President Enrique Peña Nieto is one of the country's most unpopular leaders in decades, with an administration characterized by scandal and inadequacy in combating crime and violence. According to the Mexican Interior Ministry, nearly 30,000 people were killed last year in the country, making it the worst year on record for homicides.

Peña Nieto was a member of the centrist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has ruled Mexico for most of the last century. José Antonio Meade, the PRI candidate in this year's election, finished in third place behind López Obrador and Ricardo Anaya, a center-right politician.

López Obrador has already begun breaking from previous presidents; in his Sunday victory speech, he said, "the state will represent all Mexicans...from all points of view and sexual preferences."

According to Karolyna Polloreña, an LGBT activist in Mexicali, López Obrador is the first president-elect in the country's history to specifically mention the LGBTI community in his victory speech. She also said López Obrador will have a more diverse cabinet than previous administrations and more progressive representatives across various government sectors.

"With it [the administration] and the help of the Mexican LGBTTTTI+ Coalition, we hope that this new government can help legalize marriage equality in the states where it's lacking in Mexico and also move forward on issues of legislation that have (stalled) in past governments," Polloreña said.

Despite his remarks in his victory speech, López Obrador did not campaign explicitly as an advocate for LGBT rights or marriage equality, and he dodged questions on the campaign trail regarding such issues. His electoral coalition also includes the Social Encounter Party (PES), which was founded

by evangelical Christians and has opposed previous efforts to federally legalize same-sex marriage.

Given these factors, Alex Ali Méndez Díaz — a lawyer spearheading same-sex marriage efforts in Mexico — said LGBTI advocacy will remain principally centered in civil society.

"It is up to civil society to continue working to make our voices heard and to defend ourselves against any attempt at invisibilization and/or regression," Méndez Díaz said.

Polloreña echoed Méndez Díaz's belief that Mexican citizens are the key to progress and should be engaged and active under the new administration, saying "it is now important to invite citizens to get involved and demand that campaign promises be fulfilled when the new administration begins."

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

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(Not pictured: Hina Javaid, MD)

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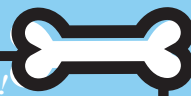


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Trump Keeps Omitting LGBT People from HIV/AIDS Statement

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

For the second year in a row, President Trump has issued a statement recognizing National HIV Testing that omits any mention of the vulnerability of LGBT people to the disease.

The lack of LGBT inclusion in statements on HIV/AIDS has been a consistent theme from Trump, who last year issued a statement on World AIDS Day that also failed to mention LGBT people being disproportionately impacted by the disease.

To be fair, President Obama never mentioned LGBT people in his statements on National HIV Testing Day either, but did mention LGBT vulnerability to the disease in other statements, including his final proclamation on World AIDS Day.

The White House didn't respond to a request for comment on LGBT omission from the National HIV Testing Day statement.

Trump in his statement lauded "the great progress we have made" against HIV/AIDS, including national efforts "to spread awareness about the importance of getting tested."

"Early detection of HIV — using a simple and routine test — is instrumental in helping contain the advancement of the virus to



President Donald Trump didn't mention LGBT people in his National HIV/AIDS Testing Day statement. (Blade file photo by Michael Key)

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)," Trump said.

Trump also promoted HIV testing by pointing out new medications are helping people with HIV/AIDS "live longer and healthier lives." Alluding to PrEP, Trump noted the Food & Drug Administration approved medication dramatically reducing the risk of HIV infection in the first place.

Although Trump doesn't mention LGBT people in his statement, Trump does mention the high number of youths who are contracting the disease.

"Despite this progress, in 2016, nearly

40,000 people were diagnosed with HIV in the United States," Trump said. "People between the ages of 20 and 29 received more than a third of those diagnoses. Even more troubling, 44 percent of people living with HIV between the ages of 13 and 24 were unaware that they were carrying the virus."

Trump concludes that National HIV Testing Day is "an important reminder" those who are unaware they are carrying the disease are the "most at risk for inadvertently infecting others and missing out on potentially life-saving treatments."

"As we observe National HIV Testing Day, we celebrate the advancements we have made in medical science, and I encourage all Americans to invest in their health and be aware of their HIV status," Trump said. "Through greater awareness and education, we can all do our part to lead healthier and longer lives."

Carl Schmid, deputy executive director of the AIDS Institute, said he was "happy" with the statement despite the LGBT omission.

"It doesn't mention any of the groups," Schmid said. "And I was thinking, gee, we did a statement, and I didn't mention LGBT in ours either. We just focused on the number of people not being tested and the importance

of testing."

"I think we should give him credit for issuing a statement," Schmid said. "I didn't know they were going to do it, so I'm pleased. It shows that they are providing attention to HIV."

Although Trump doesn't mention LGBT people in his National HIV Strategy, a recently released report from the Department of Health & Human Services' Office of HIV/AIDS & Infectious Disease Policy, which adopted Obama-era goals in confronting the disease, did include statistics on the vulnerability of gay and bisexual men, as well as transgender women, to the disease.

Schmid acknowledged the lack of LGBT mention on HIV/AIDS — as well as other populations — has been a theme from Trump, and said identification of youth as a vulnerable population is important because most of them are LGBT.

"I hope that he will address LGBT — particularly youth — and black and Latino gay youth as well, but I give him credit for issuing this, and I think we should," 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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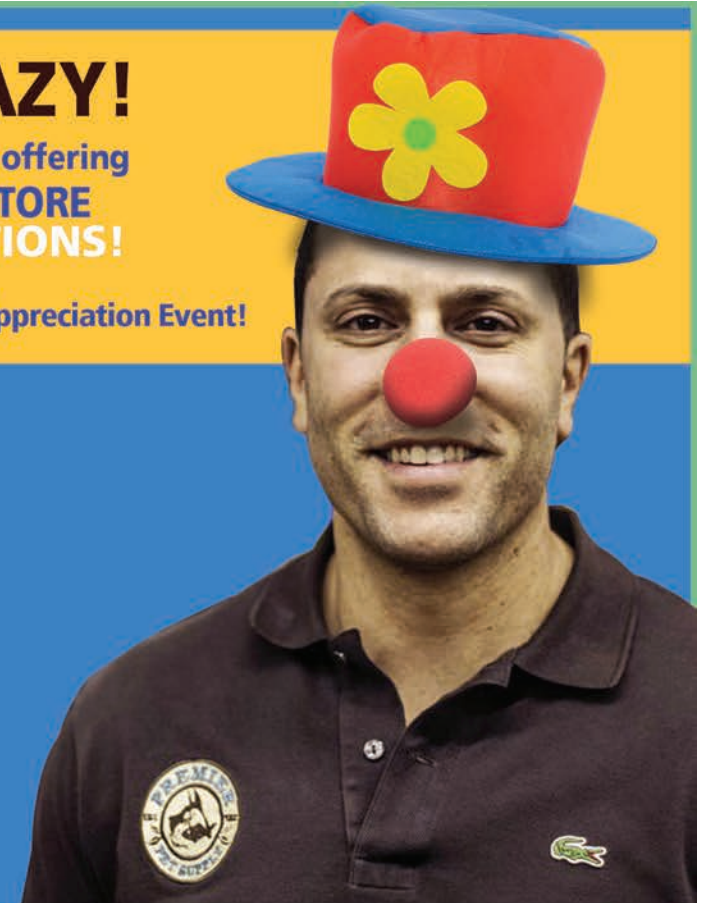
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Study Documents Millennials' Views on LGBT Issues

NEWS

COMPILED BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Millennials are America's largest, most diverse generation and an important potential voting bloc. So, now more than ever, it's important to understand their thoughts on issues that impact all Americans. A new survey created by GenForward called "Millennials Views on LGBT Issues: Race, Identity and Experience" asks questions on these topics and more.

GenForward is a nationally-representative survey of millennials led by Dr. Cathy Cohen from the University of Chicago, with samples of African-American, Latinx and Asian-American Millennials aged 18 to 34. This survey was taken from May 17 to June 3 of this year and it includes interviews with 525 African-Americans, 256 Asian-Americans, 502 Latinx individuals and 553 white millennials. These groups were asked their views on their own sexual identities, their perceptions of discrimination against LGBT people – both within the U.S. and their respective racial and ethnic communities – and their moral evaluations of LGBT relationships. These findings were then analyzed.

Notable Highlights

- LGBTQ millennials prioritize policies to end bullying of youth and to curtail violent hate crimes over policies that deal with family issues and health (HIV/AIDS) concerns, which were formerly front and center.

- The percentage self-identifying as LGBTQ is at 14 percent – several points above the previously assumed 10 percent and way above the estimated 3 percent as a voting bloc.

- Experiences of discrimination abound, with highest rates in communities of color.

- African-American and Latinx millennials see issues LGBT people face in communities of color as quite different than what mainstream LGBT organizations focus on.

- And, while conventional wisdom tells us millennials are open-minded, they express conflicted views over whether societal acceptance of homosexuality is degrading the country's moral fiber.

Breakdown of Identity and Connection

- **Identifying as LGBTQ.** Approximately 14 percent of millennials identify as something other than straight/heterosexual. Larger percentages of Latinx millennials (22 percent)



identify as LGBTQ compared with African-Americans (14 percent), whites (13 percent) and Asian-Americans (9 percent).

- **Group Solidarity.** Millennials who identify as LGBT, independent of race and ethnic group, express higher levels of group solidarity, or "linked fate," with other LGBT people compared to the linked fate millennials who identify as straight/heterosexual feel toward other straight/heterosexual young adults.

- **Knowing Someone Who is LGBT.** Large majorities of millennials across race/ethnicity know someone who is gay or lesbian. Fewer, though still substantial amounts of people, know someone who is transgender. White millennials are the most likely to know a transgender person (36 percent) compared to other racial/ethnic groups (~22 percent).

Breakdown of Discrimination

- **Anti-LGBT Discrimination in the U.S.** Large majorities of millennials across race/ethnic-city believes there is "a lot" of or "some" discrimination against lesbians, gays and transgender people in the United States.

- Millennials are more likely to say there is "a lot" of discrimination against transgender people compared to lesbians and gays (46 percent vs. 34 percent).

- **Anti-LG Discrimination in Racial Communities.** Majorities of Latinxs (61 percent) and Asian Americans (53 percent) say there is "a lot" of discrimination against lesbians and gays in their racial community, compared to 43 percent of African-Americans and 27 percent of whites.

- **Anti-Transgender Discrimination in Racial Communities.** Majorities of Asian-Americans (64 percent) and African-Americans (58 percent) and pluralities of Latinxs (49 percent) and whites (47 percent) say there is "a lot" of discrimination against transgender people in their racial community.

- **Racial Tensions in the LGBT Movement.** Majorities of African-American (53 percent) and Latinx (50 percent) millennials believe that the issues confronting LGBT individuals in communities of color are very different than the issues being promoted by mainstream organizations. In contrast, the majority of white (58 percent) and Asian-American (54 percent) millennials believe that all LGBT individuals benefit when mainstream LGBT organizations fight for basic rights.

- **LGBT Views of the LGBT Movement.** Millennials who identify as LGBT are also more likely (52 percent) to believe that issues confronting people of color who are LGBT are very different from those that are promoted by mainstream LGBT organizations.

Breakdown of Policy Preferences

- **Policy Priorities.**
 - Across racial and ethnic groups, millennials say the two most important issues facing the LGBT community are reducing hate crime violence against LGBT people and ending bullying against LGBT youth.

- LGBT millennials, while clearly concerned with bullying, are concerned with equal employment rights to almost the same degree.

- Adoption. Majorities across racial and

ethnic groups support adoption by LGBT parents, though African-American (+4 percent), Latinx (+9 percent) and white millennials (+13 percent) are more likely to support adoption by lesbians and gays than by transgender parents.

Least Supported LGBT Policies

- While all the policy proposals had substantial majority support, accepting LGBT immigrants is the least supported policy among white, Latinx and Asian-American millennials.

- Among African-Americans, the least supported policies are those that allow LGBT people to adopt children.

Breakdown of Norms, Acceptance and Morality

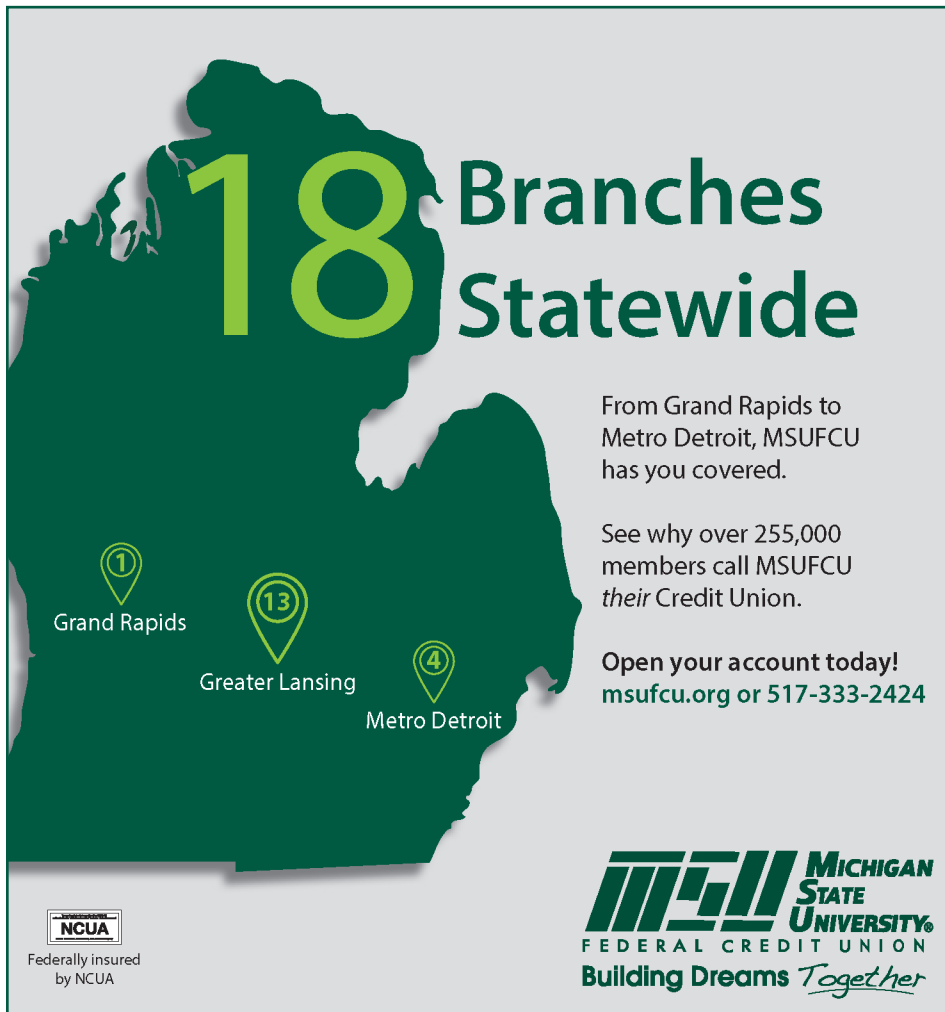
- **Need to do More to Accept Transgender People.** Majorities of Asian-American (69 percent) and white (52 percent) millennials and pluralities of African-American (49 percent) and Latinx (47 percent) millennials say our society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender.

- **Accepting LGBT Children.** Majorities of millennials say they could accept their son or daughter being LGBT. White millennials (80 percent) expressed the greatest acceptance toward having a child that identified as LGBT, followed by Asian-Americans (76 percent), Latinx (75 percent) and African-American (68 percent) millennials.

- **Conflicting Attitudes.** Despite their general support of policies promoting the equality of LGBT individuals and communities, a significant percentage of African-American (45 percent), Latinx (42 percent), white (34 percent) and Asian-American (28 percent) millennials also say increasing acceptance of homosexuality is causing a deterioration of morality.

- **LGBT millennials.** Of millennials who identify as LGBT, over one fifth, or 21 percent, believe that homosexuality is a moral detriment, while among millennials who identify as straight, 40 percent agree that homosexuality is damaging to society's moral values.

A total of 1,886 interviews were conducted representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey was offered in English and Spanish and via telephone and web modes. The full report on this data can be found at the GenForward website: GenForwardSurvey.com/reports.




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The Gaffney Couple Builds a Life After Long Distance

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Khiana Gaffney was living in Birmingham, Alabama, in 2016 when she made a quick trip home to Detroit to celebrate her grandmother's 90th birthday. While back in the Motor City, Khiana spent a little time on social media to learn a bit about the local girls. One of those girls, one of those who caught her eye, was the woman who is now her wife, Aleeya Gaffney.

"The day we met earlier that morning we were on Facebook in a group and they were like post your picture and a short bio," Aleeya recalled. "So she posted her pic. She put her age and where she lived at. I was like, 'Oh she's cute but she don't live here so I'm not going to think nothing of it.' And she was more of the masculine type and I'd never had an attraction to that type. But she was cute and she caught my eye."

That night at the bar, a place called Boney's, the two saw each other across the room.

"That night was karaoke and when I went back on Facebook I was like, 'That couldn't be her because she don't live here.' I would look every now and then in the mirror and catch her looking at me." "She was staring at me in the mirror," Khiana said.

"I was not," insisted Aleeya. "Anyway, I sent my friend over to ask her name and see if she had a girlfriend or just to find out something about her," Khiana said.

"And I told her friend, 'You tell her we grown,'" said Aleeya. "Tell her, 'Don't tell somebody to come over here.' She has to come talk to me if she wants to talk to me."

So the couple started talking, talking and talking some more.

"We got to talking, slow dancing the whole night away," Aleeya said. "Our conversation was good. She was goofy. She tried to be a little charming. She tried to put on this shy act but she's really not shy."

Before Khiana headed back to Alabama, the two went out on a date. Then the couple stayed on the phone together for nearly Khiana's entire 12-hour trip back to Alabama.

"We quickly got in the habit of talking many hours a day," said Khiana. "We fell asleep on the phone, took baths on the phone, you name it."

Soon enough, the couple realized they



Khiana and Aleeya Gaffney.

wanted to be together and that somebody was going to have to move.

"I didn't want her to leave her job to come down South because I felt she had a better job than I did," Khiana said. "So with me being from Detroit I made a decision to move back home. My mom is deceased and she left me with a house in Detroit so I had somewhere to go. So I moved back home. We dated and I stayed in my house and she stayed in hers."

Then, just a few months later, disaster struck. Aleeya was involved in a hit-and-run, rollover accident, leaving her in critical condition.

"I was there every night at the hospital with her," Khiana said. "Once she got home, our daughter was 3, so she couldn't even bathe our daughter. So I made the decision to move in. I moved in. We never had to talk about it and everything just went from here."

"I couldn't even walk in the beginning," said Aleeya. "I couldn't bathe myself. I couldn't get my child off to school. So I was like, 'You're not going nowhere. You belong to me.'"

And just like that, the couple was

engaged.

"We got engaged and we planned, we planned, we planned," Khiana said. "Every detail from the party bus to the antique Bentley to the ice sculptures. We had our faces carved in fruit."

The couple had their wedding and reception at Regency Manner in Southfield.

"I'm more of a private type of person," said Aleeya. "She's an over the top person. I wanted a private wedding but she wanted a big ceremony. So I said, 'OK, I'll give you the big ceremony. But if we're going to do it we're going to do it right.' I wanted to make it epic for her ... I wanted to give her her rainbow fairytale wedding."

"Everything worked out," Khiana said. "We had a lot of family and friends there. It was like a fairytale come true."

Now, Aleeya relishes in the joys of being a married woman.

"I love being married," said Aleeya. "Everything I say at the end of it I say 'I'm married now. Do you want to see my ring? I'm married now.' It feels good to say it. I truly married my best friend."

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The Now-Indie Aussie Sets Out to Expand Her Bop-Queen Horizons

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Jessica Newham, better known as Betty Who, is in a constant state of gay. A Pride festival one day, a stroll through Berlin with four gay friends another. Naturally, their afternoon walk is unfolding when as she rings me to talk about – what else? – gay things.

In October, more gay: she'll perform during the All Things Go 2018 Fall Classic festival in Washington D.C., uniting the 26-year-old Australia-born, Michigan-bred pop fixture with the LGBTQ community's other best kept secret, Carly Rae Jepsen. "Probably the gayest night of anybody's life," Betty says. "There are posters all over D.C. right now that say 'Make America Slay Again,' and it has Betty Who and Carly Rae Jepsen and a rainbow flag," and what's gayer than that?

OK, possibly the year 2013, when Betty's breakout bop "Somebody Loves You" soundtracked a viral same-sex proposal video in a Home Depot. Or her on-brand involvement in the second season of Netflix's "Queer Eye," singing the series' theme song, "All Things," and strutting a catwalk with the Fab Five in the accompanying video.

Just before the release of her new EP on AWAL Recordings, "Betty Pt. 1," Betty talks about how she wouldn't have a career without the LGBTQ community and why she left RCA Records (not because of Justin Timberlake, *exactly*).

What was it like to be in the presence of the Fab Five and Antoni's crop top for the theme-song video?

Obviously, Antoni is, like, the most handsome and I got to watch him do (the video in) slo-mo with the hair dryer, so I was like, "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I am in the presence of this and I know that a million people would literally murder me to be where I am right now. I literally sang for President Obama and that was the coolest thing I've ever done, but I still feel more people are jealous of what's happening to me right now."

Did you tap into any of the guys' expertise?

Honestly, I'm so obsessed with Tan (France) and his vibe and his styling choices. I really love what he does for all the boys. But on the shoot he was wearing this white corset that the stylist had actually culled for me and he went into the wardrobe department and he was like, "Wait, I want that." And he stole my corset. So, it's obvious to me that we have similar style, if you're wearing my clothes.

Was becoming the gay queen that you've become on your to-do list?

Oh my gosh, absolutely not. I'm so happy

to be! It's such an honor. But no, it was not intentional by any means. I still am so shocked by it all the time. I do kind of feel sheltered and protected by them; I feel quite like they're an overprotective dad, that's how the gay community has been with me. And I truly do believe that I would not have a career had it not been for my LGBTQ fans. They're my people. I feel like my tribe has always been filled with LGBTQ people in my life, separate from my career. So my career, to sort of take shape the way that it has, feels like it's really kind of aligned with who I am as a person.

It's just a big extension of your personal life.

Totally. Which is what you want it to be when you're an artist. I meet fans all the time and I'm like, "Oh my god, we could be friends!"

Are you happy where you're at, success-wise?

I hope that nobody ever is, because I want so much. I'm very forward-thinking, and I think that can be a good thing and a bad thing because you sort of sometimes get swept up in where you want to go and don't get to really appreciate where you are. In the last six to eight months, my journey has shifted course a little bit and I feel like I'm in a really great place emotionally and mentally around my career for the first time in a long time. Now, I feel really at ease in the place that I am.

What was making you feel uneasy?

Long story short: I think that anybody who is in a not completely healthy working relationship with someone who is supposed to be their partner is challenging. It takes a toll on you. Leaving and becoming the creator of my own destiny and making all of these decisions by myself has put me in a position where I'm so much more tuned into myself. All I've ever wanted is to be able to be myself and not have to fight for that, not have to convince anybody that what I'm doing is right, so to have people before the music comes out distilling all of this fear and doubt into you makes it so much more challenging. I want people who are on my team. I want them to be on my side.

And they weren't?

It was so much about the timeline. When you're signed to a major label, no matter who you are, it's, "Well, we can't put this out that day because Justin Timberlake has an album coming out that day." I don't want to have to compete with people who I don't even know. If your job is to take care of me, you should be taking care of (me). You should be doing what's right for my project. And waiting two years to put an album out was not right for my project.

What project did we have to wait on?

"The Valley." I wanted to put "The Valley" out a year after the first record came out, and my first album came out in October 2014 and "The Valley" came out in the spring of 2017.

That was a long time for me. *Too* long. And it was really difficult for me to sit and wait because you can't tour, you can't do anything if you don't put new music out. I felt quite isolated, and all I wanted to do was share. All I wanted to do was be myself and share myself and make more music and continue to do what I love to do.

What's the best part of being a free agent now?

There are lots of good things! (Laughs) Being able to record a song and go, "Cool, I want to put it out in three months, I can do that!" That's totally foreign to me, so that's really exciting. Not having to fight for my case, or sort of go through a hundred people to try to get stuff approved. That's so refreshing.

And if you want, you can even release an album on the same day as Justin Timberlake.

Exactly. By the way, who I love. That was an example; I didn't even try to put out a record that day. But there are so many people on any major label and not enough people to work that project. There are 200 artists and 50 people working – like, how can you possibly take care of everybody? So: no tea, no shade.

How has your artistic freedom influenced the way you approached the music on "Betty Pt. 1"?

If I had written "Taste" and wanted to put it on an album a year and a half ago, I would've got, "I don't know how this fits in with everything. It's really different for me, and I don't know how to do different." I was always encouraged to do what everybody thought was best for me, not sort of expand too much outside of that. Now, I'm putting music out at my own free will and with my own inspiration and vision. With "Taste," I go, "This is really different, and that's exactly why I want to put it out." A song like "Friend Like Me": I had been writing singer-songwriter songs for the last 13 years of my life – I started writing songs when I was 14 – and that was where I learned to write, on a guitar.

I was writing really intimate, sad, quiet songs. "Silas," I think, is the closest thing that I've done that feels like that, which is on my second EP. It wasn't even on an album because everybody goes, "But you know, you're not a singer-songwriter." But I am. That's exactly who I am. It's who I've always been. And just because I'm a singer-songwriter does not negate the fact that I also want to make pop music and dance on stage. I'm an artist, and I wanted to have more of an emotional range. Just because I can do one, doesn't mean I can't do the other.

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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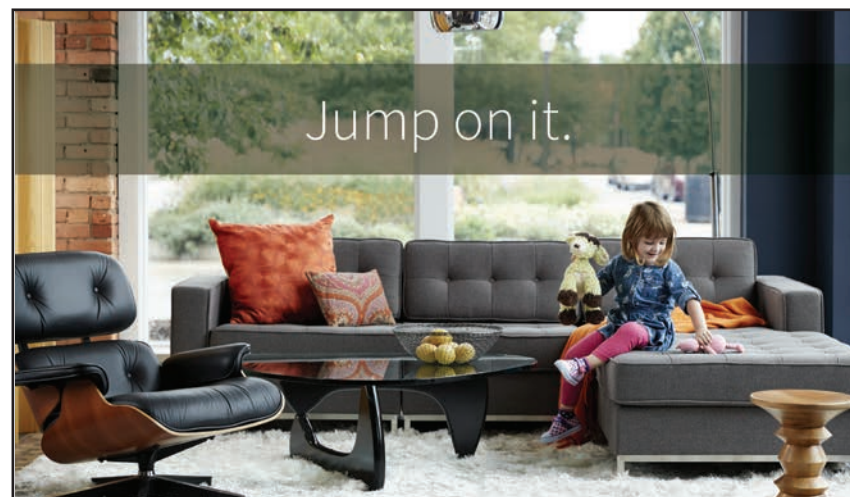
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ANN ARBOR PRIDE

AUGUST 3-5 2018

Street Festival

Saturday, August 4, Beginning at 10:00AM

Beer & Wine Tent | Festival Booths
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NECTO



Jim Toy Community Center
319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor, MI
AnnArborPride.com
734-995-9867

All Ages Welcome

Festival information
is available at
AnnArborPride.com

Ann Arbor Pride New Headliner Announcement: Brian Justin Crum

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR – Although previously scheduled to headline Ann Arbor Pride, Ada Vox will not be able to perform at the event on Saturday, Aug. 4 due to a contractual obligation with talent TV show “American Idol.” Pride organizers said that all meet & greet tickets that were purchased may be allowed refund, up to seven days before the event, which is ongoing from Aug. 3 through 5. In Vox’s stead, Brian Justin Crum shall headline.

Crum is an American singer and stage actor from San Diego, California. In 2016, he competed on the 11th season of the NBC TV competition show “America’s Got Talent,” taking fourth place. The full entertainment schedule for Ann Arbor pride will be announced closer to the start of the three-day festival.

This year marks the 24th anniversary of Ann Arbor Pride, formerly known as



OUTFest. This year will not only include live music in the form of entertainment, but a kid zone, guest speakers, a variety of food, workshops and even more. This

annual event is a pride celebration that is hosted by Ann Arbor’s Jim Toy Community Center and in partnership with a variety of LGBTQ people and allies around Washtenaw County.

Ann Arbor Pride August 3-5, 2018

Crum will perform at the festival’s main stage, located at Kerrytown 121 Catherine St., in Ann Arbor. This event is free and open to the public. All day entertainment beginning at 10 a.m. in the Kerrytown neighborhood of Ann Arbor, located on

the corner of Catherine and N 4th Ave. For more information about the event, please visit AnnArborPride.com.

Ozone House to Commemorate 50th Anniversary

BY BTL STAFF

Tickets will go on sale in July for a Sept. 29 celebration by those at Ozone House, an Ann Arbor-based shelter that helps get youth off the streets and into a safe space. That celebration will both commemorate the shelter’s almost 50 years of service, as well as those who have helped it maintain its services.

“We celebrate the young people that Ozone House has the privilege of working with, our hardworking and talented staff, and most importantly, the community that continues to support the lifesaving work that we do,” said event organizers. “As we gear up to turn 50th anniversary next June, we are excited to honor our past and our future plans with all of you!”

The event will include a silent auction, youth speakers and a variety of entertainment.

The event will be held at the Domino’s World Resource Center located at 30 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive in Ann Arbor. More information can be found about the event online at ozonehouse.org.

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Concert of Colors Diversity Festival in 26th Year

Since 1993, the Concert of Colors has been a regular Detroit-based, diversity-themed music festival with a goal of “uniting Metro Detroit’s diverse communities and ethnic groups.” This is done with a variety of musical acts that are sourced from around the world. The free festival’s acts this year include everything from the punk sounds of Pennsylvania-based group Tile, the pop and Hip-Hop-influenced work of Flint Native Tunde Olaniran and Iranian artist Mohsen Namjoo – hailed by the New York Times as Iran’s Bob Dylan.

The concert was established by Ismael Ahmed, the former head of ACCESS, or the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, in partnership with New Detroit, a racial justice organization New Detroit. Originally a one-day event at Chene Park, it expanded to three days in 2001 and now it spans from June 11 through 15. This year’s event is being produced by the Arab American National Museum with partners Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Institute of Arts, the University of Michigan – Detroit Center, ACCESS and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.



Like Mayaeni is performing this year.

More information about the event’s history and a list of all music times and venues can be found online at concertofcolors.com.

SAGE Metro Detroit, Affirmations Host Dual Fundraiser

On Wednesday, Aug. 22, the Affirmations LGBTQ community center will host a dual fundraiser for itself and SAGE Metro Detroit – an advocacy organization for LGBT Elders.

At the event, SAGE Metro Detroit Executive Director Angie Perone and Affirmations Interim Executive Director Lilliana Reyes will talk about the newest service developments for

LGBT Older Adults in the Metro Detroit Area.

Refreshments will be provided, including beer and wine. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. All proceeds will support both organizations. The event will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. To purchase tickets visit <https://bit.ly/2K48sxb>, call Affirmations at 248-398-7105 or email info@sagemetrodetroit.org.



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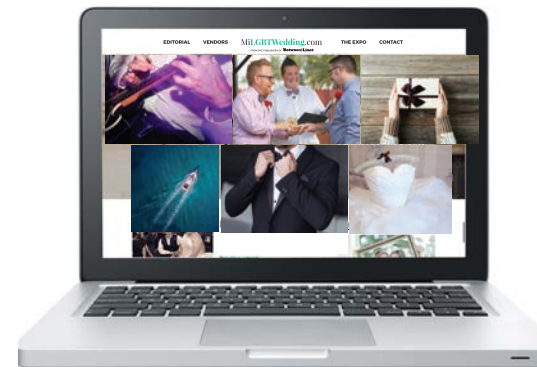
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Groups Protest Bill Giving Polluters Control Over Environmental Protections

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING — Environmental justice groups are urging Gov. Rick Snyder to veto a package of bills that would give polluting industries and special interest groups control over environmental protections in Michigan. On Monday, July 2, they held a tele-press conference to share insights on how these bills could exacerbate the already dangerous levels of pollution in Michigan communities, undermine clean air and water protections and expose Michiganders to air and water pollution and other and serious health risks.

Speakers included Vickie Dobbins, a River Ridge community activist and Environmental Justice Work member; Dr. Lawrence Reynolds of Flint, a member of the Sierra Club environmental justice group; Theresa Landrum of the Original United Citizens of Southwest Detroit and Michelle Martinez, the state coordinator for the Michigan Environmental Coalition.

The groups say that if allowed to move forward, the bills, SB 652-653, would ultimately lead to more environmental and public health disasters like the Flint water crisis, toxic algae blooms in Lake Erie, Nestle's Great Lakes water withdrawal and



toxic air pollution hotspots in Detroit.

The governor has until July 9 to make a decision on SB 652-653.

The groups are also calling on Gov. Snyder to implement recommendations developed by the Environmental Justice Work Group. The Environmental Justice Work Group was created by Governor Snyder following direct recommendations from the Flint Water Advisory Task Force and the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee's Policy Subcommittee. The Work Group issued a series of recommendations for action on environmental justice in March, but have yet to hear a response from the Governor's office.

To find out more information on SB 652-653, go to legislature.mi.gov.

State Veterans Homes Earn a Pair of Perfect Scores in VA Surveys

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

LANSING, Mich. — For the first time, both State of Michigan-managed veteran homes met all 231 standards for nursing home and domiciliary care, according to surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“Top to bottom, MVAA made a commitment to improve on the work we do in providing long-term care to Michigan's veterans,” said Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency Director James Robert Redford. “We are proud of the continued hard work and dedication of our staff in Grand Rapids and Marquette who live the commitment by providing the best care to the members who reside in both homes.”

This is the third year in a row that the Marquette Home has achieved a perfect survey

result and the first year for the Grand Rapids Home. At GRHV, the 2018 survey results showed marked year-over-year improvement, rising from a met-rate of 87.8 percent of the 231 standards in 2015 to 90 percent in 2016, then 99.5 percent in 2017.

“It's encouraging to see continuous improvements in care at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans,” Gov. Rick Snyder said. “The positive results of the federal survey are a direct result of action by MVAA leadership and hard work from the staff who have made it their mission to provide excellent care for our veterans across Michigan.”

The 2018 surveys of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans and the D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans may be downloaded from the MVAA website at MichiganVeterans.com.



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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, July 12

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce Merge & Mixer 6:30 p.m. Michigan Employee Resource Groups for Equality (MERGE) Monthly Networking Event. All are welcomed to network. Host by: Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce. Check website for monthly location, RSVP is Required. Soho, 205 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-542-7646 info@detroitlgbtchamber.com info@detroitlgbtchamber.com www.ferndalesoho.com http://www.detroitlgbtchamber.com

Battle Creek Pride 2018 6:30 p.m. This unique 4 day pride festival is the largest LGBTQ gathering in Calhoun County. Beautiful downtown Battle

Creek will serve as the gathering spot for friends, family and visitors from around the state to celebrate. Downtown Battle Creek, Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek. info@battlecreekpride.org info@battlecreekpride.org http://www.battlecreekpride.org/ http://www.battlecreekpride.org/images/MEDIA/Pride20Weekend202018.pdf

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Farmington Hills - Oakland County 7 p.m. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620 www.oaklandumc.org http://www.standwithtrans.org

Sunday, July 15

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Parent Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals 4 p.m. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st

Street, Wyandotte. 734-747-4363 http://www.standwithtrans.org

Wednesday, July 18

Stand with Trans Support Groups - Livonia - Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. http://www.standwithtrans.org

Thursday, July 19

Safetalk Training 10 a.m. Hosted by American Indian Health and Family Services and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, safeTALK is a half-day alertness training that prepares anyone 15 or older, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105

Friday, July 20

Slipstream Theatre presents 'Lost in 3 Pines' 8 p.m. Fresh off his multiple honors and awards, and new addition to the Dramatists Guild, Maxim Vinogradov offers a world premiere of his new work. Slipstream Theatre Initiative, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. insidetheslipstream@gmail.com insidetheslipstream.com http://www.slipstreamti.com/

Tuesday, July 24

Hotter Than July Candlelight Vigil 6 p.m. Come out and join us at Palmer Park as we pay respect to our loved ones that have past this past year and rejoice in our lives and freedoms. We look forward to seeing everyone Palmer park, 17888 pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit. http://lgbtdetroit.org

Hotter Than July 2018! 4th Annual LGBT Community Chat 6 p.m. Entering into its 23rd year, Hotter Than July is the second oldest Black LGBT Pride event in the world, an honor we take with a sense of responsibility to keep raising the bar of excellence. Palmer park, 17888 pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit. https://www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Stand with Trans Support Groups - Ann Arbor - Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. http://www.standwithtrans.org

Wednesday, July 25

Hotter Than July Resource Fair and Opening Party 5 p.m. Come out to the Woodward and help us kick off Hotter Than July. There will be great food, drinks and music. This is an annual event so come out and enjoy yourself with friends and Woodward Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave., Detroit. lgbtdetroit.org

Kesha and Macklemore Do Dual Concert at DTE Energy Music Theatre

Kesha and Macklemore will team up this summer for their "The Adventures of Kesha and Macklemore" Tour. Presented by Live Nation, the tour follows acclaimed and celebrated eras for both artists who are ardent LGBTQ rights supporters. Additionally, \$1 single dollar from every ticket sold will be donated on 'The Adventures of Kesha and Macklemore' tour. Kesha will donate her proceeds to RAINN (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network), the largest anti-sexual assault organization in the US. Macklemore will donate his proceeds to M Plus1, an organization that advances racial and social justice through the M&RL Equity Fund. They will be at DTE Energy Music Theatre on Wednesday, July 18, at 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$46.

Hotter Than July 2018! Resource Fair and Opening Party! 5 p.m. Entering into its 23rd year, Hotter Than July is the second oldest Black LGBT Pride event in the world, an honor we take with a sense of responsibility to keep raising the bar of excellence. Woodward Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave., Detroit. lgbtdetroit.org https://www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Thursday, July 26

Hotter Than July 2018! Fine Art Reception! 6 p.m. Come out and join us at the Hotter Than July Fine Art Reception. We will have art from our great local artists so please come out and support some of wonderful Detroit art! Can't wait The Carr Center, 1505 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 313-965-8430 https://www.thecarrcenter.org/ https://www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Friday, July 27

Hotter Than July 2018! Conference 9 a.m. LGBT Detroit and Community Health Awareness Group hosts The 23rd Annual Hotter Than July Conference. This annual gathering for LGBT issues addresses relevant and important concerns. The day consists of "The Candidates Forum" in the Community Health Awareness Group, 1300 W. Fort Street, Detroit. https://www.lgbtdetroit.org/hotterthanjuly/

Saturday, July 28

Hotter Than July Palmer Park Picnic 11 a.m. Come out to the 23rd annual Palmer Park Pride Picnic. There will be great local entertainment from singers, rappers, showboys/showgirls. We will have a great DJ their playing great music. So come out and have Palmer park, 17888 pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit.

Hotter Than July 2018! Palmer Park Picnic! 11 a.m. The pinnacle event of Detroit's annual celebration is a family reunion and you're invited. A Day with The Mizharis, Ballroom, House Party, Merchant Row, Testing Zone are highlighted along with free food and fun! Palmer park, 17888 pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit.

Hotter Than July House at Palmer Park Picnic 12 p.m. Ms. Honey Twista Sista, DJ Tone and DJ Tony Peoples host Hotter Than July House at Palmer Palmer Picnic. The event is free and open to all. Palmer park, 17888 pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit.

MUSIC & MORE

The Cochrane House: Table D'hôte Series-The Ultimate Foodie Experience July 12, 6 p.m. Join Chef Michael England and Jazz Artist Gene Dunlap for a relaxing evening with good music, good food and networking. Proceeds benefit our non-profit organization. Donations are

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Editor's Pick

Showing of 'The Shining' at Royal Oak Main Art Theatre

This chilling film stars Jack Nicholson as the caretaker of a hotel in its off season. It follows his slow descent into madness after he and his family are left to fend for themselves in the many-roomed hotel for several weeks. This Stephen King adaptation was released originally in 1980 and runs for 2 hours and 26 minutes. It will be shown on both Friday, July 6 and July 7 at noon. More information can be found online at landmarktheatres.com.



tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. The Cochrane House Luxury Historic Inn, 216 Winder Street, Detroit. www.thecochranehouse.com <http://tch712.eventbrite.com>

Detroit: You're So Unusual Bus Tour (Part Un) July 14, 1 p.m. This fun, quirky motor coach tour goes beyond the familiar Detroit landmarks and showcases the cool, curious, unfamiliar, and forgotten sites of interest located within the city's vast 139 square miles. Join us for an 2934 Russell Street, 2934 Russell St, Detroit. 313.757.1283

citytourdetroit.com/detroit-youre-so-unusual-bus-tours/ <https://citytourdetroit.com/detroit-youre-so-unusual-bus-tours>

Summer Osborne in Concert July 14, 7 p.m. Summer Osborne is one of the hottest new voices in the Women's Music Scene. An award winning singer-songwriter from St. Louis, Missouri, her powerful vocals and artful storytelling illuminate the power of spirituality, truth, love Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023 uufilint.org <http://office@uufilint.org>

Patti Labelle and Kenny 'Babyface' Edmonds at Chene Park Amphitheatre July 14, 8 p.m. Come enjoy a beautiful outdoor evening concert with the Detroit River Chene Park Amphitheatre, 2600 Atwater Street, Detroit. www.cheneparkdetroit.com

In The Heights @ New Center Park July 18-22, 8 p.m. Music and Lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda; Book by Quiara Alegria Hudes. Performed by The Detroit Actors Theatre Company (The DATC), 'In the Heights' explores three days in the characters' lives in the New York City. New Center Park, 2998 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-420-6000 www.newcenterpark.com <http://www.thedatc.org>

ART 'N' AROUND

Star Wars and the Power of Costume Star Wars™ and the Power of Costume explores the challenges in dressing the Star Wars universe from the Galactic Senate and royalty to the Jedi, Sith and Droids™. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900 <https://www.dia.org/starwarsattheDIA>

It's Back! The Ann Arbor Art Fair July 19-22, 10 a.m. This premier event, which features four fairs in one, hosts more than 1,000 juried artists in a wide range of media, including painting, drawing, glass, sculpture, mixed media, jewelry and more, and takes place over

16th Annual Hotworks Orchard Lake Fine Art Show July 28, 10 a.m. Join us July 28 and 29 for the 16th annual Hot Works Orchard Lake Fine Art Show located in the heart of West Bloomfield.

This juried fine art and fine craft show showcases top-notch quality. West Bloomfield High School, 4925 Orchard Lake Rd, West Bloomfield Township. 2486842613 <https://hotworks.org/orchardlakefineartshow/>

THEATER

Disney's The Lion King at The Wharton Center July 12 - 28, 7:30 p.m. Giraffes strut. Birds swoop. Gazelles leap. The entire Serengeti comes to life as never before. THE LION KING, is making its triumphant return. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 517-353-1982 wharton@msu.edu www.whartoncenter.com <http://www.whartoncenter.com/events>

Michigan Shakespeare Festival's THE TEMPEST July 12, 7:30 p.m. Shakespeare's final masterpiece, The Tempest is a stirring fairy tale of depraved royalty, foolish clowns, languishing lovers, and the quest to make things right in the face of terrible wrongs. Jackson College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd, Jackson. 517-787-0800 gm@michiganshakespearefestival.com <https://www.jccmi.edu/entertainment-events/michigan-shakespeare-festival/tempest/>

A2CT Workshop: Improv for Actors July 14, 1 p.m. Come strengthen your acting chops without the pressure of scripts or blocking! A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 www.a2ct.org/classes-and-workshops

Michigan Shakespeare Festival's THE ROVER July 14, 2 p.m. Three Englishmen – a soldier, a gentleman, and a stoic – are banished from England and head to Naples to experience Carnevale and find adventure. Jackson College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd, Jackson. (517) 787-0800 gm@michiganshakespearefestival.com

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In The Heights @ New Center Park July 18, 8 p.m. Music and Lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda; Book by Quiara Alegria Hudes. Performed by The Detroit Actors Theatre Company (The DATC), 'In the Heights' explores three days in the characters' lives in the New York City. New Center Park, 2998 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-420-6000 www.newcenterpark.com <http://www.thedatc.org>

Michigan Shakespeare Festival's MEASURE FOR MEASURE July 19, 7:30 p.m. One of Shakespeare's most contentious comedies, Measure for Measure rings true with legal, social, and political issues, all tempered by a darkly-comic wit. Jackson College Potter Center, 2111 Emmons Rd, Jackson. (517) 787-0800 gm@michiganshakespearefestival.com <https://www.jccmi.edu/entertainment-events/michigan-shakespeare-festival/measure-for-measure/>

Slipstream Theatre presents 'Lost in 3 Pines' July 20, 8 p.m. Fresh off his multiple honors and awards, and new addition to the Dramatists Guild, Maxim Vinogradov offers a world premiere of his new work. It's a journey into the discovery of what we do, what Slipstream Theatre Initiative, 460 Hilton Road, Ferndale. insidetheslipstream@gmail.com <http://www.slipstreamt.com/>

Wicked is Flying Back to Detroit! August 8, 8 p.m. Back By Popular Demand!! WICKED, the Broadway sensation, looks at what happened in the Land of Oz ... but from a different angle. The untold true story of the Witches of Oz transfixes audiences. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING <https://www.broadwayindetroit.com/shows/wicke>

July 12 - August 19, 2018

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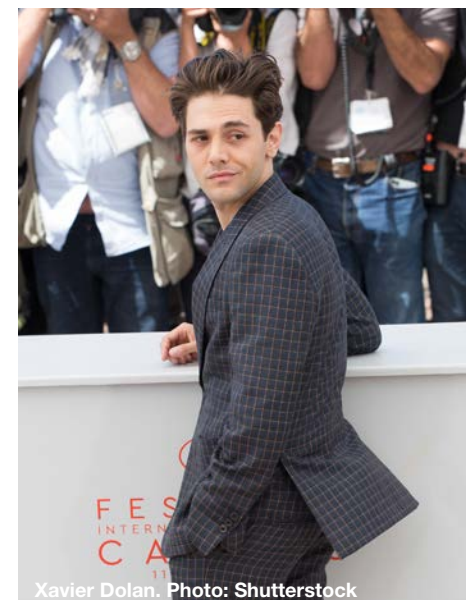
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'IT Chapter Two' features Xavier Dolan and also that Murder-Clown

Do you arthouse? If so, then you already know that Xavier Dolan, the wunderkind director-actor from Montreal, is responsible for an ever-growing body of queer-themed films that enjoy the international swoon on the film festival circuit -- and good ones, too, like Cannes. But if you don't then you at least know him from watching Adele's "Hello" video, which he directed. Soon enough, however, you'll be seeing him play a gay character in the next installment of "IT." The hugely successful big screen adaptation of Stephen King's horror novel will fast forward for "IT Chapter Two" and continue the story of the now-adult kids and the horrors they confront. The grown-up versions will be played by Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy, Bill Hader and Isaiah Mustafa (the Old Spice Guy), as well as Dolan as a townsman attacked for his sexuality. Meanwhile, Bill Skarsgard will return as sewer-dwelling death reaper Pennywise. No word on if they're going to write in The Babadook as Pennywise's love interest, but we can all dream.



Xavier Dolan. Photo: Shutterstock

'American Horror Story' crossover time!

Summer's here, which means only three months until we get the "American Horror Story" crossover event our witching circle has been chanting for. In September comes the unholy alliance of "Coven" and "Murder House," colliding the different worlds of Ryan Murphy's ridiculously entertaining series. Sarah Paulson, "Pose"'s Evan Peters, Kathy Bates, Cheyenne Jackson, Billy Eichner and Leslie Grossman are all involved, and so is a new cast member: "Dynasty"'s Miss Joan Collins. Sure, it's stunt casting, but that's kind of what this series has always been about, anyway. And who else but Murphy can put Collins' camp credentials to work like they deserve? Murphy is also hoping to include Gaga, because of course he is, and he says that the season will be more of a "heightened" story line (as if all earlier seasons were far too grounded in gritty, mundane realism). It should all go deliciously off the rails in the way Murphy shows never fail to do. So once we're done with the true horror of August television's "Bachelor in Paradise," we'll be ready for something a little less frightening. The timing couldn't be better.

Billie Holiday re-sings the blues

Older queer audiences will remember the legendary Diana Ross as Billie Holiday in the acclaimed '70s drama "Lady Sings the Blues." And like all good things from the past,

someone wants to remake it. But don't look down your nose just yet. As of right now it's called "Billie" and has attracted Lee Daniels ("Precious," "Empire") to the director's chair, singer-songwriter Andra Day as Holiday, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks ("Father Comes Home From the Wars") to write the script, and "Atlanta"'s Lakeith Stanfield to co-star. There's no studio yet, so this is all very early days -- look at how long it's taken those Freddie Mercury and Elton John movies to materialize -- so changes and delays are pretty much a certainty. But it's nice to see important women get their place in the pantheon of biopics. The children must learn about Holiday at least before someone makes a film about Ariana Grande.

'The Ray' will finally be gay on Blu-ray

You remember when we told you that the first queer animated DC superhero movie was on its way. Well, it's almost here. "Freedom Fighters: The Ray," from the creative team behind live-action shows like "Arrow," "Supergirl" and "The Flash," is the first time a gay superhero has been the lead character in a DC Comics project. The story follows Ray Terrill (Russell Tovey), a young man who discovers a dying superhero from another Earth, one who looks just like him. The dying doppelganger transfers photokinetic energy to the new Ray, turning him into a superhero, too: just a gay one who still has to come out to his parents. We think this is very good idea, because we already know plenty of queer people who deserve superhero status; it's long past time that we at least had a cartoon version, and this one is going to fight Nazis, so it couldn't be more appropriate for this moment in American history. It all arrives to DVD/Blu-ray and streaming platforms at the end of August.

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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
SpecTurmcenter@umich.edu
<http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

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

Eastern Michigan University

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

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW

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

Community Centers

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

Jim Toy Community Center

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

LGBT Detroit

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

Affirmations

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

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

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

Fair Michigan

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

Know Your Rights Project

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

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

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

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

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

Stonewall for Revolution

www.facebook.com/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 LGBT Yellow Pages

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- 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

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Hotter Than July Announces Event Details for 23rd Year

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

LGBT Detroit, the agency that produces Hotter Than July – Detroit Black Gay Pride, has released the schedule of events for this year's week-long celebration, which takes place July 24 through 29.

Following tradition, Hotter Than July will kick off with Tuesday night's candlelight vigil in Palmer Park. However, for this year's edition, organizers have added the words "community chat" to the title.

"The chat is an event I've been holding for the last five years where we bring law enforcement and LGBT (people) together to 'chat' about community issues and concerns," said Corporal Dani Woods, LGBT Liaison to the Detroit Police Department. "This year's theme is in line with HTJ – 'Honor & Rejoice.' We will focus on the honor concept by recognizing and honoring those who are involved in the community but are rarely uplifted. The chief will be present and speaking on a few nods to the community and the progress we've made thus far."

The opening party and resource fair will take place at the Woodward Bar & Grill on Wednesday.

"Equality Michigan will be providing

light food and refreshments," said Jey'nce Mizrahi Poindexter, Equality Michigan's transgender advocate. "Also, there will be several trusted agencies present to extend resources on site, including HELP, LGBT Detroit, Trans Sistas of Color Project and the Ruth Ellis Center."

On Thursday, the event of the day is the Fine Arts Reception at the Carr Center. This year's exhibition will include over 20 artists from the Detroit area featuring everything from visual art, poetry, music and the culinary arts.

"The show's purpose is to highlight inclusiveness through creativity," said Geno Harris, the Carr Center's curator and organizer of the show.

Friday will be the annual conference, which this year moves to the Community Health Awareness Group's headquarters downtown. As is HTJ's tradition for election years, this year's conference will feature a candidate's forum. All candidates have been invited and organizers say they are hoping that Democratic frontrunner Gretchen Witmer will stop by.

The annual Palmer Park Picnic, the HTJ attraction that draws the biggest crowds, will of course take place on Saturday. Cierra Malone and Ron Reeder

will emcee the festivities and music will be provided by DJ Romeo Milliown. Talent scheduled to perform include Jaye Prime & PPT, Adonis Wayne, Alexyn Wunderland, King Scooby, Briaa Dupree, Logan Mario, Sebastian St. James, Truth Raines, Raven Davine, Bee Street, D.S. Sense, Travis Dior, Jacobi Polo, Charlie B. Keyz, Tre'lyric and Bianca Badd.

In addition, website Black Boy Addictionz will once again be sending porn stars to perform at the picnic. Confirmed so far to attend is BBA's newest star Manny Killa (for an interview with Killa, see next page).

For Sunday, the final day of HTJ, there are two events. The first is the worship service, which is sponsored this year by One Church Detroit. And the last event of the week is the annual HTJ brunch, which is produced by Imagine This Productions. This year's brunch will once again take place at the Charlevoix Gallery on Detroit's east side and feature a food prepared by chef Reggie Hamilton.

All events, except the brunch, are free to the public. Tickets for the brunch are \$25. For more information, visit facebook.com/lgbtdetroit.

LGBT Detroit's Hotter Than July 2018 Schedule

Tuesday, July 24, from 6 to 8

p.m. — LGBT Community Chat and Candlelight Vigil

Offering program assistance, awareness, addressing concerns, and respecting those that have gone on before. Chairs: Lawrence Pennymon of LGBT Detroit and Detroit Police Department LGBT Liaison Corporal Dani Woods.

Admittance: Free

Palmer Park

17888 Pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit.

Wednesday, July 25, from 5 to 9

p.m. — Resource Fair and Opening Party

A community resource fair highlighting area service providers. Chairs: Nathan Strickland, Jr. of Community Health Awareness Group and Jeynce Poindexter of Equality Michigan.

Admittance: Free

Woodward Bar & Grill

6426 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Thursday, July 26 from 6 to 10 p.m.

— Fine Arts Reception

Art featured by Detroit-based artists.

The Carr Center

1505 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Friday, July 27, from 9 a.m. to

4 p.m. — The Hotter Than July Conference

LGBT Detroit and Community Health Awareness Group hosts The 23rd Annual Hotter Than July Conference. This annual gathering for LGBT issues addresses relevant and important concerns. The day consists of "The Candidates Forum" in the morning and the "My Voice My Vote" seminar in the afternoon. Free breakfast provided by The Counter Narrative Project.

Chairs: Alfredo Smith of Unified and Jamesion King of LGBT Detroit.

Admittance: Free

Community Health Awareness Group

1300 W. Fort St., Detroit.

Saturday, July 28, from 11 a.m. to 8

p.m. — Palmer Park Picnic

Join LGBT Detroit for a day in the sun at the annual

Palmer Park Picnic. Included will be artists: Ms. Honey Twista Sista, DJ Tone, DJ Tony Peoples, and DJ Romeo host Hotter Than July House at Palmer Palmer Picnic. The event is free and open to all.

Chairs: Jamesion King of LGBT Detroit, Richard Brown of Malone Entertainment, Jeynce Poindexter of Equality Michigan, and Ari Hampton of W'SUP.

Palmer Park

17888 Pontchartrain Blvd., Detroit.

Sunday, July 29 from 11 a.m. to noon — Worship Service

The LGBTQ worship service hosted by Detroit's faith community. Chairs: Rev. Jeffery Seals of One Church Detroit and Detroit Police Department LGBT Liaison Corporal Dani Woods.

Tindal Recreation Center

10301 W. Seven Mile Road, Detroit.

Sunday, July 29 from noon to 3 p.m. — Sunday Brunch

A final brunch to end Hotter Than July 2018 with a party.

14505 Charlevoix St., Detroit.

More information can be found about Hotter Than July online at lgbtdetroit.org or on the Hotter Than July Facebook page.



Q&A with HTJ 2018 Visiting Entertainer

Meet Manny Killa

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

He's the newest sensation from porn site BlackBoyAddictionz.com. At 24 years old, 6-foot-4 tall and equipped a trim, muscular physique he is known simply as Manny Killa. He is also one of the entertainers set to visit during LGBT Detroit's Hotter Than July festivities. Born and raised on the south side of Chicago, Manny admits to losing his virginity when he was only 14 years old. Manny, who considers himself bisexual, talks about how promoting himself on social media got him an offer to enter the adult entertainment business and how long he plans to stay in it.

Here's Manny in his own words:

What made you start doing porn?

I love to have sex and make love and make it something to remember. Last year, I started an OnlyFans page and a Tumblr and it took off from there. Before I knew it, my inbox is piling up and views are growing. People started wanting to make videos with me.

How did you hook up with Black Boy Addictionz?

I was fortunate to be contacted by Montez who is the scout/recruiter for BBA. It was always on my bucket list to become a porn star so I thought why not see what it's about? I'm a different and very strong individual who will not let things affect what I do. I have to write my story just like anybody else.

How are the realities of doing porn professionally different from what you thought they'd be?

I would say definitely it's a lot of work. It's not as easy as it looks. And it's not as quick as it looks. There's a lot of work put into it. From stopping and starting and changes scenes and positions, it can be exhausting to

the point where you feel like you just worked a 9 to 5 job in a few hours' time.

Best and worst part of the business so far?

The best would be the pay and being able to travel and go to different places. Most people are not able to travel or whatnot. You get to see new places. That's something I was not able to do before. The worst would probably be when you have a model who doesn't show up for the shoot and Michael (Galletta, owner of Black Boy Addictionz) has to go find somebody else who can hurry up and come in and take over and do the shoot. The only other thing would be when it comes to working with another model, if that model isn't open and able to do different things, it can make it stressful and hard to get the job done.

What's down the road for you? Do you see a life for yourself after porn or this is something you want to make a career out of?

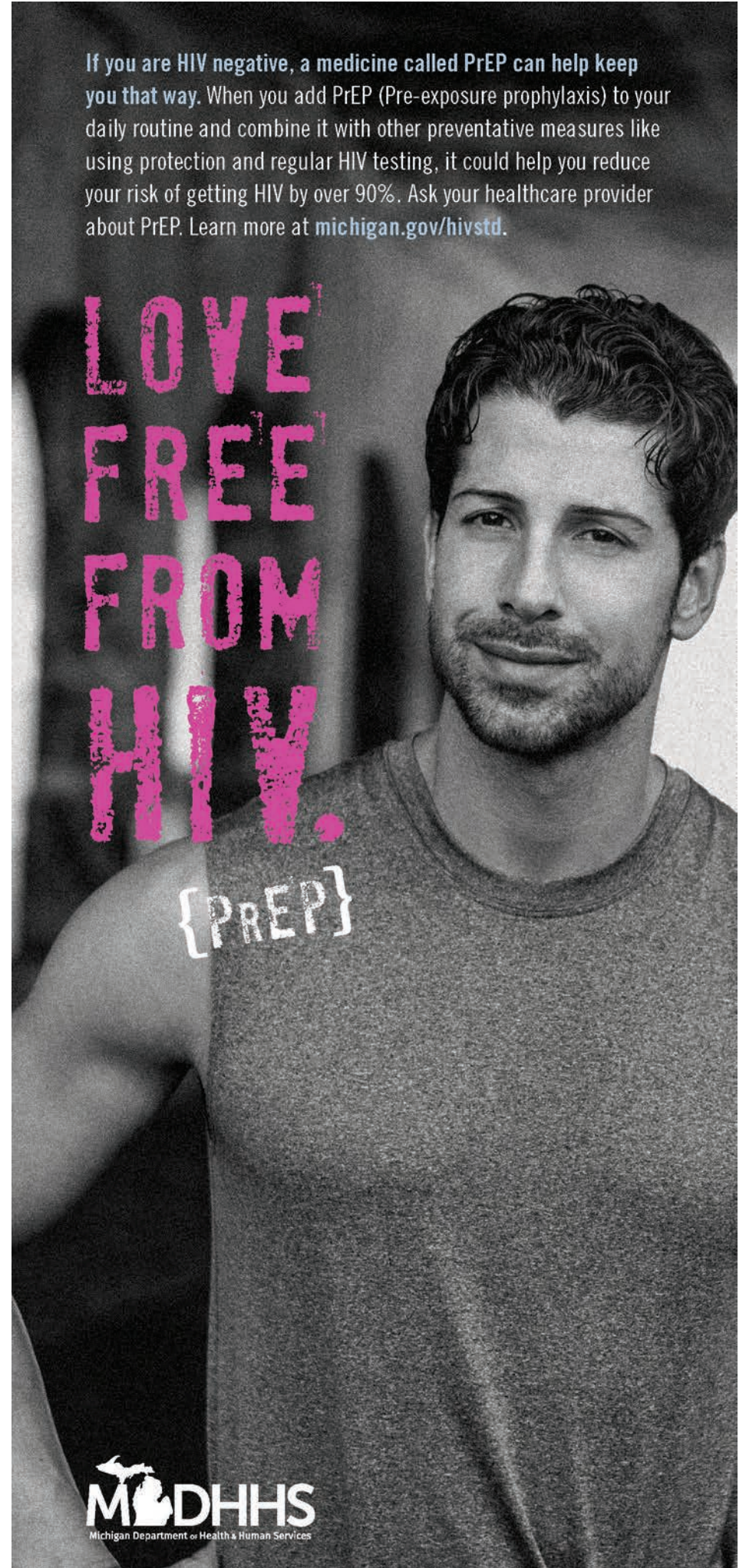
Right now I can see doing it for a year or two or three. I'm still in the beginning stages. I'm still new. But I can't see it turning into something long-term. I still have other things I want to do in life as far as a career. But this is a good start. After porn I do see myself going into modeling or starting my DJ and music-producing career. I'm really in love with music. I have a passion for it. So that might be the next step after this.

Manny Killa will be appearing Saturday, July 28 at the Hotter Than July Palmer Park Picnic. For more Manny Killa visit blackboyaddictionz.com or check him out on social media:

Snapchat @ Mannykilla21
Instagram @ Mannykilla_23
Twitter @ Mannykillaxxx
Tumblr @ Sexymanny24

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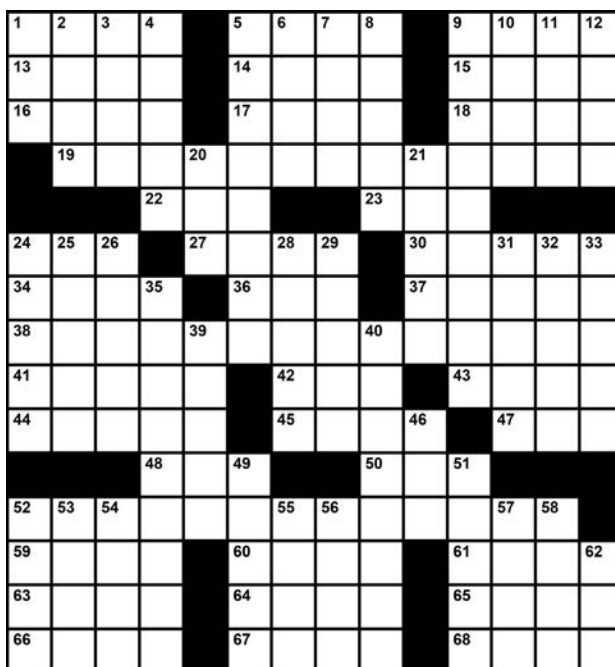
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Oscar, But Not an Award Q Puzzle

Across

- 1 "Rocky Horror Picture Show" following, e.g.
- 5 Cruising areas
- 9 Suitcases
- 13 Area east of the Urals
- 14 Grace, or will to be diplomatic
- 15 Come out
- 16 Swarm

- 17 Tennis stadium in Queens
- 18 Italian sports car, briefly
- 19 Actor currently directing and playing the title role in a movie about Oscar
- 22 Sex-toy batteries
- 23 One who wears very little clothing
- 24 Put it in a stallion's mouth
- 27 What you must remember, as

- time goes by
- 30 Queen bee's mate
- 34 From the top
- 36 Cole Porter's "___ Gigolo"
- 37 Transnational money
- 38 Pictures from the movie about Oscar?
- 41 GLAMA award, e.g.
- 42 Old Spanish queen
- 43 Went lickety-split
- 44 Panache
- 45 Bad bottom-line news
- 47 St. of the Cathedral of Hope
- 48 Print measures
- 50 Long sandwich, for short
- 52 Steppenwolf song about Oscar?
- 59 Melville novel about a mutiny
- 60 On top of that
- 61 Lubricates
- 63 Avoid premature ejaculation
- 64 Serengeti sound
- 65 Kind of child
- 66 Family diagram
- 67 Macho man
- 68 "Coming of Age in Samoa" author

Down

- 1 Roof animal of Tennessee
- 2 Visitor at lesbianation.com
- 3 In ___ of
- 4 Home of the Buccaneers
- 5 Patrick Stewart's Enterprise, for one
- 6 Over and done
- 7 Masseuse's target
- 8 Carell, who played Bobby Riggs in

- "Battle of the Sexes"
- 9 Hairy gay guy, redundantly?
- 10 Trucker's rod
- 11 Present
- 12 Online exaggeration, perhaps
- 20 Enjoy Stephen Pyles
- 21 Church leader
- 24 Gathering places for Gaius Julius
- 25 Words before water or pursuit
- 26 Opening for a bopper?
- 28 Push forward
- 29 Larry Kramer's "Just ___"
- 31 Phrase from Ripley
- 32 Cathedral word in gay Paree
- 33 Flynn role opposite Davis
- 35 Circle on a Bernstein's staff
- 39 "___ we a pair?"
- 40 Durable 1960s game show
- 46 Word before generis
- 49 Flies like an eagle
- 51 Emulate a pansy
- 52 Make a break for it
- 53 Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
- 54 Name repeated in a Stein quote
- 55 Rorschach stain
- 56 Biblical birthright seller
- 57 Wine partner
- 58 Enchanted Disney character
- 62 "Providence" lead role

Find solution to this puzzle at www.pridesource.com

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Elizabeth Currans
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