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# Making History

Dana Nessel Becomes Michigan's First  
Openly Lesbian Attorney General

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## COVER

4 Making LGBTQ History.  
BTL Photo: Kate Gowman

## NEWS

4 Dana Nessel Wins Attorney General  
5 Moss Makes History 6 Midterm LGBTQ Analysis: Executive Officers, State Senate, State House

8 Midterm LGBTQ Analysis: Ballot Initiatives

8 3 of 4 Williamston School Board Members Overcome Recalls

9 LGBTQ Analysis: State Supreme Court

9 Gretchen Whitmer Elected Governor

9 Jocelyn Benson Elected Secretary of State

10 Common Language Bookstore to Close

11 San Francisco Opera Cancels Performance Amid Sexual Assault Allegations

16 With Democrats Winning the House, LGBT Advocates Have Great Expectations

17 Jared Polis Becomes First Gay to Win Election as Governor

## OPINION

12 Parting Glances  
12 Take a Breather: Avoiding Post-Midterm Despair and Complacency  
13 Creep of the Week

## LIFE

18 No Doubting Viola Davis's Power

30 Detroit Fringe Festival Marks Fifth Year of Experimental Performances

30 'The Cake' Runs at Ringwald

30 Detroit Opera House's 'Too Hot to Handel' Performance

36 5 Steps to Coming to Terms With Your Balding Head

32 Happenings  
37 Puzzle & Crossword

## 2018 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



22 Shop the All Things Detroit Online Marketplace this Holiday Season  
26 Happy Holi-Gays: Gifts By and For LGBTQ Friends and Family  
30 Holiday Markets & Craft Shows

See Page 18

## THE INTERVIEW



No Doubting Viola Davis's Power

See Page 18

## MICHIGAN NEWS



Reyes Leaves Affirmations

See Page 10

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



38 'OutCasting' LGBTQ Youth Radio Program Founder Receives AARP Purpose Prize

34 Transgender Day of Remembrance 2018

## NATIONAL NEWS



Elected: Jared Polis

See Page 17



Elected: Sinema Wins Senate Seat

See Page 14

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PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP  
20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152  
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS  
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF  
Michigan Press Association  
National LGBT Media Association  
National Gay & Lesbian Chamber Q Syndicate



## EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief  
Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 102  
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor  
Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 106  
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Feature News Editor  
Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 108  
kate@pridesource.com

Editorial Assistant  
Eve Kucharski, 734.293.7200 x 105  
eve@pridesource.com

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

CREATIVE  
Webmaster & MIS Director  
Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

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

Cartoonists  
Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers  
Andrew Potter, Alexander Godin, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES  
Director of Sales  
Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 101  
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives  
Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 103  
anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 104  
donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative  
Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Dana Nessel (left) addresses the crowd before her win as attorney general. April DeBoer (center) looks on with wife Jane Rowse. Nessel originally represented the couple in *DeBoer v. Snyder* which eventually made its way up to the Supreme Court of the United States and was instrumental in securing marriage equality for the LGBTQ community. BTL Photo: Kate Gowman

## Nessel Becomes Michigan's First Openly Lesbian Attorney General

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Michigan voters made history election night by choosing Dana Nessel to become the state's first openly gay attorney general. She tweeted early Nov. 7 that her opponent, Republican state Rep. Tom Leonard called to concede.

"At 9:00 this morning, my opponent Tom Leonard called to concede. Tom, you ran a great race. It has been an honor to run against you these last 4 months. To all of my supporters, thank you. We made our dream a reality. I'm ready to do the work."

Nessel will succeed Republican Attorney General Bill Schuette, who is term-limited from seeking the office again and lost the battle for governor to Gretchen Whitmer. She defeated Leonard, who reportedly conceded following the results of Tuesday's night election, stating:

"Last night's results may be personally disappointing, but it is time to move forward and allow Michigan's next attorney general to begin transitioning into this important role," Leonard said. "Dana Nessel ran a smart campaign and earned the voters' trust. I have offered her any help she may need getting acclimated to the department and beginning

her term. I will always have a passion for serving alongside law enforcement and making our state safer and stronger for Michigan families, and I wish Dana the best as she assumes that mantle on our behalf."

Nessel, 49, broke the 16-year Republican streak for Michigan's attorney general held by Republicans Mike Cox and Bill Schuette.

Although Nessel could not give an acceptance speech on Tuesday night at which point the results were too close to call, she did take the stage at MotorCity Casino Hotel to thank her campaign staff and family.

"It has been such a long time since we've had an office of attorney general that really protected everyone in this state," Nessel said. "And if things work out tonight and I become the new Michigan attorney general, I vow to follow in the legacy of the great Frank Kelly who I hope is watching television right now and say this: Whenever you feel like you need someone there for you — you know, when you've had someone rip you off or scam you, or you have a company that has polluted your environment or you live in a nursing home and you feel like you've been abused or neglected or if your civil rights have been infringed upon — and you say to yourself, 'Who's going to

be my lawyer? Who's going to represent me?' Well, if this works out, I will tell you this: I will represent you. I will be your lawyer and I will work relentlessly towards justice for everybody in this state."

The position of attorney general is meant to uphold the state's top lawyer and law enforcement official. According to Michigan.gov, "the attorney general's responsibilities include safeguarding the public from violent criminals, helping victims of crime, leading the fight against human trafficking and opioid abuse, preserving Michigan's spectacular natural resources, protecting consumers and addressing illegal business practices."

Nessel told BTL her priorities will be to protect the environment, senior citizens and consumers while addressing marijuana laws and fighting for civil rights.

"This is incredible for the LGBT community, and for our allies and activists," said Trevor Thomas, Equality Michigan Action Network board chair. "It's momentous to have elected our first-ever, out, statewide official in Dana Nessel; the fact that she's been at the vanguard of our fight for civil rights for years is even more so. It's been decades since Michigan's LGBT community had an advocate in the attorney

general's office. To have not just an ally, but a fighter who truly gets it, who lives it, means so much."

Nessel has nearly 25 years of legal experience covering a vast array of disciplines as both a defense and prosecuting attorney. Her work has centered around elevating and protecting the rights of marginalized and unrepresented communities. She spearheaded the *DeBoer v. Snyder* case, which joined *Obergefell v. Hodges* and legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. She is also the founder and president of the two-year-old Fair Michigan Justice Project that investigates and prosecutes hate crimes and currently has a 100 percent conviction rate. This first-of-its-kind task force has charged over two dozen offenses, most of them capital offenses.

Nessel lives in southeast Michigan with her wife, Alanna Maguire, their twin sons, Alex and Zach, along with her pet cats. She publicly kissed her wife when delivering her MotorCity Casino Hotel speech as an act of LGBTQ solidarity. For the next four years, Nessel will serve as Michigan's Attorney General, and she will be up for re-election in 2022.

## Jeremy Moss Makes History as First Openly Gay Michigan Senator

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

With results announced just after 2 a.m. via a tweet from the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, Sen. elect Jeremy Moss made history as the first openly gay person to be elected to the 11th state Senate district.

In a tweet shortly after, Moss said he was “excited” to be one of 38 senators who will work with newly elected Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Moss’s district includes the communities of Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Madison Heights, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Southfield and the Chater Township of Royal Oak.

In an interview shortly before election results were announced, BTL asked Moss what his priorities would be if elected. He emphasized that he would remain focused on transparency.

“It’s important. This is probably one of the biggest issues I have campaigned on and it resonates with folks across the political spectrum,” Moss said. “We are one of two states where people can’t access their government

records in the legislature or in the governor’s office and I don’t think a lot of people knew about that until we really highlighted this issue in a bipartisan fashion.”

Moss stated also that expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity is vital to ensuring that LGBTQ Michiganders have legal protections on their side. He emphasized also that while being open about one’s sexuality in politics today can be considered a step in the right direction toward LGBTQ visibility, even a few years ago it was highly controversial.

“What once a generation ago was a liability, now I think is an asset for a candidate to be their true selves so that they can advocate for progress,” Moss said. “Flash forward to just this past month, Gretchen puts it in her opening statement that she is going to fight for LGBT rights. It puts Bill Schuette on the defensive to say he doesn’t have a problem with it either, even though we know his record is dismal when it comes to the rights of our community.”

Moss said he feels confident in the Michigan House’s ability to pass Elliott-Larsen, saying that, “If we were in session today, I bet we

could pass it,” but expects it to be an issue in the Senate.

“Now, with this kind of sensitivity on the Republican side to get it done, it’s going to be an issue in the Senate,” he said. “I think our Senate Republican officials are still a little bit far to the right of where folks are in Michigan, and so by being somebody in the Senate to advocate for our issues with our own voice in that conversation telling about our community, I think it makes a huge difference.”

When asked what he feels should be priorities in the coming months, in particular for LGBTQ people, Moss is firm on housing and job security.

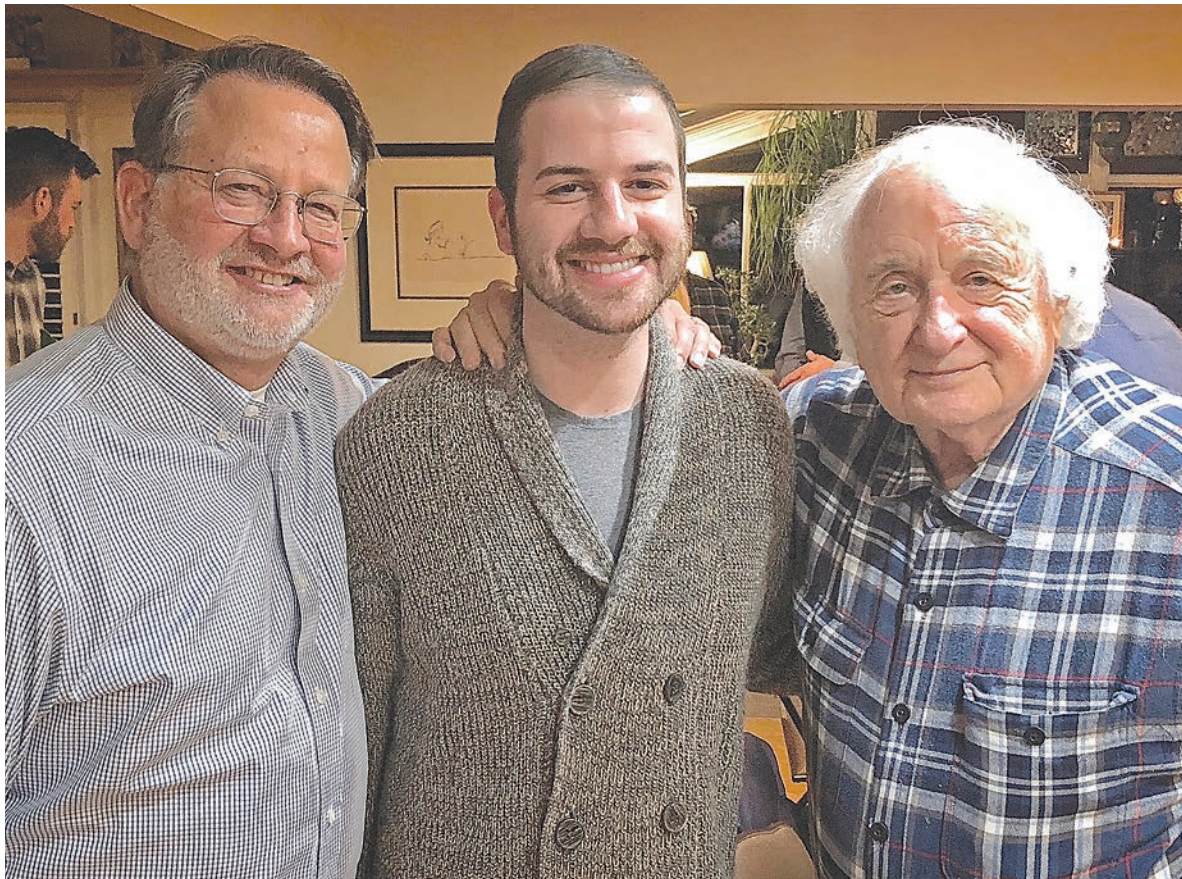
“I think of an older lesbian couple that I talk to often in Southfield,” he said. “And as they approach their retirement years, they don’t want to have to go back in the closet after living a proud and open life so that they can go back to living in a retirement community together. Because nothing protects them in Michigan law from a retirement community kicking them out for being a lesbian couple.”

He then mentioned “the other end of the spectrum.”

“We need to attract young talent to Michigan, and if we don’t have laws that protect LGBT workers who want to contribute to our economy, they ain’t gonna come here,” Moss said. “And it’s not even just about attracting LGBT workers — which of course we want — but millennials don’t want to be in a state that’s not tolerant for these kinds of social issues.”

Beyond campaigning for LGBTQ-specific issues, however, Moss said that he’s especially looking forward to increasing the public’s awareness of the LGBTQ community generally. That’s because, despite his win, Michigan Republicans still maintain a majority in the House and Senate.

“I have found that serving in the state House, more than just the policy proposals (is) showing up, being there, being somebody that they can’t escape from if they oppose our rights,” he said. “So that has been the biggest asset that we’ve been providing by being there and being visible. So that nobody has an excuse to call us ‘other.’ We’re there, serving in the same capacity that they are. In the Senate, it’s going to be historic.”



Jeremy Moss (center) with Rep. Sandy Levin (right) and Sen. Gary Peters (left) who both held the same 11th state Senate district seat in years previous. Photo courtesy of Jeremy Moss.

### LGBTQ Candidates Make History in Michigan

#### Nessel First to win Statewide

BY BTL STAFF

A record number of openly LGBTQ candidates won races in Michigan Nov. 6. Leading that list is Dana Nessel who won a tight race for attorney general. That historic win makes her the first openly LGBTQ person to win a statewide election in Michigan.

Another candidate of note is Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), who easily won his race for state Senate. That win made him the first openly gay man to win an election to Michigan’s state Senate.

Two openly gay state Reps., Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) and Tim Sneller (D-Genesee County), won their re-election bids, too. In Circuit Court races, Jake Cunningham won in the 6th Circuit and Carol Kunke was reelected in the 22nd.

Tracy Hall was re-elected to her seat on the Kalamazoo County Commission, and Beth Bashert has been elected as mayor of Ypsilanti.

## 2018 Michigan Midterm LGBTQ Analysis: Executive Officers, State Senate, State House

BY BTL STAFF

The ballots are counted and the final votes will soon be certified. The outcomes up and down the state ballot will have an impact on LGBTQ Michiganders and allies in the coming two years and here's how:

### Top Executive Officers

Democrats swept all four executive offices up for grabs Tuesday night. Jocelyn Benson became Michigan's new Secretary of State, Dana Nessel became the state's first-ever openly gay attorney general and Gretchen Whitmer and Garlin Gilchrist II become Michigan's new governor and lieutenant governor.

All four candidates made LGBTQ equality a key issue in their campaigns with Whitmer making it clear she believes amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act is a key legislative move. Nessel has promised she will shove Republican- and Trump-supported Attorney General Bill Schuette's anti-gay, anti-Affordable Care Act, anti-climate change agenda out. Meanwhile, Benson said she will make sure that LGBTQ people, people of color and others traditionally marginalized at the polls have access to the vote.

Notable for the LGBTQ community is Nessel's win also because it's likely to result in the overturning of Schuette's July anti-LGBTQ opinion. In it, he said that the state's civil rights law does not protect LGBTQ people. Overturning that will not only uphold the independence of a Constitutional body to interpret the law it is in place to administer, but it will lay the groundwork for a possible amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court arguing the decision by the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of Aimee Stephens. Stephens was fired from R.G. & G.R. Harris funeral home for being transgender. If the Supreme Court of the United States takes the case, it could realign the current legal standing for people who are transgender. It also means that should the case be overturned by a deeply conservative Supreme Court, Nessel would be in place to push hard to amend the state civil rights act.

### State Senate

Michigan Democrats did not pick up the necessary eight seats to get a de facto control of the chamber with Lt. Gov. Gilchrist in place



Gretchen Whitmer and Garlin Gilchrist II become Michigan's new governor and lieutenant governor. BTL Photo: Kate Gowman

to swing tie votes to the Democratic side. However, Democrats did pick up five seats, ousting two incumbent Republicans. That breaks the GOP super-majority on this upper chamber and will likely force the GOP to find conciliation with Democrats to pass anything.

However, the GOP will still control much of the agenda coming through the Senate: Who chairs which committees, what issues get moved in committees and, ultimately, which issues get moved to the Senate for a vote. With Whitmer's experience crossing the aisle while minority leader, watch for her to build coalitions to push her agenda.

The GOP makeup of the Senate today is 26-12. Come Jan. 1, 2019, however, that will shift to 22-16. Sen. Jim Ananich from Flint will likely remain the Senate minority leader after his re-election Tuesday night. He is unlikely to face any challenger in the minority leader vote on Thursday.

However, the Senate leadership is certainly not going to get any less anti-gay. Current Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof may be on his way out Jan. 1, but he will likely be replaced by Jackson Republican Mike Shirkey.

In July, Meekhof, along with term-limited Tom Leonard (who lost to Dana Nessel in the attorney general race), signed a letter seeking an attorney general opinion on the

Michigan Civil Rights Commission interpretive statement related to sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. They wanted that decision overturned, and Schuette was happy to oblige them days before the August primary election where he faced off with even more anti-gay GOP candidate for governor, Sen. Patrick Colbeck.

In addition, despite having the backing of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Republican Rick Jones of Grand Ledge, Meekhof sent anti-LGBTQ legislation to amend Michigan's Ethnic Intimidation Act to include hate crimes against the LGBTQ community, off to the Government Oversight Committee. That's the committee controlled by Meekhof and the one that has been referred to as the "place legislation is sent to die."

Shirkey is no friend to LGBTQ Michiganders, either. He opposed the Jackson City Council's move to create a nondiscrimination ordinance, which ultimately passed, and helped organize out-of-state opposition that bussed into a five-hour long council meeting. He also opposed the Michigan Civil Rights Commission determination, accusing the body of going "off the rails." He will likely work hard to oppose any LGBTQ-related legislation from reaching the floor for a vote and he will whip the GOP caucus to oppose such actions.

However, the upper chamber will have the first openly gay member in Michigan history. He is state Rep. Jeremy Moss, a Southfield Democrat who is now state Senator-elect.

### State House

Democrats have been hoping to swing control of the House, which has been under GOP control since 2011. While they failed to garner enough seats to flip the 110-seat chamber's control, they picked up enough seats to shrink the GOP's hold on the House. Rolling into the election, the GOP had a 63-46 majority. It appears Democrats were able to pick up six seats, shrinking that to 58-52 control. The highly conservative Speaker of the House Tom Leonard (R-DeWitt) lost his fight to become Attorney General and because he was term-limited, could not seek re-election. That clears the way for Lee Chatfield, a 30-year-old conservative from Levering, to take the reigns of the Speaker's post.

Chatfield, who boasts his membership in the National Rifle Association and Right to Life on his official state biography, ran for his seat to oust former State Rep. Frank Foster. His reasoning behind that move was because Foster introduced legislation to expand The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a protected category. Chatfield won re-election despite a run-in with the law this summer with northern Michigan airport security. The incident began when he tried to go through a security line with a loaded unregistered handgun. The GOP prosecutor in the area, who also had donated to Chatfield, refused to bring criminal charges against the lawmaker.

It seems Chatfield will use a leadership position to push a radical anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ agenda. Democrats can expect him to become a thorn in the side of Whitmer as he leads what will in effect be a right wing resistance to the progressive agenda she and others will be driving.

On the Democratic side, state Rep. Sam Singh of East Lansing who has served as minority leader is term-limited out. The caucus will end up choosing between State Rep. Christine Greig, who has served in a leadership role for the last two years, or state Rep. Brian Elder. The House Democratic Caucus will vote on their next leader Thursday morning.



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**David Lewis**  
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## 2018 Michigan Midterm LGBTQ Analysis: Ballot Initiatives

BY BTL STAFF

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, Michigan voters faced and approved three separate ballot initiatives: Proposal 1, the decriminalization of marijuana; Proposal 2, the creation of an independent redistricting commission; and Proposal 3, that aims to expand voter rights and access through no reason absentee balloting and same-day voter registration.

### Proposal 1

Ten days after state election officials certify election results, possession of marijuana by those 21 years of age or more will not be a crime in most instances. However, the state will still have to build up the licensing and regulatory affairs construct to control the growth, sale and distribution of the drug. It will also have to put into place the collection of state taxes on the sale of recreational marijuana.

With this shift in play, who Gov.-elect Gretchen Whitmer appoints to lead the

department will oversee the development and implementation of licensing rules and regulations for the state — a move that has dragged under Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for medical marijuana. As a marijuana-friendly governor, Whitmer has the opportunity to speed that process up and avoid the bottleneck of licensing.

Proposal 1's win will also provide a new opportunity for Michigan to clear its slate in how it has handled marijuana — both medically and now recreationally — in the past. State voters approved medical marijuana in 2008, but under Republican Attorneys General Mike Cox and Bill Schuette, the right to access the drug for medical use has been severely limited through prosecutions and court actions. GOP lawmakers, aware that marijuana was an issue rolling into the election year, approved a new scheme to license and regulate dispensaries and legalize medical marijuana. Despite those efforts, the state has authorized very few licenses.

On top of this, Attorney General-elect Dana Nessel owes her nomination and win in no small part to the Democratic Party's Cannibus Caucus. She has promised to make the implementation of Proposal 1 smooth and to remove the ongoing barriers related to medical marijuana. As the state's top law enforcement officer and its top lawyer, watch for her to push the boundaries with decriminalization as well as licensing for both medical and recreational marijuana establishments. With both Whitmer and Nessel in the top implementation roles, there's a real chance for the state to rake in new taxes that could fund road repairs and schools.

### Proposal 2

Proposal 2 is perhaps the clearest celebration of citizen activism and engagement in recent Michigan history. This proposal redraws Michigan's legislative districts using a 13-member independent commission that is appointed by the Secretary of State. Starting as a Facebook post two years ago, it grew into a massive movement that collected hundreds of thousands of signatures to put the question on the November ballot.

The implementation of this new Constitutional authority will now rest in a new process overseen by the Secretary of State. That means Michigan's new Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson will oversee the first redistricting commission in 2020. Under the law, she will be required to submit potential candidates to legislative leaders. They will have the ability to strike some candidates for the commission, leaving Benson with the final

**Proposal 1, the decriminalization of marijuana; Proposal 2, the creation of an independent redistricting commission; and Proposal 3, that aims to expand voter rights and access through no reason absentee balloting and same-day voter registration.**

choice as to which four Democrats, which four Republicans and which five independents will serve on the commission.

The job of the commission will then be to take new census data from the 2020 U.S. census to re-draw Michigan's legislative districts to reduce or eliminate partisan favor. For decades, whichever party controlled the state legislature when the census happened controlled the redistricting process. That resulted in bizarrely drawn boundaries for various legislative positions, and often created places that leaned heavily to one party or the other. Recently, GOP control of the legislature since the 1990s has resulted in GOP-controlled state legislatures despite more votes for Democrats statewide, resulting in an imbalance.

### Proposal 3

Proposal 3 is another constitutional amendment dealing with voting rights. Implementing the new status quo will also fall on Benson is who is recognized as an expert in voting rights. Because of this amendment, voters will no longer have to fit one of a few reasons to qualify for an absentee ballot. Instead, for 40 days before an election, voters can simply request an absentee ballot.

In addition, voters can register with their local clerk in person for 14 days before an election and at the polls on the day of the election. Finally, anyone showing up for state-issued identifications or driver's licenses issued by the Secretary of State will automatically be registered to vote.

But perhaps the biggest change, which the Michigan GOP successfully killed for Tuesday's election, is the re-establishment of straight ticket voting. The legislature had eliminated this choice, and the law was upheld by the U.S. 6th Court of Appeals just before the election. Advocates argued the elimination of the option would result in longer wait times at the polls and more ballot spoilage as voters worked their way through each race on a given ballot. That right is now enshrined in the Michigan constitution.

## 3 of 4 Williamston School Board Members Overcome Recalls

**Battle Over Policy to Protect Transgender Students, Avoid Federal Lawsuits**

BY BTL STAFF

WILLIAMSTON — Voters in this small bedroom community about 15 miles east of downtown Lansing threw out one school board member, but retained three others who were involved in casting controversial votes to protect transgender students. The outcome of this special election, that was put forth by opponents of the transgender-positive school policies, leaves Williamston's progressive wing intact, but slightly weakened.

School Board Members Sarah Belanger (2,966-2,397), Christopher Lewis (2,835-2,516) and Nancy Deal (3,083-2,279) will maintain their seats. Board President Gregory Talberg was nudged out of office by Karen Potter (2,711 - 2,653). All results are unofficial election results published by the Ingham County Clerk.

The disagreement that resulted in this special election began in Nov. of 2017. That's when school board leaders approved policy amendments intended to extend protections for transgender students. A lead up to the vote featured battling testimony from the American Civil Liberties

Union and medical leaders, supporting the move; and members of the Great Lakes Justice Center under the leadership of Delta Twp. attorney David Kallman.

Kallman is a well-known opponent of LGBTQ equality under the law. He sued Planet Fitness in Midland over its policy allowing transgender members to use the locker room facilities corresponding with their gender identity. His initial case was dismissed in the circuit court, but a few of the claims put forth that were unrelated to discrimination but to consumer fraud were approved in an Appeals Court ruling. He is also representing several families from



From left to right the members of the school board targeted for recall: Christopher Lewis, Sarah Belanger, Nancy Deal and Greg Talberg.

Williamston who are suing the district in court over the transgender-friendly policies.

Those who are suing claim that the policies violate the privacy rights and religious beliefs of the youth and families opposed to the rules.



# 2018 Michigan Midterm LGBTQ Analysis: State Supreme Court

BY BTL STAFF

The current makeup of the seven-member court is five Republicans and two Democrats. Two Republicans were up for re-election Tuesday: Kurtis Wilder, who was appointed to the Court in 2017 by Gov. Rick Snyder; and Elizabeth Clement, who was also appointed in 2017 by Snyder. Wilder lost his seat to Democrat Megan Cavanagh. The other Democrat in the running, Samuel Bagenstos, came in third place while candidates from the third parties of Libertarians and Natural law came in fifth and sixth respectively.

For Democrats, the biggest surprise in this race was the surge that put Clement back on the bench despite being spurned by the state GOP.

Republicans were miffed with Clement for two specific rulings: She agreed that schools could ban guns on their grounds, and she concurred that the citizen initiative to create an independent commission to draw legislative districts. The Michigan Chamber of Commerce and other conservative stalwarts fought the liberal push for the ballot question all the way to the state supreme court. They argued the initiative amended too many parts of the state constitution and was therefore unconstitutional. Clement, however, joined the majority in ruling against the Chamber and its allies. That resulted in the proposal landing on the ballot Tuesday – where it passed.



Megan Cavanagh

Republicans were pushing the Libertarian candidate over Clement in the lead up to the election and she did not appear on state party-supported mailings. But the split appears to have taken out Wilder instead of Clement.

In addition, the court will now sit with a three to three split (with Cavanaugh joining Democrats Bridget McCormack and Richard Bernstein) and Clement will become a swing vote. In a statement to the Detroit Free Press, she said voters showed they supported an independent judiciary and that likely won't sit well with ideological Republicans who want to see more judicial restraint at the top court.

Nationally it is important to note the approval of conservative judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court. With his appointment, it is possible the watershed decision *Roe v. Wade* could be overturned, and could shift the decision of whether or not abortion will remain legal in the states. If this happens, Michigan's Supreme Court will have a key role in any such action locally.

# Whitmer Elected Governor

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Leading by tens of thousands of votes, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Gretchen Whitmer won the race over Republican Bill Schuette by a nearly 10 percentage point lead. Addressing her constituents at MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit, she expressed her gratitude for their support.

"Thank you, Michigan. I am incredibly, incredibly humbled that you put your trust in me to be your next governor. Early results appear to be a record turnout. So this victory belongs to you." Whitmer said. "We may have all gone to the polls for very different reasons, but today we as Michiganders came out because we all love this state. And because we want a Michigan that works for every one of us."

While campaigning, Whitmer focused on her ability to work "on both sides of the aisle." Some of her goals included expanding Medicaid, boosting school funding and introducing universal pre-kindergarten for children, as well as fixing Michigan's roads. Perhaps most importantly for Michigan's LGBTQ community, Whitmer spoke about expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and advocating for services provided by organizations like Planned Parenthood.

Schuette, who conceded just after 10 p.m. in Lansing, said that it was a privilege to have run.

"I just want you to know I was so honored to be the Republican nominee for governor, and I ran to have Michigan be the leader; the leading state in our nation," said Schuette. "Nothing less will do for Michigan."

Whitmer went on to thank her family, campaign team, running mate Garland Gilchrist II and mentioned Gov. Snyder and Lt. Gov. Brian Calley.

"We thank them for their service and I'm eager for a smooth transition. The people need that," Whitmer said.

She went on to say that she looked forward to joining the ranks of Michigan's state employees, as well as working with both Democrats and Republicans.

"To the people of this great state, the work ahead will not be easy. There will be tough days and there will be setbacks, but no matter the challenge, I want you to know I will be a governor who works for everyone in this state," Whitmer said. "For those who voted for me, and those who didn't. (I'll be) a governor who brings people together to solve problems, a governor who always puts you, the people, first."

# Benson Elected Secretary of State

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, Democrat Jocelyn Benson won out against her Republican opponent Mary Treder Lang in her second bid for Secretary of State — running for the first time in 2010 against Ruth Johnson. Though Democrats all over the state are happy with Benson's win, perhaps the LGBTQ community is among the happiest. In particular, those who are transgender can likely appreciate her support for the community to change their gender on identification long before most politicians were aware of that community.

"I'm not going to stick my nose into anyone's private decision," Benson said to MLive during the 2010 race. "Where there is proper documentation to reflect a fact, then our records should support what the documentation says."

Though it is possible to change gender markers on identification in Michigan currently, with an LGBTQ-supportive Secretary of State it's possible that this process may become more streamlined. After all, during her campaign Benson promised to provide 30-minute wait

times, to expand online services, ban fee increases and provide same-day voter registration presented on this year's ballot Proposal 3.

Additionally, Benson supports Proposal 2 which will use a 13-member appointed commission of Republicans, Democrats and independents to prevent gerrymandering.

Benson was the CEO of the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality, was the former dean of Wayne State University Law School and the co-founder of Military Spouses of Michigan. Benson also serves as a board member of the Southern Poverty Law Center.



Jocelyn Benson

# Detroit Bus Company Bussed Voters to Polls, Free

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The Detroit Bus Company donated busses and organized volunteers to give free rides to the polls last Tuesday to anyone who needed one throughout Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park.

"Detroit hasn't had great voter turnout in prior elections and we are transit people, so we decided to try to use our super power to get people out to the polls and make a change," said Andy Didorosi, the Detroit Bus Company's founder. "Our goal today was to get everybody a quick and efficient and safe ride." Didorosi said he planned to continue the effort in upcoming election years.

"I think we're giving about 50 rides today, which for our first year doing this is really awesome,"



Andy Didorosi of the Detroit Bus Company and Ferndale Pride Event Chair Julia Music get ready to get on the bus and take voters out to the polls. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

he said. "This has so far been a perfect first year for us."

LGBT community activist and Ferndale Pride Event Chair Julia Music provided snacks for the all the riders and helped out as needed.

"As a queer person, I thought it was important to vote absentee so I could help

get people out to the polls, especially with the issues beings so extreme," Music said. "I wanted to do something to make it easier for people and I know that Andy launches projects with integrity so I wanted to help him with this project."



## Common Language Bookstore to Close

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

They held out as long as they could. Keith Orr and Martin Contreras, owners of Common Language Bookstore in Ann Arbor, recently announced that they plan to close their feminist, LGBTQ store at the end of the year. The announcement comes after years of dwindling sales that they attribute at least in part to internet sales and the rise of online giant Amazon.com

“The last decade has been especially challenging to maintain Common Language and each year to a greater degree,” said Orr and Contreras in an online letter posted to the store’s website. “Sadly, it is no longer possible to continue to fight the market pressures, which have challenged the bookstore. As we approach retirement, we are no longer able to sustain the bookstore.”

Orr and Contreras, who also own LGBTQ-friendly Aut Bar and the converted house that is home to the Jim Toy Community Center, built a little gay haven in the historic Kerrytown district of Ann Arbor. Now, as the couple looks to retire and sell both the building that Common Language has done business in for the past 15 years, as well as the one that’s home to the community center, the fate of gay-friendly refuge is uncertain.

“We created a little gay center here,” Orr told the Ann Arbor News. “There’s definitely a sense that (Kerrytown) is the LGBT neighborhood of downtown Ann Arbor. I don’t know how that’s going to change over the years, but change happens.”

## A Local Tradition

Common Language first opened on Fourth Street in 1991. After a short time, the store was acquired from Kate Burkhardt and Lynden Kelly who ran the business until they retired in 2003.

“We purchased Common Language because it was a such an important resource to us, and we knew it was a vital resource for the LGBT community as well,” said Orr and Contreras in their letter. “We know that this continues to be true, especially in this period of political and cultural upheaval. This is our greatest regret in announcing our decision.”

Common Language, one of only about a dozen LGBT bookstore left in the country, will close for good on Dec. 31. Orr and Contreras hope to sell as much inventory as possible before then. As of now, nearly all the merchandise in the store is 20 percent off and greater discounts will apply as the closing draws nearer. Orr and Contreras are considering keeping an online presence for the store after the physical location closes.

To find out more about the store, visit [gltbooks.com](http://gltbooks.com), call 734-663-0036 or visit in person at 317 Braun Court in Ann Arbor.

# Affirmations Interim Executive Director Resigns, Joins Ruth Ellis Center

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Affirmations Interim Executive Director Lilianna Angel Reyes has resigned from the organization, effective Thursday, Nov. 15. She made the announcement via social media Nov. 9.

Reyes will be joining the Ruth Ellis Center later this month as the new second stories director. According to Reyes, she was offered the permanent position of executive director at Affirmations several weeks ago, but turned it down.

“One of hardest things I had to do was to leave Affirmations,” said Reyes, the first transgender Latina to lead an LGBTQ+ organization in Michigan. “Mostly because any time you go to a place and really give it your all, you really believe in the mission, it’s always hard to leave. These are trying times for LGBT people of color, trans women of color, and I’m young enough in my career to figure out where I need to move my skills and help grow.”

For that reason, Reyes said, she applied for the position at REC and later accepted their offer — one of many Reyes said she received. Ultimately, however, the choice was between Affirmations and Ruth Ellis.

Reyes made sure to emphasize her unyielding support for Affirmations, stating that the organization “has stood strong for years and years.”

“And Affirmations is not one person ... it’s a collective voice. I want people to remember that Affirmations will stand strong,” Reyes said. “Affirmations is still my community center. Both Affirmations and Ruth Ellis have supported me in this transition.”

On Monday, Affirmations Development Director Katie Koch said, through tears, “On behalf of the staff of Affirmations, we would like to thank Lilianna for her guidance and leadership over the past four years. And as a member of our family, she will be sorely missed.”

An announcement through Affirmations regarding Reyes’ replacement will be made on Friday, according to board president Mike



Lilianna Angel Reyes

“On behalf of Affirmations, we would like to congratulate Lilianna on the new role. We believe this is a role that is not only good for Lilianna, but will continue to strengthen the relationship between the Ruth Ellis Center and Affirmations.”

– Board President Mike Flores

Flores. Reyes was named interim executive director in March following the resignation of Susan Erspamer, who left amid staff concerns and reports of financial misconduct. This summer, the board launched a national search for a permanent executive director.

“On behalf of Affirmations, we would like to congratulate Lilianna on the new role,” Flores said. “We believe this is a role that is not only good for Lilianna, but will continue to strengthen the relationship between the Ruth Ellis Center and Affirmations.”

In her four years at Affirmations, first as Youth Program Manager, then as Program Director before being named interim executive director, Reyes was instrumental in broadening the range of youth and

general programming at the center. Additionally, she played a leadership role in Affirmations’ corporate inclusion awareness and training, and helped to create new avenues for Affirmations to serve the community.

The details of Reyes’ resignation were unveiled to the board a few days before her public announcement, according to Flores, who reiterated that he is happy for her.

“We really do see this as an opportunity for us, we don’t see this as a negative at all,” Flores said. “We see it as an opportunity for Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Center to continue to be partners in the community.”

To find out more about Affirmations, go online to [goaffirmations.org](http://goaffirmations.org). More information about the Ruth Ellis Center can be found at [ruthelliscenter.org](http://ruthelliscenter.org).

# San Francisco Opera Cancels Performance Amid Sexual Assault Allegations

## Husband Scott Walters Takes Leave from Directing Out Loud Chorus as Scandal Intensifies

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

In a press release posted on their website Nov. 8, the San Francisco Opera announced it was removing University of Michigan professor and countertenor David Daniels from the role of Medoro in Handel's "Orlando." Initially planning to present the opera next summer, the announcement comes in the wake of a lawsuit filed last month against Daniels in which it is alleged that he sexually assaulted one of his students.

"The decision to part ways with Mr. Daniels, for business and professional reasons, was reached after considerable deliberation given the serious allegations of sexual assault, an ongoing police investigation and a lawsuit filed against the American opera singer," read the Opera's statement. "While these situations remain under investigation, San Francisco Opera is unable to present the artist on the War Memorial Opera House stage."

The lawsuit was filed last month in federal court by University of Michigan student Andrew Lipian. He alleges that Daniels invited him to his apartment last March and then proceeded to ply him with liquor and Tylenol, that was revealed to be Ambien, before forcing himself upon Lipian. Following the encounter, he claims that Daniels told him he would likely be receiving a full fellowship for his master's program.

In a statement released through a Florida public relations firm, Daniels denied the claims.

"These allegations are both false and malicious," read the statement. "I have never had a physical relationship with the individual mentioned in this complaint. The events alleged here never happened and I intend to defend my reputation. I am an openly gay man who has been married to a wonderful partner for the past four years. It pains me that someone, for reasons that I cannot fathom, would attempt to destroy my career, the program at Michigan and all that I hold dear."

Lipian's lawsuit is just the latest chapter in an ongoing sexual assault saga for Daniels. In August, singer Samuel Schultz alleged in a story in the New York Daily News that Daniels and his then-partner, now-husband Scott Walters drugged and sexually assaulted him following a 2010 performance in Houston. In the story, Schultz said he awoke the next morning disoriented, in pain and bleeding from the rectum. Following the allegation, Daniels took a leave from the University of Michigan.

Initially, though, Walters continued as artistic director of the Out Loud Chorus, a position he has held for just over a year. But on Nov. 2, in the wake of the lawsuit, Walters announced he was taking an indefinite leave of absence from directing.

"As all of you know, my husband and I have been accused of sexual assault by a young man in Houston," Walters' email read. "This last week it was reported that one of my husband's students is accusing him of sexual assault. These are very serious allegations that should, and will, be addressed in a court of law. I wish I could share additional details with you, but again, this should be presented in a court of law. I understand the visceral implications of these allegations, and for that reason I am taking an indefinite leave of absence. My presence is a distraction to the Out Loud Chorus and you should be focusing on music, community, and fellowship."

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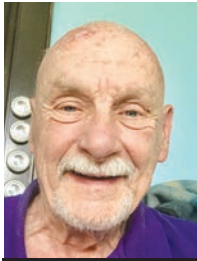
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## Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

### How's your Thanksgiving Parson's Neck, Mary?

**DRUMSTICK #1:** If you're looking for a ploy to come out to your family this Thanksgiving, you might casually remark that according to "Biological Exuberance" by animal behavior specialist Dr. Bruce Bagemihl, the female domestic turkey often engages in same-sex courting and mounting activity before, during and after the holidays.

**DRUMSTICK #2:** Contrary to popular belief, the 102 Pilgrims who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620 did not eat Thanksgiving turkey or pumpkin pie. Flour for baking bread and pie crust was all used up during the three-month ocean crossing. Guinea hen – whose same-sex courting and mounting status is unavailable as BTL goes to press – was the main dinner staple.

**LIGHT MEAT:** Pilgrims were too straightlaced to wear silver buckles, and they didn't land at Plymouth Rock. Thomas Faunce, a popular preacher, started that public relations story in 1741. He claimed his father, who arrived in this country three years after the Mayflower first dropped anchor, pointed the site out to him as a kid.

According to Harvard historian spoilsport Edward Channing (no relation to "Hello Dolly" Carol), a ship could never have landed at Plymouth Rock, given the strong direction of the surrounding currents.

(Note: New England Pilgrims – America's original "love the sinner, hate the sin" do-gooders – would be appalled if they had an inkling of the direction the current flows around P'Town these days. Especially at the Boat Dock!)

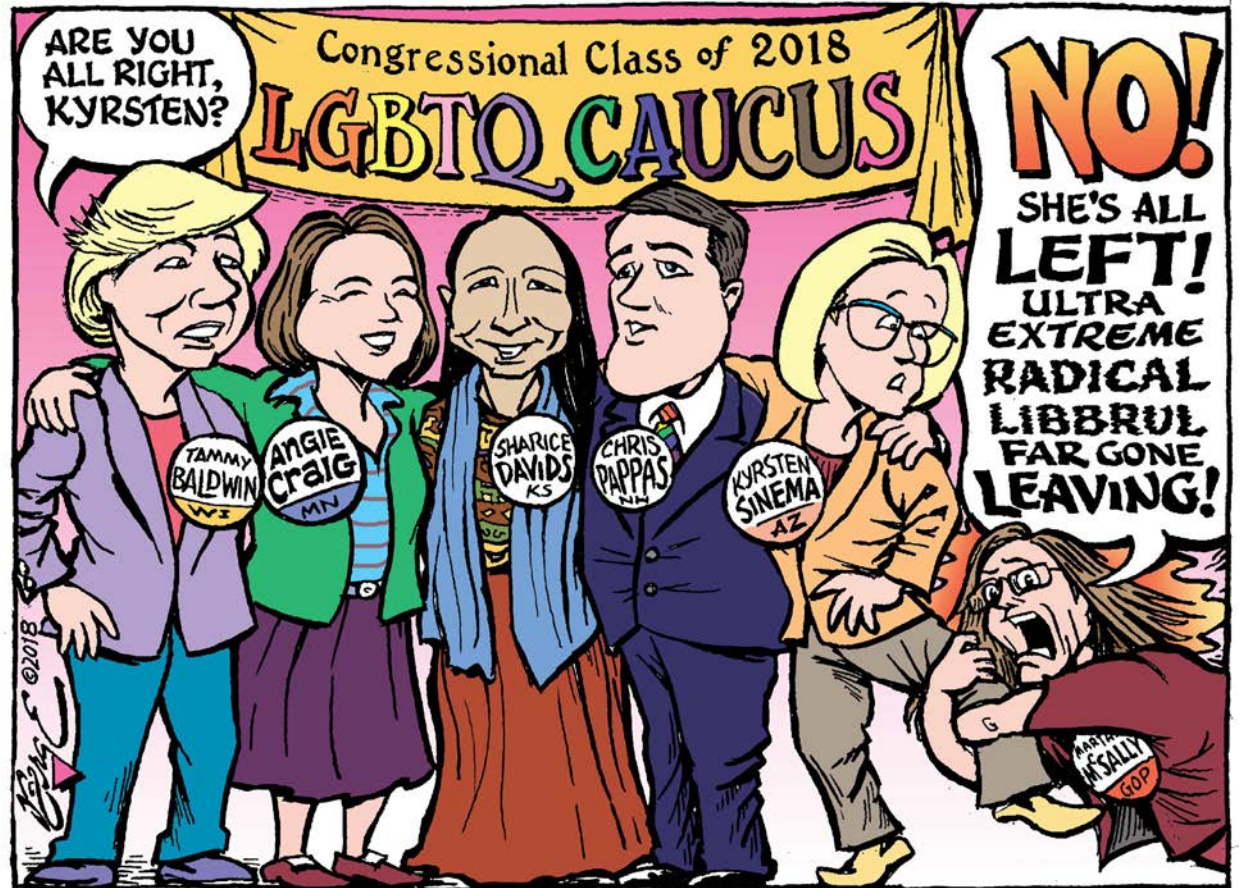
**DARK MEAT:** In 1647, Puritans – who, it turns out, actually enjoyed only missionary position sex – outlawed the preaching of wedding sermons. Marriage for brimstone Calvinists was not a sacrament but strictly a secular matter to be conducted by civil magistrates, and so it remained well into the 1700s.

Puritans quoted Martin Luther, who cautioned, "Marriage is a secular and outward thing, having to do with wife, children, house and home, and with other matters that belong to the realm of government, all of which have been completely subjected to reason." (AFA, please take note, and pass the turkey stuffing.)

**BREAST:** From 1702 until 1708 the governor of New York, Lord Cornbury, was a cross dresser. He appeared gowned at public ceremonies, wore elaborate hairdos, let his fingernails grow long. A favorite of Anne, Queen of England, he was a bit too, too much for the puritanical colonists who booted him – and his silver buckle – out of office.

**GIZZARD:** Puritans were a mean-spirited bunch. They didn't celebrate Christmas, and nobody dared work on Sunday for fear of being put in the stockade. Children's games were deemed unbiblical, and unmarried courting couples risked public beatings if they were discovered sitting alone or holding

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



## Viewpoint



### Take a Breather: Avoiding Post-Midterm Despair and Complacency

BY CURTIS LIPSCOMB

**M**y religious teachings tell me that I should not be fearful. However, real and tangible fear should always be met head on. I struggle with that. On voting day, which has come and gone, there are two fears that I confess I faced:

First, I fear that if progressive values do prevail, a sense of complacency will invade our community. After all of the hard work that we have done canvassing, calling, advocating, speaking and getting out the vote, a win could create a false sense of security. If so, movement toward the more just and equal society we hope for could be stalled. Even with preferred elected officials in office, victory still requires us to engage the public and work toward significant legislation that solidifies and protects progressive values in our country.

Secondly, if the election didn't bring about the win for which we had been working so hard, that despair and despondency would extinguish the flame of hope that was burning before.

Either way, I know that we cannot give into despair. As a descendant of enslaved Americans, I can attest that misery had to be tackled for centuries. We cannot lose hope. We must continue to band together, work strategically, unite and support one another as we work to advance progressive values.

Regardless of the outcome of the midterm elections, our community requires spaces to gather, to celebrate, to grieve, to plan, to connect and to feel safe as we brave the next chapter in our country.

### A Safe Space, A Brave Space

I am the executive director of LGBT Detroit, and we are preparing for this next phase in community and legislative advocacy with our #SafeBraveSpace campaign. With the newly

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

**For area activists, we want to offer a place where they can gather and inspire the movement. For the questioning, we want to offer a space where it is safe to be inquisitive. For those who suffer loneliness, we want to offer connections.**

## ► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 12

acquired space on Greenfield Road, we want the unique ability to offer a physical structure where the hope and direction needed can occur.

For area activists, we want to offer a place where they can gather and inspire the movement. For the questioning, we want to offer a space where it is safe to be inquisitive. For those who suffer loneliness, we want to offer connections. Organizing around the crisis of urban African-American LGBT issues remains a heightened priority. The loss of life caused by disease, trauma or depression has to be addressed culturally and effectively to a distinct population.

Regardless of the political climate of the time, with the new #SafeBraveSpace, we can expand the critical direct services to the LGBT residents in both the city of Detroit and surrounding areas for individuals. Direct services such as educational programming designed for questioning teenagers and young adults, legislative advocacy to encourage voter participation and social gatherings designed to combat loneliness are but some of the immediate types of offerings planned.

This safe, brave space will also serve as a location for current and newly elected officials to offer meaningful forums held consistently so that the LGBT option leaders of Detroit

can directly share concerns and welcomed officials can offer means to participate in the success of their LGBT constituents.

We are in the first phase of transforming our newly acquired space into a place for the community with the hope of opening to the public in Spring 2019. The site has ample space for administration, volunteer activities, small events and client-centered programs. Planning has already begun to partner with individuals, civic groups, foundations and corporate partners to create a hub of social and economic opportunities for area residents. For those interested in being a part of the creation of this Safe Brave Space, please visit [lgbtdetroit.org](http://lgbtdetroit.org) and sign up to volunteer or invest in its success.

By avoiding the complacency or despair we may feel after the elections, let's take a collective breath and come together. Let us also address our physical and emotional well-being and provide accessible spaces to tackle the challenging issues for individuals and the community at large with a Safe Brave Space within Detroit.

---

*Curtis Lipscomb is the executive director of the "safe," "brave" space that is LGBT Detroit. He is the co-founder and manager of Hotter Than July, the world's second-oldest black, LGBTQ pride celebration. With the dedication of a Board of Directors, staff and advisors, he is charged to fulfill the mission of an organization founded in 1994.*

husbandry, he was hung – beg pardon: hanged – and each of the aforementioned amorous playmates was “kild” for making hey, nonny non with a minor.

Happy Holiday! Gobble your drumsticks to your heart's content, but please leave your domestic birdies behind the barn alone. And please don't pluck any political ruffled feathers in public.

---

*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](mailto:Charles@pridesource.com).*

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

hands unchaperoned.

Children who disobeyed their parents in colonial Connecticut got stoned (and not on pot), and those Massachusetts rakehells who were caught in adultery got the final head chop in the mid-1600s. Salem witch hunts came soon after.

PARSON'S NECK: In 1642, 17-year-old Thomas Granger was at various times seen cuddling up with “a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey.” But not necessarily in that poking – er, pecking – order.

For his post-pubescent bit of animal

# Creep Of The Week

## Donald Trump

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Well, we made it. We lived through the 2018 midterm election, an election that saw record turnout. And record voter suppression.

Sadly, that voter suppression is still ongoing. In Florida, swamp creature outgoing Gov. Rick Scott is neck and neck with Democrat Bill Nelson in the race for Nelson's Senate seat, and the governor's race is also undecided with all kinds of hell going on with uncounted ballots.

Thankfully we have a mature and adult human who thinks hard as president that we can turn to for guidance at this difficult time.

As Definitely-Qualified-for-President-Job Donald Trump tweeted on Nov. 12, “The Florida Election should be called in favor of Rick Scott and Ron DeSantis in that large numbers of new ballots showed up out of nowhere, and many ballots are missing or forged. An honest vote count is no longer possible – ballots massively infected. Must go with Election Night!”

Oh, and that's after he Tweeted on Nov. 10, “Trying to STEAL two big elections in Florida! We are watching closely!”

What a stalwart defender of Democracy, that one.

A couple of things: these ballots that Trump claims “showed up out of nowhere” likely include ballots of men and women in the military who are stationed overseas. And they didn't just magically appear. They were mailed and under Florida law can arrive after Election Day and still count. Not that I think Trump has any understanding of Florida law, not to mention how the United States Postal Service works or how people outside of the USA manage to vote. But surely he knows someone who can whisper into his hair, “Refusing to count service members' ballots is a really bad look.”

But that's where we are.

Oh, yeah, and then there's Georgia where the Governor's race is still undecided between Democrat Stacey Abrams, who is a black (gasp!) woman (gasp!), and a white man whose name I can't remember because I fell asleep looking at his face.

Don't worry. Trump has an opinion about that, too: “You mean they are just now finding votes in Florida and Georgia – but the Election was on Tuesday?” he tweeted on Nov. 9. “Let's blame the Russians and demand an immediate apology from President Putin!”

Get it? LOL. Because Russia interfered with the 2016 election and Trump was quite possibly in on it even though he calls it a hoax and so it's so funny to joke about when the country's faith in Democracy is already shaken to its core.

Oh, and speaking of Russia, the Republicans are peeing their pants over the

**A couple of things: these ballots that Trump claims “showed up out of nowhere” likely include ballots of men and women in the military who are stationed overseas. And they didn't just magically appear. They were mailed and under Florida law can arrive after Election Day and still count.**

new Democratic majority in the U.S. House and so Trump panic-fired Attorney General Jeff Sessions and replaced him with a guy who is younger but just as racist and terrible. Only this new guy, Matthew Whitaker, wants to shut down the Russia investigation and OH, HEY, WHAT'S THAT? IT'S A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND IT'S COMING RIGHT AT US!

To paraphrase a quote from Godzilla, “[Washington D.C.] a smoldering memorial to the unknown, an unknown which at this very moment still prevails and could at any time lash out with its terrible destruction anywhere else in the world. There were once many people here who could've told of what they saw ... now there are only a few.”

Oh man, that sounds dire, doesn't it? I don't mean to be a bummer, but shit's dire. For real.

A lot of good came out of the midterm election.

Michigan elected Dana Nessel as the state's next Attorney General, replacing Bill Schuette, the man who fought up to the Supreme Court to keep same-sex couples from being legally recognized as married. Oh, and the lawyer who fought against Schuette and won? Dana Nessel, who is also openly lesbian.

In another karmic outcome, Minnesota Democrat and lesbian Angie Craig beat the anti-LGBTQ Rep. Jason Lewis.

Massachusetts voters rejected a measure that would have taken legal protections away from transgender people.

Jared Polis became the first gay governor of Colorado.

Kansas sent Sharice Davids, who is both Native American and a lesbian, to Congress.

Zach Wahls, at just 27-years-old, is now an Iowa state senator. Wahls, you'll remember, spoke in support of his lesbian moms in front of the Iowa House of Representatives and the video went viral.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. So there is much to celebrate.

But Democracy is still in a fragile state. If we thought Trump's behavior was bad when he had a Republican majority was bad, we ain't seen nothing yet.



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PHOTO CAP: Rep. Kyrsten Sinema is headed to the Senate. (Photo public domain)

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# Sinema Wins Senate Race in Arizona

BY KAREN OCAMB

It's official. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, an out centrist bisexual Democrat, has defeated Donald Trump's choice to replace retiring Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, Republican Rep. Martha McSally. It's the first Democratic win in the red state since 1976.

The nail-biter was too close to call on election night and for days counting the outstanding ballots. But Sinema's lead expanded by more than 32,000 votes as mail-in ballots were counted over the weekend, enough for supporters to believe the gap was "insurmountable."

Monday night McSally conceded in a video posted on her Twitter account. "I just called Kyrsten Sinema and congratulated her on being Arizona's first female senator after a hard fight battle," McSally said. "I wish her all success as she represents Arizona in the senate."

Sinema, 42, posted a statement on Facebook pledging to continue working to "find common ground." "That's the same approach I'll take to representing our great state in the Senate, where I'll be an independent voice for all Arizonans," she wrote.

Democrats now control at least 47 Senate seats, though Republicans still hold the majority with 51—with two seats still undecided, Florida, where there is

a recount, though Rick Scott is sure he beat Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson, and in Mississippi, where there is a runoff.

Sinema joins out Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who faced a hard fight but handily won re-election in the end.

Sinema talked to the Los Angeles Blade before her appearance at the Human Rights Campaign gala last March. She expressed then much of the same attitude as she expressed during the campaign and with her victory.

"Growing up, we were like every other working family until my dad lost his job and we lost our home. We ended up living in an abandoned gas station for nearly three years. But I worked hard, got an education, and got my shot at the American dream. I'm focused on making sure every Arizonan gets his or her shot just like I did," Sinema told the Los Angeles Blade.

Sinema said being an out bisexual for her three terms in Congress has not been an issue. "When I talk with Arizonans, it's the last thing on their minds. Arizonans want to talk about protecting our health care and jobs," she said.

"This isn't a matter of one party being right and the other being wrong," Sinema said. "If we allow our basic values to become just another political football, we'll all lose. If President Trump is

willing to work together to stand up for Arizonans, I'll work with him. We've done this when it comes to standing up for veterans. If he pursues policies that undermine Arizona families, I'll stand up to him, like when we stopped his effort to take away our access to health care. My guiding principle is always doing what's right for Arizona."

It may be this desire to solve problems that explains her strategic political evolution.

"I learned early on that you get more things done when you're willing to work together," Sinema said. "The problem with Washington is that people don't listen to those who have different points of view so they never find the common ground needed to really solve problems. When you actually talk with people and work across the aisle, it's amazing how much you can accomplish. That's how I was able to reach across the aisle to pass a law that helps our veterans get better health care. That kind of pragmatism is how we get things done in Arizona."

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

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# With Democrats Winning the House, LGBT Advocates Have Great Expectations

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

After a disappointing election night in 2016 and two years of President Trump in the White House, Democrats came back with an important win Tuesday night and were projected to win control of the U.S. House — a victory celebrated by LGBT rights supporters eager to thwart the administration and advance equality measures.

NBC News and Fox News declared that late Nov. 6 Democrats would win enough seats on Election Day to take control of the House, marking the first time since 2008 Democrats won a majority of seats in the chamber. Democrats needed a net gain of 23 seats to win control of the House, but the early call means they could win significantly more as the night progresses.

Meanwhile, CNN declared the Senate would remain in Republicans hands after Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) declared the winner against a Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke. Despite an expected "blue" wave, political observers expected Republicans to retain control of the Senate.

Topping the list for what LGBT rights supporters were expecting from the House with Democrats in control was oversight of the Trump administration's anti-LGBT policies and advancement of the Equality Act.

Sarah McBride, a transgender advocate and spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign, identified the Equality Act as a top priority with Democrats finally in control of the House.

"Voters across the country have helped to pull the emergency brake on the hateful agenda of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, and with a pro-equality majority in the U.S. House and pro-equality leadership in the U.S. House, we're hopeful that we can see the Equality Act pass through the chamber this Congress," McBride said. "That would send an important message that the U.S. House of Representatives believes that LGBTQ people should be protected from discrimination throughout daily life."

Although the Equality Act, which would expand the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to bar anti-LGBT discrimination, is unlikely to become law if Democrats control only one chamber of Congress and President Trump is in the White House, McBride said movement in one chamber would be beneficial.

"It would help build momentum for us to pass the Equality Act and have it signed into law by a pro-equality president when a pro-equality president is elected into office in 2020," McBride said. "It would help to build momentum for state legislatures and more city councils to pass inclusive non-discrimination protections."

Rea Carey, executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, said legislation to prohibit anti-LGBT discrimination in Congress has languished for decades and the time has come for action.

"Given that so many LGBTQ people and



House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has signaled the Equality Act will be a "top priority" with Democrats winning the House. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

their families face discrimination in multiple areas of their lives, it is well past time for a federal bill to provide protections, so we will certainly continue working with members of the House to pass federal legislation, to push for passage of the Equality Act and ensure that our community members are finally protected," Carey said.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has signaled the Equality Act would be a personal priority and she'd assign the legislation a low bill number between 1 and 10 designating the legislation a top priority with Democrats in control of the House.

In terms of the expected timing from LGBT advocates for movement on the Equality Act, the general consensus was as soon as possible, although no specific timeframe was offered.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, called the Equality Act the "centerpiece bill" for the LGBT community and said timing for movement should be "sooner rather than later," but didn't offer a specific deadline.

Asked when she expects to see movement from the House on the Equality Act, Carey replied, "Yesterday."

"We will continue to push for the Equality Act very early on in this next session," Carey said. "It is past time. We've been having this conversation for decades starting really in the 1970s when the first piece of legislation was introduced, but certainly into ENDA, and now the full Equality Act. But it is just well past time for our community to have protections."

But oversight of the Trump administration's

anti-LGBT policies — such as the transgender military ban, efforts to define laws against sex discrimination to exclude LGBT people and "religious freedom" laws that would enable anti-LGBT discrimination — was also high on the list of priorities for LGBT rights supporters.

Keisling said oversight and accountability of the Trump administration are "by far the most important things" in the next Congress.

"Finally, somebody will be holding President Trump accountable for all his lawless actions," Keisling said. "So when the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education says it will no longer enforce federal civil rights laws, somebody can hold them accountable. Somebody can hold hearings, somebody can subpoena their records to find out why they're doing."

Carey expressed a similar sentiment about the importance of congressional oversight under the Trump administration.

"We're expecting them to step up," Carey said. "They should be using their authority to conduct hearings and investigations to stand up for the American people to ensure that this administration is held accountable. We have an unprecedented lack of transparency, corruption and self-serving actions from this administration, so we expect the House to step up and stand by the American people."

Carey also said her organization will stand with the House in efforts to preserve the Affordable Care Act, including protections for patients with pre-existing conditions, and efforts to use religious freedom "to discriminate against LGBTQ people and others."

The Equality Act wasn't the only piece of legislation important to LGBT rights supporters. Other bills not as high profile but still important to LGBT people were also mentioned.

For the transgender community, Keisling identified the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, which would ban anti-LGBT discrimination in adoption, and the Screening with Dignity Act, which would enhance policies at the Transportation Security Administration for transgender passengers.

Carey said she wants to see companion legislation in the House for the Census Equality Act, which would add questions to the U.S. Census allowing respondents to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity. Currently, a version of the legislation introduced by Sens. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.) remains pending in the Senate.

"We know that when our community isn't counted through the U.S. Census and other federal surveys that it means that valuable and much-needed programming in federal funding is not directed to the needs of our community," Carey said.

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



# Jared Polis Becomes First Out Gay Person to Win Election as Governor

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

The LGBT community achieved a major first on Tuesday night when Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) became the first openly gay person to win election as governor in the U.S.

NBC News declared Polis, a Democrat and five-term member of Congress, the winner over his Republican opponent in the Colorado gubernatorial race, State Treasurer Walker Stapleton, shortly after polls closed in Colorado at 7 p.m. local time.

In addition to being the first openly gay person elected governor, Polis — who's in a relationship with Marlon Reis — is the first person in same-sex relationship to be elected governor in the United States. The couple is raising two young children.

Annise Parker, CEO of the LGBTQ Victory Fund, said in a statement LGBT people “have dreamed of the moment when voters would overcome tired stereotypes and elect an openly gay man who stands proudly with his partner and family — and this is that moment.”

“Colorado has undergone a transformation that parallels the changing attitudes in the country at large,” Parker added. “In just 25 years, Colorado went from being labeled a ‘hate state’ for its anti-LGBTQ voter-approved ballot initiative to becoming the first state in the nation to elect an openly gay governor. This is the evolution we will fight for in states all throughout the country — both red and blue — because we know voters are ready to support authentic, values-driven LGBTQ candidates who speak to the issues that matter most. Jared shattered a lavender ceiling in Colorado, but its effect will extend well-beyond the state’s borders.”

Polis’ victory was expected amid anticipation of a “blue” wave in the congressional midterm election. Polls in recent weeks consistently showed Polis ahead of Stapleton by a single-digit margin.

The key messages for Polis in his campaign were expanding health care, free full-day preschool, encouraging renewable energy and building the state’s economy. In terms of LGBT issues, Polis said in an interview with the Washington Blade he’d support signing into a bill banning widely discredited “ex-gay” conversion therapy for youth in his state.

A co-chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus in the U.S. House, Polis also took the lead on LGBT issues in Congress. Polis was lead sponsor of the Employment Non-



Jared Polis

Discrimination and the Student Non-Discrimination Act. Polis is also a co-sponsor of the Equality Act, which would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban anti-LGBT discrimination in employment, housing, education, jury selection, federal programs, credit and public accommodations.

Having served in the House since 2009, Polis became the most senior openly gay member of the House after the retirement of Barney Frank and Tammy Baldwin’s election to the Senate. (After Polis departs Congress, that distinction will fall to Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.))

Although Polis is the first openly gay person elected governor in the U.S., he won’t be the first governor who is openly gay. That distinction belongs to former New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey, who came out as gay in 2004 after already being elected, but before resigning amid scandal.

The first person elected governor representing the LGBT community as a whole was Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, who’s bisexual, assumed office in 2015 by being in the line of succession after resignation of the previous governor and subsequently won election in 2016. (Brown was up for re-election this year. Check the Blade website for updates on her race.)

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



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# No Doubting Viola Davis's Power

## 'Widows' Star Talks LGBTQ Evolution & Why Her Favorite Role Was As a Man

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Viola Davis taps my hand when she really means what she says. Each time the actress reaches over to make contact, the big bar in the big skyscraper in big Chicago where we are sitting diminishes. She has a way of making any space feel intimate.

The first black actor to win an Oscar, Emmy and a Tony for acting, Davis is seated diagonally from me at a larger-than-we-need table more suited for a family's Thanksgiving gathering than a conversation between two people. She is striking in a baby-blue pantsuit and a gorgeous, billowing afro, owning the space she occupies much like

the way she owns the screen, having granted vulnerability and humanity to some of TV, theater and film's most unforgettable women for three decades.

Her knack for investigating the deepest human depths of her characters is best illustrated in a single scene, as a loving, anguished mother in 2008's "Doubt," her indelible breakthrough. Later, she starred as Aibileen Clark in "The Help" (she previously played another maid in gay director Todd Haynes' 2002 film "Far From Heaven"), and in "Suicide Squad" and "Fences," which won her an Oscar. And as criminal defense attorney Annalise Keating on ABC's hit drama "How to Get Away with Murder," she is a mighty force.

Davis's signature resilience once again pervades tenacious crime-boss Veronica Rawlins in "12 Years a Slave" director Steve McQueen's socially charged action-thriller "Widows," notably featuring a lead cast mostly comprised of actresses of color.

After spending the early years of her career not recognizing her power even though we did, Davis, 53, does now, she tells me. The obvious question: "Do gay men feel compelled to bow down to you?" I ask, moments into the candid conversation that awaits us, which has Davis reflecting on how she learned to love the LGBTQ community and why she feels her best role was as a man. Smiling, she lights up and leans back. "You know what, yeah,

they do."

**These badass women doing badass things in a world where sometimes these women are told that they can't do them...**

Absolutely.

**How do you explain the connection between these strong women you play and the LGBTQ community?**

Because I think the LGBTQ community feels like they're on the periphery. They feel like they're not seen, they feel like they're not worthy, they feel like they're not valued. And there's no answer to that, other than

the fact that you're not heterosexual. Really, that's it. That's what I think, and I certainly feel the same way, as someone who has been marginalized my entire life. Listen, when I think about myself, I am everything within me. I've had boyfriends, people think I'm cute (laughs). I'm funny! I'm telling you, I'm all of those things. And I cannot stand labels. I cannot stand them.

**Did you have something to do with Annalise's sexual fluidity, then?**

I had everything to do with that. And so did (creator) Pete Nowak; I can't leave him out. I really have to give him credit for that too. But yeah, absolutely. And also, "I Am Jazz": I was watching that one night. I love that show. But I was watching that one night and (trans TV star and model Jazz Jennings) was playing in the closet with one of her friends who was a trans teenager, and it was just great. They were talking about who they see themselves with in the future, and they were like, "Whoever, you know. I'm open. I'm open to a boy, I'm open to a girl." And they started talking about just the attributes of the people they wanted to be with.

That transformed me more than anything. I thought, "That is the greatest thing in the world," and I thought that that was a great idea for Annalise because Annalise is so damaged, so traumatized that what if she just said, "I'm just open to love"? God, think about what we can explore there.

**Are you inspired by this generation of young people who identify as sexually fluid?**

Totally, with everything. My generation – I always say, "The black and Hispanic people liked disco and the white people liked rock 'n' roll." That was my generation. And there was no language for homosexuality – only fear.

**Growing up in Rhode Island, what was your introduction to the LGBTQ community?**

Hmm... probably through... that's a difficult question. I'm gonna say this: My friend... shit. This is menopause, 'cause I was just talking about him. Slim! My friend Slim! And I'll say him, even though it's more than just him, because I just did have a lot of gay friends. I'm a theater geek!

But my introduction into, especially the gay and the trans community, was Slim. And the reason why I say that is because it challenged even my idea of sexuality, because we were just friends and he had a girlfriend, and then he announced to me that he was gay, and then it went from that to him borrowing my clothes, my dresses. I was like, "Oh, OK! You can borrow my dresses!" So he would take my dresses, and then it went from that to him dropping out of school – and of course we still continued our friendship. And then it went from that to him wearing my makeup.

I just remember going with it, of course, because I loved him. It was my first introduction into a different level of sexuality that no one talked about. He had a group of

young men that lived with him who were all trans and he called them his "sons and daughters." Some were gay, some were trans, some were transvestite, and it was my first introduction into the fluidity of sexuality.

**You said this was going to be a difficult question for you to answer, but it wasn't.**

It wasn't difficult, I know. I guess not.

**Was reconciling your Christian upbringing with your acceptance of homosexuality a challenge for you?**

I guess it was a little – it was. But I loved him. I have to say I loved him, so I felt it was on me to shift my thinking and it was up to me to understand him. I will say I went with it, but it was my first introduction to understanding it. When I was on Facebook, I did have my Facebook friend Nika (Lomazzo, a trans woman and activist) and she really schooled me. So every day I would go to her site and she would school me and I said, "I've been to school; I'm just gonna learn." She's a trans woman, so I was schooled (with) just certain language.

**The first time you kiss a same-sex love interest played by Famke Janssen – did your mother ever see that episode of "How to Get Away with Murder" even though you didn't want her to?**

Yep!

**You said that you weren't gonna show it to her.**

I didn't show it to her! She saw it on her own!

**And?**

She was good with it – because my niece is gay and at 9, 10 years old she told her mom, my sister: "Mom, I like girls," and my sister said, "OK. Well, are you OK?" She said, "I think I'm fine." She was like, "OK, well I'm good too." And that was their conversation.

**You starred in one of the most notable queer films ever made: Todd Haynes' "Far From Heaven." How do you reflect on your role in that film?**

The maid? I liked that movie. I loved that movie.

**And the role?**

I mean, the role was a maid. I'm done with the maids. But that was in the beginning of my career. I wasn't really awake then – not as awoken as I am.

**You recently admitted to having issues with "The Help."**

Yeah, I did.

**Looking back on "The Help" and "Far From Heaven," what has that taught you about the importance of representation for the black and LGBTQ community?**

I guess I already knew it then, too, but I never thought that I had any power. I was just happy

See **Viola Davis**, continued on p. 20

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## ► Viola Davis

Continued from p. 19

to have a job. But I think it's important to be seen, it's important to see your own images on the screen – and in a way that is honest.

The reason I became an actor, and it's absolutely the reason why I became an actor: I'm a total nerd and I fell in love with Arthur Miller. He said he wrote to make people feel less alone, and that's why I do what I do. Seriously, that's why I do what I do. I seriously do. And so I feel responsible for any image I put out there that makes people feel alone, that makes people feel not seen, that doesn't show fully who they are – their anger, their pain, their joy, their sexuality. That's your job as an artist, so yeah, that's where I'm at right now.

**Have you considered the importance of you not just portraying a lesbian but a lesbian of color, a demographic so rarely portrayed on screen, and the impact that could have on the LGBTQ community?**

I've been offered, I played: "God's Heart" with Julie Kavner. We were lesbians. I played a lesbian in "King Lear." It was a workshop production (at the Public Theater in New York) and actually the guy who directed it was one of the people who put together "Paris Is Burning" and he set "King Lear" in one of the



Michelle Rodriguez, Viola Davis and Elizabeth Debicki star in "Widows." Photo: 20th Century Fox

gay (ball-culture) "houses" of the '90s. And I didn't do it, because the director told me at the last minute I probably should've done it, but he wanted me to compete in those gay house shows. You have to be a man pretending to be a woman or a woman pretending to be a man and the more real you are, that's a whole competition. It's about being as real as you can be. To me, that was the best role I'd ever done, by the way. Bar none. TV, film. It was the best role.

**Why was your role in "King Lear" so special to you?**

Because I had to play a lesbian who was pretending to be a man and I went home – I

am telling you, I said, "I am gonna hit this" (bangs fist against palm). So I felt like I really transformed into a man. I thought it was totally believable! And Nicole Ari Parker was my girlfriend! Every time we see each other, I'm like, (excitedly waves her arms) "Hey!"

**I feel like gay men must come up to you all the time and quote Annalise's iconic line, "Why is your penis on a dead girl's phone?" Is that line still following you around?**

I mean, I don't know what it is about that line – maybe just 'cause it was so unexpected! So I keep quoting or thinking about Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," because I feel like gay men like that movie too. I love that movie.

And there's a lot of reasons why. I think it's Judy Garland too, you know?

**Right, a gay icon.**

Yeah. You understand why. But also, this is my thing: She keeps talking about going home and wanting to go home, and then in the end the Good Witch tells her (she) had the power to go home all along. I know, even as a black woman, that feeling. I have the power within to be the change I wanna see, to have the life I wanna have; it's already in me.

People strip us of our worth and the potency of our worth and the potency of our power so much. I see it because... listen, I'm socialized on steroids (laughs). The number of people I meet every day who interview me, who I have to meet at parties and social gatherings, because I'm an actor – one of the things I've noticed, 'cause I love looking at different reporters who come in and imagining who they are, who they love, and I love it. And there have been (people) who come in from the LGBTQ community – and now there's more trans men, trans women reporters, and it's a "coming out" and stepping into who you are. You gotta love it.

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

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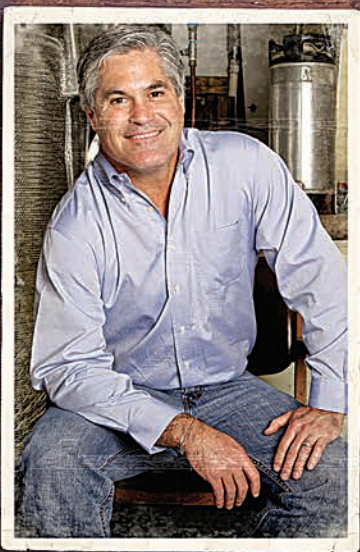
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## Jennyfer Crawford Provides Opportunity for Shoppers to Buy Local this Holiday

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Six years ago Jennyfer Crawford set out to build a community of entrepreneurs and makers. From her one-bedroom apartment the self-taught entrepreneur began hosting tiny events for friends with small businesses. In 2012, Crawford founded the Detroit-based firm, Ask Jennyfer, which helps promote and brand Michigan-based retailers.

“I wanted to contribute to the growth and all of the great things that are happening in the city of Detroit,” she said. Within months she started hosting events at larger and larger venues. With just \$1,500 in the bank she quit her job and said, “If I want something to happen for me, I have to create my own opportunities.”

Today, more than 250 businesses come together for her local event, All Things Detroit, which draws more than 12,000 shoppers to Eastern Market three times a year.

“I really love the community of the event. It’s all about building relationships with customers during that time,” said Crawford, a 2016 recipient of Crain’s Detroit Business’ 40 Under 40 honor.

And, it’s an opportunity for customers to “support people and feed families” by shopping local, she said.

Crawford works with vendors that craft a variety of products available for purchase from greeting cards to gourmet food to specialty artwork to knitted goods to upcycled home decor. Creating a platform for these businesses to network and showcase their products and services is a part of her vision.

“My mission in life is to promote other people’s talent. That’s what I want to do,” said Crawford. “My focus is on the actual people behind the businesses and hearing their stories.” Some of those stories, she said, are fun and exciting while others are deep and have become inspirational narratives of achievement from humble beginnings or even adversity.

For Amy and Brad Coffee, it’s all about giving new life to items with a refurbished twist.

“We use our imagination to come up with unique items which we repurpose for modern day living,” said Amy Coffee, creator and co-owner of Coffee Upcycle. The couple has been in business for a year and a

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Jennyfer Crawford,  
photo by Remy Roman

See **All Things Detroit**, continued on p. 24



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## ► All Things Detroit

Continued from p. 22



Twistful Thinking jewelry is made with genuine crystals, semi-precious stones, agates, and cruelty-free deer suede. Everything is an original and mostly a one-of-a-kind design by owner and creator Nina DiMambro. All pieces are hand wrapped with sterling silver filled and copper wire.

Amy and Brad Coffee, creators and owners of Coffee Upcycle. Coffee Upcycle specializes in handmade recycled coffee bags and purses made from repurposed materials with various fabric interiors. Photo: CoffeeUpcycle.

half. They reached out to Crawford at Ask Jennyfer to get their name out there and expand their reach to help with selling their rustic industrial furniture, lighting, and home decor. Coffee Upcycle specializes in one-of-a-kind handmade recycled coffee bags and purses made from repurposed materials with various fabric interiors.

Coffee said the response to their military line of handbags at the Nov. 4 All Things Detroit show was “staggering.”

“We offer custom orders using the customers own

military items such as duffel bags and fatigues. We also offer personalized custom bags,” she said. “A customer at a recent show requested a black bag with a Hello Kitty guitar strap that we are making specifically for her. This allows the consumer to be creative and we can continue to make one-of-a-kind bags that are as unique as the person wearing it.”

Crawford said the key to any brand is yourself. “The way they make it and advertise it will be different than anyone else.”

Embracing difference is important to Crawford, an LGBTQ ally, a woman and a minority business owner.

“In order for you to grow, you have to be diverse. You can't just be geared towards one type of person. I want this to be open to everyone,” she said, adding that vendors come from all over the state of Michigan and as far away as Windsor, Ontario, to participate. “This is very important to me. It wouldn't be All Things Detroit or have grown the way it has if it wasn't diverse.”

After six years and many events, Crawford has expanded, creating an online community – All Things Marketplace – where shoppers can buy local all year around.

“It is so important for people to shop small local business because it boosts the community and supports the hard working people in your area,” said Nina DiMambro, creator and owner of Twistful Thinking. “People like myself and many other small business owners work every day to bring our dreams into reality. When you purchase from one of us it gives us so much fulfillment not to mention puts food on our tables, pays our bills and supports our families.”

DiMambro started making jewelry a little over three years ago, but it wasn't until recently she started selling her creations at the All Things Detroit event and online. For budget-friendly gifts ideas this year, DiMambro offers simply chic boho accessories like gemstone bracelets, crystal stud earrings and necklaces featuring all types of crystals and stones. She also has affordable crystals and other metaphysical items like sage available for purchase.

She said, “If you're looking for some unique and special handcrafted jewelry for you or your loved one, I'm your girl.”

When asked what she enjoys about being apart of the All Things Detroit event, DiMambro said, “I truly enjoy being a part of something good in the Detroit community. It has been a great event for me to meet new customers and for my return customers to catch up

with me again. A lot of people now know me as the crystal girl at All Things Detroit and that just makes me the happiest. I also love being part of such a well-run and well-publicized event. Jennyfer really puts a ton of effort into this event that is so great for the community. And to be a part of something that is bringing people together and boosting the local artist community is so special.”

Visit [iloveallthingsdetroit.com](http://iloveallthingsdetroit.com) or download the All Things Detroit mobile app – available at the Apple Store and on Google Play – to learn more about all vendors participating in All Things Detroit. Log onto the All Things Marketplace, at [allthingsmarketplace.com](http://allthingsmarketplace.com), to connect with an online community of small business owners and shop locally-made wares.





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# Happy Holi-Gays: Gifts By and For LGBTQ Friends and Family

BY MIKEY ROX

Keep it in the “family” this year by giving these gifts from LGBTQ-led businesses designed with our queer brothers and sisters in mind.

## Furious Goose Pocket Squares

Fancy silken pocket squares – like the luxurious Selim’s Hammer geometric depicting Ottoman flintstock pistols nestled in an arabesque of roses – doubles as an aristocratic neckerchief with anarchist flair to help elevate your Coachella look from basic bitch to baddest. \$54, [furiousgoose.co.uk](http://furiousgoose.co.uk)



earrings put all the men at your holiday dinner table on notice without you having to say a word. \$73, [wildfang.com](http://wildfang.com)

## Smash the Patriarchy Earrings

It’s been all-out war on toxic masculinity in 2018 – and there’s no reason to relent now. OHME’s brass (and brash) Smash the Patriarchy

## Üllo Wine Purifier

Selective Sulfite Capture technology in the Üllo purifier restores your vintage to its just-bottled taste, removing the artificial preservative suspected to cause those nasty wine



headaches. Package includes an adjustable aerator, four replacement filters, travel bag and display base to capture stray drips. Custom hand-blown glassware also is available and designed to work specifically with the device for a chicer presentation. \$80, [ullowine.com](http://ullowine.com)

## Bullies and Biceps Calendar

Photographer Mike Ruiz panders to your sensitivities by bringing shirtless models and adorable, adoptable dogs together for his 2019 Bullies and Biceps calendar. The just-safe-enough-for-your-cubicle calendar honors the memory of Ruiz’s beloved pit bull Oliver who passed away earlier this year, and \$1 from each copy sold will benefit New York Bully Crew, a rescue op that specializes in rehabbing and re-homing the world’s most misunderstood breed. \$25, [nybullycrew.org](http://nybullycrew.org)

## Haus of Karyn Rolling Papers

As the marijuana-legalization train picks up steam, so are fey ways to get fuzzy, like rolling a fatty in slow-burning, 100 percent-hemp, “Fancy AF” papers from lesbian-owned maker Haus of Kayrn. Stuff a toker’s stocking with the also available



“Happy Pride, Bitch” set while you’re at it. \$2.99, [haus-of-karyn.myshopify.com](http://haus-of-karyn.myshopify.com)

## Exotics by Cedrick Heel-Boot

Miss Vanjie will be yelling your name on loop after a death drop in the Sarae Boot from Exotics by Cedrick, featuring a leather upper with faux snakeskin print, side zippers and a five-inch, spiked, table-leg heel that lets all those hoes know you came to snatch the crown. \$1,250, [exoticsbycedrick.com](http://exoticsbycedrick.com)

## Marsanne Brands Custom Dog Sweater

Get the most bark for your buck with Marsanne Brands’ custom dog sweaters, available in sizes that range from Chihuahua to Chow Chow,

See **Gift Guide**, continued on p. 28





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see website for details

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### ► Gift Guide

Continued from p. 26

adorned with fabric roses and sequins in you-pick colorways and embroidered with your pet's name. Canine couture cheaper than from a store. \$39, shopmarsanne.com

### Mr Turk x 2(X)IST Smoking Jacket set

Add more merry to your Christmas morning routine in the Hef-inspired velvet satin smoking jacket and matching lounge pants, a collab between gay go-tos Mr Turk and 2(X)IST, that save the best package for last. \$596, 2xist.com

### I Love My Weiner Amenity Bag

You're so vain, you probably think this bag is about you. Might be – if you've got a special doxie in your life or, ya know, just an affinity for what your daddy gave you. \$24.95, nakeddecor.com



### Upcycled Mixed Print Jogger

Sewing-room floor scraps are redeemed in no-two-are-alike joggers (and other couture clothing and accessories) from Zero Waste Daniel, which makes it its duty to avenge textile pollution and champion fair labor practices one toss-away at a time. \$123, zerowastedaniel.com



### Nitro Noir Eau de Parfum

If the Paramount Network's ill-fated, thrice-canceled, but-nonetheless-delicious "Heathers" reboot (resurrected on demand) were liquefied and bottled, it'd smell exactly like Kierin NYC's intoxicating Nitro Noir, with notes of Italian bergamot, pink berries, orris,



and the envy of all your hangers-on. Isn't it just? \$78, kierin-nyc.com

Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert. He spends his time writing from the beach with his dog Jaxon. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikeyrox.

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## HOLIDAY MARKETS & CRAFT SHOWS

**Christmas Market at the Anton Art Center**  
125 Macomb Place, Mount Clemens  
Friday, Nov. 16 - Saturday, Dec. 22  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesdays-  
Wednesdays and Fridays-Saturdays;  
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Thursdays; 12-4 p.m.  
Sundays; closed Mondays  
586-469-8666

**Santa's Craft Castle**  
Eisenhower High School, 6500 25  
Mile Rd., Shelby Township  
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Royal Oak Christmas Event –  
Holiday Arts and Crafts Market**  
Royal Oak High School, 1500  
Lexington Blvd., Royal Oak  
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Elf Shelf Arts and Crafts Show**  
Troy High School, 4777 Northfield  
Parkway, Troy  
Saturday, Nov. 24, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
248-988-0426

**Affirmations Annual Holiday Market**  
290 W. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale  
Friday, Nov. 30, 5-8:30 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 1, 10:30 a.m. - 6:30  
p.m.  
248-398-7105 or goaffirmations.org

**Midnight Madness**  
Kerrytown Market and Shops, 407  
N. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor  
Friday, Nov. 30, 4 p.m. - midnight  
734-662-5008

**Kris Kringle Market**  
Downtown Rochester, On West  
Fourth Street between Walnut and  
Main streets

Friday, Nov. 30, 4-10 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 1, noon-10 p.m.  
248-656-0060

**Detroit Urban Craft Fair**  
Detroit Masonic Temple, 500  
Temple St., Detroit  
Friday, Nov. 30, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 1, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
**Birmingham Winter Market**  
Shain Park, South Bates and  
West Merrill streets, downtown  
Birmingham  
Friday, Nov. 30, 4-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 1, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 2, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
248-530-1200

**MSU Arts & Crafts Show**  
MSU Union, corner of Grand River  
Ave. and Abbot Road, East Lansing  
Saturday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 2, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
517-355-3554

**Tinsel and Treasures Holiday  
Market**  
Northville Community Center, 303  
W. Main St., Northville  
Friday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 8, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 9, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
810-484-2950

**Farmington Hills Holiday Shopping  
Expo**  
Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile Road,  
Farmington Hills  
Saturday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
248-473-1800

*For additional listings, visit  
mifun4u.com/events/category/  
craft-holiday/*

## Detroit Fringe Festival Marks Fifth Year of Experimental Performances Over Weekend

**A**erialists and police radios, a theatrical podcast airing and the first multi-generational performance by an internationally renowned spoken word poet. These are just a few of this year's performance highlights at the 2018 Detroit Fringe Festival. The event will take place Thursday, Nov. 15, through Sunday, Nov. 18 at four venues across Detroit.

This year marks the fifth year of the grassroots theater festival. Its goal is to "advance the medium beyond the traditional play while connecting neighbors and artists through the performing arts." Since its inception the Detroit Fringe has featured the work of over 200 artists, highlighting new creations from Michigan playwrights and performers chosen by an advisory council of local arts professionals from a public open call.

This year's festival aims to showcase the diversity of the performing arts landscape that Southeastern Michigan

has to offer, with 15 performances featured in six separately ticketed events at theaters across the city; these venues include Planet Ant's Ant Hall, CMAP Detroit, Light Box and the Jam Handy. The lineup includes local directors, actors, choreographers, electronic musicians, new and seasoned playwrights, improv impresarios, contemporary circus artists and experimental theater makers throughout one electrifying weekend.

In addition to the performances taking place at Detroit Fringe, the festival will continue its mission to support artists via its new Professional Development Mentorship program. "This program connects Fringe artists with local performing arts professionals as a means to further their creative development, foster relationships and generate networks of support and collaboration," said event organizers.

2018 Fringe mentors include Shua Group choreographer/installation artist



Josh Bisset, director and playwright Jeff Nahan and manager of Detroit Public Theater's Shakespeare in Prison program, Frannie Sheperd-Bates.

*To find out more about the festival, go online at [detroitfringefest.com](http://detroitfringefest.com). With discounted pre-sale tickets ranging from \$8 to \$15 and an all-inclusive festival pass for \$70, the Detroit Fringe strives to be financially accessible for everyone (with no one turned away for lack of funds.)*

## 'The Cake' Runs at Ringwald Through Dec. 10

BY BTL STAFF

**R**unning Nov. 16 through Dec. 10, at The Ringwald Theatre is "The Cake," a topical story about two worlds colliding and the choice to accept or reject change. The story begins with Della, a woman who tries not to voice controversial opinions.

"Della makes cakes, not judgment calls — those she leaves to her husband, Tim. But when the girl she helped raise comes back home to North Carolina to get married — and her betrothed is another woman — Della's life gets turned upside down," said event organizers. "She can't really make a cake

for such a wedding, can she?"

"The Cake" is a bittersweet culture-clash comedy by Bekah Brunstetter, who has spent the last several years writing for two hugely popular TV shows: "American Gods," the Starz series based on the acclaimed fantasy novel by Neil Gaiman; and "This Is Us," the award-winning NBC dramedy on which she's also a producer.

The production is directed by Dyan Bailey, stage managed by Andy Lograsso-Gaitens and features Suzan M Jacokes as Della, Joel Mitchell as Tim and introducing Maggie Alger and Audrey Jai as Jen and Macy. The design team features Chris Fortin (costumes),



Christopher Kamm (set), Brandy Joe Plambeck (lights), Katy Schoetzow (props) and Dyan Bailey (sound).

*To find out more information about the performance and about ticketing, go online to [theringwald.com](http://theringwald.com).*

## Detroit Opera House's 'Too Hot to Handel' Performance Dec. 1

**T**he Detroit rendition of Handel's "Messiah" is a unique jazz-infused version of the holiday classic that this year will return to the Detroit Opera House on Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m.

"This soul stirring, toe-tapping rendition of Handel's 'Messiah' never fails to bring audiences to their feet," say event organizers. "It's an exhilarating fusion of gospel, jazz and classical music performed by the Rackham Symphony Choir, the Too Hot Orchestra and an all-star cast of soloists. This is a celebration unlike any other."

The performance will feature renowned musicians Roderick Dixon, Alfreda Burke, Karen Marie Richardson, Marion Hayden, Alvin Waddles and Dave Taylor. Playing along will be the Too Hot Orchestra and the performance will be conducted by Artistic Director Suzanne Mallare Acton.



*For more information about the event and showtimes, go online to [michiganopera.org](http://michiganopera.org) or call 313-237-3425. The Detroit Opera House is located at 1526 Broadway St., Detroit.*



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[WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG](http://WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG)



## John Legend Presents 'A Legendary Christmas Tour' Dec. 6

Midwest-born vocal star John Legend comes back to his home region on Dec. 6 with his "Legendary Christmas Tour." Performing at 8 p.m. at The Fox Theatre, the EGOT-winning, multi-platinum singer will share his take on holiday classics. Tickets start at \$49.50.

# Happenings

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## OUTINGS

### Thursday, November 16

**The Rainbow Dance Hosted by The Forum Foundation** 7 p.m. Open Bar, Family Style Dinner, Dessert, 50/50 Raffle, Pot-O-Gold Drawing and Dancing. Music by DoublePlay DJ Services The Ukrainian Cultural Center, 26601 Ryan Road, Warren. 586-573-9932. [forumfoundation.org](http://forumfoundation.org).

### Sunday, November 18

**MCCDetroit – Transgender Day of Remembrance** 11:30 a.m. In honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance, Char Davenport, Navy Veteran and transgender activist will speak. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

**Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of**

**Trans Individuals** 4 p.m. Free. For Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. For St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. 734-747-4363. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Tuesday, November 20

**GenderSpark Transgender Day of Remembrance Event** 6 p.m. GenderSpark is taking an empowering approach to this year's homage to Transgender Day of Remembrance. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

### Wednesday, November 21

**Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County** 6:30 p.m. Free. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, [ksessle@yahoo.com](mailto:ksessle@yahoo.com) or 734-

673-3590 and Scott Sessler, [pastorsscott@emmanuel-livonia.org](mailto:pastorsscott@emmanuel-livonia.org) or 734-673-2485 Trans Youth Support Group (12+). Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Thursday, November 22

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County** 7 p.m. Free. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620. [oaklandumc.org](http://oaklandumc.org). [standwithtrans.org](http://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](mailto:lawrencemoebis@gmail.com). [speakout.toastmastersclubs.org](http://speakout.toastmastersclubs.org).

### Saturday, November 24

**A Drag Queen Christmas 2018 – The Naughty Tour at Devos Hall, Grand Rapids** 8 p.m. Presented by Murray & Peter, A Drag Queen Christmas show features contestants from "RuPaul's Drag Race" as well as Sasha Velour, Milk, Shea Couleé, Latrice Royale, Aja, Chi Chi DeVayne and more. The show Devos Hall, 245 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids.

**MCC Detroit – Open Art Studio at The Art Experience, Inc.** November 24, 12:30 p.m. Explore your creative side. The studio is open with people to assist as needed. The Art Experience, 175 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. 248-706-3304. [theartexperience.org](http://theartexperience.org). [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

### Sunday, November 25

**MCCDetroit – 30th Anniversary World AIDS Day** 11:30 a.m. Join us for this special service as we commemorate those who have and continue to be impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. After service there will be a screening of the important documentary 'It's Not Over'. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

**A Drag Queen Christmas 2018 – The Naughty Tour at the Fillmore Detroit** 8 p.m. Get ready for those fierce drag queens from TV, coming to your city, live on stage this holiday season. For the third year in a row, A Drag Queen Christmas returns with magic and shenanigans. The Fillmore Detroit, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 800-745-3000. [help@goldstar.com](http://help@goldstar.com). [goldstar.com](http://goldstar.com).

### Tuesday, November 27

**Stand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw** 6:30 p.m. Parent Support Group Facilitator – Yma

## Editor's Pick

### Scarab Club Annual Photography Exhibition

Running through Nov. 17, Detroit's Scarab Club hosts its annual photography exhibition. Its juror is Millie Tibb, who holds an MFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design. Participating artists include Nick Baldwin, Noura Ballout and BTL contributor Kate Gowman who won first place with her photo featured here.

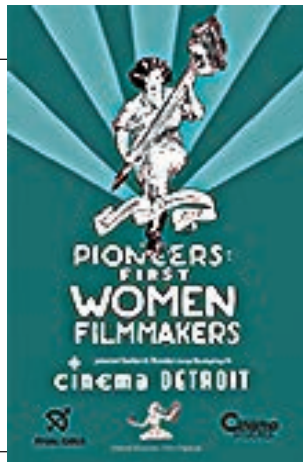




## Editor's Pick

### Pioneers: First Women Filmmakers Nov. 23 at Cinema Detroit

On Friday, Nov. 23, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. movie-goers at the Cinema Detroit can learn about Mabel Normand, the woman who taught Charlie Chaplin how to direct films. Shown will be "Mabel Lost and Won," "Mabel's Blunder," "Caught in a Cabaret" and "Mabel's Busy Day." Find out more information online at [cinemadetroit.org](http://cinemadetroit.org).



Johnson, ymaj1968@gmail.com or 734-780-4092. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

#### Wednesday, November 28

**MCC Detroit – GenderSpark Monthly Program** 7 p.m. Founded by a group of trans-identified folks and their loved ones. The groups message is essentially that you don't have to choose between your identity and your spirituality. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

#### Sunday, December 2

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County** 6:30 p.m. Free. For Trans Youth Support Group information, contact facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW: [socorro@hilltopcounseling.org](mailto:socorro@hilltopcounseling.org). Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org). [hilltopcounseling.org](http://hilltopcounseling.org).

## MUSIC & MORE

**Ann Arbor's State Theatre Presents "Boy Erased"** November 15, 7 p.m. The story follows Jared, the son of a Baptist pastor in a small American town, who is outed to his parents at age 19 and then faced with an ultimatum. State Theatre, 233 S. State St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. [statetheatre2.org](http://statetheatre2.org).

**Soundboard presents Thunder from Down Under!** November 15, 8 p.m. Australia's Thunder from Down Under is here to rock your world! All guests must be at least 21 years of age with valid ID. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. [motorcitycasino.com](http://motorcitycasino.com).

**Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night at Northern Lights Lounge** November 15, 9 p.m. Northern Lights Lounge Proudly Presents Neo Soul & Jazz Cabaret w/ Sky Covington, Jimi Blues on Keys, Alex Brooks on Drums, Greg Cook on Bass. No Cover. Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore, Detroit. 248-445-1277. [northernlightslounge.com](http://northernlightslounge.com).

**Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4** November 16 10:45 a.m. John Storgårds conducts Tchaikovsky's "Fourth Symphony," and Pekka Kuusisto plays Daniel Bjarnarsson's new violin concerto. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. [dso.org](http://dso.org).

**Bible 101: A Bible Study Facilitated by Deacon Hattie Alexander-Key** November 16, 12 p.m. Come explore the basics of the Bible and take some of the mystery out of what lies between the covers of this book. Held in the Clawson Conference Room. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

**MCC Detroit – Membership Relations Meeting** November 17, 9 a.m. Get involved in optimizing the experience of our new visitors and members to assess, evaluate and improve these aspects of MCCD. Held in the conference room. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

**MCC Detroit – Risk Management Team Meeting** November 17, 10 a.m. Come learn how you can get involved with our risk management team regarding the safety, security and legal compliances that protect MCCD and our members. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. [mccdetroit.org](http://mccdetroit.org).

**Unicorn Feed and Supply's First Annual Mermaid Party** November 17, 8 p.m. A mermaid themed costume party in downtown Ypsilanti. Join us for an "mermazing" evening with Ypsi's own performers Maxi Chanel and Luna Legare, with DJ Jamie Register spinning deep cut soul and funk. Light food, Bona Sera, 200 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. [info@unicornfeedsupply.com](mailto:info@unicornfeedsupply.com). [unicornfeedsupply.com](http://unicornfeedsupply.com).

**How To Dress Well Presented by El Club** November 19, 8 p.m. Tom Krell, known better by fans as How to Dress Well, will be stopping to give Detroit fans a taste of his unique music. The Schvitz, 8295 Oakland St., Detroit. 313-724-8489. [ElClubDetroit@gmail.com](mailto:ElClubDetroit@gmail.com). [schvitzdetroit.com](http://schvitzdetroit.com).

**Parenting in Recovery** November 20, 7:30 p.m. Mary Jo Desprez, MA, and Amber Horwitz, MSW candidate, will discuss the importance of maintaining a strong recovery program while parenting in recovery from substance addiction. Explore "parenting skills 2.0" including a panel discussion. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. [dawnfarm.org](http://dawnfarm.org).

**New 'Holiday Belles' House Tour at Ford House** November 23, 12 p.m. With replica holiday décor and new stories, this new tour gives you a glimpse into the society scene of the 1960s during the grand holiday receptions Eleanor Ford hosted. Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores. 313-8844-222. [info@fordhouse.org](mailto:info@fordhouse.org). [fordhouse.org](http://fordhouse.org). [holidaybelles.fordhouse.org](http://holidaybelles.fordhouse.org).

**"See What Stacey Started" Benefit for MS Research** November 24, 12 p.m. Local artists and a myriad of eclectic performers will lend their talents to a very important cause this Thanksgiving weekend. The 5th Annual "See What Stacey Started" Benefit for Multiple Sclerosis Research will raise funds Scribblez Art Studio, 48137 Van Dyke Road, Shelby Township. 586-224-2400. [scribblezart.com](http://scribblezart.com).

**DSO Presents The Vienna Boys Choir!** November 25, 7 p.m. The illustrious group of child musicians has been delighting music lovers across the

globe for six centuries with their purity of tone, distinctive charm and popular repertoire. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. [dso.org](http://dso.org).

**An Introduction To Cultivating Mindfulness to Support Recovery** November 27, 7:30 p.m. Mindfulness educator and researcher Dr. Elizabeth A.R. Robinson, MPH, MSW, Ph.D will define mindfulness, research supporting mindfulness' benefit and more. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. [dawnfarm.org](http://dawnfarm.org).

**Bugs Bunny at the Symphony II** November 30, 10:45 a.m. Bugs Bunny at the Symphony II celebrates the world's most beloved Looney Tunes and their legendary stars projected on the big screen with original scores played LIVE by the DSO. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. [dso.org](http://dso.org).

**Michigan Philharmonic Presents 'In a Winter Garden'** November 30, 8 p.m. This reflective concert includes Pie Jesu by Lili Boulanger, Vaughan Williams's Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and more. 47650 North Territorial Road, Plymouth. 734-453-0326. [michtix.com](http://michtix.com).

## ART 'N' AROUND

**3rd Annual Royal Oak Art Fair Edition at the Farmers Market** November 15, 12 p.m. 65 Artists, entertainment, food trucks, beer and wine and lots of art! Royal Oak Farmers Market, 316 E. Eleven Mile Road, Royal Oak. 248-246-3276. [romi.gov](http://romi.gov).

**Holiday Art Shop at Ann Arbor Art Center Opens November 16!** November 16, 10 a.m. Support local artists this holiday season by shopping for one-of-a-kind gifts from the Art Center's gallery shop! Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores. 313-884-4222. [info@fordhouse.org](mailto:info@fordhouse.org).

**"See What Stacey Started" Benefit for MS Research** November 24, 12 p.m. The 5th Annual "See What Stacey Started" Benefit for Multiple Sclerosis Research will raise funds for research. Scribblez Art Studio, 48137 Van Dyke Rd., Shelby Township. 586-224-2400. [scribblezart.com](http://scribblezart.com).

**Lina Iris Viktor: Materia Prima** November 29, 5 p.m. Lina Iris Viktor is a British-Liberian conceptual artist whose work centers around gilding with 24-karat gold. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. [stamps.umich.edu](mailto:stamps.umich.edu).

**Holiday Show 2018 @ Epiphany Studios** November 30, 4 p.m. Join us for this free event, open to the public- families with children welcome! Watch glassblowing

See Happenings, p. 34

## Pride Night @ Thunderbowl



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bill to be counted towards the fundraiser.

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## Transgender Day of Remembrance November 18th at 11:30am

In honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance, Char Davenport, Navy Veteran and transgender activist, will bring the message as we acknowledge, remember, and honor all who have been victims of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people.

## 30th Anniversary World AIDS Day November 25th at 11:30am

Join us for this special service as we commemorate those who have and continue to be impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. After service there will be a screening of the important documentary *It's Not Over*, which explores the lives of three millennials who are living with, or whose lives have been directly affected by, HIV/AIDS.

## New Year's Eve Party, December 31st, 7pm-1am Vassel's Banquet Hall, Tickets: \$60 by December 16th, \$80 after December 16th

Come ring in 2019 with MCC Detroit! Join us for a night on the town that includes dinner & dancing, cash bar, midnight celebration and snack.

*New Year's  
Eve Party*



Weekly Sunday Worship @ 11:30 am.  
205 N. Main St. [www.mccdetroit.org](http://www.mccdetroit.org)  
Clawson, MI 48017 (248) 399-7741

# Transgender Day of Remembrance 2018

The Transgender Day of Remembrance is an annual observance on Nov. 20 that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. TDOR was started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998.

Though Hester was not the first transgender person to be a victim of transphobia and violence, her death became the catalyst for the launch of TDOR in San Francisco on the one-year anniversary of

her death.

During the week of Nov. 12 through 19, individuals and organizations around the country participate in Transgender Awareness Week to help raise the visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming people and address the issues these communities face.

There are a variety of activities and events in Michigan to memorialize those who have been murdered because of hate, to support the transgender community and to help raise awareness about the continued violence facing transgender people.

## MONDAY, NOV. 19

6 p.m. Grand Valley State University  
Kirkhof Center, Room 2263, 1 Campus Dr, Allendale  
Hosted by the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center. Keynote speaker, Qwo-Li Driskill, a non-citizen Cherokee Two-Spirit writer, performer, and activist also of African, Irish, Lenape, Lumbee, and Osage ascent.

6 to 8 p.m. Wayne State University  
Student Center Ballroom AB, 2nd floor, 5221 Gullen Mall, Detroit.  
Hosted by the LGBT Student Advisory Board. Special appearances by Rachel Crandall-Crocker, founder and executive director of Transgender Michigan and founder of the Transgender Day of Visibility; and Laci Marie, singer and songwriter, proud community member and advocate.

## TUESDAY, NOV. 20

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oakland University,  
Oakland Center, Gold Room C. 312 Meadow Brook Road, Rochester.  
Hosted by the Gender and Sexuality Center. Open to all students, staff, and faculty, no registration required.

4 to 4:45 p.m. University of Michigan-Flint.

Michigan Rooms, A & B. 213 University Center, Kearsley St., Flint. Hosted by UM-Flint Women's Educational Center and LGBTQ Center

5:30 to 7 p.m. University of Michigan.

Michigan League, Michigan Room. 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor  
Hosted by the Spectrum Center featuring a performance by the OutLoud Chorus.

6 to 8:30 p.m. MCC Detroit.

205 N. Main St., Clawson  
Hosted by GenderSpark. Please RSVP to <http://gaybe.am/qj>.

6:30 to 8 p.m. Salus Center.

408 S. Washington Square, Lansing.  
Hosted by Michigan State University's LGBT Resource Center, the Sexual Assault Program, Salus Center, MSU's TransAction and the Transgender Stress and Resilience Research Team.

7 to 8 p.m. Holland Area Arts Council.

150 East 8th St., Holland. Hosted by UCC, Hope Church, Out On The Lakeshore and Gender SAFE (Supporting All For Equality). Pastor Bryan Berghoef of Holland UCC will officiate this event.

7 to 9 p.m. Goei Center, Kindel Room.

818 Butterworth St. SW, Grand Rapids.  
Hosted by the Grand Rapids Pride Foundation and the Grand Rapids Pride Center.

## ► Happenings

Continued from p. 33

demonstrations, shop in our gallery for one-of-a-kind sculptures and unique handmade gifts. [epiphanystudios](http://epiphanystudios.com), 770 Orchard Lake Road, Pontiac. 248-745-3786. [epiphanyinfo@epiphanyglass.com](mailto:epiphanyinfo@epiphanyglass.com). [epiphanyglass.com](http://epiphanyglass.com).

## THEATER

Ann Arbor's State Theatre Presents 'Boy Erased' November 15, 7 p.m. State Theatre, 233 S. State Street, Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. [statetheatre2.org](http://statetheatre2.org).

Detroit Public Theatre Presents 'Cry It Out' November 15, 8 p.m. Cooped

up on maternity leave and eager for conversation, Jessie invites Lina for coffee in their neighboring backyards. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5162. [dso.org](http://dso.org).

Williamston Theatre Presents 'A Hunting Shack Christmas' November 15, 8 p.m. Charlie heads up to the hunting shack that's been in his family for generations, hoping for the peace he needs to sort out his life. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. 517-655-SHOW. [info@williamstontheatre.org](mailto:info@williamstontheatre.org).

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'A Christmas Carol' November 30, 7 p.m. Join Ebenezer Scrooge on a ghostly adventure in Dickens' classic story. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2960. [wsushows.com](http://wsushows.com).

War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast by Joe Landry November 30, 7:30 p.m. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. [tasiopeg@udmercy.edu](mailto:tasiopeg@udmercy.edu). [detroitmercyarts.com](http://detroitmercyarts.com).

THE ELVES AND THE SCHUMACHERS by Carla Milarch and R. MacKenzie Lewis World Premiere November 30, 7:30 p.m. Bring the whole family to laugh, boo, hiss and sing in this over-the-top evening of heroes and villains, funny songs and extreme merriment. Theatre NOVA, 410 W. Huron, Ann Arbor. 734-635-8450. [A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com](mailto:A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com). [theatrenova.org](http://theatrenova.org).

Stagecrafters Presents Peter and the Starcatcher November 30, 8 p.m. Peter and the Starcatcher is the fantastical adventure about how Peter Pan came to be. Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. [stagecrafters.org](http://stagecrafters.org).



Thursday November 8 & 29  
9:30pm

HEADS OVER HEELS  
Drag and Variety Show

Tuesday, November 13 & 27  
10:00pm

KARAOKE  
With KJ Geoffrey

Wednesday, November 21  
10:00pm

THANKSGIVING EVE PARTY  
Drink Specials

Saturday, December 1st  
World AIDS Day

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## The Frivolist

### 5 Steps to Coming to Terms With Your Balding Head

BY MIKEY ROX

Male pattern baldness for a young gay man can be tough to come to terms with, but rest assured that your hair is only one aspect of your overall appearance and personal style. Instead of obsessing over that which you lack – and have little control over, frankly – concentrate on the total package you present. When your shoulders are held high because of boosted self-esteem from other outward factors, people will notice (even the haters!) – without thinking twice about your sitch up top. To make the move to a more confident you, consider these tips on how to accept (and love!) your balding head.

#### 1. Assess the situation

If you notice your hair thinning and that prospect is a source of anxiety for you – I've been there myself – assess the situation rationally and consult a professional. Master barber Brandon Barney suggests taking the issue straight to the person you've trusted your hair with for years – your barber or stylist.

"The barber should have an idea – if they've been doing your hair for long enough to see it change – of both how your hair is growing and when it's starting to retreat," he says. "If you don't have a regular barber, be your own detective. Look in the mirror and really look at yourself. After the shock of 'Holy shit, I'm old' wears off, be honest with yourself. You'll

know if it's easier to see your scalp if your hair looks thinner at the roots."

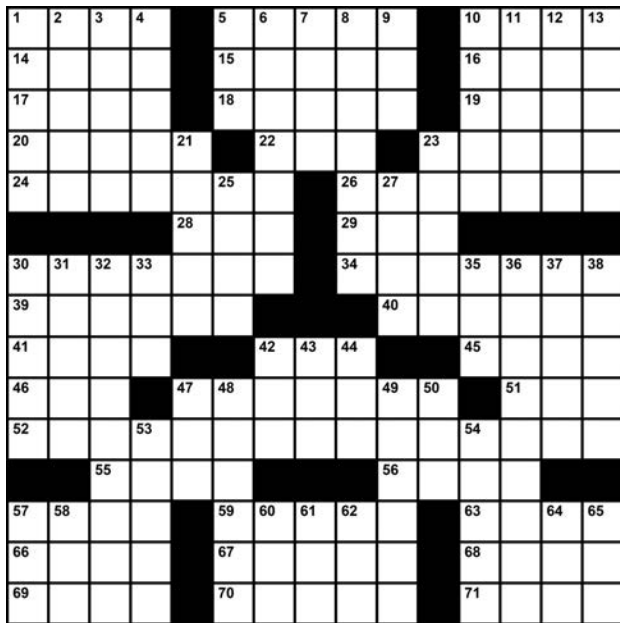
It's important, too, that you're comfortable enough and have a decent rapport with your barber or stylist that they'll tell you the hard truth. My stylist downplayed my thinning for a long time out of fear of hurting my feelings. That didn't help the situation, and I lost valuable time in trying to halt the process. That's how I wanted to approach the issue – with a Minoxidil regimen – but that was a personal choice and certainly not an endorsement for the temporary remedy. This is a do-you situation and only you can decide how to make the best of it.

#### 2. Stop lying to yourself

I was in denial about my male pattern baldness for several years because I didn't want to accept that my youth had expired. As a result, I grew more self-conscious every time I looked in the mirror. I knew I had to deal with it at some point, even though the acceptance process dragged on. I wasn't alone in this battle, however, and neither are you.

"You lose your hair and one thought comes into mind: I am no longer young," says Barney. "Age has caught up. The sooner you can accept that, the sooner you can manage it. Older isn't dead, and age is only a number. If you're feeling depressed, self-conscious about it, you're not

See *Frivolist*, continued on p. 38



## What Bob Said to Bob QPuzzle

### Across

- 1 Reproduced nonheterosexually?  
 5 Nut from Oak Lawn  
 10 Nuts and bolts  
 14 Facetious "I see"  
 15 Lindsay of "Liz & Dick"  
 16 Farmer's tool  
 17 Chocolate factory vessels  
 18 Photographer Leibovitz

- 19 Cocksure Aesop character  
 20 Start of what Bob Armstrong said to Bob Barnard, on "Insatiable"  
 22 Coal delivery unit  
 23 More of what Bob said to Bob  
 24 "A Girl Thing" director  
 26 Most like Patrick Stewart  
 28 Einstein's birthplace  
 29 Plug attachment

### Down

- 1 Superman portrayal Henry  
 2 Rub the wrong way  
 3 Cosmetics name  
 4 One who gives AZT, e.g.  
 5 It borders Tenn.  
 6 Denounce, to Shakespeare  
 7 Cry after getting the shaft  
 8 "Black-ish" character or gay symbol  
 9 SSW's opposite

- 30 More of what Bob said to Bob  
 34 More of what Bob said to Bob  
 39 At the top  
 40 1943 Bogart film  
 41 "If \_\_\_ my way ..."  
 42 Split one in the locker room  
 45 "Beat it!"  
 46 Long-jawed swimmer  
 47 Like Philip Seymour Hoffman playing a movie priest?  
 51 Wall St. bears watch it  
 52 More of what Bob said to Bob  
 55 PinkNews, for one  
 56 R.E.M.'s "The \_\_\_ Love"  
 57 It's glorious, in \_\_\_ Oliver!  
 59 End of what Bob said to Bob  
 63 Marilyn Monroe facial feature  
 66 Maria's "Do-\_\_\_"  
 67 Sample some buns, e.g.  
 68 United, to Vivien  
 69 "Why, \_\_\_ delighted!"  
 70 German industrial hub  
 71 Say whether or not you're coming

- 10 One that sucks some sap  
 11 "The Pink Panther" director Edwards  
 12 They're found in some fruits  
 13 Result of a good, hard workout  
 21 "Meet Me in St. \_\_\_"  
 23 Andean pack animal  
 25 Supporter of bedroom activity  
 27 Stein fillers  
 30 One of the Mario Brothers  
 31 Green with an unfabulous social life  
 32 Style that's fashionable but a failure?  
 33 Muscle Mary's pride  
 35 Actress Sandra's family  
 36 You can take them at Palm Springs  
 37 Use a rubber  
 38 Mr. Right-now  
 42 D.C. summer clock setting  
 43 Drama in the land of Samurai  
 44 Expected to come soon  
 47 Parting words, old style  
 48 Veto  
 49 Dean Cain's "The \_\_\_ Hearts Club"  
 50 Catch some rays at South Beach  
 53 Any song by Johnny Mathis  
 54 Bone near the scrotum  
 57 Good da. in Lent  
 58 Ref for Lytton Strachey  
 60 Geoff Ryman AIDS novel  
 61 Sink-trap shape  
 62 Summer for Rimbaud  
 64 Tyler of "Lord of the Rings"  
 65 Sixth sense

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# 'OutCasting' LGBTQ Youth Radio Program Founder Receives AARP Purpose Prize

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

AARP's Purpose Prize is designed to honor extraordinary individuals who use their life experience to make a better future, each year selecting winners who have gone above and beyond to achieve that goal. In the case of one of this year's winners, Marc Sophos, his focus has been on LGBTQ youth. The New York-based audio engineer is the founder and executive director of Media for the Public Good — a nonprofit that focuses on creating media from underrepresented points of view. Putting his nearly two decades of radio experience to use, Sophos created "OutCasting" a youth LGBTQ public radio program, and the accompanying podcast 'OutCasting Overtime.'" Each episode is created by LGBTQ teens.

"OutCasting' is public radio's LGBT youth program," Sophos said. "It's heard on more than 50 public radio stations affiliated with the Pacifica Radio Network. It's monthly and 29 minutes long. We also produce 'OutCasting Overtime,' a series of shorter pieces. It's also monthly and is regularly featured in the excellent LGBT program 'This Way Out,' which is carried on about 200 stations."

"OutCasting" has even collaborated with Michigan State University to branch out into other national offices. The mission of the shows, Sophos said, is twofold.

"Externally, we're working to give LGBT youth and straight allies a national voice and contribute to our national discussion, such as it is, on LGBT issues through thoughtful, thorough coverage as seen from a youth point of view," he said. "Internally, we provide training and experience to our youth participants that

people of their age don't often get. I train our youth participants, OutCasters, in research, interviewing and production, and they apply those skills working

*"I'm amazed at how young our OutCasters are when they come out. We all know that it's not an easy thing to do, and for some of our youth, involvement with OutCasting can be transformational."*

substantively on a nationally distributed program — which is rare for people of their age and helps set them apart with college and job applications."

As someone who struggled with his sexual orientation and did not come out until age 39, Sophos said he enjoys seeing teenagers accepting their sexual orientations at such a young age.

"I'm amazed at how young our OutCasters are when they come out," Sophos said. "We all know that it's not an easy thing to do, and for some of our youth, involvement with OutCasting can be transformational."

Sophos underscored his point when he mentioned one OutCaster in particular, David,



Marc Sophos

who joined as a high school senior.

"He was out only to a couple of people and didn't want to talk about himself at all. Kids these days sometimes don't know how to make business phone calls, so we train them to do that, too, but David was so self-conscious that he'd go and hide on the other side of the room so he didn't have to participate," Sophos said.

Over the course of the year that he was involved, Sophos said he saw a huge transformation in both David's demeanor and confidence. Eventually, he and another OutCaster interviewed Bishop Gene Robinson on the air.

"It was amazing to see him emerge as a confident young man, publicly out of the closet,

by the time he left for college," he said.

Sophos said that both through transformational experiences like that and through working on "OutCasting," he has developed passion for promoting young LGBT voices to the greater public.

"Young people are smart and articulate, but we don't hear very much from their point of view," he said. "This is particularly true for LGBT youth and their straight allies. I think that this is at least partly because some people continue to believe that being LGBT is a choice and that kids won't 'turn gay' if they don't hear about it. You see that attitude in the opposition to even mentioning LGBT people, issues, history or identities in schools. So, I think it's important that the authentic voices of LGBT youth and allies be heard so that a truer understanding can take the place of

misconceptions."

Sophos will be honored at the AARP Purpose Prize ceremony in December and will receive \$5,000, as well as access to AARP support and technical assistance.

"It's a great honor, of course," said Sophos of receiving the prize. "There were about 1,000 people at the beginning of the process, and at the end, five winners and 10 fellows, so I find myself in pretty rarified company. I had been looking through a database of grants, and when I read about the AARP Purpose Prize, it seemed like a great match. But this kind of thing is never a given, and I was thrilled when I got the word."

## ► Frivolist

Continued from p. 36

alone. The vast majority of people experiencing [thinning hair] feel that way. But learning how to manage it and accepting the reality of it will change how you feel about it and yourself."

### 3. Ask your significant other and friends their opinions

When trying to figure out how to handle my own situation, I turned to my boyfriend and my friends for what I should do. While the final decision wasn't up to them ultimately, I wanted to hear from my male buddies on how they were approaching or had approached their own balding, and I wanted to gauge my boyfriend's response to buzzing my hair so the thinning wasn't as noticeable at the source.

These consultations helped me come to terms with my situation and make a proactive move regarding my hair that would eventually eradicate my anxiety.

### 4. Work with what you've got

Now that you've accepted what plenty of men continue to deny, you can start to disguise your "problem" area properly. This doesn't mean spraying on fake infomercial hair-in-a-can or carpeting your head with a toupee or comb-over. This is dressing your hair to its strengths and avoiding products that will exacerbate the issue. Don't use "high shine" hair products, like pomade or gel, for instance. The shine will draw attention away from the hair and accentuate your scalp. Instead, use clay or matte products that give a natural look. This will style your follicles effectively and help keep the focus on the hair you still have.

"Also, do your research and ask your barber about hairstyles that will work for your hair," Barney adds. "The difference between a side part and a comb-over is the amount of scalp exposed by the hair on top. Look up haircuts yourself before you see your barber next, make your top three selections, and prepare yourself for his professional, honest opinion and the possibility that none of them will work. Finding and accepting your new hairstyle — if one is needed — will benefit you tremendously along with using the right product."

### 5. Hold your head high

Hair is important to a lot of guys, and that's nothing to be ashamed of. But remember that your hair is only one part of you, and not even the best part. Besides, there's nothing sexier than a man who owns himself and his appearance, which translates naturally to virility

and masculinity.

"Sexiness is a lot more about attitude and confidence," says Caleb Backe, health and wellness expert at Maple Holistics. "If you're rocking a bald or balding head properly, it can be very enticing. Some see it as a sign of maturity and experience, which is a whole new kind of turn-on for many individuals. This process is not about compensating, or diverting attention, and it isn't about choosing a new hat to cover your shame. It's about self-acceptance of the highest order."

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

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