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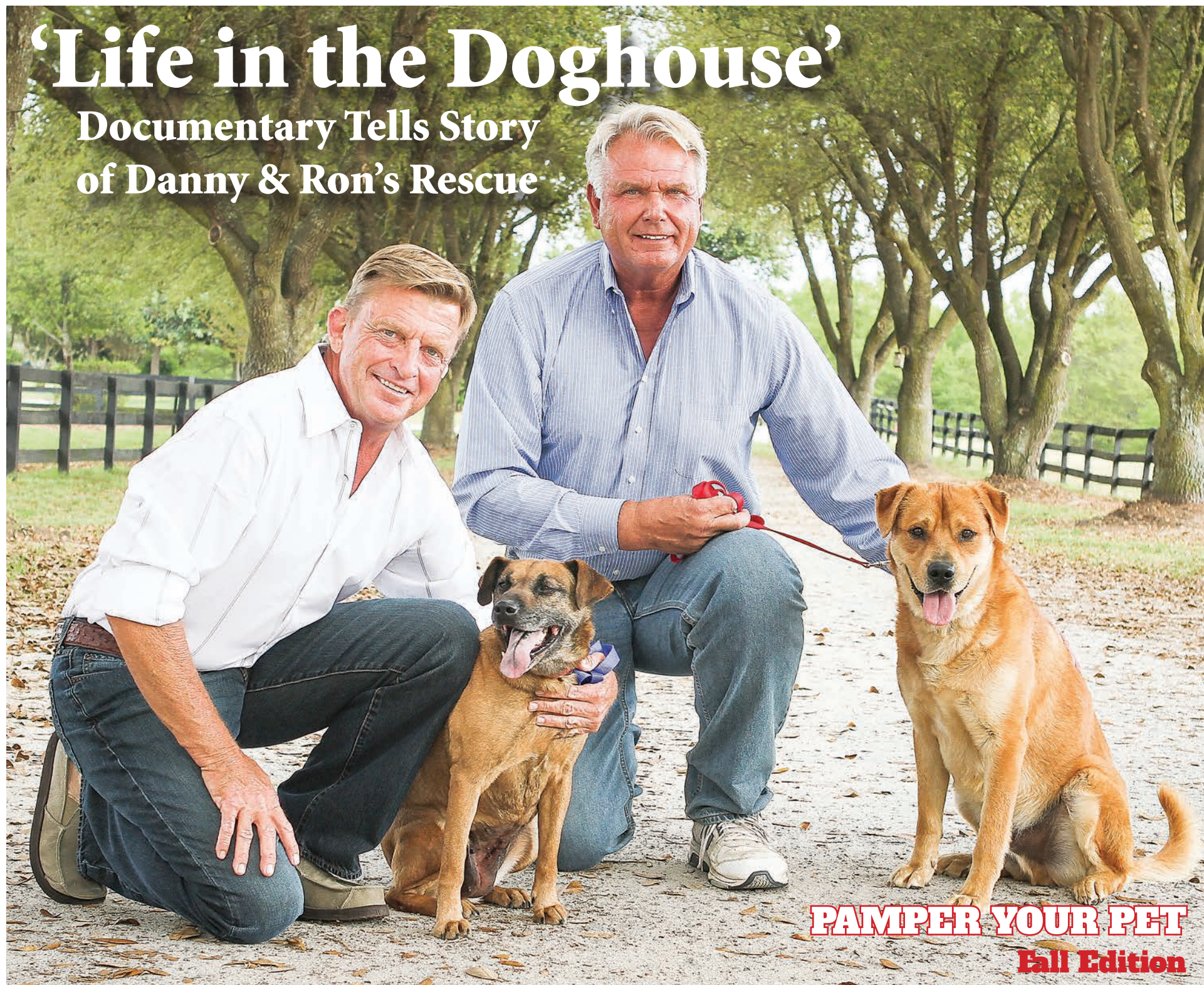


**Kary Moss Will Continue ACLU Work at HQ,
Advocates for Mich. Voter Rights Ballot Proposals**

**LGBT Groups Call for Halt to Kavanaugh Vote Amid
Attempted Rape Charges**

'Life in the Doghouse'

Documentary Tells Story
of Danny & Ron's Rescue



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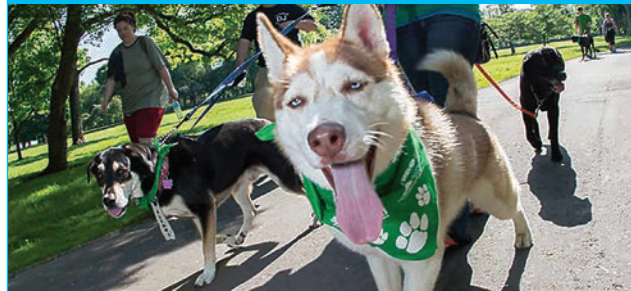
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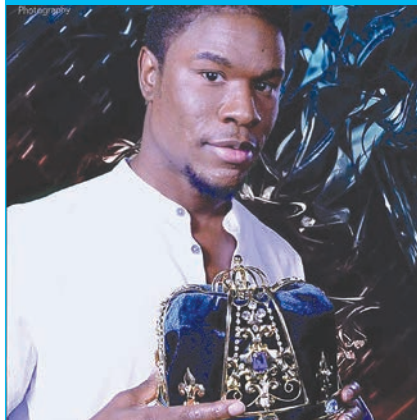


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Detroit to NYC: Kary Moss to Continue ACLU Work at HQ

ELECTION 2018

Vote **YES** on Voter Rights Ballot Initiatives **VOTERS NOT POLITICIANS:**

A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a commission of citizens with exclusive authority to adopt district boundaries for the Michigan Senate, Michigan House of Representatives and U.S. Congress, every 10 years.

Official Language: Create a commission of 13 registered voters randomly selected by the secretary of state:

4 each who self-identify as affiliated with the 2 major political parties; and

5 who self-identify as unaffiliated with major political parties.

Prohibit partisan officeholders and candidates, their employees, certain relatives and lobbyists from serving as commissioners.

Establish new redistricting criteria including geographically compact and contiguous districts of equal population, reflecting Michigan's diverse population and communities of interest. Districts shall not provide disproportionate advantage to political parties or candidates.

Require an appropriation of funds for commission operations and commissioner compensation.

www.votersnotpoliticians.com

PROMOTE THE VOTE:

A proposed constitutional amendment to provide certain voting rights to make voting easier and more accessible in Michigan.

Official language: A proposal to amend the Michigan Constitution of 1963 by amending Article II, Section 4. If adopted the proposal would provide citizens qualified to vote in Michigan with the following rights: to vote a secret ballot; for military and overseas voters to be sent a ballot 45 days before an election; to vote straight party on all partisan general election ballots; to be automatically registered to vote when obtaining a driver's license or personal identification card from the secretary of state, unless the person declines; to register to vote by mail on or before the 15th day before an election; to register to vote in person at any time with proof of residency; to vote an absentee ballot, by mail or in person, without giving a reason; and to have election results audited to ensure the accuracy of elections. This proposal is to be voted on at the Nov. 6, 2018 general election.

www.promotethevotemi.com



ACLU Executive Director Kary Moss and ACLU Attorney Michael Steinberg

BY JAN STEVENSON AND EVE KUCHARSKI

After two decades serving as the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, Kary Moss has headed many notable campaigns for the organization. Like her work against warrantless wiretapping by the National Security Administration and when she spearheaded a lawsuit that held the state accountable for poor literacy scores among Detroit-area youth. She's also been a staunch advocate for LGBTQ rights, fighting for the expansion of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights act to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Now, her work will take her to the ACLU headquarters in New York, where she'll be appointed the director of affiliates support and nationwide initiatives.

"It'll be about helping states build the capacity to do the important work at every level," Moss said. "Their legal programs, legislative, communications, other programs and then also developing high-impact campaigns like Promote the Vote and other efforts that really can move the needle around the country. So, it's about looking at the whole map and figuring out where we can be doing our work and really investing resources to make sure it happens."

Moss plans to leave her local position at the ACLU in late September, but she won't fully be settled into her role in New York until November. In the midst of her work transition, BTL met with Moss to get her thoughts on the progress the ACLU of Michigan has made since she became executive director, where it still needs to go and the issues that she'll focus on

in her new position.

It's all Teamwork

When asked to reflect on some of her career highlights, Moss pointed to her team's work on the Flint water crisis.

"That was work that when we got into it, we had no idea where it would lead and never imagined that with the residents of Flint, and Marc Edwards and Mona Hanna-Attisha, that we would end up exposing a crisis of the magnitude that we discovered," Moss said. "And then kind of being able to pivot and file lawsuits that ensure that lead pipes are replaced within a particular time period was a big deal. And now we have a case where we're trying to improve the quality of Flint public education for Flint children and we're trying to ensure that every child in Flint can get neuropsychological testing to make sure that they weren't poisoned by lead."

And, as successful as the ACLU has been on calling attention to the state of the water in Flint, she gives her team most of the credit. In fact, she said that perhaps her proudest achievement in her 20 years as executive director is in helping to maintain a consistent high quality group of people to continue the ACLU's work.

"I think I'm most proud of the team here and just really being able to attract and keep incredibly talented people here. The quality of work, the curiosity, the risk-taking has just always made me really proud and has made me look good and there's a lot of reflected glory that I'm benefitting from," Moss said. "So, the people here who've given me a lot of freedom

to be creative, I'm just really grateful for all that and proud of it."

'Unfinished Business'

Moss also noted the ACLU's work on behalf of the LGBTQ people in Michigan as a point of pride, but she said that she wishes she could have seen the state adopt the expansion of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights act during her tenure.

"I feel like we've absolutely protected and defended the rights of the LGBT community. I wish we could have accomplished more in the legislature. I wish we could have gotten Elliott-Larsen to expand to include sexual orientation and gender identity, but it's a tall mountain to climb with the state legislature," Moss said. "And the consequence of gerrymandering, I think, has been that the values expressed in the legislature are not the values of the people who live here in Michigan. I think the vast majority of people here in Michigan want to see greater legal protections for the LGBT community."

To her, she said that it feels like "unfinished business," that her successor will have to contend with. She emphasized the importance of focusing on positively impacting gerrymandering and voter turnout to further combat the issue in the future, too.

"We need legislators who support that and who aren't worried about the far right, and because we're gerrymandered that has made it much more difficult. And I also think voter turnout," Moss said. "People need to be voting their conscience and their values and that's one of the reasons that we're doing the Promote the Vote ballot initiative, to make it more accessible to more people. I think we'll start to see more people holding elected office who do support LGBTQ rights, I think we'll start to see legislators who'll start doing the right thing."

The Promote the Vote initiative is an ACLU-sponsored amendment to the Michigan Constitution that intends to broaden the pool of eligible individuals who can cast their ballots every year. If accepted, it would protect the right to vote a secret ballot, ensure military service members overseas get their ballots in on time, provide voters the option to vote straight party, automatically register citizens doing business at the Secretary of State unless they ask not to, allow a citizen to vote anytime with proof of residency, open absentee ballot voting to all regardless of age and regularly audit election results.

"I think of Promote the Vote and then Voters Not Politicians as two important democracy proposals," Moss said. "Both of them do different things. Promote the Vote would have a real impact on the next presidential election and the (Voters Not Politicians) anti-gerrymandering (ballot initiative) would have

See **Kari Moss**, on next page

ACLU Same-Sex Adoption Services, Foster Care Case Moves Forward

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Last week, a federal district court ruled that a challenge by the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan against the state of Michigan could go forward. The challenge addressed the state's allowance of governmentally-contracted faith-based adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples. The plaintiffs are same-sex couples Kristy and Dana Dumont and Erin and Rebecca Busk-Sutton who were both denied as potential adoptive parents by state-contracted religious agencies. Also included was Jennifer Ludolph who was herself in the child welfare system and objects to taxpayer dollars funding religious discrimination.

"... the Court DENIES Defendants' motions to dismiss except that the Court GRANTS the motion to dismiss Plaintiff Jennifer Ludolph's claims for lack of standing," read U.S. District Judge Paul D. Borman's ruling.

In the case of Ludolph, ACLU Staff Attorney Jay Kaplan said that, "his ruling ... (is that) she would no longer be a plaintiff, but we haven't decided yet what we might do. We're going to sit down and talk about that."

"The court didn't feel there was enough nexus for any of our plaintiffs to have taxpayer standing, but there were other grounds found why the plaintiffs, Eric and Rebecca as well as Kristy and Dana, have the other claims they

have," Kaplan continued. "The constitutional claims, they remain plaintiffs on that criteria."

The case's defendants are St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services director Nick Lyon and Herman McCall, the director of the state Children's Services Agency. In their argument, they referenced a 2015 Michigan Law that said child placement agencies wouldn't be required to provide services in conflict with their own religious beliefs.

In a Detroit News report, Mark Rienzi an attorney with Becket, a law firm that is representing St. Vincent Catholic Charities said that the "court ruling allows the ACLU's lawsuit to proceed — a lawsuit aimed at forbidding the state from working with faith-based adoption agencies to help children in need."

"Such a result would make it much harder for thousands of children to find the loving home they each deserve," Rienzi continued. "Becket is fighting to make sure that doesn't happen, and this is just one step along the journey in this case."

Kaplan said that Rienzi's statement does not reflect the ACLU's intentions.

"Not at all," Kaplan said. "And it's interesting to note that we did not name the faith-based agencies that are refusing to work with same-

See **ACLU Adoption**, on next page

► Kary Moss

Continued from p. 4

a huge impact after the next census, which happens in 2020. So both, I think, are very necessary if you really believe in democracy."

Looking to the Future

Now that she's leaving, Moss foresees that the Michigan ACLU's primary goals will center around immigration reform, voting rights and anti-racism. Moss said that since the 2017 Muslim ban took effect, every state office has been working on immigration issues in some way, and Michigan has continued that work.

"Here in Michigan we hired an immigration advocacy attorney. We challenged the Muslim ban. We have defended the Iraqi Christians who were arrested last June in a huge case that ended up applying to the whole country, and we ended up representing over 1,000 Iraqis and getting them all lawyers, getting them all bond hearings," she said. "It's been a huge investment, the immigration work."

She's also seen the mobility of pro-hate groups in recent years, and said that it has only bolstered her organization's work on the topic.

"We've seen this huge, kind of shocking display, I guess, of latent racism that has been simmering beneath the surface," Moss said. "And I think every office is doing very important racial justice work."

Moss herself started a local racial justice project that has lasted nearly as long as her time as executive director. When asked if she felt anxious or worried about a replacement taking up her work as executive director, she said she hopes "it's smooth," and that she knows her successor will be supported.

"We have a great board and a great search committee and I know we'll be hiring a great search firm, I just hope it's smooth and I know it's easy if people know me, to feel personally kind of invested in my being here or not being here, but the fact is that everything I've done has been in service to this organization and the relationships really belong to this organization," she said. "I'm confident that people will just help support whoever the new leader is in the transition."

Moss will stay on temporarily to continue her work with Promote the Vote and pledges to return frequently to Michigan. More information about Promote the Vote can be found online at promotethevote.com and on votersnotpoliticians.com



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The guide also offers voters an opportunity to support the candidates who share our values by donating to their campaigns or volunteering to get out the vote. The 2018 Progressive Voter Guide will make voting for the right candidates easy. The online Guide mivoterguide.com will be updated now through Election Day, and it's easy to find the candidates in your area. All you have to do is enter your zip code.

► ACLU Adoption Suit

Continued from p. 5

sex couples and defendants to the lawsuit. Now, St. Vincent put a motion to intervene, so they now are part of the lawsuit, but we did not name them because we don't object to the idea of the government contracting with various agencies to provide these services, including faith-based adoption services."

Kaplan went on to emphasize his point by saying that Borman made clear in his order that when the government forms a contract with private entities, the entities should follow civil rights laws and nondiscrimination requirements, "They can enforce that."

"That's what the state of Michigan should be doing," he said. "If you have people sign a contract saying you don't discriminate based on sexual orientation, and yet you know these two particular agencies are doing so, then you need to do something about it. And, you know, no one has a constitutional right to a governmental contract, but if you decide you want to participate if you're selected for this, the government can require you not to discriminate."

Kaplan said that the next step in the legal process will be discovery.

"Discovery is the process where you gather your evidence with regards to the claims that you're making and you're able to demonstrate that indeed this has happened factually, and why this would be in violation of the law," he said.

Kaplan went on to say that the case will either proceed to a summary judgment, "In other words saying, 'We've already presented, we have enough information to indicate that the court could decide this case without actually having a hearing,'" or a "full evidentiary hearing."

The ruling for the case to move forward follows a decision by a Philadelphia federal court that involved a similar situation. In that case, a faith-based foster care agency claimed that by being required by the city to include same-sex couples as potential foster parents, its rights were being infringed. Kaplan said that it might have had an impact on this decision because the judge made reference to the Philadelphia decision in his ruling.

"What's so important about this issue is not only the facts of our case or dealing with the issue of creating enough permanent homes for kids who are in foster care, but I think also what we're seeing is one of the largest threats to LGBT rights and LGBT equality: The attempt to justify discrimination or to exempt discrimination against LGBT people in the name of religion," Kaplan said. "This is a very important case and it focuses on that issue, but we're seeing this on many fronts across the country. Even in the state of Michigan there are other situations where people are trying to justify discrimination against LGBT people based on their religious beliefs, and this is an issue that continues to be a threat and it isn't going away any time soon."



MCCD programming team (not pictured: Jim Wagner), Rev. Deb Cox pictured in front with a thumbs-up. Photo courtesy of MCCD.

MCC-D 201: Ministry Releases First Publication on 46th Anniversary, Seeks to Become 'Program-Size' Church

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

At its 46th anniversary service on Sunday, Sept. 16, Metropolitan Community Church – Detroit debuted its new publication called "Ignite." The 24-page glossy magazine features information on all the events and new programming happening at the church through the end of the year, as well as some spiritually enlightening information and lessons. The publication was a dream 10 years in the making for assistant pastor Rev. Deb Cox.

"I was first introduced to the idea of doing programming differently about 10 years ago," Cox said. "We had several of the elders from our denomination come to Detroit for a small conference. They did a lot of teaching about the importance of understanding the characteristics of church size and how the size of a church, which identifies the stage of development with very specific characteristics identifying each of the four stages, impacts the ways that you can best grow each size church."

At the time, MCC-D was what the elders called a "pastor-size" church.

"That's where most everything revolves around the pastor, and the congregants are hesitant to step into leadership. And where the activities offered are minimal," Cox said. "They identified that as the most difficult stage to transition from. The next size up is called 'program-size.' In a program-size church people learn to get their spiritual guidance and direction by knowing where they are on their spiritual journey, and then choosing programs and activities offered that will help them grow in the direction they are needing at the time. It shifts the focus off the pastor and allows

congregants to grow in learning and service and through the programs offered."

Cox hoped to be a part of growing MCC-D into a program-size church when she was first introduced to the concept, but the timing was not right. The church, then under the leadership of Rev. Mark Bidwell, suffered hard times when he was forced to step down. Then there was an interim pastor for some time and the rebuilding of the church, that had to be done when Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow came on board, that took much of the church's focus for a time. But finally, Rev. Cox, who had remained steadfast and patient, saw that the time was right.

In June, the church created a programming committee and she was installed as its director.

"I began meeting with the team every Sunday after church for sometimes up to two hours as we planned and prepared for all this program and process," said Cox. "Over these months I have watched each sub-team step up and grow into different people than they were when we started."

The completion of their task, the debut issue of "Ignite" and a full season's worth of new programming, is now the first step in taking the church to the next level. This fall, the church will offer a variety of seminars, workshops, discussions and study sessions such as Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University, Spiritual Care for the Crying and Dying by Rev. Dr. Samuel White, Finding Your Voice by MCC Musical Minister Brian Londrow, Transgender and Thriving with Rev. Dr. Justin Tanis and much, much more.

"I am thrilled about the product because it really looks professional and I am so anxious to see how the congregation and the community

responds to it," Cox said. "However, even more than the magazine, I am thrilled at the work I have been blessed to lead with a God-picked team of people. ... I looked at them yesterday and realized I was a part of growing the next generation of leaders at MCC-D and wow, was that a powerful thought. I said in a sermon last week that we are not just bringing a magazine, we are helping our church shift from Church 101 to becoming Church 201."

Celebrating 46 years

The original MCC 101 was first started in Los Angeles by the Rev. Troy Perry in 1968. He was a Pentecostal preacher who got put out of his church for being gay. But Perry didn't stop preaching God's word. Instead, he started his own church for the LGBTQ community.

"They called him a preacher and a prophet," said Stringfellow in his anniversary sermon. "He saw something way back when that said, 'I know my redeemer liveth and I know my redeemer has called me to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and I am a same-gender-loving man and the two can be compatible.'"

Offering an anniversary reflection at the service was Between The Lines columnist and longtime MCC-D member Charles Alexander.

"At 82, I am alive today for two spiritually born-again reasons," Alexander said. "Because I stopped drinking 36 years ago, and I cautiously — and somewhat shyly — began attending MCC-D one or two years later."

To find out more about the MCC-D's new Ignite magazine and its fall programming, visit mccdetroit.org.

BBB Hosts Panel on ‘Cultural, Social, Sexual and Political Power in the Age of 45’

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The Black Bear Brotherhood of Detroit, a local social group dedicated to black gay men of size, and the Onyx Great Lakes Chapter, a fraternal order for men of color, are co-hosting a panel discussion called Black Gay Men: Cultural, Social, Sexual & Political Power in the Age of #45. This free community forum, which will take place Thursday, Sept. 27 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Affirmations, is co-sponsored by the Counter Narrative Project and is part of a concurrent five-city #WeWillBeHeard National Day of Action.

“This is a rare opportunity afforded to black gay, bisexual and same gender-loving men in Detroit by the Counter Narrative Project and our partners, to discuss where and how we resist, accommodate and access power in an age where our racial and sexual identities are both under siege and the fragile rights afforded us appear more vulnerable than ever,” said L. Michael Gipson, BBB’s founder.

The Day of Action is part of a national approach to combat voter suppression in key battleground states like Michigan by registering voters, checking local voter registrations to see which residents may have unknowingly been purged from the voter rolls, and to convene a community dialogue about the importance of minority enfranchisement, representation and political power. The BBB registered voters and checked registrations during Hotter Than July, Detroit’s black gay pride, this summer.

“We found that about half of those who thought they were registered was (sic) no longer registered, many having just voted in the last election,” said Gipson. “Therefore, it’s vital we help educate our community on voter suppression tactics, register folks, and do our part to make sure our community’s voice is heard at the voting booth over these next two game-changing election cycles.”

Gipson will moderate the upcoming panel discussion. On the panel will be Chase Cantrell of Building Community Value, Denzel Anton McCampbell of Engage Michigan, Albert Dixon Cunningham of Adodi Detroit, Geno Harris of the Carr Center, Curtis Lipscomb of LGBT Detroit, Jay Phoenix of Onyx Great Lakes and Nguvu Tsare of the New Leaders Council. In addition to the discussion BBB will also be offer voter registration and host a networking reception.

“We have a couple of spitfires on our panel,” said Gipson. “Attendees can expect some impassioned discussion and maybe a firework or two. We have two candidates for public office and one former candidate Detroit City Council represented. Audiences can expect seriousness and a depth of knowledge about what we need here at home. We have artists and creative thought leaders represented so recipients can

expect some flourish and moments that make you reconsider what you thought you knew or believed. We hope to shift the conversation from raising the issues to acting on them and have black gay men seen in our range and beauty and capacities as we seek to gain more power and credibility for who we are and what we do for community.”



Michael Gipson founded the Black Bear Brotherhood in 2017.

Founding the BBB

The BBB was first formed by Gipson in the spring of 2017. Initially it was just a monthly potluck and safe space for black gay and bi men of size and their allies and admirers.

“It began in my home as my brainchild and I still steer the ship,” Gipson said. “But where and how we’ve evolved over time has come from the members demanding more from both me and the group. They envision us bigger than we are and we try to meet that vision. ... We are becoming more of a socially conscious collective that also seeks to create change in our community.”

Resistance, one might say, is one of the group’s themes. The BBB, Gipson said, consists of “out and proud black men who are unapologetic about their size, race, sexuality or progressive politics in an era where all four are under attack. And we’re not just talking about the issues, which is also essential as a starting point,” he said. “But we are rolling up our sleeves and doing the work to make sure people aren’t steamrolled over politically or socially. As big black men in a fatphobic and white supremacist society we have some experience with what that feels like and we will not have it.”

For more information, visit [facebook.com/BlackBearBrotherhood](https://www.facebook.com/BlackBearBrotherhood).

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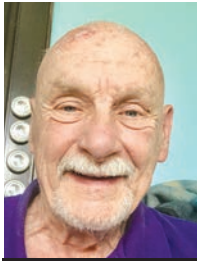
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Chapter from a Memoir in Process

As a teenager I learned the lay of the land from word-of-mouth publicity given from those who had navigated the watering spots years before me. I did, however, venture — daringly — on my own into the Greyhound Bus Depot to check out noonday comings and goings. I was cautious. I had been forewarned.

“Miss Tillie — vice cops — goes there all the time. Mind your business, child. If you have to pee, just pee. Don’t look anybody straight in the eye!” said Miss Bruce (alias Bruce Kendall Johnson).

Stories of arrests for merely glancing at a vice officer were many.

Yes. It’s been a long journey for me. It wasn’t always easy. But, then again, it wasn’t that hard either (The journey, not the sex.). I’ve survived, and I like to think I’ve made something of myself as an artist, a writer and human being who just happens to be quite gay. Contentedly so. Reasonably happy. Most of the time. That’s life (I’d gladly do it all over again).

“It’s your word against theirs, Mary. Case closed.”

Just behind the Greyhound Bus Depot on Washington Boulevard was another hangout for gay teenagers called Mama’s (one diner star rating over the Famer & Bates Streets’ gay Hub Grill’s none). Mama’s was owned by the mother of 30-something, Butch Jimmy (“BJ”), who had as lovers his share of impressionable teenagers, including, in the early stages of my all-too-willing acquiescence to all things macho, yours truly.

Mama — short, stocky, ruddy, roly-poly-faced — was of ethnic heritage, possibly Hungarian, Latvian or Romanian. She wore her hair in a tight bun and dressed in basic black (no pearls). She got her sense of humor probably by osmosis from gay kids, greeting regulars with a hearty wave of the hand, yelling “Kud-de-vahs! Kud-de-vahs!” (“Whores! Whores!”)

As a teenager I had no gay-positive role models. I learned how to survive from more-experienced gays and lesbians who on their own learned the ropes by trial and error: encounters with “Tillie,” the medical establishment (“Mary, I’ve got the name of a good gay doctor!”) and queer-hating employers (The police often reported entrapment gays to their bosses.).

I also came to realize that sensing or knowing a professional, boss, teacher or professor who was gay could be used to my advantage by letting them know that I too was gay. It was done by looks, hints and “dropping hair pins.” Very rarely directly. Gaydar circa late-1950s nonetheless.

Unlike today, the general public then knew very little about gays or lesbians. We belonged to what essentially was a secret organization — the Gay Masons! — with passwords, special

See **Parting Glances**, continued on next page



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Our Story?

One of the most important things for a trans person is their identity. We live in a world that is constantly, doggedly, trying to strip that away from us. We face pressure over this throughout our lives — and often end up losing that battle after death.

In 1993, a transgender woman by the name of Lauren Diana Wilson took her life. Her family claimed her body, and later held a funeral. From anything I was able to learn about it, she was buried in male clothing, with her hair clipped. Her parents listed her as male, and under her birth name — known in trans circles as one’s “deadname.” They kept the event private, so that no one in her life could attend.

Those of us who were her friends held our own memorial, and still do not know where Lauren was laid to rest by a family that did not care for the person she became.

I wish I could say that Lauren’s story is an uncommon one, but I have heard all-too-many tales of trans people buried by families under birth names and dressed in attire matching their birth gender, let alone the even bigger issue of newspapers and police reports stripping away the identity of the deceased

under the guise of “accuracy.”

I recently ended up at a discussion about transgender people, our “deadnames” — that is, the name we were given at birth and may have long-since given up — and obituaries. The panel revealed some of the biases within the nature of obituaries and other reporting on transgender deaths.

So often, when a newspaper tells the story of a transgender person after they pass, they rely on police reports and immediate family to provide details of a person’s life. As one can imagine from the example of Lauren Wilson’s life above, the story of a trans person’s life can often be stripped away, with our lived experiences and preferences stripped away by those who may not have had our best interests in mind.

Likewise, police reports may be only going by available resources: a piece of legal ID, a set of fingerprints and so on. They may not be privy to the whole story of a person when they report on our passing. This is especially true in the more violent stories that permeate trans society.

See **Transmissions**, continued on next page

To me, it becomes an issue of accuracy versus truth. It may indeed be accurate, for example, to include the name I was born under, answered to and used on legal documents until I was in my early 20s — but this isn't exactly my truth. That surely isn't me, and isn't my identity now. It's not the person who pens these words, or has been under this name and gender for the more than half of this life.

► Transmissions

Continued from p. 8

When one relies on identity paperwork, one doesn't get a complete story. Many trans people have not been able to change legal paperwork. It can be a costly process, and some localities don't allow a complete change no matter the price.

One of the more intriguing — and frustrating — parts of the overall discussion was the issue of “accuracy.” That is, if one is telling a complete story of a person's life, should one feel the need to delve into a “deadname” as well as a gender identity long since dropped?

To me, it becomes an issue of accuracy versus truth. It may indeed be accurate, for example, to include the name I was born under, answered to and used on legal documents until I was in my early 20s — but this isn't exactly my truth. That surely isn't me, and isn't my identity now. It's not the person who pens these words, or has been under this name and gender for the more than half of this life.

I know it becomes all the more convoluted when a transgender person is also a notable person. I'm sure there will be a day that a certain Olympian who was the subject of a very public gender transition will have their “deadname” added to every single obituary the day she passes — all the while knowing that actor Tab Hunter did not see his birth name, Arthur Andrew Kelm, included in his.

Of course, I am mindful that an obituary — indeed much of what happens after one shuffles

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 8

looks and hand signals. The better gay bars had back entrances. Keep it secret! Survive! Don't get caught! But enjoy yourself!

Yes. It's been a long journey for me. It wasn't always easy. But, then again, it wasn't that hard either (The journey, not the sex.) I've survived, and I like to think I've made something of myself as an artist, a writer and human being who just happens to be quite gay. Contentedly so. Reasonably happy. Most of the time. That's life (I'd gladly do it all

off their mortal coil — is no longer for the husk of a body left behind, but for those who survive. An obituary is a way to reach out to friends and family, and announce the passing of someone that all these people cared about. In this discussion of obituaries, an argument was put forth: how much someone who knew me in high school should know that I passed, given the name in the yearbook is so very different from the one I wear now?

To me, that's largely irrelevant for one big reason: those who knew me then — and with whom I still may maintain at least a nodding acquaintance — are aware of my transition, and know who I am now. Those who somehow missed the memo are not likely to be the people I would care to know about me alive or dead: that bully from freshman year who is now spending time in San Quentin State Penitentiary, for example.

I'm not sure there's a complete answer, but I do know that if someone was to try and pen what I'd consider a truth obituary of a transgender person, it would be just as easy to discuss their transition in language that makes it clear that whatever gender or name they were born with is not the “accurate” one.

To be trans is to reveal deep inner truths, and shed an erroneous gender assignment. Who we were seen as by others up to a given part of our lives is not the sum of our lives, and in my opinion misses the whole point of being transgender in the first place.

We are the authors of our lives, and our identities matter.

Gwen Smith is who she is. You'll find her at gwen.smith.com.

over again).

Come to think of it, life might have been a helluva lot better for me and for others like me if the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force had been around back then to help us out, in both senses of the word. For today's LGBTQ teens, NGLTF is a godsend — in spite of Trump, Pretty Boy Pence and the Reiblican Party.

Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Facebook 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

Brett Kavanaugh

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

It seems like it was only one week ago that I was writing about how Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh was a nightmare for LGBTQ people. That's because it was last week.

And now we find that he is a nightmare for women, too. Who would have thought? Besides anyone who pays even a fleeting bit of attention to the contemptuous way Republicans treat women, of course.

Christine Blasey Ford has bravely come forward to accuse Kavanaugh of attempted rape while they were in high school.

Yep, that's right. High school. Which was a long time ago for them. But so what?

Conservatives have been tying themselves in knots arguing, essentially, that what happens in high school stays in high school, especially if what happened in high school was their pet SCOTUS nominee getting drunk, pushing a girl onto a bed, trying to take off her clothes and covering her mouth with his hand when she tried to scream.

This behavior, many would like you to believe, is just “boys being boys.” Which is bullshit.

And then, of course, there are people saying that Ford is a lying liar, including Kavanaugh himself. Which just shows you how little so many men understand about sexual assault and how our society treats accusers.

As Candance Owens of Turning Point USA put it on Twitter, “Brett Kavanaugh should be confirmed IMMEDIATELY. It is time for Americans to send a STRONG message to the anarchist Democrats that we will no longer tolerate their disgusting, corrupt, low-bar antics. The #MeTooWitchhunt needs to come to an END once and for all.”

And I agree! The #MeToo thing should totally come to an end. But, spoiler alert, it can only end when MEN CHOOSE TO STOP SEXUALLY HARASSING AND ASSAULTING WOMEN. Until then, women must keep coming forward to try to stop it. They will, of course, be accused of being liars, like Ford has, even though it is a huge risk to come forward.

As @OhNoSheTwitnt, the Best Tweeter on the Tweeternet, put it: “Hello, I am an opportunistic woman. I make up decades old sexual assault accusations against rich and powerful men because my lifelong dream is to get death threats from strangers calling me a lying whore.”

And as she points out: yeah, that's as ridiculous as it sounds.

So Ford is lying and/or Kavanaugh was just putting “locker room talk” into practice.

Republicans are hot to confirm Kavanaugh as fast as possible so that the court can finally repeal Roe v. Wade and Republicans can prove once and for all how much they hate women.

But Ford's accusation is credible. And we need to take a step back and ask ourselves how in the hell we got to this place. And we don't have to look very far.

And now we find that he is a nightmare for women, too. Who would have thought? Besides anyone who pays even a fleeting bit of attention to the contemptuous way Republicans treat women, of course.

We've seen this story played out over and over. One popular fable is of the Supreme Court nominee who is accused of sexual harassment and yet the Senate essentially puts his accuser on trial and he's confirmed anyway and is STILL ON THE BENCH TODAY MAKING EVERY AMERICAN WOMAN'S LIFE.

Then there's the made-for-TV movie about the powerful man who is accused of sexual assault by over a dozen women, calls them all liars after bragging about grabbing women “by the pussy” and becomes President of the U.S.

Trump is, of course, very concerned about Ford's allegations and is taking the matter very seriously.

Just kidding. He merely sees it as a little bump in the road.

“If it takes a little delay, it'll take a little delay,” Trump said. “It will, I'm sure, work out very well.”

And who knows? Maybe it will. There are a lot of people fighting like hell against this nomination. Which is heartening.

But I keep thinking of the one person who could have stopped this whole mess before it started. If more American men respected women we would have a President Hillary Clinton nominating Michelle Obama to the Supreme Court right now.

I don't know, y'all, it's almost like steeping American boys in a mixture of rape culture and toxic masculinity has been bad for, well, everybody.

Cuban President Backs Same-Sex Marriage

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has said he supports an amendment to his country's new constitution that would extend marriage rights to same-sex couples.



Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel (Photo public domain)

"I defend that there should be no type of discrimination," he told Telesur, a television station that is largely funded by the Venezuelan government, during an interview that aired on Sunday.

"The will of the people and the people's sovereignty will have the final word."

A source in Havana told the Washington Blade the Telesur interview was broadcast on Cuban television on Sunday night.

Díaz-Canel took office in April after Cuba's National Assembly chose him to succeed Raúl Castro.

Lawmakers in July approved the new constitution with the marriage amendment.

The Cuban government is currently holding meetings that allow members of the public to comment on the new constitution. The National Assembly later this year is expected to finalize it before a referendum that is scheduled to take place in February 2019.

The debate over whether to extend marriage rights to same-sex couples is taking place less than 60 years after gay men were among those sent to labor camps — known by the Spanish acronym UMAPs — after the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power.

Fidel Castro in 2010 apologized for the UMAPs during an interview with a Mexican newspaper. His niece, Mariela Castro, a member of the National Assembly who directs the country's National Center for Sexual Education, over the last decade has spearheaded LGBTI-specific issues in the Communist country.

Díaz-Canel, who was born after the revolution, supported an LGBTI cultural center in the city of Santa Clara when he was secretary of the Cuban Communist Party in Villa Clara Province. Díaz-Canel also defended Mariela Castro's doctoral thesis that focused on the integration of transgender people in Cuban society.

Independent LGBTI activists with whom the Blade regularly speaks insist they continue to face harassment and even arrest if they publicly criticize Mariela Castro and/or the Cuban government.

The articles on this page originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.

LGBT Groups Call for Halt to Kavanaugh Vote Amid Attempted Rape Charges

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

With Christine Blasey Ford coming forward as the individual alleging sexual assault against Brett Kavanaugh, LGBT groups are joining the calls to pull the brake on his confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court ahead of a scheduled vote on his nomination this week.

Sharon McGowan, chief strategy officer for the LGBT legal group Lambda Legal, compared the allegations to the testimony of Anita Hill against now U.S. Associate Justice Clarence Thomas and said they "demand a thorough investigation."

"We are pleased that a number of senators from both parties have recognized that the Senate has an obligation to the country to delay any further consideration of Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to a lifetime position on the Supreme Court until such an investigation can take place," McGowan said. "This should not be a partisan issue. At this moment, Republicans and Democrats — men and women alike — have an opportunity to do more than just talk about their commitment to taking issues of sexual assault seriously. Now is their opportunity to take concrete action to back up those words."

After Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) last week announced she had sent an anonymous accusation Kavanaugh as a teenage student at Georgetown Preparatory School attempted to sexually assault a woman, Ford came out as the alleged survivor of sexual assault in an interview published Sunday in the Washington Post.

Ford, now a 51-year-old research psychologist in Northern California, said the assault took place in the summer in the early 1980s, when at a party Kavanaugh tried to pin her down and attempted to remove her clothes. When she tried to scream, Ford said Kavanaugh put his hand over her mouth.

Ford said Mark Judge, Kavanaugh's friend at the time, at that time jumped on top of them, causing all three of them to tumble and allowing her to break free. Ford said she initially locked herself in a bathroom, then fled the house.

Ford said she told no one about the incident until 2012, when she was in couples' therapy with her husband.

According to the Post, Ford provided notes from the therapist at the time that

don't mention Kavanaugh by name, but says she was attacked by students "from an elitist boys' school" who became "highly respected and high-ranking members of society in Washington."

Her husband, Russell Ford, corroborated to the Post his spouse told the allegations to a therapist, used Kavanaugh's last name at the time and expressed concern might one day be nominated to the Supreme Court. That ended up coming to pass when President Trump nominated Kavanaugh this year for



LGBT are calling for a halt to Brett Kavanaugh's nomination amid sexual assault allegations. Blade photo by Michael Key

the seat occupied former U.S. Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy.

The Post also reports Ford consulted Debra Katz, a D.C.-based lawyer known for her work on sexual harassment cases. After Katz recommended to Ford she take a lie detector test, Ford undertook one in early August administered by a former FBI agent. According to the Post, the results concluded Ford was being truthful.

Kavanaugh, who had previously denied engaging in sexual assault when the charges were anonymous, repeated his denial in a statement responding to Ford coming out publicly with the allegations.

"I categorically and unequivocally deny this allegation," Kavanaugh said. "I did not do this back in high school or at any time."

Ford's story prompted senators on both sides of the aisle to the call for a halt to the confirmation proceedings for Kavanaugh. After a week of raucous hearings earlier this month, the Senate Judiciary Committee was set to vote on his nomination Thursday.

Prior to the accusation from Ford, Kavanaugh's confirmation was likely

in the Republican-controlled Senate. Nonetheless, progressive and LGBT groups engaged in a concerted campaign to thwart his nomination over concerns he'd issue anti-LGBT rulings from the Supreme Court and overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, commended Ford for coming forward and said the Senate must put the brakes on the Kavanaugh nomination.

"Brett Kavanaugh's nomination process has been anything but transparent, and now with this grave charge of sexual assault, this process must be halted immediately," Griffin said. "Moving forward with this confirmation process without conducting a thorough investigation would be deeply troubling and offensive to the American people, but more importantly to survivors of sex crimes across the country. It would communicate their trauma isn't worthy of justice if a person sitting on the nation's highest court can be confirmed without being investigated for alleged sexual violence."

A week prior to the Kavanaugh committee vote, Feinstein said she delivered material on the allegations to the FBI so the agency can conduct an investigation into the allegations. Last week, the FBI reportedly said it wouldn't conduct a criminal investigation into the matter and instead referred the issue the White House for review. It remains to be seen what action the FBI will now take in the aftermath of Ford going public with her allegations.

Rick Zbur, executive director for Equality California, went further in his statement and said the time has come for Trump to withdraw the Kavanaugh nomination.

"These charges are serious and disqualifying," Zbur said. "They would be for any person in any circumstance, and are particularly so for someone nominated to serve on the nation's highest court. Ms. Ford should never have had to come forward, but now that she has chosen to share her story, it is critical that law enforcement be given adequate time to thoroughly investigate Judge Kavanaugh's conduct. The stakes are too high for his nomination to proceed, and the White House should withdraw it immediately."

The White House had yet to respond to Ford coming forward with her allegations as of late Sunday evening.

Biden Urged to Run in 2020 at HRC Dinner

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

Attendees at the annual Human Rights Campaign national dinner Saturday night urged Joseph Biden to challenge President Trump in 2020 amid speculation the former vice president is mulling a run for the White House.

As Biden approached the podium at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, he was greeted with calls of “Run, Joe, Run!” and “2020!” In response, Biden didn’t convey any thoughts about the upcoming presidential election, but thanked the audience and proceeded with his remarks.

During his speech to the estimated 3,500 attendees at the dinner, Biden expressed regret over not speaking out sooner against President Trump after leaving the White House at the end of the Obama administration.

“Barack and I agreed we would be quiet for the first year to let the new administration get up and running,” Biden said.

Making the sign of the cross over chest, Biden added, “God forgive me.”

After the white supremacist rally last year in Charlottesville, Va., Biden said he felt compelled to brake his vow of silence because he “could not remain silent.”

“This is about basic decency,” Biden said. “The idea that goons could come out of fields at night with lighted torches, carrying Nazi flags, chanting the same, exact anti-Semitic bile that was chanted in the streets of Nuremberg and Berlin and every other German city in the 30s.”

After tamping down boos from the audience, Biden laid into Trump for his responding there were “good people” on both sides.

“We are in fight for a America’s soul and we have leaders...who at the time when that occurred, when these guys were accompanied by white supremacists and Ku Klux Klan and those who objected, making a comparison, saying, “There are good people in both groups,” Biden said. “What has become of us? Our children are listening and our silence is complicity.”

Accompanying Biden on stage was his spouse, former second lady Jill Biden, who was also critical of Trump. In a veiled criticism of the current president, Jill Biden said, “I hate bullies.”

“There is nothing that makes either of us more angry than a bully,” Jill Biden said.

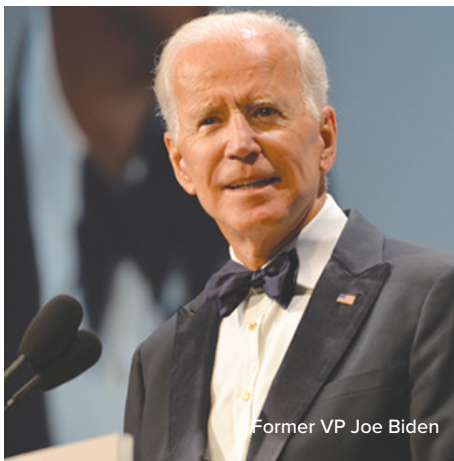
Echoing his spouse later in the evening, Joseph Biden said, “The president uses the White House a a literal bully pulpit.”

Consistent with his other speeches to LGBT audiences, Biden commended the LGBT rights movement for its accomplishment and repeated

his characterization of LGBT rights as the “civil rights issue of our day.”

Biden decried anti-transgender legislation in state legislatures and the lack of federal non-discrimination protections for LGBT people. On the international front, Biden spoke out against violence against LGBT people around the world in places like Chechnya, El Salvador, Malaysia and Tanzania as well as attempts to undermine LGBT rights in Romania.

“Any person of conscience regardless of their religious or partisan beliefs should be able to agree that discrimination and violence against any person in any form is simply intolerable, illegal, wrong,” Biden said.



Former VP Joe Biden

Biden wasn’t the only 2020 prospect who spoke at the dinner. Also addressing attendees was former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who now chairs the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, a group that seeks to elect Democratic candidates ahead

of the 2020 Census.

Holder recalled the LGBT accomplishments of the Obama administration, including the Justice Department’s refusal to defend the Defense of Marriage Act in court and assessing legal spousal benefits to same-sex couples after the 2013 ruling against the anti-gay law.

“And yet, our work is far from over,” Holder said. “The unfortunate fact is that in 2018, America’s long struggle to overcome injustice, to eliminate disparities and to eradicate violence continues. The age of bullies and bigots is not fully behind us and much of the progress that we made together now hangs in the balance.”

Holder said the gains made by gay and lesbian Americans aren’t yet “solidified” and those achievement aren’t yet extended to transgender people — something the Trump administration has made more complicated.

“There are still hearts to open, there are laws to change and the need for leaders to reflect or even seem to grasp our nation’s core values,” Holder said. “Instead of trying to build consensus toward our common goals, they try to build walls and stoke fear and anger among voters for short-term political advantage.”

Also speaking at the dinner was Virginia State Del. Danica Roem (D-Manassas), the first openly transgender elected and seated to a state legislature, and Nelson Araujo, who’s running to become secretary of state in Nevada and could be the first openly gay person elected to statewide office in the United States.

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PAMPER YOUR PET Fall Edition Cover Story

Danny Robertshaw (left) and Ron Danta own a successful nonprofit called Danny & Ron's Rescue that has helped 11,000 animals in its lifetime. Photos by Julie Prickett.

'Life in the Doghouse'

Documentary Tells Story of Danny & Ron's Rescue

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Ron Danta says that to “truly do rescue really well, you cannot at all be selfish.” And, to show how selfless they are, he and his partner Danny Robertshaw have opened their 4,400-square-foot home to over 80 dogs in need of adoption.

The couple has transformed their place on a horse farm in Camden, South Carolina, into Danny & Ron's Rescue where they've saved more than 11,000 dogs from being euthanized and those in overcrowded shelters, abusive puppy mills and dogfighting rings.

The new documentary “Life in the Doghouse,” by filmmaker Ron Davis, follows the day-to-day life of Danta and Robertshaw

as they rescue dogs in need.

Starting Small

The couple, both successful horse trainers, started their rescue work 15 years ago.

When they began, Danta and Robertshaw would go to their local shelter to pull a handful of dogs to take back to their farm. They would socialize them, and then take them to horse shows find them new homes.

Their work hit a turning point when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005. To help fight the devastation, the couple sent a horse trailer down to provide supplies and toiletries to survivors. After they heard stories about the number of abandoned dogs that were left behind during the floods, they began picking up loads of dogs to drive back home. In total, Danta and Robertshaw saved 600 dogs in approximately five months.

“Katrina taught both of us that we were capable of expanding our rescue,” Danta said. “The volume taught us that we were capable of getting more dogs adopted.”

But that volume proved costly; the couple realized that their trips to New Orleans and back had depleted 40 percent of their retirement

funds. So, to gain more funding, the couple decided they needed to start a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. A friend, Beth Grazes, referred them to attorney Danielle McCluskey in Milford, Michigan.

“We are forever grateful to her,” Danta said about McCluskey, who helped them pro bono.

“Beth explained how they were doing all of this fabulous work out of their own pocket, doing everything at their own cost. Then Ron called me. I thought, ‘He's such a nice man and it's such a worthy cause,’” McCluskey said. “I was so amazed that they had done so much out of the goodness of their heart and the kindness of their soul.”

McCluskey herself saved four dogs through Danny & Ron's Rescue and sits on the rescue's board as corporate secretary.

Inside the Doghouse

Currently, Danny & Ron's Rescue is one of few that doesn't have an adoption fee and survives strictly off of donations. In the film, Danta said it costs nearly \$1 million annually to run the nonprofit. It's easy to see where the costs add up in the film, too. Together with their staff of eight, Danta and Robertshaw do 18 loads of laundry in a commercial washer and dryer every day. They go through 10 gallons of laundry detergent, 56 rolls of paper towel, 60 pounds of dry dog food and 56 cans of wet dog food per week. The dogs are also groomed

and medicated when necessary. Beyond that, the couple delivers pet food and supplies to numerous elderly people in their area and helps with their veterinary bills.

“The most strenuous part is constantly worrying about where the money is going to come from, how staff will get paid and how we're going to make it to the next month,” Danta said.

In the past, when the couple has hit some “dry periods” when donations don't come in, they've had to put in their own money or take out loans to stay afloat.

“We don't take a salary at all from the rescue,” Robertshaw said. “We never have and never would.”

But, through all their struggles, they've remained positive.

“You cannot allow yourself to get pulled down into a sad or depressed state of mind,” Danta said. “Because you have to keep thinking day in and day out how we can save another life.”

The film shines a light on the level of animals in need in the U.S. It reports that 6.5 million animals enter U.S. shelters each year. Ninety percent are not spayed or neutered and only 2.5 million shelter animals actually find homes. The rest, around 4 million animals, are euthanized.

Danta receives hundreds of emails from numerous shelters each day asking them to save dogs on their euthanasia list.

See **Doghouse**, continued on p. 14

► Doghouse

Continued from p. 13

“Seeing their faces and knowing they’re going to die - that drives me harder to want to save more,” Danta said. “I don’t think I could ever turn my back on this because I don’t think I could live with the guilt of walking away from all those faces that need help.”

In fact, the overall message of “Life in the Doghouse” is to spay and neuter.

“It’s really easy to get on your podium and shake your hand and say, ‘Oh my god this shelter is a kill shelter. They’re killing all these animals,’” Danta said. “But it’s not the shelter’s fault. It’s the community’s fault. It’s because we have people that will not spay and neuter their dogs. So, we have multiple litters of cats, dogs, but the shelter is the one that gets the bad press because they’re a kill shelter, but basically they’re doing the dirty work for our community.”

Danta then emphasized that for those who can’t take a dog home from a shelter, there is still an opportunity to make a difference.

“If you can’t adopt, go to a local shelter to bring newspapers or towels or offer to walk the dogs,” he said. “Just give them some love.”

Animal Lovers

Beyond their animal welfare work, Danta and



Robertshaw’s love story is captured in the film, too. The couple met in 1980 at a horse show in Aiken, South Carolina, and Robertshaw rode Danta’s horses professionally. They had a working relationship for a long time, before Danta divorced his wife in 1986.

“Danny was one of my friends that really reached out to be there for me,” Danta said. “Seeing the emotional pain I was going through, he was a warm, compassionate person.”

They grew closer as both men realized they were gay, and now the couple has been together

for almost 30 years.

“I think we realize how much strength it takes to do what we’re doing,” Robertshaw said. “The rescue has made us stronger which has made our relationship stronger.”

While they don’t get much private time together, they do travel some. The couple is known for bringing dogs to horse shows all across the country in Danny & Ron’s Rescue bus.

“You have to make sure you’re ready to give up that much of your life to do this,” Danta said.

“Don’t think that rescue is a part-time job or task. It’s not something that you can say, ‘Oh, I’m only going to work a little bit tomorrow.’ Can you give up that much of your life to do rescue the right way?”

The couple, both in their 60s, have done some talking about retirement, but they’re not ready yet. If they won the lottery today, they would buy a massive bus and hire two or three full-time veterinarians to travel state to state to do free spays and neuters.

With the hope of creating successors, they’ve also been reaching out to young people in the horse community to learn the ropes of rescue.

“Kids compete and raise money for the rescue by having bake sales and car washes,” Danta said.

The rescue has a junior board as well.

“We want their input because they really kick butt to help us,” he said. “They are realizing how important it is to make a difference in the world.”

Filmmaker Ron Davis said he will donate all proceeds to animal rescues. To see “Life in the Doghouse,” pick a theater or request one near you www.lifeinthedoghousemovie.com/find-a-theater.html. View the film’s trailer on YouTube at <http://gaybe.am/z3>. Learn more about Danny & Ron’s Rescue at dannyrnsrescue.org.

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Michigan Senate Votes Down Breed-Specific Bans Often Aimed at Pit Bulls

BY ALICE YIN, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No bans on pit bulls allowed, Michigan's Senate said on April 12.

The chamber voted 22-13 to prohibit local governments from dictating breed-specific regulations on dogs. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.



About 30 of Michigan's local governments have some form of breed-specific regulation, which entail outright bans but also methods such as compulsory neutering, additional liability insurance, muzzle requirements for owners of certain

dogs.

Canines that are perceived as more aggressive — mostly pit bulls, but also Rottweilers, German shepherds and cane corsos — are most targeted by these breed-specific rules. Among the pack, pit bulls have typically been targeted the most by such ordinances in Michigan.

The bill applies to cities, counties and other local government bodies. If it passes, Michigan would join at least 20 other states that prohibit breed-specific legislation.

Bill supporters say these rules encroach on dog owners' property rights, and that targeting certain breeds is a waste of time in preventing dog bites.

"The breed is not the strongest predictor of whether or not a dog is going to be dangerous," said Dr. Emily Patterson-Kane, an animal welfare scientist at the American Veterinary Medical Association. "You could argue about whether it's even a predictor at all. It's that weak."

A number of pit bull maulings have made Michigan headlines, such as a December attack that gruesomely injured a child in Kalamazoo. But evidence by the AVMA indicates pit bulls aren't necessarily born killers — although their upbringing could indicate why some people dislike them, Patterson-Kane said.

"These are dogs that not very good owners would get because they thought they were macho," she said. "That's part of what tells you it's human behavior that's weaponizing dogs. It isn't that the dog is innately a hazard."

The AVMA study found when adjusted per capita, pit bulls were not disproportionately dangerous.

Patterson-Kane said every era has a different mascot to play the "dangerous mutt." In the 1980s, she said, it was the German shepherd, while during the previous decade people mostly feared Doberman pinschers. Moreover, maintaining breed-specific legislation could be cumbersome, she said, because dog breeds are so intermixed that there is little consensus on which breeds are actually pit bulls.

Sen. Tom Casperson, however, said he voted no on April 12 because he hasn't heard complaints from dog owners in his district, which covers areas ruled by breed-specific ordinances.

"If I had heard a lot of complaints from people it would change my mind," the Republican from Escanaba said. "I just haven't heard that. It seems like these ordinances are working for my district."

Michigan Bill Would Criminalize Leaving Pets in Car in Dangerous Conditions

PAMPER YOUR PET

Fall Edition

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

As the end of September nears, winter draws closer and with it comes cold weather. That's why animal welfare organizations are reminding pet lovers early that hot cars aren't the only culprits for unwanted pet death; cold cars are guilty, too.

"It could take less than an hour for a dog left in a cold car to get hypothermic," said Elie Ramsey, manager of field services with the Michigan Humane Society in Detroit. Although this depends on the temperature, the dog's age, breed, weight and overall health, she emphasized that often it's "not appropriate" to leave animals in cold cars. The normal range for a dog's body temperature is 101 to 102.5 F. If a dog's temperature drops between 97.6 and 99.6 F, this is considered a danger point and medical attention is necessary. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, anxiety, weakness, slowed movements and searching for somewhere to burrow.

Legislation passed in a state Senate committee in May and is currently awaiting a vote that would make it a crime to leave an animal in the car in harmful conditions.

That includes, but is not limited to, "heat, cold, lack of adequate ventilation, lack of food or water or other circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause suffering, disability or death of the animal."

If the animal dies, the punishment would be a felony with up to five years of prison time, otherwise it would be a misdemeanor.

Bill sponsor, state Sen. Curtis Hertel of East Lansing, said, "Hundreds of animals are lost every year because people leave them in cars."

Hertel himself owns a rescue dog named Sampson, said that he hopes this legislation would stop many unnecessary pet deaths and raise awareness.

"Our goal is not to put people in jail, but we're hoping to put some teeth into this and drive up education on the issue," Hertel said, noting that the issue is "near and very dear to his heart."

According to Michigan State University's Animal Legal & Historical Center, more than 25 states have some form of law on the books to protect pets left in parked vehicles.

Beyond leaving animals in the car, Ramsey points to a law in the state of Michigan that requires adequate shelter for dogs who are kept outdoors. It defines shelter as adequate protection from the elements and weather conditions suitable for the age, species and physical condition of the animal so as to maintain the animal in a state of good health.

This could be the residence of the dog owner or other individual. It could be a doghouse that is an enclosed structure with a roof and of appropriate dimensions for the breed and size of the dog. The doghouse should have dry bedding when the outdoor temperature is, or is predicted to drop, below freezing. It could also be a structure, including a garage, barn or shed, that is sufficiently insulated and ventilated to protect the dog from exposure to extreme temperatures.

"A car is not part of that definition of adequate shelter,"



said Ramsey. "We have a zero tolerance policy. We get calls year-round about dogs being left in cars. If it's below freezing, it's a high priority call and we'll head to those calls first no matter what and remove the dog to safety."

While the bill makes its way, Ramsey reminds people not to take matters into their own hands because breaking a window and damaging a car to rescue a pet does not protect a person from prosecution.

"Anytime someone feels like there's a pet that's not in a state of good health due to a lack of shelter, please contact your local law enforcement office," Ramsey said.



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Let the Games Begin! Eliminate Pet Boredom

PAMPER YOUR PET
Fall Edition

BY AMY GARABEDIAN

Here's something you probably haven't thought about when it comes to training your dog. Training is just a game you play.

In the beginning, we teach our puppies all kinds of things. We teach them to sit, to lay down, not to jump on counters. We teach them where it's appropriate to go to the bathroom and where it certainly isn't. We make a party out of each move the puppy makes that is right, that wins. We celebrate with treats and praise.

Then, many times, suddenly the shine is gone and the training stops. Where before we'd spend hours with our pup to "teach" them, it starts to get a bit boring and we just ... stop. We expect, like some kind of computer, that we've programmed our dogs. That they just know what to do and that they will do it.

A lot of frustrated people make this claim: "My dog knows what to do, he just won't do it."

Maybe.

Play With Me

Most dogs live for engagement with their people. You're likely the most interesting thing in their world. Their day revolves around your schedule, when you wake up, go to work, come home. So when we stop engaging them, is it really any wonder they stop playing by the rules we set out?

Think about this the next time your dog does something you don't like. Can you turn compliance back into a game? If you can, and you can engage your dog with joy or a reward, chances are, the next time you ask in a non-game setting, you might



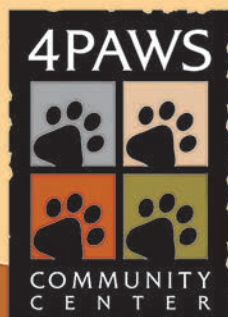
just get a win for all involved.

Come When Called is Hide-and-Go-Seek

Here's an idea to get you started remembering how fun training can be. A solid recall is arguably one of the most important commands you can teach your dog. That means having a dog that can reliably come to you upon command. A fun way to spice it up if the old recall is getting a bit rusty is to engage in hide-and-go-seek. Bring something that is sure to get your dog's attention, the whiff of a yummy treat or the squeak of a fascinating new toy, and pair it with your call from the other room, "Come!"

Many dogs simply love the game of "find it" and if you are the thing they are finding, so much the better. Hide somewhere, maybe behind a door or crouched down behind the couch and call for your dog. Make sure to make it possible for them to find you with some a little work in the beginning and more as they start to "get" the game.

Guest Blogger for The Pet Beastro. Amy Garabedian is the co-owner of Sit Means Sit Metro Detroit, which trains hundreds of dogs locally each year. She has a passion for helping dogs and their owners live their best life and she believes therapy dogs might just save the world. For more information, visit sitmeanssit.com.



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Pros and Cons of Canine Influenza Vaccination

PAMPER YOUR PET
Fall Edition

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Over the past few months, news outlets, veterinarians and vaccine manufacturers have all been warning the public about the canine influenza epidemic that has hit nearly 100 dogs in New York City and elsewhere. However, Dr. Glynes D. Graham — owner and primary veterinarian of Patterson Dog & Cat Hospital in Detroit — says that there is “no need to panic.” She said that although vaccination is always a personal decision for the pet owner, “there are many precautions” available for those who are concerned.

“People need to do a risk assessment for their dogs. Does everybody need it? Absolutely not. If your dog doesn’t go places, it doesn’t need the vaccination,” Graham said. “I think it’s reasonable for dogs that spend time at day care and the dog park to get it. It’s what we have available, and is certainly a level of

protection for dogs with more active social lives that are constantly being exposed to other dogs.”

The American Veterinary Medical Association provides similar advice: dogs in close contact with potentially infected dogs in places such as kennels, groomers, day care facilities and shelters are at an increased risk of infection.

At present, two strains of the virus have been identified in the U.S.: the original H3N8 and the newer H3N2, and the contagious viral infection can affect cats as well as dogs. The AVMA reports that an infected animal is usually contagious for two to eight days after it contracts the illness.

The main symptom is coughing, which can last from 10 to 21 days, but the disease can also be accompanied by sneezing, fever, nasal discharge, decreased appetite and general lethargy. A dog’s cough can make the virus airborne up to 20 feet, and it can spread through direct animal-to-animal contact, human-to-dog contact and from contaminated objects like dog bowls. Some dogs can also contract severe illness, like pneumonia, when they are infected.

Graham said juvenile and elderly dogs, and dogs with other health issues, tend to be more at risk.

“Some dogs don’t show symptoms at all and it resolves itself without any treatment. But if there are symptoms, they are generally mild and the fatality rate is pretty low, like less than one percent,” she said, noting that treatment is based on the dog’s symptoms.

Graham also said that while it’s true the vaccination doesn’t prevent infection, it offers three key benefits: it decreases the severity of the illness if it is contracted, it reduces the risk of it spreading and the length of infection.

“I don’t see any reason not to use it if they need it,” she said.

For those pet owners worried about side effects, Graham said they aren’t very common, but they’re more likely to affect smaller breeds. However, if they do occur, pet owners should watch out for fatigue, as it’s the most common. Other possible symptoms include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory distress, facial swelling, pale gums and pain at the site of the injection.



“Any pet can react to a vaccine, and while the risk is low it’s one of the things owners have to take into consideration,” Graham said. “Their pet’s preventive health and their own concerns about vaccination.”

There is no evidence that either strain of canine influenza can infect humans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

“Panic is a reasonable initial reaction, but take a deep breath and talk to your veterinarian to assess the risk,” said Graham. “Also, rely on your daycare and other professionals to give you the appropriate information to help you make these kinds of decisions.”

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s current report of confirmed 147 cases of canine influenza across Michigan since Aug. 31:

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Photo by Ann Marie Fox

Natasha Rothwell

Is Here to School the World

'Love, Simon' Star on Her Breakout Role as a Gay-Supportive Teacher

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Oh, sure, actress Natasha Rothwell's scene-stealing drama teacher in out director Greg Berlanti's groundbreaking gay teen rom-com "Love,

Simon" is bitter – and therefore, funny as all hell – about overseeing amateur teens in a student production of "Cabaret." Hey, she had an oh-so-prestigious part in "The Lion King" musical! (As, um, an extra.)

But Ms. Albright is a dogged ally for life,

demonstrating heartfelt compassion for her LGBTQ students when Simon and his queer schoolmate, Ethan, are bullied in the lunchroom. Enter Ms. Albright, who breaks up the fight in true Ms. Albright fashion: "That's mine now," she scolds, confiscating the bullies'

speaker. "I'm'ma sell it, get my tubes tied."

Rothwell knows the teacher life well: She was a high school teacher in the Bronx for four years. Queer students confided in her, some even came out to her. Now, the 37-year-old actress and former "SNL" writer returns for a

third season of actress-writer Issa Rae's terrific HBO comedy "Insecure," as Issa's freewheeling, zero-fucks friend Kelli. And no details on her role just yet – she couldn't reveal any during our recent interview, sorry – but Rothwell is also set to star in director Patty Jenkins' "Wonder Woman" sequel.

Plenty to chat about until then, though, including the importance of LGBTQ inclusion in her projects and her reaction to the criticism "Love, Simon" received for not being progressive enough.

Why do you think the women on "Insecure" have resonated with the queer community?

I think what attracts the queer community to "Insecure" is authenticity and seeing a group of women being celebrated on television for being their authentic selves. The courage that it takes for marginalized groups like the LGBTQIA community to be authentic – it's so difficult and so brave and so admirable to do so that when you see a group of people doing that on screen I can understand why that resonates with the queer community. I feel that way when I see other marginalized groups of people on TV shown as full-fledged characters. I'm like, "Yes, yes, yes!"

It should be noted how effortlessly LGBTQIA just rolled off your tongue. You didn't stumble over a single letter.

(Laughs) I think having been a part of "Love, Simon" and doing press for that I was like, "I'm gonna get this! They're not gonna get me on camera or on tape!" Because I'm an ally through and through, and they better know I know what I'm talking about. (Laughs)

So, Kelli: Surely her unapologetic boldness – I mean, in season two, she got fingered at a diner – resonates with the community.

(Laughs) She was living her best life. She's not gonna apologize for it. Until I got into my 30s, I felt like I was apologizing for being a woman, for being black. The beauty of playing Kelli is I get to have a character match how I now feel, and I get to play a woman who's never known any different. Like, I imagine this is Kelli from the crib; when she was an infant, till now, she's only ever known this version of herself. I love playing someone who doesn't experience doubt in the way I do.

Do you write Kelli?

We all write Kelli. We'll do internal table reads of the script and I'll sit down and get to see what the other room was working on, and I'm like, "Oh shit, I'm getting fingered? OK!" It's a real team effort to develop her and all the characters.

You've cited Lily Tomlin as an influence. How did she influence your comedic voice?

Female comedians that weren't trapped by femininity is what resonated with me most. She was such a chameleon, subverting expectations. She plays a little girl (Edith Ann) and she's sitting in this giant, oversized

chair and having this monologue, and she's so playful and inventive and completely embodies the POV of a small child, and using her body to tell a story. I just remember watching that and being obsessed.

You're writing a rom-com called "Bridal Recall" for Paramount Pictures, and you also have a development deal with HBO to write and produce and star in your own project. Will the queer community have a place in those projects?

If I have a say. To me, I don't think talking about inclusion and diversity is enough. We have to do it in actuality and in action. One of the brilliant things about Issa's writers' room? It's not all black. We have representation from all over the spectrum. We have different sexualities represented, different ethnicities represented, and we can tell a nuanced story that way. So, I have every intention of making my writers' room reflect the nuance that I want to tell in those stories, that I feel make worthwhile stories.

What did it mean to you to be a part of "Love, Simon"?

It meant everything. When I read the script and the book, I was just honored that I could participate in a project that really felt bigger than myself. The response has been insane and continues to be. People are discovering the movie even still and are responding to it in a really visceral way. I imagine it being that way for young people of color watching "Black Panther" for the first time. To me, that's powerful to see your story represented and it's not – it's a love story first and a coming out story second.

It's one of the things where it's just, I want more of this. I want more people to see themselves represented in this very specific, common way that straight white people have had the privilege of. So, I want to see more of those stories being told, because I'm a child of the '80s. John Hughes is my jam, and I loved "Pretty in Pink" and "Sixteen Candles." So, to see this story get that treatment was a magical thing. I will be forever grateful to Greg Berlanti for thinking that I could play Ms. Albright. He's such a wonderful man and encouraged me and brought me to tears. He pulled me aside after I finished shooting and he was just like, "I have the same feeling about you I did when I directed Melissa McCarthy." And I was like, "You just said a lot in that sentence!" And then I burst into tears. (Laughs)

Do gay fans recognize see you as Ms. Albright on the street?

I don't get "Hey, Ms. Albright!" I live in West Hollywood and the LGBTQIA community is en masse here and I love it. So, I'll get recognized from "Love, Simon" and as Kelli, sometimes at the same time. It's a great

See **Natasha Rothwell**, continued on p. 21



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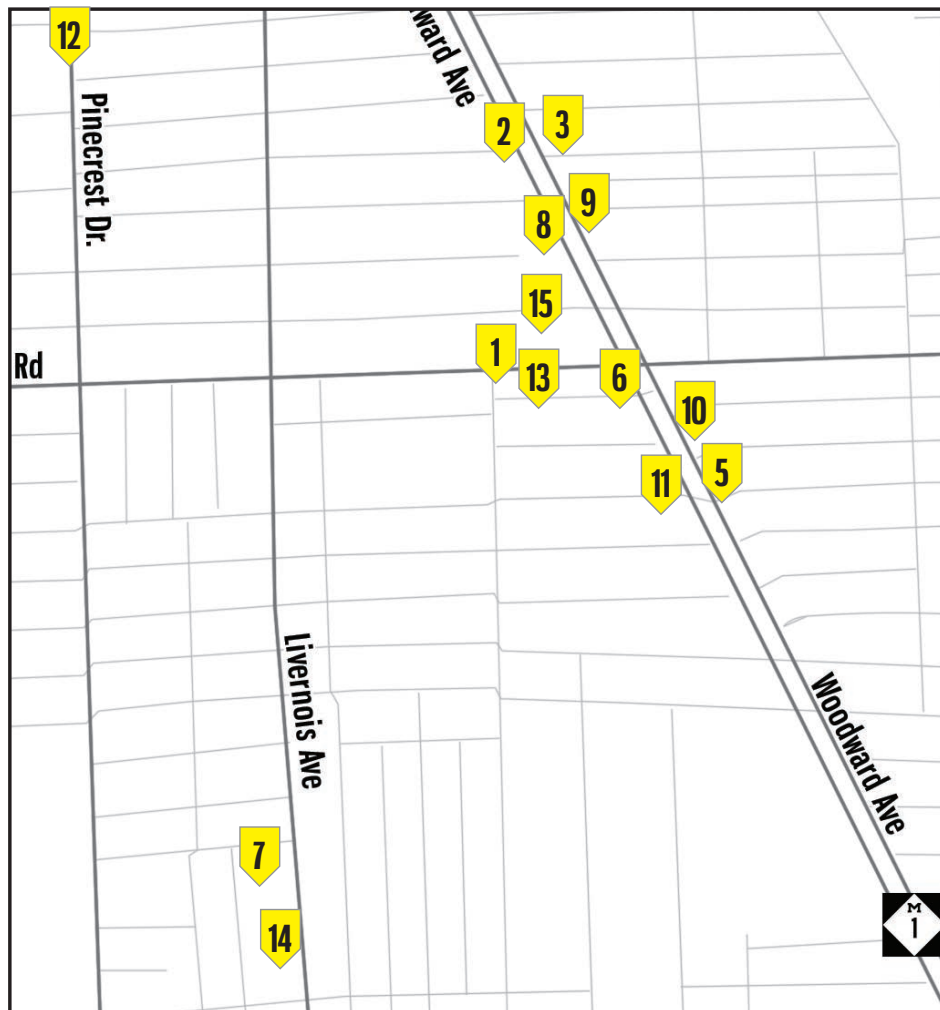
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Photo by Ben Rothstein

► Natasha Rothwell

Continued from p. 19

community, and I feel so welcomed and thankful for it.

In an episode during season two of “Insecure,” you and Issa call out Molly for being revolted by a male suitor because he has sexual history with another man. The episode acknowledges a glaring double-standard between men and women, and also hypermasculinity in black versus white communities. What part did you play in bringing that storyline to light?

We all talked about our experiences and something that would give us pause before entering into a relationship, or something that we wouldn't even stop and think twice about. It varied by gender, by sexuality, by age. What boiled up to the top was the hypertoxic masculinity of communities of color, especially the black community. So, we really loved to present that specific part of the show to our audience because it caused conversation around the topic. One of the things that I love about our show is we don't present answers – we present questions. We want people to have these conversations in a public way.

Recently, a massive Twitterstorm ignited when GQ featured the straight male cast in a photo spread that some deemed “gay.” One of the featured actors, Sarunas Jackson, called out the homophobic tone of the comments. I’m thinking, we’ve already been here.

We've already been here, we already did this, guys. We've already evolved. Let's just move on. But this just goes to show that continued conversation and continued moments for

educating yourself are helpful. One of the more palpable things that I think that photo spread did was spark that conversation again, so people can really, once and for all, understand their own toxic masculinity. I was shocked by the number of women jumping on board. I'm like, you were indoctrinated to think that way, and we have to unlearn some things in order to be the progressive, thoughtful, inclusive people that I know we are capable of being.

You responded to people who don't feel represented by “Insecure” by telling them, well, then you tell your story, because no one story can encompass all of our stories. “Love, Simon” received similar criticism for featuring a white man in its lead role, versus someone of color. Would you respond to that criticism in the same way?

Absolutely. I think I would be remiss to say, “We did it guys. Let's pack it up! We fixed it! We fixed inclusion in Hollywood!” I think that would be a gross mistake to be made. I don't look at “Insecure” and even see myself represented all the time and I write on the show, because this is a story. This is Issa and her girlfriend in Inglewood, California. But what it requires is more art to be made to reflect those things that aren't being shown. Let's tell those stories because, if there's anything I've learned when really resonating with audiences lately, it's a hunger for diversity.

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.chrisazzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).

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Sensational Showboys

A Look at the Lives of Men Who Do 'Boy Drag'

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

They call themselves showboys. They are boys, men actually, who sing and dance. And, just as often, one can find them lip-syncing at gay bars or competing in male beauty pageants across the state and country. Three of the most popular in Michigan are Izaya Cole, Prince Cole and El' Ross.

El' Ross

Born Cory Shorter, Izaya Cole grew up in Inkster and by 5 he had already started dancing and performing in theatrical productions.

"I did little school plays and I went to church and I used to sing in the choir," Shorter said. "The first play I was ever in was 'The Little Drummer Boy' and I was actually the little drummer boy."

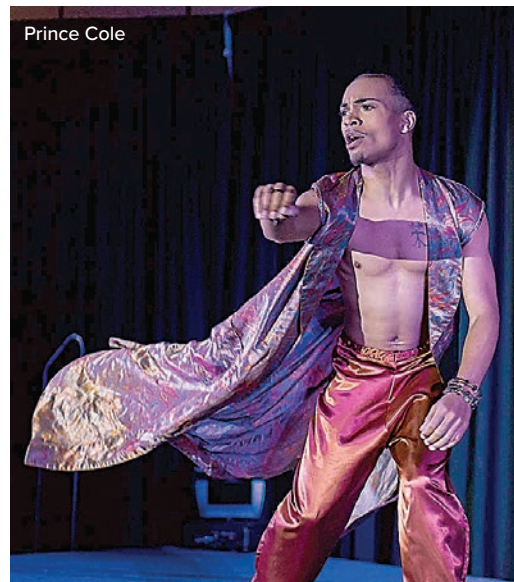
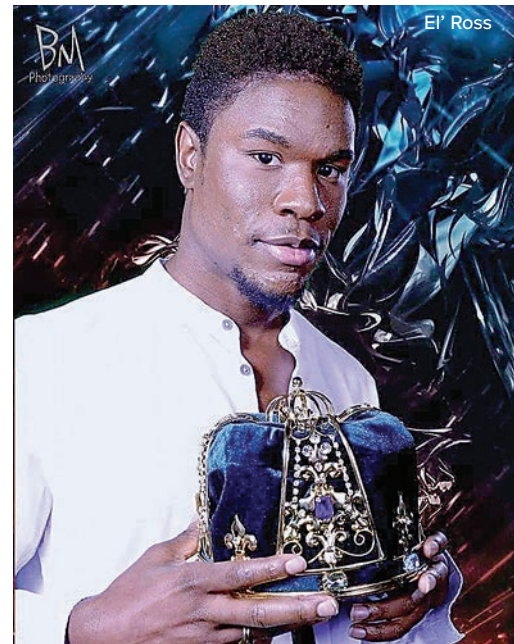
After high school, he earned a degree in theater from the University of Michigan. Then in 2009, while still pursuing a career in theater, Shorter stumbled upon an interesting opportunity. Drag legend Natalie Cole was looking for dancers to compete with her in the Miss Gay USA Unlimited pageant.

"Natalie competed and she ended up winning," said Shorter. "Natalie and I just bonded. She knew I did theater so she asked if I would ever be interested in performing as a male. And I said, 'I love to perform, so why not?' So, she adopted me into the Cole family and gave me the name Izaya and it started from there."

Even with his previous experience, at first, Shorter was hesitant on stage.

"All I did was sing," he said. "I had no costumes. I had nice clothes, and all I would do is sing. Then I got some coaching from my drag family and they said, 'You can dance, you can move.' So, I started getting costumes made and doing the dance numbers. I had to get comfortable with myself and start getting a little bit sexy and comfortable in my own skin."

It wouldn't be long before Shorter began to fully accept his role as Izaya,



national title. In fact, he has three national titles under his belt: Mr. Gay USA Unlimited, Mr. Black National and Mr. Sapphire.

Today, at 28, Shorter works by day as the lead Emerald Club consultant for National Rental Car at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. And by night, even when he's not out being a showboy, fans can find him onstage.

"Theater is pretty much a second job of mine," Shorter said. "I've moved on to professional theater where I get paid for it and I have points which go toward becoming an (Actors') Equity (Association) member."

In addition to his own acting, Shorter also made his directorial debut last year directing "The Addams Family" for the Southgate Community Players. More recently, last summer Shorter played the leading role of Usnavi in Lin-Manuel Miranda's "In The Heights" for the Detroit Actor's Theater Company.

Prince Cole

It was Shorter that got Prince Cole interested in being a showboy. Born Jeremy Smith, Prince Cole grew up in Detroit. He attended Fraser's Arts Academy in the Woods and started his formal training in ballet, modern and jazz dance at age 13. Smith would on to earn a degree in dance from Marygrove College.

He was 20 years old when Shorter first approached him about performing as a showboy.

"I was one of his backup dancers in the very first national pageant that he won," Smith said. "After that, I started doing shows and pageants. That was my entrance into the pageant scene."

And Smith had no trouble making a name for himself at the outset. However, he soon discovered that being a showboy was not without its challenges.

"It's very hard as a male entertainer to keep going," he said. "There's not a lot of appreciation for male entertainers."

Challenges aside, Smith has so far captured 16 titles. Most are from Michigan, but he's won competitions in Ohio and Kentucky, too.

"Every title I've won has brought me

and he began moving all over the stage in costumes as flashy as they were racy.

"When I first started there was such a stigma that you have to be a man and you have to be butch," he said. "And you can come out in jeans and tank top and perform a number. That's not just the case. You still have to put on a show. We call it drag. Boy drag. Yes, you're a man, but you're a gay man so it's OK if you want to come out in makeup or a little bit of sequins."

To date, Shorter has won 25 pageants and is known as Michigan's most-awarded showboy, along with the first to win a

further and further and each title I've won has brought me recognition in different ways," Smith said. "Then, in different states I get even more exposure so they all hold the same value to me."

Along the way on his pageant journey, Smith began impersonating the musical legend from whom he took his name. Smith is also known for putting his dance skills to work in choreographing for other performers.

"I work with a lot of queens and the male entertainers building their talents," Smith said. "So, in this community and throughout the Midwest, for the most part people know me as a choreographer."

Not surprisingly, that's Smith's day job as well. In 2014 he bought his own dance studio and became artistic director of Staccato Dance Works in Oak Park. Even though he's involved in a variety of other creative work, his love for being a showboy has not lessened.

"It's kind of hard as far as trying to stand out in the drag community," he said. "We are still technically a part of the drag community as far as the entertainment part is involved. The idea is we're really just trying to be us, be our most authentic and not afraid to be feminine sometimes, but also masculine. Just embellishing the traits we have in our everyday personalities on stage."

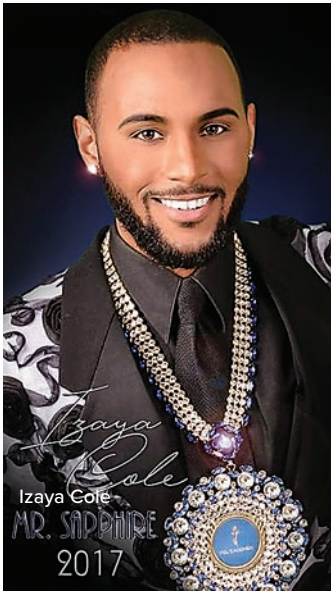
El' Ross

Like Shorter and Smith, El' Ross is also a member of the Cole family of entertainers. He too was given his drag name by his drag mother Natalie Cole. Ross was born Maurise Smith and grew up in Southwest Detroit. He said he decided to start doing shows after witnessing performers like DeAngela "Show" Shannon and Jeremy Smith do their thing.

"I saw them burn the stage up and they looked so comfortable performing and competing," said Ross. "I said I wanted to try it and see if I could do what they do."

And try he did. Early on, Ross said he

"When you have a great audience that's into what you're doing and loving it and dancing with you it does something to you that makes you want to give them your all."



also learned about the double standards in the industry.

"I think with the boys, people try to compare showboys to showgirls, and there's really no comparison," Ross said. "The girls, they're in drag more than the boys. When you're doing Usher or Trey Songz, they don't wear those kinds of lavish costumes like Natalie Cole does when she is doing [the singer] Natalie Cole."

He continued, "That's why I think the showboys are overlooked, because it's not as big and glamorous as the drag queens."

That said, Ross said he has had no trouble finding audiences to appreciate his skills.

"What I most enjoy about it is the rush and high from the audience," he said. "When you have a great audience that's into what you're doing and loving it and dancing with you it does something to you that makes you want to give them your all."

Ross has even moved beyond performing to actually producing shows. His first ever took place three years ago and featured showboys including Brian Rodeo, Ray Milliown, Fabulus, Christian Dior and Jeremy Smith performing as Prince Cole. They each performed together as the Men of Detroit.

Looking forward, Ross said he would like to create his own version of the existing pageant system in Detroit.

"I created the MoTown Awards and MoTown Honors to celebrate our own and hope to create a pageant system here that can go nationwide," he said. "Detroit has so much to offer and we have a wonderful new pageant system here called Dazzling Detroit created by Jamar Boykins. It's getting nationwide attention and I do hope to one day to reach that status."

For now, however, Ross, who is 29, is the current Mr. Innuendo's and Battle Creek's Mr. Performer of the Year.

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Happenings

Mega March for Animals

Grab your leash and join the Michigan Humane Society for the 13th Annual Mega March for Animals, presented by Sellers Subaru. The two-day event happens on Saturday, Oct. 6, at Kensington Metropark's Martindale Beach, 4570 Huron River Parkway in Milford and on Sunday, Oct. 7 at Cullen Plaza, 1340 Atwater Street on Detroit's RiverWalk. March with your pet and help save animals' lives in the process. Registration is free. For more information, visit michiganhumane.org/events/.

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OUTINGS

Tuesday, Sept. 25

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday of each month. ymaj1968@gmail.com. 734-780-4092. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. standwithtrans.org.

Thursday, Sept. 27

2018 Voices – A Detroit Legacy 6 p.m. Main Event at 7 p.m. REC honors Margaret Cho. Tickets at ruthelliscenter.org Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. motorcitycasino.com/soundboard.aspx.

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County 7 p.m. This youth group meets 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620. oaklandumc.org. standwithtrans.org.

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7 p.m. Professional, personal communication skills development. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoebis@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

Friday, Sept. 28

Tig Notaro at Masonic Temple 6:30 p.m. Tig Notaro is a groundbreaking stand-up comedian. Detroit Masonic Temple, 3011

W. Grand Blvd, #100, Detroit. 800-854-2196. templedetroit.com.themasonic.com/events.php.

Saturday, Sept. 29

10th Annual Fall Fundraiser – An Evening with Ozone House 6:30 p.m. Spend an evening enjoying food, drinks, music, performances and a silent auction. Bring friends to learn about how Ozone House helps young people.

Tig Notaro at Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids! 7:30 p.m. Tig Notaro is a groundbreaking stand-up comedian. Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St., NE, Grand Rapids. 616-459-8386. fountainstreet.org.fusionsshows.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 2

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Lake Orion – Oakland County 7 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. This group meets the 1st Tuesday of each month. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663. stmarysinthehills.org. standwithtrans.org.

Saturday, Oct. 6

Mega March for Animals, Presented by Sellers Subaru 9 a.m. Join almost 1,000 supporters of the Michigan Humane Society and their dogs. Kensington Metropark, Martindale Beach, 4570 Huron River Parkway, Milford. 810-227-8910. events@michiganhumane.org.

Editor's Pick

Novi Pet Expo

This family event is a celebration of all furry, feathered and finned family members, featuring a wide variety of pet rescues and adoptable pets from across the region. The event takes place Nov. 9 to 11 at the Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave. in Novi. The Michigan Humane Society will be on site and a full adult admission, \$10, will be discounted \$2 with a donation of pet food or needed supplies. More information is available online at novipetexpo.com/.



Editor's Pick

Drinking with Dogs

Canine to Five presents Drinking with Dogs on Sept. 25 from 6-9 p.m. Join them for a fun night filled with drinks and dogs at Rosie O'Grady's, 279 W. 9 Mile Road in Ferndale. This hound dog happy hour will benefit the Michigan Humane Society. Stop by with your pooch to enjoy a signature cocktail that helps support MHS, free daycare giveaways, adoptable dogs, and more. This event requires dogs to be 100 percent on a leash. For more information, visit gaybe.am/Rz.



metroparks.com. MichiganHumane.org/megamarch.

Sunday, Oct. 7

Mega March for Animals 9 a.m. Join an estimated 1,000 supporters of the Michigan Humane Society and their dogs. Cullen Plaza (formerly Rivard Plaza), 1340 Atwater St., Detroit. 313-566-8200. events@michiganhumane.org. detroitriverfront.org. MichiganHumane.org/megamarch.

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County

6:30 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids, this group meets 1st Sunday of each month. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. standwithtrans.org. hilltopcounseling.org. soccorro@hilltopcounseling.org.

Monday, Oct. 8

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Macomb County 6:30 p.m. Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group: All youth are welcome to attend this free group. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700. chippewavalley.schools.org.

MUSIC & MORE

Addiction and Families Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Lynn Kleiman Malinoff, Ed.D. will discuss substance addiction. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

2018 Voices – A Detroit Legacy Sept. 27, VIP Reception at 6 p.m., Main Event at 7 p.m. REC honors Margaret Cho. Tickets available at truthelliscenter.org Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. motorcitycasino.com. ruthelliscenter.org.

10th Annual Fall Fundraiser – An Evening with Ozone House 6:30 p.m. Spend an evening enjoying food, drinks, music, performances and a silent auction. Bring friends to learn about how Ozone House helps young people.

Tig Notaro at Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids 7:30 p.m. Tig Notaro is a groundbreaking stand-up comedian. Rolling Stone Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St., NE, Grand Rapids. 616-459-8386. fountainstreet.org. fusionshows.com.

Big 80s Flashback Bash! 8 p.m. Big '80s Flashback Bash celebrates all genres of '80s music all night long! Each band performs selected songs in their various styles. Proceeds to Hater Kitty Cat Rescue PJs Lagerhouse, 1254 Michigan Ave., Detroit. 313-961-4668. facebook.com.

Gil Shaham and Enigma Oct. 5, 8 p.m. Shaham plays Prokofiev's "First Violin Concerto," and Leonard Slatkin opens the season with Sir Edward Elgar's Great and Noble Enigma One event on Oct. 6 at 8 p.m. One event on Oct. 7 at 3 p.m. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Dancing in the Street: A Symphonic Tribute to Motown Oct. 12, 10:30 a.m. One event on Oct. 12 at 8 p.m. One event on Oct. 13 at 8 p.m. One event on Oct. 14 at 3 p.m. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Addiction and Older Adults Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m. Charles E. Coleman LLMSW and Matthew Cremin, LLMSW will discuss how addiction affects elders. Free. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

The Firebird Oct. 18, 7:30 p.m. Stravinsky's "The Firebird" and "The Song of the Nightingale." One event on Oct. 19 at 10:30 a.m. One event on Oct. 20 at 8 p.m. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Voices of Freedom Oct. 19, 6 p.m. Celebrate 35 years of welcoming those "yearning to breathe free." John Prendergast is a human rights activist and New York Times best-selling author. Motor City Casino, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 866-782-9622. freedomhousedetroit.org.

Christopher Titus Oct. 20, 7 p.m. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St., Royal Oak. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com. soundchronicle.com.

The Intersectionality of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Substance Use Disorders Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m. Discuss relationship between domestic violence/sexual assault and substance use. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

ART 'N' AROUND

Star Wars and the Power of Costume 10 a.m. Star Wars™ and the Power of Costume explores challenges in dressing the Star Wars universe. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900. dia.org.

16th Annual Michigan Renaissance Festival. Take a time-travel adventure into the 16th century at the annual Michigan Renaissance Festival. 12600 Dixie Hwy., Holly. 248-634-5552 info@michrenfest.com. michrenfest.com. tickets.vendini.com.

Morag Myerscough Sept. 20, 5 p.m. Myerscough explores the theme of

"belonging" in her work. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. pennystampsevents.com.

Have We Met: Dialogues on Memory and Desire Sept. 21, 6 p.m. Curated by Srimoyee Mitra. Artists include Rudolf Baranik, Al Loving, Michele Oka Doner and more. stamps gallery, 201 S. Division St., Ann Arbor. stamps.umich.edu.

Michigan Burlesque Festival – Dirty Martini Sept. 21, 7 p.m. It is our privilege this year to honor one of Detroit's own burlesque legends Toni Elling and more. One event on Sept. 22 at 7 p.m. Hastings Street Ballroom, 715 E. Milwaukee St., Detroit. 313-873-2955. tangentgallery.com. michiganburlesquefestival.com.

Ariel Waldman Sept. 27, 5 p.m. Ariel She sits on the council for the NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts Program, which aims to nurture radical, science-fiction-inspired ideas that could transform future space missions. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. stamps.umich.edu.

Satori Circus 30th Anniversary Performances Sept. 28, 8 p.m. Performance artist Satori Circus celebrates 30 years with performances of his avant-garde theatre of the absurd. One event on Sept. 29 at 8 p.m. One event on Sept. 30 at 8 p.m. Tangent Gallery, 715 E. Milwaukee Ave., Detroit. 248-445-1277.

The Post-Photographic Body: See Me As I Feel Oct. 5, 7 p.m. Renowned Michigan dancer, choreographer and video artist Peter Sparling presents his first solo exhibit of acrylic paintings. Oct. 5 to 7, 19 to 21, 26 to 27. 22 North Gallery, 22 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti, MI. 734-757-5708. 22north.org.

THEATER

Michigan Burlesque Festival – Dirty Martini Sept. 21, 7 p.m. We honor one of Detroit's own burlesque legends Toni Elling. One event on Sept. 22 at 7 p.m. Hastings Street Ballroom, 715 E. Milwaukee St., Detroit. 313-873-2955. tangentgallery.com. michiganburlesquefestival.com.

Outvisible Theatre Presents "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" Sept. 21, 8 p.m. Outvisible Theatre, 18614 Ecorse Road, Allen Park. info@outvisibletheatre.com. outvisibletheatre.com.

Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert Sept. 28, 8 p.m. The feature film projected onto a screen in Orchestra Hall, with John Williams' music played alongside. One event on Sept. 29 at 8 p.m. One event on Sept. 30 at 3 p.m. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

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The Frivolist



6 Reasons Eating Alone at a Restaurant Is the Best Meal You'll Ever Have

BY MIKEY ROX

Being alone and being lonely are two different things. While I don't prefer the latter, I embrace the former. I do a lot of things by myself, in fact. Go to the movies, sit on the beach, pop into a happy hour, enjoy bike rides, even go on vacation. I also like to treat myself to lunches and dinners out where I can sit in solitude and think, work, or catch up on odds and ends on my to-do list. For those reasons and six more, here's why eating alone at a restaurant is the best meal you'll ever have.

1. You can order what you want without any guilt

When I'm trying to stick to a strict diet, I like to have a food buddy who will support my endeavors when I go out to eat. But, sometimes, I just want to dive face first into a massive pasta dish with a bottle of wine, a basket of bread, and finish with dessert. And do you know what I don't need while I'm doing that? Judgment. I judge myself hard enough, ya know, and I don't need some hoity-toity fit so-and-so chastising me for licking the bowl in public. So what if I make vaguely oinky noises while I do it. Does that embarrass you? Good; table for one, please.

2. You don't have to engage in idle chit-chat

I don't know if you have this thing, but I sort of put my friends into certain categories. Like, I have specific friends with whom I enjoy going to the movies or inviting over for game nights or going away for the weekend with. I rarely, however, invite anyone to eat out with me or accept invitations for a meal out, especially if I'm without my boyfriend. The reason? I don't want to feel trapped in a situation where I feel like I *have* to talk. I find small talk annoying,

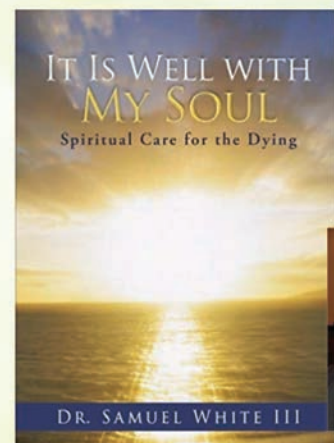
and to have to keep it up for an hour or more gives me anxiety. If you want to catch up, just text me. I'll be at one restaurant eating alone and you'll be at another and we can establish a lovely back-and-forth banter without having to ever look at each other's faces, which is exactly how I like it.

3. You don't have to worry about picking up someone else's tab

I'm the higher earner in my relationship, so I often pick up the tab for meals out – which I don't mind doing most of the time, but sometimes it gets old, if I'm honest (though he does pay half when he can and takes me out from time to time). I do the same for friends and family out of guilt or kindness or reparation, like if somebody put me up in their house for a night or two while traveling. Whatever the reason, it's nice to go out by myself and know exactly how much I'll be spending. Even more so when I'm taking advantage of a deal, like Chili's recent "3 for \$10" promotion. This is not a paid endorsement but an endorsement nonetheless because where else can you get a drink, salad, and substantial meal for a Hamilton? If you're reading this, Chili's, I will be your spokesperson.

4. 'Me' time is absolutely necessary

I eat alone at restaurants spur of the moment, but most of the time it's a conscious, advance decision, and I plan for it. I like to gather up all my unread magazines and take them with me. I sit at the bar for hours, eating, drinking, and thumbing through the pages of the pile, and it's truly my happy place. Totally relaxing; try it sometime.



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5. You'll get faster service at the bar

When I'm eating out with four or more, it's usually best to get a table, but I prefer to sit at the bar on most other occasions. My boyfriend and I strictly sit at the bar whenever we dine out, except for special romantic occasions (we like to get mushy on anniversaries and holidays – sex is better afterward).

I opt for the bar because I know I'll get prompt service because I can stare the bartenders down until they submit to my if-you-don't-pay-attention-to-me-I'm-not-tipping gaze. That's not true, of course – I'm a generous tipper, I think – but they don't need to know that when my mouth is parched for another margie.

6. Nobody will eat off your plate

If you've ever seen that "Friends" episode where "Joey doesn't share food" – that's me. When my ex-husband and I would go out to dinner, he'd order something small like an appetizer and a salad because he was watching his weight or he didn't want to feel like he was overeating, but then he'd grab from my fries until I barely had any left. *All the time.* Eventually I started encouraging him to order a more substantial meal because I didn't want him taking my food. I'm not anti-sharing, but I am pro cleaning my plate. I want to eat what I ordered, thank you, and I'd love it if you ordered your own junk so we can get fat together. Isn't that what love is all about?

Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. He spends his time writing from the beach with his dog Jaxon. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikeyrox.

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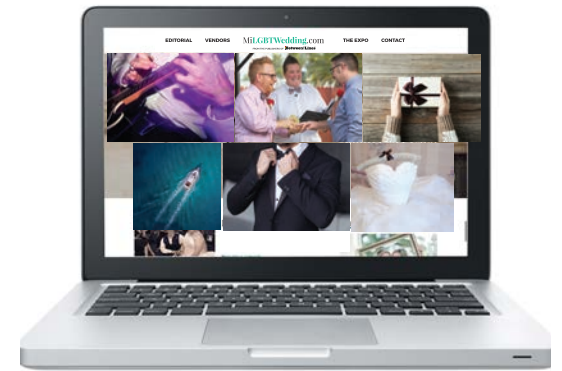
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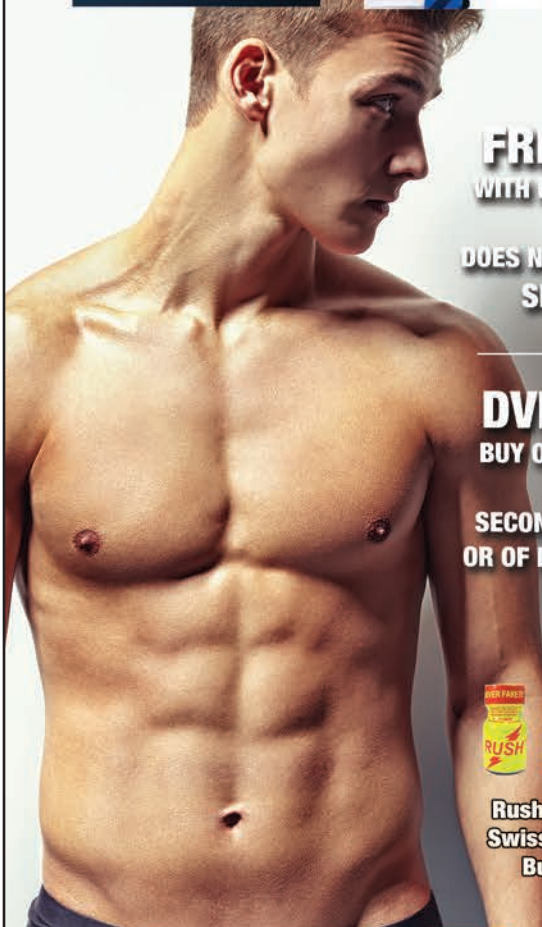
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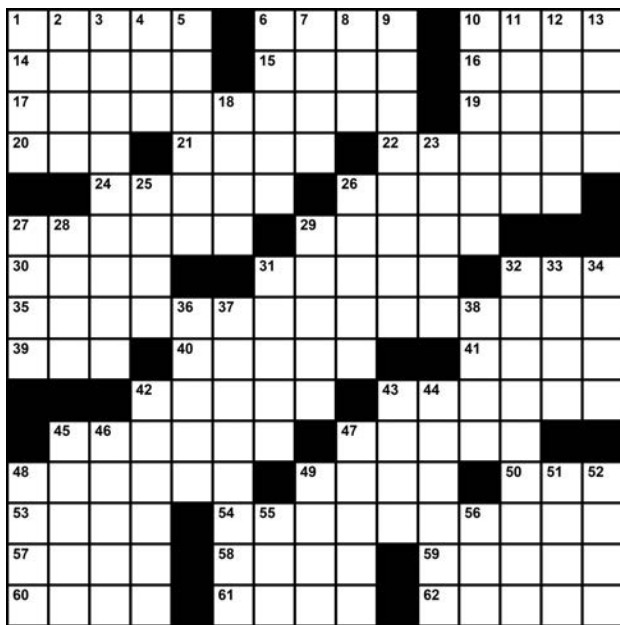
PAUL BENSON, D.O. is a Board Certified Family Medicine physician and Medical Director of the Be Well Medical Center.

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Across


1 Composer Ned

- 6 Verdi slave girl
 10 Top Norse deity
 14 "You're ___ talk"
 15 Stick it to a con
 16 Suffix with Congo
 17 NBC comedy series about retailers
 19 Big Daddy in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"
 20 Nutty ___ fruitcake
 21 Hiker's snack
 22 "Milk" and "Moonlight"
 24 State in a Gus Van Sant title
 26 "A Walk on the Moon" writer Gray

- 27 City in "Italia"
 29 Fruit peeler
 30 "Today ___ man"
 31 Silky undies material
 32 Hamm of the World Cup
 35 Film about zany, wealthy persons of the largest continent?
 39 IRS info
 40 Comes out slowly
 41 Type of balls
 42 More like a twink
 43 Moon of "Frasier"
 45 Hurts a lot
 47 2010 high school comedy with a beard
 48 "Six Feet Under" auto
 49 Octopus abundance
 50 Broadway bio
 53 Painting and such, to da Vinci
 54 Gay Filipino-America on the rise
 57 "Sixteen Going on Seventeen", e.g.
 58 Synonym for Gomer's "Shazam!"
 59 Like an ACT UP protester
 60 Israeli author Oz
 61 Teased mercilessly
 62 Nathan and family

Down


- 1 "The Horse Fair" painter Bonheur
 2 Invitation from bottoms to tops?
 3 He whips out his tool on the job
 4 Sorbonne summer
 5 Hearst Castle architect Julia
 6 Houston athlete in Billy Bean's sport
 7 Breakfast chain, familiarly
 8 Board mem., maybe
 9 Prayer to Madonna
 10 Character played by 54-Across in 35-Across
 11 Mr. Applegate in "Damn Yankees"
 12 "___ little silhouette of a man..."
 13 Monster's loch
 18 Arty gay-friendly district
 23 Dire signs
 25 Guillermo of "Weeds"
 26 Wooded ways
 27 Queer mannerisms
 28 Crew tools
 29 Many an expectant father
 31 Online exaggerations, perhaps
 32 "Rent" setting
 33 Aware of
 34 "It's the End of the World ___ Know It"
 36 Traditional letter closer
 37 More like something in the state of Denmark
 38 Game of observation
 42 Insertion marks
 43 Oral sex protectors
 44 Tear into
 45 Vital fluid
 46 Character played by 54-Across in 17-Across
 47 Eat away at
 48 "If I Only ___ Brain"
 49 Learning inst.
 51 Dull routine
 52 Treats as a sexual object
 55 "Where did ___ wrong?"
 56 Piece-loving org.




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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Transgender Michigan Hosts 8th Annual Transgender Health Fair

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Transgender Michigan will host their 8th annual Transgender Health Fair on Saturday, Sept. 29. The fair will take place at Affirmations from 1 to 4 p.m. and Dr. Patricia Schmidt of the Center for Transforming Health will be the featured speaker.

“Dr. Schmidt will also be available to talk to individuals at her exhibitor booth,” said Transgender Michigan Executive Director Rachel Crandall-Crocker. “We’ve never had a doctor available to talk with individuals before, so we’re really excited about this.”

Crandall-Crocker said that the health fair is important “because many trans individuals do not have access to health care of any kind.”

“And some trans individuals cannot even remember the last time they saw a doctor,” she said.

“Some might be very sick and not even know it. There are many health disparities for trans people. They include the need for hormones and surgeries, the fact that doctors are not trained at all about trans issues and the fact that some doctors refuse to treat transgender people for anything — including things that have nothing to do with being trans.”

For her part, Schmidt will deliver her talk on the subject of hormones.

“Hormones are so important for so many reasons,” said Crandall-Crocker. “Many trans people buy their hormones from the internet and not from an actual pharmacy. When they do that they do not know what they are actually getting. It might not be hormones at all. It could be anything. Another problem is that many people who do not get their hormones from a doctor do not get the blood work done that they need to. They could be on the wrong dosage and type of hormones. And those hormones could be damaging their bodies.”

The decision if and when to start hormones is a unique choice each trans person must make, according to Schmidt.

“When one senses that they are not ‘in the body’ they believe they were meant to be born into, then looking at using hormones to masculinize or feminize would be indicated,” she said. “One does not need to be on hormones to feel whole, though for a number

of individuals for whom I care, (the) use of hormone therapy is the missing piece.”

The impact of cross-sex hormone therapy, said Schmidt, can be amazing for the person who chooses to go that route.

“It feels like Christmas every day [is what] my patients [say] once they have begun on their journey with hormones,” Schmidt said. “The first thing they report is that they ‘feel normal inside.’ The piece that was missing has been replaced and the hormone that was very low has now begun to come to a ‘normal level’ for that person. After the initial sense of feeling



congruent inside, the outer self begins to have its changes — more masculine features for the female-to-male, and more feminine features for the male-to-female. There is a shift in their confidence that they are now becoming their most unique and authentic self.”

However, according to Schmidt, finding the right doctor is just as important of one’s journey on hormones as finding the correct hormones.

“I think it is most important that when individuals are thinking about going onto hormones for medical transition, they find a physician with whom they feel confident and secure,” she said. “There needs to be collaboration, doctor with patient, because it is the patient who needs to be able to live with their decisions and physical changes. ... It is important to have full awareness and make the decisions that are right for you.”

In addition to Schmidt’s speech, there will also be a workshop offered called Lipstick Changing Lives. Trans women will be taught make up techniques and interested persons are asked to bring their own makeup.

“The makeup workshop is very important because trans women coming out have not had the gradual learning process through the years that cis women have had,” said Crandall-Crocker. “So they know nothing about makeup. Thus, they often have poor confidence and low self-esteem.”

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