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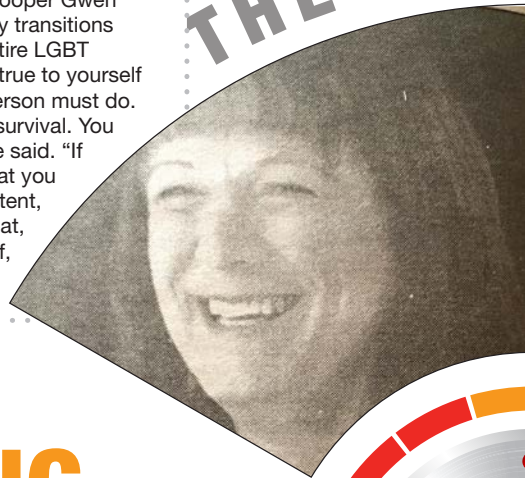
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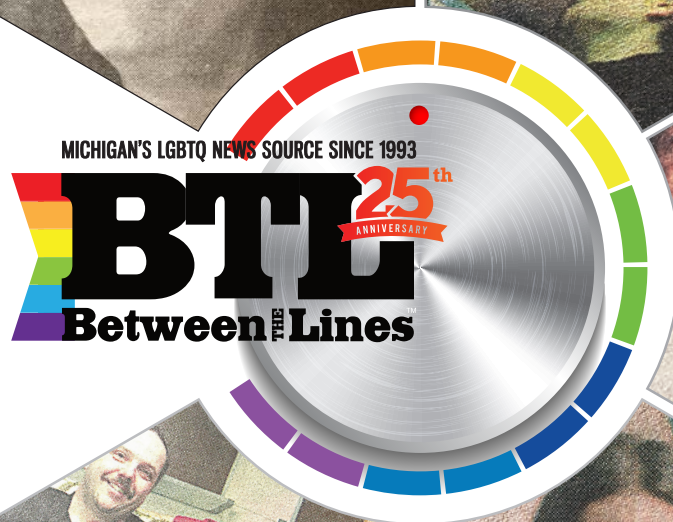
THE '00S - 2001

January - Transgender Life in a Northern Michigan Town: Heroic state trooper Gwen Sanford of Traverse City publicly transitions from male to female. For the entire LGBT population, Sanford said being true to yourself is the most important thing a person must do. "I think it comes to a matter of survival. You have to be true to yourself," she said. "If it is something, a side of you that you need to express to whatever extent, it is real important to express that, to feel comfortable with yourself, to like yourself."



February - Hundreds Gather to Embrace at 'Kiss In': Anti-gay picketers from the Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church were greeted by hundreds of counter protestors on Feb. 16 on the campus of the University of Michigan as they began a three-day picketing spree through the area. Despite the presence of the nine picketers bearing anti-gay signs, the University's Diag was filled with gay-positive energy during the LGBT visibility week's capstone event, the Kiss In.

FLASHING BACK TO THE PAST:



April - BWMT Celebrates 20 Years: Black and White Men Together celebrated its 20-year anniversary in Detroit. BWMT provided a safe space for interracial gay couples. At the time, the group had 80 members and held monthly meetings in addition to hosting social gatherings for the community. Pictured: BWMT Chairman Walt Baraboll (right) and his partner James at a group fundraiser.



December - Gay Teachers Win Arbitration Ruling: A more than two-year wrangle over teacher's rights ended when an independent arbitrator found that the rights of Plymouth Canton teachers Mike Chiumento (left) and Tom Salbenblatt (right) were violated when a school administrator forced them to take down bulletin board displays on gay and lesbian history month at their schools.



July - Transgender Town Hall Takes Agencies to Task: At this time, many people did not know there is a difference between gender identity and sexual identity. As a result, organizers of this town hall - Affirmations, the Triangle Foundation and the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project - held the meeting in Ferndale to provide more exposure and understanding of the transgender community. This followed proposed amendments to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, which didn't provide protection to the transgender community and was later fixed. Pictured: Susan Crocker, co-founder of Transgender Michigan, who spoke during the meeting about how invisible the transgender community can be.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA UNDER FIRE

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in June 2000 that the Boy Scouts of America can exclude gays from their organization, backlash ensued in the form of funding cuts and protests, and facilities where Scouts met began closing their doors. It would take many years and several legal battles before the Scouts ended its ban in 2013 on openly gay youths participating in its activities. Two years later, the organization ended its ban on openly gay adult leaders. In January 2017, the Scouts began accepting members based on the gender listed on their application, paving the way for transgender boys to join the organization.



board members on the Detroit Human Rights Commission with a motion to cease funding the Boy Scouts in 2002 unless they agree to adhere to the city's non-discrimination ordinance, which includes sexual orientation. The Detroit Area Council of the BSA receives about \$50,000 in Neighborhood Opportunity Funds annually. It wasn't until May that the commission unanimously decided to send a letter to Mayor Dennis Archer and the Detroit City Council urging them to pull funding from the Boy Scouts.

February 2001: The Boy Scouts' anti-gay policy crept into play on Feb. 6 as Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer accepted the Silver Beaver award from the 100,000-member Detroit Area Council. Prompted by a letter from Jeff Montgomery, executive director of Triangle Foundation, Archer accepted the award, but not without comment on the Scouts' anti-gay policy, stating he would like to "work from within" the organization to change their "unreasonable position."

March 2001: Cub Scout Pack 33 in Ann Arbor dropped out of the Boy Scouts and affiliated instead with the Camp Fire Boys and Girls Clubs because of the Scouts' anti-gay policies. Jan Culbertson, a former leader in Pack 33, said, "We have a significant number of families with homosexual parents. How could we tell them that they couldn't be leaders or members? We are a very diverse community. Being affiliated with the BSA was not enabling our organization to serve all of the families."

August 2001: Inspired by a call to action by Scouting

For All, the Genesee County PFLAG protested the Boy Scouts' no-gays-allowed policy. Close to 50 people attended the protest staged at the offices of the Tall Pines Boy Scout Council in Flint. A high point of the gathering was the presentation of a "Homophobia" badge that was placed inside the building to which Scout officials did not respond.

October 2001: Unauthorized use of the Boy Scouts of America's name and image had two anti-gay campaigns and one Scout leader under fire as three communities inch toward important votes on gay and lesbian issues. Scout officials in Kalamazoo and Traverse City drew the line when identical postcards were mailed to senior citizens urging them to protect the Boy Scouts by limiting gay rights. With or without the ban on gay Scouts, nationally the group has an "apolitical" policy forbidding troops from taking a stance on political issues. The American Family Association, it's "Vote Yes" campaigns, and one Scout leader were asked to stop using the Scouts as a brand name to grab support for anti-gay ballot measures.



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Wayne State Holds First Transgender Day of Remembrance Service

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

A small crowd of about 20 came out Monday, Nov. 19 to the Wayne State University Student Center Ballroom for what organizers believe was the university's first official Transgender Day of Remembrance service. The service, which was organized by the Wayne State LGBT Student Advisory Board, was led by board president Cara Mitrano.

"I felt that it was important to have a Wayne State recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance," Mitrano said. "I also thought it was important to have community activists like Rachel Crandall-Crocker and Laci Marie featured in the celebration and not just talked about."

In her talk to the crowd, Crandall-Crocker, the founder of Transgender Michigan and the International Transgender Day of Visibility, reflected on the state of affairs for the transgender community in the nation.

"I'm sorry to say that has not been a great year for the transgender community all around the world," she said. "There were an awful lot of murders everywhere. People like me, who are just trying to be myself, that's why these people were killed. It wasn't because they did anything wrong. It was just because they were trying to live their true lives."

The violence, Crandall-Crocker said, is senseless.

"Do you know that a father once killed his baby son because his baby son was acting too feminine?" Crocker asked. "That actually happened. And do you know that in a shopping mall a man was holding his wife's purse when she was trying on clothes and someone came



Activists Laci Marie, Cara Mitrano and Rachel Crandall-Crocker all spoke at the Wayne State University Transgender Day of Remembrance service. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

along and shot him? I want to make it clear. It isn't only trans individuals. It's people who are perceived as being trans. Who knows, that could be a lot of us right here."

Crandall-Crocker talked to the crowd about what it felt like growing up knowing she was different.

"When I was little it was in the mid-'60s," she said. "I was so freaking scared. I thought I was God's one mistake. In the '60s there wasn't any internet, there wasn't any term 'transgender.'

There really wasn't anything at all. I have to admit I wanted to kill myself a number of times. I still can't figure out how I'm still alive honestly. I never thought I would be alive at the ripe old age of 21. However, actually, I am 21. It was 21 years ago that I began to live as Rachel."

Almost as old, the first Transgender Day of Remembrance service took place in San Francisco in 1999. It was organized by trans activist Gwen Smith.

"She had the very first one because a local

community member was killed just for being trans," said Crandall-Crocker. "I have to admit I created the International Transgender Day of Visibility as a result of what Gwen did. So, I want to know, what are you going to do? I hate when people say that one person cannot make a difference. One person always could make a difference. Every movement was started by one individual. One person can really make a difference."

Today, there are Transgender Day of Remembrance services held all over the globe.

"Right here in Michigan, and all the way around the world, there are people gathering for events like this," said Crandall-Crocker. "There are like 15 in the state of Michigan. Think of how many there are around the world. In numbers come power. And I want to say we do have power and we showed our power a few weeks ago in the midterm election. Activists like me are already planning how with the new people in Michigan government we can really change things for trans individuals. We're already working on it."

For her part in the service, Marie sang a few inspirational songs for the crowd.

"I'm just trying to live my life authentically because I knew in 1951, before there was light and electricity, that I was a woman and female," Laci Marie said. "I've been suicidal twice. I had a nervous breakdown. Now, I'm just as thrilled as anything to be finally living my truth."

"I pretended for a long, long time," she continued. "I was an Academy Award-worthy actress. But today, I'm very comfortable with who I am. And that's a beautiful thing, living authentically. I commit the rest of my life to helping other people accept us and everybody."

REC Remembers Fallen Transgender People in Day of Remembrance Celebration

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

About 20 people came out on Tuesday, Nov. 20, for a Transgender Day of Remembrance service at the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park. The service was designed to be an intimate conversation among trans women and men of color.

"I really wanted to make sure that I took the time out to honor our transgender women and men of color, solely because most of the time when it comes to us honoring and making sure we remember our fallen people of color, a lot of people don't realize how traumatizing it is to hear that someone has fallen but there's no exposure," said Brandi Smith, transgender coordinator at Ruth Ellis Center and organizer of the service. "They don't get [media] coverage. Most of the time that's what happens to people in our community."

According to the Gender-Identity Network Alliance, there were nearly 30 transgender men

and women killed violently over the past year in the U.S. Of that number, the majority were people of color.

"Personally, as a trans woman of color, I think it's very important that we have spaces like this where we can come together and talk to each other," said Tiffany Richardson of the Corktown Health Center. "Times like these are a call to a major shift in the relationships among trans men and women of color, the way that we as a community and as a people see ourselves and the way that we see each other."

"The numbers are in," Richardson continued. "And it's obvious that we are targets."

But for this service, the emphasis was on not anger or fear, but respect for those whose lives had been senselessly ended.

"I'm very happy to be here to honor our transcesters today," said community activist Emani Love. "Our beautiful sisters and brothers who have fallen, they did not get what they deserved."



BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

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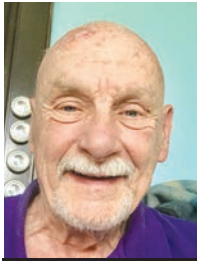
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

How's Your Sugar Plum Fairy, Mary?

I hate to play the gay Grinch who stole Christmas, but there's a movement afoot by the Southern Comfort Baptists to do away with all suspected gay references in Christmas carols and holiday traditions. (Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Veterans Day are targeted next.)

Unless we act with a united front, and a well-padded backside, "Don we now our GAY apparel!" is doomed. "God rest ye, MARY gentlemen" is a goner. Gold, frankincense and myrrh (and patchouli) are out. Mince pie and sugar plum you-know-whats are things of the past.

Rainbow ribbons and wrapping paper are taboo. Red stockings for the chimney will be minus silver belles or D&G designer fur trim. Dancer, Prancer and Cupid are dead ducks. (Substitute: Butch, Bouncer, Bimbo.)

Yes, Christmas may never be its gay old self again. And Mr. Gailey will forever be a delete from "Miracle on 34th Street." (How gay, by the way, is Kris Kringle? He even looks a bit, well, you know, suspect. And what's all this fascination with kids, anyhow? Has he ever had an authentic FBI security check?)

Yes, Christmas may never be its gay old self again. And Mr. Gailey will forever be a delete from "Miracle on 34th Street." (How gay, by the way, is Kris Kringle? He even looks a bit, well, you know, suspect. And what's all this fascination with kids, anyhow? Has he ever had an authentic FBI security check?)

For readers who are in the dark about the Southern Comfort Baptists, they're a boisterous offshoot of gay-bashing, Disney-boycotting, 15-million-strong Southern Baptists. All Trump religious elves!

The 100 proof Southern Comforters swarm like a plague of biblical locust. And they're two-fisted when it comes to minding other people's business and sampling other people's Texas Tea.

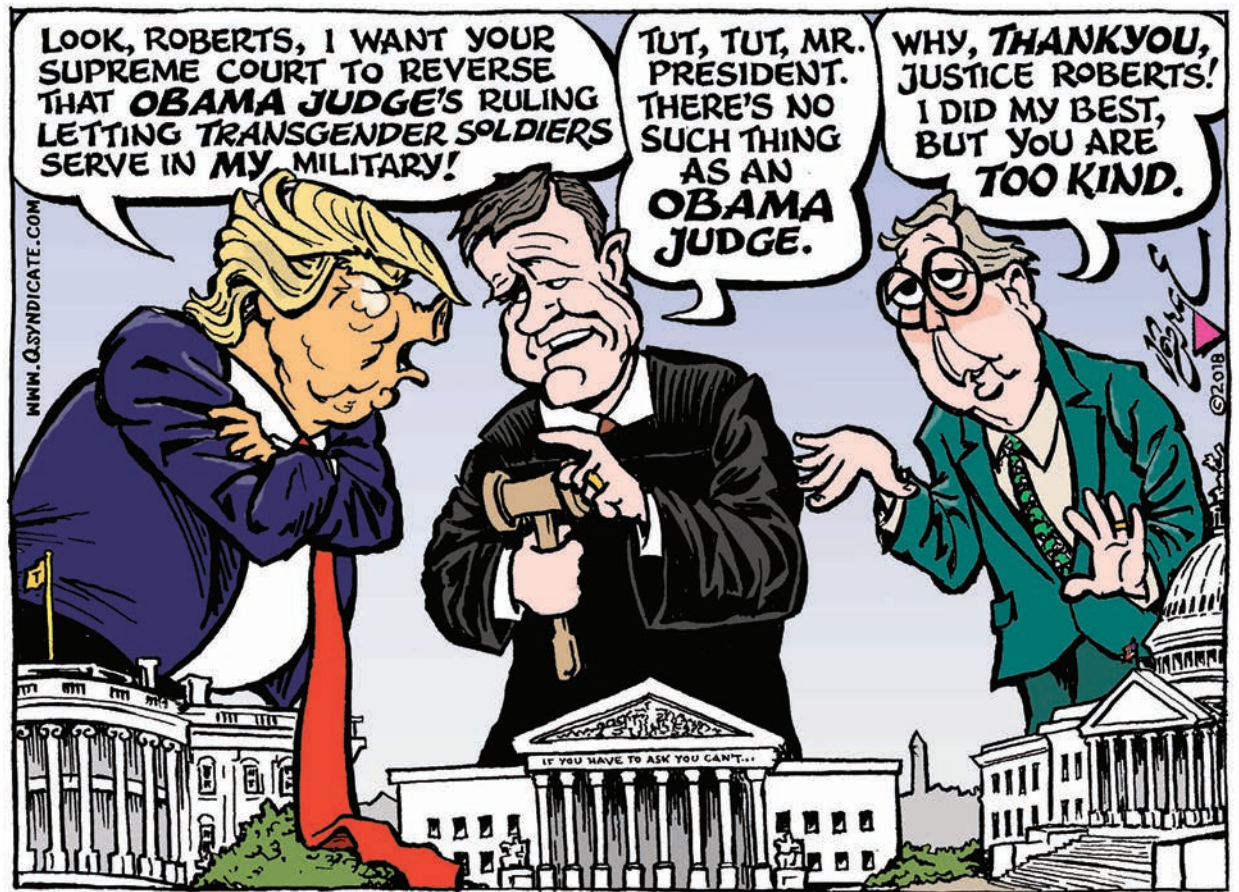
Every neighborhood has one or two Southern Comforters livening things up way into the wee-wee Sabbath hours. (I spotted one leaning against a lamppost and singing the doxology to my neighbor's calico pussy just the other morning. The cat has yet to return. Saved or unsaved. Neutered or otherwise.)

Southern Comforters are headquartered in Myopic Flats, Texas, home of the world-famous batter-dipped, low-cal Gila Burger. ("The burger with a bite to die for!") They broadcast over radio station TPARTY-AM, and their TV program, "The Church Key Hour," is syndicated worldwide. Sarah Palin, who likes peeking through an occasional narrow-minded keyhole, is thinking about converting. Again.

The Southern Comforters perform what they call brinkmanship baptism.

"We don't sprinkle. We dunk, count to 10 very slowly, and

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



BTL Editorial

Legislature Must Stop Health Officials' Invasive Plans

State health officials are using the newest science to address the HIV epidemic Michigan and to curb its growth.

The new science certainly has the potential to reshape how we identify new HIV cases, getting those recently infected into care and quickly suppressing their virus. That, in turn, could help reduce the number of transmissions from that person. Specifically, health officials are using genetic data, collected from people living with HIV as part of their medical care, to identify related infections. Those related infections create clusters of people, and those clusters reveal groupings which may be involved

in more transmissions or visiting and socializing in areas where that particular virus is quietly passing from one person to another. Disrupting these secret networks is good public health.

That's a laudable move. But this is not a lab where pure science devoid of the social and human impact can be accepted.

As long as Michigan continues to criminalize people living with HIV for engaging in sexual behavior that may not even transmit the virus, the genetic clustering work could be abused by zealous prosecutors. Perhaps those prosecutors believe they are working to stop HIV transmissions. Perhaps they

are driven by animus against certain at-risk populations. Indeed, an analysis of prosecutions in the state done by sociologist Trevor Hoppe found there was a disparity among those charged under Michigan's felony law: while black men who have sex with women represent a small percentage of those living with HIV in the state, they represented nearly 44 percent of the prosecutions. The analysis did not include data from Wayne county or Detroit specifically.

Let's be clear: genotype studies do not, and cannot, prove the directionality of transmission. However, with the lack of basic understanding of HIV science in America today, combined with a near

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

As long as Michigan continues to criminalize people living with HIV for engaging in sexual behavior that may not even transmit the virus, the genetic clustering work could be abused by zealous prosecutors. Perhaps those prosecutors believe they are working to stop HIV transmissions. Perhaps they are driven by animus against certain at-risk populations.

► BTL Editorial

Continued from p. 8

worship of science as evidence in criminal cases by juries; make this genotype data attractive for law enforcement.

Add on top of this the request for expansive investigatory powers and data collection by the state and you have a recipe for an oppressive, invasive nanny state. That nanny state will undermine prevention and care services. That will result in more cases of HIV, not fewer.

The legislature has the opportunity in this lame duck session to reject this expansion. They can refuse to pass the legislative reforms before them if Rep. Jon Hoadley's HIV criminalization modernization legislation is not included. They can also, as the GOP does not believe in government interference in the private lives of citizens, reject the whole reform package sitting in the Senate today. Why? Because the reforms would dramatically

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 8

ask God for a miracle.”

They don't smoke weed, boogie down, play bridge, skinny-dip, practice feng shui, eat kosher mayonnaise or play kissy face on the first and last date. Their motto: “One taste of 100-proof heaven goes a long, long way.”

More than likely you've seen a controversial full-page ad the Southern Comforters took out in National Expirer tabloid recently (appearing next to Lady Gaga's candid camera cuties). SANTA: A GAG AGENDA PLOT! Homos put the X in X-Mas! Are There 'Toys' Under Your Tree? Is Your Sock 'Hung' by the Chimney with 'Care?' Beware! The GAGs are coming.

In case you're too busy to speed-read the scandal sheets at checkout counters, Santa really got a few below-the-belt punches from these burning bush holy rollers: “It's bad enough the Gay Agenda Gang (GAG) has shoved TV's Burt & Ernie and Tinky Winky down our collective throats, but the real Trojan Horse is Old St. Nick himself!

“It's true. Santa, who wears a leather belt and boots, sports a beard and a big beer belly, is what GAGs call a card-carrying 'bear.' His red suit is color-coded to convey a deep-

reshape how HIV cases are investigated and would remove autonomy for many people living with HIV.

And finally, lawmakers must act to end the use of genotype data without receiving informed consent from persons living with HIV for their participation. Any move to approve the use of genotype data by the legislature should first be vetted not by case workers and hand-selected persons living with HIV who are married to state health officials, but through large community gatherings held throughout the state for people living with HIV.

Early in the epidemic, activists screamed “Nothing about us, without us.” Unfortunately, that message has been lost in the flurry of exciting scientific advances. Until state health officials realign with that message, seeking the broad input from many people living with HIV, not just those who are hand selected to serve on state committees, these initiatives will become invasive, authoritarian and result in sex policing by the government.

seated message. (Years ago, gay men wore bright red ties. And, those unmentionable hankies!) And while there may be a Mrs. Santa — a 'beard' of another kind — what grown man in his right mind breaks bread with elves, second cousins to hobbits, twinks and fairies?

“Be forewarned. Sitting on Santa's ample knee and telling him you're naughty or nice, when God knows you're a loathsome, rotten, stinking sinner, is an invitation to disaster and damnation. Santa, and all he stands for — which includes same-sex marriage — is anti-American, anti-family values, anti-Republican and a GAG plot to boot. Amen.”

PS: The less said about “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” the better. Mary Christmas, PGers!

YULETIDE TIP: Instead of donating LGBT dollars to the Salvation Army this year, put a note in the little red kettle: “The Salvation Army's homophobic! No donation from me, my family, my friends. MARY Christmas!”

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

Creep Of The Week

Peter LaBarbera

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

OMG, you will never believe this but Peter LaBarbera is in jail. Just kidding, kind of.

For those of you familiar with LaBarbera, the specter behind Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, you'd be forgiven for assuming that he was in jail for hate-criming someone — probably a transgender teenager wanting to attend prom or something.

In reality, LaBarbera is merely in Facebook jail. (But, then again, aren't we all?)

LaBarbera is super upset about his 30-day suspension from Facebook after posting photos of Alex Jacob's post top surgery along with an invitation to the AFTAH banquet, promising that AFTAH would help stop “transgender insanity” and “gender deviance and body mutilation.”

“The picture is from the Twitter feed of Alex, a beautiful young woman who had her healthy breasts surgically removed two years ago in her tragic quest to identify as a man,” LaBarbera writes.

A couple of things. First, whether or not LaBarbera thinks pre-op Alex is “beautiful” is irrelevant. Note to LaBarbera: Alex's body isn't, wasn't, and never will be your business. The only thing “tragic” about this whole thing is LaBarbera's obsession with LGBTQ people and his commitment to hating them.

Second, LaBarbera links to Alex's Twitter feed and so I went to check it out and OH MY GOD ALEX HAS THE CUTEST CORGI PUPPY NAMED CHARLOTTE SORRY I AM LITERALLY DEAD FROM ACUTE CUTENESS! (OK, so I'm not literally dead, I'm figuratively dead.)

But Alex's Twitter isn't all cute puppies. It's got a fair share of trans realness, too.

“Sometimes i have these lil moments where i look in the mirror n see the way a shirt falls over my flat chest n get so ecstatic,” Alex Tweets. “it's been over 2 yrs since top surgery & it's easy to forget about the pain i felt pre-op but I don't think I'll ever stop having these moments of pure joy n comfort in my own body.”

Pure joy and comfort, huh? That's a lot different than the “tragic quest” LaBarbera depicted. The “pain” Alex is referring to isn't physical pain, but emotional pain. It's a pain that cisgender people don't, and probably can't, fully understand. And it's why LaBarbera's insistence that people like Alex are damaged and sick is so appalling. Trans people have higher rates of suicide precisely because of the kind of societal pressure rejection LaBarbera traffics in.

Not that anyone needs to tell Alex that.

“Transphobes will treat trans people like freaks & deny us basic human rights only to later use our high suicide rates as proof

If LaBarbera thinks it's tough to be a right-wing bigot online he should try being, say, any woman with an opinion on Twitter. Women online get rape and death threats for posting things like, “I really loved the all-female Ghostbusters reboot!” And even when the accounts of those threats are reported, they often don't get put into Facebook or Twitter “jail.”

that we don't deserve validation & support,” Jacobs said.

It's a vicious circle, and one that literally costs lives.

So LaBarbera can spare me his sob story about his cyber exile.

“To tell you the truth,” LaBarbera writes, “I can't even keep track anymore of how many times I or AFTAH have been ‘jailed’ or unpublished by these leftist ‘Tech Totalitarians’ in the last few years.”

For someone who claims to be a purveyor of “truth,” LaBarbera sure lies a lot. But in this case, I believe him. He probably can't keep track of all of the times he's faced consequences for advocating hate against LGBTQ people. However, the number of times he has either faced no consequences or has even benefitted from peddling hate is far, far greater.

“I don't have any answers on how to combat this escalating corporate speech control, which is far more menacing than the government ‘hate crime’ laws conservatives feared for so many years,” he writes.

If LaBarbera thinks it's tough to be a right-wing bigot online he should try being, say, any woman with an opinion on Twitter. Women online get rape and death threats for posting things like, “I really loved the all-female Ghostbusters reboot!” And even when the accounts of those threats are reported, they often don't get put into Facebook or Twitter “jail.” They just hang out there, unchecked, just like sexism and misogyny IRL.

LaBarbera will not be deterred, however.

“We must never, ever, ever give in to this radical, anti-God LGBTQ sex-and-gender revolution and its apologists,” he writes. “Their agenda harms children, and we cannot let them silence us. Hopefully reason and sanity will prevail over the growing ‘LGBTyranny’ that threatens our cherished freedoms as Americans.”

Ah, yes. Our cherished freedoms to post super shitty things about people on Facebook. Like the founding fathers intended.

“Keep on fighting,” LaBarbera writes.

And the truth is, LaBarbera truly is fighting the good fight. He's just on the wrong side. Oh, and his Twitter feed has no cute Corgi puppies AT ALL. Complete waste.

BTL World AIDS Day 2018 Analysis

World AIDS Day

BY BTL STAFF

The last several years have seen a dramatic shift in the HIV landscape in the country and specifically in Michigan. In September, San Francisco, long a bastion for those affected by the epidemic, reported just 221 new cases in 2017. The San Francisco Chronicle reported this was an historic low in new cases, but it also found that there were significant disparities in age, race and gender of those newly diagnosed. Of those new diagnoses in San Francisco, 60 percent were among people under age 40 — that's despite the vast majority of those living with HIV in the city being over age 50.

That decline reflects a broader national trend of reductions in new cases. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that new infections of HIV dropped five percent nationwide. But it too has warned the epidemic continues to dramatically impact younger men of color who have sex with men. Also, transgender women have significantly higher rates of HIV infection and risk.

The Detroit Metro area reported 512 new cases of HIV in 2017, with 228 of those in the city of Detroit. Across the U.S. there were another 249 cases reported statewide in 2017.

Obscured by the numbers, however, are the issue of access to and adherence to medications and care. Science has shown that when a person living with HIV is successful in taking their medications, they attain what is called viral suppression. They become undetectable in blood tests, meaning there is so little viral replication occurring the tests can't find the virus in tests. The science shows that people who have reached suppression can't transmit the virus.

The U.S. and the United Nations Joint Nations Program on HIV/AIDS has set an aggressive goal of identifying 90 percent of people living with HIV, connecting 90 percent of those with the virus to medical care and treatment and virally suppressing 90 percent

of those in care. It's called the 90-90-90 Plan.

While there are just over 16,000 Michiganders living with HIV, only 89 percent of them are suppressed according to the state. And those numbers vary dramatically based on geography. In Wayne County, specifically in Detroit, residents in have an 83 percent suppression rate while Genesee County has an 85 percent suppression rate and Ingham county has an 88 percent suppression rate.

Combine the lower viral suppression rates with lower access to Pre-exposure Prophylaxis medication and there starts a recipe for a continued epidemic. Worse, people of color and low-income folks in Michigan tend to have lower suppression rates and lower use of PrEP. This results in higher transmission rates with these communities.

With this information in mind here's the good, the bad and the ugly in relation to HIV in Michigan:

The Good

Michigan has a new governor rolling into office. Democrat Gretchen Whitmer won the office earlier this year and she has committed to increasing efforts to addressing HIV. This includes leveraging more federal funding and pushing for the ability to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to reduce the costs of HIV prevention and treatment drugs provided through Medicaid.

Last year, during the campaign, Whitmer also committed to creating an assistance program to fund PrEP for those who can't afford it. Currently, once a person is infected with HIV, they qualify for the Michigan AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which is funded almost entirely through drug rebates, if they make up to about \$64,000 as a single person. The program will pay copays for insurance coverage of HIV drugs, or if a person doesn't have insurance, it will pay for the drugs as well as blood tests related to HIV care.

Whitmer noted Washington and New York

state have both created such programs for PrEP and she said she would explore that option for Michigan.

Also on the positive with a Democratic governor set to take office in January is a promise from Whitmer that she will work with State Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) on reforming and modernizing Michigan's HIV-specific criminal law. Currently, any person who engages in sexual penetration "however slight" without first disclosing their HIV positive status can be charged with a four-year felony.

Hoadley and HIV advocates argue Michigan's law ignores a key component of criminal activity: intent. Currently, a person does not need to have an intent to transmit HIV to be charged. In fact, the law is so broadly written that sexual activity, such as using sex toys, which doesn't transmit the virus is still criminalized.

Whitmer acknowledges the law has failed to help address the epidemic and said she would support Hoadley's legislative efforts.

State health officials have also fully integrated messaging for prevention and care services to include information about viral suppression and PrEP in prevention of HIV.

The Bad and Ugly

Michigan continues to mirror national data as it relates to racial disparities in new HIV diagnoses. Of the new cases identified in 2017, 60 percent were men and 63 percent were black men. Two transgender people of color were also newly diagnosed with HIV in 2017.

Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of LGBT Detroit, noted last year that state health officials needed to come to the African-American LGBTQ community to do targeted prevention efforts and PrEP outreach. That still has not happened.

On top of this, state health officials while quietly supporting a modernization of Michigan's HIV criminal law, have been pushing through legislation to dramatically reshape the landscape on how the state interacts with people living with HIV.

Legislation that passed the House earlier this year is expected to be taken up by the GOP-controlled Senate during the lame duck session. This legislation would remove prohibitions on the collection and keeping of the identity of persons identified as at risk partners for newly diagnosed persons. Current law prohibits local health departments from keeping that information beyond 90 days. But state health officials have worked to circumvent that law for nearly two decades.

First they used a state owned and run database that local health officials had access to at all times. That was called the HIV Event System and it tracked not only the identifying information of persons testing for HIV,

but also those identified as at-risk partners of persons diagnosed with HIV along with those who already had HIV. The system has since been removed, but the state continues to circumvent the law by storing nearly the same data on a federal database outside of the state of Michigan. This database does not track identifying information about persons testing for HIV, but does track everything else the HIV Event System tracked.

In addition, state health officials are pushing for a revamp in the state's partner services law. Currently, those diagnosed with HIV had the right to decline partner services assistance from local health officials if they agree to contact sexual and needle-sharing partners. Once that has been done, health officials are supposed to cease contact with the person. But health officials want a blank check to continue pushing newly diagnosed persons for partner information on a regular basis.

State health officials, known as disease investigators, have historically had a contentious relationship with the LGBTQ community over the perception the investigators are judging persons living with HIV and their sexual and drug using choices. The partner service programming can make people feel like they are under a microscope and subjected to invasive scrutiny not given to other infectious and reportable diseases in the state.

Perhaps the most troubling move by health officials, however, is the use of genetic data collected by infectious disease doctors to determine care choices for persons with HIV. The test is a genotype test and tells doctors to which medications, if any, the virus a person has is resistant. Unbeknownst to most Michiganders living with HIV, the state has been collecting these genetic tests for years. They're kept in a database run by the CDC as well as a national database that is publicly available through the Los Alamos National Lab. The information on the Los Alamos database is de-identified.

But the data in the CDC database is identifiable and linked to a specific person. Health officials have taken to creating models of transmission, called clustering, which shows the interconnection of the various viruses in the state. Those clusters then become a target for enhanced prevention services, even if the people in the cluster are virally suppressed. Health officials have said people living with HIV have no right to withdraw from the program or their consent.

The program has been rolled out to groups of people mostly working in AIDS Service Organizations, but not necessarily living with HIV. Many HIV activists opposed the program because the data has the potential to be abused by zealous prosecutors, despite the fact genotype tests cannot be used to determine directionality of infection.



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National Organization Highlights Experiences of Women With HIV

World AIDS Day

BY DREW HOWARD

Women living with HIV account for roughly 20 percent of all individuals who have contracted the disease in the U.S. As a minority group within an already marginalized community, women with HIV navigate a unique set of challenges that are oftentimes buried in mainstream education.

Positive Women's Network, a national membership body of women living with HIV, exists to address such issues. Founded in 2008 by 28 women, the body's mission is based around six priority issues: universal health care; economic justice; sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice; ending criminalization; trans rights, safety and justice; and ending violence against women living with HIV.

Chunnika Hodges, PWN-USA Michigan State Lead, has lived with HIV since 2006. Competing priorities such as work, motherhood and school present unique hurdles for women with HIV seeking treatment, Hodges said, on top of the universal stigma associated with the disease.

"We (women) also face the challenge of being economically stable or obtaining a livable wage," Hodges said. "In particular with women living with HIV, most do not have higher education to become employed with a livable wage ... in most extreme cases, some turn to sex work because of the lack of financial resources."

Numerous studies indicate the ways in which gender shapes the HIV experience. According to PWN, studies show that over

60 percent of women living with HIV in the U.S. may have experienced intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. IPV can increase a woman's risk of contracting HIV through unprotected or rough sex, among other things, while the threat of violence may prevent a woman from disclosing her HIV status and subsequently seeking life-saving treatment.

"When it comes to HIV disclosure and safety, one must remember that history of violence or trauma can undermine a woman's ability to protect herself and engage in self care," Hodges said. "For example, a woman's fear of IPV can prevent her from refusing to have sex or even asking a partner to use a condom."

Such threats are compounded within communities of transgender, African-American and immigrant women. For example, Hodges said many immigrant women with HIV refuse to seek treatment outside the home for fear that their immigration status will be threatened. Transgender women who perceive or experience a lack of cultural competency in modern healthcare may also be dissuaded from treating for HIV.

On the criminalization front, Hodges says PWN works to repeal "archaic," "draconian" laws on the state and federal level that oppress the HIV community.

"Currently there are 32 states that make HIV exposure a crime," Hodges said. "Plus, relentless HIV stigma has fueled the prosecution and criminalization of hundreds of people with HIV in the U.S., even in states without an HIV-specific law."

For example, it's illegal in Michigan for people living with HIV to engage in "sexual penetration" without disclosing their HIV status. However, neither the intent to transmit HIV nor actual transmission is required for prosecution.

"The law does not distinguish between sexual practices that could transmit the virus and those that pose no risk of transmission," Hodges explained. "If someone engages in penetration of other body parts that cannot transmit the virus, it is still defined as sexual penetration ... the laws include low to no-risk behaviors such as oral sex."

HIV oppression takes many other forms across the country. PWN cites several cities that have or have had a "condoms as evidence" policy, which allows the possession of condoms to be used as the basis for a solicitation charge.

In New York, possessing what's considered "too many" condoms can be used as evidence of sex work. PWN supports the elimination of such policies as they discourage sex workers from protecting themselves, furthermore oppressing the sex work economy.

PWN is in firm support of legalizing sex work. Criminalizing the act leads to over-policing and incarceration of sex workers, PWN's mission statement reads, further increasing the vulnerability of sex workers to violence, abuse and exploitation.

"Sex work is work," LaDawn Tate, a student at PWN's Michigan chapter, said. "Decriminalizing it creates a sense of normalcy ... our stance is that every woman deserves to live and work how she wants to work. Her body is her body."



PWN-USA Michigan State Lead Chunnika Hodges (left) and LaDawn Tate, a student at PWN's Michigan chapter.

In addition to decriminalizing sex work, Tate is especially passionate about promoting cultural competency in healthcare through PWN. As a heterosexual woman living with HIV, Tate said she failed to receive adequate treatment due to the stigma around the disease.

"HIV doesn't have a demographic," Tate said. "I'm a true ally of the LGBT community, but the thing is that because I don't fit in, because I'm not a part of that community, my doctor didn't ask me if I wanted an HIV test."

"It's not a demographic - it doesn't matter," Tate continued. "If you're having unprotected sex you're at risk of HIV?"

Hodges agrees with Tate. "Some professionals in the medical field have their own personal biases, and they're not aware of their biases," she said. "They put that on the client when they come into the door. She didn't fit a certain demographic - not a sex worker, didn't have multiple partners. Her doctor didn't feel she was at risk to acquire HIV."

Creating real change around HIV requires PWN members to meet with local and national leaders. This midterm election, PWN centered its efforts around getting out the vote and promoting progressive, diverse candidates. PWN reports its members reached over 10,000 voters, many of who were from underserved and low-turnout communities.

PWN is celebrating the election of Colorado's first openly gay governor, the record-number of women of color and LGBT winning candidates, as well as the victories for Democrats in the U.S. House. And in Michigan, Hodges and Tate were thrilled to see a win for Gretchen Whitmer, a leader they believe will be receptive to PWN's mission.

Moving forward, Hodges and her team hope to continue recruiting members while fostering strong leadership among its current team. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit pwn-usa.org to learn more about the organization's mission, values and opportunities for membership training.

PWN will continue to keep their finger on the pulse of the current White House administration. To follow the latest developments with PWN, visit the group's "Speak Up Blog" at pwn-usa.org/speak-up-blog.

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Positive Thoughts: The Hidden Survivors

Why People Living and Aging with HIV Will Lead the Way

BY JEFF BERRY

Long-term survivors of HIV face unique challenges – they are the “hidden” survivors of the epidemic. When I was diagnosed with HIV in 1989, I wasn’t sure I’d be here in 2018 to talk about it. At the time there was no effective treatment for people living with HIV; it was basically a death sentence. For those of us who did have access to health care and treatment, we were given what we now know is suboptimal therapy that not only rendered us resistant to more effective medications that were being developed, but also had life-altering side effects that remain with some of us to this day. These side effects from those earlier, more toxic treatments have added to the stigma of aging with HIV and have disfigured us, made us frailer and caused our hearts to literally skip a beat.

Don’t get me wrong, I am grateful to be here. As a white, gay, cisgender man living with HIV who turns 60 this year, I also recognize and acknowledge my privilege. I have access today to a one-pill, once-a-day therapy that keeps my virus fully suppressed so that I’m unable to pass on HIV to others. And I experience virtually no side effects to my current regimen. But I also know that when I walk into a room, I have “the look” — the sunken cheeks, the veiny arms and legs, the distended belly.

“You should be grateful to be here,” we’ve been told, “thankful to be alive!” But to what end? Grateful to be here to suddenly be rolled off of disability after being out of work for 20 to 30 years, expected to join the ranks of the workforce without any specialized training or support? Grateful to be here only to fall into addiction or isolation because our support networks, friends and former lovers no longer exist? Grateful to be here while there is scant culturally competent care for aging LGBTQ seniors who are living with HIV? We as a society in general do not value our elders – how does the LGBTQ community regard those of us aging, let alone aging with HIV?

There is much work to be done, but if anyone can lead the way, it’s people living with HIV and our allies. We were the ones who took care of each other back at the start of the epidemic, and we will come to the forefront of the battle once again. The lesbian community was there for many gay men back in the 1980s when we were dropping like flies and when no one else would touch us; thank heavens for these unsung heroes. Community-based organizations like TPAN, the Test Positive Aware Network, were founded by people living with HIV so that we could survive and thrive. Informational resources like Positively Aware delivered the information we needed to live healthy, happy lives.

Earlier this year, The Reunion Project convened a community-led, diverse coalition of survivor advocates to discuss the needs and priorities of survivors, and issued a report in June at tpan.com/reunion-project. As someone living with HIV for 29 years, I am excited to be part of a national network of survivors that is giving voice to those who don’t have one and who have in many respects been left behind.

Currently, 50 percent of people living with HIV are over the age of 50, and by 2020 it will be 70 percent. But we knew this was coming. Where is the sense of urgency? Where is the crisis task force taking up our agenda? Do we matter?

I believe we do. As the saying goes, with age comes wisdom. Long-term survivors have an opportunity to come together and join forces, mentor those coming up behind us on how to age and live with HIV gracefully, and to advocate for those who have no voice. An entire generation was lost, so who now is going to step up and advocate for us?

Those of us who have survived.

Jeff Berry is the editor in chief of Positively Aware magazine, and Director of Publications at Test Positive Aware Network in Chicago. Find him on Twitter @PAEditor.



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World AIDS Day Event Calendar

Friday, Nov. 30

8:30 a.m.

Community Committee 30th Anniversary Commemoration Appreciation Breakfast and Luncheon at Corktown Health Center, 1726 Howard St., Detroit.
corktownhealth.org

11 a.m.

Unite in the global fight with The Wellness Plan Medical Centers, W'SUP, Good Girl Radio and the Positive Women's Network. Join them for support services, free HIV testing, and educational presentations. Food, refreshments and prizes will be provided. Guest speakers include Wayne State University Prevention Team Member Ari Hampton, TWP Nurse Practitioner Sarah Kironde, Chunnika Hodges and Shalandra Scott of the Positive Women's Network.

East Medical Center, 4909 East Outer Drive, Detroit For more information, contact Bettina Graham, bgraham@wellplan.com, 313-369-3950 or 313-399-3118.

Saturday, Dec. 1

10 a.m.

UNIFIED – HIV Health and Beyond HIV testing. Free by appointment only at 2287 Ellsworth Road, Suite B, Ypsilanti every Saturday. Contact 734-572-9355 to schedule an appointment. miunified.org/Home

3 p.m.

Matrix MAC Health will host a drawing contest for a \$50 Visa gift card. All participants receive a small gift. Matrix will provide art paper, color pencils, light refreshments and prizes. Judges from both Matrix and Affirmations will select which art best represents World AIDS Day. Contact: Rich Yancy, ryancy@matrixhs.org.

Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. goaffirmations.org

6 p.m.

30th Anniversary of World AIDS Day Commemoration featuring a reception, story sharing, a light up Detroit candlelight vigil, and celebration.

The David Whitney Building, One Park Avenue, Detroit

Admission \$25

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For more information, call 313-757-2840

Monday, Dec. 3

9 a.m.

The University of Michigan School of Social Work Research Office and the Michigan HIV/AIDS Council invites the

community to the World AIDS Day and Awards event. Featured speakers include Rogério Meireles Pinto, associate dean for research and professor of social work; Dawn Lukomski, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; and Larry Gant, professor in the school of social work. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served.

University of Michigan, School of Social Work, 1080 South University Ave., Room 1840 (ECC), Ann Arbor

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Taiwan Voters Reject Same-Sex Marriage in Referendum

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

A referendum on whether same-sex couples should receive marriage rights in Taiwan failed on Saturday.

Voters by a 67-33 percent margin rejected a question on whether same-sex couples should receive marriage rights through Taiwan's civil code. Voters by a 66-34 percent margin rejected a question on whether the island's Gender Equity Act should include LGBTI-inclusive school curricula.

Questions on whether marriage in Taiwan should be defined as between a man and a woman and whether same-sex couples should be able to enter into civil unions or domestic partnerships, as opposed to marriages, passed by a margins of 72-28 percent and 61-39 percent respectively. Voters by a 67-33 percent margin also said Taiwan's Gender Equity Act should not include LGBTI-inclusive school curricula.

Taiwan's Constitutional Court in May 2017 ruled the provision of the island's civil code that does not "allow two persons of the same sex to create a permanent union of intimate and exclusive nature

for the committed purpose of managing a life together" is unconstitutional. The landmark ruling also said same-sex couples could legally marry within two years if Taiwanese lawmakers fail to "amend or enact relevant laws" that allow them to do so.

President Tsai Ing-wen publicly supported marriage rights for same-sex couples.

"We are deeply saddened and disappointed by the referendum results today," said the Marriage Equality Coalition Taiwan and other advocacy groups on Saturday. "However, we would like to express our gratitude toward those who have been supporting the cause throughout the process."

Evan Wolfson, founder of Freedom to Marry, and two of his former colleagues, Cameron Tolle and Thalia Zepatos, worked with the Marriage Equality Coalition Taiwan, an organization that is campaigning in support of marriage rights for same-sex couples on the island, before the referendum. The National Organization for Marriage provided support to marriage opponents.

"Tonight, we send our support to advocates and families in Taiwan who

are hurting after a disappointing election result," said Wolfson in a statement. "Over the last year, anti-LGBT organizations — bankrolled and instigated by U.S.-based groups like the National Organization for Marriage — spent millions on scare tactics and deceit, in an effort to spread lies about gay and lesbian people and harm families."

Taiwan would have become the first country in Asia to allow gays and lesbians to marry if Saturday's referendum on the issue passed. Wolfson in his statement notes the island's lawmakers still face a May 2019 deadline to extend marriage rights to same-sex couples, despite the referenda results.

The referenda took place a day after Bermuda's top court ruled a law that rescinded marriage rights for same-sex couples in the British island territory is unconstitutional.

A referendum on whether to define marriage as between a man and a woman in the Romanian constitution's definition of family failed last month because of insufficient voter turnout.

Read more about this issue online at pridesource.com.

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The Ringwald Serves a Slice of Life and Politics with 'The Cake'

Bittersweet Dramey Explores Bakers, Cakes and Family Dilemmas

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

In July 2012, Colorado residents Charlie Craig and David Mullins approached Masterpiece Cakeshop owner Jack Phillips with a request to create a cake to celebrate their upcoming wedding. Everyone knows how that turned out, but not necessarily about "The Cake" – the current production at Ferndale's Ringwald Theatre. To discover the story behind the play, Between The Lines talked recently to director Dyan Bailey and noted actress Suzan Jacokes..

Bekah Brunstetter's play, "The Cake," tackles a topic most of our readers are familiar with: Christian bakers, cakes and gay weddings. What's this particular story about?

Dyan: Della's best friend passed away from cancer five years ago. Her daughter, Jen, comes back into town to ask Della to bake her cake for her wedding. Jen is marrying a woman, and Della can't get behind gay marriage.

Brunstetter, as you point out, gives the play a few twists from the Colorado case, such as moving the story from Middle America to the Old South, and rather it focusing on a gay male couple, it's a pair of lesbians getting married. What was it about this particular script that resulted in it being produced by The Ringwald this season?

Dyan: At the Ringwald, we have been cognizant of the fact that we showcase more of the gay male experience than the lesbian, so I was really excited to be directing a show that focuses more on the lesbian experience. With "Fun Home" later this year, it's pretty exciting to me that we are doing two lesbian-based shows this year – I think that may be a first for us!

As the director and an LGBT ally, Dyan, what attracted you to this play? Of all the choices out there, why this script?

Dyan: It wasn't typical, and the relationship between Della and her husband really struck a chord.

You're no stranger to gay weddings. How close does this play echo your experiences in regard to conversations you've had with people about gay weddings in general, or when they've learned you've actually attended one?

Dyan: I have a friend whose sister just got married to her wife, and his family would not attend. It's a weird time we live in. It's 2018, and people still have problems with who other people marry. This play – it doesn't make excuses for that, but it does try and explain that these people, like Della, aren't bad people. They just hold onto these beliefs they are taught to be the truth. It's whether they realize there are "other truths" (alternate facts?) or dismiss them and continue believing what they believe. It's Della's struggle that really is compelling.

In today's hyper-sensitive environment, many are quick to assign "hate" as the motivating factor behind the reasons why a person refuses to provide a service for a gay wedding. You, Suzan – as Della – get to jump into the head and mind of a woman caught up in a situation she never anticipated. How do you as an actor do that? How did you initially perceive her, and what was your thought process as you tried to jump into this woman's world and make sense of it?

Suzan: This might seem strange, but I liked her from the start. I feel like her initial reaction comes from a place of shock. She's never been confronted by this before. It's a gut reaction, but she tries to understand (it). It's not simple to change your whole way of thinking, but she's open to it.

What was hardest for you to wrap your head around as you worked on developing the character?

Suzan: Della is a funny person! As a mostly comedic actor, when I'm working on something a little more dramatic, my instinct is to push the comedy aside, but Della has a sense of humor about her I found endearing.

What surprised you most as you discovered what makes this woman tick?

Suzan: She's a sexual person. It's something that would take me by surprise with every reading, but it's very important to her. She has many layers.

When I saw who's playing your husband – the one and only Joel Mitchell, who's earned more honors for his work than I can possibly remember – I couldn't help but smile. He's a force to be reckoned with. (As are you, Suzan.) What did he bring to the table that allowed you to fully grasp your character?

Suzan: I've known Joel for about 20 years! He was Herr Schmidt to my Frauline Schneider in "Cabaret" when we were at Wayne together. The scenes we do together are pretty charged, and Joel made it a safe place every time. He just makes it easy to be in the

moment. The way he plays Tim really helped me with Della. The ins and outs of their relationship has been easy for me to feel since day one. You can love someone more than anything, and still feel disconnected, and at the same time, be one with that person. He's a very present scene partner, and it makes everything easier.

The show has been open now for a handful of performances. Is the audience reaction so far what you expected? Or if not, what's surprised you about their response?

Dyan: I knew during rehearsals we had something really special, but the responses I have gotten from people that I know who would be incredibly honest with me have been overwhelming. This is the first "play" play I have directed. It sounds crazy, but everything I have directed has either been something I have written, been part of writing or worked with the writers as part of the process (or a parody). So to be gifted with this play has been a blessing.

Suzan: Honestly, I didn't have any preconceived notion about how audiences would react, but I have been pleased that people seem to be on board with Della. They give her credit for trying.

How has the show been selling?

Dyan: Our houses haven't been huge. Coming off a monster hit like "Clue," you just want the people to come back to see this show. And I know I'm biased, but it's so good.

What do you hope audiences take away from the show?

Dyan: I hope it makes them feel hope that people can open their minds and change. (Or) at least try.

Suzan: That's a big question. I hope this is the kind of show that you sit and enjoy, then it makes you think on the way home. And then again the next day. Then when you watch the news. I don't agree with Della's stance, but she's open; the whole situation makes her think and re-evaluate. She's not afraid to



Suzan Jacokes plays Della in "The Cake" at The Ringwald Theatre through Dec. 10. Photo: Brandy Joe Plambeck

change her mind; she just wants the time to get there.

And what would you say to someone if they were hesitant to come see "The Cake?"

Suzan: Why are you hesitant? Even if the subject matter makes you uncomfortable, you'll be able to see something of yourself in one or more of these characters. If you're more in line with Della's beliefs, that's okay. The character is treated with respect. She's not a villain; she's a person on a different path than she has been her whole life. And that's scary.

INFO

THE CAKE

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Photo: Eyaan Kheraj

Michael Bublé

Gets Into the Heavy Stuff

Crooner Talks Plans For LGBTQ Youth Outreach & His 'Sexist' Christmas Cover

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

☞ You're my first. Be gentle with me. Can we start with, like, a foreplay thing where you can just take it easy on me? Some gentle licking perhaps, and then we'll get into the heavy stuff? And so my interview with Michael Bublé, who has almost made me forget he has a wife, Argentine actress Luisana Lopilato, begins.

Returning to music with a new heart-emoji-titled album called "love" that he will support on a world tour in 2019, Bublé – who introduces himself by that mononym when he rings me directly – spoke openly on a variety of topics, including the difficulties of being a public figure

amid familial distress, atoning for his "sexist" Christmas song and doing his part to support the LGBTQ community.

It's sweet that this album uses the heart emoji for its title, though the gay community certainly wouldn't have argued with you naming your album using the eggplant emoji.

Oh god, I wanted to use the eggplant. You have no idea.

You fought for that.

I did. I had long conversations about it. And you think I'm joking. I've already said this a million times when talking to my friends:

They were like, (in a deeply bro voice) "Why didn't you use the eggplant?" and I'm like, "Oh, I would have."

Did you intend for the album to be a Band-Aid for our divisive times?

Yeah, it's funny that you just said that: I've actually said that in private. You know what, man, obviously everything I've gone through has everything to do with this record and what I want to put out to the world. I had different names that I'd come up with, but there was nothing that really explained the record and the concept as well as just one word could.

The record is about love, but it's not simply about romantic love. It was really a record that was kind of my theory on this word, this emotion that has so much range. When you hear it you think, "Oh god, romantic and lovey-smovey," but there's so many different things that happen with that word.

"When I Fall in Love" is such a beautiful track and people say, "Oh, it's so romantic." It is romantic. But for me, it's really sad. As I put myself into the character of that song, I thought about a guy sitting at the bar at 4 o'clock in the morning, drunk, looking over at another couple, wishing that he had that because it hasn't happened for him. It's very

INFO

Michael Bublé

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unique in that way. It's a very sad song about longing. I could go on through the whole tracklist. They all have a story for me.

Did you personalize any of the songs?

I wanted to do the best I could to be as personal and honest in the storytelling, in becoming the characters for the song, but at the same time give the audience a way to be able to hear and have their own opinions.

If I want to use this album to get a guy to fall in love with me, which song do you suggest I play to make him swoon?

Honestly, I think "La Vie En Rose" (a duet with jazz vocalist Cecile McLorin Salvant) is incredible because when I did this song my concept was to build a mirror of the relationship I had with my wife. It was me going to this foreign land with someone who didn't speak my language and having this kind of dance of love with them.

I felt like there were these two characters and one is singing to the other, where I was singing to her in my language and my culture and she was answering in hers. Though we were on this path together, we were still apart; and by the middle of the song we have this beautiful dance together, this incredible night, and by the morning we were walking through the streets of Paris. I have sort of assimilated to her culture and I am singing in her language, and I loved that because that's exactly what happened in my life.

I don't think you thought you'd be recording music again after your 5-year-old son, Noah, was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2016, days after our last conversation. But I've heard you say he's holding up and is in remission. Was creating this album more cathartic than past albums?

I don't think I ever fell out of love with making music or being a creative person; I just think I knew it had to be put aside. The part of being a public person, that part I didn't know if I was ready for. There are always reminders every time you go out and people speak and you're trying to move on with your life or yourself and your family. At first, there were always these reminders of it and so it was hard to just move on.

I made a promise to myself that it would be organic and that it would be joy and it would be blissful – and if it ever becomes what I consider work, or egotistically driven, then I would step away. But I never fell out of love with making music. You know, I'm having to leave the family and stuff for little bits, and if I

do then it has to be for the right reasons.

Harder than usual to leave the family right now?

No, it's not. When I do something, I know that there's a great reason for it. We can make more money and we can make more music and we can make more this and more that, but it's time – you can't make time. I wanna make sure I'm spending time doing what I love and that it's all worthwhile.

You talked about being an LGBTQ ally in our last interview. Why did you decide to express your compassion and advocacy for the LGBTQ community at that moment in your career?

I don't know if it was about that moment. I think I had an opportunity to speak with you, and I felt like it was a really good chance to say how I felt. Now more than ever I think it's important for me to just be honest, and it's what I believe. It's part of who I fundamentally am, how I was raised. And it's about equality. It's simple. That's it.

I wish it were so simple. When we last spoke, Trump hadn't been elected, and a lot has changed in the last couple of years politically. How are you feeling about the way this administration has treated the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups?

I don't... (pause)... it sounds crazy, but after what I've been through, I really promised myself that I would try not to get into – and when I say "get into," I just didn't want to be a part of negative things. So I stopped reading things. I stopped reading things about myself. I stopped reading things that made me feel badly.

I really, truly feel like more than ever in my life actions speak much louder than words do and how you treat people is – it's funny, a friend heard me talking to my son. My son was going to his first day of kindergarten and he saw me kneel down to my boy and I said to him, "Noah, I just want you to know that" – and it sounds like a cliché, but I said, "You treat people the way you want to be treated, kid." I said, "If you're kind to people and you're good to people, life will always be OK for you." And I got up and I walked away and my friend said to me, "They may not remember what you did or what you said but they'll remember how you made them feel."

I can't stop the politicians or stupid, uneducated people from thinking and saying and doing stupid things, but I can make a stand, I can talk to you, and when I'm with groups of friends or I'm in public places or when I'm with people who I think can use that sense of love and education, I can open my mouth and tell them how I feel. And one at a time, you can change the world like that.

Listen, I've gone through too much not to feel this way. I just feel this way really strongly. I also think it's important – it's really easy for someone selling something, an artist, to say that they support or love the

See Michael Bublé, continued on p. 22

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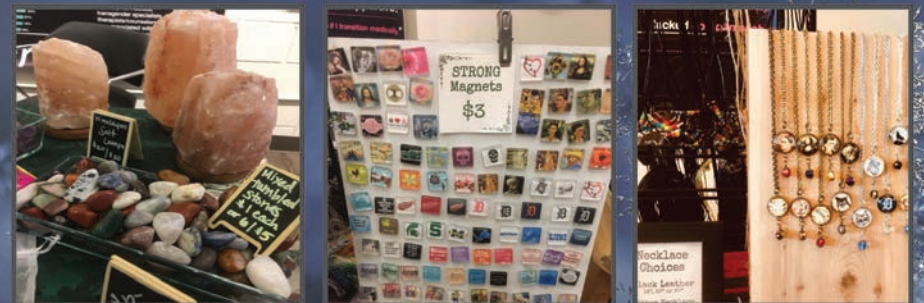
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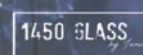
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► Michael Bubl 

Continued from p. 21

gay community; I just think it's a different thing to say it than to do it.

When we spoke in 2016, you told me you had plans to get involved with the Harvey Milk High School in New York City, but then, of course, you had to tend to your family. Do you plan on picking up where you left off?

As a matter of fact, (my publicist) Liz (Rosenberg) and I have spoken many times and talked about the plan that we have. We have a plan (that involves) the Hetrick-Martin Institute (a NYC-based professional provider of social support and programming for LGBTQ youth and host agency for the Harvey Milk High School).

To start, I just wanted to go. I wanted to go and just let people know they had my support. Young kids who have been bullied and haven't felt comfortable have a place to go, which is just disturbing in the first place, that in 2018 they didn't. There wasn't an environment where they felt they could be who they are. Listen, I can't get into the details. I can't.

You can't get into details about the project?

Not those details, but within my family there are things that I can't really speak to that have made this even more pressing for me. It's because it's not my story to tell. But I'll just say that within my family these are the same issues that every family has. I wouldn't and I couldn't talk about something so personal. Definitely, I just know there needs to be advocates. Being a public person is having a responsibility sometimes to show that kind of love and that kind of support and to step out there and to do that. It's not an edgy fucking thing to do. It's not.

For some public figures it seems so.

Why? Because what – half of the audience doesn't buy your records anymore? Well, that's fucking stupid, isn't it? Then you gotta ask yourself if you want half of those people buying your records in the first place, and what's really important to you. Because if you're gonna tell people that you know what's important or that you've had an epiphany in your life that you know what matters then, again, actions speak louder than words, don't they?

Knowing what Noah has gone through, has the feeling of loving your kids no matter who they are, which we discussed in 2016, intensified in the last couple of years?

No, it was always the same. I could tell you the truth: I never had to find that perspective, I always felt that way. And I think I'm very lucky because I really do think that came from the way I was parented. I really do think

I was very lucky to be raised in a family that was so open and liberal and loving. I just think they were always so unconditionally loving – not just toward us children, but toward our family.

Again, clich s, but I just tell both of my boys now that they're old enough to understand: "You know, boys, the things that make you different are what makes you special." What's amazing to me about that school and wanting so badly to go to that school is, I just feel so strongly that the difference between a child and an adult is only life experience. An adult's life experience is, "It's gonna get better. This isn't how it has to be, and this isn't how it's going to be." So for me, it's really massive to be able to meet kids and to say publicly – really: "It's not going always going to be like this."

In light of the holidays, you do realize your gay fans would've gone wild for a version of "Santa Baby" by you that was actually called "Santa Baby," right?

(Laughs) Yeah, exactly. Instead of "Santa Buddy." I think I used "Santa Baby" in one of the lines.

You did.

I should've gone full.

I mean, a straight man can shop at Tiffany's.

(Laughs) Yeah, no, you're right. It's funny: When I did that song, I tried to put it into my perspective and modernize it. I changed words; I asked for a Rolex or Mercedes or things I would want. The best part about it is: I get to sing those kinds of songs now in my life, and if I do concerts and I wanna add a Christmas song, then you know what? I can amend it and I can sing "Santa Baby."

A straight guy singing "Santa Baby" is the progress we need.

Fuck yeah. You're right, you're absolutely right. It was sexist of me not to.

I'm looking forward to your live rendition of it.

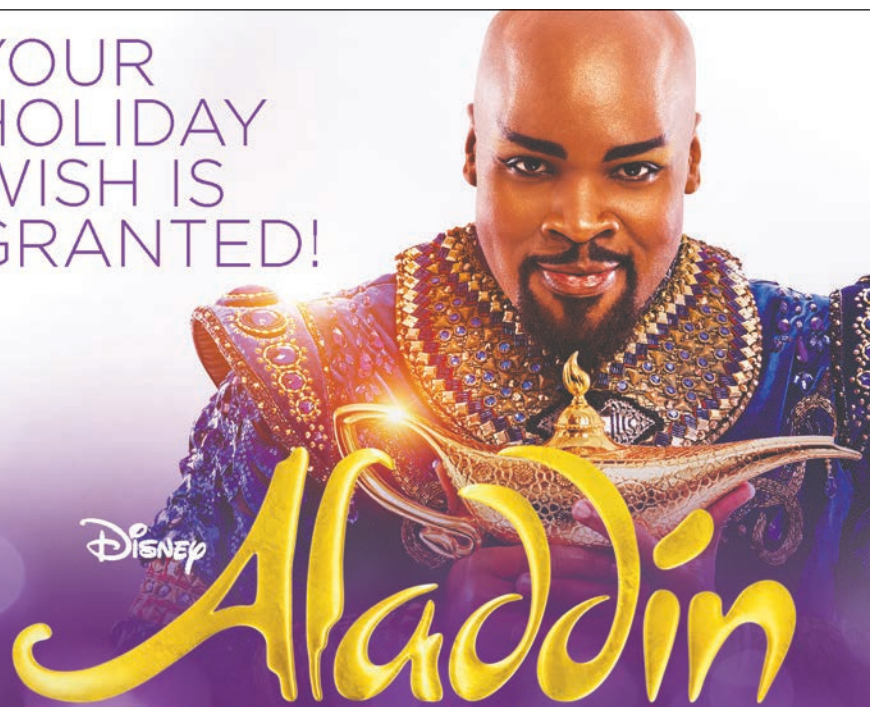
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As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyonc . Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).

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MOCAD's Annual Monster Drawing Rally Dec. 14

BY BTL STAFF

In an “open call” to artists interested, MOCAD sent out a press release advertising their Monster Drawing Rally. This is an annual public event that features 100 artists in two one-hour shifts. They will draw in front of a live audience and make their usually private studio processes part of a public performance.

“Artists at all stages of their careers will create sensational works using a variety of materials: everything from collage and watercolor, to ink and graphite,” said event organizers. “Spectators will have the



opportunity to witness the creative process — watching as ideas transform into fully fledged artworks. Each piece immediately becomes available for sale at \$40.”

As of the 2018 event, more than 600 artists have participated in the rally, that was originally born in San Francisco,

California, through Southern Exposure. In addition to artists, MOCAD is also searching for volunteers to help artists get set up, collect finished drawing and direct visitors.

“We are looking for volunteers to work a 3 hour shift in exchange for a free ticket to the event (and more freebies throughout the night!),”

organizers said.

To find out more on submitting art and volunteering, reach out to newwave@mocad.org.

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DIA Partners with Social Service Agencies for 10th Community Group Art Exhibition

The Detroit Institute of Arts presents its 10th annual Community Group Art Exhibition from Dec. 6, 2018, to Jan. 6, 2019, in the special exhibition galleries located next to Rivera Court, with a connected display in the Walter Gibbs Learning Center. The artworks were created by participants in the DIA's Community Group Program, a partnership between the museum and human service agencies in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

The DIA's Community Group Program has been serving social service agencies in the Detroit area for more than 20 years, providing meaningful experiences through art with gallery tours and hands-on art making. The program focuses on providing a safe, nurturing environment for creative expression and socialization, while building positive relationships within the community. The annual Community

Group Art Exhibition provides a unique opportunity for group members to share their artistic work with both their peers and the public.

“The DIA is very interested in providing collaborative practices to use art as a healing

long-standing show to a more accessible location in the museum, underlining that the community is at the center of everything that we do.”

Groups in this year's show are:

Wayne County: John D. Dingell Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Piquette Square for Veterans, Hannan Center, Mariners Inn, Sexual Assault Services for Holistic Healing and Awareness (SASHA)

Macomb County: Macomb County Community Mental Health (MCCMH),

CARE of Southeastern Michigan, Friendship Clubhouse

Oakland County: Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Grace Centers of Hope



tool, contributing to the important work done by these tri-county social services agencies,” said Salvador Salort-Pons, DIA director. “From veterans to grandparents, the participants in this program have created artworks, based on their personal experiences, which will resonate with all of our visitors, so we have moved this

Scarab Club 105th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition

The Scarab Club is currently preparing its Gold Medal Exhibition, an annual unthemed, all-media exhibition, open to all members in good standing. The Annual chronicles year-to-year events and exhibitions at the Scarab Club and includes images of the club artists' work. There will be a Boar's Head dinner and award ceremony on

Saturday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m.

“Regardless of whether your work is selected for inclusion of the exhibition, one of your submitted images will be included in the book,” said event organizers. “Books will be shipped to artists in December, after publication.”

This year's juror is Dominique Chastenet de Géry. She received a MFA

from Wayne State University in 2016 and now has a studio in Ann Arbor. Throughout her career she has explored medium like ceramics, encaustic, textiles and paper mache.

For questions and more information about the Exhibition reach out to Treena Flannery Ericson at: tericson@scarabclub.org.

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MSU Presents Holiday Classics

EAST LANSING – Michigan State University’s College of Music will bring a holiday tradition to St. Thomas Aquinas Church on Saturday, Dec. 8, at 8 p.m. with a performance of selections from Handel’s “Messiah” and other festive pieces inspired by old English carols.

MSU Director of Choral Programs David Rayl will lead more than 130 choristers from the MSU Community Music School’s Choral Union and the College of Music’s University Chorale. The MSU Symphony Orchestra and Hae Won Jang, an organist from St. Thomas, will accompany the choirs comprised of students and community members. Soloists include six vocal arts students from MSU: Jillian Brennan and Tianxi Wang, sopranos; Megan Magsarili, mezzo-soprano; John Henrikson, tenor; and Peter Boylan and Ben Reisinger, baritones.

“Performing the world’s greatest choral music is a blessing for all of us, but so is presenting these great works in concert and making them accessible to the larger Lansing community,” Rayl said. “I have so much admiration for the dedicated members of the Choral Union, who come to rehearsal every Wednesday evening to make this and other events happen with the MSU choral community.”

Since 2015, this annual holiday performance

pays tribute to and extends the 26-year tradition of the “Messiah” concert that took place at the College of Music from 1978 to 2003. This year’s performance will feature the arias and choruses from the “Christmas” portion and the famous “Hallelujah” chorus from Handel’s Messiah.

Rayl said the audience will also enjoy the first movement of Bach’s “Christmas Oratorio” and two British works from the early 20th century scored for orchestra and organ. Ralph Vaughan William’s “Fantasia on Christmas Carols” and Gustav Holst’s “Christmas Day” are based on old English carols, some of which are from the more formal hymnal tradition, and others from the folk tradition that were sung in the English countryside.

“We’re thrilled to bring joy to our community by performing these great and masterful works,” he said. “Audiences never fail to connect with holiday music, especially Handel’s most famous oratorio.”


Tickets are \$22 for adults, \$20 for seniors (age 60 and older) and \$12 for students with ID and anyone under 18. They can be purchased at the College of Music Box Office by calling 517-353-5342 or visiting musicboxoffice@music.msu.edu. Tickets can also be purchased at the door if available. Seating is general admission. For more information visit music.msu.edu.


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Adoption Month: Michigan Searches for Permanent Homes for Over 320 Children in Foster Care

More than 320 children who are in foster care in Michigan need permanent homes as the state marks November as Adoption Month, as proclaimed by Gov. Rick Snyder.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services – in partnership with adoption agencies and the courts – works to find and create forever families through adoption. In fiscal year 2018, 1,931 children were adopted from the Michigan foster care system, according to MDHHS.

“It is important for all children to have a loving home that they can call their own,” said MDHHS Director Nick Lyon. “While our priority is to safely reunify children in foster care with their parents, we rely on adoptive parents when it’s determined that a child cannot safely return to his or her home.”

People can adopt whether they’re single or married. They don’t have to be wealthy or own their own home, but must have adequate financial resources to provide for a family.

Children in the foster care system become eligible for adoption following termination of parental rights due to abuse or neglect. There were 13,710 children in the foster care system as of Sept. 30, 2018, but the goal for most children is safe reunification with their families.

New families are becoming “official” at Adoption Day ceremonies around the state this month, including Nov. 26 at the Michigan Supreme Court Hall of Justice in Lansing.

Those interested in adopting from foster care can contact the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at 800-589-6273 or learn more about children available for adoption at mare.org. For more information about adoption in Michigan, visit michigan.gov/adoption.

Partners Unite to Give Options for Pain Management

BY BTL STAFF

OKEMOS — Several local organizations and health care providers have recently come together to encourage people to think beyond medications, especially potentially habit-forming opioids, when it comes to pain management. This comes in light of the U.S.’s opioid epidemic which has ravaged communities across the country. In 2017 there were over 72,000 opioid-related deaths recorded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, compared to less than 20,000 in 1999. The Capital Area Health Alliance reports that on average, 115 Americans die every day from opioid overdose.

“There are many ways to manage pain. Medication is helpful for many patients, but other options can reduce the need for prescription medication,” said Narasimha Gundamraj, who holds an MD and first thought of the project. “This brochure will undoubtedly help many people in our area better manage their pain.”

The Capital Area Health Alliance, the Ingham Opioid Abuse

Prevention Initiative at the Ingham County Health Department, the Tri-County Office on Aging, and the Barry-Eaton District Health Department spearheaded the development of a new resource for pain patients. Along with a physician from the Pain Management Center of Lansing and the Sparrow Pain Management Center, the team created a brochure that includes pain management options and local resources.

The brochure is to be distributed to hundreds of local doctors’ offices and community organizations. Brochures are also available for pick up at the Capital Area Health Alliance office in Okemos and is available online at capitalareahealthalliance.org.

“One of the goals of the brochure is to reduce the need for opioid medication,” said Dr. Gundamraj. “While opioids can help some patients with pain, they have limitations and have the



potential for misuse or overdose. The brochure educates patients about some of the risks of opioids and lists many other effective options for pain management.”

Additional sponsors of the pain management brochure include: Dewpoint, Families Against Narcotics, the Ingham County Medical Society, Mid-State Health Network, Sparrow Health System and The

Capital Area District Libraries.


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Happenings

OUTINGS

Sunday, December 2

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals 4 p.m. Free. Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. standwithtrans.org.

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. Contact facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW: socorro@hilltopcounseling.org. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. standwithtrans.org. hilltopcounseling.org.

Tuesday, December 4

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Lake Orion / Oakland County 7 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. Parent Support Group Facilitated by Lisa Goyette, ally, activist. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663 stmarysinthehills.org. standwithtrans.org.

Wednesday, December 5

DIVINELY QUEER Book Launch 7 p.m. Join Affirmations and author Jennifer Miracle-Best for a reading, Q&A, and book signing. Continue the celebration after at Rosie O'Grady's Ferndale for Wednesday PRIDE Night. 10 percent of proceeds go to Affirmations. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105.

Thursday, December 6

Pride Night at Thunderbowl! 7 p.m. Meet & Greet First Thursday of every month, unlimited bowling, shoe rental, private room, private bar area, drink specials, billiard room, 250 foot video wall. Come as you are. Thunderbowl Arena, 4200 Allen Road, Allen Park. 313-928-4688. thunderbowl.org.

Monday, December 10

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Macomb County 6:30 p.m. Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group, Free. Come and meet other trans* youth and teens and support each other through your journeys. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700 chippewavalley.schools.org.

Wednesday, December 12

Stand with Trans Youth Support Group – Flint – Genesee 6:30 p.m. Free. Facilitator Sara Griffin, MA, LPC is a psychotherapist and a parent of a

transgender son, eiregriff@aol.com. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023. uuf Flint.org. standwithtrans.org.

Foster Care and Adoption Orientation Dec. 12, 6 p.m. Interested in learning more about foster care and adoption in Michigan? Join us for an orientation to discuss the need, process & how you can become a parent for a child in need! Orchards Children's Services, 24901 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 601, Southfield. 248-258-0440 smarks@orchards.org. orchards.org.

Thursday, December 13

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

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County 7 p.m. All youth are welcome to attend this Free group. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620. oaklandumc.org. standwithtrans.org.

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

Sunday, December 16

MCC Detroit – Christmas Elves Wrapping Party Dec. 16, 1 p.m. All the elves will be merrily preparing the gifts and food to give to the families we have adopted. Please bring wrapping tools, scissors, MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. mccdetroit.org.

Wednesday, December 19

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, kssessler@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org or 734-673-2485 Trans Youth Support Group. (12+) Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. standwithtrans.org.

The Piano Guys at Fox Theatre

Though the musical team that makes up The Piano Guys consists of only two members, Jon Schmidt and Steven Sharp Nelson on piano and cello respectively, producers Paul Anderson and Al van der Beek are equally important in creating the performance group that became viral internet sensations. Having amassed over 1 billion views on YouTube, the quartet will give fans a chance to see them up close with they make their way to the Fox Theatre on Friday, Dec. 7. Tickets start at \$37.50. Go online to 313presents.com for more information.



MUSIC & MORE

Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night at Northern Lights Lounge November 29, 9 p.m. No Cover. 313-873-1739. northernlightslounge.com. Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore, Detroit. 248-445-1277. northernlightslounge.com.

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.

War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast by Joe Landry November 30, 7:30 p.m. The play celebrates the 80th anniversary of Orson Welles' 1938 radio

adaptation that threw humanity into chaos when aliens made landfall on earth. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. tasiopeg@udmercy.edu. detroitmercyarts.com.

Michigan Philharmonic Presents 'In a Winter Garden' November 30, 8 p.m. 'In a Winter Garden' brings together orchestra, chorus and soloists sharing a musical reflection on Advent and all its various moods and themes. Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 47650 North Territorial Road, Plymouth. 734-453-0326. michtix.com.

Friends of the Huntington Woods Library Used Book Sale December 1, 10 a.m. Year end sale, bargains abound! All hardcover, trade fiction and nonfiction 50 cents each, mass market paperbacks, children's and young adult books, and CDs and DVDs are 25 cents. All proceeds

fund library programs and Huntington Woods Library, 26415 Scotia, Huntington Woods. 248-543-9720. huntington-woods.libcal.com.

Fort Street Chorale presents Handel's 'Messiah' December 1, 3 p.m. Presbyterian Church, 631 W. Fort Street, Detroit. 313-961-4533. secretary@fortstreet.org. fortstreet.org/messiah.

32nd Annual Winter Concert – Ann Arbor Youth Chorale December 1, 4 p.m. Come be delighted by the sounds of seasonal tunes performed by the Chorale's two distinguished youth choirs: the Descant Choir and Concert Choir! Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S Fourth Ave, Ann Arbor, MI. 734-996-4404. aaycadmin@annarboryouthchorale.org. bethelehem-ucc.org.

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'Noel Night – Dance' December 1, 6 p.m. Company One Dance performs this one-day only concert for the 46th annual Noel Night in Midtown Detroit. Allesee Dance

Theatre, 4841 Cass Ave., 3rd Floor, Detroit. wsushows.com.

Detroit Opera House Presents 'Too Hot to Handel' December 1, 7:30 p.m. This Detroit rendition of Handel's 'Messiah' is a unique jazz infused version of the holiday classic and is returning to the Detroit Opera House. It's a soul-stirring, toe-tapping rendition. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING. michiganopera.org.

NKFM Kidney Ball's "Party Hard Speakeasy" After-party December 1, 10 p.m. Enjoy the NKFM Kidney Ball after-party! Includes Open bar, beer tasting, live music by Your Generation in Concert, dancing, late night coney, candy "bar," and access to mobile bidding on Kidney Ball silent auction items. 1114 Washington Blvd., Detroit. 1. 313-442-1600. jwilliams@nkfm.org.

AEG Presents 'Hip Hop Nutcracker' December 6, 6:30 p.m. Detroit Masonic Temple, 3011 W. Grand Blvd, #1100, Detroit. 800-854-2196 templedetroit.com. aegpresents.com.

Editor's Pick

Board Gaming With Cats Dec. 2

Held at the Meowtown Lounge & Adoption Center inside Pet Valu in West Bloomfield, this is a chance to both get acquainted and bond with a potential new friend — human and feline alike. Admission is Free but seating is limited. Snacks and beverages welcome. Advance reservations are needed at least two days prior to the event. Email MeowtownLounge@gmail.com or call 586-825-3350.



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P R E M I E R E

Editor's Pick

Masonic Hosts 2-Night GRIZMAS

Detroit's own Grant Kwiecinski, better known as GRiZ to music fans, will be hosting a two-night GRIZMAS at the Masonic. Lasting from Friday, Dec. 14 through Dec. 15, fans will be able to get a live taste of his unique blend of funk, hip-hop and dance music all in a two-night grouping. For ages 16+. A single show costs \$42.50, two-show bundles are \$85. Go online to themasonic.com for more event details.



Beethoven's Fifth December 6, 7:30 p.m. No other musical statement can match its raw power and bracing energy. Carlos Miguel Prieto conducts Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and Christian Tetzlaff plays Brahms' impassioned Violin Concerto. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

AEG Presents The Piano Guys at the Fox Theatre December 7, 6:30 p.m. Hailing from Utah, ThePianoGuys became an Internet sensation by way of their immensely successful series of self-made music videos. They've made over 35 since joining forces in early 2010. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611. aegpresents.com.

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'December Dance Concert' December 7, 7:30 p.m. Contemporary dance masters come together for one thrilling weekend! Join us at the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Detroit for these two remarkable performances. Detroit Music Hall, 350 Madison St., Detroit. 313-887-8501. musicchall.org. wsushows.com.

A Charlie Brown Christmas with Cyrus Chestnut & Friends December 7, 8 p.m. The holidays don't officially arrive until you hear Vince Guaraldi's classic score from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Virtuoso and playful, pianist Cyrus Chestnut infuses these classic charts with his soulful sound. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

The Detroit Prohibition Bus Tour December 8, 10 a.m. We'll visit three speakeasies (including a secret, subterranean tunnel) with your guides who are descendants of bootleggers! Goody bag and snacks included in price. Bus Tour, 1400 Wilkins, Detroit. marion@magicalmichigantours.com.

Holiday Pops with the Phil December 13, 6 p.m. Get into the spirit of the season with the Michigan Phil performing all your holiday favorites along with a beautiful Mozart horn concerto. The Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman Ave., Plymouth. 734-453-0870. michiganphil.org.

Home for the Holiday 16: Songwriter Showcase and Charity Drive Dec. 14, 8 p.m. The 16th annual showcase raises donations for goods for the homeless population in Detroit. 7 singer-songwriters will perform for the cause. PJs Lagerhouse, 1254 Michigan Ave., Detroit. 313-961-4668.

Navigating Grace: The Power of Connection and Transformation December 18, 7:30 p.m. Best-selling author and clinician Jeff Jay will describe personal connection, and the concepts of service and altruism that lie at the heart of Twelve Step Programs. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

AEG Presents 'Straight No Chaser' at the Fox Theatre December 19, 7 p.m. All male a capella group. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611. aegpresents.com.

Home Alone with the DSO! Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. Enjoy one of the most beloved holiday films of all time accompanied by the Detroit Symphony live in the splendor of Orchestra Hall. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Home for the Holidays! Dec. 21, 10:45 a.m. Share Detroit's favorite holiday musical tradition with family and friends and thrill to the spectacle of the season. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111 dso.org.

MCC Detroit – Fellowship Friday December 21, 6:30 p.m. Come join our gathering of music lovers who share in song, prayer and a meal. Held in the Fellowship Hall. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. mccdetroit.org.

MCC Detroit – Christmas Elves Celebration! December 22, 1 p.m. Come and join us for an amazing holiday time. We will be gathering with the families that we have adopted for Christmas to give them their gifts and share some holiday spirit. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. mccdetroit.org.

MCC Detroit – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service December 24, 7 p.m. Join us for our annual candlelight Christmas Eve service as we are reflective of the greatest gift of all and how we can be a blessing to others in the world. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main St., Clawson. 248-399-7741. mccdetroit.org.

Sound Board Presents Bret Michaels December 26, 8 p.m. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. motorcitycasino.com.

ART 'N' AROUND

Lina Iris Viktor: Materia Prima November 29, 5 p.m. Lina Iris Viktor is a British-Liberian conceptual artist whose work centers around the age-old practice of gilding with 24-karat gold. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. stamps.umich.edu.

War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast by Joe Landry November 30, 7:30 p.m. The play celebrates the 80th anniversary of Orson Welles' 1938 radio adaptation that threw humanity into chaos when aliens made landfall on earth. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. tasiopeg@udmercy.edu tasiopeg@udmercy.edu detroitmercyarts.com

Saline Antiques Market December 2, 9 a.m. Since the Saline Antiques & Vintage Market debuted a few years ago, it has been our goal to offer a quality monthly market for your buying enjoyment. Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor. 734-761-2796 salinemarket@gmail.com foodgatherers.org salinantiquesmarket.com/

Yourist Studio Gallery 2018 Holiday Show and Sale Dec. 7, 5 p.m. Ceramic art, beautiful tableware, and original and lovingly handmade objects. Yourist Studio Gallery, 1133 Broadway, Ann Arbor. 734-662-4914 kay@youristpottery.com kay@youristpottery.com youristpottery.com youristpottery.com/news/index.html

THEATER

Monster Box Theatre Presents 'The Book of Liz', A Comedy Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m. Sister Liz is a cheese ball maker from a Squeamish order (Amish) in Clusterhaven. Liz's community relies on the popularity of her cheese balls in the outside world, made with a secret recipe. Monster Box Theatre, 2529 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. 248-787-1400 monsterboxtheatre.com

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 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 2485418027 stagecrafters.org/on-stage/main-stage/32-peter-starcatcher.html

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike' Dec. 7, 8 p.m. Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play. Middle-aged siblings Vanya and Sonia share a home in Bucks County, PA, where they bicker and complain about the circumstances of their lives. Studio Theatre at the Hilberry, 4743 Cass Avenue, Detroit. theatredanceatwayne.com/wsushows.com

The Plays The Thing: 1-Act Full-Length Play Revision December 8, 1 p.m. This workshop will give attendees the opportunity to get feedback and revise existing script ideas. Local playwright Brian Cox will lead registrants through the process of development and revision. (16 AND UP. 16-18 WITH PARENTAL A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 https://a2ct.org/classes-and-workshops

Disney's Aladdin at the Detroit Opera House! Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. From the producer of The Lion King comes the timeless story of ALADDIN, a thrilling new production filled with unforgettable beauty, magic, comedy and breathtaking spectacle. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING broadwayindetroit.com/shows/disney-aladdin

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Jason Stuart 10th Year Anniversary Stand-Up Special from Here Media Set to Stream on Dec. 7

BY BTL STAFF

Proudly openly gay for the length of his career, comedian Jason Stuart was the first openly gay male comedian to have his own hour comedy special: “Making it to the Middle.” It was taped in the middle of his career, the middle of the country and the middle of his life, and will air again from Here Media for its 10th year anniversary on Dec. 7, on Here TV on cable and streaming services.

The 2018 winner of The Joshua Tree International Improv/Comedy Festival as Best Comedian commented on the changes in the last decade.

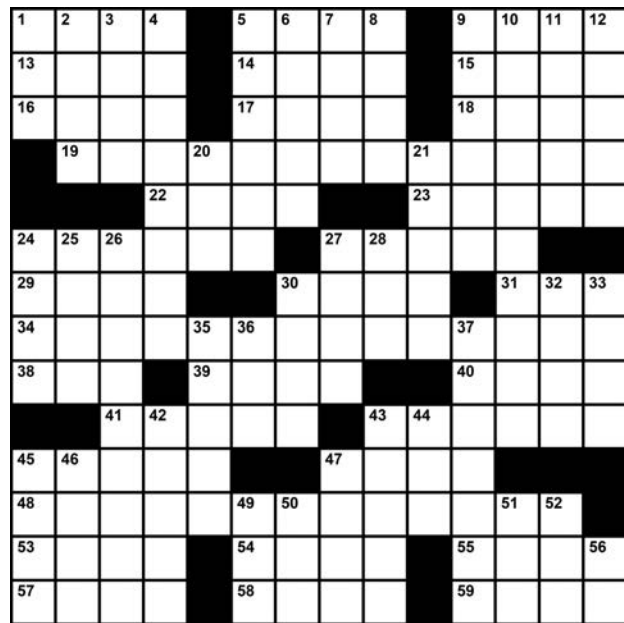
“10 years ago we did not have gay marriage, my favorite film was ‘The Devil Wears Prada’ and Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown finally split up! Now we have gay marriage — but I still have no husband — ‘Can You Ever Forgive Me?’ is my favorite film and Barbra Streisand cries while singing ‘Happy Days Are Here Again’ on her new CD. A lot has changed,

for the world and for me.”

Jason was lauded for his role as a racist plantation owner in “The Birth of a Nation.” He then was cast in several projects and continues working as an out stand-up comedian.

Next up for him is supporting roles in the action film “Abducted” as a police detective and as a private investigator in the thriller “Immortal,” with Samm Levine of “Inglourious Basterds” and Dylan Baker of “Homeland.” Jason was last seen on Judd Apatow’s Netflix series “Love,” and on “Swedish Dicks” opposite Keanu Reeves. Currently, he’s on the Direct TV series “ATT/Hello” and as an anti-abortion leader in the movie “The Line” from executive producer Common. He is also the title character in the drama “Hank,” which won best LGBTQ short film in The Los Angeles Independent Film Festival.

To find out more, go to heremedia.com.



Gay Martyr

QPuzzle

Across

- 1 120 minutes, to Sue Wicks
- 5 Biathlete’s slats
- 9 Roadies’ burdens
- 13 What comes to mind
- 14 Make less difficult to bear
- 15 Simba’s love, on Broadway
- 16 Disneyland street

17 “Look ___, I’m Sandra Dee”

- 18 Rotary phone feature
- 19 With 48-Across, 2014 movie about a gay martyr
- 22 “Hey, sailor!”
- 23 Davis of “Commander in Chief”
- 24 Fruit that’s the color purple
- 27 Put on display
- 29 Morales of “Resurrection Blvd.”

30 Skater Mattis

31 “Bali ___”

34 2000 play about a gay martyr (with “The”)

38 “... a rose by ___ other name...”

39 Bannon and Northrop

40 Dixie Chicks’ “Goodbye ___”

41 “The Name of the Rose” characters

43 Composer whose name sounds like a dagger part

45 Flies like an eagle

47 Strap on a stallion

48 See 19-Across

53 A little behind

54 “Kiss of the Spider Woman” setting

55 Moves the head

57 Gomer’s “opposed to”

58 Weight loss product

59 Infatuated with Mr. Right Now

60 Fender bender evidence

61 Rimbaud’s zip

62 Where to stick your tool

Down

- 1 “Hymn to ___” of “My Fair Lady”
- 2 Gay video directory name
- 3 Future queen of “Star Wars”
- 4 Disney movie with a sorcerer
- 5 Time of the year
- 6 Najmy of “If These Walls Could Talk 2”

7 Demi Lovato’s “This ___”

8 Penetrate the cracks

9 “Evita” composer ___ Lloyd Webber

10 Women’s restroom?

11 Bagel variety

12 Music style for Ricky Martin

20 Howe’er

21 Part of a club name

24 Words before Hoya

25 Straight ___ arrow

26 Peter Pan portrayer

27 Dips in gravy

28 Heston’s “Ben ___”

30 Pride places

32 Suburban plot

33 “ ___ put hair on your chest!”

35 Home for Troy Perry

36 Pen contents

37 LGBTQ rights activist Jazz

42 Set straight

43 _Battle Cry_ actor Van

44 Draw a bead on

45 Mixed-up fruits, perhaps

46 No longer jail bait

47 Bea Arthur’s TV maid Esther

49 Home st. of Maupin

50 Where you can eat a hero

51 He cruised with a bear pair

52 Slight advantage

56 Like McCullers’ cafe

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Survey to Look at Health Needs of LGBTQ Adults in Southeast Michigan

BY BTL STAFF

Corktown Health Center and its community partners invite southeast Michigan residents who identify as part of the LGBTQ community to participate in a new online survey. The purpose of the survey, known as the Corktown Health Center Community Health Needs Assessment, is to learn about health needs, strengths and challenges of the LGBTQ community in Southeast Michigan.

Findings will help the Center understand how to improve existing health services and help create the Center's new five-year plan.

"The Community Health Needs Assessment survey is one way community voices will be heard, as we work to ensure Corktown Health Center continues to deliver excellent

healthcare services," said Latyona Riddle-Jones, the Center's medical director. "The Center will follow the survey with community conversations to discuss the results. Through the anonymous survey and community conversations, the center aims to identify new ways to improve health in the southeast Michigan LGBTQ community."

The anonymous online survey - developed by community members and allies from Corktown Health Center, Wayne State University, and WorldShare LLC - takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Participants must be at least 18 years of age or older. The survey is available now until January 9, 2019. Anyone interested in participating can access the survey online at corktownhealth.org or request a paper copy.

For more information about Corktown Health Center and the Community Health Needs Assessment survey, contact Patrick Yankee, chief development officer, at pyankee@corktownhealth.org or call 313-832-3300, ext. 35.

The Mary Kay Foundation Awards First Step \$20K Grant

BY BTL STAFF

In support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, The Mary Kay Foundation announced in November that it is awarding \$3 million in grants to 150 domestic violence shelters

across the country. First Step has received a \$20,000 unrestricted grant to support local survivors of domestic violence in southeastern Michigan. This year's grant contribution brings the Foundation's total investment in its shelter grant program to \$50 million.

The Mary Kay Foundation was established in 1996 with the purpose of supporting issues impacting women. In 2000, The Foundation expanded to include ending domestic violence as part of its mission. The Foundation is committed to funding the life-saving work of women's shelters and the annual shelter grant program has helped finance critical needs including emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling and legal aid. All of these resources support women and children as they seek refuge and relief on their journey to an abuse-free life. This year, more than 1,200 organizations applied for the Mary Kay Foundation shelter grants.

"At Mary Kay, we believe in helping women improve their circumstances and live their best lives. One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and it is our responsibility to support the women's shelters that aid these survivors," said Michael Lunceford, president of the foundation's board of directors. "At the heart of The Foundation's work is the shelter grant program which is actively supported by our independent sales force. We're proud that our commitment makes such a powerful impact in local communities and in the lives of domestic violence survivors

In the 40 years since its founding, First Step has served over 300,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence in southeastern Michigan.

across the country."

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, more than 72,000 adult and child victims receive domestic violence services across the United States in just one day. Unfortunately, in the same period of time, more than 11,000 requests for services are unmet due to a lack of resources.

In the 40 years since its founding, First Step has served over 300,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence in southeastern Michigan. In 2017, 14,745 nights of safe shelter housing and 16,925 nights of transitional supportive housing were provided to 385 adults and children. Over 100 families seek shelter each month and sometimes no space is available for them. First Step is grateful to have The Mary Kay Foundation grant to help with bridging the gap of shelter space, as well as support services including in-court victim advocacy, assistance with personal protection orders, transportation and counseling.

Applications for the 2019 shelter grant program will be available in January 2019. Please visit marykayfoundation.org for more information and to view the complete list of 2018 shelter grant recipients.



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